The Questionable Progression from Modernism to Postmodernism: Exploring Aesthetic Convergences in *Ulysses* and *Gravity’s Rainbow*

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Introduction

The problem with attempting to discuss the differences between modernism and postmodernism almost immediately presents itself in most discourse as a series of unreliable dichotomies. Perhaps the most famous of these oppositions is the concept of modernism as primarily an epistemological exercise and postmodernism as more of a focus on ontological concerns. Brian McHale in “What is Postmodernism?” refers to this as a “shift of the dominant”: “So the change-over from modernism to postmodernism isn’t a matter of something new entering the picture, but a reshuffling of the deck: what was present but ‘backgrounded’ in modernism becomes ‘foregrounded’ in postmodernism” (McHale). McHale discusses this theory in conjunction with John Frow’s 1997 “What Was Postmodernism?” as well as Harry Levin’s 1960 canonization of modernism in “What Was Modernism?” Both Frow and Levin focus on the concept of a “changed tense” in the historical progression from modernism to postmodernism. Levin views modernism as simply history, which seems plausible due to the ex post facto nature of his analysis of 1922 (“the high point of modernism,” according to Levin), but this construction only works if we concede that by 1960 we have entered the postmodern. The idea of the postmodern, according to Frow, is based primarily on the “modernist logic of innovation and obsolescence” (Frow 36): “Eventually, this relentless logic of superseding oneself requires that modernism itself become obsolete” (McHale).

In this discussion, modernism becomes associated with a need for “nextness” or “innovation,” whereas postmodernism has possibly created a different temporal mode to distinguish itself. There does not seem to be a consensus on what this temporality is; due to the existence of a variety of possible explanations attempting to explain these temporal shifts, much of the theory attached to these concepts still remains quite ambiguous:
“One option might be to adopt a temporality of *stasis* in contradistinction to modernism's dynamism - either in the form of a static neoclassicism (a version favored by Charles Jencks in his various accounts of postmodern architecture), or in the form of apocalypse and the end of history (which are recurrent topics of postmodernist theory and practice alike, as we'll shortly see). Alternatively, postmodernism might attempt to outstrip modernism by adopting an even more frantic pace of innovation and obsolescence, speeding up the cycle until it approached the seasonal rhythm of fashion” (McHale).

Despite all of these possible alternatives to explain postmodernism, there is even stronger evidence to support a theory of “multiple and uneven times, or non-synchronicity,” which posits that it is possible for modernism and postmodernism to simultaneously exist due to the unevenness of cultural postmodernization (i.e., some fields postmodernize faster than others). McHale eventually makes the crucial distinction of the postmodernization of the arts: “In other fields, those with heterogeneous and contested modernisms, such as film, painting, or literature, the term ‘postmodernism’ is correspondingly optional, dispensable, or problematic” (McHale).

Before McHale eventually proposes his theory of the ontological vs. the epistemological, he considers himself above all a constructivist:

“Period terms like postmodernism (and modernism, for that matter) are strategically useful; they help us see connections among disparate phenomena, but at the same time they also obscure other connections, and we must constantly weigh the illumination they shed over *here* against the obscurity they cast over *there*”(McHale).

It seems heavily counterintuitive to present a “background” vs. “foreground” theory of the epistemological and ontological after making this statement. Although McHale recognizes the
tenuousness of these rigid dichotomies, he seems to rely on a type of binary categorization that is frequently misleading.

I chose to include this discussion of McHale’s theory of the postmodern as a segue into my purposes here, which is to propose that the terms “postmodernism” and “modernism” are fluid, hybrid terms that are fundamentally contained in one another. Any given work of art that has been categorically labelled as either postmodernist or modernist cannot exclude that which it attempts to leave behind. Aesthetic “differences” between postmodernism and modernism have been engendered primarily through critical theory that has attempted to categorize certain aesthetic and cultural moments in history. When rigid guidelines are created to explain groups of ostensibly similar aesthetics, these theoretical “boxes” fail to explain the possibility of cross-aesthetic convergence. In other words, there truly is no “pure” group of aesthetics that differentiates the modernists from the postmodernists; appropriately, these terms have been used as interpretive techniques that have gradually become associated with certain cultural and historical milieus. For example, postmodernism is heavily associated with existentialism (although existentialist philosophers such as Soren Kierkegaard predate the 20th century), so existentialist theory is often interpolated in aesthetic formulations of “postmodern” texts. When attempting to decode a particular work, we look for these types of “theoretical cues” to explain an aesthetic. In Beckett’s Waiting for Godot, the overwhelming sense of absurdity thus becomes equated with the anomic state of mind associated with existentialism. Now we have created the following associations: Waiting for Godot features absurdity, which is an element of existentialism, which has become attached to postmodern theory; therefore, Waiting for Godot is primarily a postmodern play. When the terms “postmodernism” and “modernism” as used as
interpretive expedients, these types of associations are created in an attempt to explain aesthetics
that would otherwise be devoid of any contextual meaning.

