

MULTIPLE MODERNISMS: ESSAYS ON NON-SYNCHRONOUS PERIODIZATION

By

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To my grandmother

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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Multiple Modernisms: Essays on Non-Synchronous Periodization explores the concept of periodization and its value for the study of literature and a number of other artistic forms, offering both a historical analysis and a reconceptualization of traditional methods of studying these cultural phenomena. This project emphasizes instead how larger cultural logics work themselves out through a diverse range of different cases, ranging from specific works and artistic careers to genres, media, and forms. This study also confronts the isolation of canonical literature from other practices, such as popular music, architecture, and children's literature. It is further unique in that it posits "non-synchronous periodization" for each of these forms, rather than subscribing, for example, to the notion of a uniform realist, modernist, or postmodernist period. This raises a number of historical questions that have largely been ignored within cultural studies, and offers what I hope are productive and original answers to them.

CHAPTER 1
THEORIES OF RELATIVITY: MULTIPLE MODERNISMS AND A SINGULAR
MODERNITY

The most troublesome passage in Marx has to do with the emergence of a new mode of production. . . . The parturitional figure is well known although not absolutely indispensable: ‘new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society.’ The organic overtones have often been an embarrassment, particularly since the mother normally survives the birth of the child, while the older mode of production presumably does not.

— Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity* (77-78)

This is a dissertation on the multiplicity of the expressions of modernism. I am exploring the concept of periodization and its value for the study of literature and a number of other artistic forms, offering both a historical analysis and a reconceptualization of traditional methods of studying these cultural phenomena. This project challenges the “genius” model that still dominates much of the work in literary and cultural studies, and emphasizes instead how larger cultural logics work themselves out through a diverse range of different cases, ranging from specific works and artistic careers to media, genres, and forms. This dissertation also confronts the potential isolation of canonical literature from other practices, such as popular music, architecture, and children’s literature. When the traditionally-accepted artistic periods of realism, modernism, and postmodernism have been applied to these practices, it has most often been with the understanding that development in all these forms are synchronous with one another. In looking at modernism across a wide range of temporalities, I shall posit a non-synchronous periodization for each of these artistic forms. This is in opposition to the generally accepted notion of a uniform “modernist period” located, for example, in the years between 1914-1945, and wherein all works produced in that moment are evaluated according to the criteria of modernism--usually to the marked detriment of many of them. While the logic of periodization is based on the scale of the economic mode of production, I will argue that there is

no such thing as a pure mode of production, a recognition that enables non-synchronous periods to develop in relation to the traditional realms of realism, modernism, and postmodernism.

The chapters in this dissertation explain such different scales of periodization--those of individual text, genre, musical medium, and architectural practice--structured around the periodizing method of America's foremost Marxist critic, Fredric Jameson. This project is complicated not only by the scale of its periods, but also by the subjects and works under analysis, which range from a canonical modernist text to children's literature, rock and roll, and the American ballpark. As such, in addition to its Jamesonian framework, this project in many ways mirrors the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss in its assessment that the primitive is no less complex than the sophisticated modern. In *The Savage Mind*, Lévi-Strauss emphasizes, "What is true of the constitution of historical facts is no less so of their selection. . . . Every corner of space conceals a multitude of individuals each of whom totalizes the trend of history in a manner which cannot be compared to the others. . . . What makes history possible is that a sub-set of events is found" (257). This dissertation accomplishes this by focusing on progression and transition within a number of forms. The thinking in the cultural logic of each of these formal sub-sets is different from those of the established macro-scales, and they necessitate equally sophisticated readings. When we read these texts within their own formal histories, their developments are rich and varied and contestatory.

Of course, to accomplish this we need to focus on situational descriptions--a vital point within Jameson's method that many readers are apt to overlook. For the fundamental--and unarguable--axiom of Jameson's Marxism is that everything must respond to the larger cultural situation at hand. The largest historical periodizations are those of a situation that is cultural, political, and economic. In this logic of situation, all things produced during the "modernist

period” are modernist. However, more than simply positing the historical boundaries of a period, Jameson actually theorizes what that historical situation is, with the understanding that different cultural works will respond to this situation differently.

Alain Badiou, in the opening of his provocative *Ethics* (2001), observes that “certain scholarly words, after long confinement in dictionaries and in academic prose, have the good fortune, or the misfortune--a little like an old maid who, long since resigned to her fate, suddenly becomes, without understanding why, the toast of the town - of sudden exposure to the bright light of day” (1). While Badiou speaks in reference to the term “ethics,”¹ he could just as surely be talking about the concept of “modernism.” The understanding that aesthetic modernism was a movement of the past is evident in a number of crucial critical essays that have helped to shape the academy’s conception of the term. Maurice Beebe, in a 1974 essay titled “What Modernism Was,” states that “we can take some comfort in the realization that we can now define Modernism with confidence that we shall not have to keep adjusting our definition in order to accommodate new visions and values” (1065). Perry Anderson, meanwhile, in his well-known “Modernity and Revolution,” attests that “modernism as a notion is the emptiest of all cultural categories. Unlike Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Mannerist, Romantic, or Neoclassical, it designates no describable object in its own right at all: it is completely lacking in positive content” (332). Anderson’s statement--while seemingly as close-ended as Beebe’s--highlights a crucial component to the contemporary reconsideration of modernism: that a mere focus on the formal characteristics of modernism is now understood to be a critical dead end.

Instead, a situational definition is necessary for any effective consideration of modernism, and such historical placement includes our own contemporary refiguration of what modernism *is*. As Phillip Wegner argues, “we need to understand the past differently to perceive

our present in a new way . . . Only in this way can we hope to keep faith with the true radicality of past movements and actors” (*Life* 4). As mentioned earlier, one could argue that anything produced during the “traditional” modernist period is in some ways modernist; however, Jameson problematizes this thinking in *A Singular Modernity*. For Jameson, modernism is a period concept that has been relegated to a rather static and stereotypic conception in the contemporary world. Modernism cannot (or, at least, should not) be an inflexible “standard by which to compare a whole series of historically incomparable writers (or painters or musicians)” (*Singular* 28).

Jameson accordingly argues that “the emergence of a properly modernist ‘style’ . . . will be validated only by the kind of new work it enables: by some fresh (formal and structural) approach to the moderns able to formulate their historical specificity more adequately for us today than the descriptions we have inherited from their contemporaries” (“Modernism” 164). In *A Singular Modernity*, Jameson accomplishes these aims in part through his articulation of the buffer period of “late modernism.” Late modernism most obviously fills a gap between modernism and postmodernism, but it also does something more: namely, it illustrates the coming to fruition of the “ideology of modernism.” It is, Jameson states, “the very emergence of some full-blown ideology of modernism that differentiates the practices of late modernism from modernism proper” (*Singular* 197).² Individuals did not consciously set out to craft an ideology of modernism; it was arrived at over time, an “ideological project, on which any number of individuals . . . labored collectively” (*Singular* 180), and only after a first wave of blind experimentation had yielded a number of tangible aesthetic reference points. This subsequent aesthetic movement comes to be characterized by “late modernist contingency . . . [which] constitutes the failure of autonomy to go all the way and fulfill its aesthetic programme”

(*Singular* 209). The far more accessible literature (“a middlebrow type”) that emerges in turn impacts our conception of the modernist period itself, for it is in these more accessible texts that we see the more recognizable products of modernist experimentation.

Jameson’s conception of “late modernism” is hence not simply a periodizing gesture, but rather one of *re*-periodizing. Late modernism presents a break with the traditional periodization which posits a modernism and postmodernism side-by-side, offering a transitional period in order to stimulate a new mode of thinking. A period becomes transition (a break) and a break becomes a period--a notion that is as dialectically frustrating as it is inescapable. As Jameson says, “the trope exists precisely to provoke astonishment and the scandal of the new theory, the break further back than we imagined, the uncanonized name suddenly arising to overshadow the only too familiar one” (*Singular* 150).

While this assault upon certitude potentially undermines the validity of his own periodizing operation, Jameson insists that this is an essential dialectical component to any effective theory. Even Jean-Francois Lyotard’s influential postmodern theory of the end of grand narratives is, Jameson points out, “itself another grand narrative” (*Singular* 5). In addition, “it is wrong to think that Lyotard’s postmodernity . . . marks a repudiation of the past, its wholesale consignment to oblivion,” Jameson argues, as “for Lyotard, . . . the philosophers of the past were to be reinvented and rewritten in the postcontemporary idiom” (*Singular* 4). In such a way, Jameson concludes, “Lyotard was himself in many ways a quintessential modernist, passionately committed to the eruption of . . . the authentically new” (*Singular* 4). Much as Jameson has reconceptualized Lyotard, through his work in *A Singular Modernity* he has just as certainly resituated and reevaluated himself.

Wegner observes that “Jameson’s own recent writings on periodization offer us another way of thinking about this relationship,” as the guidelines he establishes “should also be understood as the fundamental axioms for the production of any successful periodizing narrative” (*Life* 4). While such operations may be taken as arbitrary³--with the success or failure of the project ultimately resting with the individual reader--a rigorous application of such formal structures produces any number of interesting readings. Much like Wegner’s book, my own periodizing method is guided by Jameson’s more universal axioms for periodization--the four “Maxims of Modernity” developed in *A Singular Modernity* (2002)--and it is precisely these axioms that eliminate arbitrary applications of periodizing theory.

The first of these maxims speaks directly to the necessity of periodization. Just as Jameson begins *The Political Unconscious* with the now famous exhortation “Always historicize!” (9), he begins the maxims of *A Singular Modernity* with the stylistically similar “We cannot not periodize” (29).⁴ While this maxim seems at first glance to lack the enthusiasm of his earlier work - even to the point that it “seems to encourage a resignation to defeat” (*Singular* 29)--it is no less definitive. “Periodization,” Jameson argues, “is not some optional narrative consideration one adds or subtracts according to one’s own tastes and inclinations, but rather an essential feature of the narrative process itself” (*Singular* 81). Jameson’s decision to word the maxim as such (rather than “Always periodize!”), comes as a result of “acknowledging the objections to periodization as a philosophical act” and then ultimately finding that those objections are “brought up short against [periodization’s] inevitability” (*Singular* 29).

This brings to light the seeming fatalist nature of periodization, and its status as a requirement, rather than an operation of empowerment. Jameson’s maxims are, after all, worded as far more a Biblical Ten Commandments than an American Bill of Rights, and are seemingly

focused on what one *cannot* do, or what one *must* do, as opposed to what one *can* do with modernity.⁵ As Badiou states, “it was always easier for church leaders to indicate what was forbidden--indeed, to content themselves with such abstinences--than to try to figure out what should be done” (10). Upon closer inspection, however, Jameson’s maxims take up both of these considerations. While they are obviously a set of regulations for any successful periodizing operation, they just as surely make such liberatory operations possible (indeed, essential). Such a mandate also lends real power to period theory, with contemporary breakthroughs in aesthetic modernism coming as the result of theoretical reconsideration. As Marshall Berman observes, “It may turn out, then, that going back can be a way to go forward: that remembering the modernisms of the nineteenth century can give us the vision and courage to create the modernisms of the twenty-first” (36).

Jameson’s concept of a period is admittedly indebted to Thomas Kuhn’s notion of the “paradigm,” and to the transitional model that Kuhn articulates. Kuhn conceives of the paradigm as a period of “normal science” (10): a period of stability and mainstream consensus regarding the dominant problems (rather than solutions) of the time. This is a key point, as paradigm debates are always situated around the question “Which problems is it more significant to have solved?” (Kuhn 110). There is thus an arbitrary, moment-specific significance to the establishment of paradigms; they are not random developments to be situated in an ahistorical vacuum. The ultimate goal of Jameson’s highly-influential *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), in his own words, is “systematizing something that is resolutely unsystematic” and drawing historical substance from “an ahistorical period of history” (418, 296). By *A Singular Modernity*, this point is expanded into a more general call to move beyond chronologization (a form of postmodern nominalism) and onto the political term of narrative.

This is evident in the second of Jameson's Maxims of Modernity: "Modernity is not a concept, philosophical or otherwise, but a narrative category" (*Singular* 40). This insistence upon narrativity is not without controversy, given that narrativity has come to represent the "frightening possibility of an utter relativism" and "the ultimate threat of the disappearance of truth" (*Singular* 32). Jameson is dismissive of such claims, stating that "the trope of 'modernity' is always in one way or another . . . a powerful displacement of previous narrative paradigms" (*Singular* 35); one should be more unnerved by a narrative structure that resists future reconsiderations.⁶ The initial problem with periodization, Jameson insists, is always that it might create a bad totalization, and the fine line it presents is no doubt the source of much of the critical skepticism regarding Jameson's work. As he acknowledges at the end of *Postmodernism*, "It has not escaped anyone's attention that my approach to postmodernism is a 'totalizing' one. The interesting question today is . . . not why I adopt this perspective, but why so many people are scandalized (or have learned to be scandalized) by it" (*Postmodernism* 400)--the irony being that this scandal may itself be understood as a symptom of postmodernism.

Such skepticism seems evident in the work of Lyotard, who implores us to "wage a war on totality." However, there are significant differences between totalities and totalization.⁷ While Foucault admits that "there is nothing more tentative, nothing more empirical . . . than the process of establishing an order among things" (xix), he just as quickly insists on the "stark fact" that "order *exists*" (xx). To periodize is always to totalize; the variable instead is the scale on which one periodizes. Jameson asserts that "the summing up, from a perspective or point of view, as partial as it must be, marks the project of totalization as the response to nominalism" (*Postmodernism* 332). The realization that any totalizing claim will inevitably leave out potential considerations is the point of the dialectical nature of the process. While "the

commitment to the Absolute,” Jameson states, is “not always hospitable to pluralist fairness” (*Archaeologies* 19), this bears little on the validity of the operation. Taking all objections into account, “it is diagnostically more productive to have a totalizing concept than to try to make one’s way without one” (*Postmodernism* 212).

The new canon that thereby results becomes an exercise of selection, rather than one of exclusion. It is a Marxian axiom that history has to be a world history, but it is equally certain that any form of periodization that operates exclusively on a single scale is bound to be abstract. As Brian McHale argues regarding Jameson’s method, “Rather than let one’s discourse be shaped – or deformed – by the desire to evade and deflect accusations of metanarrativity, better to try to tell as good a story as possible, one that makes the richest possible sense in the phenomenon in question and provokes the liveliest possible critical scrutiny, controversy, counter-proposals, and (why not?) counter-stories” (“Postmodernism” 31). The “situation” that one must narrate under is “a narrative term that *attempts* to square this particular circle and to hold its contradictory features of belonging and innovation together within itself” (*Singular* 57). Ultimately, Jameson states, “the search for some true or even correct narrative is vain and doomed to every failure but the ideological one” (*Singular* 33).⁸ Narrativity is thereby at the same time limited *and* essential, and it is its ideological solution which leads back to Jameson’s insistence on the necessity of periodization and its subsequent application.

This also leads logically into Jameson’s third Maxim of Modernity: “The narrative of modernity cannot be organized around categories of subjectivity; consciousness and subjectivity are unrepresentable; only situations of modernity can be narrated” (*Singular* 57). Framing the historical moment of transition--and the transition it articulates--is a vital component to any period concept. Perry Anderson insists that “it is necessary to insist that revolution is a *punctual*

and not a permanent process; that is, a revolution is an episode of convulsive political transformation, compressed in time and concentrated in target, with a determinate beginning . . . and a finite end” (332).

In addressing the modernist revolution, Jameson concurs that “even if the conception of artistic modernism as a stepping out of time and history can be accepted, it is an experience that is surely not available or accessible at every moment of history” (*Singular* 193). However, while he talks at length about the search for periodizing breaks throughout the *A Singular Modernity*--including his insistence that the use of the term “‘Modernity’ always means setting a date and positing a beginning” (31)--he does not hesitate to emphasize the innate incompleteness of such claims. Jameson instead encourages the search for further transitional models, devoid of the insistence on a single and irreparable break.

This search for the event raises further questions regarding the effective positing of such a moment. Hayden White has notably drawn attention to “the tendency of modernist literature to dissolve the event” (“Modernist” 17), an observation that also applies to the transition and development of any number of other artistic mediums. Much the same as the designation of a larger period, Jameson explains that “the alleged break is itself merely a narrative effect” for the purpose of conceptualizing the larger transitional framework (*Singular* 145). It is equally the case, though, that such events serve as essential markers that designate large-scale shifts within these mediums, and, in doing so, sanction the production of the absolute and the break with previous practices.

This break with previous practices is the focus of Jameson’s fourth Maxim of Modernity: “No ‘theory’ of modernity makes sense today unless it is able to come to terms with the hypothesis of a postmodern break with the modern” (*Singular* 94). Many of the first postmodern

critics (including Hassan) carried “an essentially antimodernist standpoint” (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 56), and seem more concerned with outlining what postmodernism is *not* (i.e. not modernism) than what it actually *is*. Jameson considers this obsessive binary division particularly curious, given that in it “the ‘postmodern’ becomes little more than the form taken by the authentically modern in our own period, and a mere dialectical intensification of the old modernist impulse” (*Postmodernism* 59). As a result, he asks us to consider that the postmodern is not diametrically opposed to the modern, but rather exists in a dialectical union with its predecessor. This thinking is evident in Jameson’s tripartite schema, in which realism gives way to modernism and then postmodernism. As this model is based on Ernst Mandel’s own tripartite model of capitalist development, it seemingly limits our notion of aesthetic periodization to a single tripartite development that is synchronous with large-scale shifts within the mode of production.

It is precisely this period concept that Jameson is best known for, as it is the one he develops in his most celebrated work, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991). In this work, Jameson develops a singularly distinct period of postmodernism that is effectively aligned with late capitalist development in the broadest possible sense. In his influential 1984 essay that bears significant influence on Jameson’s book, Perry Anderson implores that “the history of capitalism must be *periodized*, and its determinate *trajectory* reconstructed, if we are to have any sober understanding of what capitalist ‘development’ actually means” (322). Anderson argues that it is important to seek an account of periodization which strikes a dialectical middle ground between “[Marshall] Berman’s perennialism [and Georg] Lukacs’s evolutionism” (324), and Jameson’s periodizing operation gives us just such a model. Jameson’s tripartite structure of capitalist development – based on Mandel’s three stages

of market capitalism, monopoly capitalism, and late capitalism--is effectively aligned with the progression from realism through modernism to postmodernism. This sets up a cognitive system behind the artistic manifestations within any sort of large-scale transition: a transformation in culture is always contingent on a radical modification in the social and economic system. As such, Jameson repeatedly uses the economic as the foundation for his theories of the cultural--a move that implies unity as it articulates transition.

There are significant differences between Jameson's larger historical scheme in *Postmodernism* and the operation I am suggesting here. Much like Phillip Wegner's periodization of the 1990s in *Life Between Two Deaths*, "the provisional answer [to this differential] lies in the matter of scale" (*Life* 4). In Jameson's larger scale of *Postmodernism*, it forces us to read everything at this moment as a production of postmodernism. While this model works, my own periodizing project is doing something different; I am not questioning the established larger cycles, but am rather using them to craft a synthetic model. By taking the established historical periodizing structures as axiomatic, the discussion becomes what happens when we shift to local scales (as opposed to Foucault's macro-scales).

Jameson's models are also foundational for such an operation. The Maxims of Modernity are not a departure from the model of *Postmodernism*; instead, they apply to both that larger scale and to the smaller scales being utilized in this project.⁹ As Caren Irr and Ian Buchanan argue, "What distinguishes Jameson's work . . . is his ability to draw together this multiplicity of disparate strands, or straws in the wind as he put it, and reveal their integration. This totalizing impulse at once fascinates and infuriates his critics, but it is also what makes his writing so vital" (4). When Jameson discusses the tripartite schema of aesthetic development and its periodizing logic he is at his most Hegelian, and the application of this tripartite schema is

a heuristic device that enables us to see developments in this historical situation in a new and interesting way. How do we describe a period?” essentially means “How do we make connections between phenomena?” A periodizing operation involves making connections across several boundaries, and it is imperative to utilize an established framework to govern this analysis, one which Jameson provides.

However, Jameson insists that “no historical society has ever ‘embodied’ a mode of production in any pure state” (*Political* 94). Instead, “every social formation of historically existing society has in fact consisted in the overlay and structural coexistence of several modes of production at once, now relegated to structurally dependent positions within the new, as well as anticipatory tendencies which are potentially inconsistent with the existing system but have not yet generated an autonomous space of their own” (*Political* 95). In his Forward to *The Postmodern Condition*, Jameson categorizes “science and knowledge today as a search, not for consensus, but very precisely for ‘instabilities,’ as a practice of paralogism, in which the point is not to reach agreement but to undermine from within the very framework in which the previous ‘normal science’ had been conducted” (xix). Any transition therefore involves not only a “crisis,” but also an ensuing battle over the problems such a crisis raises. Kuhn’s conception of “normal science” offers a consideration parallel to Jameson’s lag period between the genuine practice and the codified ideology of modernism (given that Kuhn describes normal science as “mopping-up operations” [24]).¹⁰ Hence, while the concept of the mode of production is synchronic, the various cultural productions at work within this overarching framework is “open to history in a dialectical way” (*Political* 95). Cultural revolution is earlier posited by Jameson as “that moment in which the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradictions moving to the very center of political, social, and historical life”

(*Political* 95).¹¹ Even within his well-known “cultural logic” of *Postmodernism*, Jameson insists that “postmodernism is ‘merely’ a cultural dominant” (*Postmodernism* 159), and not a cultural totality.

In such a way, a singular moment of departure for any period concept is bound to not be precisely applicable to any number of cultural productions.¹² Woolf’s December, 1910 starting point for modernism provides an intriguing referent, but it is instantly problematic given, as Perry Anderson argues, “how strikingly uneven [modernism’s] distribution actually is” (323). Accordingly, Jameson theorizes that “each break officially posited seems to bring a flurry of new ones in its wake” (*Singular* 64); this is true of Jameson’s concept of late modernism, but this also holds true within the various modernisms themselves. In analyzing Jameson’s *Signatures of the Visible* (1990), Wegner highlights “a central contradiction of modernist aesthetics [:] Each particular practice, style, or movement declares itself to be the new universal; however, the very proliferation of such declarations already signals the ultimate impossibility of any such unification” (“Periodizing” 259).

Signatures significantly contains the first publication of “The Existence of Italy,” an often-overlooked essay that is crucial for positing a more precise model of microperiodization.¹³ The proliferation and uneven development of the modernist aesthetic results in a periodizing logic that offers a “non-synchronous dynamic of various belated or premature modernisms, their ‘catching-up’ or indeed their untimely exhaustion” (*Singular* 180).¹⁴ Jameson’s tripartite schema that develops “at a more compressed tempo” with regard to film history (“the ‘realisms’ of the Hollywood period, the high modernisms of the great auteurs, the innovations of the 1960s and their sequels” [“Existence” 157]), could also be applied to “other semi-autonomous sequences of cultural history such as American Black literature . . . or for the history of rock” (“Existence”

156). In essence, there emerges any number of distinct aesthetic responses to the same transition. The flexibility of scale and the idea of microchronologies is crucial, as “the moment of realism can be grasped rather differently as the conquest of a kind of cultural, ideological, and narrative literacy by a new class or group; in that case, there will be formal analogies between such moments, even though they are chronologically distant from each other” (“Existence” 156) - and this logic proves equally the case for modernism, late modernism, and postmodernism.

This proliferation of period sub-sets offers an essential dialectical relationship to macro-period schemes. On the one hand, while the method of “The Existence of Italy” encourages a concentrated analysis of an aesthetic period, it also necessitates looking at each moment in relation to *all* of the periods within this tripartite trajectory. Without such an understanding, the formal transitions within each object of study may never come into situational focus. “In other words,” Jameson explains, “the ‘solution’ a modernist position allows one to achieve for the false problem of ‘realism’ is itself insensibly undone by a whole range of now *postmodern* positions” (“Existence” 159).

On the other hand, as the term “microperiod” implies, one must be careful not to be too broad with relation to period development. Andreas Huyssen argues that “the problem with such historical macro-schemes . . . is that they prevent the phenomenon from ever coming into focus” (183). This insight has spawned a number of exceedingly interesting microperiodizing projects in recent years, including Stephen Paul Miller’s *The Seventies Now*, Michael North’s *Reading 1922*, Wegner’s *Life Between Two Deaths*, or Jameson’s own “Periodizing the 60s.” Such suggestions do not necessarily question the major political and economic dynamics of the larger historical periods, but rather look at how particular micro-periodizations may impact our understanding of these larger models. Microperiodizing makes the transitions between period

concepts all the more discreet, even as it magnifies the particularities of such change. In contrast to Giddens' and Foucault's century-long "epistemes," for example, Miller divides the seventies--already a reasonably concise time period--into two or three-year "micro-periods" (28). Again, the larger period concept retains preeminence, with the microperiod serving as an exceedingly useful cartographic tool for positing "cultural unities" (369). North observes that "attempts to formulate a unified formalist definition of modernism have always run afoul of the fact that modernism ceaselessly creates forms and in so doing confounds critical desires for formal consistency" (209); he is thus compelled to condense his microperiodizing operation to the single year of 1922. While Jameson's essay focuses on the 1960s, his model of analysis is applicable to all historical periods; any "'period' in question is understood not as some omnipresent and uniform shared style or way of thinking and acting, but rather as the sharing of a common objective situation, to which a whole range of varied responses and creative innovations is then possible, but always within that situation's structural limits" ("Periodizing" 178).

It is in its *transcendence* of particular limitations, however, that Jameson's operation finds applicability across a seemingly endless range of subjects. Brian McHale argues that while Jameson gives us a very precise method, it is in the future possibilities that it generates that the true value lies. "Jameson's interpretations of postmodernist texts--of which there are many in *Cultural Logic*--ought to be reductive," McHale says, "since Jameson approaches all texts as allegorical representations (or, as he prefers to say, 'cognitive mappings') of a single ultimate referent, namely the mode of production" ("Postmodernism" 25-26). However, "the reverse of what might have been expected is actually the case," as "Jameson's readings . . . constantly surprise through the flexible, unpredictable, paradoxical, and occult relationships they establish between texts and their ultimate referent" (McHale, "Postmodernism" 26). This is clearly

evident in the model Jameson constructs in *A Singular Modernity*, where “‘modernity’ is a useful trope for generating alternative historical narratives” (214). This includes the concept that there are multiple non-synchronous aesthetic modernisms developing within this larger framework,¹⁵ a consideration Jameson develops much more precisely in “The Existence of Italy.”

I hope that this dissertation raises the question of how diverse formal developments are a response to the larger historical situation. Jameson writes that “The Existence of Italy” is significantly concerned with “the technical problem of constructing a mediation between a formal or aesthetic concept and a periodizing or historiographic one” (155). While this may seem a fundamental operation, it has been a dialectical component of Jameson’s work that many have been apt to overlook. For Jameson’s method can be taken to another extreme, in which “Always historicize!” is interpreted as “Only historicize!” The reality, of course, is that if one thinks about periodization solely in the historical sense, then form becomes irrelevant. To prevent this, we have to periodize these forms, and must also establish the grounds on which to scale them that reconcile their non-synchronous development. There are both formal reasons and local historical reasons that inaugurate such shifts, which do not correspond to the largest historical scales.

By taking up the axioms that Jameson’s Maxims of Modernity provide, we are offered an expansive method for periodizing a number of divergent works and forms. Just as significantly, the tripartite method of “The Existence of Italy” supplies the more precise axioms for non-synchronous microperiodization. Out of practicality, this dissertation is focused on the smaller scales, because to periodize in the largest historical sense involves writing many volumes. This is precisely the case with Jameson’s larger *Poetics of Social Forms* project, of which both *Postmodernism* and *A Singular Modernity* are a part. I am writing another story in

this dissertation. The microperiods of this project are an attempt to bring together the situational and the formal; while some of these truths seem unsettling, they enable readers to comprehend seemingly random or isolated incidents that otherwise make no sense. The dialectic is for Jameson not a thought of the past, but rather an unfinished project for the future; as Irr and Buchanan argue, “The Jamesonian project will always be, in the best sense of the word, an incomplete one” (8), as there will always be another scale to consider.

In spite of the apparently restrictive wording of Jameson’s maxims, they ultimately generate a liberatory strategy for reconceptualizing the established past in the hopes of highlighting its relevance to the present. This in itself is a crucial task: “What every emancipatory project does,” Badiou poignantly states, “what every emergence of hitherto unknown possibilities does, is to put an end to consensus” (32). The chapters that follow will examine the existent models of periodization at work within these genres and mediums and address the need to read further into these established paradigm conceptions. In each instance, Jameson’s period logic provides the basis of a synthetic model to reconceptualize the boundaries of aesthetic transition and identity of each subject, as well as the understanding that we can never understand a modernism in isolation from the larger histories of the development of a form.

Chapter Two problematizes the traditional periodization of perhaps the most canonical work of modernist literature, James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922).¹⁶ Rather than framing it as the paradigmatic modernist text, I demonstrate that the three parts of the work may be each understood as engaging in the aesthetic practices of realism, modernism, and late modernism/postmodernism, respectively. This then also accounts for the transitional role that *Ulysses* plays in Joyce’s artistic evolution; Part I of *Ulysses* directly continues his previous novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916)--a work that Moretti describes as the last

great example of the realist form of the *bildungsroman*--while Part III points toward a literary postmodernism that numerous scholars see as first coming to fruition in Joyce's final work, *Finnegans Wake* (1939). I draw heavily here upon a pair of critical essays that respectively allow for an intervention into the beginning and end of the book: Moretti's "'A Useless Longing for Myself': The Crisis of the European *Bildungsroman*, 1898-1914" and Jameson's "'Ulysses' in History" (the latter of which provides an early model of late modernism).

My third chapter focuses on what I show to be the high modernist moment of rock and roll, and how it unfolds with respect to its literary corollary (with specific reference back to *Ulysses*). In situating the realist, modernist, and postmodernist moments of a medium that did not exist at the time of canonical literature's realist and modernist periods, the non-synchronous dynamic of my study is most effectively illustrated. Through a close reading of its specific practice, innovations, and reception, I show how the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) signals the full emergence of the high modernist moment of rock and roll. I also pay particular attention to the importance of economically and culturally situating such paradigmatic works in any effective periodizing study.

Chapter Four periodizes the development of the specific genre of the children's book. Children's literature has been traditionally marginalized by canonical adult genres and seen as unworthy of the study of its larger institutional development. As a result, the periodization of children's literature has often been simply aligned with that of adult literature, or ignored altogether. My study shows that this genre develops according to its own non-synchronous aesthetic dynamic, taking as its specific object of study key works by (among others) Dr. Seuss, Maurice Sendak, Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith. The "Golden Age" of children's literature stands as the realist point of departure and draws attention to both the premature and the delayed

emergence of a modernist aesthetic within this genre. This chapter also extensively develops Jameson's concept of "late modernism" as an effective buffer between high modernism and the onset of postmodernism, once again emphasizing the evolutionary qualities of periodization.

The final chapter of this dissertation analyses how a work understood to be one of the monuments of late postmodern literature, Don DeLillo's *Underworld* (1997), offers an effective entry point for an extended examination of the realist, modernist, and postmodernist periods in the history of Major League Baseball architecture. The experimental progressiveness of these structures is grounded by both the rules of the game and the reactionary nature of these enormously expensive (and increasingly public) constructions. In spite of these constraints, the aesthetic trajectory of the Major League ballpark effectively parallels that of other artistic mediums, and usefully corresponds with the development of the Cold War in DeLillo's novel. As such, this chapter emphasizes how cultural practices as disparate as highbrow literature and popular architecture are interconnected, as well as how new light can be shed on the development of even these larger institutional forms through an effective periodizing model.

¹ Despite the subject that its title indicates, Badiou's *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* offers exceeding relevance to the operation of periodization. This includes his articulation of the three names of evil: simulacrum (to believe in an event that does not address void, but rather plenitude), betrayal (to fail to maintain fidelity to a legitimate concept), and disaster (to identify a truth with total power; in effect, to posit an inflexible totality). A truth, Badiou says, "punches a 'hole' in knowledges, it is heterogeneous to them, but it is also the sole known source of new knowledges. We shall say that the truth forces knowledges" (70).

² This ideology in many ways represents the academic/mainstream codification of the revolutionary forms of modernism, and in many ways threatens to dull that aesthetic's subversive edge. Wegner argues that Jameson's periodizing method in his most recent books "is an attempt to crack open this late modernist ideological entombment, and to recover a more radical modernism" ("Jameson's" 11). The ideological conflict of the Cold War does not represent "the end of hope and the paralysis of the productive energies of the preceding period," but rather "the signal opportunity to forge a brand-new ideology that co-opts and reawakens those energies" (*Singular* 172).

³ Brandon Kershner explains that whenever “we set off a given period for special study . . . we are performing an admittedly arbitrary act. There are good reasons why we do, reasons both institutional, having to do with how literature is taught in the academy, and intellectual, having to do with the necessity of drawing boundaries before we can discuss anything” (31). While “the twentieth century has abandoned [the] traditional sort of ‘historicism’” of objective knowledge and cumulative progress, it has done so “without abandoning the need for literary history” (31).

⁴ This statement builds upon Jameson’s work a decade earlier in *Postmodernism*, in which he declares that “as for postmodernism itself, . . . we cannot *not* use it” (xxii). It is significant that in *A Singular Modernity* he builds outwardly--from the necessity of utilizing a contemporary term whose development is still unfolding to an understanding of the necessity of establishing a larger period map that extends far past the present moment, but which is no less contemporarily relevant.

⁵ The division between the terms “modernism” and “modernity” presents a key distinction within the periodizing model Jameson presents. Throughout *A Singular Modernity*, Jameson is intent on exploring what exactly what the word “modern” and its various forms (including “modernism” and “modernity”) represent. He takes a decidedly broad approach to the term “modern,” quickly pointing out that its usage traces as far back as the fifth century A.D., and that its definition is highly contingent upon the national tradition of the culture in question. The division between France, where the modern “begins with Baudelaire and Nietzsche,” and Germany, where “the modern begins with the Enlightenment” (*Singular* 99), illustrate the division inherent within Western Europe (to say nothing of the rest of the world). “Modernity” presents an even more problematic term, from the origins of its birth to how we are to categorize it. To begin with, modernity and modernism are not congruent, to the point that “anti-modernity is also a possible feature of modernism” (and, one assumes, vice versa [*Singular* 143]). Modernity represents neither a definitive break or period for Jameson, and is characterized instead by the “fluctuation between the perception of modernity as an event and its apprehension as the cultural logic of a whole period of history” (*Singular* 33). He ultimately recommends “the experimental procedure of substituting capitalism for modernity in all the contexts in which the latter appears” (*Singular* 215), and views modernity not as an object of study, but rather “as an explanatory feature” (*Singular* 33). Jameson is quick to admit that “the ‘concept’ of modernity raises more problems than it solves” (*Singular* 80), and as such makes no formal attempt at a concise definition of the term. As Jameson concludes in his Preface, “this will be a formal analysis of the uses of the word ‘modernity’ that explicitly rejects any presupposition that there is a correct use of the word to be discovered, conceptualized, and proposed” (*Singular* 13). Rather than letting the term itself guide its usage, Jameson turns to the Maxims of Modernity to offer a regulatory structure.

⁶ One of the fundamental arguments of Jameson’s collective work is that the Marxist dialectic should not be thought of as a conclusion, but rather as a problematic. In such a way, Jameson’s own periodizing model offers a starting point to be worked with by others. It is best, Jameson argues, to set out with the intention “to produce new problems (generally of a historical kind), rather than to simulate . . . some dogmatic solution of definition” (“Signatures” 174).

⁷ Badiou also speaks of the dangers of totality, as he observes that “every revolutionary project stigmatized as ‘utopian’ turns, we are told, into totalitarian nightmare. Every will to inscribe an idea of justice or equality turns bad. Every collective will to the Good creates Evil” (13). As with Lyotard, an understanding of Badiou’s argument rests on the distinction between totality and totalization.

⁸ A statement that effectively aligns itself with Lyotard’s argument that “it is our business not to supply reality but to invent allusions to the conceivable which cannot be presented” (81). It logically follows that contemporary breakthroughs within aesthetic modernism tend not so much toward material production as toward theoretical reconsideration.

⁹ To put this another way, *A Singular Modernity* provides the overarching logic of periodization for all of Jameson’s models, with *Postmodernism* standing as one demonstration of this application. They do not represent contrarian models, nor is the former a repudiation of the latter.

¹⁰ This is also in correlation with the gap Badiou’s posits between the “Event” and the establishment of a “Truth.” The “decision” from which a truth process stems is “fidelity”: a faithfulness to the event that “compels the subject to *invent* a new way of being and acting in the situation” (41-42). In such a way, “an eventual fidelity is a real break” (42), and one that works against the existent “dominant opinions, since these always work for the benefit of some rather than all” (and are thereby revealed as false truths [32]). As Slavoj Žižek asserts in *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, the “‘truth’ itself becomes true only through--or, to use a Hegelian term, by mediation of--the error” (59), a point effectively echoed by Moretti, who insists that paradigm transition is necessitated not through the success of an operation, but rather “when a form deals with problems it is unable to solve” (238).

¹¹ This view mirrors that of Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, who theorize that “periods of transition . . . are characterized by the coexistence of several modes of production, as well as by these forms of non-correspondence” (307). As a result, “it seems that the dislocation between the connexions and instances in transition periods merely reflects the coexistence of two (or more) modes of production in a single ‘simultaneity’, and the dominance of one of them over the other” (307).

¹² This realization generates significant flexibility in the periodizing process, allowing for the consideration of a number of texts that stand in seeming contrast to the period of their historical emergence. As Jameson states, “The temptation to classify texts according to the appropriate mode of production is thereby removed, since the texts emerge in a space in which we may expect them to be crisscrossed and intersected by a variety of impulses from contradictory modes of cultural production all at once” (*Political* 95).