In an attempt to illustrate the multi-interpretive fluidity of modernism and
postmodernism, the focus of this study will analyze the aesthetic and theoretical convergences of
two of the most important texts of the 20th century, James Joyce’s 1922 Ulysses and Thomas
Pynchon’s 1973 Gravity’s Rainbow. Ulysses has been labelled as the apotheosis of modernism,
and likewise Gravity’s Rainbow is frequently cited as the greatest example of postmodernism in
the second half of the 20th century. My purpose is to not necessarily discredit these statements
altogether; I am more concerned with examining the similarities between the two texts to
delineate how Ulysses has many elements that are now associated with postmodernism, while
Gravity’s Rainbow cannot completely divorce itself from the modernism it has supposedly left
behind. For one, Ulysses seems to be the exception to most of the blanket modernist tendencies,
and Gravity’s Rainbow’s aesthetics are usually contradistinguished from modernist “family
tendencies” based primarily on the types of theoretical associations I demonstrated above with
Waiting for Godot. It is more important to understand how these texts can be interpreted as
modernist, postmodernist, or both simultaneously. The degree to which these novels are
categorized is based on the intermingling of terminological constructions with a given aesthetic
or theoretical framework. Ulysses could be considered modernist simply because it was
published in 1922, and, for that matter, Gravity’s Rainbow as postmodernist for being published
in 1973, a time when postmodern discourse began to generate in critical theory. Sections of
Ulysses could be labelled as postmodernist because of Joyce’s use of extreme fragmentation
(note: postmodernism is often attributed to “extreme” uses of certain modernist tendencies such
as fragmentation); conversely, Pynchon’s linguistic experiments could be interpreted as
fundamentally modernist. It seems as if both novels function on a coin-like aesthetic in which both authors seem to fluctuate between these aesthetic categories via experimentation in form and context. Although it seems strange to consider something as comprised of two categories simultaneously, this notion of a spectrum rather than strict aesthetic demarcations lends credence to the interpretive nature of these terms. It has certainly been easier to label certain works as primarily one category or the other, and while a given work may appear to exhibit certain tendencies related to a particular category, it is important to analyze how these categorizations are subject to change based on a quasi-parallax relationship with any given set of theoretical frameworks.

I have identified various aesthetic and theoretical similarities between the two texts in my efforts to delineate the underlying crossovers between these paragons of the modern avant-garde. I have focused more on attempting to find characteristics that could be interpreted as either postmodernist or modernist and, therefore, subject to change due to the elasticity of theoretical and interpretive constructions.

The first chapter will explore how Joyce and Pynchon canvass paranoia in terms of chaos, industrial culture (cyberpunk), entropy, skepticism, mysticism and religion, and commodity culture. Pynchon’s paranoia throughout Gravity’s Rainbow represents a post-war society where technology and cyberpunk landscapes are juxtaposed with the mysticism of astral projection, séances, telepathic narration, etc. For example, The Zone (similar to William S. Burrough’s own nightmarish Interzone in Naked Lunch) presents human existence as a liminal projection caught between a cabalistic world-wide conspiracy and an apocalyptic vision of cyberspace, pareidolias, paranoidic symbols of phalluses (the Schwarzgerat), and preterition (itself a sort of limbo). Joyce similarly employs paranoia in Ulysses via religious and literary
symbolism. Throughout *Ulysses*, there is a sense of paranoia similar to *Gravity’s Rainbow*: in “Aeolus,” Joyce prefigures the 20th century landscape of information overload in the form of newspaper headlines (similar to Pynchon’s use of “talking headlines”), while at the same time creating a sense of foreboding through advertisements, pamphlets, and celestial and religious symbols that Bloom and other characters see throughout the day that forecast or reflect on certain events in the novel. Like Pynchon, much of Joyce’s paranoia is rooted in reflecting on historical narratives. Stephen’s theory of Shakespeare, for example, is embedded in a type of conspiracy theory (recall Pynchon’s “Proverbs for Paranoids” or Slothrop’s gradual unraveling of the mysterious Imoplex G) that traces patterns throughout Shakespeare’s plays, creating a sense of skepticism in relation to Shakespeare’s historical identity. I will explore other textual examples of paranoia in the two novels to illustrate how this sense of “Them,” although now considered a “postmodern” trope, can be found in Joyce’s “modernist” configurations, which are not radically different from Pynchon’s embodiment of a similar type of paranoia in *Gravity’s Rainbow*.

It has become somewhat of a cliché that postmodernism is dehistorized and flat due to commodity culture and capitalism (recall Godard’s famous statements of existential alienation and the “comic book” existence of the modern world in *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*). Pynchon’s and Joyce’s parodies, pastiches, and allusions create dialectical commentaries on the very cultures in which the authors themselves reside. If *Ulysses* is deemed “postmodern” in this instance, it is appropriate to recall “Oxen of the Sun” in which Joyce engages in a pastiche of the gestation of the English language. A similar example of pastiche in *Gravity’s Rainbow* is Pynchon’s treatment of popular culture: his obscure pop culture references (an oxymoronic term, to say the least) are a representation of the nature of commodity culture and history – what celebrities does history remember? Do we really rely on “pop” images of the past? Joyce himself
becomes abstruse in his treatment of culture through pastiche and parody: various songs, riddles, celebrities, sayings, slang, operas, plays, and historical instances are interplayed to create a microcosm of the 19th century (and early 20th). *Gravity’s Rainbow* is also an encyclopedic microcosm of cultural and historical sensibilities channeled through very similar stylistic motifs, often employing a type of cultural artifice as a comment on the postmodern condition, which, I will argue, is not void of historical contextuality. Despite their various interactions with history, both *Ulysses* and *Gravity’s Rainbow* are skeptical of historical narratives (or “grand narratives”): Joyce views history as a nightmare of clichés, and Pynchon is also skeptical of the authenticity of traditional historicity (he would have to be since he has created an alternate “meta” history of World War II!). In this chapter, I will trace the similarities of Joyce’s and Pynchon’s views of history and culture. Much of *Ulysses* juxtaposes the ideal with reality (cf. Aristotle’s entelechy), asking questions such as, “What could have happened in this historical moment?”; *Gravity’s Rainbow* also plays with the multiplicity and perhaps subjectivity of history, featuring over 400 characters whose perspectives are explored (cf. the “Wandering Rocks” episode in *Ulysses*, which plays with a similar type of subjective multiplicity via rapidly changing perspectives). I will also explore a number of theories relating to fluctuating modes of cultural discourse *vis-a-vis* changing ideas of aesthetic representation, including the notion of an increasingly self-reflexive avant-garde sensibility as well as discussions of post-structuralism, mass culture, high vs. low cultures, and ironic juxtaposition. It seems as if both Joyce and Pynchon reflect on their specific time periods, which somewhat explains the various aesthetic and historical associations we have of modernism and postmodernism. Joyce comments on Victorian and early 20th century culture through ironic juxtapositions of high vs. low and explores the political and social attitudes of various time periods, while Pynchon’s novel is an amalgamation of countercultural politics and,
perhaps, the anti-intellectual sensibilities of the 1960s. Therefore, both novels seem to be snapshots of avant-garde culture endemic to particular moments in history (although supposedly the avant-garde has collapsed by the time we get to *Gravity’s Rainbow*). Joyce’s novel seems to recall Impressionism or even Dada (delayed decoding, for example), whereas Pynchon’s novel has an aura of the camp sensibility of the 1960s in which the obscene becomes art (Joyce, of course, has these types of moments as well). We can view these novels as historical and aesthetic artifacts of both the modern and postmodern condition, although many theorists would find this somewhat antithetical to postmodern theory, which traditionally emphasizes a text’s formal elements outside of historical context. I will attempt to differentiate between the aesthetics themselves and the theory surrounding the aesthetics.

My last two chapters focus specifically on the meta-fictional aspects of the texts. It has been posited by theorists such as Clement Greenberg that the avant-garde has become increasingly self-reflexive, which, I will argue, often becomes a type of meta-narration. It is difficult to classify parody, pastiche, and absurdity as either postmodernist or modernist, as both the modernists and postmodernists often utilize these tropes. The overall “meta” effect in *Ulysses* and *Gravity’s Rainbow* could be both modernist and postmodernist in terms of self-reflexivity, artificiality, and intertextuality, none of which are inherently situated in one aesthetic “box” or the other. The texts seem to be “aware” of themselves as texts by experimenting with these various motifs.

The final chapter will extend my previous chapter’s concept of meta-textuality to specific stylistic characteristics of both novels that could be either modern or postmodern, and, more specifically, why it is difficult to create neat little “boxes” that attempt to categorize what is “postmodern” vs. “modern.” The experimental nature of modernism is sometimes downplayed
when concessions are made to a diametrically oppositional postmodernism; these types of binary constructions prioritize canonization at the expense of very complex aesthetic intertextuality. What makes *Ulysses* a particularly difficult novel to categorize is its “ultramodernism,” or, as I call it, “postmodernism before postmodernism,” a type of pre-configuration of postmodernism that fundamentally obeys the modernist logic of “nextness,” which is not completely obliterated in postmodern literature as maintained by many theorists. Or is it possible we now have a postmodern bias when reading *Ulysses*? Why do some theorists cringe at the thought of calling *Ulysses* “postmodern,” whereas very few dispute *Gravity’s Rainbow* as an instance of postmodernism? Despite the problems of these theoretical models, I will attempt to illustrate what (stylistically) has carried over from *Ulysses* to *Gravity’s Rainbow* (and, vice versa, what could be applied to *Ulysses* from *Gravity’s Rainbow*) and how certain motifs could be in both “boxes” of modernism and postmodernism simultaneously.
Chapter 1: Paranoia and Reality

The notion of extreme paranoia has become attached to ideas surrounding theories of a postmodern society. A number of these theories directly address paranoid society or are applicable to certain texts in which this concept of a widespread “postmodern” paranoia has specific stylistic representations. In this chapter, I will examine certain aspects of this notion of paranoia in relation to the difficulties of classification; in dichotomous frameworks, the postmodern text is labelled “paranoid” (or skeptical of institutional modes and constructions), while the modernist text is often distinguished by some type of “faith” (perhaps in “high” art). This type of model only somewhat explains these very complex aesthetics: in both Ulysses and Gravity’s Rainbow, paranoia, like modernism and postmodernism in themselves, takes a variety of forms that are difficult to link to a singular aesthetic or theoretical school of thought. Before broaching a discussion of the modes of paranoia in Gravity’s Rainbow and Ulysses (and whether or not postmodern paranoia is fundamentally contradistinguished from modernist paranoia), it is necessary to discuss briefly a few of these theories and how their discourse is conducive to an understanding of both modernist and postmodernist configurations of paranoia.