¹³ A thorough reading of “The Existence of Italy” reveals a more precise set of axioms for periodization that build upon the more abstract guidelines of *A Singular Modernity*. At the risk of complicating the enumeration of axioms in this chapter, I have omitted a direct delineation of

the guidelines of “Existence.” I will provisionally offer them here instead, as “Existence” forces us to do three things:

1. It requires us to use smaller, non-synchronous scales.
2. It necessitates formal considerations.
3. It dictates that we can only understand any one moment of this tripartite structure by looking at all three periods.

¹⁴ This has also been a primary periodizing argument of Susan Stanford Friedman, who suggests that “instead of looking for the single period of modernism, with its (always debatable) beginning and end points, we need to locate plural periods of modernisms, some of which overlap with each other and others of which have a different time period altogether” (432).

¹⁵ This is also a significant point within the work of Astradur Eysteinnsson, who asserts that “positioning modernism parallel to the tumultuous aspects of modernity . . . can lead to an unproductive view of its semiotic practices. The changes that can be observed in modernist aesthetics, the disruptions and breaks with tradition that it seems to call for, do not directly reflect social modernity or lend us an immediate access to its distinctive qualities” (6). Instead, he “find[s] it more to the point to see modernism as an attempt to interrupt the modernity that we live and understand as a social, if not ‘normal’ way of life” (6).

¹⁶ Beyond the opening chapter, the chapters of this dissertation are arranged in a progressive expansion of scale from single text to genre to medium to form. It may be noted that in this continuum a particular scale has been bypassed - that of the single author. Until a more author-focused addition has been made, this second chapter, “‘Signatures of All Things’: Periodization and Transition Within James Joyce’s *Ulysses*” stands not only for the scale of the single work, but also provisionally for the scale of a single author--as Joyce’s artistic transitions within *Ulysses* reflect not only the development of his book, but also his own trajectory as a writer across the breadth of his career.

CHAPTER 2
“SIGNATURES OF ALL THINGS”: PERIODIZATION AND TRANSITION WITHIN JAMES
JOYCE’S *ULYSSES*

I am the foolish author of a wise book.

—James Joyce

In his 1982 contribution to Joycean studies, “‘Ulysses’ in History,” Fredric Jameson asserts that there are three traditional interpretations of *Ulysses* --the mythical, the psychoanalytical, and the ethical (“Ulysses” 174)--emphasizing that these traditional takes can often obscure any fresh reading of the text. Read today, a fourth conventional interpretation can be added to this list: the modernist, or, more specifically, the reading that takes *Ulysses* as modernist. The critical consensus of this interpretation is already well documented--from Stanley Sultan terming *Ulysses* as “the extreme exempla of the modernist novel” (81) to Morton Levitt’s statement that “The Modernist Age might as easily be called the age of Joyce” (12). While Maurice Beebe’s assertion in 1974 that “we can take some comfort in the realization that we can now define Modernism with confidence that we shall not have to keep adjusting our definition in order to accommodate new visions and values” is now largely dismissible (“What” 1065), the fact remains that *Ulysses* often represents just that: a de facto example of modernism, which stands in contrast to the realist tradition that preceded it and the postmodern horizon that would come after.

There have been a number of notable attempts at examining the coexistence of these two aesthetic peripherals within the modernist dominant. In response to Harry Levin’s assertion of *Ulysses* as “a novel to end all novels” (*James* 207), Jeri Johnson argues that Levin credits *Ulysses* “with being the culmination of one tradition (say, nineteenth century realism) while setting out the questions to be debated in the next (next two, perhaps, Modernism and postmodernism)” (ix). Michael Groden argues that “between 1914 and 1922 [Joyce] passed

through three distinct stages (rather than two, as has been thought) in his writing, with the middle stage serving as a bridge between his early interest in character and story and his late concern with schematic correspondences” (4). Beyond his three stages,¹ Groden also divides the book into two parts (the first nine episodes and the last nine) based on a shift from character to technique and what he considers the advent of the book’s experimental narration. While his argument is multilayered, Groden’s ultimate point is that Joyce “retained the results of each stage he passed through, even after he had progressed into the next, so that he presented *Ulysses* as a palimpsest of his development from 1914 to 1922” (23).

With this in mind, Kevin Dettmar advocates a new conceptualization of *Ulysses*’ aesthetic (dis)unity; according to Dettmar, “We need, perhaps, more bilingual critics of Joyce: those, like Fritz Senn, who speak German and English, but also those who speak both modernism and postmodernism” (6). Brian Richardson, likewise, challenges fellow critics to envision “a thoroughly postmodern Joyce who pioneered a new poetics decades before it was discovered and named by literary scholars” (1051). Brian McHale has ultimately settled on *Ulysses* as “a literary-historical scandal” (10), and offers a structural division while highlighting the placement of postmodernist qualities at strategic points in the text. Even Maurice Beebe, in spite of his static conception of the modernist aesthetic, offers one of the first focused studies of how *Ulysses* at times demonstrates “the opposing view of modernism,” and argues that “the ending of *Ulysses* seems to anticipate Post-Modernism” (“*Ulysses*” 186-87).

However, while critics have become increasingly more comfortable with working forward in the periodization of *Ulysses*, they have been far more reluctant to look backward. This is problematic, given that the “nonmodernist” (to use Dettmar’s term) aesthetics of *Ulysses* represent a turn in both directions--not only an anticipation of the postmodern future, but also an

evolutionary movement from the realist past. As such, it is important to heed A. Walton Litz's assessment that "in the space of three or four years [Joyce] travelled most of the distance from *Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake*" (35), as well as Groden's incisive addendum that "*Ulysses* lies between *A Portrait* and *Finnegans Wake* in ways beyond mere chronology" (13). *Ulysses* is neither an exclusively modernist composition that offers a revolutionary break from Joyce's other texts, nor a random collection of aesthetic contrasts that defies periodization altogether. Thus, while Jean-Francois Lyotard argues that, in Joyce's work, "the whole range of available narrative and even stylistic operators is put into play without concern for the unity of the whole" (80), the reality lies closer to Donald Barthelme's assessment that "the strangeness of [Joyce's] project is an essential part of it, almost its point. The fabric falls apart, certainly, but where it hangs together we are privileged to encounter a world made new" (5). Although there have been great strides made over the past twenty years in illustrating specific nonmodernist irregularities by Joyce, what has not been offered to this point is a satisfactory mapping of such periodization within *Ulysses*, or an analysis of how aesthetic transition functions with regard to the book's larger structure.

Ironically, it is in two essays written thirty years ago that we are offered the context for such a contemporary critical intervention, and it is no surprise that both of these essays have resurfaced within the last decade with renewed meaning and importance. Jameson's aforementioned "'Ulysses' in History" was written in 1980 and first published in 1982, and reappeared in his 2007 collection, *The Modernist Papers*. In spite of the title, Jameson insists that the volume's essays are not "designed to illustrate this or that component of a theory of the modern" and instead implores his readers to look deeper for "other interpretive codes" ("Introduction" viii). Franco Moretti's *The Way of the World* was likewise conceived and

written at the same time as “‘Ulysses’ in History,” only to resurface in 2000 with a new preface (titled “Twenty Years Later”) and a new appendix that offers a fresh take on the decline and fall of the realist *Bildungsroman*, positing Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as the limit of this development. On the surface, neither essay seems particularly concerned with the alternative periodization of *Ulysses*: Moretti claims that the realist *Bildungsroman* lived through 1914, while the focus of Jameson’s essay is “the two most boring chapters” (“Eumaeus” and “Ithaca”) of *Ulysses*. On closer inspection, though, both essays anticipate, support, and often guide the contestation of *Ulysses* as an exclusively modernist text--or even one that supports only a postmodern break--each developing from a different end.

Before delving into how these breaks may be posited within *Ulysses*, it is first important to consider how such breaks are imaginable in the first place. Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkovitz, in a 2008 *PMLA* article subtitled “Expanding Modernism,” argue, “As scholars demonstrate the fertility of questioning rigid temporal delimitations, periods seem inevitably to get bigger” (737). In many ways, though, positing *Ulysses* as the progression of realism through postmodernism is a dialectical exercise that threatens to shrink modernism while expanding those period concepts on either side of it. The modernist period concept is one that has generally shunned reduction, as the notion of modernism as a tightly unified aesthetic is sheer academic myth. Jameson himself holds that “it is evident that any theory of modernism capacious enough to include Joyce along with Yeats or Proust, let alone alongside Vallejo, Biely, Gide, or Bruno Schulz, is bound to be so vague and vacuous as to be intellectually inconsequential, let alone practically unproductive in the close textual reading of *Ulysses* ‘line by line’” (*Singular* 104).

However, Jameson just as quickly queries, “Is it however equally certain that we can read Woolf or Joyce productively without implicitly ranging the text under some such general or

universal category of the generic periodizing type?” (*Singular* 104). The positing of specific boundaries and breaks is essential to the understanding of what kind of period transition *Ulysses* offers, either inside or outside itself, and to the crafting of its own stylistic identity. Arnold Goldman argues that in certain episodes of *Ulysses* “where so many [styles] are available at all times, the choice of one mode of vision . . . is demoted in importance” (93)--a seeming resignation to the impossibility of periodizing a work as diverse as *Ulysses*. However, this is to go against Jameson’s foremost maxim of modernity--“We cannot not periodize”--which necessitates the need for historicizing the aesthetic development of even as problematic a text as *Ulysses*.

“The crisis, then,” Jameson explains, “lies precisely in a situation in which Joyce cannot not mean something else . . . no matter how squeamish we may feel about the unabashed deployment of such a larger general concept” (*Singular* 105). However, the search for just such a period concept often seems over before it has even begun. In part the result of the 1920 banning of the book in America and Great Britain, *Ulysses* is one of the few major works whose criticism preceded the official book itself. The textual addendums and canonical criticisms of *Ulysses* have thus often been as inextricably linked with the work as the text itself. The interpretations of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound in particular have formed a sort of source book for any potential periodization of the work, with the conclusion that *Ulysses* is “a scientific discovery,” a revolutionary text that breaks fully with all that has come before it, supporting the modernist paradigm.

Such an interpretation offers little that is critically compelling, however, and Jameson sensibly notes that “if there are boring chapters of *Ulysses*, . . . there are also boring interpretations of *Ulysses*” (“*Ulysses*” 173). To simply consider the time of its publication in

1922, or the book's reputation--along with Eliot's *The Waste Land*--as one of the towers of modernism, is to disregard the evolutionary nature of the work's aesthetic progression. As Groden attests, "If we allow for the short period of time involved, we can see Joyce moving through discernible stages in a way that supports the idea of a stylistic development" (23). However, the question of how to read this development is another enigma. Despite Jennifer Levine's provocative suggestion that we call the book *Hamlet* in order to discard all its preconceived, canonical interpretations (131-32), this difficulty of reading *Ulysses* as new remains.

As a result, Jameson argues that we must consciously "displace the act or the operation of interpretation itself" ("Ulysses" 175). Such displacement involves accepting the possibility that aesthetic transition is an evolutionary process bound to frustrate either the insistence on a singular aesthetic unity within *Ulysses* or an overly concentrated "line by line" reading of the text. Instead, there is bound to be evidence somewhere in the book of most any period logic one wishes to observe--as Beebe asks, "What, after all, does *Ulysses* not illustrate?" ("*Ulysses*" 186). However, such a realization does not discredit the validity of mapping transition within the text itself. Jameson draws attention to a key passage within Althusser and Balibar that engages this seeming paradox:

Periods of transition are . . . characterized by the coexistence of several modes of production, as well as by these forms of non-correspondence . . . Thus it seems that the dislocation between the connexions and instances in transition periods merely reflects the coexistence of two (or more) modes of production in a single 'simultaneity', and the dominance of the one of them over the other. (Althusser and Balibar 307; cited in Jameson, *Singular* 78)

On this basis, we can argue that aesthetic developments on either side of modernism may be at work within *Ulysses*, and that evidence of them may be present even amidst its most collectively "high modern" parts. It is equally plausible that a single text may demonstrate a move beyond

the larger cultural logic surrounding it, and even portend the coming transition beyond this present mode of being. Jameson notes:

the seeming rigidity of the base/superstructure distinction . . . is loosened up by a play of oppositions between the ‘determinant’ (always production itself) and the ‘dominant’, which can take the form of religion, civic politics, kinship, and the like, thus giving each mode of production its own cultural and ideological specificity, if not indeed its own unique lawfulness and internal dynamic. (*Singular* 77)

The question at hand is thus not whether *Ulysses* is a modernist text (it is, and will rightfully continue to serve as the high modernist benchmark within literature); rather, the pertinent debate is whether the modernist dominant of the book is at times superseded by other period logics, and how such transition takes place. The ultimate goal of such a reconceptualization of *Ulysses* is, in the words of Derek Attridge and Daniel Ferrer, “to produce Joyce’s texts in ways designed to challenge rather than comfort, to antagonize instead of assimilate” (6). Working within the Jamesonian model of periodization, I suggest that *Ulysses* is collectively to be taken as a work of realism, modernism, late modernism, and postmodernism, with each of its three parts serving as structural events that signal the onset of a new period logic and aesthetic imperative.

This flies in the face of the prevailing critical trend among academics wishing to microperiodize *Ulysses*, which has been to work against the available tripartite division and simply to cut the book in half. Karen Lawrence and Michael Groden each argue that *Ulysses* splits roughly down the middle, as do earlier critics such as Edmund Wilson and S. L. Goldberg.² Brian McHale concurs when he suggests that “*Ulysses* is double, two differentiable texts placed side by side” (43). I will argue the need to push this division even further, to the extent that there are *three* distinct aesthetic logics at work within *Ulysses*, and that these correspond to the

tripartite structure of the book: the initial three episodes of the “Telemachiad,” the middle twelve episodes of the “Odyssey,” and the final three episodes of the “Nostos.”

Rarely have these parts been the focus of any sort of transitional theory. Instead, they have almost exclusively been viewed as an artificial divide that systematizes the association of *Ulysses* with the *Odyssey*. Dettmar asserts that “the Homeric trelliswork was for Joyce a means of keeping the unpredictable process of discovery which is writing within manageable--if artificial--bounds” (167), reinforcing the classical framework that has led many critics astray. For example, to say that *Ulysses* is modernist because of its mythical associations (per Eliot) is to disregard the mythical foundation of Stephen Dedalus’s name in *Portrait*, or the fact that Joyce reflects Dante’s division into three parts in “Grace” in *Dubliners*. Also, to place exceeding emphasis on the eighteen-episode format carries little weight in analyzing the governance of *Ulysses*’ development. As of June 1915, the book was slated to have twenty-two episodes; by May 1918, this had been reduced to seventeen, before Joyce eventually settled on eighteen. Even Joyce’s names for these episodes changed drastically from their initial conception to the book’s eventual publication--among the original titles were “*Met-him-pike-hoses*,” “The Seal of Solomon,” and “Paternity.” The tripartite structure, by contrast, remained almost wholly consistent from the time of *Ulysses*’ conception.

Furthermore, as stressed by Jameson, an isolated “line by line” reading of *Ulysses* will be incommensurable with the type of period work being performed here.³ For example, to argue--as Andre Topia does--that the advent of modernism in *Ulysses* comes with its establishment of an intertextual literature is problematic to reading the “Telemachiad” as a realist text if one includes every isolated example, as there are elements of intertextuality present throughout this first part (such as the repeated references to Stephen’s relationship with Cranly, a prominent character in

Portrait who never appears in *Ulysses*). The scale utilized is of the utmost significance in this case, with each of the three parts of *Ulysses* representing the focus of this microperiodization. Groden, in qualification of his own partitioning of *Ulysses*, emphasizes that “the concept of stages must remain a flexible one or it may imply a more schematic process than was actually the case. [Joyce] never planned to end one stage and move to another; one evolved into the next without a clear break” (23). While it is true that an evolutionary progression may be witnessed across the breadth of *Ulysses*, it is equally the case that Joyce painstakingly engineered the tripartite division of the finished product, and it is each of these parts which provide the clearest signal of breaks in the book.

Such a reading of *Ulysses*’ aesthetic division and progression is far from purely arbitrary; during the period from 1914-1922, Groden notes, Joyce’s “artistic goals changed to such an extent that a book that in some aspects began as a *sequel* to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* ended as a prelude to *Finnegans Wake*” (13, emphasis added). It is significant to consider both parts of this observation. Karen Lawrence asserts that “*Ulysses* begins by deliberately establishing narrative rules that are bent and finally broken later on” (*Odyssey* 54). Lawrence is correct in her assessment, but it is necessary to define what those rules are. Richardson, likewise, argues that “*Ulysses* is governed by at least two antithetical aesthetics, one quintessentially modernist, the other defying modernist constraints” (1039). It is significant that he says “at least,” and even that qualification still leaves the statement somewhat inexact, for in *Ulysses* the realist portion does not defy modernist constraints; rather, the modernist portion defies realist constraints.

It is the mapping of Joyce’s transition out of a realist aesthetic and the death of the *Bildungsroman* that is the focus of the aforementioned essay of Moretti. Moretti’s ““A Useless

Longing for Myself': The Crisis of the European *Bildungsroman*, 1898-1914" posits the end of the *Bildungsroman* "around 1914," in conjunction with the emergence of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (vii). Much like Jameson's concept of late modernism (to which my chapter will return), Moretti emphasizes the "late *Bildungsroman*," which, he says, "far from preparing modernism, did, if anything, delay it" (235). The downfall of this realist form was as swift as it was surprising, and can be largely attributed to the sweeping socio-economic changes that World War I engendered. Ultimately, Moretti argues:

Nothing was left of the form of the *Bildungsroman*: a phase of Western socialization had come to an end, a phase the *Bildungsroman* had contributed to. The strength of its pattern--the stubbornness, in a sense--can be nowhere seen as clearly as in Joyce, who devoted a first novel to Stephen Dedalus, and then a second novel, and then the beginning of a third novel. (244)

The beginning of this third novel, *Ulysses*, is ripe for a realist description. Rodney Wilson Owen notes that "*Ulysses* the novel had formed from the union of 'Ulysses' a short book and the projected ending of *Portrait*" (56), while Jeri Johnson observes that "every literary convention it performs (in this [first] case, 'realism') it performs so completely that it appears to exhaust the convention and so to draw attention to the status of the convention as merely conventional" (xxvi).

In explaining the historical downfall of the *Bildungsroman*, Moretti quotes a German volunteer from World War I who wrote that "No one shall come out of this war, if not as a different person" (229). The irony is that *Ulysses* does begin with the same person with which *Portrait* concludes. This is in fact the great tragedy: Stephen, in spite of his great talent and the utopian possibilities hinted at with the end of *Portrait*, is largely the same individual he was years earlier. In such a way, the "Telemachiad" offers an intriguing control for the effectiveness of realist form. As Moretti emphasizes, "the clearest sign that a trauma has occurred is the fact

that language no longer works well” (238), and he defines a literary failure as “when a form deals with problems it is unable to solve” (243). The opening two episodes of *Ulysses*, “Telemachus” and “Nestor,” are interesting partly for their stylistic insertions (which portend the coming of modernism) and partly for the biographical narrative surrounding Stephen. By “Proteus,” however, where Stephen effectively mopes on the Sandymount strand with no end in sight to his issues and despair, it is apparent that we have already seen this style and this characterization played out--an impatience (even boredom) that is most evident in the main character of Part I. For Moretti, *Portrait's* great epiphanic passage begins with Stephen facing the question, “What did it mean?” (169). By *Ulysses*, Stephen is asking his students, “Can you do them yourself?” (2.137).

Moretti emphasizes that in the fourth segment of *Portrait* “epiphany redeems the meaninglessness of the past,” and, as a result, “one could not wish for a better closure for Joyce’s ambitious *Kunstlerroman*. Except that, of course, *Portrait* goes on, and the following chapter, compared to the previous ones, is strikingly blank and pointless” (241). Moreover, Moretti could just as easily be talking about the first part of *Ulysses*: “Neither visions nor rebirths here, but idle conversations to kill time . . . In every respect, [it] seems to have one possible function only: the merely negative one invalidating what, up to then, had been constructed as the meaning of the novel” (241). In the “Telemachiad,” Mulligan and Stephen morosely discuss the death of Stephen’s mother; Haines blames “history” for England’s treatment of the Irish; Stephen painfully replays his own schooldays, and ultimately drifts off to internally ponder matters of little external concern. Thus, *Portrait* did not end with Stephen’s prayer to his father; rather, it carries over to *Ulysses* and we witness its completion in Stephen’s interminable walk along the beach, which provides perhaps an even more blank and pointless ending than that of *Portrait*.

A historical reading of the “Telemachiad’s” composition and development supports such a realist reading. As far back as 1907, *Ulysses* had been slated as a short story to be included in *Dubliners*. From there, Richard Ellmann records, *Ulysses* “grew steadily more ambitious in scope and method, and represented a sudden outflinging of all [Joyce] had learned as a writer up to 1914. Its use of many styles was an extension of the method of *A Portrait of the Artist*, where the style, at first naïve, became romantic and then dramatic to suit Stephen’s ontogeny” (357). By June 1915, *Ulysses* had progressed to the first pages of the third episode, and Joyce wrote to Ezra Pound that, “It is a *continuation* of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* after three years’ interval blended with many of the persons of *Dubliners*” (Ellmann 383, emphasis added).

The outbreak of World War I in Austria-Hungary (along with the complexities of Joyce’s status as a British subject) contributed to another interesting break within the initial composition of *Ulysses*. In June 1915, Joyce departed from Trieste with his family for Zurich, and, as Ellmann records, “Switzerland . . . was more than a refuge; it was a symbol of artistic detachment, au-dessus de la meele, and it was fitting that Joyce should . . . write the bulk of his greatest book there” (386). The shift was more striking than most have recognized. Trieste had become Joyce’s “second country,” as he had lived there half as long as he had in Dublin, and it had been where he published *Chamber Music*, completed *Dubliners*, revised *Stephen Hero* into *Portrait*, written *Exiles*, and begun *Ulysses* (Ellmann 389). In accordance with Moretti’s periodization and Polanyi’s definition of the “Hundred Years’ Peace” of European history between 1815-1914, the Bildungsroman was perfected during a period of peace, and “understandably so, because in such areas individual growth is sheltered, and easier, and less painful” (Moretti 239). Deprived of such stability, Joyce’s compositional production also

underwent a notable change, as he moved from the Bildungsroman of *Portrait* to the high modernist experimentation of *Ulysses*' later episodes.

Moreover, for most of Joyce's composition of the "Telemachiad," *Portrait* remained an unpublished work. This meant that the style and subject of the first three episodes of *Ulysses* were not so much repetition as considerations that had yet to appear in a novel (Joyce's first use of interior monologue, for example, appears in *Portrait*, where it is somewhat disguised as Stephen's concluding journal entries. In this context, the extended interior monologue of "Proteus" is not particularly revolutionary; only if *Portrait* were never published would it stand as a groundbreaking innovation). With the publication of *Portrait* in 1916 this changed, necessitating the shift away from Stephen--who was now an established and predictable hallmark--as well as removing some of the artistic heaviness that weighs down the "Telemachiad." As Ellmann notes, Joyce's "sense of becoming somewhat established helped to poise the more relaxed tone of the Bloom episodes in *Ulysses*" (392). Moreover, seeing the fruits of his previous labor pay off no doubt re-energized Joyce's writing as well. As opposed to the opening of Part I of *Ulysses*, which offers a "stately, plump" character in the procedural midst of daily ritual (1.1), Part II opens with a character eating with "relish" (a clever play on words which not only means "a strong liking," but also "something adding a zestful flavor" [4.1]) and pondering the ways in which he will vary a similar daily ritual. The division between these two parts was to the extent that when Joyce explained in a May 1918 letter to Harriet Weaver his plan for the tripartite division of the book, he suggested that the first three episodes might be published as a cheap paperback titled *Ulysses I* (Gilbert 113).

McHale notes that "earlier critics sought in *Ulysses* a 'normal' modernist poetics, a poetics that could be seen to have evolved from the early-modernist phase represented by

Dubliners and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*” (43-44). However, by stipulating “early modernist,” McHale seems to be speaking in accordance with Moretti’s conception of the “Late Bildungsroman,” a still realist form. The semantic differences between these concepts are important: McHale’s implies a framework to build upon, whereas Moretti’s suggests an aesthetic logic that is coming to an end. There are clear limits to the method that the “Telemachiad” imports from *Portrait*: to stick with this storyline and style, Ellmann comically explains, amounts to little more than “Stephen Dedalus goes out to encounter reality for the *millionth* time” (550). Thus, while McHale terms the background of the early *Ulysses* as a “stable world” (48), it is in reality a “stale world”--one that has effectively failed to transition from Joyce’s previous work and necessitates the dramatic shift that the second part provides.

This transition into Part II is characterized by the appearance of Leopold Bloom, who emerges emblematic of the modernist present in contrast to Stephen, who ironically represents the past⁴. This shift in character was again informed by Joyce’s biography. Ellmann argues that “in the tempestuous days at Trieste, complicated by a new wife and children, by old and new scores with Stanislaus, by financial pressure, he had had an appropriate setting in which to write of his youth, with Dedalus for the symbol of his presumptuous flight” (393). Upon moving to Zurich, however, “the vision which . . . attracted [Joyce] was not so insurrectionary” (Ellmann 393). This shift, while seemingly simple, would prove significant. Bloom represents a clean break not only from Joyce’s past work as a writer, but also from Joyce’s own past. In November 1918, Pound wrote to Joyce that “Bloom is a great man, and you have almightily answered the critics who asked me whether having made Stephen, more or less autobiographically, you could ever go on and create a second character” (Ellmann 442-43). Stephen, hero though he is of two

of Joyce's previous works and the beginning of *Ulysses*, ultimately proves to be an aesthetic dead end. In effect, as Ellmann surmises, "Bloom is Ulysses" (361).

In perhaps the most significant line of his essay, Moretti argues that "the merit of *Portrait* lies precisely in not having solved its problem. Or in plainer words: the merit of *Portrait* lies in its being an unmistakable failure" (Moretti 243)--a scandalous enough criticism of *Portrait*, and all the more so if we apply it to Part I of *Ulysses*. This is a fortunate failure though; Moretti insists that "had it been otherwise . . . we would have no *Ulysses*" -- that is, without the failure of Stephen we would not have Leopold Bloom and, consequently, not have Part II of *Ulysses*. Stephen Hero, and just as evidently Stephen Dedalus, "could hardly survive in the new context, and in an epoch-making change the decentered subjectivity of Leopold Bloom . . . set the pattern for twentieth-century socialization" (Moretti 244).

The fact that *Ulysses* has in fact two beginnings--the beginning of Part I and that of Part II, both of which begin at the same time of day--is exceedingly pertinent to Moretti's argument. Indeed, Moretti states, "far from preparing *Ulysses*, *Portrait* delayed it, and in order to invent Bloom, Joyce had to forget his [realist] *Kunstlerroman* and retrace his steps all the way back . . . to Eccles St." (Moretti 245). Moretti attests that, given the historical framework of the time, "the postwar political scenario could hardly encourage a rebirth of the *Bildungsroman*" (232); instead, it offers a veritable funeral. This is in accordance with Wyndham Lewis' initial assessment of *Ulysses* as "a sardonic catafalque of the Victorian world" (44). Thus, while the realist *Bildungsroman* had reached its limits by 1914, we might say it secured death in deferral until 1922, as Part I of *Ulysses* provides an extension of this crisis of form and--by contrast with Part II--lays this realist dominant to rest.

The progression of *Ulysses* into a properly modernist aesthetic also can be directly linked to the book's serialization in the *Little Review*. By mid-1917, as Joyce was completing "Lotus-Eaters" and "Hades" and preparing to write "Aeolus," Ezra Pound became the European editor of the *Little Review* (which began serializing *Ulysses* in its March 1918 issue), and he subsequently assumed an active role in the editing and composition of *Ulysses*. Pound had no direct influence on the composition of the first three episodes (which were already written by the time *Ulysses* was serialized and were altered very little after that); and he had a considerably diminished role in the last four episodes, which were not serialized in the *Little Review*.

This stylistic development of each subsequent episode of Part II progresses on an exponential scale: each progressively trumps the previous, challenging the unity of the developing modernist aesthetic, as well as daring the limits of the readership of this time. The spiritual heaviness of "Hades" gives way to the circular irreverence of "Aeolus" and onto the *mise-en-scène* at the conclusion of "Wandering Rocks" that feeds into the orchestral introduction of "Sirens"--all the while increasingly pushing the bar of conventional, and even progressive, decorum. In June 1919, Joyce wrote to Harriet Shaw Weaver, "If the 'Sirens' have been found so unsatisfactory I have little hope that the 'Cyclops' or later the 'Circe' episode will be approved of" (Ellmann 461).

In November 1919, Joyce began work on "Nausicaa," and had completed it by his birthday three months later. He moved immediately into the "Oxen of the Sun" episode, working with the expressed goal of finishing *Ulysses* in 1920. While this goal was decidedly unrealistic, the reasons are historically pertinent. In July 1920, Joyce moved his family Paris, and although he arrived planning to stay for a week, he instead remained there until the outbreak of World War II. Much like with the move to Zurich four years earlier (which in many ways

necessitated the onset of Part II of *Ulysses*), this physical relocation signaled another distinct aesthetic shift in Joyce's writing. It was with the move to Paris that Joyce completed "Circe" (and, consequently, the second part of the book) and embarked on writing the final three episodes of *Ulysses*.

Groden significantly emphasizes that "Joyce did not plan on the end of the middle stage in advance; it came about during his early work on 'Circe'" (52). Ellmann, meanwhile, records that Joyce "hoped to finish 'Circe,' 'the last adventure,' before Christmas [1920], and finally, on December 20, after having rewritten the episode from start to finish six or seven or eight or nine times (the count varied) he pronounced it done. In a rare moment of appraisal he commented to Francini Bruni, 'I think it is the strongest thing I have written'" (497). However, the second part having culminated in the masterpiece of "Circe," Joyce was faced with the critical dilemma of what would come next.

This dilemma was further complicated when, after repeated confiscations of previous issues by the U.S. Postal Service, the July-August 1920 issue of the *Little Review* (containing the "Nausicaa" episode) was brought up on charges of obscenity by the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. The ensuing trial--which ultimately found the journal's publishers guilty, effectively banning *Ulysses* in the United States (and subsequently Great Britain)--left the potential book without an audience in its two biggest markets. Indeed, the forced cessation of *Ulysses* at this particular time is more than simply an arbitrary moment within the composition and publication history of this book: it represents the very limits of Joyce's modernist aesthetic at this moment in mid-1920. This is a crucial consideration to positing *Ulysses* as a text which moves beyond modernism by the time of its completion, in seemingly irreconcilable distempo with the traditionally-accepted apex of literary high modernism in 1922. I will suggest here that,

in relation to the culture at-large, the subsequent episodes not be viewed as a 1922 text so much as a product of 1933, when Judge Woolsey's famous decision finally allowed *Ulysses* to be published in the United States (and soon after in Great Britain). Viewed in this timeline, the gap between *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* shrinks considerably, as does the moment of the departure from modernism in *Ulysses* in relation to the accepted advent of a larger cultural postmodernism.

The concept of these two parts representing separate books--a realist one and a modernist one--logically leads into the question of what the third part of *Ulysses* represents. As I mentioned earlier, the existent criticism on a nonmodernist departure within *Ulysses* has largely centered on a postmodern break (if one not always located in the book's final part). Dettmar runs into trouble in trying to trace the postmodern all the way back to *Dubliners*, but he also rather inexplicably does not address the final three episodes of *Ulysses* in his analysis.⁵ His focus on the middle of the book indicates a desire to render *Ulysses* as much a "nonmodernist" text as a postmodernist one. Dettmar argues "that the vital impulse behind Joyce's stylistic experiments in *Ulysses* is not, as Litz and others would have it, *mimetic*, expressive, but rather carnivalesque" (150), and that *Ulysses* "introduced the carnivalesque--the postmodern--note into modernist fiction" (173). The dangers of a purely formal periodizing analysis are ever present in this move; Richardson notes that "postmodernism is often treated as if it were the same as the carnivalesque: if this is true, Aristophanes would be the first postmodernist" (1038). Instead, we need to take an effective historicizing approach to this debate.

The location of a postmodern advent within *Ulysses*, as such, produces a number of problems. Richardson thus notes:

The stakes of this debate are very substantial. Either postmodernism is a new form that, in responding to the new socio-historical conditions that produced it, supersedes and supplants the older, dying, increasingly irrelevant form of modernism; or, it was all invented a third of a century--or indeed most of a century--before the pomo boom got

underway, and can be found in earlier works . . . that stretch back to the origins of modernism itself. (1037)

With most critics being unwilling to radically reorient existent period boundaries in this way, Richardson acknowledges that the critical consensus has been that “Joyce’s postmodernism . . . must be denied, repressed, mystified, or somehow made honorary rather than foundational” (1037).

This stance has softened somewhat in the past two decades. McHale, for instance, on the heels of his treatment of *Ulysses* as “an exemplary modernist text” in *Postmodernist Fiction*, subsequently “reopens and problematizes this issue of the modernism of *Ulysses*” in his *Constructing Postmodernism*, and argues that, “in fact, *Ulysses* is (or ought to be) a literary-historical scandal” (9-10). For McHale, *Ulysses* is a text that is “split roughly down the middle,” its first half serving as the norm for “‘High Modernist’ poetics,” and its second half evolving into a “normatively postmodernist” text (10). McHale’s blueprint of the postmodern *Ulysses* at best highly fluctuates and at worst is outright scattershot. He considers it to be “the chapters from roughly ‘Wandering Rocks’ and ‘Sirens’ on (perhaps including ‘Aeolus,’ perhaps excluding ‘Nausicaa’ and Penelope’)” (McHale 44). Jameson himself, writing a decade after “‘Ulysses’ in History” in his later Joyce study, “Modernism and Imperialism,” stops short of terming Joyce “postmodern,” although he does say “on my side, I’ve tried to invoke a . . . Joyce more consistent with a contemporary than with a modernist aesthetic” (*Postmodernism* 303).

In establishing a postmodern bridge to *Ulysses*, it is useful to consider the book’s relation to Joyce’s more properly postmodernist *Finnegans Wake*. A number of other notable critics have drawn attention to how the late episodes of *Ulysses* serve as a preamble to *Finnegans Wake*. Karen Lawrence focuses on “Sirens” and “Ithaca,” Hugh Kenner emphasizes “Eumaeus,” while Derek Attridge draws attention to “Sirens” and “Eumaeus.” While Ihab Hassan considers

Finnegans Wake to be “without a doubt, the crucial text” in the transition from modernism to postmodernism (11), I will suggest that the crucial text in this *transition* is in fact *Ulysses*, with *Finnegans Wake* representing the first work in which the postmodern aesthetic is dominant across the breadth of the text.

This is not as significant a leap as might first be assumed, as the conception of a revolutionary postmodern break with the modern was devalued almost from the advent of the concept. Writing in 1968, Frank Kermode views the exemplars of postmodernism largely as “neo-modernists” who “enable us to see more clearly that certain aspects of earlier modernism really were so revolutionary that we ought not to expect--even with everything speeded up--to have the pains and pleasures of another comparable movement quite so soon” (26). Richard Pearce argues that “there is no difference between modernism and postmodernism. It is only that revolutionary writers like Joyce had to be read in a conservative way” (43). Charles Newman, meanwhile, writing at the same time as Jameson and Moretti, argues that postmodernism “inevitably calls to mind a band of vainglorious contemporary artists following the circus elephants of modernism with snow shovels” (17).

Newman’s comment, while profound, fails to characterize the true dynamic of the postmodern development, particularly within the conceptual framework that *Ulysses* offers. Jameson, interpreting Lyotard’s theory of contemporary postmodernism, observes that “the ingenious twist, or swerve, in [Lyotard’s] own proposal involves the proposition that something called postmodernism does not follow high modernism proper, as the latter’s waste product, but rather very precisely precedes and prepares it” (*Postmodernism* 60). The development of *Ulysses* provides a brilliant demonstration of this theory, as witnessed in the transition from the second to the third part of the book. Joyce, Groden notes, “spent the entire year of 1920 free

from deadlines. The seizure of the July-August 1920 'Nausicaa' issue, long after he had submitted 'Oxen of the Sun,' made publication of 'Circe' unlikely, and the court ruling of February 1921 eliminated the possibility" (169). In many ways, this freed him from commercial demands entirely, allowing for the virtually unfettered expansion of "Circe" (in theme, style, and subject, as well as in length).

Furthermore, as Arnold Goldman argues, "By its fifteenth chapter, *Ulysses* has begun to provide its author enough in the way of material to become self-perpetuating" (99). Stephen's vision of his dead mother and Bloom's vision of his dead son provide the twin climaxes of this episode, which is guided by little more than the endless stream of references to the characters and events that have comprised the book up to that point. Groden states decisively that "['Circe' s'] transforming powers changed not only Joyce and Bloom, but *Ulysses* itself. The episode was the first to expand far beyond the proportions Joyce originally set for it . . . By the time he had finished 'Circe,' his continuing belief that he had nearly completed *Ulysses* was groundless" (169).

Such realization encourages a conception of the "Nostos" as more than irrelevant waste product, and instead one of paradigmatic, transitional significance. Much the same as Moretti's essay offers an effective intervention into Part I of *Ulysses*, Jameson's aforementioned "'Ulysses' in History" gives a framework for alternatively periodizing Part III of the book. Jameson begins his essay by stating that "most people would agree" that "Eumaeus" and "Ithaca" constitute "the two most boring chapters of *Ulysses*" ("Ulysses" 173). Indeed, these episodes are boring because of both what comes before and after them, a fact Jameson acknowledges by observing that "one must necessarily speak about the rest in some great detail so that those parts are greatly reduced" ("Ulysses" 173). Viewed with regard to their aesthetic

transition from the earlier chapters of the book, these episodes present a fascinating study, and cause the question of periodizing within *Ulysses* to become, in Jameson's terminology, "a crisis of detail" ("Ulysses" 176). For it is with the advent of Part III that *Ulysses*' trend toward exponential stylistic advancement comes to a screeching halt. To play out Jameson's analogy, we "need a house for our characters to sleep in, a room in which they may converse, but nothing is there any longer to justify our choice of this particular house rather than that other" ("Ulysses" 176).

For Jameson, "genuine interpretation . . . involves the radical historicisation of the form itself," and "we can make a beginning on this . . . by evoking the philosophical concept, but also the existential experience, called 'contingency,'" and "this particular event is so often first most tangibly detectable and visible on the aesthetic level" ("Ulysses" 175-76). From the roundabout and often nonproductive language of "Eumaeus" to the ritual question-and-answer organization of "Ithaca," the issue of contingency is paramount in these two episodes. It is in his 2002 *Singular Modernity* that this concept of contingency is most fully developed, where Jameson defines it as "a failure of the idea . . . [that] belongs to the conceptual field of ontology, rather than that of the various epistemologies" (206). This claim is in accordance with the line along which McHale draws his modernist/postmodernist divide. However, Jameson advocates the even more concentrated periodization of late modernism, which "constitutes the experience and failure of autonomy to go all the way and fulfill its aesthetic programme" (*Singular* 209). Modernist autonomy in *Ulysses* is granted its fullest opportunity in "Circe," which fails to provide a permanent solution; in its wake, we are left with a style and logic that is "far more modest and comprehensible," rendering this turn away from high modernism, in Jameson's words, "a fortunate failure" (*Singular* 209).

As in the case of the “Telemachiad” and the “Odyssey,” the composition history of the “Nostos” also supports a break with the modern. In contrast to the endless writing and rewriting of much of the second part of his book, Joyce progressed rather swiftly through the final part of *Ulysses*. Now aiming to complete the book in the spring of 1921, Ellmann writes:

[Joyce] worked as quickly as he could, groaning with melancholy as he evolved the high comedy of the final episodes. “Eumaeus” went quickly . . . He sent the last of “Eumaeus” to the typist in the middle of February, then hurried on to ‘Ithaca,’ which he described to Miss Weaver as my “last (and stormiest) cape,” “the ugly duckling of the book and therefore, I suppose, my favourite,” and at last to “Penelope,” which came easier for him. (500)

Furthermore, Groden records that “Joyce wrote the final episodes in pairs – ‘Circe’ with ‘Eumaeus’ and ‘Ithaca’ with ‘Penelope’” (52), which makes sense if we are viewing “Eumaeus” as a transition from the aesthetic logic of “Circe,” and “Penelope” as a transition from that of ‘Ithaca.’” This means the “Eumaeus” and “Ithaca” episodes occupy an intermediary period space between the “Circe” and “Penelope.”

Exactly how to describe ‘Eumaeus’ and “Ithaca” has been the subject of considerable debate. Richardson asserts that “the cases for a postmodern ‘Eumaeus’ and ‘Ithaca’ are easiest to make: they are after all the chapters that the more resolutely modernist readers enjoy the least” (1043); however, this is only if we label *any* break from the high modernist aesthetic as postmodern. Instead, Jameson’s transitional models from “‘Ulysses’ in History” and *A Singular Modernity* offer productive avenues to periodize differently, by considering “the other, complementary moment, in which the break becomes a period in its own right” (*Singular* 26). This intermediary period--which he terms in *A Singular Modernity* as “late modernism”--represents the codification of modernism, and involves the canonical acceptance of high modernist experimentation.

Writing in 1991, Jameson observes that “not only are Joyce and Picasso no longer ugly; they now strike us, on the whole, as rather ‘realistic,’ and this is the result of a canonization and academic institutionalization of the modern movement generally that can be traced to the late 1950s” (*Postmodernism* 4). This is in contrast to the “Make it New” philosophy espoused by Ezra Pound, where modernism could essentially be classified as the radically new and revolutionary. Jameson describes the freedoms of the first modernist artists as “utterly blind and groping; they know no identifiable public” (*Singular* 199); as a result, a unified modernist program has always been difficult to agree upon (look no further than a work as disparate as *Ulysses* being traditionally branded as the paradigmatic modernist text). Late modernism, by contrast, works off of the established record of modernist experimentation, and this provides a point of orientation for the more conservative advances of the period to follow. The style of Nabokov may be readily distinct from that of Joyce, but Jameson emphasizes that “Nabokov is unlike Joyce first and foremost by virtue of the fact that Joyce already existed and that he can serve as a model” (*Singular* 200).

By the time he was writing Part III, Joyce was already wrestling with a codified concept of modernism, which he established in the midst of *Ulysses* rather than in its wake. With the move to Paris, Joyce was in consistent contact with a number of the foremost modernist figures of Europe and America, including Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound, Ernest Hemingway, T. S. Eliot, Valery Larbaud, and Samuel Roth. By 1920, *Ulysses* had already been serialized up through “Oxen of the Sun,” and had been under construction for six years. By the time he was completing the second part of *Ulysses*, Joyce was already being lionized for the modernist innovations of this work--and likely felt the need to both manage and supersede the literati’s expectations for the book’s conclusion. By the end of the compositional process, Joyce

reworked the first few episodes of Part II (such as the headlines in “Aeolus,” which were not inserted until August 1921), which were now governed by a different aesthetic, but interestingly left the episodes of Part I almost wholly intact, as remnants of the realist dominant.⁶

The first two episodes of Part III each offer a respective representation of late modernism, as Jameson emphasizes “the peculiarly anticlimactic nature” of both “Eumaeus” and “Ithaca” (“Ulysses” 185). “Eumaeus,” Jameson notes, presents “the moment to say the price *Ulysses* must pay for the seemingly limitless power of its play of reification and dereification; the moment, in other words, to come to terms with Joyce’s modernism” (“Ulysses” 183). In comparison with “Circe,” the language of “Eumaeus” is thoroughly comprehensible, and its obfuscation is often reliant on verbal excessiveness, rather than abstract theme and style (such as when “the keeper of the shelter in the middle of this *tête-à-tête* put a boiling swimming cup of a choice concoction labeled coffee on the table and a rather antediluvian specimen of a bun, or so it seemed” [16.354-56]). Likewise, in spite of its initial appearance, Jameson argues that in “Ithaca,” “the format . . . is not really, I think, a return to the experimentation . . . of the earlier chapters” (“Ulysses” 187). Instead, the subject is notably excluded, an attempt at the “radically objective,” before giving way to Bloom’s private thoughts and then Molly’s soliloquy.

To be sure, these episodes at times hint at the coming of postmodernism, as they offer an incomplete, one might even say embryonic, representation of some of that literary period’s stylistic dominants. Pastiche, one of Jameson’s characteristic postmodern developments, is prominent in Joyce’s patterning of his writing after the “Odyssey.” “Eumaeus,” Jameson theorizes, “really constitutes Joyce’s attempt at a parody or pastiche,” although “it is not a very good pastiche” (“Ulysses” 186). Several critics, Kenner and Attridge among them, have argued that the episode is a parody of several prominent English grammar handbooks of the time.

Kenner further suggests that the episode is Bloom's (rather than Joyce's) production.

"Eumaeus" is, in effect, the *My Experiences in a Cabman's Shelter* story conceived of by Bloom for submission to *Titbits* (a la Philip Beaufoy); while it is subsequently bound to be inferior to what Joyce himself would have penned had he written the episode in earnestness, it is just as sure that Joyce's historical situation prevents him from being able to fully realize this postmodern style. If "Eumaeus" is an attempted pastiche of a grammar handbook, then "Penelope" offers a significantly better expression of this, with its outright eschewing of punctuation and sentence structure. Ultimately, Joyce's triumph of pastiche would come with *Finnegans Wake*, which provides the fullest realization of the postmodern in its pastiche of *Ulysses*.

"Eumaeus" and "Ithaca," above all else, are marked by a turn toward resignation and contingency, and away from the notion of progressive utopian teleology of the work's modernist section. The tone established by these episodes (a consideration few critics have mentioned) is an indispensable component of their periodization. In "Eumaeus," suddenly "the exotic picture-postcard vision of a tourist Dublin is transformed back into a dreary familiar reality of jobs and contracts and the next meal" (Jameson, "Ulysses" 183). The price paid in the wake of *Ulysses*' apex of modernism is a "radical depersonalization," which removes author, reader, and point of view to the extent where "only a form of material unity is left, namely the printed book itself" (Jameson, "Ulysses" 183). This emphasis on the detached mundane carries through to "Ithaca," where the scientific language within a catechismal structure fosters a resignation to objectivity. Jameson concludes "'Ulysses' in History" with an excerpt from Joyce's notable description of the mechanics behind tap water:

What did Bloom do at the range?

He removed the saucepan to the left hob, rose and carried the iron kettle to the sink in order to tap the current by turning the faucet to let it flow.

Did it flow?

Yes. From Roundwood reservoir in county Wicklow of a cubic capacity of 2400 million gallons, percolating through a subterranean aqueduct of filter mains of single and double pipeage constructed at an initial plant cost of £5 per linear yard . . . (17.160 -67; cited in Jameson, "Ulysses" 188)

This passage, which continues on at length in the same fashion, offers a strikingly mechanical and detached rendering of the action, working against the trend toward individual subjectivity and personal autonomy that the middle section of *Ulysses* so thoroughly celebrates.

A close analysis of the Gilbert and Linati schemata further supports Joyce's turn toward contingency in *Ulysses*' final section. The Gilbert schema lists the technics of "Eumaeus" and "Ithaca" as "Narrative (old)" and "Catechism (impersonal)", respectively.⁷ This comes on the heels of "Circe," whose technic is "Hallucination," and "Oxen of the Sun," where its multiplicity of styles are branded as "Embryonic development." Meanwhile, the Linati schema, subsequent to "Circe's" technic of "Exploding vision," categorizes "Eumaeus" as "Relaxed prose," "Ithaca" as "Pacified style," and even "Penelope" as "Resigned style."

While this trend would seem to unify stylistically the third part of *Ulysses*, it further complicates the issue of how to periodize "Penelope." In contrast to the periodization implied by Jameson, Richardson, who casts "Eumaeus" and "Ithaca" as "the strongest candidates in a case to be made for a substantially postmodern *Ulysses*" (1044), argues that the "Penelope" episode marks "a turning back from the early postmodernism of the chapters immediately preceding it" (1044). The question that emerges from Richardson's critique--and, indeed, from virtually all postmodern assessments of *Ulysses*--is why "Penelope" is consistently ignored in this debate. After all, if *Finnegans Wake* has been a popular default for the advent of postmodernism, it seems at least a little surprising that the episode in *Ulysses* that is the most stylistically and

thematically similar to the *Wake* (as well as the one in closest compositional proximity) has been ignored in this postmodern discussion.

It is instructive to consider that Joyce could have concluded *Ulysses* with “Ithaca,” which provides an even more logical conclusion than “Penelope.” Bloom and Stephen have finally been united, Bloom has returned home, Stephen has elected to go off on his own, and Bloom has recapped the day’s events before falling asleep at episode’s end; in short, most every narrative loose end has been tied up and it would appear that (from the relatively comprehensible framework of “Eumaeus” and “Ithaca”) stylistic abstraction has been exhausted, as well.

Instead, “Penelope” takes *Ulysses*’ ending in a different direction, and reinvigorates the narrative in much the same way that Bloom’s initial appearance does. Just as Bloom’s emergence in Part II represents a countersign to Stephen, Joyce wrote in a letter to Frank Budgen that “Penelope . . . is the indispensable countersign to Bloom’s passport to eternity” (Ellmann 501). By the middle of the June 1921, Joyce had finished planning “Penelope,” at which time he wrote to Budgen:

Penelope is the clou [star turn] of the book. The first sentence contains 2500 words. There are eight sentences in the episode. It begins and ends with the female word *yes*. It turns like the huge earth ball slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning . . . Though probably more obscene than any preceding episode it seems to me to be perfectly sane full amoral fertilizable untrustworthy engaging shrewd limited prudent indifferent *Weib*. (Gilbert 169)

Joyce completed the final draft of “Penelope” on October 20, and finished the final draft of “Ithaca” (troublesome transitional episode that it was) a little over a week later. Upon completion of “Penelope,” Joyce openly worried in a letter to Harriet Weaver, “Perhaps I have tried to do too much in this book” (Ellmann 519).

The specific role that “Penelope” fills within this book, as well as its place within aesthetic periodization, has long been problematic for critics seeking to unify the book. McHale,

for instance, asserts that “if we insist on reading the sequence of styles as a transition, we will have to confront the awkward fact that the sequence ends not with its most radically avant-garde (or postmodernist) chapter but with a chapter [‘Penelope’] which regresses to the modernist ‘narrative norm’ of the first half” (55). Groden insists that “Ithaca” is a more diverse and demanding episode than “Penelope” (53). For Richardson, likewise, “Penelope” marks “a turning back from the early postmodernism of the chapters immediately preceding it, thereby problematizing attempts to simply reproduce at the level of the book the more general narrative of ‘first modernism, then postmodernism’” (1044).

Again, I would argue that Richardson is right in that “Penelope” does mark a departure from the previous two episodes; however, he is wrong in claiming that it is a regression back into some earlier modernist logic. The interior discourse of “Penelope” has been a red-herring with regard to the periodization of both the episode and *Ulysses* as a whole; the assumption is that we have seen this technique in the book already, when in reality we have not. It is true that Joyce originally set the episode out as a series of letters written by Molly Bloom (in a parallel with the end of *Portrait*) and that he decided against that style because he felt a female monologue was needed to balance Stephen’s earlier male monologue at the end of the “Telemachiad.” However, it is also true that “Penelope” represents an aesthetic innovation previously unencountered in *Ulysses*, and that this innovation goes beyond the general omission of punctuation and sentence structure.

To begin with, there is its unsettling of “point of view,” which “Penelope” provides the most radical expression of within *Ulysses*. The term represents, for Jameson, “the quasi-material expression of a fundamental social development itself, namely the increasing social fragmentation and monadisation of late capitalist society, the intensifying privatisation and

isolation of its subjects” (“Ulysses” 139). With respect to the privatisation and isolation of late capitalism, Molly emerges as the most extreme and enigmatic figure within the text.⁸ While “Penelope” seems to be wholly oriented around the individual and the personally autonomous, what we are instead privy to, in Jamesonian terms, is “the ‘death’ of the subject itself--the end of the autonomous bourgeois monad or ego or individual” (*Postmodernism* 15). Molly is an individual pitted against the larger socio-economic totality, which she cannot hope to physically conquer. She is a slave of the system economically (she is reliant on the men in her life, Bloom and Boylan, for her financial well being), socially (she cannot complete the act of intercourse with her husband, but will never be married to the man she is having intercourse with), and even rhetorically - most significantly when Molly turns away from her soliloquy to plead “O Jamesy let me up out of this poo” (18.1128-29)--before she is forced to continue to episode’s end in the established style.

Another significant innovation that “Penelope” offers is its transcendence of physicality and tangibility. Jameson asserts in “‘Ulysses’ in History” that “the great modernist literature--from Baudelaire and Flaubert to *Ulysses* and beyond--is a city literature” (177). It is useful to consider that the first and third parts of *Ulysses* allow us to leave that city: in the first case through Martello Tower, the Dalkey School, and Sandymount Strand, and in the second through Molly’s veritable dreamlike transcendence of environment. Furthermore, the book’s setting presents a unique socio-economic environment, as “Dublin is not exactly a full-blown capitalist metropolis, but like the Paris of Flaubert, still regressive, still distantly akin to the village, still un- or under-developed enough to be representable” (Jameson, “Ulysses” 182). In order to take on the unrepresentable, it is necessary to move beyond Dublin, which is precisely what Molly’s dreamlike soliloquy enables the book to do. This turn toward the purely conceptual may be

considered a demonstration of “postmodern hyperspace,” which Jameson says “has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world” (*Postmodernism* 44).

In such a way, Molly’s soliloquy fashions a conceptual framework that moves beyond even the hallucinatory narrative of “Circe.” Kenner writes, “Nothing, in ‘Circe,’ distinguishes ‘real’ from ‘hallucination’” and we are consequently “deprived of reliable criteria for ‘reality’” (*Ulysses* 123, 126); this is in contrast to “Penelope,” where *nothing* is real--or, better still, where everything is imagined reality. This includes Molly’s final recollection of Bloom’s proposal to her on Howth Hill, which offers an imaginatively happy ending to the book. While Bloom and Molly are physically pointed in different directions as their marriage has grown progressively colder, the warmth of this nostalgic replay stands in stark contrast to the reality of “Eumaeus” and “Ithaca.” The postmodern categorization of such technique is exceedingly relevant, as “Penelope” blurs the concept of history to the point of a simulacrum rife with nostalgia. “This approach to the present,” Jameson explains, “by way of the art language of the simulacrum, or of the pastiche of the stereotypical past, endows present reality and the openness of present history with the spell and distance of a glossy mirage” (*Postmodernism* 21).

While the first two parts of *Ulysses* had served as an exemplar of modernist innovation and an inspiration to a number of canonical writers, even the most prominent of modernists were left in awe by the ending of the book. Eliot notably wrote to Joyce regarding *Ulysses*, “I wish, for my own sake, that I had not read it,” but lesser known is his conversation with Virginia Woolf shortly after *Ulysses*’ publication, where he asked her straight-faced, “How can anyone write again after achieving the immense prodigy of the last chapter?” (Woolf 363). “Eliot

insisted,” Ellmann records, “that Joyce had killed the nineteenth century, exposed the futility of all styles, and destroyed his own future. There was nothing left for him to write another book about” (528).

This was not entirely the case, of course, for *Finnegans Wake* represents a decidedly more advanced postmodern production; at the same time, it does not represent a revolutionary departure from the end of *Ulysses*. Far from these two works occupying independent compositional histories, their composition feeds almost seamlessly into one another. Groden asserts that “Joyce never actually ‘finished’ *Ulysses*. Rather, since he was determined that it should be published on his fortieth birthday, February 2, 1922, he had to stop writing it” (13). As such, when he began writing *Finnegans Wake* a little over a year later, Joyce began by sorting back through a stack of notes leftover from *Ulysses*, a pile that reportedly weighed over twenty-five pounds. While the publication of *Finnegans Wake* in 1939 left many initial readers baffled at the direction in which Joyce had moved, Litz emphasizes that “those who had studied the fragments of Joyce’s *Work in Progress* published during the 1920s and 1930s were prepared for the new language, realizing that it had developed gradually and inevitably out of the method of *Ulysses*” (76).

This likely accounts for the significant number of parallels to be drawn between “Penelope” and *Finnegans Wake*. Ellmann explains that “in many ways [*Finnegans Wake*] was to be a sequel to *Ulysses*; for example, the last page of *Ulysses* showed Molly and Leopold eating the same seedcake like Eve and Adam eating the ‘seedfruit’ (as Joyce called it) when man fell, and *Finnegans Wake* also began with the fall of man” (545). The final page of *Finnegans Wake* is even further like the conclusion of *Ulysses* in its language, subject, and nostalgic impulse:

Yes. Carry me along, taddy, like you done through the toy fair. If I seen him bearing down on me now under whitespread wings like he’d come from Arkangels, I sink I’d die

down over his feet, humbly dumbly, only to washup. Yes, tid. There's where. First. We pass through grass behush the bush to. Whish! A gull. Gulls. For calls. Coming, far! End here. Us then. Finn, again! Take. Bussoftlhee, mememoree! Till thousandthee. Lps. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long the (628)

The conclusion of *Finnegans Wake* (like the rest of the book) represents a more advanced postmodernism than that of "Penelope." Whereas Joyce proclaimed that "Penelope" has no beginning, middle, or end, it does in fact seem to both begin and end with the word "yes," while the last words of *Finnegans Wake* loop directly back to the first words of the text. It is worth considering, though, that "Penelope" might not actually end with the final word of *Ulysses*, and instead feeds directly into *Finnegans Wake*, rendering the final "yes" merely the final word of the waking world, and giving way to the endlessly indeterminate and cyclical realm of the dream.

Obviously, the idea that *Ulysses* feeds fluidly into *Finnegans Wake* provides a clear avenue for the former's alternative periodization. If one looks solely at *Ulysses*, however, the result is no less compelling. The "Penelope" episode is also effectively periodized through the conclusion that it offers the book, for much the same as *Ulysses* has two beginnings, it also has (at least) two endings. In another notable essay, "Joyce or Proust," which first appears in *The Modernist Papers*, Jameson attests that "*Ulysses* is completed not by one but by two endings. On the one hand, the Nighttown chapter recombines all the elements of the preceding chapters . . . [A]s in a decompression chamber, all the momentous textual developments of the preceding book are slowly charged and diffused" (180). "This leisurely coda," however, "is brought to an abrupt and scandalous ending . . . [with] Molly's invincible monologue" (180), and it is crucial that Jameson does not mark this transition out of "Circe" with "Eumaeus," but rather with "Penelope." For the difference between "Circe" (*Ulysses*' high modernist climax) and "Penelope" (its postmodernist departure) is abrupt and startling; it is the two episodes in between

them, the late modernist “most boring in the book” chapters of “Eumaeus” and “Ithaca,” that provide the necessary space to affect this transition smoothly. It is in this context, then, that we can read Jameson’s earlier insistence that “what we have been calling boredom is not Joyce’s failure, then, but rather his success” (“Ulysses” 187), and, as Jameson later writes in *A Singular Modernity*, “it is with this late modernism that postmodernism attempts radically to break, imagining it is breaking with classical modernism” (210).

In the opening sentence of his monumental 1959 biography of Joyce, Ellmann writes, “We are still learning to be James Joyce’s contemporaries” (3). This statement has proven exceedingly true in the ongoing periodization of *Ulysses*. According to McHale, the contemporary reconfiguration of *Ulysses* “has been undertaken in terms of a poetics closer to that of *Finnegans Wake* than that of *A Portrait*: call it postmodern poetics” (44). It is therefore vital to note that any such reading of *Ulysses* is as much a product of emergent theory as it is historical composition.⁹ Jameson emphasizes that “we needed the word *postmodernism* so long without knowing it” (*Postmodernism* xii). Our conception of what constitutes the progression of realism into postmodernism has been shaped by the century since *Ulysses* began, as, Jameson observes, “the strange afterimage of ‘primal unity’ always seems to be projected after the fact onto whatever present the historical eye fixes as its ‘inevitable’ past” (*Postmodernism* 337). Thus, how we read Joyce today is bound to be more flexible than previous appraisal. As Dettmar concedes, “Joyce, in 1922, was *not* a postmodern writer; the term had not been coined, the category didn’t exist, and throwing one’s lot in with the program of the modernists, as Joyce did, was perhaps the most avant-garde artistic gesture a creative writer could make” (171). Just as imperative to emphasize, however, is how *Ulysses* functions as a bridge beyond what came before it, in addition to what would come after. While McHale argues that *Ulysses* “is at one and

the same time a founding text of ‘High Modernism’ and a postmodernist text” (55), it is equally the perfection of realism and its veritable exhaustion. While these competing aesthetic logics are necessarily coterminous in literature in general, the work of Joyce exhibits a clear progression from realism onto postmodernism, with these stylistic dominants succeeding one another in a surprisingly structured manner.

With this in mind, it is still crucial to still employ the classic historical periodization (*Ulysses* as modernism) in this operation; what is of interest is how a particular text occupies the space of realism, late modernism, and/or postmodernism within the historical moment of high modernism. While the concept of the mode of production is synchronic, Jameson argues that the cultural productions at work within this overarching framework are “open to history in a dialectical way” (*Political* 95). “Cultural revolution” in this way becomes “that moment in which the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradictions moving to the very center of political, social, and historical life” (*Political* 95). This offers a new way of reading 1922 as the peak of modernism precisely *because* it is the moment when these multiple modes of production are in the greatest tension.¹⁰ In doing so, such a theory casts modernism not as an identity, but rather as a transition between realism and postmodernism.

Brian Richardson notes that “Joyce, perhaps wisely, never outlined a literary genealogy within which his own works might be situated” (1035), and as such we are particularly reliant on periodizing theory to do so. This study is designed to both complicate and simplify the existing periodizing criticisms, and to recognize that *Ulysses* is ostensibly at odds with its own canonical periodization. In contrast to the critique that nothing of significance happens in the *Ulysses*, we are suddenly faced with the possibility that realism passes fully into postmodernism in the course

of this single day. While this is not literally the case, the rapid transition from realism all the way to postmodernism within the book *is* admittedly difficult to acknowledge; however, the possibility exists that, as Moretti argues, “there were more structural novelties in a decade than an entire century” (232). Much like Joyce with *Ulysses*, Jameson and Moretti both exhibit an unspoken periodizing logic with the potential to guide literary critics far removed from the time periods when each of these essays were conceived, and to clarify (if not unify) the existent periodizing theory of *Ulysses*. As Moretti attests, “Problems change, and old solutions stop working” (230) – a statement that holds as true of critical theory as it does of the *Bildungsroman*. The obligatory designation of *Ulysses* as modernist, while certainly apt, is in no way wholly accurate; Joyce once claimed himself to be “the foolish author of a wise book” (Ellmann 471), and the aesthetic progression within *Ulysses* beyond its larger cultural logic stands as testament to the veracity of Joyce’s claim.

¹ For Groden, this includes a first stage that runs from “Telemachus” to “Scylla and Charybdis,” a second stage that stretches from “Wandering Rocks” to “Oxen of the Sun,” and a third stage, from “Circe” to “Penelope,” during which Joyce also revised earlier episodes. Groden emphasizes that Joyce “only partly reworked the episodes, however, as if to present *Ulysses* as a palimpsest involving all three stages” (4). It should also be noted that much of Groden’s argument for where to draw the line on the three stages in *Ulysses* is based on the *Little Review* manuscript of *Ulysses*, in contrast to the actual book that was published in 1922.

² In his 1996 essay “*Ulysses* and the Twentieth Century” (which appears in Moretti’s *Modern Epic: The Two World System from Goethe to García Márquez*), Moretti also speaks of “a first *Ulysses* . . . and a second *Ulysses*, with equally distinctive features” (183). He expands this, though, by theorizing that “there is even a third *Ulysses*, albeit far more indistinct than the other two,” that occupies “the zone of transition from one to the other – when Joyce is abandoning his first great technique (but does not yet know it), and is seeking his second (but has not found yet it)” (183).

³ While Jameson’s historicizing suggestions regarding *Ulysses* have been utilized by any number of significant Joycean scholars (from Margot Norris’ *Joyce’s Web: The Social Unraveling of Modernism* [1992] to James Fairhall’s *James Joyce and the Question of History* [1993]), they have just as often come under fire by Joyceans, most notably in Thomas C. Hofheinz’s *Joyce and*

the Invention of Irish History (1995), which criticizes Jameson's article as "a radical simplification of Joyce's text that he justifies purely by previous assertions of his theory" (12).

⁴ Obviously, Stephen is also representative of the future on account of his youth. In "Ithaca," Stephen hears in Bloom "a profound ancient male unfamiliar melody the accumulation of the past," while Bloom sees in Stephen "a quick young male familiar form the predestination of the future" (17.776-780). However, it bears mentioning that Stephen's association with the past extends to his scholarly pursuits, which leave him considerably more knowledgeable about the past (at least in the collective intellectual sense) than Bloom, and to the "familiar form" that he offers is also a familiarity to the individual reader upon opening *Ulysses* for the first time.

⁵ Dettmar, by his own admission, tends to "ignore entire episodes of *Ulysses*" (9), and does not factor Jameson's theories into this study, on the grounds that Dettmar does "not find in [Jameson's] work anything like a coherent description of postmodern stylistics" (15). In many ways, though, this directly illustrates the flaws in Dettmar's own brand of aesthetic categorization, which is rife in formal analysis at the expense of legitimate historicization.

⁶ Joyce, in an October 1921 letter to Harriet Weaver, writes "*Eolus* is recast. *Hades* and the *Lotus-eaters* much amplified and the other episodes retouched a good deal. Not much change has been made in the *Telemachia* (the first three episodes of the book)" (Gilbert 172).

⁷ It is, of course, crucial to mention that these technic categorizations of Part III offer a direct inversion to those of Part I, where the technics of the first three episodes are listed as "Narrative (new)," "Catechism (personal)," and "Monologue (male)," respectively. Each of the episodes of the "Nostos," though, represent a decidedly more advanced stylistic expression than their counterparts in the "Telemachiad;" they cannot be a regression back to realism, largely because they have to account for the modernist innovations that have immediately preceded them.

⁸ Maurice Beebe contends that "it is a mark of the greatest literature that it achieve a synthesis of thesis and antithesis. I think that Joyce does this--and meant to do so largely through Molly Bloom's soliloquy. We cannot escape the fact that it is given the honor of the last word" ("*Ulysses*" 187). The aesthetic progression within *Ulysses* is essential to this conclusion, as "Joyce could not have written Molly Bloom's soliloquy . . . if he had not somehow found a way in art, if not in life, to recognize the distinct otherness of the loved one" ("*Ulysses*" 187)

⁹ McHale is cognizantly aware of this fact, recognizing that "we will know that the postmodernist *Ulysses* has really arrived when the Norton Anthology reprints 'Sirens' or 'Cyclops,' say, instead of 'Proteus' or 'Lestrygonians'" (273).

¹⁰ Joyce's correspondences and letters provide insight into such tension, where a boast such as "I have discovered I can do anything I want with language" is balanced by his statement to Beckett that "I may have oversystematized *Ulysses*" (Ellmann 702).

CHAPTER 3
“WITHIN YOU WITHOUT YOU”: *SGT. PEPPER* AND THE HIGH MODERNISM OF
ROCK AND ROLL

On the opening page of his landmark 1991 book, *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Fredric Jameson states:

[The postmodern] break is most often related to notions of the waning or extinction of the . . . modern movement . . . The enumeration of what follow, then, at once becomes empirical, chaotic, and heterogeneous: Andy Warhol and pop art, but also photorealism and beyond it . . . the moment, in music, of John Cage, but also the synthesis of classical and ‘popular’ styles found in composers like Phil Glass and Terry Riley, and also punk and new wave rock (the Beatles and the Stones now standing as the high-modernist moment of that more recent and rapidly evolving tradition). (1)

While Jameson’s book is obviously geared toward the development of the concept of postmodernism, it is this throwaway observation that opens up a significant range of possibilities for reimagining modernism. This comment is left relatively open (it is the only time he mentions such a specific possibility in the book), but Jameson also conspicuously draws attention to it in his 1988 essay, “The Existence of Italy,” which details the development of the non-synchronous modernism(s) of twentieth century film. “The history of rock,” Jameson asserts, “unpredictably develops into the ‘high modernisms’ of the Beatles and the Stones, and thereafter into rock postmodernisms of the most appropriately bewildering kinds” (“Existence” 156).

Few serious literary critics would likely dispute the validity of the place of non-traditional mediums in the artistic canon. Astradur Eysteinnsson, voicing a trend within critical theory, warns that “the relevance of modernism depends upon our resisting the insulation of literature” (240). Jameson takes this emphasis one step further, noting that “for some seventy years the cleverest prophets have warned us regularly that the dominant art form of the twentieth century was not literature at all” (*Postmodernism* 68).

“Film history,” Jameson observes, “signally fails to coincide with any of the rhythms or coordinates of development in the other arts or media” (“Existence” 156). While the high period

of literary realism would traditionally be posited in the nineteenth century by most reputable literary scholars, it would be impossible to situate the moment of filmic realism as contemporaneous with Dickens,¹ given that film as a medium obviously did not exist at that time. Instead “the microchronology of film recapitulates something like the realism/modernism/postmodernism trajectory at a more compressed tempo” (“Existence” 156). The modernist moment that Jameson posits for sound film, that of the “great auteurs,” comes well after the high modernism of Joyce, Eliot, and Picasso, and requires a general reorientation of what constitutes “modernism” (if not “*a* modernism”).

Jameson states that “this proposition that could also be argued for other semi-autonomous sequences of cultural history” (“Existence” 156). The application of it to rock and roll complicates this model even further, given that, unlike film, it is not a medium that is “coterminous with the 20th century” (as it finds its generally accepted origins in the 1950s [“Existence” 156]), nor are there two distinct histories of rock ‘n roll (as there are with, say, silent and sound film).² In much the same way that “film history can be clarified, or at least usefully estranged, by period theory” (“Existence” 155), this history of rock music may be illuminated by such a periodizing operation.

Once again, while the focus of “The Existence of Italy” would seem to be the uneven development of filmic modernism with the commonly accepted period of artistic “high modernism,” the essay also establishes a useful framework with which to periodize other emergent cultural forms (such as rock and roll). To begin with, Jameson insists that “formal or aesthetic tendencies are governed by the historic logic of the three fundamental stages in secular bourgeois or capitalist culture as a whole[:] realism, modernism, and postmodernism” (“Existence” 155). In short, this realist/modernist/postmodernist progression--co-opted from

Ernst Mandel's *Late Capitalism*--is observable in any aesthetic form, and may operate independent of an unwaveringly singular "period" of modernism. Rather, the periodization of emergent cultural forms necessitates a compressed tempo, if an equivalent trajectory.

This non-synchronous dynamic has long been one of Jameson's most charged points of emphasis. In *A Singular Modernity* (2002), he cautions that any periodizing operation must account for "the non-synchronous dynamic of various belated or premature modernisms, their 'catching-up' or indeed their untimely exhaustion" (180). The necessity of periodization accordingly requires one to think in terms of periods (plural), rather than simply in terms of a linear time frame. This theoretical axiom is not limited to Jameson, as it has emerged as one of the most revisited historicizing claims within critical circles, from Ernst Bloch's non-synchronous present representative of a horizon to Susan Stanford Friedman's logical proposition that "multiple modernities create multiple modernisms. Multiple modernisms require respatializing and thus reperiodizing modernism" (427). After all, states Friedman, "declaring the end of modernism by 1950 is like trying to hear one hand clapping. The modernisms of emergent modernities are that other hand that enables us to hear any clapping at all" (427).

Exactly where to set the breaks in such periodization is a consideration that Jameson spends the majority of "The Existence of Italy" concretizing, with perhaps no axiom being more significant than the insistence that "the paradigm-cancelling process . . . must be related to the discovery/invention of new kinds of social material" (166). In speaking of "the end of filmic realism," Jameson says:

The end of Hollywood . . . can be formulated as the repudiation of the genre system itself, something which happens in the other arts in literature at an earlier moment when the conception of some Gesamtkunstwerk, Book of the World, or ultimate autonomous aesthetic practice, comes to replace the production of one book or novel after another.

The introduction of the 'wide screen' in 1952, with its overdetermined technological and economic situation (end of the studio system, introduction of television), is also emblematic of this mutation in aesthetics itself, which renders the modest on-going practice of the traditional genres somehow uncomfortable, if not intolerable. ("Existence" 177)

This has long been a regular practice for "traditional" literary modernism: Joyce and *Ulysses* or Eliot and "The Waste Land" standing as the aesthetic default upon which the subsequent ideology of modernism rests its foundation (however fragmentary and imprecise that definition might be). In much the same way, positing such a break in the history of rock music requires the location of such a "Book of the World." Taking Jameson's suggestion of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones as rock and roll's high modernism, I will posit the Beatles' 1967 critical masterpiece, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, as its fullest realization. The Beatles are the enduringly visible figures in the high modernism of rock and roll, and it is with *Sgt. Pepper* that this aesthetic movement is brought to its apex.

To make such a periodizing claim is easy enough; exactly what it means for this album to be high modernist - and what the stakes of this claim are - represents another matter entirely. To begin with, it is crucial to recognize that to do so is an operation of micro-periodization, which, as laid out by Stephen Paul Miller in his insightful cultural history of the 1970s, "considers small temporal changes within a historical period" in an effort to "articulate the period's prevalent episteme" (47).³ Even a traditional observation of the rhythm of literary evolution reveals that any large-scale period one attempts to establish will be, in the words of Franco Moretti, "necessarily uneven: long periods of stability 'punctuated' . . . by bursts of sudden change" (232). Certainly one's conception of "long" is put to task in the periodization of film and, even more so, popular music. Tim Riley, in writing specifically about rock and roll, states that "a lifetime in pop is very short, and seven years has come to signify about one generation" (267).

This time span represents the Beatles' years of songwriting and recording productivity (1963-69), effectively moving from the opening bars of "I Saw Her Standing There" on *Please Please Me* to the final fragmentary vignette of *Abbey Road*. Michael North has notably speculated that "the squabble between modernism and postmodernism is in fact a symptom of our inability to theorize that distance, which becomes, in turn, an inability to understand the important works that reflect on the twentieth century" (North 213). In accordance with this, the Beatles' body of work appears within such a concentrated history that it seems illogical that two (if not more) prominent aesthetic movements would play out over that span, and our distance from their work (even forty years hence) seems insufficient to judge their artistic importance and legacy.

In spite of this, Jameson has notably insisted that, when talking about the past, "we cannot *not* periodize" (*Singular* 29). In analogizing rock music with other artistic mediums as such, we are forced to "name the system" (Bertens 182), and to assign specific foundational texts a specific place in the development of said system. In this case that involves naming the period logic of *Sgt. Pepper* "high modernism," despite the uneasy realization that this moment is operating forty years hence from the generally-accepted high modernism of Western literature. After all, Jameson contends, "it is diagnostically more productive to have a totalizing concept than to try to make one's way without one" (*Postmodernism* 212).