Michel Foucault is perhaps the theorist most closely associated with paranoia in postmodern discourse: the notion of the “panopticon” is, in itself, a paranoid reading of modern society. Foucault’s 1975 Discipline and Punish suggests the existence of a panoptic, carceral society in which individuals may or may not be cognizant of being watched: “The inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so” (Foucault 201). Foucault uses the term “inmate” to build upon the notion of modern society as an allegory for the ultimate prison, which, as he argues, has become the society in which we live, where the panopticon:
“is polyvalent in its applications; it serves to reform prisoners, but also to treat patients, to instruct schoolchildren, to confine the insane, to supervise workers, to put beggars and idlers to work. It is a type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons. Whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behaviour must be imposed, the panoptic schema may be used” (Foucault 205).

This panoptic schema could be applied to a number of “postmodern” novels, even more specifically to the science fiction genre (e.g., A Clockwork Orange, 1984, A Scanner Darkly). An even better example of the panopticon could be Ken Kesey’s 1962 One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, where the application of Foucault’s focus on surveillance society is clearly evident in Kesey’s theory of the ‘Combine.” Perhaps paranoia has become closely related to the postmodern novel due to our increasingly technological society, but even before the supposed end of modernism, there can be found varying degrees of paranoia in modernist literature based on this panoptic schema. I used 1984 as an example of a “postmodern” novel, but it barely makes the cutoff into postmodernism if modernism ended in 1940. If we could still consider 1984 as a modernist novel, then it could be argued that the modernists at least prefigured many of the supposed “extreme” uses of paranoia in novels such as Gravity’s Rainbow, so there arises many overlaps in the constructions of paranoia employed by both the modernists and postmodernists. For example, Eliot’s The Waste Land personifies a paranoid sensibility in the “Game of Chess” section of the poem, where the disintegrated form is heavily influenced by the paranoid hallucinations of a woman who represents many of the neuroses of modern sexuality. In other
words, you could apply this paranoid, panoptic schema to novels within the “modernist” school since, at times, the modernists are just as paranoid as the postmodernists, as in the case of *Ulysses*.

Jean Baudrillard’s 1981 *Simulacra and Simulation* similarly offers a paranoid reading of society, but perhaps not as directly as Foucauldian analysis. Baudrillard’s emphasis is on the notion of “simulacra” and hyperreality in postmodern society, where, according to Baudrillard, reality and the virtual are blurred in hyperrealistic, alienating capacities. Baudrillard traces the existence of simulacra throughout the ages, culminating supposedly in postmodern society’s lack of a fixed reality. In his online modules on Jean Baudrillard, Dino Felluga, professor at Purdue University and creator of the highly acclaimed website *Introduction to Critical Theory*, writes:

“In the third order of simulacra, which is associated with the postmodern age, we are confronted with a precession of simulacra; that is, the representation precedes and determines the real. There is no longer any distinction between reality and its representation; there is only the simulacrum” (Felluga, “Modules on Baudrillard: On Simulation”).

This “hyperreality” (similar in many ways to the panopticon) is usually found in science fiction novels, such as Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, which presents a society overloaded with simulacra in the form of advertisements, mechanical animals, and cyberpunk motifs (i.e., high technology intermixed with squalid living conditions). As with Foucault, you could apply Baudrillard’s reading of postmodern society to modernist society as well: the “three orders of simulacra” (i.e., the pre-modern period of the counterfeit image and mass production, advertising in the 19th century, and finally the postmodern era of the “precession of simulacra”) are readings of various points of modernization. Once again, the idea of a postmodern paranoia
could be equated with “extreme paranoia” (as opposed to a more subtle paranoia, perhaps, in modernist literature), but Joyce seems to be the exception. Arguably, there are moments in *Ulysses* in which the notion of “extreme paranoia” could certainly be applied (such as Bloom’s fixation on Blazes Boylan or the “Circe” episode as a whole), but I think the differences and similarities in the use of paranoia as a device in *Ulysses* and *Gravity’s Rainbow* are not based solely on the idea of levels of extremity; *a fortiori*, the distinction, I think, is based more on stylistic configurations of paranoia that fluctuate in varying degrees throughout both novels, not necessarily a fundamental difference in the overall effect. Although *Gravity’s Rainbow* is possibly more directly paranoid, many of Joyce’s narrative devices, when decoded, have an equally potent paranoia.

Pynchon’s paranoia in *Gravity’s Rainbow* is complex for its stylistic representation of an apocalyptic vision of a disillusioned, confused, technologically advanced post-World War II society. What, exactly, about this vision of society is “postmodern?” If we apply McHale’s notion of the ontological, which conceptualizes the ambiguity of “true” reality, this paranoia could be interpreted as a Baudrillardian schema of hyperreality. This interpretation is certainly sound, but it fails to fully accommodate the fundamentally epistemological problems of Pynchon’s subjective realities, where the true difficulty in distinguishing what is real is a discrepancy between our perceptual knowledge systems (such as our sense of sight) and how these systems determine reality; it is our subjective knowledge systems that formulate the real vs. the virtual. Moreover, if we apply aspects of McHale’s theory, it would perhaps be more accurate to label Pynchon’s paranoia as epistemologically ontological, especially since the terms are often extremely proximal in theoretical applications.
Another possible function of this paranoia is the notion of extremity, which I previously suggested often associates with the postmodern. For one, Pynchon and Joyce are in completely different narrative milieus, Pynchon in an apocalyptic sci-fi setting, Joyce in the mundane. Pynchon’s paranoia only appears more extreme because *Gravity’s Rainbow* is essentially an allegory for Pynchon’s view of the direction society is taking in the “postmodern” world. According to Mark R. Siegel, “His major interest in *Gravity’s Rainbow* is with the patterns of technology and culture which determine, together with the physical laws of the universe, what is born out of the chaos into which we have descended” (Siegel 40). As such, Pynchon appears to be more directly paranoid as a means to enrich the allegory. Joyce, on the other hand, is perhaps more subtle, but once Joyce’s world is decoded, it is just as paranoid as Pynchon’s allegorical reading of society.