However, this realization does not override the reality that there are methods of periodization that are faulty, as Jameson is quick to point out that "this refunctioning of cultural terminology for historiographic and periodizing purposes runs crucial risks" ("Existence" 155). For example, it is tempting to posit *Sgt. Pepper* as high modernism by aligning the 1960s with the period of high "literary" modernism of the 1920s. Andreas Huyssen, for instance, states that the two vital transitional periods were the earlier 20th century and the 1960s (viii), and argues

that theory in the 1960s is itself the last great modernist movement. The notion of what constitutes the actual “period” of the 1960s, however, is not as static lengthwise as might be assumed; Jameson, in addressing the subject at length in his “Periodizing the 60s,”⁴ offers that “it seems plausible to mark the end of the 60s around 1972-74” (183). Jameson is not alone in this suggestion: Arthur Marwick, Eric Hobsbawm, Stephen Paul Miller, and Jameson all periodize the 1960s by extending it into the early 1970s (generally onto 1973-74). Jameson draws attention to Ernst Mandel’s “elaborate system of business cycles under capitalism, whose most familiar unit, the 7-to-10 year alternation of boom, overproduction, recession, and economic recovery, adequately accounts for the mid-point break in the 60s” (“Periodizing” 206).

In a rough application of this cycle, Arthur Marwick writes that “we can resolve these puzzles by thinking not just of a ‘long sixties’ but of that period being divided into a three distinctive sub-periods, 1958-63, 1964-8/9, and 1969-74” (Marwick 8). In doing so, he effectively situates a “Pre-Beatles” and a “Post-Beatles” period around their years of actual productivity (of which *Sgt. Pepper* is at the center). Additionally, Marwick’s conception offers a model for the periods of rock realism and the advent of rock postmodernism that follows the Beatles. The realist moment of 1958-63 is characterized by Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly, Elvis Presley, and Little Richard; the years of 1969-74 give way to the expansive work of The Who and Pink Floyd, as well as the late work of the Beatles themselves.⁵

The moment of *Sgt. Pepper* would seem to present just such a special historical situation. The 1960s, as the periodizing fascination with the decade bears witness to, has emerged as the pre-eminent transitional period of the latter half of the twentieth century. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri contend that at certain moments “humanity appeared for a magical moment to be united by a common desire for liberation, and we seemed to catch a glimpse of a future when the

modern mechanisms of domination would once and for all be destroyed” (*Empire* 42). This was certainly the case with the 1960s, and it was in the so-called “Summer of Love” of 1967 that this moment reached its utopian apex, with rock and roll at its artistic summit. The irony of this “flower power” movement, of which *Sgt. Pepper* represented its mainstream blossoming, is that it proved exceptionally fleeting, in direct correlation with Karl Marx’s commentary on the concept in his *Grundrisse*:⁶

The point of flowering [is] . . . the point at which [the capitalist mode of production] can be united with the highest development of productive forces. . . . It is nevertheless still this basis, this plant in flower, and therefore it fades after flowering and as a consequence of flowering . . . As soon as this point has been reached, any further development takes the form of decline. (439)

1967 marks a critical historical apex, a transitional moment of immense potential that has been historically burdened by the cultural reality of what came after it. While the early 1970s may constitute, in Stephen Paul Miller’s terminology, a “rippling episteme” of the 1960s, it also constitutes a startling shift from the moment of 1967.

Viewed in such a manner, the moment of *Sgt. Pepper* seems a perfect storm, one that plays out the high modernist trajectory in a brief period of brilliance. Much as F. Scott Fitzgerald had termed 1922 as “the peak of the younger generation” (North 174), the Beatles rose to prominence right at the time that America’s baby-boomer generation was coming of age. This was also a moment of burgeoning influence for youth on a global scale. Rock and roll, with its inherent turn away from established “adult” culture, with regard to language, fashion, and form, presented an attractive blank slate for youth to embrace.

While the artistic validity of music-at-large is not in question, it bears keeping in mind that the periodization of rock music is not the outright periodization of music in general. The definition of “modernist music” has traditionally been oriented toward the likes of Mahler,

Strauss, and Schoenberg (whose “prohibitively difficult music” Huyssen likens to the writings of Joyce [144]);⁷ even the notion of a modernism of “popular music” has often been allied to American jazz, as is the case in Michael North’s *Reading 1922* and Bernard Gendron’s *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club*. However, by the mid-1960s, the wide-scale cultural focus was not on the novel, nor jazz, nor silent film, but on rock and roll. As such, it is once again tempting to align this moment of rock music with the flowering of jazz as demonstrable evidence of its modernist tendencies.

An even more dangerous path for many critics has been the outright identification of modernism with a certain formalism. Using such formalist identification, many periodizing models for the Beatles have settled on the notion of a postmodern break relatively synchronous with the one that literary modernism was experiencing at the time.⁸ Kenneth Gloag alleges that “the diversity of [*Sgt. Pepper’s*] material, effectively intensified through their encounters with the avant-garde, . . . suggests a stronger alignment with notions of postmodernism than of modernism” (“All” 582).⁹ Ed Whitley, likewise, categorizes the Beatles as postmodernist largely on the grounds of their “disparate musical styles” and their “fragmentation of structure” (Womack, “Beatles” 224). In a segment of his aforementioned book, ironically titled “Resuscitating Modernism: The Beatles as Stimulant,” Bernard Gendron concurs with this view, positing the Beatles as breaking with modernism proper. In the wake of *Sgt. Pepper*, he observes that “many of the cultural shifts with which the Beatles were being associated--such as . . . the declining importance of the written text, the weakening of the boundaries of high and low culture--are nowadays grouped under the category of the stylistically ‘postmodern’” (202).¹⁰

A small number of emerging critics, such as Kenneth Womack, have taken issue with “the increasing certainty with which the Beatles are framed as innovative postmodern

visionaries” (“Beatles” 223),¹¹ and there are any number of reasons to be wary of such a postmodern classification, particularly with regard to *Sgt. Pepper*. To make such a case formally, in accordance with Jameson’s previously mentioned suggestion that a high modernist moment necessitates the emergence of a “Book of the World” to govern the subsequent ideology of the concept, it may sensibly be suggested that *Sgt. Pepper* effectively fills this capacity for the high modernism of rock and roll. In seeking to align *Sgt. Pepper* with a modernist *Gesamtkunstwerk* equivalent, there is no more obvious literary point of reference than James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, given the enduring critical significance of both works’ respective paradigm reorientation.

To be sure, everything about *Sgt. Pepper* is compressed in relation to *Ulysses*: *Sgt. Pepper* was completed in only 129 days, whereas *Ulysses* required the better part of eight years to write; *Sgt. Pepper* is collectively forty minutes long, while *Ulysses* runs over seven-hundred pages; and while Joyce’s next project, *Finnegans Wake*, would not emerge for another seventeen years, the Beatles would release their *Magical Mystery Tour* album a scant five months after the release of *Sgt. Pepper*.

A closer analysis, however, yields an uncanny symmetry between the two works. *Ulysses* and *Sgt. Pepper* have consistently stood at the forefront of any serious discussion about twentieth century literature and rock music, respectively. The Modern Library’s influential 1998 list of “The 100 Best Novels of the Twentieth Century” put *Ulysses* as the very top of the list, and a similarly oriented survey in 2003 by *Rolling Stone* magazine of “The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time” coronated *Sgt. Pepper* as #1. Much as the climactic “Yes” of *Ulysses* represents the end of an era for Ezra Pound (North 3), the concluding three-piano E-major chord crash in *Sgt. Pepper* would seem to signal a similar consideration for the periodization of rock music.

The sheer volume of critical studies and material devoted to these two works stands as testament to their vital importance, and act as an effective bridge between the two aesthetic movements; John Lennon, for example, was an ardent fan of *Ulysses*, and one of the first subscribers to the *James Joyce Quarterly* upon its inception in 1963. Kenneth Womack draws attention to the fact that while even Lennon's early writing were critically judged to be "Joycean" in origin, Lennon's "subsequent reading of the Irish master proved to be a revelation. It was like 'finding Daddy,' he remarked" (Long 91-92).

In both cases, the original direction of the project was (to a certain extent) abandoned. The initial "Telemachiad" of *Ulysses* is in many ways an extension of *Portrait*, with the reappearance of the character and method of Stephen Dedalus, who represents Joyce himself. It is only with the second part, "The Odyssey," with introduction of a new style and a new central figure, Leopold Bloom, that the true modernist direction of the project takes shape.

The Beatles' original plan for *Sgt. Pepper* was a tribute album to their home of Liverpool, with the first two songs recorded being "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Penny Lane," two Liverpool locales that held childhood significance for Lennon and McCartney. It is instructive to note that while these songs would have, stylistically at least, fit effectively alongside the other songs of the *Sgt. Pepper* sessions, neither one was included on the album; they were released instead as a double A-side single in advance of *Sgt. Pepper's* release.¹²

Furthermore, just as *Ulysses* utilizes the story of Odysseus as a unifying concept, the Beatles employ their own sort of mythical method in the framing of *Sgt. Pepper*. One component of this is the mythical band on the album's cover, whose history is explained on the opening track of the album. It is revealed that "it was twenty years ago today" that "Sgt. Pepper taught the band to play" and that this group "has been going in and out of style" and prominently

features a singer by the name of Billy Shears. Outside of that, we are left with little more than a reprise of the song as the album's penultimate track, which then feeds discretely into "A Day in the Life"--the other tracks on the album bear no direct mention of the band or the concert that is being performed. The history of Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band offers no sort of historically established myth to either orient the album's (seemingly) loose concept around or to frame what specifically this album is confronting in its innovation.

In still another formal analogy between the two works, *Sgt. Pepper* co-opts a method of popular scavengery within the larger governing principles of its songs and its concept. The cover of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* is reminiscent of the "telephone directory" that *Ulysses* was critically characterized as being, with an emphasis on montage and seemingly irrelevant scraps and images. The entirety of Lennon's lyrics for "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite" were taken from a poster advertisement for a circus act; "Good Morning Good Morning" was inspired by a Cornflakes breakfast cereal commercial (note the cock crowing at the song's end); and "A Day in the Life" was based on a pair of stories from the *Daily Sketch* (about a crash that killed Guinness heir Tara Browne) and the *Daily Mail* (about filling potholes in Blackburn), respectively. This parallels Joyce's use of *The Evening Telegraph* and *Thom's Dublin Directory* to craft *Ulysses*. While it is often easy to forget how fully a modernist work like *Ulysses* utilizes popular culture, it is equally common, given its classical leanings and abstract artistic stylings, to ignore how attuned to popular culture is *Sgt. Pepper*.

Our historical distance from both of these works, of course, obscures the contextual reality of each, particularly in relation to cultural subversion, given how fully culture has co-opted the content of both *Ulysses* and *Sgt. Pepper*. Fredric Jameson comments that "the classics of high modernism are now part of the so-called canon and are taught in schools and universities

– which at once empties them of any of their older subversive power” (“Postmodernism” 124). *Ulysses* is, unquestionably, one of the most notorious modernist texts in this regard, having progressed from a banned work of pornography (in the eyes of the U.S. court system) to “the greatest novel of the twentieth century” (in the eyes of the Modern Library). Today, it is lauded for its unbridled experimentalism, and the ban-inciting pornographic scene in the “Nausicaa” episode seems relatively discrete by contemporary standards.

An easy retrospective of *Sgt. Pepper* would be that this album offers modernism blown wide open and given free reign to grow and work, unencumbered by political restriction and/or censorship – but this was not the case. This *was* a controversial work: “A Day in the Life” and “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” were both banned by numerous media outlets on the grounds of its potential drug references. The final circular bit of Beatle chatter in the album’s concentric run-out groove has retained a subversive vibe for its alleged backtaping of the message, “We’ll f*ck you like we’re Superman.”¹³ The cover of *Sgt. Pepper*, although entertaining and intriguing, was scandalous in its own right, on the grounds that it was originally slated to include Hitler (whose cardboard cut-out can be seen off to the side of the cover montage in some photos of the shoot) and Jesus Christ (who was abruptly eliminated in the wake of Lennon’s “We’re more popular than Jesus” statement in 1966). Even given the final censored list, Brian Epstein had stated that his last wish would be “brown paper bags for *Sgt. Pepper*.”¹⁴

These formal analogies, however, while interesting and even uncanny, fail to offer the effective sort of periodizing foundation that Jameson posits in “The Existence of Italy.” To begin with, to formally compare music *directly* to literature is to evaluate apples alongside oranges. Even if rock music could be analyzed in chronological lock-step with traditional high modernist literature, it would be fatal to do so. Bernard Gendron and Robert Christgau concur

that it is crucial to remember that rock and roll is *not* poetry; taking Bob Dylan's work as an example, "if the lyrics are taken by themselves, it is a 'bad poem,' loaded with out-of-date metric forms, 'clackety-clack rhymes,' and 'scatter gun images'" (Gendron 211). It is instructive to note that Lennon's forays into poetry and surrealist verse, while interesting for their Joycean style, are inferior to the original work of Joyce himself and of little interest to literary scholars; it is instead through Lennon's (and, more accurately, the Beatles') music that he stands as a paradigmatic artistic force.

Even more crucially, to simply characterize these formal traits as "modernist," without simultaneously mapping their break from realism and postmodernism, fails to satisfy the demands of such an operation. Under such a comparative system, *everything* fits: while *Sgt. Pepper* might be aligned with the high modernist moment of *Ulysses*, it could just as easily be aligned with the works of Edgar Allan Poe, Lewis Carroll, and Oscar Wilde (all of whom, unlike Joyce, appear on the album's cover). Instead, Jameson explains:

These stages, which can be identified as realism, modernism, and postmodernism respectively, are not to be grasped exclusively in terms of the stylistic descriptions from which they have been appropriated; rather, their nomenclature sets us the technical problem of constructing a mediation between a formal or aesthetic concept and a periodizing or historiographic one. ("Existence" 155)

This complex synthesis necessitates an emphasis on dialectical relationships, with each individual period definable only by its relation to those adjacent to it.

Jameson attests to the historical necessity of a modernist break by postulating that "modernism, indeed, does something else, for which the discussion of realism has not prepared us at all" ("Existence" 198). This is taken to such lengths that, Eysteinsson suggests, for Jameson "realism has served as the straw designating whatever modernism *is not*" (183). A purely stylistic definition of postmodernism, for example, is bound to be problematic, on the

grounds that “the ‘postmodern’ becomes little more than the form taken by the authentically modern in our own period, and a mere dialectical intensification of the old modernist impulse toward innovation” (*Postmodernism* 59). In much the same way, Jameson insists that “any realism . . . must also explicitly designate and account for situations in which realism no longer exists, is no longer historically or formally possible” (“Existence” 167).

As a result, to consider exactly why the Beatles, and, more specifically, *Sgt. Pepper*, are modernist involves moving beyond such simple stylistic negation or affirmation.¹⁵ “Even if the conception of artistic modernism as a stepping out of time and history can be accepted,” Jameson argues, “it is an experience that is surely not available or accessible at every moment of history” (*Singular* 193). It is not enough to simply periodize a “modernist” moment (or one that is realist or postmodernist) based exclusively on formal traits--it is essential to consider the socio-economic framework that this band was operating within and from which this work emerged, and this consideration encompasses issues of technology, audience, and economics.

For example, while it is problematic to analyze the stereotypical modernist formal characteristics shared by *Sgt. Pepper* and *Ulysses*, it is productive to consider what they represented a change from. The years leading up to *Sgt. Pepper* saw a development of the realist rock album that is analogous to the realist Bildungsroman in the years before *Ulysses*. Much the same as Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is considered by many to be the fullest realization of literary realism, the Beatles’ *Revolver* is consistently upheld as the pinnacle of song craftsmanship. In the same surveys mentioned earlier, *Portrait* was named by the Modern Library as the 3rd Greatest Novel in English of the 20th century, while *Rolling Stone* named *Revolver* the 3rd greatest rock album of all time. This meant that each of these works faced the dilemma of reorientation in the wake of their fulfillment of the established medium – lest they

simply repeat their previous artistic approach and thereby fail to move in the direction of the authentically new. As such, in contrast to the conception that the Beatles were at the height of their critical prowess with *Revolver* is the reality that by the time of *Sgt. Pepper*, for all their commercial success, “the Beatles were in accreditory limbo” (Gendron 189). This aligns itself effectively with the historical situation of Joyce at the time of *Ulysses*’ publication, when he was famously termed by Virginia Woolf as “a frustrated Titan” (Johnson xii), and subsequently felt the need to craft a dramatic departure from his established work.

The larger context of rock and roll at the time of *Sgt. Pepper*’s release points to a decided shift beyond the established realism of rock, and it is crucial to realize that the Beatles were not just breaking with personal creative stagnation, but rather signaling a seismic shift within the work of other rock artists. The work of countercultural artists like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez had by this time filtered into any number of mainstream rock performers, including Dylan himself, who had infamously in May 1966 forsaken his acoustic exclusivity in favor of the electric guitar. Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother and the Holding Company, and The Who had all just begun to generate critical buzz on the performance circuit, and Jimi Hendrix began widespread touring in October 1966. Most notably of all, The Beach Boys’ *Pet Sounds* album (1966) had marked that group’s shift to a more mature lyrical emphasis on love and nostalgia, and the musical innovations (with bells, whistles, and studio manipulation) were such that Paul McCartney has called it his favorite album of all-time (one that doubtlessly provided a significant inspiration for *Sgt. Pepper*, a point I will return to). In spite of this, the album only reached #10 on the charts, and was a commercial disappointment, which in retrospect is not surprising, given its precise historical context. The top two charting worldwide songs of 1966 were Frank Sinatra’s “Strangers in the Night” and (his daughter) Nancy Sinatra’s “The Boots Are Made for Walking;”

by 1967, the top charting song was Procol Harum's groundbreaking "A Whiter Shade of Pale," with songs by the Beatles, the Monkees, and the Doors rounding out the top five. This shift was, quite obviously, set in motion before *Sgt. Pepper*, but it was only with the release of the album that both its critical and commercial significance became wholly evident to the culture at-large.

Interestingly, Bernard Gendron observes that among the highbrow press "the prevailing view was not that the Beatles were operating at the cutting edge, but rather that they were harkening back to something aesthetically old and forgotten, something that contemporary modernism, and notoriously art music, had unfortunately lost touch with in its trajectory toward abstraction and experimentalism" (Gendron 200). This served as "a useful highbrow device for containing while praising the Beatles, denying them any claim to real hard-won knowledge of the devices they were appropriating" (Gendron 202). It also illustrates a further obstacle to critically aligning the Beatles alongside the high modernist figures within literature and art (and even other genres of music): while the popular press (then as now) lavished *Sgt. Pepper* with unrelenting praise, the highbrow accolades the Beatles received--while unprecedented and perpetually legitimating--would be both short-lived and dual-edged. Eventually, most highbrow critics settled somewhere in the vicinity of Ned Rorem, who despite his initial enthusiasm for *Sgt. Pepper*, ultimately did not consider the Beatles "very interesting to analyze" structurally, holding that they had "added nothing new, simply brought back excitement" (Gendron 201).¹⁶ Charles Gower Price, in assessing the legacy of the Beatles, holds that "what will outlast their identification with the 1960s and the phenomenon of 'Beatlemania' . . . is the quality of their musical production" (Price 209).

While this might be the case with any number of individual Beatles albums, the lasting impact of a work like *Sgt. Pepper* lies in its status as a cultural event and its enduring

achievements as a paradigm-canceling work in the high modernist tradition. In trying to account for the phenomenon that the album became, Ringo Starr admits that “there were lots of better songs on different records. It was the time, the attitude, it was the concept; the world was trying to change . . . It was in the air” (*Making*).

In the immediate aftermath of the album’s release, the popular and highbrow presses were in decided agreement that *Sgt. Pepper* constituted a definitive break with the traditional canon of rock music. The influential BBC music critic Deryck Cooke categorized Lennon and McCartney as “serious” composers that were purveyors of a “new music” (199), while a *Time Magazine* article claimed that the Beatles were making “an enormous contribution to electronic music” and that “serious musicians [were] marking their work as a serious departure in the progress of music--any music” (“Other” 63). Kenneth Tynan went so far as to immediately dub the release of *Sgt. Pepper* as “a decisive moment in the history of Western civilization” (Womack, *Long* 189). The Beatles’ technological experimentation, technical virtuosity, and synthesis of artistic forms all contributed to a thoroughly reoriented (and, within the popular imagination, lasting) conception of rock as form. It was little coincidence that, in a 1967 article about the Beatles, Marshall McLuhan notably observed “that the visually oriented and literate society of Western man is being replaced by an acoustically oriented, electronic society” (Gendron 202).

As such, the modernist monumentality of *Sgt. Pepper* involved the paradigmatic reorientation of its audience. The Beatles’ appeal was not limited by class: the band, background-wise, represents the triumph of the lower-to-middle classes (as the mythology of their poor, working-class, Northern-England-accent background bears witness)--but they just as surely offer a triumph for the highbrow upper class, which up to this point had few effective

intellectual avenues into rock music. The desire of all publications, be they high, middle, or low-brow to comment on the Beatles' work is, as mentioned earlier, a testament to their wide-scale cultural impact.

Nor was their popularity limited by nationality: Their appeal to a global audience was equally evident in this album. By the time of *Sgt. Pepper's* release, for example, the Beatles had sold over one million records in Denmark (a country of less than four million people), and were the unquestioned most popular musical group in the world (having toured in Japan and the Phillipines in the lead-up to the *Sgt. Pepper* sessions). There were a number of conscious gestures on *Sgt. Pepper* geared at expanding this audience even further--most notably George Harrison's well-documented foray into Indian music, "Within You Without You," which constitutes his contribution to the album. The Beatles seemed full cognizant of the trend toward a global world, in which, as Hardt and Negri have observed, "local" is a bad word (*Empire* 44). Both of the singles released from the *Sgt. Pepper* sessions, "Strawberry Fields" and "Penny Lane," are a testament to this, as they transform esoteric (and otherwise unremarkable) local references into ubiquitous global musical concepts.

The lyrics of *Sgt. Pepper*, alongside (or perhaps as a result of) this maturity, become a subject of analysis in a way that they had not been before. Complex lyrical themes were emerging in the work of several aforementioned contemporary artists, but outside the folk scene rock lyrics had largely been viewed as scraps of entertainment to fill in the gaps between the vocal harmonies and guitar riffs. *Sgt. Pepper* offered the first album cover to include the printed lyrics to its songs--proof positive of the lyrical interest the Beatles had inspired in conjunction with their musical art.

It was a direct result of looking into the Beatles' lyrics for symbolism and hidden meaning that *Sgt. Pepper* came under fire for its potential drug references.¹⁷ "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" was viewed as the lyrical expression of an LSD trip; "Fixing a Hole" was seen as a reference to injecting heroin; and "tak(ing) some tea" in "Lovely Rita" was taken as innuendo for smoking marijuana. This is to say nothing of the album's two most famous refrains, "I get high with a little help from my friends" and "I'd love to turn you on," both of which, while potentially innocuous, were offered as evidence that the album was governed by a drug culture mythology.¹⁸ "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" was banned by the BBC upon its release, as was "A Day in the Life" (and while the BBC has played the song in years since then, as of 2007 the corporation's ban on the song has not been lifted).

Such censorship, however, did not significantly hinder the Beatles from reaching a massive audience extending beyond the youth culture. In many ways, though, this loose potential association with drugs was necessary to echo contemporary concerns, particularly when considering Eliot's dictum of "ma[king] the modern world possible for art." The result of this universal popular acceptance was that *Sgt. Pepper* became the first rock album to win a Grammy for Album of the Year (a rather radical shift, considering that the most recent winners had included Bob Newhart, Judy Garland, Barbara Streisand, and Frank Sinatra).

Consequently, *Sgt. Pepper* cast a dark pall over many of the most prominent pop artists of the time with its establishment of a new paradigm and its incomparable popular success in doing so. Brian Wilson, for example, whose *Pet Sounds* album McCartney cites as a major influence on *Sgt. Pepper*, stopped touring with the Beach Boys in order to base himself exclusively in the studio, in large measure to compete with the Beatles' approach, before ultimately finding himself unable to finish his potential masterpiece (the now-famous *SMiLE*

album, which was ultimately re-recorded and released in 2004),¹⁹ lapsing into mental illness and creative stagnation. To a large degree, Wilson's frustration was the result of the very appearance of *Sgt. Pepper*. Much the same as *Ulysses*' realization was, in Eliot's now-famous terminology, "a scientific discovery," *Sgt. Pepper* indeed represented a paradigm-shifting discovery, and the Beatles had beaten Wilson to it. It is significant to consider that *Sgt. Pepper*, as opposed to being simply a liberating artistic gateway, was in many ways a crippling mechanism for any number of contemporary artists (Wilson being foremost among them). Compare this with George Orwell's assessment of *Ulysses*, in which he stated bluntly:

I rather wish I had never read *Ulysses*. It gives me an inferiority complex. When I read a book like that and then come back to my own work, I feel like a eunuch who has taken a course in voice production and can pass himself off fairly well as a bass or a baritone, but if you listen closely you can hear the good old squeak just the same as ever. (Orwell 139)

Beyond even the recording of the album, *Sgt. Pepper* contained an inordinate amount of peripheral considerations that stretched the boundaries of what an album could contain. While cover art had been around before this album, having been popularized by Alex Steinweiss (among others), it is with *Sgt. Pepper* that this artistic canvas moved to the forefront of aesthetic analysis and popular recognition; today, even those who have not heard the album, or even heard of the album, are apt to recognize the cover. *Sgt. Pepper* was one of the first to have a gatefold album cover, and was the first to include printed lyrics on the cover sleeve. It even included a sheet with cut-outs for role playing, including a moustache, stripes, and badges. To say the least, this album stretched the notion of what an album could do musically, visually, and materially.

Such reorientation of the established artistic unit brings to mind Jameson's assertion that "Joyce's conception of the chapter as a formal unit is, indeed, one of the supreme philosophical achievements of the modern movement" ("Existence" 207). By oscillating abruptly between episodes that are stylistically autonomous, *Ulysses* presents "virtually the archetypal emblem of

the process of episodization in modernism” (“Existence” 207). The Beatles also seek to make *Sgt. Pepper* episodic, but through an inverse method. Whereas *Ulysses*’ modernist achievement lies in the fragmentation of a traditionally-assumed whole, *Sgt. Pepper*’s artistic innovation was taking a collection of traditionally autonomous units (the rock single) and crafting a unified whole,²⁰ with its own governing logic--what would come to be known as a “concept album.”²¹ *Sgt. Pepper*, above all else, is an *album*. While this is the album people most readily associate with the Beatles and their legacy, its singles are not the songs that first come time mind when we think of the Beatles. In fact, no song on the album was ever released as a single, and, just as telling, only one has ever achieved success as a cover: Joe Cocker’s snarling rendition of “With a Little Help from My Friends.” By the time of *Sgt. Pepper*’s release, Tim Riley observes, “the Beatles weren’t so much songwriters as they were record writers” (266), and Paul McCartney concurs that, in contrast to their other records, the making of *Sgt. Pepper* “was more like writing a novel” (*Making*). While each song seems to stand on its own, they are collectively an act of imposing synergy.

What holds the album together (or, rather, how effectively it is held together) is a matter of some scholarly debate. Much the same as Jameson argues about *Ulysses*, *Sgt. Pepper*’s “narrativity is that of the episode and not of the work ‘as a whole,’ which we probably mean the *idea* of the work, its ‘concept,’ what the single word title of Joyce’s book is supposed, for example, to convey” (“Existence” 208). Not willing to take the album’s title as a sufficient unifying feature, Kenneth Gloag critiques the Beatles’ efforts toward cohesion by arguing that “although one may acknowledge the possibility of unifying processes such as ‘prominent lower descending lines’ or ‘fifth cycles,’ . . . the absence of any such clearly defined and precisely

situated unifying process undermines the musical integrity of the ‘concept’ of the album” (“All” 581).²²

In response to such criticism, Kenneth Womack contends that, while the Beatles create an intentional sense of fragmentation in *Sgt. Pepper*, “they clearly do so as artists bent on establishing a form of controlled chaos in which every note, every utterance has its place” (“Beatles” 224).²³ Everything on the album, from the chaotic barn animal noises in “Good Morning Good Morning” to the kHz tone after the final crescendo of “A Day in the Life” to the carefully selected figures represented on the cover, was the product of meticulous composition, production, and execution.

Time Magazine proclaimed, upon the release of *Sgt. Pepper*, that the Beatles’ “recording practices” are the “early steps in a brand new field,” comparable to “the shift from representational painting to abstractionism.” They are moving from “reproduc[ing] sounds as realistically as possible” to “building pure sound pictures” (Gendron 195). In accordance with Jameson’s claim that “all modernist works are essentially simply cancelled realistic ones” (“Beyond” 16), *Sgt. Pepper* goes to great lengths to ensure that its songs are not conventionally realist, starting with standard recordings and technically altering them. Moreover, it is not a stretch to assume that it was an intentional decision to limit direct references to the larger concept governing the album. The sort of criticism that Gloag levels against the album’s cohesion, then, is to be expected, in much the same way that “it is this tension, or even contradiction, which probably accounts for the tenacious stereotype of the ‘plotlessness’ of the modernist novel” (“Existence” 208).

Beyond its social and technological paradigm shifts, in keeping a focus on the economic “in the largest and most varied senses” (“Existence” 155), it is safe to say that everything about

Sgt. Pepper was huge economically in the largest and most varied senses imaginable. For a band that, by 1970, would sell 500 million albums worldwide, *Sgt. Pepper* would stand as the highest-selling single album. *Sgt. Pepper* was an enormously expensive to record (an estimated \$75,000 cost – a pedestrian amount today, but an extraordinary sum by the standards of the time), shoot (EMI normally spent £25-75 on photos for albums; for *Sgt. Pepper*, they spent £1,300 for permission processing and £1,500 for artist fees), produce (studio time came to over 700 hours, compared with 585 minutes for the Beatles' first album), and even to insure, as EMI studios insisted that the Beatles indemnify them for several million pounds against potential lawsuits. Prior to *Sgt. Pepper* the Beatles had only earned six cents per album; for this album, they received thirty-nine cents per copy. In the United States alone, it had advanced sales of 1 million copies, and within three months sold 2.5 million. It is worth remembering that even the cover of *Sgt. Pepper*, one of the most reproduced photographs of the last forty years, is itself an advertisement, and has been at least partly responsible for the album having remained in the popular (and, hence, economic) spotlight over the whole of that time period.

Huyssen aptly reminds us that “the youth movement created needs that could be exploited economically” (141), and the Beatles' effective identification with youth culture has often been viewed through the dialectical lens of artistic integrity on the one side and economic exploitation on the other. Frank Zappa, whose *Freakout* is often considered the first concept album, accused the Beatles of co-opting flower power for economic gain; Zappa and the Mothers of Invention followed this accusation with an album that provided a direct commentary on *Sgt. Pepper* (replete with a cover parody) titled *We're Only in it for the Money*. Outside of the obvious humorous quality of this gesture, Zappa might be accused of little more than sour-grapes envy, as the Beatles could easily have remained safely consistent with the format of *Rubber Soul*

and *Revolver* and not have exposed themselves to commercial risk.²⁴ The extremities of this vanguard movement--Captain Beefheart, Frank Zappa, and even Bob Dylan--are operating on a considerably inferior economic plane; in other words, it is not a given that this overtly psychedelic shift was really a smart move economically. True to form, the double A-side singles “Strawberry Fields Forever” and “Penny Lane” that were released in advance of (and separately from) *Sgt. Pepper* became the first Beatles’ single not to reach #1 in the U.K (finishing behind “Release Me” by the infamously-named Engelbert Humperdinck, a traditional singer of comparable style to Tom Jones and Frank Sinatra).

In fact, the Beatles’ consistently strong album sales - then and now - obscure the overall reality that the economic structure governing this moment was fleeting. In the wake of *Sgt. Pepper*, the Beatles--and rock and roll in general--went from a moneymaking machine to a problematic economic study: The Beatles’ creative corporate entity, Apple Corps., was largely a business disaster; their experimental follow-up album, *Magical Mystery Tour*, had comparatively disappointing sales, and the accompanying feature-length film of the same name was a cinematic bomb; Woodstock, the very embodiment of the youth culture the Beatles were seen at the heart of, while an undisputed cultural success, was a commercial flop. In contrast to other “serious” musicians of the time (from Bob Dylan to John Cage), the Beatles at the time of *Sgt. Pepper* stand as the enduring artistic hallmark for the dent they made in both mainstream culture and large-scale economics.

While it may be taken as axiomatic today that rock music evinces many of the foremost methods of artistic expression and creativity, this was not always the case. The Beatles, significantly, “were the first rock-and-roll musicians to be written about as musicians” (Teachout 60), and it was with the release of *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* in June 1967 that this

critical approbation reached its apex. The album was lauded enthusiastically by classical composers like Leonard Bernstein and Aaron Copeland, as well as noted critics Wilfrid Mellers, William Mann, and Hans Keller. In October 1967, Richard Poirier published in the *Partisan Review* a scholarly article entitled “Learning from the Beatles,” likening their approach to that of the auteurs of high modernism that had preceded them in other mediums.

The nature of the Beatles’ interaction with the audience underwent a significant shift with *Sgt. Pepper*, as well, as they made the decision to stop touring and playing live shows before recording the album – a bold transition for a band whose image to this day is, for many, one of live performance. The Beatles played over 1500 live shows between the late 1950s and August 29, 1966 – but only one thereafter (their infamous rooftop concert that concluded the recording of the *Let It Be* album). The Beatles no longer had to tour, as technology had advanced to where *not* touring might present a competitive artistic advantage. Instead, the Beatles crafted an album that could tour for them.²⁵

Although the Beatles served as perhaps the most thoroughgoing phenomenon of youth culture in the twentieth century (as the scale of Beatlemania in 1964 attests to), it was with *Sgt. Pepper* that we witness a declaration of their maturity--physically, artistically, and economically. Their appearance on the album’s cover with facial hair, with wax statues of their 1964 mod incarnation right beside them, signaled a clear message that the Beatles had moved beyond their former teenybopper idol selves, and that their audience was asked to do so as well.

This technological complication in performance draws attention to another formal danger in modernist periodization. Jameson explains that “only if the concept of modernism is promoted to the status of mature secular art, as such as happens in Perry Anderson’s brilliant historical excursus on the topic, does it become possible to relegate the various realisms to a

lumber room in which various formal oddments are stored, on their way to the ashcan of history” (“Existence” 159). Anderson’s warning against “the simple identification of modernity with technology itself” (319), though, is a key consideration, given that such a relationship would seem to align ideally with *Sgt. Pepper* and its technological progressivism and experimentalism. The recording techniques, packaging, distribution, and promotional material, for instance, were all distinct technological advancements that differentiated *Sgt. Pepper* from the previous work releases of other rock artists, including that of the Beatles themselves. Once again, though, such a formalist “simple identification” is incomplete, as it fails to take into account the historical impulses inherent to such application, and the decisive break with the established realist model that such technology engenders.

Anderson’s statement further draws attention to the economic component inherent in such a technological development. In the case of *Sgt. Pepper*, it was not simply a matter of this technology being available, but also of a band having the prior success to enable access to this technology. There is an inescapable financial aspect to the studio production of the album, in that it takes significant capital to make the kind of music one finds on *Sgt. Pepper*; the Beatles needed EMI’s financial backing to set their project in motion at all. This also represents a move beyond the realist, low-budget garage bands of the late 50s and early 60s. The permanent move into the studio represented “a revelation” for the Beatles, as Paul McCartney would remark in later years that they “gradually became the workmen who took over the factory” (Womack, *Long* 59). In an ironic (if symbolic) twist, the Beatles’ economic prowess not only made their technological capabilities possible, it made their *audience* (however mythical) possible, given that the cover design was well in excess of what EMI executives would have been willing to put up for any other artist in their catalog.

To be sure, not all of the musical innovations on *Sgt. Pepper* were technologically advanced – witness the comb and paper on “Lovely Rita” or the smorgasbord of traditional Indian instruments on “Within You Without You.” The range of instrumentation that *was* put into play on the album, however, represents a technological tour-de-force: the wah-wah pedal, the fuzzbox, direct injection, multi-track recording, magnetic tape, automatic double tracking, varispeeding, and the infamous backtaped messages. Following the Beatles’ lead, rock became an art form that might no longer rely on a four-piece band.²⁶ In a stunningly exponential increase from prior albums, there are 43 separate individuals credited in the studio recording of *Sgt. Pepper*. Geoff Emerick, the recording engineer for *Sgt. Pepper*, explains its prevailing technological mentality:

[Everything on the album] was either distorted, limited, heavily compressed or treated with excessive equalisation. We had microphones right down in the bells of the brass instruments and headphones turned into microphones attached to violins. We plastered vast amounts of echo onto vocals, and sent them through the circuitry of the revolving Leslie speaker inside a Hammond organ. We used giant primitive oscillators to vary the speed of instruments and vocals and we had tapes chopped to pieces and stuck together upside down and the wrong way around. (“Liner Notes”)

Ironically, this very emphasis on technological enhancement not only stands in for live performance, it rendered a live performance of *Sgt. Pepper* impossible at the time. Even given the comparatively primitive technology (by today’s standards) the group had to work with, the Beatles did more to draw attention to this album as an “album” than perhaps any rock band before or since. As Tim Riley attests, “The recording industry still measures itself against . . . *Sgt. Pepper* (recorded on two four-track recorders), even though digital circuitry is now far beyond the twelve-track mixing boards which were used to tape their last album, *Abbey Road*” (Riley 266).

Sgt. Pepper's cover is further exemplary of this trend. Wanting to establish a clean break from their previous work (as well as heeding the criticism of Robert Fraser that in time the intended cover would be judged as just another piece of 60s acid art), the Beatles and Fraser instead put together a complex set of photographs within a photograph, in which the band would figure prominently in the center. While it is easy to argue that the Beatles place themselves at the center of this creative montage, it is again useful to remember that - like Joyce - they move beyond their biographical selves; on this album, they are no longer the Beatles, but rather (quite literally) Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.

Walter Benjamin famously states that "in every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it" (255), and in this case the overpowering tradition was, quite ironically, the Beatles themselves.²⁷ This is once again made evident by the band choosing to place wax figures of themselves on the cover, and listing themselves among the influences of the Sgt. Pepper band. The Beatles, in the process, are effectively allowing themselves to stand in for the larger concept of rock realism with which *Sgt. Pepper* represents a significant departure. This assumes, of course, that the concept of the album was so eye-opening at that historical moment in part because its audience was expecting a continuation of the popular Beatles work with which they were so familiar. With respect to such a gesture, modernist artists, Jameson argues, "are obliged to recognize themselves; and autoreferentiality is the very dynamic of this process" (*Singular* 159). Womack clearly supports this claim, noting that "as with the enduringly prescient words of E. M. Forster--'Only connect!'-the album's ultimate theme invokes a signal import of self-awareness, and the awareness of others, at nearly every turn" (*Long* 184). The Beatles make *Sgt. Pepper* the determinate negation of themselves--much as Paul McCartney told *Newsweek* magazine in the lead-up to the album,

“We’ve barely started. Our best influences now are ourselves . . . You name it and it’s possible we could do it” (“Bards” 102). The sort of “everyman” incarnation the Beatles craft, which in turn offers a concert of dramatically eclectic material, is a decisive move away from the realist rock medium they had already perfected.

Beyond the technological experimentation, the unprecedented cover, and the unifying concept of the album in general, it is just as crucial to recognize how the autonomization of the Beatles as auteurs contributed to the paradigmatic significance of the album - and to the overall fragmentation of rock music in general. Against the prevailing trend of the day, from 1965 onward the Beatles recorded only material that they themselves had written. *Sgt. Pepper* complicated this trend further by increasing the range of musical material a rock band could be expected to perform (Indian, big band, carnivalesque, psychedelic, etc.) “Once this became common practice for most other rock groups,” Terry Teachout observes, “it was harder for ‘standards’ to emerge from the vast body of new pop music” (60).

Jameson has suggested in *Brecht and Method* that autonomization works in two directions: minimalization and the mega-project. Given the scope of its production, concept, and innovative ambition, *Sgt. Pepper* is clearly a mega-project, and a paradigm-shattering one at that. As appropriate for such a mega-project, it is important to remember that the Beatles were not *one* artist. While the group had largely constituted a unified set in the period up to *Sgt. Pepper*, the shift from live sets to multi-track studio recording in fact separated the group into four individual entities. A day’s work might now consist of recording a set independently and then waiting several hours to repeat the process. When asked to describe his memories of the album, Ringo Starr recounts, “I learned to play chess during *Sgt. Pepper*” (*Making*).

With these paradigmatic departures in mind, Franco Moretti's notion of modernist development provides a final useful context with regard to *Ulysses*. In his "Appendix" to *The Way of the World*, Moretti develops what the surveys of the Modern Library and *Rolling Stone* seem to suggest: that while *Portrait* and *Revolver* are the crowning achievements of their creators' realist periods, they are also significant failures in relationship to the modernist masterpieces of their creators, which abolish the formulaic in favor of a utopian "blank slate" of form. Moretti notably asserts that "the merit of *Portrait* lies precisely in not having solved its problem. Or in plainer words: the merit of *Portrait* lies in its being an unmistakable failure . . . And fortunately so. Had it been otherwise . . . we would have no *Ulysses*" (Moretti 243).

It would be equally scandalous to term *Revolver* an "unmistakable failure." *Revolver*, Tim Riley contends, "stands as the pinnacle of all [the Beatles] can do: there are no weak tracks, and most of what follows deserves to be measured against it" (268). He claims that *Sgt. Pepper*, on the other hand, while "the most famous [Beatles' album], is also the most overrated" (Riley 269). This is, however, once again to fall into the trap of using a purely stylistic or technical barometer to measure these albums' significance, as well as privileging the older realist definition of artistic excellence. Bernard Gendron concurs that *Revolver* is the Beatles' "crowning musical achievement," but emphasizes that this album "slipped by with hardly any critical notice by the cultural press" (189). It is ultimately insignificant that the individual songs on *Sgt. Pepper* are less "strong" (whatever this evaluative term entails); it would instead come to garner unprecedented critical acclaim under the new paradigmatic definition of excellence, that of the unified album. Much like *Ulysses* before it, what is crucial to this work are the larger implications of "event" and "concept," for which *Sgt. Pepper* has no peer within the rock musical catalog.

In addressing the influence, and the consequences, of *Sgt. Pepper*, and its ultimate place in the periodization of rock and roll, it is instructive to consider Walter Benjamin's observation that "a major work will either establish the genre or abolish it, and the perfect work will do both." While *Sgt. Pepper* did not abolish the concept album (hence its imperfection), it did give popular credence to it and raise the bar notoriously high for what was expected of any subsequent group to attempt in the genre.

In analyzing their body of work after *Sgt. Pepper*, it would be questionable whether the Beatles ever achieve anything that matches the obscurity of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (with the possible exception of the *White Album's* "Revolution 9")--at the very least, there is no subsequent album of theirs that mirrors such extreme avant-garde ambition. It is important to emphasize that the Beatles did continue to move *forward* on this aesthetic plane--*Sgt. Pepper* was by no means an aesthetic dead end--but it is in subsequent projects that attention is drawn to the limits of modernism, rather than its enormous potential.

This progression to a "late modernism" constitutes, in Jameson's words, "the experience of the failure of autonomy to go all the way and fulfil its aesthetic program" (*Singular* 209). While the Beatles' 1968 *White Album* was a larger album than *Sgt. Pepper*, it is not the mega-project that its predecessor is. It is a fragmentary assemblage, a raw accumulation to which the audience is privy to the failures as well as the successes, and one which fails to capitalize on the utopian spirit established by *Sgt. Pepper*. Even in a work as momentous and commercially/critically successful as *Sgt. Pepper*, the vast majority of the potential it generates goes unfulfilled. Indeed, when one listens to the album today, there is the tendency to be disappointed at the lack of advance rock has made in the forty years since.²⁸ In a final nod toward its literary modernist predecessors, Michael North states, "Though the prestige of Eliot or

Pound, if not of Joyce, has been considerably diminished since the days in which the whole of the literature could be named after one man, . . . [modernism] lives on, in a mummified state to provide a determinate negation for its successor” (11). Just as surely, the concept of *Sgt. Pepper* continues to serve as the artistic standard against which all subsequent rock albums are judged, and stands as the apex of the transitional historical moment of high modernism in rock and roll.

¹ A relationship that is notably treated in critical detail by the great modernist film auteur and theorist, Sergei Eisenstein, in his essay “Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today” in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory* (Harcourt, 1949).

² Jameson’s theory implies that there are not two distinct histories of rock *modernism*. Per Jameson’s dictum, the great schism within rock comes after the high modernist moment of “the Beatles and the Stones,” resulting in the divergence of “rock postmodernisms of the most appropriately bewildering kinds” (“Existence” 156). In spite of this statement, Andrew Goodwin argues that “from the point of view of aesthetic form, The Beatles and the Rolling Stones need to be differentiated: if the development of modernism is at issue here the increasingly artificial of The Beatles is modernist (self-conscious, ironic, knowingly artificial), in contrast with the ‘authentic’ rough-edged blues inflections of The Stones” (84). As a result, Goodwin continues, the Beatles “typified a notion of musical ‘progress,’ where The Rolling Stones . . . simply repeated a rhythm and blues formula which typifies a form of rock realism” (84). Goodwin’s argument is flawed in the overly formal analysis it employs, but raises the interesting concept that the Beatles and the Stones--for all their collective association with rock and roll--are actually part of different aesthetic movements.

³ This is significant to remember, as without considering the larger epistemological implications for such a microperiodizing operation, we are prone to settle for what Jameson terms “locally satisfying narratives” (*Singular* 180).

⁴ It is worth mentioning that “Periodizing the 60s” was written by Jameson in 1984, just over a decade after the official end of the 1960s, placing any analysis on this essay today at a greater distance than Jameson was from the 1960s. In short, this is a historical document of theory that merits historical contextualization in and of itself.

⁵ *The White Album* and *Abbey Road* have, as previously mentioned, been deemed by most critics to be postmodernist, but this also raises the question of where Jameson’s seminal concept of *A Singular Modernity*, “late modernism,” comes into play. While there are any number of stylistic features to these latter albums that may be categorized as postmodernist, they just as surely evince the classic traits of Jameson’s late modernism, from the contingency of language to a political response to the Cold War. In short, much as Jameson asserts that “it is with this late modernism that postmodernism attempts radically to break” (*Singular* 210), it is not a stretch to say that the rock postmodernisms of new wave, punk, and hip-hop are actually looking to break

from the late modernism of *The White Album* and *Abbey Road*, rather than from the high modernism of *Sgt. Pepper*.

⁶ As an intriguing side note, Karl Marx is actually represented as a member of the eclectic audience on the cover of *Sgt. Pepper*, directly between Oliver Hardy and H. G. Wells.

⁷ Interestingly, Kenneth Womack notes that, by the time of *Sgt. Pepper*, Paul McCartney “had become enamored with the electronic, experimental works associated with musique concrete-- and with Karlheinz Stockhausen’s *Gesang der Junglinge* [*Song of the Youths*] in particular. Paul was equally fond of the work of composer John Cage, the most famous pupil of the expressionist composer Arnold Schonberg” (146). It is equally interesting to note that one of the prize pupils of Cage was a young Japanese artist named Yoko Ono, who would eventually become John Lennon’s second wife.

⁸ As noted by Kenneth Womack, there are an extensive number of additional studies that have unfailingly categorized the Beatles as postmodernists; these include Henry W. Sullivan’s *The Beatles with Lacan: Rock ‘n’ Roll as Requiem for the Modern Age* (1995), David Quantick’s *Revolution: The Making of the Beatles’ White Album* (2002), Devin McKinney’s *Magic Circles: The Beatles in Dream and History* (2003), Ed Whitley’s “The Postmodern *White Album*,” and Jeffrey Roessner’s “We All Want to Change the World: Postmodern Politics and the Beatles’ *White Album*.” In Womack’s words, contemporary criticism has “collectively outed the Beatles as postmodernists—not that there’s anything wrong with being a postmodernist *per se*” (“Beatles” 223).

⁹ Gloag’s argument is one of particular development, as he goes on to state that while *Sgt. Pepper* “made claims towards unity, . . . it is somewhat paradoxical that this aspiration towards unity within popular music was to occur at a moment when the possibility of homogenous culture was most under threat and many specific art works questioned, at times even subverted, their own unified identity” (“All” 581). “The album,” he continues, “is diverse in the extreme; the differences between, for example, three consecutive songs such as ‘Within You Without You,’ ‘When I’m Sixty-Four,’ and ‘Lovely Rita,’ or the differences contained within ‘A Day in the Life,’ could not be greater” (“All” 583). The irony of such commentary in relation to modernism should not be lost – as this is precisely the historical situation that high modernist literature encountered, and precisely the sort of criticism that was leveled against the high modernist “twin towers” of *Ulysses* and “The Waste Land.”

Gloag, in subsequent work, backs off this accusation against *Sgt. Pepper* (or at least its relative situation), asserting that “the *White Album* (1968) features a significant rupture within the stylistic trajectory of the Beatles. . . . The *White Album* presents a reaction against the drive toward unity in *Sgt. Pepper* and embraces a higher sense of difference/plurality which was implicit but often resisted in their earlier work, qualities which render it readily available to a postmodern perspective and which will come to be seen as part of a wider fragmentation of popular music styles” (“Situating” 403). It seems safe to assume, though, that he would stop short of ever calling *Sgt. Pepper* “modernist.” Gloag seems unwilling to distance *Sgt. Pepper* from the *White Album*; there are limits to his willingness to micro-periodize, partly because of what (he claims) are the fragmentary stylings of both albums and, more likely, because of the

exceptionally small time period that elapses between these albums. It is evident that the compressed tempo that Jameson theorizes can often be uncomfortable and seemingly unfeasible.

¹⁰ Jameson, in support of this particular trait has written that “High modernism and mass culture . . . develop in dialectical opposition and interrelationship with one another. It is precisely the waning of their opposition, and some new conflation of the forms of high and mass culture, which characterizes postmodernism itself” (*Postmodernism* 195). The Beatles’ role in the conflation, however, was never one of an easy alliance between the highbrow and the popular; while they were adopted at various points by each side, it was for significantly different reasons. Their critical reception by the highbrow press in the wake of *Sgt. Pepper’s* release bears testament to this; as Gendron acknowledges, “highbrows were clearly neither inducting the Beatles into high culture . . . nor abandoning ‘serious’ music for them” (200).

¹¹ Womack futhers that “this rather transparent critical desire to classify the Beatles as postmodernists most likely finds its origins in an effort to ‘update’ the band by making them seem more trendy by virtue of postmodernism’s relative contemporaneousness” (“Beatles” 223).

¹² Herewith lies yet another similarity between *Ulysses* and *Sgt. Pepper*, as both were serialized in advance. While the release of “Strawberry Fields” and “Penny Lane,” and their accompanying promotional films, did not stir the sort of censorship that *Ulysses* episodes did in *The Little Review*, they did provide an advance perception of the direction of the project, and help to make *Sgt. Pepper’s* release the cultural event it was.

¹³ This draws attention to the ability of music to be more subversively representational than language. In contrast to *Ulysses* being banned on account of its linguistically symbolic portrayal of a male sexual climax, there was no cultural or political opposition to the famous crescendo of “A Day in the Life,” which George Martin says was designed to represent “an orgasm of sound” (*Making*).

¹⁴ This is another instance where historical distance distorts the subversive weight of much of the audience. For example, Karl Marx, who lends academic credence to the album today, was at the height of the Cold War seen as an extremely controversial figure, one who many felt aligned the Beatles with communism and Soviet sympathies.

¹⁵ As Susan Stanford Friedman has argued, any effective contemporary approach to modernism requires “jettisoning the ahistorical designation of modernism as a collection of identifiable aesthetic styles” (Friedman 432). It is the prevalence of such method within critical circles, Andreas Huyssen contends, that has led to “American criticism’s specific, and narrow, idea of modernism” and its expansive idea of postmodernism (Bertens 17).

¹⁶ Lest anyone think that such critical reservations were limited to the 1960s, consider Allan Moore’s 1997 book, *The Beatles: Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, which tellingly theorizes that “the chief legacy of *Sgt. Pepper* is, then, one of a failed striving for legitimacy” (81).

¹⁷ It should be noted that this interest in lyrical meaning and symbolism coincided with Paul McCartney's admission in May 1967 (only a month before the release of *Sgt. Pepper*) that the Beatles had indeed all smoked marijuana and taken LSD.

¹⁸ While not specifically in reference to drugs, Fredric Jameson has argued that "addiction is one of the pleasures of postmodernism." This brings up another clear distinction to establish, in contrast to what drugs would become in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s: that of the addiction and despair of cocaine, heroin, and crack. The drug use by the Beatles at this time was indeed part of their utopian project: it was recreational, exploratory, and, above-all, liberating. This would give way (very quickly) to the drug-related deaths of Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix, and Janis Joplin, to be followed by the drug-related deaths of two seminal figures of the rock "postmodernisms" that would follow, punk rock's Sid Vicious and grunge's Kurt Cobain. Even the Beatles' manager, Brian Epstein, would die of an accidental mix of sleeping pills and alcohol in August 1967, less than three months after the release of *Sgt. Pepper*. If one is to take this album's drug lyrics at face value, a useful contrast to consider might be "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" with John Lennon's 1969 "Cold Turkey" (a song that Lennon wrote in response to his heroin addiction).

¹⁹ Indeed, if the Beatles are James Joyce, and *Sgt. Pepper* is *Ulysses*, then Brian Wilson is just as surely Walter Benjamin, and his long-anticipated *SMiLE* album is the equivalent of Benjamin's *Arcades Project* – a long-lost, unfinished (albeit for considerably different reasons) masterpiece that effectively anticipates the future as well as any work of the time.

²⁰ Accordingly, *Sgt. Pepper* was the first rock recording to be mastered without rills, "eschewing any formal breaks between songs because [George] Martin had explicitly instructed the engineers not to band the album into individual tracks" (Womack, *Long* 170).

²¹ The Beatles were not the first to utilize the format of a "concept album," as previous rough attempts at the genre included Frank Sinatra's *Only the Lonely* and Frank Zappa's *Freakout*. The Beatles' supreme achievement lies in the popular, critical, and economic success that they enabled this form to achieve, as well as offering an ideology for subsequent concepts albums to measure themselves against.

²² Consider, however, how the mere presence of such a governing concept (however loose) works against Jean-Francois Lyotard's definition of the postmodern, which is an "incredulity toward metanarratives" (xxiv). It is also useful to consider how such a loose narrative construction works in relation to the unprecedented material presented on the album. No one would ever suggest that *Sgt. Pepper* was unlistenable, in the same way critics alleged that *Ulysses* was unreadable, but it was certainly more complex, difficult, demanding, and (ultimately) rewarding than any of the Beatles' previous albums.

²³ This assessment is in accordance with Eysteinnsson and Peter Burger, who explain that "a basic feature of the avant-garde work . . . is that it is made up of fragments without the aim of making them cohere with one another in a traditional sense" (210).

²⁴ For example, lost in the historical ubiquity of *Sgt. Pepper's* cover is just how critically acclaimed and successful the cover for the *Revolver* album had been. It was, at the time of its

release, “the Beatles’ most imaginative cover to date” and three months before *Sgt. Pepper’s* release won the 1967 Grammy for Best Album Cover (Womack, *Long* 150). The Beatles were breaking radically with a productive ideology that was commercially *and* critically viable.

²⁵ In some way, this sets up the dialectical question of whether the Beatles succeeded because of this approach, or whether this approach succeeded because of the Beatles. From a commercial standpoint, it is more likely the latter than the former, but the Beatles’ enduring critical legacy largely rests on such technologically-motivated avant-garde gestures such as these.

²⁶ Technologically, George Martin was the fifth Beatle. By the time of *Sgt. Pepper* the four members of the band were unbounded idea men (in the mode of T. S. Eliot) with George Martin being analogous (if only from an inspirational and editorial standpoint) to Ezra Pound. Martin’s expertise in classical music cannot be understated in the crafting of this work; the Beatles, who famously had worked to collectivize the creative rock process, had ironically necessitated a whole system of apparatuses for production with *Sgt. Pepper*.

²⁷ This notion of the Beatles myth has been touched on by scores of critics in the years since the band’s dissolution, not the least of which is Wilfred Mellers *Twilight of the Gods: The Music of the Beatles*, which was published just five years after the band’s breakup. Among the critics touched on in this essay, Tim Riley talks about “the Beatles’ myth” (260), while Kenneth Gloag observes a clear “shift towards a near-mythology of the 1960s in general and the Beatles in particular” (“All” 581).

²⁸ The “malaise of the late twentieth century” that Hans Bertens applies to Western literature is every bit as endemic in rock music (12). While the periodization of rock operates at a more compressed tempo, once this “catching up” process is complete it plays out much like that of its literary corollary.

CHAPTER 4
WHERE ARE THE WILD THINGS?: THE MODERNIST REVOLUTION AND BEYOND IN
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

That will be the mystery that will haunt me until the day of my death; what is that thing that comes into the work that is not premeditated, that you didn't think of, that actually belongs there but you don't know how it got there?

—Maurice Sendak

The 2005 release by W. W. Norton & Co. of the *Anthology of Children's Literature* stands as a revealing moment within children's literature in two ways. First, it serves as a landmark affirmation of the academic and critical viability of children's literature, a literary division that has historically been relegated to librarians and schoolteachers. With the *Norton Anthologies'* status as erstwhile arbiters of the literary canon, the appearance of a children's volume represents a definitive event in the acknowledgement of children's literature as Literature, a development that has been in progress since the establishment of English and literature departments in the university. The sheer size of the volume (2471 pages) speaks to the overdue nature of this literary compilation, as it judiciously includes a wide range of writers across an equally wide span of time.

However, while the current trend has certainly been toward the academic recognition of children's literature as a viable area of critical study,¹ the release of this literature in a separate volume highlights my second observation: there has remained strikingly little crossover between children's and traditional adult literature, particularly with regard to aesthetic periodization. Richard Flynn, in a recent issue of the *Children's Literature Association Quarterly (CLAQ)* devoted to boundary issues, begins by emphasizing that "the boundaries between 'children's literature' and 'adult literature' have shifted historically and have alternated between the rigid and the permeable depending on the political and cultural climate" (117). In their comprehensive 2002 study, *Introducing Children's Literature*, Deborah Cogan Thacker and Jean

Webb observe that “while a few key texts find their way into mainstream studies of the history of literature (Carroll’s two ‘Alice’ books are the best example), most are invisible to literary historians” (3). Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer, in an apt statement for English and American literature as well as that of her native Denmark, emphasizes that “the majority of authors are canonized in one, but not the other literary system, or are marginalized in both systems” (Beckett xiv).

The “Preface” to the *Norton Anthology of Children’s Literature* acknowledges that “typically, the term *literature* has excluded children’s literature--that is, children’s literature has generally been marked as separate from ‘real literature’” (*Norton* xxxii). However, presented with the opportunity to make a legitimate intervention against this prevailing logic, the anthology instead reinforces it by categorizing children’s literature by genre rather than by period or aesthetic ideology--placing works from the seventeenth century alongside contemporary children’s texts. This is partly a result of the belated construction of this anthology and the fact that it is the only collection of its scope on the marketplace. However, it nonetheless brings to light a troublesome issue in the periodizing of children’s texts. The prevailing trend has been to align the periodization of children’s literature with that of the literary mainstream, or excluding it altogether from the rigidly codified period definitions of modernism and postmodernism that have emerged. Both options are exceedingly unsatisfactory.

There have been some notable attempts to break down these boundaries in recent years. Juliet Dusinberre, in her landmark 1999 study, *Alice to the Lighthouse*,² argues that “children’s books should not be considered as a self-contained genre developing exclusively in relation to other children’s books or other literary works” (280). Building upon this observation, Karin Westman speaks against the perceived requirement that children’s literature be studied in

“categories of genre rather than chronology” (283-84). Indeed, the issue of *CLAQ* in which Westman’s quote appears is devoted to the study of modernism and children’s literature, and this very synthesis represents an innovation in itself. Westman admits that “children’s literature has not found its way into most conversations about modernism as a literary movement or modernism as a literary period” (283)--and this exclusion applies equally to conversations about postmodernism, late modernism, or any other period concept. As Sandra Beckett effectively observes, “if children’s literature does sometimes succeed in briefly arresting the attention of scholars and critics of mainstream literature, it is largely attributable to well-known authors who have crossed over” (xiii).

One reason for this critical oversight is the general marginalization of children’s culture. Even critics who have pushed the boundaries of literary studies over the past quarter century have generally failed to recognize the viability--indeed, essentiality--of children’s literature. Susan Stanford Friedman, for example, who admirably champions categorization with regard to “race, ethnicity, religion, class, national origin, sexual preference, abledness, and historical era” (471), fails to include “age” among her considerations. Equally significant is the consistent relegation of children’s literature to the status of a preparatory literature which is, by nature, inherently inferior to the adult equivalent. As Jacqueline Rose argues, childhood and (as a result) children’s literature traditionally have been seen as “part of a strict developmental sequence at the end of which stands the cohered and rational consciousness of the adult mind” (13).

This also may be attributed to children’s literature research itself, which Lena Kareland says “neglected literary aspects in favor of pedagogical considerations” (217). The emphasis on the didactic in both criticism and composition helps to account for the consistent lag between the

emergence of experimental practices in adult literature and their subsequent appearance--sometimes years, sometimes decades hence--in children's literature. And as a result of this lag, the historicization of children's literature may appear to be a self-contained project--and an optional one at that. Westman draws attention to the contemporary rejection of *Little Black Sambo*, first published in 1899, in theorizing that "only when a children's book no longer resonates with a particular cultural movement . . . do many readers become aware of that book's historicity" (284).

While the self-contained world of children's literature has often been isolated from the canon of adult literature, I would argue that critics (and the academy in general) should look to children's literature as a literary field ripe for periodizing consideration. To begin with, children's literature is not an exclusively or inherently developmental division. The quality of the best that children's literature has to offer is rarely called into question, a fact echoed by C. S. Lewis's assessment that "no book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally (and often far more) worth reading at the age of fifty" (100).

It is, furthermore, easy to forget Juliet Dusinberre's critical reminder that "children do not write their own books" (33). The adults who have written these texts are just as open to cultural developments and influences as those adults who write books for an adult audience. While writers of children's literature often express such cultural logics within a far more rigid set of generic, aesthetic, and thematic parameters, their work is no less expressive of developments in art and the world at-large. Indeed, Thacker and Webb argue, "if one traces the development of literature in the last two centuries and engages with shifts in aesthetic concerns, from Romanticism to Modernism and Postmodernism, it is possible to see the relevance of children's literature to a map of literature as a whole" (2).

However, even if one concurs that children's literature can be periodized in the same way as adult literature, there is the exceedingly complex question of how its periodization works in relation to the historical periods of literary modernism and postmodernism "proper." For example, is the high modernism of the children's book to be located in 1922, in historical synchronicity with Joyce's *Ulysses* and Eliot's *The Waste Land*? Or, does its unique generic specification necessitate entirely new period categorizations and concepts?

Nowhere does this question exhibit more potential for an answer than in the writings of Fredric Jameson. In spite of the fact that his work has traditionally not addressed children's texts and that his theories have been labeled as problematic in their application to children's literature, they are exceedingly valuable to a division of literature that has foregone historicization in favor of formal categorization. While Jameson admits that periodization is "intolerable and unacceptable in its very nature,"³ he just as quickly insists that, lacking all else, "simple chronology becomes periodization" (*Singular* 28, 24).

The issue at hand is thus not whether periodization is an absolute necessity (it is), but rather the *scale* at which one attempts to periodize. The operation of periodization is, Jameson notes, "enabled only by the very constitution of the historical object of inquiry, by a specialized focus which excludes other topics in order to fasten exclusively to this particular content" ("Existence" 228). In this case, a focus on children's literature demands a particular emphasis that has been consistently lacking from the broader studies of collective literary periodization. Jameson also admits that his periodizing hypothesis "clearly demands 'verification' by way of a very great range of historiographic materials" ("Existence" 228), so as to avoid "the simple abuse of periodization" (*Singular* 28), a dialectical conundrum that has both frustrated and motivated critics in his wake. Philip Nel's *The Avant-Garde and American Postmodernity*

(2002) is in many ways a detailed search for “alternative[s] to the worn out binaries of the modern-postmodern discussion” (40). Jameson’s conception of postmodernism has attained such canonical status that, Nel claims, we often take its formal definitions for granted. For example, while Deborah Stevenson terms Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith’s *The Stinky Cheese Man* as “the classic postmodern picture book” (32), she can only say this if we already know (or at least think we know) what postmodernism is.

Nel’s point is a valid one, for the danger of a purely formal periodization is the potential for an I-Know-It-When-I-See-It type of aesthetic categorization to emerge. Needless to say, such a method yields any number of “bad” periodizations. To say that Maurice Sendak’s *In the Night Kitchen* (1970) is a modernist work (as Nicholas Paley does) because of its scandalous child nudity, charges of obscenity, and avant-garde leanings offers a short-sighted view of the work’s period logic. On the other hand, to consider Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) a postmodernist work solely on account of the prominence that a nostalgic return plays in its narrative is equally faulty. Each theoretical application works, but only on the most limited, formal level. Periodizing a work along purely formal grounds is incommensurable with the kind of period work Jameson intends for his theory to encourage.

Instead, in accordance with Jameson’s “Always historicize!” demand in *The Political Unconscious* (1981), Nel insists that “what we experience as real is culturally contingent” (9). Furthermore, this culturally contingent reality is grounded in the notion that it is essential to identify a period movement by what it marks a transition from; and as these changes function across such a wide scale (in this case, the breadth of literature in English), the actual events that signal such paradigm change are sometimes not easily discerned. “The Event itself,” Jameson contends, “can never be present to the mind or the naked eye, and is detectable only in the terms

of this or that provisional solution” (“Existence” 228). Hence, the “event” that signals the onset of modernism in adult literature may not be the same one that marks a similar transition within children’s literature. Rather, the “synchronic system of capitalism” offers the potential for a series of non-synchronous modernisms, as Jameson insists that “one can only tell a given narrative of modernity in terms of its situation” (*Singular* 118, 57). It is important to keep in mind that, with regard to children’s literature, we are dealing with separate economic, hierarchical, and critical structures, which opens up the possibility for a periodizing framework that, while it may follow the trajectory of the classic realism/modernism/postmodernism schema, does so in a non-synchronous manner. Much in the way Jameson has developed non-synchronous periodizing models for film, and suggested the possibility of doing so for African-American literature, and the history of rock and roll, children’s literature unfolds at its own unique tempo. For Jameson emphasizes that “these three ‘stages’ are not symmetrical, but dialectical in their relationship to each other” (“Existence” 157); the fact that the realist dominant might give way to the modernist one at a later moment in children’s literature than in its adult equivalent does not signal a different aesthetic trajectory, but rather simply a different socio-economic situation particular to the scale of the genre.

These periodizations will never present an indisputable model, nor is this my goal. Such periodizing operations are exercises in which the existent period logic is “clarified, or at least usefully estranged” (“Existence” 155); and, as Jameson emphasizes, “along with the breaks comes the insistence on the merely partial and incomplete, never-to-be-completed or totalized object of study” (*Singular* 64). It is instructive to consider, then, that Jameson’s method does not overtly ignore children’s literature as much as it offers the opportunity to think it through his theoretical framework. When Jameson’s periodizing models are applied to children’s literature,

they reveal a historical development that is surprisingly in accordance with the trajectory of adult aesthetics: as Sandra Beckett argues, “strongly influenced by the aesthetics of modernism and postmodernism, children’s literature now reflects the dominant trends in adult literature and sometimes even initiates them” (xvii).

Just as significant as Beckett’s argument for the aesthetic relevance of children’s literature is her use of the word “now,” and its implication that children’s literature has not always done so. At the very least, as illustrated in the divide between the Golden Age of children’s literature and the high modernist apex of adult literature, there is a non-synchronous dynamic present in the development of children’s literature in the periods leading up to the postmodern present. But children’s literature complicates such non-synchronous periodization even more with the possibility that its modernism emerged on either side of historical modernism proper. This is notably evident in the nineteenth century “nonsense literature” of Lewis Carroll, whose famous wordplay in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871) offers an effective model for the linguistic experimentation of canonical modernists like Joyce and Stein.⁴ DusiBerre asserts that “radical experiments in the arts in the early modern period began in the books which Lewis Carroll and his successors wrote for children” (5), and demonstrates Carroll’s particular influence on the modernism of Virginia Woolf. Relatively unique among children’s writers from that time, selections from Carroll’s *Alice* books have already appeared in previous *Norton Anthologies* (namely the nonsense verse of “Jabberwocky” and “The Walrus and the Carpenter”), and his influence is equally undeniable on the emergent avant-garde children’s texts of the late 1930s. Thacker and Webb concur that DusiBerre’s conception of “Modernist art aris[ing] in part as a

response to the children's fantasies read by modernist writers in their childhoods is a tantalizing one, and deserves further exploration" (5).

This chronological suggestion is also exceedingly problematic with regard to periodization, for Carroll generally stands as the great aesthetic exception of the nineteenth century--consider the difficulty of naming a similar avant-garde children's writer from this time--and his model, influential though it would be, failed to spawn any immediate paradigm shift in children's literature itself. In short, the modernist dialectic would not assume prominence here; it was not until decades later that this modernist impulse assumed prominence over (or at least equality with) the realist voice--and the pinpointing of this moment of the development is the very function of periodization.

Consequently, we must also consider that such a non-synchronous children's literary modernism might come to its fruition *after* that of the literary mainstream. Children's literature presents its own unique situation with regard to reception, publication, and socio-economic development. As such, it applies to the aesthetic development of these other forms, such that we must account for "the non-synchronous dynamic of various or premature modernisms, their 'catching-up' (in Habermassian terminology) or indeed their untimely exhaustion" (Jameson, "Existence" 180). The modernist efflorescence within children's literature, consequently, may occupy a chronological position subsequent to that of its adult forebearer; even if we concede that children's literature is today in lockstep with the aesthetic periodization of art as a whole (a statement that is highly debatable), that is not to say that this has always been the case. Instead, it is essential to look to those texts and events that offer a legitimate transition out of the established paradigm of the Golden Age of children's literature.

This period concept of the Golden Age has maintained great popularity and conceptual cohesion since the term was coined by Roger Lancelyn Green in 1962. The period--which generally extends from the mid-nineteenth century to the first few decades of the twentieth century--is marked by the emergence of what would represent the canon of grammar school children's books for the first half of the twentieth century. "The moment of realism," Jameson says, "can be grasped rather differently as the conquest of a kind of cultural, ideological, and narrative literacy by a new class or group" ("Existence" 156); in this case, that new class or group is the child reader. Jameson also notes, though, that "realism is grasped as the expression of some commonsense experience of a recognizably real world" (*Singular* 120), and, from the beginning of this period, the most visible texts were identifiable by their social realism and moral message. Lena Kareland observes that "literature for children was, from the beginning, more related to the pedagogical field than to the aesthetic" (217), and the Golden Age of children's literature, as classically-attuned and morally-anchored as it was, demonstrates the fullest realization of the didactic within this form.

This period is also largely coterminous with the end of the dominant age of the realist novel in adult literature; yet interestingly it extends past the emergence of modernism and even into the high modernist decade of the 1920s. In recognition of this, Thacker and Webb note that "at a time when art and literature were experiencing an explosion of innovation in response to the changing world, the majority of children's books seem repetitive and derivative" (101-102). By the 1920s and 1930s, the exceedingly popular works of Richmal Crompton, Arthur Ransome, Noel Streatfeild, and Enid Blyton were still reflective of a compositional logic that was "self contained and solidly conventional" (Thacker and Webb 102), with the form and theme of early Golden Age texts remaining largely intact. Much like the period of the realism does for the

novel more generally, this period significantly informs our traditional conception of what defines a children's book, and helps to explain why the canon of children's literature has become so self-contained.

The brilliant island of Carroll's nonsense literature aside, children's literature of the nineteenth century proceeded famously into a Golden Age that was in effect dominated by a realist aesthetic. Critics such as John Cech draw attention to the fact that the latter part of the Golden Age of children's literature corresponds with the apex of high modernism in adult literature. The reasons that children's literature did not more synchronously reflect the changes in adult aesthetics are the subject of some debate. Hope Howell Hodgkins accounts for this phenomenon in that "high modernism had created a literature that, as Joyce remarked of Eliot's *Waste Land*, was 'no longer for ladies'--and by implication not for the children either" (356). Franco Moretti explains this aesthetic divide somewhat differently in terms of sanctuary rather than prohibition: "The adult world refuses to be a hospitable home for the subject? Then let childhood be it" (231).

In spite of this--or perhaps because of it--a number of the most canonical figures and aesthetically progressive works within the adult literature of this time reveals a striking emphasis on childhood and forays into children's culture, most notably in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, but equally in works by Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, and Henry James. These works, in the words of Thacker and Webb, "reflected the search for 'self' amidst the alienation of modern living" (102), and directly addressed the delicate progression from childhood through adulthood. However, nowhere in these texts does one to find an outright glorification of children's culture. Elizabeth Goodenough, in analyzing the breadth of Woolf's work, observes that "it is remarkable how rarely children talk in her novels" (184). More

specifically, Peter Coveney notes that in *The Waves* “there is no attempt at rendering [the character’s] sensations into a child language” (318), while *To the Lighthouse* “conveys a great pessimism about childhood” (314). With regard to Joyce, while *Portrait* famously begins with “Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road” (3), it is crucial to remember how thoroughly Stephen Dedalus subsequently rejects (indeed, apologizes for) his previous childish self. Ultimately, Hodgkins argues that within the canon of high modernism, “children are portrayed largely in terms of deficiency (as not-adults) or, at best, as avatars of the adult-to-be” (356-57), and this statement proves exceedingly applicable when coupled with the archetypal Golden Age construction of childhood.

In response to this, Karin Westman sensibly asks “how a survey of children’s literature would look with an emphasis on modernism rather than the Golden Age of children’s literature” (286). One method of pursuing this suggestion is to consider works that were explicitly written for children by canonical modernist writers. For while no one would mistake *Portrait* or *The Waves* as legitimate children’s texts or picture books, Joyce and Woolf did both author children’s books.⁵ Such analysis gets complicated very quickly, though, as these works--Joyce’s *The Cat and the Devil* and Woolf’s *Nurse Lugton’s Curtain*--were both published posthumously in 1965, and neither was intended for publication. One could question if, in Woolf’s case, the book was even intended for children, given that, as Hodgkins notes, “an opening sentence employs no fewer than five semicolons” (361). Additionally, despite the fact that *The Cat and the Devil* was written expressly for his grandson, Stephen, Joyce incorporates an extended speech in French without offering an accordant translation. Whatever children would read these texts would be expected to be advanced linguistically. Even the story’s climax is fraught with symbolism, as

the Devil curses the citizens of Beaugency and says he will turn them all into cats (“Vous n’etes que des chats!”), although the book does not go on to illustrate or describe such transformation.