Mark R. Siegel in “Creative Paranoia: Understanding the Systems of *Gravity’s Rainbow*” categorizes Pynchon’s self-reflexive paranoia as “an exercise in creative paranoia, a self-conscious construction of a variety of possible worlds” (Siegel 53). Siegel mostly notes Pynchon’s ontological paranoia, but he also mentions one aspect of the epistemological:

“Ambiguity, not deterministic certainty, is the essential fuel for such Creative Paranoia. ‘Real’ or ‘Unreal’ is impossible to know, since They seem to be defining our meaning of our ‘Reality.’ It is this system (the system of the novel) that matters in allowing man to structure and respond to the contemporary world” (Siegel 53).

As Siegel illustrates, Pynchon creates a system of “They” that very much recalls a type of surveillance society akin to Foucault: “They know he’s on to Them. There is the usual chance his paranoia’s just out of hand again, but the coincidences are running too close” (Pynchon 262). This self-conscious paranoia is crucial to Pynchon’s panopticon, which is encompassed by a set
of unwritten “guidelines” (or proverbs) comprised in the characters’ collective consciousness:

“Proverbs for Paranoids 3: If they can get you asking the wrong questions, they don’t have to worry about answers” (Pynchon 251). The camera is often very closely associated with a type of voyeuristic paranoia, or, rather, a Hitchcockian concept of being watched by an unknown viewer (cf. the prisoner being watched in Foucault’s panopticon). Grigori the octopus, a specimen in Pointsman’s scheme at the White Visitation, views Katje on an observation screen from his water tank: “The camera follows as she moves deliberately nowhere longlegged about the rooms…” (Pynchon 113). This type of “observation” becomes a fetishistic treatment of “specimens” under the constant scrutiny of scientists, such as the Pavlovian experiments conducted on Slothrop in Dr. Jamf’s lab: “Unconditioned stimulus = stroking penis with antiseptic cotton swab; unconditioned response = hardon…” (Pynchon 84). Observational psychology seems to be one of “Their” systems in which every idiosyncrasy of one’s life is canvassed for the “good of science”: “Kevin Spectro will take his syringe and spike away a dozen times tonight, into the dark, to sedate Fox (his generic term for any patient)” (Pynchon 47).

Throughout Slothrop’s many encounters with paranoia, the term “pareidolia” is certainly an applicable concept as well, where there is a constant struggle in deciding if there are truly any patterns to events at all: “…there is still anti-paranoia, where nothing is connected to anything, a condition not many of us can bear for long” (Pynchon 434). This playfulness with paranoid schizophrenia is certainly an excellent contender for postmodernism’s heterogeneity, but this notion should not be used to undermine the skepticism at the apex of high modernism. Modernism is rooted in a very similar form of “paranoid skepticism” in which power systems responsible for the existence of certain social institutions are heavily scrutinized. In Ulysses,
there is possibly an idea of a “They” system in the form of the Catholic Church. What is interesting to note is Joyce’s notion of the “Catholic Panopticon,” a type of Foucauldian institution dictating the very realities in which we live. In almost every chapter, there is some type of configuration of the Church as an all-powerful being “watching” the events: “Then spake young Stephen orgulous of mother Church that would cast him out of her bosom, of law of canons, of Lilith, patron of abortions, of bigness wrought by wind of seeds of brightness or by potency of vampires…” (Joyce 319). Foucault’s panopticon could be applied to Joyce’s criticisms of the Church, which is portrayed as the all-seeing eye that influences our every move. John Nelson of Oregon State University in his Master’s thesis titled “James Joyce’s Critique of Faubourg Saint Patrice: Ulysses, the Catholic Panopticon, and Religious Dressage” writes:

“In his works, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and *Ulysses* (1922), James Joyce demonstrates what he perceives to be the paralyzing effects of those institutionalized religions that sit at the center of cultures. Drawing on Michel Foucault’s analysis of institutional dressage as well as his use of Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon prison in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), this thesis argues that Joyce's portrait of the Catholic Church's influence on Irish culture is his attempt to display its ubiquitous and inextricable power. In both works, Joyce focuses on the internalization of this power which emanates from the physical manifestations of the Church's presence, the strict tenets of its doctrine, and its concept of an omnipotent, omniscient God who, embodied in an individual's conscience, becomes the perfect "surveillant" (Nelson 1).

Nelson’s idea of this “Catholic Panopticon” could be seen as early as the “Telemachus” episode in *Ulysses* via Buck Mulligan, whose jocular remarks denigrate many aspects of Catholic
traditions (cf. “The Ballad of Joking Jesus” and various Latin phrases spoken in mock-seriousness). Mulligan’s stultification of the Church is reminiscent of Orwell’s 1984, where Big Brother must only be criticized in private. Even amongst friends, however, Mulligan’s blasphemy appears to strike a nerve in Haines: “Haines, who had been laughing guardedly, walked on beside Stephen and said: We oughn’t to laugh, I suppose. He’s rather blasphemous. I’m not a believer myself, that is to say” (Joyce 16). It is as if Haines, even though he claims to be atheist, is paranoid that Mulligan’s blasphemy may foment some unknown consequences, a type of religious paranoia (“Catholic guilt,” even) so deeply ingrained in Catholicism that even the most harmless quips against the Church may result in eternal damnation (cf. preterition in Gravity’s Rainbow in which the characters often question if God has abandoned them to apocalypse).