Even the quality of production in these cases is somewhat questionable. Woolf’s imagery oscillates between forced (“Over them burnt Nurse Lugton’s thimble like a sun”) and nondescript (“Really, it was a beautiful sight”). *The Cat and the Devil*, meanwhile, offers little of the wit that Joyce would parlay into literary immortality (the subsequent illustrations by Gerald Rose prove at least as entertaining as the text itself), and it is narrated in the form of a letter largely because it originally *was* a letter. As Hodgkins effectively observes, “clearly Joyce did not labor long over this text” (362). In looking to such canonical figures as the foundation of children’s periodization, the result seems exceedingly clear: while Joyce’s and Woolf’s writing *about* children can be effectively periodized, their writing *for* children is decidedly limited.

To locate the advent of high modernism in children’s literature, one must instead look to those writers who specialized in this particular form, and even more specifically those that pushed the boundaries of the form that the Golden Age had perfected. For example, Margaret Wise Brown, according to Jay Livernois, “projected the childlike spirit of the avant-garde to an extraordinary degree” (140). Even in this case, however, Livernois’ confidence in characterizing Brown as a modernist is due in no small part to Brown’s having edited a children’s book by Gertrude Stein: *The World is Round* (1939). Thacker and Webb focus specifically on Pamela Lyndon Travers’ *Mary Poppins* (1934), E. B. White’s *Charlotte’s Web* (1952), and Mary Norton’s *The Borrowers* (1952) as their critical examples of modernist children’s literature. While such categorization conforms to the suggestion that the modernism of children’s literature is non-synchronous with that of its adult counterpart, it would be difficult to discern definitive

aesthetic breakthroughs in these works, to say nothing of the fact that none of these texts would be considered Caldecott-eligible works.

Rather, Jameson's periodizing model privileges "the supreme value of the New that seems to preside over any specific or local modernism worth its salt" (*Singular* 81). As such, one must look beyond those works that offer the affirmation of existent form in the recognition that "the interpretation of a break or gap in terms of separation is a promising starting point for a rather different theory of the modern" (*Singular* 74). "The function of any cultural revolution," Jameson insists, "will be to invent the life habits of the new social world, to *de-program* subjects trained in the older one" ("Existence" 164), and such a realization speaks to the necessity of reconceptualizing the traditional advent and boundaries of modernism. For example, Hodgkins contends that children "receive little in the high modernist era, which in its peculiar aloofness from childhood makes an island between Victorian sentimentality of the Golden Age and postmodern interest in children" (357). However, this is to subscribe to the traditional notion of what constitutes the high modernist era within children's literature. In effect, the persistence of the Golden Age dominant throughout the 1920s and early 1930s is incommensurate with a properly modernist development in children's literature, as its epochal break with realist ideology occurs at a later moment.

In positing the moment of such a break, a legitimate case could be made for the publication in 1937 of the first children's book by Theodore Geisel--better known to the world as Dr. Seuss. Seuss might seem today like an unlikely revolutionary figure, given his absolute assimilation into contemporary popular culture. However, within the context of his historical moment, Seuss was incomparably revolutionary: When asked if his work was intended to be subversive, Seuss responded, emphatically and iconically, "I'm subversive as hell." While the

high modernists of adult literature have never been fully accepted by the popular masses (a fact that again raises the stereotypic divide between elitist academicism and mass culture), the same cannot be said of a figure like Seuss. Nel observes that “the recent mass commercialization of Seuss threatens to absorb his critical edge, to transform ‘Dr. Seuss’ into another Disney, one of many blithe affirmations of consumer culture dominating America’s cultural landscape” (68).

In spite of this, Nel argues that, in addition to Seuss’s current status as the foremost children’s author of the twentieth century, he “may also be considered a high modernist author” (69). There is sufficient theoretical and historical evidence to support this claim. The experimental language Seuss is noted for would eventually surpass even that of Lewis Carroll and represents a definitive logic across the breadth of his compositions. Works by Seuss tend to veer toward verbal gamesmanship, with the narrative that builds up to a surrealist *mise-en-scène* by story’s climax, which is in general alignment with Jameson’s emphasis on the “autoreferentiality” of modernist works, which are “allegories of their own production” (*Singular* 159). “Wuzzle,” “Lorax,” and “Zizzer-Zazzer-Zuzz” may each come across as striking and grammatically subversive, but they fit seamlessly into the texts that Seuss constructs around them.

Furthermore, Seuss’s work offers little of the moral certitude and inculcatory emphasis of the Golden Age’s primary texts, a division that further explains the bemused reaction by the publishing industry to Seuss’s unprecedented material. Seuss’s first children’s book, *And To Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, was rejected by twenty-seven publishers before it was accepted by Vanguard Press, and was, Nel records, “rejected precisely because editors thought it lacked ‘moral or message’ and contained nothing that would help in ‘transforming children into good citizens’” (42). His work is instead grounded in the dialectic of and founded on the

principle that imagination is the clearest avenue to reality, with a style of art that fluctuates almost imperceptibly between the inner-consciousness of Marco, the child protagonist, and the material world. Marco does imagine a scene that is progressively more unrealistic, culminating in a blue elephant and two giraffes carrying a Rajah and carting a brass band. However, his imagination is also both productive (as it inspires him on his walk home) and considerate (he takes into account traffic patterns, the burden on the elephant, and even a potential audience for the band).

Jameson contrasts the “conventional account of modernist innovation,” with the observation that it is often “not a matter of new materials so much as the continuous invention of new taboos on the older positives” (*Singular* 156-57). Seuss provides a useful example of this in bringing avant-garde techniques and topics to children’s literature. At the very least, Nel insists, Seuss must be recognized for “mastering the formal qualities for which high modernism is praised” (69). The autonomy of formal characteristics within his work, as well as the utopian nature of his themes and narratives certainly places Seuss in the same conversation with Joyce, Stein, and Woolf, and as a result, Nel says, Seuss is a figure that “did challenge accepted notions of high modernist art” (48). But to say this is only to posit Seuss’s approach directly against the preexisting development of high modernism in other mediums. Within children’s literature, on the other hand, this style was unprecedented, uncharted, and outright revolutionary (as opposed to artistically reactionary).⁶

Just as crucial to this paradigm shift is the reorientation that the period logic offers the gap between adult and children’s culture, which were exceptionally fractured in the literature of the 1920s. Thacker and Webb explain that “the function of children’s literature, to offer a comforting vision of the world, as well as to entertain, becomes more difficult as the social

spheres of children and adults become more separate” (112). Seuss’s work was largely responsible for bringing these two worlds back within range in children’s literature by confronting this division head on. Seuss wrote *Mulberry Street* as a direct commentary on the adult stifling of children’s imaginations, with Marco’s recantation of his imaginative experience at story’s end highlighting the gap between adult and children’s perspective. Both *Horton Hatches the Egg* (1940) and *Horton Hears a Who!* (1954) offer an extended illustration of fidelity to tenuous and developing figures on the part of a larger, more-established individual (to the point where the symbolic onus is placed as much on the adult as on the child). Even a later work like *The Cat in the Hat* (1957), which definitively separates the experience of Sally and her older brother from the experience of their mother, just as surely places the children in a position of autonomy (indeed, maturity) and lends credence to their creative impulses and inner logic in the context of an adult world.

The utopian nature of Seuss’s work is plainly evident, in accordance with Jameson’s definition of the true modernists, who “did not wish to endorse a system . . . in which the task of the artist is simply to replicate a given form and to supply new examples of it (with whatever distinctive twist)” (*Singular* 199). In addition to his originality of plot and objective, Seuss develops a series of “private languages” that further align his work with these classical modernists (*Singular* 199). While *Mulberry Street* is relatively traditional in its grammar and word choice, it set in motion a trend which would lead to Seuss’ more verbally-experimental works like *Bartholomew and the Oobleck* (1949) and *If I Ran the Zoo* (1950). In spite of the seeming elementary nature and length of his texts, Seuss’s attention to form was such that revising and rewriting a work as brief as *The Cat in the Hat* took him about a year. It is even

worth noting that Seuss's editor, Saxe Commins, also edited the work of William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, and Eugene O'Neill.

While Seuss seems to provide a definitive example of the modernism of children's literature, Jameson provides a legitimate warning against too easy a certitude. Periodization, by its very nature, attempts "to unify . . . hosts of realities whose interrelationships must remain inaccessible and unverifiable, to say the least" (*Singular* 28), and we must be wary of this even with positing Seuss's emergence as a definitive break. Golden Age-style books still represented the bestselling children's texts well into the Seuss era, as it took time for his popular fame and critical recognition to match his creative output. Much like Joyce, Stein, and Woolf (none of whom ever won the Nobel Prize), Seuss never won a Caldecott Medal. In addition, Seuss also illustrates the relative dangers of aligning a single individual's career with a larger aesthetic paradigm, as his sheer breadth of production is complex from a periodizing standpoint. Nel observes that "because he is seen as merely a popular children's author, few notice that . . . [his career] spanned both modern and postmodern periods" (41). Some of the traits that no doubt make figures like Woolf and Joyce magnets of modernist ideology are problematized by a figure like Seuss, whose career runs from the twilight of traditional literary modernism to the end of the Cold War. There are, rather, multiple incarnations and developments. Although, with regard to genre, *Mulberry Street* occupies the same relative space as *The Sneetches and Other Stories* (1961) and *The Butter Battle Book* (1984), the latter are two highly time-specific works whose content, technique, and tone would have been impossible at the advent of Seuss's career.

Furthermore, while Seuss's individual works may be time and place specific, even a close inspection of the breadth of these books does not yield another formal paradigm shift, in the same way that the initial emergence of *Mulberry Street* did. In spite of the influence his work

would have on subsequent writers and artists (for both adults and children), it fails to render the next great “deprogramming” of the dominant ideology of children’s literature. And this, ironically, is perhaps the most modernist quality of all that Seuss demonstrates. For much as canonical modernists like Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot remain indelibly linked to their individual styles,⁷ one can easily recognize the writing of Seuss at a glance – perhaps more readily than any other writer of the twentieth century (to say nothing of his illustration, which is equally distinctive within the annals of twentieth century art). Seuss’s style remains, in effect, Seuss’s style. While there were a number of other significant, groundbreaking writers of children’s literature at this time, it is with the epochal event conferred by the emergence of Seuss that, to quote Jameson’s explanation of modernist transition, “the ‘common sense experience of a recognizably real world’ is easily unmasked as little more than a cultural paradigm in its own turn” (*Singular* 122). The autonomy of Seuss’s language, theme, and art generated a liberating freedom within children’s literature composition and publication that is enduringly emblematic of a modernist break within the form itself.

Even within those works that have critically addressed the periodizing implications of children’s literature, there has been a veritable certitude that the modernist period feeds directly into a subsequent postmodern aestheticism. Thacker and Webb’s book, for example, is divided into sections on “Romanticism,” “Nineteenth-century literature,” “The *fin de siècle*,” “Modernism,” and “Postmodernism.” The problem with this assumption, particularly in the context of Jameson’s theory, is that such definitiveness represents its own form of bad periodizing. As periodizing is an exercise in the “dialectic of continuity and rupture,” Jameson insists that it is “a process that cannot be arrested and solved, in and for itself, but generates ever new forms and categories” (23). In his work on Seuss (and beyond), Nel emphasizes “the flaws

of a modern-postmodern conceptual paradigm” (113), as this binary construct often reduces an exceedingly complex historical analysis to little more than a list of formal comparisons. Even Thacker and Webb, in spite of the structure of their book, assert that “narrative fractures and an underlying sense of doubt about the possible worlds offered in the fictions suggests a transitional phase as Modernism anticipates a postmodern response to an alienating and decentered world” (112). In *A Singular Modernity*, Jameson directly confronts this tension, and contends that “it is perfectly proper to speak of two moments of modernism”: high modernism and “a moment of late modernism, in contrast to modernism proper” (150). This latter aesthetic period, for which Beckett and Nabokov are held up as the paradigmatic examples, is responsive to the modernist ideology that develops in the 1940s and 50s. The idea that we can now argue what modernism is, gives rise to an “other, complementary moment, in which the break becomes a period in its own right” (*Singular* 26).

Where exactly to pinpoint this break is, again, a matter of critical debate. Crockett Johnson’s *Harold* books, beginning with *Harold and the Purple Crayon* in 1955, present a compelling case for aesthetic progression, as does the work of Margaret Wise Brown, whose enduringly-popular and wonderfully-simple *Goodnight Moon* (1948) has been labeled by Susan Cooper as the only “realistic story” to attain the collective affection of a traditional fairy tale. Meanwhile, Ruth Krauss’s *A Hole is to Dig* (1952) represents an effective departure from not only the traditional children’s book, but also from the traditional dictionary (as is evident by the very definition that the title provides). This work additionally offers one of the first published projects of Maurice Sendak, who would go on to illustrate seven more books by Krauss between 1953-60. Again, while Krauss’s work may appear relatively unremarkable today, Sendak felt at the time that Krauss “was writing the most original postwar books in America, but no one paid

any attention, because they were ‘children’s books’” (Zarin 41). In feeding off such creativity, Sendak employed a non-linear illustration technique in his work for her book, and notes that “there are more hermaphrodite children in *A Hole is to Dig* than in any other work of literature” (Zarin 41).

It is with Sendak’s own books, however, that this late modernist transition finds perhaps its most effective and visible expression, and the publication of *Where the Wild Things Are* in 1963 marks as significant a transitional moment as the appearance of Seuss’s work twenty-five years prior. Sendak was the most popular children’s writer to have emerged at this time and *Where the Wild Things Are* has been the most readily analyzed and critiqued of Sendak’s texts. It remains, despite the impressive diversity of Sendak’s body of work, an effective demonstration of Sendak’s aesthetic ideology. It also represents an anomaly as a decidedly canonical text within a decidedly non-canonical time period. For example, a San Antonio College website entitled “Landmarks in the History of Children’s Literature,” which begins in 990 AD with Aelfric’s Colloquy and contains over 120 entries, comes to an abrupt conclusion with *Where the Wild Things Are* – the last seeming consensus masterpiece within the contemporary canon of children’s works.

In accordance with this, Jennifer Shaddock notes that *Where the Wild Things Are* “holds a treasured position on perhaps more bookshelves than any other American picture book in history” (155). However, she just as quickly emphasizes that “Sendak’s book is inextricable from its own historical period, that of the American cultural rebellions of the 1960s” (157). This point is easy to forget, given the relative ahistoricity of its narrative and setting, and its seamless suffusion into the culture of each decade since its publication. John Cech, in his 1995 study of

Sendak, *Angels and Wild Things*, explores the paradigmatic significance of this work even further:

It is perhaps difficult for us to imagine today the full significance that *Where the Wild Things Are* must have had on this world and these assumptions, but an analogy from another art form offers this perspective: the arrival of *Where the Wild Things Are* was the aesthetic equivalent for the picture book that the famous 1913 premier of Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* was for modern music--electrifying, controversial, precedent setting--a point of departure from which there could really be no easy return to the same forms and subjects. The spirit of the times and the creative spirit of the artist were in complete harmony, and together they produced a work that challenged its readers and other creators of picture books to fundamentally change. (110)

While Cech analogizes the departure of *Where the Wild Things* with that of musical modernism, the point here is not so much the period comparison as the transitional parallels. Sendak himself explains, "I brought to the industry the rebellious kid, because I came with a particular idea of what a children's book was supposed to be" (Zarin 41). The early works of Sendak were not written exclusively with children in mind, and were instead classified as children's books largely because they were published by children's publishing houses. In spite of their origins, "they have become children's classics, due to the fact that their subject matter--children, animals--and their themes, about the search for independence, or the finding of 'home,' were attractive to publishers of children's books and not to publishers of adult books" (Thacker and Webb 7). Sendak emphasizes that this formal separation is arbitrary and insignificant,⁸ instead drawing attention to "a time in history when books like *Alice in Wonderland* and the fairy tales of George MacDonald were read by everybody. They were not segregated for children" (Haviland 244). The enduring popularity of *Where the Wild Things Are* can be at least partly attributed to the fact that, much like Seuss before him, Sendak breaks down this perceived wall between adult and children's culture, and crafts a work that may be artistically and thematically meaningful for readers well into adulthood.

This is not to say, though, that these two paradigmatic writers achieve their ends through equivalent means. The formal and thematic devices employed by Sendak, as well as the cultural context his work responds to, differ greatly from the early work of Seuss. To begin with, in contrast to the verbal experimentation made famous by Seuss, Sendak places emphasis on illustration above language: the narrative is driven by the visual rather than the verbal. Sendak's text is not opposed to language⁹--witness the ongoing analysis that critics have devoted to the book's minimalist, yet significant, text--but his work has clearly moved beyond that of whom Hodgkins calls the "high modern 'priests of art,' for whom words are the all-important medium" (360). This may be due to the realization that visual expression in a children's book could be more progressive and subversive than outright linguistic experimentation. Sendak recalls a meeting with Random House in the late 1950s to discuss whether he could use the word "burp" in a children's book (Sadler 243), and notes that he did not encounter the same editorial discouragement in his artwork. He would later push the boundaries of this theory further with *In the Night Kitchen* (1970), which infamously depicts a nude child named Mickey within a dreamlike kitchen.¹⁰ While the resultant controversy and censorship of this text has been well documented (including ranking 25th in a 1999-2000 list of the American Library Association's "100 Most Frequently Challenged Books"), it is important to emphasize that this was still a children's book that was published (and re-published), and one that has remained a staple of the canon of children's literature, something that would not have been the case for a work that directly employed sexual or vulgar language.

The innovation at work in *Where the Wild Things Are* goes beyond artistic subversion, as the political implications of this work are pervasive and essential to any comprehensive cultural understanding of the book. Jameson asserts that "it is the very emergence of some full-blown

ideology of modernism that differentiates the practice of the late modern from modernism proper” (*Singular* 197). This ideology of modernism is a belated development, making “Late modernism . . . a product of the Cold War” (*Singular* 165), with all the attendant political heaviness that comes with such association.¹¹ There are any number of ways we could read into such political motivations and immediate cultural influences in *Where the Wild Things Are*, from the iron curtain that the ocean between the lands represents to the growing autonomy of youth culture in society that Max’s imaginative world reflects, to the hairy “wild things” which are in many ways representative of the emerging denizens of the East Village at that time. In this context, it is safe to say that *Where the Wild Things Are*’s popularity among college students is partly due to Sendak’s admission to smoking marijuana while writing the book. Sendak’s work also offers the potential to be read as a post-nuclear text, and its narrative arrangement is characteristic of many post-World War II children’s books, which Thacker and Webb observe “combine the recognisable world with elements of the fantastic to offer a more complex rendering of postwar angst – of a pessimistic view of ‘civilisation’ and an unease about the possibilities of speaking to children through fiction” (111).

As such, *Where the Wild Things Are* fits more neatly than one would expect into the often confusing and circuitous framework of late modernist periodization. Certainly there are “modernist” elements to this work, and there are any number bad periodizations that could be gleaned from such purely formal association. Much like “Eliot’s work points to a genuine Absolute, that is to say, a vision of total social transformation” (*Singular* 164), the land where the Wild Things are certainly represents an attempt at such a utopian community, and an imaginative turn toward individual “autonomy” (which, along with “autoreferentiality,” is one of Jameson’s favorite terms with which to characterize modernism).

Upon closer examination, however, Sendak's work is just as surely a refutation of these formal modernist traits. If Nabakov and Beckett are the masters of the late modern in conventional literature, the same case could certainly be made for Sendak with regard to children's literature. *Where the Wild Things Are* represents a quintessential illustration in the dialectical method regarding cultural barriers. Modernism, for Jameson, is founded on the dialectic of high culture and mass culture--the postmodern represents the collapse of this binary. Late modernism, on the other hand, privileges their absolute separation as "culture . . . stands between the boundaries [between art and everyday life] and the space of passages and movements back and forth" (*Singular* 178), and this is, it could be argued, precisely what we witness in *Where the Wild Things Are*. Note, for example, the casual pose Max strikes on the boat ride over to where the Wild Things are, in contrast with the serious stoicism he evokes on the way back to the "real" world. Note also the fact that his autonomy is on full public display with his name on the side of the boat on the trip over, while on the trip back the side of the boat we see is conspicuously blank. Max is returning to a world of conventions and cultural hierarchy and submission, and he is doing so willingly.

The immediate acceptance of Sendak's work is further testament to a period development which has moved beyond overtly experimental modernism. *Where the Wild Things Are* was both a critical and economic success from the outset; the book won the Caldecott Medal as the best picture book of 1964, in addition to the prestigious Boston Globe-Horn Book Award. As mentioned prior, for all his eventual economic accomplishment, Seuss never won a Caldecott; Sendak's work, meanwhile, was more mainstream (if still controversial) by the time it emerged, in large measure because of a receptive public that figures like Seuss had cultivated for a generation.

To further pursue the period logic derived from late modernism, Sendak's language, as mentioned, contains none of the ornate flair of Seuss's more elaborate work. This is in keeping with the trend established by the earlier work of writers such as Ruth Krauss, whose *The Carrot Seed* gained notoriety as one of the shortest picture book texts (101 words) at the time of its publication. In *Where the Wild Things Are*, the elaborate illustrations are countered by white pages almost wholly devoid of text, and Sendak's decidedly minimalist linguistic approach is even silenced altogether during the famous panoramas of the "wild rumpus" where Max and the beasts revel in wild concert. Instead, Sendak's approach is one that recognizes the limits of its artistic synthesis, never delving into the purely abstract visual or the sort of verbal abstraction that pervades Seuss. Max never names these Wild Things or the island they live on, and, in spite of their fantastic nature, the Wild Things fit neatly on the page in surprisingly seamless conjunction with the rest of the book's settings and characters. They are grotesque, but fittingly so.

In such a way, *Where the Wild Things Are* is emblematic of Jameson's notion of "late modernist contingency," with its "far more modest and comprehensible aesthetic autonomies" (*Singular* 209). Again, much like the work of Beckett, the language is decidedly minimalist and conciliatory; in the same regard, much like Nabokov's writing of the time, it offers an exceedingly comprehensible structure and narrative storyline. After all, in terms of large-scale narrative construct, *Where the Wild Things Are* is hardly groundbreaking. Perry Nodelman discerns a pattern in children's literature, going back to the "Golden Age," of home/away/home,¹² "in which characters move from a home that is safe but boring and embark upon adventures away which are exciting but dangerous, and return home with a new appreciation of its solidity and safety and its role in shaping subjectivity" (Hemmings 70). This,

however, obscures the fact that this was a revolutionary work, one that would have been decidedly out of place in the Golden Age of children's literature. While there may not be large-scale narrative innovation, the reason for this lies in this period logic of contingency.

Even in relation to their modernist predecessors, late modernist works may come across as largely non-progressive. Nel notes that while "Crockett Johnson's *Harold* books do raise philosophical questions about the nature of reality and *Where the Wild Things Are* is a revolutionary book in many ways, it bears noting that *The Cat in the Hat* lacks the frames of *A Picture for Harold's Room* and *Where the Wild Things Are*" (56). In many ways though, this is precisely the point; these works of Johnson and (especially) Sendak are emblematic of a new period logic, one that necessitates contingency and accepts the limits of artistic exploration. Hodgkins portrays high modernism as "proudly aware of a new height and power, eager to challenge the adult establishment and scornful of recent childish pasts" (358), and this notion would seem to apply to Max in the first half of *Where the Wild Things Are*. Late modernism, conversely, while not a regression back to childhood, represents the relative reacceptance of childhood conventions and a resignation to the limits of utopian possibility, which Max's willful journey back to his room demonstrates.

The governing logic of *Where the Wild Things Are* thereby represents a fundamental change from the (at that time) recently codified ideology of modernism. "Late modernist contingency," Jameson argues, "constitutes the experience of the failure of autonomy to go all the way and fulfill its aesthetic program" (*Singular* 209). Being unwilling, or simply unable, to develop the modernist innovations of Seuss into an aesthetic final solution, writers like Sendak turn away from experimental extremes of form and language, and instead produce original texts through other means.

The aforementioned failure of autonomy becomes, subsequently, “a fortunate failure: for the replacement of the varied and incomprehensible Absolutes of modernism by the far more modest and comprehensible aesthetic autonomies of the late modern . . . enables and authorizes the production of a far more accessible literature of what can then be called a middlebrow type” (*Singular* 209-10). At least part of *Where the Wild Things Are*’s enduring popularity lies in the simplicity of its language and its turn away from the surreal by story’s end. In contrast to a modernist work such as *The Cat in the Hat*, where the seeming realism at the end is still accompanied by the fact that all of this fantastical mayhem actually did happen, *Where the Wild Things Are* legitimately moves in a conservative direction by story’s end, one that privileges the imaginative while necessitating reality. Sendak’s book is a traditional children’s story in its narrative, it offers a readable and practical written text, and evinces traditional moral and family values with Max returning home to find his supper waiting for him.

Far from a reversion to realism, however, *Where the Wild Things Are* instead represents a recognition of the limits of linguistic experimentation and a resignation to a future that is less experimentally extreme than the immediate past. This realization offers a warning against both the marginalization of this work’s originality and the reading of this work’s narrative as a quintessentially Golden Age text. In an interview with Cynthia Zarin, Sendak underscores the fact that critics take the conclusion of the book as a happy (and domesticated) ending for Max: “My God, Max would be what now, forty-eight? He’s still unmarried, he’s living in Brooklyn. He’s a computer maven. He’s totally undignified. He wears a wolf suit when he’s a home with his mother!” (42). Much like Seuss before him, Sendak is aware of the need to enforce the revolutionary nature of his work, as well as to emphasize the dialectical message that each of his

texts provide; Sendak simply employs a different aesthetic logic to achieve these ends, one that aligns itself usefully with Jameson's transitional concept of late modernism.

It is important to recognize that the late modernism of Sendak, Krauss, and Johnson does not represent the last major paradigm shift in children's literature. The move beyond the traditional concept of the "book" has been one of the defining characteristics of aesthetic progression, and children's literature has exhibited an impressive adaption to this trend. The unprecedented critical interest in children's culture over the past decade may be partly tied to the economic explosion that has accompanied the emergence of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series and Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. While these writers' books--all of which were published between 1997 and 2007--established them as notable artists, it was ultimately with their earlier works' adaption to film that Rowling's and Snicket's books became cultural events. While the success of these writers speak to a renewed interest in the gothic novel as much as the children's culture, the children's book in general has fallen in line with this trend. Stevenson notes that "populist art infuses easily into picture books, and perhaps it is the populist nature of postmodernism that has allowed it to affect children's literature so quickly. Television, film, and music video, far more than books, are the messengers of postmodern culture to young people" (32).

This is, undoubtedly, one of the reasons that Seuss and Sendak have remained so ubiquitous within youth culture of the present, given that their works are so effectively co-opted by mass media, even as their original texts have given way to subsequent compositions by writers governed by a different period logic. As such, it is easy to ignore that there has been any fundamental change in the aesthetic imperative of children's texts in the time since Seuss and Sendak. Nel speculates that "people tend not to notice the shift, in part, because surrealism has

come to feel real and, in part, because avant-garde styles have been co-opted by commercial culture. Instead of provoking the audience, images that were once avant-garde are now merely mimetic” (xv-xvi). This is a direct reflection of Jameson’s argument about the “new depthlessness” and the “weakening of historicity” in postmodern art (*Postmodernism* 6), and this statement even disorients our historical concept of the progression of form and content. As Marc Aronson sensibly asks, “When all the world is avant-garde, what is avant-garde?” (133).

The complexity of this question within the canon of adult literature is daunting enough, and Thacker and Webb question whether such resultant “difficulties of locating the relationship between Modernism and postmodernism suggest a complexity that might be expected to exclude children’s literature” (139). The reality, of course, is that it does not; it instead simply complicates the existent argument and, in many ways, children’s literature presents a relatively accessible vehicle through which to consider an exceedingly amorphous period concept.

Jameson’s *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) presents one of the most thoroughgoing attempts to formally characterize this elusive concept, and in the process generates its own crisis of classification. For beyond his omission of children’s literature in his writing, this formal breakdown of postmodernism has been one a primary criticism of Jameson’s work. Nel warns that “although Jameson’s *Postmodernism* often claims that its concept of the postmodern ‘is a historical rather than a stylistic one’ it tends to reinscribe the stylistic definitions that maintain the ‘great divide’ (Huysen’s term) between modern and postmodern” (xx). However, if this is true, it is only because Jameson’s postmodernism has been popularly appropriated in such a way to consistently privilege its formal aesthetic over its foundational historicism. Jameson’s concept of postmodernism has attained such prominence--indeed, dominance--that it has become a sort of critical default for the term, with a focus (against

Jameson's original intentions) on the formal and stylistic qualities of the period that his account outlines.

The direct application of this concept to children's literature is more natural than one might expect, for, as Thacker and Webb note, "the invitations to engage in subversive playfulness and the deconstructive tendencies of some children's books demand a comparison with the most radical postmodern challenges in art" (140). In many ways, children's literature is a form that presents a tempting challenge for the best writers of the postmodern period. The contemporary trend among canonical adult authors has been to make forays into children's writing, from John Updike's *Child's Calendar* (1965) and Umberto Eco's *The Bomb and the General* (1966) to Toni Morrison's *The Big Box* (1999) and *The School Bag* (1997), a children's anthology edited by Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney. However, much like the attempts of Joyce and Woolf at writing for children, these contemporary texts often fall short of the aesthetic excellence of these writers' work for adults. While the written text of Eco's *The Bomb and the General* is thematically interesting--as it directly addresses the nuclear crisis of the 1960s--it is overshadowed by Eugenio Carmini's corresponding artwork, whose scrapbook style proves far more artistically progressive and more likely to appeal to adults as well as children.

It is this notion of applicability to an adult audience, though, that can also obscure which texts have made distinct contributions to children's literature, rather than simply literature as a whole. One prime example of this, *Andy Warhol's Children's Book* (1983), stands as the preeminent consumer artist's lone attempt at children's writing. It is a twelve-page book of silkscreened images (including a spaceship, a train, and a monkey) with no text, and it leaves little clue as to what legitimately separates this artwork from Warhol's better-known pop art for adults. In thinking of such works, Nicholas Paley writes, "one can't help but wonder if many

children saw, much less read, any of them” (268)--and if this is the case, it likely defeats the point of considering them children’s literature.

This again raises the difficult question of what children’s literature *is*. While Warhol’s book is a particularly extreme example, it nevertheless is representative of a series of productions that force Paley to ask, “Are these picture books really children’s books? Or are they finely illustrated and stylishly produced artists’ books which simply appropriate the picture book format in order to promote other dimensions of the artist’s voice?” (268). While an artist such as Sendak puts this question to bed, one gets the impression that Warhol would have been satisfied if only adults had read and analyzed his artistic foray into children’s culture. Much the same as with the search for a high modernism of children’s literature, the search for a children’s postmodernism has at times amounted to looking for experimental artists within the adult canon and applying their work for children to a traditionally-synchronous period concept.

Donald Barthelme, another canonical postmodern figure with his own children’s book, *The Slightly Irregular Fire Engine; or, The Hithering Thithering Djinn* (1971), asserts that postmodernism is “one of only a half-dozen equally unsatisfactory formulations, probably the one that has come closest to sticking” (316). He continues that postmodernism is “realism” and opens up a series of theoretical avenues in the process (316),¹³ including whether a postmodern children’s book is situated on a modernist or a realist foundation. As previously mentioned, an obsession with the extremes of experimentalism is apt to lead one astray in the periodization of children’s literature, which inherently offers a more conservative response to paradigm shifts. In contrast to Jameson’s suggestion of “the rudderlessness of the postmodern” (*Singular* 213), Nel emphasizes that “even if children have come to expect odd juxtapositions, contemporary children still expect an ending in a culture that values teleology” (131).

The definitive postmodern texts of children's literature, then, will be ones that utilize a realist foundation to anchor their aesthetic innovations, which will themselves be grounded in traditional conventions of children's literature. Deborah Stevenson, in a groundbreaking 1994 article in *CLAQ*, posits Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith's *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* (1992) as the paradigmatic representation of self-referential postmodernity. In a number of equally useful essays to emerge since then, these writers have been effectively canonized as the exemplar avatars of postmodern children's literature. Thacker and Webb offer, along with Philip Pullman's *Clockwork* (1997), Scieszka and Smith's *Stinky Cheese Man* as the critical embodiment of this aesthetic trend. Likewise, W. Nikola-Lisa, in her intriguing "Play, Panache, Pastiche: Postmodern Impulses in Contemporary Picture Books," attempts to define what postmodern children's literature is by writing an experimental essay modeled on the style of Scieszka and Smith's *The Stinky Cheese Man* and *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (1989). *The New York Times*' Penelope Green is even more direct in her categorization, as she terms Scieszka and Smith as "the Merry Pranksters of children's publishing, and unofficial icons of a growing movement, Pomo Kids' Lit."

The reasons for Scieszka and Smith's near-universal categorization as postmodern children writers are evident in their utilization of specific realist narratives to underlie their own stylistic innovations and indirections. Peter Hunt suggests that the "children's book" is the only literary genre that is unique to children's literature, and it is instructive that Scieszka and Smith play off the traditional conception of this genre. In such a way, Stevenson's consideration of *The Stinky Cheese Man* as a "postliterate" text makes sense (32); in theory, it is a text to be read after one has been exposed to all the traditional children's stories it incorporates, such as Chicken Little, Little Red Riding Hood, and the Ugly Duckling. Thacker and Webb emphasize that this

book is “a postmodern text grounded in the ‘history’ of fairy tales, otherwise it could not work, for it is dependent upon the traditional stories for its own meaning” (163).

However, this is to assume that children *have* read each of these traditional stories before their exposure to Scieszka and Smith’s book, an assumption that may not be wholly accurate. The really Ugly Duckling that becomes a really Ugly Duck, the Princess who sleeps on a bowling ball instead of a pea, and the Stinky Cheese Man in lieu of the Gingerbread Man all present twists on original fairy tales that present-day children may not be at all familiar with (as none of these tales have been co-opted by Disney or offer the seeming contemporary relevance that even Seuss or Sendak do). As a result, Stevenson observes, “*The Stinky Cheese Man* alters book elements that kids do not even know, or do not know they know; often the book teaches convention by subverting it” (33). Scieszka and Smith’s book is a postliterate text not because it logically compliments these foundational stories, but because, as Jameson says, “the postliteracy of the late capitalist world reflects not only the absence of any great collective project but also the unavailability of the older language itself” (*Postmodernism* 17). The moment of these traditional fairy tales as accessible historical content has essentially passed, and in its distant wake necessitates a retelling of these stories that is neither accurate nor evidently purposeful.

Jameson pins the reason for such reappropriation on “the collapse of the high modernist ideology of style,” which leaves “the producers of culture [with] nowhere to turn but to the past: the imitation of dead styles, speech through all the masks and voices stored up in the imaginary museum of a now global culture” (*Postmodernism* 17-18). Under this new late capitalist logic, we are now inundated with “machines of reproduction rather than of production,” which in turn drive “narratives which are *about* the processes of reproduction” (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 37). This aligns itself with Jameson’s concept of postmodern pastiche, with its application to the

children's book being situationally contingent. Jameson defines pastiche as "the neutral practice" of parody, "amputated of its satiric impulse [and] devoid of laughter" (*Postmodernism* 17). While these stories would not appear to qualify as pastiche within adult literature--given that adults familiar with these tales will likely find them satirically hilarious--for young children they are often blank parodies of subjects children are being exposed to for the first time, and in such a way they allow postmodernism's appropriation to precede realism. In accordance with Jameson's postmodern characterization, *The Stinky Cheese Man* "invites us to indulge a somber mockery of historicity in general," as the historical fairy tale "repeats itself drearily" while devolving into "a grotesque carnival of the [subject's] various replays" (*Postmodernism* 64-65).

However, this aesthetic move is far from a trend toward absolute ahistoricity. In *A Singular Modernity*, Jameson draws attention to Friedrich Schelling's philosophical axiom that "a person incapable of confronting his or her own past antagonistically really can be said to have no past; or better still, he never gets out of his own past, and lives perpetually within it still" (*Singular* 24-25). In many ways, the postmodern children's book runs against this potentiality by confronting and drawing its content (and context) from its predecessors. *The Stinky Cheese Man's* style may often be indeterminate (witness the dedication page, turned upside down, that draws attention to its own irrelevance), and its schizophrenic text may present a proliferation of voices that flaunt the conventions of traditional children's stories; but it still offers the teleological foundation that Nel deems crucial to a children's text of any period, with a narrative that is "ironically positioned in realism rather than fantasy" (Thacker and Webb 162). Consequently, a text like *The Stinky Cheese Man* stands as the aesthetic and cultural culmination of all that has come before it, reproducing this historical narrative in contemporary terms and

offering a paradigmatic example of the transition to a postmodern aesthetic within children's literature.

Jameson insists that "periodization is not some optional narrative consideration one adds or subtracts according to one's own tastes and inclinations, but rather an essential feature of the narrative process itself" (*Singular* 81), and the periodization of children's literature is an essential operation that clarifies a number of longstanding concerns, while raising a series of even more provocative questions for the future. This study is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of every children's writer and book from the past hundred years, nor is it designed to provide the final answer on the periodization of this subject. In positing breaks and periods, the events and figures of focus will undoubtedly lead to debate, but such beginnings are necessary to initiate the mapping of a larger cultural framework.

Each of the writers under analysis here offer an effective representation of the larger cultural logics at work within their compositional periods and children's literature in general, and their contemporary stature and influence continues to drive the direction of the medium. Children today are far more likely to read Carroll's *Alice* books than *Just William*, *Swallows and Amazons*, or most any other text from the Golden Age of children's literature. Dr. Seuss is generally upheld as the most significant children's writer of the twentieth century: in addition to the critical importance of his work, his books have sold over 200 million copies, and of the 100 top-selling children's books of all time, sixteen of them are Seuss titles (Turvey). Likewise, Geraldine DeLuca notes that Sendak's texts "are now comfortably regarded as classics in which children neatly and imaginatively resolve their problems" (143), and their status as middlebrow masterpieces is just as evident. As of 2006, there were over seventeen million copies of *Where the Wild Things Are* in circulation, and *In the Night Kitchen*, for all its controversy, now sells

almost as many copies annually as *Where the Wild Things Are*. The works of Scieszka and Smith, meanwhile, have made both an immediate commercial impact within popular culture and a burgeoning critical impact within the academy, where they can be comfortably analyzed alongside the postmodernism of Pynchon, Stoppard, and Barthelme.

Lena Kareland observes that as children's literature has transitioned into increasingly complex style, form, and content, "the right of children's literature to be literature seems to have been accepted" (217). Whether they be called children's books, picture books, or any other designation, these works function in effective--if somewhat belated--concert with the larger aesthetic developments and concerns of adult literature, art, and culture. As such, children's literature offers an exceedingly interesting subject for periodization, with the ironic additional advantage of its nature as a literature of the prospective. As Juliet Dusinberre suggests, "in times of great change some of the most radical ideas about what the future ought to be like will be located in the books which are written for the new generation" (33-34). The ability to pinpoint the place of figures like Seuss, Sendak, Scieszka, and Smith in this aesthetic continuum is essential not only to an understanding of how children's literature functions in relation to these period concepts, but to the very nature of these concepts themselves.

¹ While the definition of what constitutes children's literature is a decidedly elusive concept, it should be clarified that the "children's literature" under consideration here are those books which might more generally be classified as "picture books." The hesitation in using this term stems from the generally-assumed unimportance of the written text in such works. Rather, these works tend to be artistically progressive precisely because they are able to effectively blend the visual and the verbal into a cohesive whole. More specifically, the texts under consideration in this chapter are books that would meet the criteria for the Caldecott Medal, the preeminent American award for picture books. These criteria include the employment of an artistic technique and the specific recognition of a child audience. This designation also separates the texts under analysis here from other children's books that fit the criteria of the Newbery Medal, whose criteria places a decided emphasis on text ahead of illustration. This is not to say that a single model of

periodization could not effectively encompass both types of children's texts, merely that the scope of this study is geared toward the Caldecott text as opposed to the Newbery book.

² Dusineberre's text is particularly groundbreaking, given its relative uniqueness within literary criticism; as of April 2009, Amazon.com still lists it as "the first and only full-length study of the relation between children's literature and writing for adults." Much as within children's literature itself, theory and criticism have often been categorized along the binary grounds of either adult or children's criticism, with little overlap between the two.

³ Jameson further supports this claim by observing that periodization "attempts to take a point of view on individual events which is well beyond the observational capacities of any individual, and to unify, both horizontally and vertically, hosts of realities whose interrelationships must remain inaccessible, to say the least" (*Singular* 28). Children's literature provides, in many ways, an ideal vehicle for pursuing the dynamics of these "inaccessible" interrelationships, given the relative blank slate offered by the periodization of children's literary history.

⁴ The potential of nonsense literature to drive aesthetic innovation and paradigm transition should not be underestimated. Celia Catlett Anderson and Marilyn Fain Apseloff argue that "it is the heretical mission of nonsense literature to teach the young that the world constructed by their elders is an artificial thing . . . It thereby reveals that the rules we live by are not inevitable" (94). The implications of this mode of thought on modernist experimentation are rightfully evident in Dusinberre's extended study.

⁵ Beyond Woolf and Joyce, other canonical modernists also published works for children, with varying degrees of success. E. E. Cummings' work for children stretched from his 1930 volume of nonsensical children's tales, *No Title* (so called because it was released without a title), to the posthumous release of *Fairy Tales* in 1965 (ironically, the same year that Joyce's and Woolf's children's works were posthumously published). Graham Greene's children's works were written after he had done most of his best-known work for adults; his children's books include *The Little Train* (1946), *The Little Fire Engine* (1950), *The Little Horse Bus* (1952), and *The Little Steamroller* (1955). Meanwhile, T. S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, a collection of poems Eliot wrote for his godchildren in the 1930s, is perhaps the best known of all of these texts, in large part because it served as the basis for Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats*, the longest-running show in Broadway history at the time of the show's closing.

⁶ That having been said, there were other preceding writers whose writings hinted at the linguistic style and utopian scope of Seuss's work. Perhaps the best example is Wanda Gág, who is well-known for such books as *Millions of Cats* (1928) and *The Funny Thing* (1929). The former of these texts notably offers a Seuss-like refrain of "Hundreds of cats, Thousands of cats, Millions and billions and trillions of cats."

⁷ Jameson writes in *Postmodernism* that "if the poststructuralist motif of the 'death of the subject' means anything socially, it signals the end of the entrepreneurial and inner-directed individualism, with its accompanying categorical panoply of quaint romantic values such as that of the 'genius' in the first place" (306). However, "what one must retain historically is the fact that the phenomenon did once exist; a postmodern view of the 'great' modernist creators ought

not to argue away the social and historical specificity of those now doubtful ‘centered subjects,’ but rather provide new ways of understanding their conditions of possibility” (*Postmodernism* 306).

⁸ Children do provide an ideal readership for a text like *Where the Wild Things Are*, though, as, according to Sendak, “children do live in fantasy and reality; they move back and forth very easily in a way that we no longer remember how to do” (Haviland 242). Max is the veritable embodiment of this fact, although the question may be raised at story’s end whether he is able to distinguish between fantasy and reality, or whether the story simply concludes in the real world.

⁹ In fact, between writing and illustrating, Sendak has stated he has “a preference for writing. Writing is very difficult and gives me a great deal of pleasure, partly because it is so difficult” (Sadler 243).

¹⁰ These are merely two of Sendak’s many progressive projects, which range from *The Nutshell Library* (1962) (featuring such popular stories as *Chicken Soup with Rice* and *Pierre*) to the socio-economic commentary of *We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy* (1983) to his work as an illustrator on everything from *Atomics for the Millions* (1947) to Heinrich von Kleist’s *Pentheselia* (1998). For a more comprehensive examination of Sendak’s collective works, see John Cech’s *Angels and Wild Things: The Archetypal Poetics of Maurice Sendak* (1995) and Tony Kushner’s *The Art of Maurice Sendak: 1980 to the Present* (2003).

¹¹ In contrast to the traditional habit of distancing and disassociating children’s literature with adult political culture, Julia Mickenberg and Philip Nel contend that “the useful question is not whether children’s literature should be political, but rather how children’s literature should engage with political issues because, after all, children cannot be separated from growing up in the world” (352).

¹² Robert Hemmings draws attention to “the insistent associations of food with home and the sanctuary of childhood” (71). Take for example a classic children’s text like Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), where “food (‘the very best’) is integral to the novel’s final climactic scene, a ritual acclaiming Toad’s return home, but the act of consumption is glossed over as if the depiction of satisfying appetite could disrupt the scrupulously rendered nostalgic vision” (Hemmings 71). Max’s return home, where his supper is both waiting for him and still hot, positions *Where the Wild Things Are* squarely within this tradition.

¹³ Jameson effectively echoes this sentiment in his analysis of Lyotard’s *The Postmodern Condition*, where he argues that Lyotard’s “ingenious twist, or swerve, in his own proposal involves the proposition that something called postmodernism does not follow high modernism proper, but rather very precisely precedes and prepares it” (*Postmodernism* 60).

CHAPTER 5
“THE TRIUMPH OF DEATH”: DON DELILLO’S *UNDERWORLD* AND THE
PERIODIZATION OF MAJOR LEAGUE ARCHITECTURE

Everything connects in the end, or only seems to, or seems to only because it does.

— *Underworld* (465)

In what is certainly one of the most significant novels to emerge in the last half-century, Don DeLillo’s 1997 magnum opus, *Underworld*, effectively lays out the cultural trends of the latter half of the twentieth century, in the process anticipating many of the major events of the decade since its publication. Understandably, the focus for many critics lies in the deep irony of its cover, André Kertész’s “New York, 1972,” in which the twin towers of the World Trade Center rise into clouds of fog with a bird flying toward the towers on the right and a crucifix atop a church pictured in the foreground, and in its summation of the transitional period of the 1990s, which seems to set the stage for September 11, 2001 and the destruction of this iconic architectural landmark.¹

However, it is another kind of architectural development and destruction narrated in *Underworld* on which this chapter is focused: that of the major league ballpark. While this might seem, at first glance, an insignificant object of study, a more detailed analysis of the novel and its cultural context draws attention to the primacy of the ballpark. Indeed, the ballpark stands as perhaps the most theoretically marginalized and underrepresented form of contemporary architecture. The reason for such dismissal is somewhat perplexing, given the direct engagement these structures offer with the traditional concepts of architectural modernism and postmodernism, as well as the vital cultural and political position they hold within contemporary American society. The deep connection with history that baseball as an institution enjoys, and its inherent gravity to nostalgia, makes the historicization of these ballparks significant and, in many ways, essential. As Bill Waterson explains to his rapt protégé in

Underworld's prologue, "That's the thing about baseball, Cotter. You do what they did before you" (31).

Fredric Jameson, in "The Existence of Italy," insists that "formal or aesthetic tendencies are governed by the historic logic of the three fundamental stages in secular bourgeois or capitalist culture as a whole[:] realism, modernism, and postmodernism" (155). In short, this realist/modernist/postmodernist progression, drawn from Ernst Mandel's *Late Capitalism*, is observed by any aesthetic form, and may develop outside of the traditional historical periods of the same names.

What becomes evident is that the periods of realism, modernism, and postmodernism being developed in ballpark architecture are non-synchronous with the traditional literary/artistic periods of the same name. This makes perfect sense when we consider the nature of these projects. To begin with, as Jameson argues, emergent cultural forms necessitate "a more compressed tempo" of periodization (156). The ballpark was a form that did not crystallize as a unified realist medium until the very early years of the twentieth century, so there is inevitably a catching-up process with the other aesthetic "realisms" of literature, art, and even traditional architecture itself.

While this might account for the initial lack of period synchronicity, however, what impacts the aesthetic nature of and transition within these projects even more is the sheer mobilization of resources that the ballpark requires. These are *not* going to be cutting-edge aesthetic projects: given their functional requirement there is inherently some element of conservatism at play in their design, and the political consensus required to set their construction in motion makes these ballparks public works of art that necessitate homogenization more than radicality.² The Great Depression and World War II were, in large measure, socio-economic

forces that disrupted the moment of modernism in major league architecture, making its progression not only difficult but outright impossible for a period of almost twenty years. Even in the best of times, from the Cold War to the present day, these mega-projects will inevitably lag behind less materially-ambitious (and privately-funded) aesthetic expressions of architecture.

Furthermore, Jameson contends that a fundamental question to ask of any spatial innovation in architecture is “if you can live in it” (*Postmodernism* 128), and the ballpark takes this dictum to new heights. There are significant limits to its radicality, as the rules of baseball help to limit even the most progressive of these facilities. One cannot turn the seats away from the playing field, nor place the outfield fence directly behind home plate. It is, however, precisely because we have rules that we can effectively discern the tangible trends of the postmodern within the context of an unavoidably formulaic network of necessities. The differences are subtle, lacking the ostentatious flair of stereotypical postmodern art.

As such, the periodization of major league ballparks is exemplary because there are such neat historical breaks and paradigm shifts.³ There are a limited number of subjects to consider, which are directly impacted by the larger socio-economic trends in play within America over this extended time span.⁴ In comparison with the symbolic “demolishing [of] the older forms” that Jameson speaks of in literature, architecture necessitates demolition quite literally (*Postmodernism* 107): for every park that is built, one is torn down. And the application of Jameson’s tripartite periodizing schema to such a history is uncanny, even when separated from their direct sporting significance and viewed through the lenses of the aesthetic and the economic. As *Underworld* demonstrates, even if “the games escape the mind completely” (663), the architecture of them does not.

DeLillo is keenly attuned to these trends, and to the deep connection between these projects and the major events of America at-large. The opening prologue of *Underworld*, “The Triumph of Death,” directly details the last stand of the realist ballpark, in a nostalgic compilation that foreshadows the transition beyond its familiar governing logic. What is equally interesting is that following its prologue, *Underworld* picks up in the spring of 1992, at precisely the advent of the *postmodern* ballpark in major league baseball. The unveiling of Camden Yards in Baltimore at this moment offered a paradigmatic event in the architectural trajectory of this medium, as well as a fundamental template for subsequent projects to emulate up to the present day. The large cultural swath of the Cold War that DeLillo goes on to illustrate as lying between these two moments represents, just as surely, the modernist period of ballpark construction, with its “cold war ideologies of massive uniformity” (786). Thus, DeLillo registers in *Underworld* the very tripartite structure of stadium periodization; these are not only significant dates with which to bookend the Cold War, they are also significant dates with which to frame the architectural logic of the major league ballpark.

Realism

While *Underworld* itself was published in 1997, its prologue, “The Triumph of Death,” was originally published in 1992 as a novella entitled “Pafko at the Wall.” This work offers a nostalgic look back at the New York Giants’ memorable playoff win over the Brooklyn Dodgers for the 1951 National League pennant. DeLillo effectively uses this baseball foundation in *Underworld* both to orient the reader within the cultural context of 1951 America (from *The Honeymooners* to Chesterfield cigarettes to the novelty of processed cheese food) and to offer a cohesive element throughout the rest of the novel (which Bobby Thomson’s lost home run ball and the collective memory of the event provide). While the whole of *Underworld* is an

architectural tour of New York (from the Radio City Music Hall to the World Trade Center), it bears mentioning that a ballpark--the Polo Grounds--is given foremost priority.

The Polo Grounds is one of the many ballparks that were constructed in the early years of the twentieth century, emerging from the earliest “fields” and “parks,” which were literally that: playing fields largely devoid of structural surroundings. The primitive stands in Boston’s Huntington Baseball Grounds and New York’s Hilltop Park bear witness to this development from baseball’s origin across the Hudson River in the Elysian Fields of Hoboken.

The construction of Shibe Park in Philadelphia in 1909 offered the advent of the concrete-and-steel ballpark, moving beyond the previous wooden structures that had consistently fallen victim to fires. The years immediately following witnessed an explosion of ballpark construction in which eleven new steel, brick, and concrete venues would be built within a seven-year period. These range from longstanding structures such as Forbes Field (Pittsburgh) and Comiskey Park (Chicago), to still-in-use gems like Fenway Park (Boston) and Wrigley Field (Chicago), to the long-demolished home of Nick Shay’s Brooklyn Dodgers, Ebbets Field. Each of these structures were similar in that, like their predecessors, they were stylistically oriented on the inside around the field itself and on the outside within the confines of the inner-city property they occupied, which was often a single city block. As a result, the fields themselves were consistently asymmetrical--a home run at the Polo Grounds, for example, could be as short as 258 feet, while a fly ball could be caught as far as 483 feet from home plate--and the shape of the stands themselves was governed by the immediate logic of the surrounding structures (which produced such iconic results as the “Green Monster” of Fenway Park or the horseshoe shape of the Polo Grounds). Even down to their very names, these structures exhibit a distinct individual character. The ballparks of this time period are, in DeLillo’s own words, subsequently “labeled

like rare botanical specimens--Ebbets Field, Shibe Park, Griffith Stadium . . . , their names a kind of poetry floating down the decades” (168). The Polo Grounds stands as the archetypal embodiment of this realist architecture, something evident by Russ Hodges, the Giants’ radio announcer, who idyllically ruminates on “the field with its cramped corners and the overcompensating spaces of the deep alleys and dead center. The big square Longines clock that juts up from the clubhouse. Strokes of color all around, a frescoing of hats and faces and the green grandstand and tawny basepaths . . . at the Polo Grounds, a name he loves” (15).

DeLillo opens “The Triumph of Death,” and *Underworld* itself, by describing in detail “this old rust-hulk of a structure, . . . this metropolis of steel and concrete and flaky paint and cropped grass and enormous Chesterfield packs aslant on the scoreboards, a couple of cigarettes jutting from each” (11).⁵ As Cotter Martin, the young man who sneaks into the ballgame at the outset of the prologue, first walks into the open, he sees “the great open horseshoe of the grandstand and that unfolding vision of the grass that always seems to mean he has stepped outside his life--the rubbed shine that sweeps and bends from the raked dirt of the infield out of the high green fences. It is the excitement of the revealed thing” (14). The Polo Grounds is portrayed, from this vantage point, as the environment of one’s gilded childhood, and a natural magnet for the sort of nostalgia of innocence lost.

However, this only offers part of the reality, in much the same way that viewing old photographs of these structures in no way offers a comprehensive understanding of their actual experience. As Jameson warns in *Postmodernism*, what the contemporary public exhibits “is an appetite for photography; what we want to consume today are not the buildings themselves” (99). Ever mindful of this, DeLillo, while nostalgic, paints an effectively full portrayal of such structures. Immediately following the aforementioned idealizing passages, attention is drawn to

the “crossweave of girders and pillars and spilling light” (14)--staples of the realist ballpark which impeded the view of a sizable number of spectators of the time, including Cotter himself.⁶ Equally significant is his portrayal of “the toilets [where] the old ballpark’s reek and mold are consolidated” (21); the prevailing smell of the Polo Grounds (and most parks of the time) was not hot dogs and freshly cut grass, but rather “beer and shit and cigarettes and peanut shells and disinfectants and piss” (21). Such sensory description offers a reality check on the idyllic pictures of these structures and emphasizes that they were on some level flawed works, which few present-day fans would readily tolerate.⁷

Indeed, the attendance of the game being described seems to indicate that even people of that time preferred the image to the reality. Cotter is concerned that it may be difficult to find a seat once he is inside the stadium; instead, in what was the biggest game in New York in years, “looks like thirty-five thousand and how do you figure it . . . how do you explain twenty thousand empty seats?” (14-15). There are any number of potential explanations given for this, from the radio engineer’s assessment that “All day looks like rain. It affects the mood. People say the hell with it” (15); to Marvin Lundy’s retrospective theory that “all through the nineteen fifties people stayed indoors” (171-72).

The reality, however, is that this is simply evidence of the limited public that this realist form produces. According to Jameson, “the moment of realism can be grasped rather differently as the conquest of a kind of cultural, ideological, and narrative literacy by a new class or group” (“Existence” 156),⁸ and the public that the realist ballpark had come to conquest was the middle class. Games at this time were almost exclusively afternoon affairs, meaning that the working class would not have had the option of working and then attending an evening ball game (as is the case today). Cotter is able to attend only by skipping school and--lacking the money for a

ticket--simultaneously jumping the gate with a number of boys in similar lower-class circumstances. He finds a seat at the game "between a couple of guys in suits" (20), and the man he sits beside at the game, Bill Waterson, owns a construction company (21). While Waterson has the option of taking off work for the game, those working for him presumably do not.

Thus, the issue of the game's popularity becomes dialectically complicated. On the one hand, the game of baseball (and in particular this game) is ubiquitous within the popular culture of New York⁹--the WMCA radio producer emphasizes that "this game is everywhere. Dow Jones tickers are rapping out the score with the stock averages. Every bar in town, I guarantee. They're smuggling radios into boardrooms. At Schrafft's I hear they're breaking into the Muzak to give the score" (27). On the other hand, the audience privy to the actual ballpark experience is decidedly limited. In spite of all the nostalgic hype for baseball's cultural omnipotence at this time, it was, financially speaking, a surprisingly underdeveloped institution, one that was largely limited to a middle-class audience.

Part of the reason for this economic underdevelopment is the fact that while such ballparks catered to a middle-class crowd, they did not do the same for an upper-class audience. While the people that Nick Shay's family respect "wore beautiful suits and had a box at the Polo Grounds and knew ballplayers and show people" (200), the ballpark contained none of the other luxury amenities that present-day facilities offer the wealthy. In "The Triumph of Death" the box seats at the Polo Grounds are occupied by such 1950s luminaries as Frank Sinatra, Jackie Gleason, Toots Shor, and J. Edgar Hoover, who sit proximate to (and stand out conspicuously from) the middle class crowd that surrounds them:

It's making Sinatra uneasy, all these people lapping at their seat backs. He is used to ritual distances. He wants to encounter people in circumstances laid out beforehand. Frank doesn't have his dago secret service with him today. And even with Jackie on one flank and Toots on the other--a couple of porkos who function as natural barriers--people

keep pressing in, showing a sense of mission. He sees them decide one by one that they must speak to him. The rigid grins floating near. And the way they use him as a reference for everything that happens. (24)

This lack of separation is also evident between the players and the fans of the time in a venue such as the Polo Grounds. In part, this is because of the comparatively small gap between players' and fans' salaries (in 1951, the average ballplayer earned only seven times the average working man's salary),¹⁰ but it also rests upon the direct interaction between the two. DeLillo writes of the Dodgers' leftfielder, Andy Pafko, whose picture the original novella was named after:

Pafko walks out to his position and alters stride to kick a soda cup lightly and the gesture functions as a form of recognition, a hint of some concordant force between players and fans, the way he nudges the white cup, it's a little inside boot, completely unbegrudging--a sign of respect for the sly contrivances of the game, the patterns are undividable. (37)

This symbiosis culminates in the mass of paper that is subsequently dropped on Pafko by the fans in the leftfield stands, a testament to the seeming influence on the game's outcome that the fans held in their hands. These were ballparks that were ostensibly characterized by their *lack* of barriers. At a great many parks of the day it was even customary for fans to exit through the centerfield fence by way of the playing field. In this case, after Thomson's game-winning homer, the people surge out of the stands and "on the field . . . [with] the fans pressed together at the clubhouse steps" in celebration with the players themselves (51).

Despite the disappointing attendance at the ballpark, the game itself is instantly elevated to the stuff of popular legend. It is the quintessential American event, made global by the name given to it: The Shot Heard Round the World¹¹--a reference not even so much to the game's drama and significance as to the worldwide audience of servicemen that heard it over Armed Forces Radio.¹² As a result, "Where were you when Thomson hit the homer?" becomes akin to

asking “Where were you when Kennedy was shot?” (with J. Edgar Hoover, among others, asking the former question fifteen years later [DeLillo 556]).

Underworld goes on to detail the prominent position the event is given in the newspaper headlines of the next day. The October 3, 1951 issue of the *New York Times* famously divided its front-page attention between the ballgame and news of the Soviet Union’s successful atomic detonation (the very news for which Hoover was taken aside while at the game in *Underworld*):

The front page astonished [Albert Bronzini], a pair of three-column headlines dominating. To his left the Giants capture the pennant, beating the Dodgers on a dramatic home run in the ninth inning. And to the right, symmetrically mated, same typeface, same-size type, same number of lines, the USSR explodes an atomic bomb--kaboom--details kept secret. He didn’t understand why the Times would take a ball game off the sports page and juxtapose it with news of such ominous consequence. (668)

Bronzini, the intellectual schoolteacher, offers the stereotypic academic view of the sporting event: that of marginalization and dismissal. The actual relationships between the two events, however, and the periodizing structures accordant to each, interweave with one another effectively throughout the whole of the novel.¹³ “The Triumph of Death” sits squarely at the same sort of historical crossroads as *Ulysses* or *Battleship Potemkin*, a sort of calm-before-the-storm moment in 1951--most obviously in the lull between the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War, but just as surely between the lingering advent of the modernist ballpark and its widespread application across Major League Baseball.¹⁴

“The Triumph of Death” is set just prior to the onrush of modernist stadium architecture, at a time when only two new major league venues had been built in the previous thirty-five years. The first among these, Yankee Stadium, which DeLillo terms “the most famous ballpark in the country” (646), in many ways marks with its opening in 1923 the triumph (if also the architectural limits) of realism. Situated across the Harlem River in the Bronx¹⁵--the borough that becomes the location of *Underworld*’s climax--it expanded both the traditional dimensions

and locations of the realist medium, seating 58,000 fans at a time when the major league attendance record for a game was 42,000.¹⁶

Yankee Stadium was also built just a few hundred yards north of the Polo Grounds, in harmony with the prevailing sentiment of the time that ballparks should be accessible by either foot or subway/trolley. The realist ballpark carried a distinct emphasis on the local; even up to 1951, the game was an eastern phenomenon, with major cities typically having more than one team, despite generally having much smaller populations than by today's standards.¹⁷ In contrast with the seeming logical idea that these multiple teams would play in ballparks on the opposite sides of cities, they instead often congregated in the exact same part of town. In *Underworld*, we witness not only the ability to walk from ballpark-to-home at the conclusion of the prologue, but also the ability to walk from ballpark-to-*ballpark* in subsequent chapters. The surprising proximity of these two parks is highlighted when Manx Martin stands in front of the Polo Grounds and hears the lines of fans singing at Yankee Stadium just across the river; indeed, "the voices travel so exact it's like someone's whispering just to him" (365).

Any aerial shot of the two parks in 1951 reveals not only the parks' adjacency, but also the impending modernist architectural movements already in practice in other mediums. To the west of the Polo Grounds, the encroachment of a series of housing projects is clearly evident--an application of the "city of towers" that Le Corbusier so effusively claimed would reinvent the urban landscape (57). The setting of "The Triumph of Death," even at this seeming moment of centrality, faces an inevitable architectural usurper. In stark contrast with the view toward the significance of Thomson's homer at the time--"Mark the spot," says Al, the radio producer, to his commentator, Russ Hodges, "Like where Lee surrendered to Grant or some such thing" (59)-

-the site of the former ballpark is now occupied by the nondescript Polo Grounds Towers housing project.

Just as striking a blow to the promise of this moment is the climax of the game itself and its impact on the public at hand. Thomson's hit sails over the head of Pafko, who goes "racing toward the left field corner" in pursuit (42). The futility of his attempt is illustrated in the singularly dramatic sentence that represents the barrier between victory and defeat: "Pafko at the wall" (42). The ball reaches the stands, leaving Pafko "looking straight up with his right hand at the wall" in futile wonderment (42), the fans he seemed to have such a fluid connection with now separated from him in isolated anarchy.

At the center of this anarchy are Cotter Martin and Bill Waterson, who (unknowingly) battle one another for Thomson's ball. Up to this point, the interaction between this middle-age, middle-class, white man and this young, impoverished, African-American boy has been one of camaraderie and generosity, from sharing peanuts and soda to their common love for the Giants, seeming to transcend societal mores. Instantly, however, their interaction morphs into unease and animosity, with Cotter having to run from the ballpark to escape Waterson's ill-intended pursuit of the baseball. The barrier that finally stops Waterson's chase is the exclusively black ghetto of high rises where Cotter lives, drawing attention to the decaying neighborhoods that surrounded most realist parks by this time – something that would largely prove to be the downfall of Ebbets Field and the Polo Grounds only a few years later.

The relationship between Cotter and Waterson represents a final utopian moment of promise within the realist medium, which the moment of "Pafko at the wall" brings to a crashing halt, both symbolically and literally. Thus, in spite of the celebratory scene within the Polo Grounds, the legacy of the moment described in "The Triumph of Death" is of the *limits* of

realism, which in turn leads to the loss of this utopian moment and the initiation of another vision in its place.

Modernism

The vast majority of DeLillo's *Underworld* constitutes the navigation between 1951 (the moment of its prologue, "The Triumph of Death") and the early 1990s (the moment of both Part I and the epilogue of *Underworld*). The vision that emerges over this time is one of increasing alienation, inorganicism, migration, and corporate cultural hegemony--all staples of the ideology of the Cold War. What DeLillo periodizes as the history of the Cold War may also be usefully posited as the "age" of the modernist stadium, whose beginning and ending operate in uncanny synchronicity with that of Cold War America.

However, the modernist paradigm shift finds its advent not in 1951, but rather in 1932, with the opening of Cleveland Municipal Stadium. Funded by a city-wide \$2.5 million levy, it would be the largest baseball stadium ever built, with 78,000 seats. It was also one of the first ballparks to have permanent light fixtures for night games, and the first to utilize structural aluminum in its building materials.

The trend beginning with Cleveland Stadium, though, is not only focused on technological modernization; the stadium is also formally modernist. The stadium was positioned away from the city center, directly on the lakefront and surrounded by abundant parking and space. In addition, the shape of the stadium itself was not oriented around the field--it was designed to host football as well as baseball and is symmetrically identical if split down the middle. In direct accordance with the modernist theories of Le Corbusier, it is no longer the city or the field that governs the logic of the stadium, but rather "the plan is the generator" (Le Corbusier 47). The social psychology central to Le Corbusier's style and plan was also at the heart of the modernist advent in major league ballparks: easy to commute to, abundant parking,

multipurpose in nature, symmetrical, adequately spaced, and allowing for an appreciation of the whole structure. This endows real power to the artist, allowing one to impose their form on a traditionally fluid medium, the realist ballpark.¹⁸ Accordingly, the structure of Cleveland Stadium functioned autonomously without regard to its inner or outer surroundings.¹⁹

As Jameson emphasizes, “modernist space offers itself as the *novum*, . . . that ‘air from other planets’ (Stefan George) that Schonberg, and after him Marcuse, liked to evoke, the first telltale signs of the dawning of a new age” (*Postmodernism* 163). The observation also applies to the modernist ballpark: Cleveland Stadium was decidedly ahead of its time--or, to put it more succinctly, it was not *of* its time--the proof lying in the fact that it took the Indians baseball club fifteen years to move in fully. This interplay between Cleveland Stadium and League Park over two decades acts as a sort of architectural heteroglossia, with the modernist structure eventually trumping the realist one. In their second full season in the stadium, the Indians drew over 2.6 million fans, setting a major league record that would not be eclipsed until 1962.

By the moment of “The Triumph of Death,” the modernist template had arrived, and the future was rife for its immediate development. Milwaukee County Stadium was constructed in 1953--the first new major league facility built since Cleveland Stadium twenty-one years prior--isolated from the city in a massive concrete parking lot, and looking so structurally similar to Cleveland Stadium that Hollywood would later substitute the former for the latter in film.²⁰ Upon its opening, the Braves, newly transplanted from Boston, would proceed to lead the major leagues in attendance for six consecutive years. This set in motion a trend where, over the course of the next twenty years, sixteen new baseball facilities were built, all but one bearing the surname “stadium” and following the lead of Cleveland Stadium and Milwaukee County Stadium in material, shape, and location.

The modernist stadium not only shifts its public with regard to geography, but also in terms of both time and media. Whereas the realist ballpark was characterized by day games and radio broadcasts (as is the case in “The Triumph of Death”), the modernist stadium places an increasing emphasis on night baseball and television coverage. These new venues are for the first time designed with an eye toward lighting considerations and camera pits,²¹ which allow for an accordant shift in public with regard to both those who are able to come to games (the working class fans who are notably discriminated against in day games) and those who no longer have to come to games (who instead can watch the game on television). While the first major league night game was played in 1935, the phenomenon had yet to take hold at the outset of this period; by the end of the Cold War, night baseball would become such a staple of the stadium that World Series games would be held only at night, and the economics of the sport dictating that the majority of all games be played in the evening. Television, meanwhile, quickly evolved from the prevailing attitude at the time of the “Triumph of Death” that there should be a “limit [to] TV’s presence” and that the camera should not afford a better view than that of the worst seat in the ballpark (Halberstam 208), to a medium that provided the viewing fan with unprecedented access, regardless of their geographic location.²²

In addition to these formalist aesthetic features, this architectural paradigm shift engendered a whole series of political and economic implications. This is most directly alluded to in *Underworld* with the plight of Nick Shay’s childhood team, the Brooklyn Dodgers. The twenty-thousand empty seats at the Polo Grounds in “The Triumph of Death” were indicative of a larger trend in ballpark attendance at this time; the surprising reality was that both the Giants and the Dodgers, even at this moment of cultural omnipotence and sporting excellence, consistently struggled to fill their respective ballparks. In 1951, the Giants drew a mediocre one

million fans for the season, while the Brooklyn Dodgers drew slightly more at 1.18 million (this at a time when the New York Yankees were drawing over two million fans per season). By 1957, the Dodgers' attendance had further eroded to little over a million fans, while the Giants' attendance had plummeted to 653,000 (second worst in major league baseball).

Walter O'Malley, the Brooklyn Dodgers owner, and Robert Moses, New York's irrepressible city planner, offered competing plans to remedy this trend, with each touching on the fundamental logic of the emerging modernist ballpark. O'Malley commissioned the modernist architect Buckminster Fuller to design a domed stadium for construction at the corner of Flatbush Avenue and Atlantic Avenue, an unprecedented architectural concept that O'Malley himself intended to finance. If one takes the explanation for the empty seats in "The Triumph of Death" as legitimate--"All day looks like rain. It affects the mood. People say the hell with it" (15)--it is assumed that a domed stadium is the answer. This holds just as viable for Marvin Lundy's retrospective explanation of the lack of attendance, which holds that "all through the nineteen fifties people stayed indoors" (171-72). The stadium was also designed to be 20,000 seats larger than Ebbets Field, with the assumption that a better facility situated in a better neighborhood would allow for the kind of success enjoyed in Cleveland and Milwaukee.

Moses, who Jameson himself casts as "the fundamental agent of and villain in [New York's] transformations" ("Brick" 172), did not consider Brooklyn (and in particular the site O'Malley had selected) to be the logical location for a new New York baseball venue. Instead, he favored "the notorious Flushing ash heaps and mounds of garbage that Scott Fitzgerald had immortalized as one of the great modern symbols of industrial and human waste" (Berman 303), with the idea that this stadium would provide the culmination of his redevelopment of the area. Marshall Berman, in his influential *All That is Solid Melts Into Air*, lays out in detail how

“Moses obliterated this dreadful scene and transformed the site into the nucleus of the fairgrounds, and later of Flushing Meadow Park” (303); contrary to O’Malley’s desire to privately finance the stadium, Moses insisted that it be city-owned in order to further increase the stream of commerce and income that these previous projects had initiated.

The unyielding attitudes of O’Malley and Moses resulted in political gridlock. The Dodgers would ultimately move, along with the Giants, to the West Coast, and constructed Dodger Stadium largely accordance with the ideology of the modernist ballpark. Moses, for his part, would eventually succeed in his plan to put a stadium in Flushing. Shea Stadium was opened in 1964 as the home of the expansion New York Mets (who had played in the now-decrepit Polo Grounds the two years prior). While Berman notes that Moses was the self-proclaimed “man who destroyed the valley of the ashes and put beauty in its place” (304),²³ he just as surely emphasizes that “Moses’ system, even as it constitutes a triumph of modern achievement, shares in some of that art’s deepest ambiguities” with regard to “‘the public’ and the people” (306). Whereas the realist ballpark is an outgrowth of its middle-class public, the modernist stadium requires that public to capitulate to the structure’s ideology of social reorientation. It is doubtful that there will ever be a work the magnitude of *Underworld* that waxes nostalgically about Shea Stadium. It is an alienated structure seated upon a former landfill and directly beneath the LaGuardia Airport flight path, named after a corporate lawyer and surrounded by chop shops and other businesses of questionable design. While Shea Stadium has been economically viable, it has remained aesthetically and culturally uninspiring since its inception.²⁴

What is equally the legacy of this modernist ideology is the detrimental impact the movement of stadiums out of the city had on the neighborhoods left behind. While the

modernist ballpark is theoretically intended as a means for urban renewal, it was instead in part responsible for inner-city decay.²⁵ In perhaps the most illustrative example of this, the site which had been earmarked for O'Malley's domed stadium would instead sit fallow for nearly fifty years, while the surrounding city infrastructure deteriorated further. This trend has only recently been reversed by the ironic construction of another sports facility on the same site: the Atlantic Yards complex, which will house the NBA's Nets and is designed by Frank Gehry, perhaps America's foremost *postmodern* architect.

Significantly, "The Triumph of Death" is not the only time a ballpark is portrayed in *Underworld*. The next time a baseball venue is described is in Nick Shay's trip to Dodger Stadium, which is depicted as an exemplum of the Cold War alienated stadium of the modernist era:

We sat in the stadium club with our sour-mash whiskey and bloody meat, pretending to watch the game. I'd been to Los Angeles many times on business but had never made the jaunt to Dodger Stadium. Big Sims had to wrestle me into his car to get me here. We were set apart from the field, glassed in at press level, and even with a table by the window we heard only muffled sounds from the crowd. The radio announcer's voice shot in clearly, transmitted from the booth, but the crowd remained at an eerie distance, soul-moaning like some lost battalion. (91)

As in "The Triumph of Death," the Dodgers and the Giants are again playing in the game that Nick Shay attends. While Shay's character can be expected to be jaded toward the Dodgers, West Coast baseball, and any ballpark that is not Ebbets Field, it is evident that even for more objective viewers, like his colleagues Brian Glassic and Big Sims, the fundamental logic of the spectator has been altered:

And Glassic said, "Let's eat real fast and get out of here and go sit in the stands like real people."
And Sims said, "What for?"
"I need to hear the crowd."
"No, you don't"
"What's a ball game without crowd noise?"

“We’re here to eat a meal and see a game,” Sims said. “I took the trouble to get us a table by the window. You don’t go to a ballpark to hear a game. You go to see a game. Can you see all right?” (92)²⁶

As such, the fan’s role is reduced to that of proctor, in stark contrast to the mutual experience and connection enjoyed between spectator and participant in “The Triumph of Death.” Contrary even to Russ Hodges’ press box experience of sound, smell, and feeling in “The Triumph of Death,” the luxury box experience is one that offers little more sensory engagement than watching the game at home on television. This alienation between field and fan is effectively illustrated in Nick Shay’s lamentation that “[in 1951,] we had the real Dodgers and the Giants. Now we have the holograms” (95).