In Gravity’s Rainbow, there is an interconnection between technology and what I term “cosmic paranoia.” The setting in Gravity’s Rainbow is very much akin to cyberpunk, where there is a blend of hyperrealism and technology (humans and machines become one in the same, thus blurring what is real vs. simulation) as well as notions of surveillance society, chaos, entropy, and destruction. This cyberpunk moiety is juxtaposed with a type of “mysticism” in which there also exists elements of the paranormal and ultramundane. These elements are further intermixed via hallucinogenic delusions, patterns, conspiracies, preterition, and the liminality of subjective reality, creating a milieu in which the idea of a Baudrillardian hyperreality is certainly applicable. Pynchon’s “They” system becomes rooted in a universe that posits multiple or conflicting realities, thus making it difficult to actually know what “happens” in the novel, a type of paranoia, as I mentioned, epistemologically ontological in its various ramifications.
The opening sequence in *Gravity’s Rainbow* introduces Pynchon’s motif of unapologetically placing the reader (often *in medias res*) in realities that may or may not be actually “happening”: “A screaming comes across the sky. It has happened before, but there is nothing to compare it to now. It is too late. The Evacuate still proceeds. There are no lights inside the cars. No light anywhere…” (Pynchon 3). It is gradually revealed (cf. Joyce’s delayed decoding) that we are in Pirate Prentice’s dream, but the transition to “reality” is so abrupt that it is very easy to miss: “His name is Capt. Geoffrey (‘Pirate’) Prentice. He is wrapped in a thick blanket, a tartan of orange, rust, and scarlet. His skull feels made of metal” (Pynchon 4).

Pynchon’s framing of reality is quite often a series of dissilient stratifications that continually burst through multiple layers of consciousness, as in Slothrop’s “Kenosha Kid” hallucinations in which Slothrop is being administered sodium amytal—this scene fluctuates between the thoughts of the interrogators and Slothrop’s memories of the Roseland Ballroom. Once again, Pynchon’s absurdity blurs what actually happens as Slothrop supposedly crawls through a toilet bowl amongst various articles of waste that are described in excruciating detail, an instance that gradually segues into the adventures of Crutchfield. In fact, these types of paranoid hallucinations are rampant throughout the novel: Pirate’s Dantean vision of a Guilt-Convention, the Komical Kamikazes, and finally (perhaps the most notable) the final chapter of Slothrop’s “fragmented consciousness,” which is portrayed as a type of hive-mind of Slothrop’s memories.

We truly do not know what even happens to Slothrop, who appears to fizzle out amongst hallucinations of superheroes and nightmarish pop culture wastelands (cf. Slothrop’s comic book-esque adventures with the Floundering Four against the insidious Paternal Peril). It is precisely these types of blurs between reality and fantasy that make it tempting to assert McHale’s theory of epistemology’s backseat to ontology in postmodern novels; however, these
ideas of existence are fundamentally tied to questions of knowing. Brandon Kershner in *The 20th Century Novel* has criticized McHale’s theory for being “too abstract to apply very consistently: just how do we tell whether a given novel is more epistemological or more ontological in its concerns?” (Kershner, *The 20th Century Novel* 77). According to Kershner, anything can be read as epistemological or ontological, much like postmodernism’s own dual nature: “Postmodernism may be more a way of reading than a way of writing: virtually any work can be said to have postmodern characteristics if we read it in the right spirit…” (Kershner, *The 20th Century Novel*, 77). As outrageously “postmodern” as these paranoid fantasies become, they are not as divorced from modernism as you may think. The modernists frequently played with the notion of fragmented realities via these same types of hallucinogenic digressions, such as, of course, “Circe” in *Ulysses*. You could also cite a few pre-modern examples where the outlandish and grotesque are carried to extremes, such as Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, or Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*. Blurs between reality and fantasy are, therefore, not necessarily inherently postmodern—writers have been using this technique for centuries.

Perhaps it is the intermixing of mysticism (the “cosmic paranoia” mentioned above) and technology where Pynchon’s true “postmodern paranoia” is achieved. Pynchon has created an alternate universe in which the paranormal and technological become two very important ingredients in an allegory for postmodern society’s path to the intangible realm of cyberspace. Throughout the novel, there are references to Tarot cards, séances, and the White Visitation “freaks” who all have some type of paranormal ability. In juxtaposition to this “otherworld,” there is a sense that technology continually blurs the lines between the animate and inanimate.

Brian Stonehill in “Pynchon’s Prophecies of Cyberspace” writes:
“By blurring the line between what's alive and what isn't, Pynchon enables us to see organic processes carried on by inanimate means. Metals in particular are understood to carry on life's electric impulses without loss of vital spirit. After a lengthy description of what happens, eventually, to ‘thousands of old used toothpaste tubes,’ Pynchon writes: *Yet the continuity, flesh to kindred metals, home to hedgeless sea, has persisted. It is not death that separates these incarnations but paper: paper specialties, paper routines. The War, the Empire, will expedite such barriers between our lives. The War needs to divide this way, and to subdivide, though its propaganda will always stress unity, alliance, pulling together* (130)…Our former engineering student's sense -- that the metallic can be made kindred to flesh if it's wired to the human spirit -- seems to foresee a path for the ultimate extension of human thought and expression across the phone lines, silicon chips, and phosphor screens of cyberspace” (Stonehill).

Pynchon’s world asserts a notion of the Earth itself as being alive, or made up of various microscopic systems that only Pynchon’s “zooming in” can reveal:

“Consider coal and steel. There is a place where they meet. The interface between coal and steel is coal-tar. Imagine coal, down in the earth, dead black, no light, the very substance of death. Death ancient, prehistoric, species we will never see again. Growing older, blacker, deeper in layers of perpetual night. Above ground, the steel rolls out fiery bright…” (Pynchon 169).

In cyberpunk settings, there is a mix of the spiritual or metaphysical with highly advanced technology, which creates a Baudrillardian sense of hyperreality as discussed above. Perhaps Pynchon’s admixture of these realms is to sharpen his dialectic prophecies of cyberspace, which has become a milieu composed of the intangible and often hidden from the naked eye. Perhaps
the best example of the blending of the animate and inanimate, ontic and metaphysical, paranormal and technological, is the long history of Byron the Bulb, which, like previous episodes, arises abruptly in the form of a digressional aside:

“Now it turns out that this light bulb over the colonel’s head here is the same identical Osram light bulb that Franz Pokler used to sleep next to in his bunk at the underground rocket works at Nordhausen…Wotta history, this bulb, if only it could speak—well, as I matter of fact, it can speak…Here it is, The Story of Byron the Bulb” (Pynchon 646-7).

Byron’s story is immediately presented as a digressive “side-story” that is myriad in its applications of not only Pynchon’s penchant for uncovering hidden realities, but also as one of Pynchon’s most salient pre-configurations of cyberspace. Stonehill addresses the revelatory dialectic of Pynchon’s cyberspace:

“Well, such a global information network operating ‘at something close to the speed of light’ was not even taken seriously as science fiction when Pynchon let Byron the Bulb shed his light, but clearly, in retrospect, the episode was prophetic, and now every bulb in Europe -- or every wired monitor screen in the world -- does know what's happened. Interestingly enough, Pynchon mentions prophecy itself at the end of Byron the Bulb's story, for it is Byron's fate -- like that of so many e-mail addicts -- to have access to all the information in the world, yet be able to do little with it: Someday he will know everything, and still be as impotent as before. His youthful dreams of organizing all the bulbs in the world seem impossible now -- the Grid is wide open, all messages can be overheard, and there are more than enough traitors out on the line. Prophets traditionally don't last long -- they are either killed outright, or given an accident serious
enough to make them stop and think, and most often they do pull back (654-55)”

(Stonehill).

Byron’s history also, of course, illustrates a fundamental paranoia in which patterns and connections to disparate elements are connected in some type of “plot.” Viewings of these “hidden” worlds of the inanimate certainly have the paranoid aspect of deciding whether or not these realities are “real.” It is as if Pynchon is writing an alternate history of the inanimate that focuses on multiple levels of consciousness, an ecological juxtaposition of systems we “know” vs. the hidden or unknown waiting to be uncovered—perhaps a conspiracy theory of the inanimate. Even Rocket 00000 is given a mystical, godlike aura, in which humans no longer control the very technology they have created: “Everyone’s equal. Same chances of getting hit. Equal in the eyes of the rocket” (Pynchon 57). It is as if the rocket itself is “alive” and decides its own course of action, which very heavily recalls the classic sci-fi motif of technology taking over humans (cf. I, Robot or The Matrix) in post-apocalyptic settings.

Before turning to a discussion of paranoia in Ulysses, I would like to discuss the overall nature of Slothrop’s wanderings and how they incorporate many of the motifs I have discussed above. One of the best examples of paranoia in Slothrop’s “quest” is the map of his sexual encounters and rocket explosions, both of which are apparently connected. The true paranoia lies in attempting to explain this phenomenon, which science and reason cannot necessarily explain: “Every square is just as likely to get hit again. The hits aren’t clustering. Mean density is constant. Nothing on the map to the contrary. Only a classical Poisson distribution…” (Pynchon 54). The concept of knowledge outside the grasp of human cognizance is played with here, even a looming fear of becoming a “preterite.” Preterition, most basically, stems from the Calvinist doctrine in which the elect ascend to heaven while the nonelect are left behind. Throughout the
novel, it seems as if the characters believe they have been left behind in this technological wasteland, being abandoned by God:

“There is a Hand to turn the time,/Though thy Glass today be run,/Till the Light that hath brought the Towers low/Find the last poor Pret’rite one…Till the Riders sleep by ev’ry road,/All through our cripl’d Zone,/With a face on ev’ry mountainside,/And a Soul in ev’ry stone…”(Pynchon 776).

This “song of the preterite,” in part, explains the very chaos into which they have descended, where reality is meaningless and human existence secondary to destructive entropy (cf. the decayed urban landscapes and psychological fragmentation in The Zone).