The luxury box that is described in this case finds its origins in the Houston Astrodome, the structure that represents the pinnacle of modernist stadium ambition. Opened in 1965, it was purportedly conceived when Astros’ owner Roy Hofheinz was informed, on a trip to Rome, that a giant valeria had once been installed over the Colosseum to shield its spectators from weather and sun. The Astrodome was the first domed stadium, in large part, because it was the first stadium where technology had advanced to make such a project publicly viable. While the Dodgers’ proposed (and controversial) domed stadium in the 1950s represents a cutting-edge concept, the Astrodome offered a plausible reality the voting public was willing to unconditionally support.

Even in this case, it still required a number of subsequent technological innovations to work. The dome itself was originally a series of clear Lucite panes that allowed for natural sunlight and a natural grass playing field. While this proved effective for night games, during day games it literally blinded players looking skyward, and thus necessitated painting over the panels, meaning that any light in the dome would be artificial. This subsequently killed off the

grass, and necessitated Monsanto's invention of Astroturf, a synthetic playing surface that was quickly lauded for its durability and flexibility. In the modernist ballpark, technology clearly trumps organicism, with hubris comparable to Le Corbusier's utter rejection of anything like nature (209).²⁷

The Astrodome also represents a more fully-realized modernism in the way that it takes autonomy to new heights. "Just as the expansion of the sentence plays a fundamental role in literary modernism from Mallarme to Faulkner," Jameson explains, "so also the metamorphosis of the minimal unit is fundamental in architectural modernism, which may be said to have transcended the sentence (as such) in its abolition of the street" (*Postmodernism* 10). The Astrodome not only abolishes the street, but any and all external surroundings, as it establishes its own wholly autonomous environment. The structure, from the inside, would appear the same whether it were located in Houston or Harlem. The facility is impervious to rain, sun, and wind, the field will never wilt, and air conditioning and heating ensures that it will be kept at a constant temperature throughout the year.

While initial reviews of the Astrodome were characterized by a sense of wonderment, this enthusiasm died down as other domed stadiums were subsequently built in Seattle, Minneapolis, and Toronto. As Jameson contends, "The modernist euphoria was dependent on the relative scarcity of such new projects, spaces, and constructions" ("Brick" 181). The "admire but do not emulate" that Klara Sax levels against the World Trade Center can also be usefully applied to an edifice such as the Astrodome (375). In and of itself, it is the Eighth Wonder of the World;²⁸ yet, deprived of its originality, it becomes unnatural and unsatisfying, a veritable template for the failures of modernist architecture. Though the Astrodome was conceived of as a work of the future (as its very name indicates), it is designed for a future that never arrives: by

1974, in what Klara Sax terms “the rooftop summer” (371), the trend has clearly turned to being outside rather than inside.

It is in the wake of the Astrodome that major league architecture turns toward a sort of “final solution:” the multipurpose stadium. Such a shift marks the movement to Jameson’s concept of “late modernism” (*Singular* 150), which “transforms the older modernist experimentation into an arsenal of tried and true techniques, no longer striving for aesthetic totality or the systematic and Utopian metamorphosis of forms” (*Singular* 166). It is, quite simply, “a continuation of the modern that wants to think of itself as the latter’s completion and fulfillment” (*Singular* 166).

Beginning with RFK Stadium in Washington D.C., major league cities demolished older realist ballparks in favor of cost-effective facilities that could host both professional baseball and football.²⁹ Over the next decade, Atlanta’s Fulton County Stadium (1966), St. Louis’ Busch Stadium (1966), Cincinnati’s Riverfront Stadium (1970), Pittsburgh’s Three Rivers Stadium (1970), and Philadelphia’s Veterans Stadium (1971) were all built, with each exhibiting an unwavering fidelity to a single blueprint.³⁰ In comparison with the traditional horseshoe shape of the baseball stadium, these late modernist structures were all built in the shape of a donut, with movable seating configurations at field level to allow for the transition between sports.³¹ They all were fully symmetrical, they all had artificial turf fields, and they all were constructed almost entirely out of concrete; the pattern is so undeniably static that each of these stadiums is virtually indistinguishable from the others. In spite of the seemingly unoriginal template on which each of these stadiums were constructed, this is not the trivialization of these structures, but rather the material assertion of their supreme power. It is the structure, after all--and not the field--that becomes the sole point of orientation and emphasis in the late modernist stadium.

Full-hearted acceptance of these Taylorist principles, without respect to their limitations, has significant consequences. As Jameson notably warns, “a certain ‘concept’ of totality is to be eschewed because it leads fatally to Terror” (*Postmodernism* 401). In the case of the ballpark, this is quite literally an architectural program of terror. The final solution posited by these structures is an assertion that history has ended, which Alain Badiou has notably defined as a form of disaster. Much as Lewis Mumford argues that Le Corbusier’s functional urban approach actually resulted in “a sterile hybrid,” the template of the late modernist ballpark, however functional, proves unyielding and uninspiring. In contrast to the realist ballpark, where limited freedom generated still-unprecedented originality and happy imperfections, the absolute freedom of the late modernist ballpark ironically generates absolute sterility.

Charles Jencks states that this is indeed constitutive of a larger trend within architecture itself, as “extreme developments of the features of the modern . . . end up turning this work against the very spirit of the modern” (cited in Jameson, “Brick” 186). By the early 1970s, the “ballparks” of many cities were multipurpose facilities that lacked both natural grass and idiosyncrasies, and which displayed an almost Eastern Bloc affinity for concrete. To see them as the end product of an aesthetic development is difficult, for, as Jameson theorizes, “Modernism to the second power no longer looks like modernism at all, but some other space altogether” (“Brick” 186).

In such a way, these structures exemplify Jameson’s claim in *A Singular Modernity* that late modernism is “the experience of the failure of autonomy to go all the way and fulfill its aesthetic programme” (209). The utopian promise exhibited at the modernist outset in Cleveland, Milwaukee, and Houston gives way to late modernist contingency in Atlanta, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh, before subsequently leading to the popular rejection of them all. The

1989 opening of SkyDome in Toronto, while legitimately experimental and technologically progressive, at the same time marks a dead end for this aesthetic direction.³² In accordance with Jameson's claim that "late modernism is a product of the cold war" (*Singular* 165), the fall of the Berlin Wall directly coincides with the end of the late modernist era in ballpark architecture.

The evaluation within contemporary theory of this modernist architectural ideology offers a relative consensus: Jameson directly addresses the "failures of modern architecture" (*Postmodernism* 163), Charles Jencks asserts that Le Corbusier's legacy is "deeply tragic," and Marshall Berman draws attention to the "tragedy" of Robert Moses (305). The well-intentioned theories of the early work of these figures leads Berman to sensibly ask "Where did it all go wrong? How did the modern visions of the 1930s turn sour in the process of their realization?" (304).

The stadiums of this time represent, as much as any other modernist medium, a program of unrealized promise. The consequences of this modernist era of ballparks are certainly less horrific than the consequences of the Cold War nuclear era, but they do have consequences nonetheless. Much the same as Le Corbusier's art, which came at tremendous cost and proved inflexible once realized, these structures functioned effectively within the governing logic of the Cold War, but failed to offer a lasting solution.³³ Le Corbusier's plan is flawed because he sets his Radiant City at the end of history instead of at a moment of history; stadiums such as Riverfront Stadium and Veterans Stadium are similarly flawed in that they offer a "final solution" that is only valid until the next historical period.

Reiterating Walter Benjamin's longtime insistence, Jameson posits that "history progresses by failure rather than by success" (*Postmodernism* 209). There is perhaps no better allegory for this than the Bobby Thomson-Ralph Branca dialectic that is played out in "The

Triumph of Death” and throughout the entirety of *Underworld*. In contrast to Thomson’s historic achievement, Branca’s role as the losing pitcher is one of quintessential defeat, but he is every bit as essential to both the event and its historical legacy. Without Branca’s legendary failure, there would be no “Shot Heard Round the World.” In much the same way, although the modernist ballpark “failed,” it spawned other successful experiments. It is with the promise generated from such failures that Berman writes in anticipation of the movement beyond the modernist ideology of the Cold War-era stadium:

Maybe the moderns of the 1970s will rest content in the artificial inner light of their inflated domes. Or maybe, someday soon, they will lift the domes through their picture windows, open their windows to embrace one another, and work to create a politics of authenticity that will embrace us all. (347)³⁴

Postmodernism

Jameson writes in his highly influential *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, that the postmodern concept of nostalgia is “the desperate attempt to appropriate a missing part that is now refracted through the iron law of fashion change and the emergent ideology of the generation” (19). It is this same impulse of nostalgia that informs the prologue of DeLillo’s *Underworld*, which exhibits a sentimental yearning for the moment of the 1951 Giants-Dodgers playoff game and its realist ballpark setting, the Polo Grounds. This work was originally written in the spring of 1992 as the short novella, “Pafko at the Wall,” and published in that October’s issue of *Harper’s Magazine*. What is exceedingly interesting is that this composition coincides directly with the opening of Baltimore’s Oriole Park at Camden Yards, the formal expression of a dramatic departure from the modernist stranglehold on stadium architecture and a work of nostalgia for the realist ballpark.

These two examples are not simply isolated coincidences. There is a distinct nostalgia for classic baseball and the realist ballpark evident in late 1980s American culture. Between

June 1988 and April 1989, three major Hollywood baseball films were released that spoke directly to these longings. Ron Shelton's *Bull Durham* (1988) extolled the virtues of a charming, commercialized minor league facility. David S. Ward's *Major League* (1989) detailed the plight of a team struck in the modernist monstrosity of Cleveland Stadium. Phil Alden Robinson's *Field of Dreams* (1989), the most nostalgic and--not coincidentally--most financially successful of them all, harkened back to the purity of the game of baseball in the years leading up to "The Triumph of Death," and drew attention to the field itself as the primary vehicle of nostalgia.³⁵

In the wake of such nostalgia films, the first blueprints for Baltimore's Camden Yards were drawn up in December 1988, with ground officially being broken for the project in June 1989. When the red brick-and-steel park opened on April 6, 1992, it was immediately hailed as an architectural triumph and the harbinger of an aesthetic shift within the medium. Upon attending the opening game, *Sports Illustrated's* Tim Kurkjian waxed poetically of Camden Yards:

It's a real ballpark built into a real downtown of a real city. The famous Bromo Seltzer clock, a Baltimore landmark, stares in from atop the old gray tower beyond left centerfield. Looming immediately behind the rightfield wall is the enormous red-brick B&O Warehouse, so integral to the stadium that it has instantly joined Fenway Park's Green Monster and Wrigley Field's ivy-colored walls as the game's most distinctive and distinguished architectural features. (34)

This direct comparison to two of the last remaining original realist ballparks is no accident, given that this is precisely the template upon which Camden Yards is modeled. Much the same as DeLillo's *Underworld* is a postmodern work of nostalgia, Camden Yards tangibly expresses nostalgia for the classic realist ballpark. As Kurkjian immediately surmised, "It's as if this ballpark comes equipped with memories" (35).

Furthermore, the largely unadorned nature of the modernist stadium is replaced with pervasive corporate influence throughout the ballpark. Much like the Chesterfield packs on the

scoreboard of the Polo Grounds, Camden Yards' advertisement for *The Baltimore Sun* atop its scoreboard lights up an "h" to indicate a hit and an "e" to indicate an error. Upon its unveiling, the right field wall at Camden Yards was covered with advertisements for insurance, hot dogs, and automobiles, becoming the first park to have ads on the field of play since the demolition of Shibe Park in 1970. Again, like the realist ballpark of "The Triumph of Death," which revels in the corporate pervasiveness of razor blade and cigarette advertisements, this quickly became the norm in every new ballpark, and was also eventually evident in most remaining modernist stadiums. Such advertisements also draw attention to the expansion of the game from a regional to a national to, in the postmodern era, a global entity. In 2006, Japan's Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper purchased the advertising spot on the left field wall of Yankee Stadium, not so much to influence fans at the ballgame to read the newspaper, but rather to make itself visible to those watching telecasts of the game in Japan.

Camden Yards also represents a postmodern departure in its resignation to the necessity of the city and its willing surrender of autonomy. Jameson theorizes that "postmodernism . . . went on to abolish something even more fundamental, namely, the distinction between the inside and the outside" (*Postmodernism* 98). In contrast with the modernist ideology of autonomy, Camden Yards was as instantly notable for its proximity to the B&O Warehouse in rightfield and its unprecedented framing of Baltimore's downtown skyline as it was for any singular feature within the park itself. The ballpark also allotted space between the upper and lower decks to allow for sunlight to pour in and minimize the presence of the surrounding stands on the field. The adjacent Eutaw Street was closed to vehicular traffic to accommodate concessions and vendors, and to allow for fans to view the game from outside the park in the event of a sellout.

In short, with Camden Yards, it becomes difficult to tell where the ballpark ends and the city begins.

This return to the city, as the Orioles execute in their move from the suburban Memorial Stadium to the downtown site of Camden Yards, is part of a larger trend of urban gentrification in American cities. This process represents the moment of the reclamation of the inner city by the middle class, and these parks provide entertainment and cultural resources for this public. Camden Yards presents an ideal example of this, as its economic revitalization of Baltimore's Inner Harbor bears witness. This marks a significant departure from the modernist ideology, as gentrification is not the same process as urban renewal--in contrast with the total and indiscriminate clearing out of Chavez Ravine (and the attendant exploitation of low-income residents and residences) to make way for Dodger Stadium, gentrification is sensitive to the urban. The B&O Warehouse, which would have been leveled under the modernist ideology, instead becomes the material intermediary between ballpark and city. The birthplace of Babe Ruth, adjacent to the complex, has been preserved as a museum. Even the park's name itself is derived from the rail yards formerly on the site, which have been transplanted to the far side of the Warehouse, and which provide public transportation to and from the game.

It is, of course, not sufficient to generate a period break from the singular emergence of a contradictory example. As Slavoj Žižek insists, "It is only through repetition that an event is recognized as a symbolic necessity" (61). Beginning in 1994, a total of seventeen new major league ballparks opened in the next fifteen years, all in the general mode of Camden Yards. The outfield dimensions are asymmetrical, the immediate city is positioned in full view, the fields are natural grass, and the seats are positioned closer to the field with overall capacities significantly reduced. With each new park, the novelty lies in the attempt to incorporate traditional features of

the realist park within a present-day context, as in the case of Pac Bell Park in San Francisco, where the right field stands are hard up against San Francisco Bay, or PETCO Park in San Diego, where the left field stands are deliberately constructed around the hundred year-old Western Metal Building, which was meticulously preserved for inclusion in the project.

As a result, these structures have become, in several cases, the foremost architectural representation of their respective cities. When Pittsburgh's PNC Park first opened in 2001, mayor Tom Murphy stood at home plate and, looking beyond centerfield to the city skyline in the distance, proclaimed "The only city I can think of with a similar view is Paris"--a statement which, quite literally, bears out Jameson's postmodern dictum of "Pittsburgh rather than the Parthenon" (*Postmodernism* 98). The shocking audacity of this statement underscores the central role that postmodern ballparks have played in the gentrification and architectural development in any number of America's cities.

The near-universal approbation given these structures is a testament to the overall quality of this architectural style. In assessing the merits of Camden Yards upon its opening (as well as concurrently laying out the subsequent blueprint for the postmodern ballpark), Tim Kurkjian wrote, "It's no SkyDome. It's better--more magnificent in an understated, baseball-only, real-grass, open-air, quirky, cozy, cool, comfortable sort of way" (34). This is in agreement with Jameson's assessment that, in the move from the modern to the postmodern, "[postmodern] architecture is generally a great improvement; the novels are much worse" (*Postmodernism* 299).

This is not to say, though, that Camden Yards offers a new period template based simply on its aesthetic merits. As tempting as it may be to proclaim the asymmetry and quirky nature of the retro ballpark era as evidence of "art for art's sake," the fact remains that these ballparks are

gargantuan public projects, and this trend exists because it is what paying customers want to see, and where they want to go.³⁶

Thus, along with a new ballpark aesthetic logic, there has emerged a new corporate-political logic for these structures, the stakes of which have accordantly risen exponentially; as Klara Sax contemporarily muses in *Underworld*, “Things have no limits now. Money has no limits” (76). The kind of inflation inherent to ballpark construction is analogous to the inflated price of the Thomson baseball, which Manx Martin originally sells for \$32.45 and is eventually purchased thirty years later by Nick Shay for \$34,500. Adjusted for inflation, Dodger Stadium cost \$23 million to build, and Shea Stadium cost \$28.5 million. By comparison, the Mets’ new stadium opening in 2009 has a projected price tag of \$610 million, while the Yankees’ new stadium, also opening in 2009, has a projected cost of \$1.3 *billion*. In contrast to the unprecedented political struggle over the Brooklyn Dodgers’ new stadium in the 1950s, the process has now become a streamlined exercise in ballot referendums and trickle-down economics. For the Washington Nationals’ new \$674 million ballpark, which opened in March 2008, the city of Washington D.C. assumed 97% of the construction costs, in spite of the fact that the Nationals baseball club will receive all profits from tickets, parking, and concessions at stadium events.

The changing names of postmodern stadiums also stand as a testament to this economic reorientation in the postmodern ballpark. Part of the inherent nostalgic appeal of Camden Yards is the name itself, which was kept on (in favor of simply “Oriole Park”) as a nod to such realist venues as the Polo Grounds. Following a period when each new structure over the past seventy years was given the surname “stadium” or “dome,” since the opening of Camden Yards virtually every new project has been named either “park” or “field” (the exceptions being the new Busch

Stadium in St. Louis [2006] and the new Yankee Stadium in New York [2009], both choosing to retain the familiar titles of their immediate predecessors; in the former case, it bears noting that the actual Busch Stadium construction project operated under the name “Ballpark Village”). What has become decidedly tenuous, however, are the actual names of these structures, as the corporate suffusion of the postmodern ballpark assumes titular primacy, the rights to such naming being doled out in leases for millions of dollars. In just the few years since their opening, Jacobs Field in Cleveland has become Progressive Field, Pac Bell Park is now AT&T Park, and (most notoriously) Enron Field in Houston has been changed to Minute Maid Park.

Much as the names of these structures are tenuous, the “victory of the postmodern . . . is by no means secure” (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 171). The Epilogue of *Underworld* focuses on a post-Cold War Soviet Union, along with its nuclear consequences and the questionable political and corporate entities that now control such technology. Just as nuclear paranoia has subsided in the aftermath of the Cold War despite being more real than ever, major league baseball is now more distant and alienated than ever despite the illusion of intimacy. Fans are not permitted on the field at any time, players make an average of \$3.15 million a season, and the most valued spectators at the ballpark are those that sit in isolated luxury suites.

Such rigidity runs in line with the veritable monopoly on the construction of these structures by HOK Sport--a subsidiary of Hellmuth, Obata, and Kassabaum (HOK), the largest U.S.-based architecture-engineering firm³⁷--which, in addition to Camden Yards, has designed 16 of the 19 major league ballparks built since 1992. To be sure, HOK Sport has achieved its popularity largely through its relentless refutation of the modernist stadium archetype: the unadorned, artificial, symmetrically-impeccable multi-purpose venues of each major league city are joyously imploded in favor of what is (for each particular city) a unique and refreshing

paradigmatic departure. What must be emphasized as well, though, is the number of proto-modernist features they have been incorporated into the postmodern ballpark, from luxury suites to clear sightlines to abundant restrooms to JumboTRON video scoreboards in centerfield. This is in direct accordance with Jameson's observation that "the postmodern is at one with a negative judgment on these aspirations of the high modern, which it claims to have abandoned--but the new name, the sense of a radical break, the enthusiasm that greeted the new kinds of buildings, all testify to the persistence of some notion of novelty or innovation that seems to have survived the modern itself" (*Postmodernism* 107).

In spite of the fact that the retro ballpark has enjoyed universal popularity, such corporate homogenization and ideological ossification are suspect developments. Jameson's aforementioned warning that "a certain 'concept' of totality is to be eschewed because it leads fatally to the Terror" holds just as true for postmodern aesthetics (*Postmodernism* 401)--it is accepted that the failure of the modernist ballpark lies here, but it might also be questioned whether the legacy of the postmodern ballpark will rest on this trend as well.

While there are, for obvious reasons, no postmodern ballparks depicted in *Underworld*, its concluding Epilogue--significantly titled "Das Kapital"--maps the elements for the emergence and development of this medium. It opens with the assessment that "Capital burns off the nuance in a culture" (785), and goes on to explain the economic logic that is plainly evident in the evolution of the postmodern ballpark:

[By the mid-1990s] desire seems to demand . . . a method of production that will custom-cater to cultural and personal needs, not to cold war ideologies of massive uniformity. And the system pretends to go along, to become more supple and resourceful, less dependent on rigid categories. But even as desire tends to specialize, going silky and intimate, the force of converging markets produces an instantaneous capital that shoots across horizons at the speed of light, making for a certain furtive sameness, a planning away of particulars that affects everything from architecture to leisure time to the way people eat and sleep and dream. (785-86)

If the goal of postmodernism is, as Macrae-Gibson contends, “perceptual shock” (*Postmodernism* 121), any program of consistency defeats the purpose. The “massive uniformity” of the late modernist stadiums has indeed been replaced, but it is questionable whether it has been replaced by anything truly innovative. Today, it is not shocking if a new park has the nostalgic “retro” features pioneered by Camden Yards; it is only shocking if it does not.

Instead, “the very real accomplishments of the postmodern architects are comparable to late night reefer munchies, substitutes rather than the thing itself” (*Postmodernism* 98). The rotunda in the new Mets’ ballpark built in homage to the rotunda in Ebbets Field may generate plaudits from New York’s fan base, but offers no significant architectural innovation of its own accord. And whereas Camden Yards was built on the template of Fenway Park and Wrigley Field, the subsequent parks of the postmodern era have ostensibly striven to emulate the pattern of Camden Yards. These structures, Jameson explains, “survive in a bourgeois present as exotic cosmetics and costumes alone, as sheer postmodern ‘nostalgia’ trappings, as optional content within a stereotypical yet empty form: some first, ‘classical’ nostalgia as abstraction from the concrete object, alongside a second or more ‘postmodern’ one as nostalgia for nostalgia itself” (“Brick” 189).

Hence, though it is tempting to present postmodernism as the outright cancellation of modernism, and the resumption of the realist ideology, such a viewpoint disregards the fundamental chronology of periodization. Rather than “a return to realism” Jameson notes, this newer moment “is only a replay of the empty stereotypes of all those things, and a vague memory of their fullness on the tip of the tongue” (“Brick” 189). While the plan of the modernist ballpark has been popularly eschewed, one must doubt whether the postmodern

ballpark has altered this fidelity to “the plan” in any fundamental manner. Rather, it simply offers a different plan, and throws into question the legacy of Camden Yards’ transitional event as to whether the postmodern ballpark is indeed “the triumph of death,” or simply rather the death of a triumph.

¹ Most notably, Phil Wegner’s *Life Between Two Deaths, 1989-2001: U.S. Culture in the Long Nineties* offers a comprehensive analysis of this relationship, as well as the greater implications of the book in American culture at-large, in the chapter entitled “October 3, 1951, to September 11, 2001: Periodizing the Cold War in Don DeLillo’s *Underworld*.”

² With the exceptions of Toronto’s SkyDome in 1989 and Baltimore’s Camden Yards in 1992, none of the other major league ballparks built in the last forty years have a legitimate claim to radical experimentation. The former represents an aesthetic dead end that necessitated a new architectural direction, while the latter marks a distinct period break by providing the template for every new park up to the present day.

³ This is of no small consideration in comparison with the accepted periodizing operations of other aesthetic mediums. The very operation of periodization itself can be traditionally analogized to Marvin Lundy’s theory in *Underworld* on the nature of crowd assembly: “unprovably true, remotely and inadmissibly true but not completely unhistorical, not without some nuance of authentic inner narrative” (172). This is in accordance with Fredric Jameson’s claim in *A Singular Modernity* that “this operation is intolerable and unacceptable in its very nature, for it attempts to take a point of view on individual events which is well beyond the observational capacities of any individual, and, to unify, both horizontally and vertically, hosts of realities whose interrelationships must remain inaccessible and unverifiable, to say the least” (28). While there is still, to be sure, a trace of this in the periodization of the major league ballpark, the emphasis that the medium offers on praxis over theory allows for a more materially-tangible argument.

⁴ In fact, this is a trend that is contained almost entirely within national borders, something the past twenty years have only reaffirmed with Toronto’s Sky Dome being rendered as an aesthetic dead end and the Montreal Expos’ move to Washington D.C. In spite of its inroads in the Far East and in Latin and Central America, baseball is arguably the *least* global of the four major North American professional sports, something plays right into the traditional categorization of baseball as America’s “national pastime.”

⁵ This is a more intricate feature of the park than might first be thought. Later in the game, after a questionable play on the field, the crowd looks up to “the clubhouse sign in straightaway center to see if the first E in CHESTERFIELD lights up, indicating error” (U 34). The lasting effects (and effectiveness) of such association are evident later in the novel when Nick Shay explains, “You know why I smoke Old Golds? . . . That’s the cigarette company that used to sponsor the Dodgers on the radio” (751).

⁶ In fact, in another imperfection of the realist ballpark, Cotter is not able to see the complete arc of most home run balls from the seat he takes in the lower left field stands, given the overhang of the second deck. When Thomson's ball is hit, "Cotter [is] watching the ball come in his direction . . . [but] he loses sight of the ball when it climbs above the overhang and he thinks it will land in the upper deck Before the moment can overwhelm him, the ball appears again, stitches visibly spinning, that's how it hits, banging at an angle off a pillar" (42).

⁷ Note also Susan Hegeman's warning that "this change from urban public culture to a far more privatized one may be something to get nostalgic about, . . . but, in being nostalgic, we are likely to forget that the experience of this public mass culture had, for some, its less sepia-toned features" (300). Or, as Bertolt Brecht states even more succinctly, "The bad new days are always preferable to the good old days."

⁸ This also takes into account the non-synchronous dynamic of the classification of such a moment as "realism." As Jameson further theorizes, "in that case, there will be formal analogies between such moments, even though they are chronologically distant from each other" ("Existence" 156).

⁹ This is equally apparent in Russ Hodges' postgame assessment that he has just witnessed "another kind of history. He thinks they will carry something out of here that joins them all in a rare way, that binds them to a memory with protective power . . . This is the people's history and it has flesh and breath that quicken to the force of this old safe game of ours" (59-60). Baseball is dialectically significant for the personally specific narratives it endows within the understanding of a collective experience and history.

¹⁰ In comparison, by the time of Part I of *Underworld*, in the spring of 1992, the average major league ballplayer would be making well over *forty* times the average working man's salary. By 2008, this gap has widened to the point where the average salary in major league baseball is \$3.15 million. As Roger Angell explains in Ken Burns' *Baseball* documentary, "The big difference now that players get so much is that it has distanced them from us. It was a blue-collar sport, and people in the stands could look at these people playing ball and think of them as workers, because they were getting paid workers' salaries, and this perpetuated the illusion . . . [of] the sense of 'we' between fans and players."

¹¹ This moniker is, in fact, the subtitle to the original novella, "Pafko at the Wall." It bears mentioning that the order of these titles lends primacy to the tragedy and futility of the Dodgers (with the image of the helpless Pafko) ahead of the victory and achievement of the Giants (with Thomson's home run as the focus).

¹² Marvin Lundy, for example, remembers fondly that he was "racing through a mountain in the Alps" with "two GIs huddled over a little portable antenna, listening to Russ Hodges on Armed Forces Network" (313). The fact that it was listened to by so many across the world, as well as the famous radio call by Hodges himself, at least partly accounts for the extraordinary legacy of The Shot Heard Round the World. From a purely formalist vantage point, there are any number of parallel occurrences in major league annals, such as Chris Chambliss' home run to win the

1976 American League pennant for the Yankees. These other seemingly similar events find their way into the dustbin of major league lore, however, lacking the paradigmatic qualities and the transitional moment of the game described in “The Triumph of Death.” It is the *history* of the game, even more than the game itself, that assumes precedence.

¹³ This relationship between the two events is even symbolically demonstrated by Marvin Lundy, who explains that “when they make an atomic bomb, . . . they make the radioactive core the exact same size as a baseball” (172).

¹⁴ Again, Wegner provides an excellent analysis of the aforementioned political trend in the *Underworld* chapter of *Life Between Two Deaths*. The advent of the American-Soviet Cold War may be located on the day “The Triumph of Death” is set, as the recognition of the repetition of a successful nuclear test by the Soviet Union “inaugurates a new historical period and a new relationship between the two powers” (Wegner, *Life* 53).

¹⁵ While this is seemingly a significant move, it is worth noting that all of New York’s ballparks operate on the fringes of Rem Koolhaas’ “enabling structure” of the Manhattan grid--much the same as ballpark architecture itself is cast to the fringes of architecture proper.

¹⁶ With this expansion of the realist template in mind, it might seem logical to posit Yankee Stadium as the advent of modernism, rather than the realization of the limits of realism. However, from a stylistic perspective, the structure is still oriented around its highly asymmetrical playing field, and the shape of its stands is directly influenced by the surrounding property (which, although located in the Bronx, was strategically built within walking distance of the Yankees’ previous residence of the Polo Grounds). Its unprecedented size, furthermore, was largely the product of the Yankees’ unique historical situation of having Babe Ruth, the most famous ballplayer in major league history, evident in the structure’s longstanding nickname: The House that Ruth Built. In contrast, while that same year the Giants chose to expand the Polo Grounds to 55,000 seats in competition with the Yankees, they would struggle for the next thirty years to fill those extra seats. For example, the thirty-five thousand fans that attend the 1951 Giants-Dodgers game is precisely the Polo Grounds’ previous capacity (and offers yet another method to account for the twenty thousand empty seats at the game). Thus, while Yankee Stadium offered a subtle starting point for the subsequent modernist stadium, it was simply not a template that was applicable for any other franchise at that moment. It is, instead, the renovated Yankee Stadium of 1976 that stands as a modernist work of architecture.

¹⁷ In 1951, New York had the Yankees and the Giants (in addition to the Brooklyn Dodgers), Boston had the Red Sox and the Braves, Philadelphia had the Athletics and the Phillies, St. Louis had the Browns and the Cardinals, and Chicago had the White Sox and the Cubs (a city in which the teams truly were on the opposite ends of town). Beginning in 1953, the Braves moved to Milwaukee, and were followed by the Browns (Baltimore Orioles, 1954), the Athletics (Kansas City, 1955) and, of course, the Giants (San Francisco, 1958) and the Dodgers (Los Angeles, 1958).

¹⁸ Much as Lenny Bruce’s character asserts in his Cold War-themed comedy routine, “The true edge is not where you choose to live but where they situate you against your will. This event is

infinitely deeper and more electrifying” (505). The modernist stadium necessitates the capitulation of the public to its governing ideology, however logical and well-intended that ideology may be.

¹⁹ As such, while seemingly innocuous in design and scope, it is the scandal of this plan, and the scandal of social engineering, that is the scandal of modernism. This ideology of autonomy eventually leads the medium astray, as, Marshall Berman observes, “the evolution of . . . [the] works in the 1950s underscores another important fact about the postwar evolution of culture and society: the radical splitting off of modernism from modernization” (Berman 309).

²⁰ As was the case in David S. Ward’s *Major League* (1989), which despite being set in Cleveland was filmed principally in Milwaukee for reasons of both cost and availability.

²¹ There is a detailed glimpse of this in “The Triumph of Death”: in spite of the fact that this game takes place during the day, because it is overcast “the arc lights come on, catching Cotter by surprise . . . He likes looking at the field under lights even if he has to worry about rain and even if it’s only afternoon and the full effect is not the same as in a night game when the field and the players seem completely separate from the night around them . . . it isolated the players and the grass and the chalk-rolled lines from anything he’d ever seen or imagined” (19). What had been the exception in 1951 is now the general rule in major league baseball, and ballparks from this point onward have been designed with night games in mind.

²² David Halberstam’s *Summer of ’49* provides an excellent overview of this evolution, both in regard to the publics that were reoriented as a result of this media progression and the movement of advertising in baseball from the prominent billboards in “The Triumph of Death” to the commercials on television broadcasts that would become the primary corporate outlet of the modernist stadium era (and resulting in the largely unadorned nature of the structures of this period).

²³ *Underworld* pays particular attention to this emphasis on waste management, as it is the profession of its main character, Nick Shay. Shay’s associate, Jesse Detwiler, explains that “garbage comes first, then we build a system to deal with it” (288). This is ironic, given that both Ebbets Field and Shea Stadium started off on the site of a dump, and that in both cases the system built to deal with these wastelands was a ballpark.

²⁴ In contrast to this, the single exception to Berman’s bleak vision of the Bronx is Yankee Stadium (which is, rather inexplicably, never mentioned in his study). In *All That is Solid Melts Into Air* (1982), a great many of Berman’s architectural and neighborhood examples are no longer viable; SoHo, for instance, is no longer a grubby bohemia, but rather a gentrified neighborhood filled with Gaps and Starbucks. The Bronx example, however, has held decidedly firm. *Underworld* illustrates the Bronx’s poverty and depravity in great detail in its latter half, while still upholding Yankee Stadium as “the most famous ballpark in the country” (646), and a beacon of hope and cultural pride in a desolate landscape.

²⁵ Compare this with the abandoned warplanes that constitute the massive art project in the “Long Tall Sally” section of *Underworld*. These warplanes never actually took an active part in

the warfare – “the bombs were not released. . . . The missiles remained in the rotary launchers. The men came back and the cities were not destroyed” (122). Jameson notably insists that the “modernist form as the absolute . . . has a genuine function to redeem and transfigure a fallen society” (“Existence” 178). However, while an abandoned warplane leaves a city in tact, an abandoned stadium lays waste to one.

²⁶ Compared with the unease of Frank Sinatra’s character at having the crowd watch his reactions in “The Triumph of Death,” this luxury box experience aligns itself effectively with Michel Foucault’s panopticon; the allure lies in being able to watch the game action (or not watch it) while knowing that others cannot watch you. With the proliferation of the luxury box, major league baseball effectively expanded its stream of revenue by expanding its viewing public, as it now catered to the rich, the famous, and the corporate.

²⁷ This also presents an interesting parallel to the image of the World Trade Center on the cover of *Underworld*. Lewis Mumford famously denounced the World Trade Center as an “example of the purposeless giantism and technological exhibitionism that are now eviscerating the living tissue of every great city.” The absolute environmental autonomy established by the Astrodome, as well as such addendums as luxury suites and an exploding scoreboard, render it vulnerable to the same critique.

²⁸ As was its unofficial nickname, and as it is still referred to today. Again, had it remained the only domed stadium in existence, this moniker might not today seem exaggerated and unwarranted.

²⁹ It is important to note that the practice of holding football and baseball games in the same stadium was not a novel concept at this time. A number of ballparks were in the practice of hosting football games, beginning with the Polo Grounds in 1921 (which because of its horseshoe shape, was ironically in many ways better suited as a football venue). All of the most famous realist ballparks still in existence--Fenway Park, Wrigley Field, and Yankee Stadium--hosted football games at some point, but all of these parks had been originally intended for baseball. RFK Stadium (which was named District of Columbia Stadium upon until 1969) was the first facility built expressly with these two sports in mind, and its seating configurations serve as a model that other parks copied over the next decade.

³⁰ In an ironic nod toward the cover of *Underworld*, each of these stadiums was unveiled over the time that the World Trade Center was under construction (which also intriguingly draws attention to how the periodization of the modernist ballpark effectively aligns itself with that of the modernist skyscraper). Much as Carlo Strasser says of the World Trade Center in *Underworld*, these late modernist ballparks are a “very terrible thing but you have to look at it, I think” (372)

³¹ As such, the seats in these stadiums are not oriented toward home plate (as in the traditional ballpark), but rather toward the center of the playing field. Such stadiums offer seating for both baseball and football, but do so with the understanding that the seats offered will not be ideal for either. This is further evidence that while such structures are an exercise in efficiency, they just as surely exhibit a resignation to mediocrity.

³² Some of the more notable of these experimental features included a retractable dome, an on-site fitness club, a luxury hotel, and over \$5 million of commissioned artwork positioned strategically around the stadium. Such architectural and commercial creativity, however, cannot overshadow the fact that SkyDome is in many ways more aesthetically analogous to The Mall of America than to Fenway Park.

³³ By 2008, all of the late modernist stadiums mentioned here had been either demolished or abandoned, in most cases little over thirty years after their construction. Much as the demolition of St. Louis' Pruitt-Igoe housing project represents, for Charles Jencks, "the day Modern Architecture died" in its symbolic abandonment of the modernist project (*Language 9*), this event has been replicated--to an almost farcical extent--in Major League cities across the country throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

³⁴ Berman's statement is ironic, given that his book was published the same year (1982) as the opening of the Metrodome in Minneapolis, the first (and, to date, only) major league stadium to have an inflatable dome.

³⁵ It bears mentioning that a fourth major Hollywood film, John Sayles' *Eight Men Out* (1988), offers an anti-nostalgic take on the banished White Sox players from the 1919 World Series that are the inspiration behind *Field of Dreams*. In Sayles' film, baseball's nostalgic purity is shown to be largely an illusion, with a focus instead lying in management and (corrupt) economics, some thirty years in advance of the era depicted in "The Triumph of Death."

³⁶ Indeed, Camden Yards offers the quintessential example of this: in their last ten years at Memorial Stadium (the Orioles' former modernist home) the team drew an average of 25,722 fans per game; in their first ten years in Camden Yards, the Orioles' average attendance per game jumped to 43,490.

³⁷ In an ironic parallel to the changing names of the ballparks it has designed, in January 2009 "HOK Sport" was renamed "Populous"--the result of a management buyout from its parent company that now leaves the firm as independently owned and operated.

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