Where Pynchon’s paranoia makes it difficult to decode what actually “happens,” Joyce seems to gradually allow us to figure out what is hallucination and what is mere “dream thought.” Joyce mostly plays with the reader, eventually allowing the reader to distinguish between external reality and internal thoughts (cf. fluctuating perspectives between the narrator and Stephen Dedalus in “Telemachus” and “Proteus”). However, it must be remembered that Pynchon’s word is replete with war, subplots, and psychological alienation, whereas Joyce’s milieu is everyday life. Stylistically Pynchon is more self-consciously paranoid, but Joyce is more subtle—but is one “postmodern”? My point is that the modernists employed paranoia as well; paranoia is not endemic only to postmodernism—postmodernism is just more directly paranoid, which gives the illusion of being more extreme. Just because Joyce’s paranoia is not as apparent does not mean it has a lesser effect. Even so, Joyce has moments of direct paranoia similar to Pynchon; Joyce’s paranoia is certainly there, but it is often obfuscated through some stylistic means, or, perhaps, is a type of Bakhtinian “figure in the carpet.” Once again, this recalls McHale’s background/foreground argument, but this is too simple a formulation: his argument
relies too heavily on the ontological vs. the epistemological, which could be understood
inversely in both novels. Once you decode the “background” of Joyce’s paranoia, it has just as
much potency as Pynchon’s paranoid world.

Since *Ulysses* is heavily parallel with Homer’s *Odyssey*, a “paranoid reading” of the
novel is almost essential. Infused throughout the novel are homages to the *Odyssey*, where
characters and objects recall various Homeric counterparts:

“Joyce’s symbolism cannot be explained mechanically in terms of one-for-one parallels,
for his correspondences are neither exclusive nor continuously persistent. Nevertheless
certain correspondences recur throughout *Ulysses*, establishing themselves firmly. Thus
Leopold Bloom corresponds to Ulysses in the Homeric parallel, and Stephen Dedalus
corresponds to Telemachus, Ulysses’s son” (Blamires 3).

Joyce’s entire idea of the novel rests firmly on a master system of order despite the seemingly
insuperable chaos (very similar to Pynchon in terms of an order amongst the chaos—perhaps due
to “Them,” orchestrators of the chaos). The Gilbert and Linati schemas indicate that in each
chapter of *Ulysses* there are a set of functions (e.g., catechism, dialectic, enthymemic, etc.)
coordinating the events and formal elements of the novel—almost like a computer code. For
example, in “Hades” the main symbol is the heart, so Joyce carefully alludes to the heart both
literally (“A pump after all, pumping thousands of blood every day”) and metaphorically (“Seat
of the affections,” “Touches a man’s inmost heart,” “How many broken hearts are buried here?”)
at various points in this episode. It is almost as if Joyce is “winking” at the reader when he uses
these types of subtle, “paranoid” (in the sense of a connectedness to a larger scheme) devices to
indicate complex formal frameworks. Joyce infuses the entire narrative world of *Ulysses* with
symbols, metaphors, parallels, and “connections,” which, even from the onset of the novel,
manifest themselves in Stephen Dedalus’s neurotic penchant for metaphor: “It is a symbol of Irish art. The cracked lookingglass of a servant” (Joyce 6). The “Telemachus” episode is replete with these moments of paranoia, such as Haines’s dream of the “black panther” (Bloom) or Stephen’s inability to decipher what “part he has to play”—the fallen angel, the poet, the dutiful son, the iconoclast, Christ himself, the redeemed, Hamlet, or Telemachus). Stephen does not seem to know what “book” he is in and, therefore, becomes an amalgamation of all of these possible roles. Stephen also reflects on many symbols of Ireland itself, such as the milkwoman, whom Stephen “sees as a symbol of poor, sterile, subjected Ireland” (Blamires 6): “A wandering crone, lowly form of an immortal serving her conqueror and betrayer…” (Joyce 12). The external world appears to be conforming to Stephen’s internal obsession with metaphor via paranoid symbolism (cf. the ashplant as Stephen’s crucifix or Buck Mulligan the “usurper”), not to mention Stephen’s visions of his ghostly mother, who acts as a symbol of Stephen’s fear of punishment for his sins. Joyce has carefully constructed a world in which symbols abound in a multitude of forms, where later events of the novel are foreshadowed in the earlier chapters through very subtle devices.

The “Proteus” episode especially delves into Stephen’s uncertainty of reality, which relates back to the epistemological vs. ontological problems I discussed in Gravity’s Rainbow. Traditionally this chapter has been very heavily examined in light of Stephen’s struggles with knowledge, but his struggles with the nature of human knowledge shape his idea of being: “See now. There all the time without you: and ever shall be, world without end” (Joyce 31). Since we fluctuate in and out of Stephen’s consciousness, which heavily influences how we experience the events of this chapter, these narrative modes recall Pynchon’s idea of subjective realities (Stephen also has a very Pynchonian moment where he feels he is being watched: “He is running
back to them. Who?” [Joyce 37]). Stephen experiences various instances of “prophetic intuition” that forecast his encounter with Bloom (“perhaps there is someone”), which lends credence to Joyce’s idea of a cosmic paranoia very similar to Gravity’s Rainbow’s otherworldly paranoia.

Even though Bloom is often associated with the body or the corporeal as opposed to Stephen and the metaphysical, the chapters in which Bloom is one of the central foci employ a similar type of paranoia found in Stephen’s chapters, except through different mediums. Whereas Stephen’s universe is a place of religious, artistic, and nationalistic symbols, Bloom’s world is a milieu of symbols channeled primarily through advertisements (the melon fields and 34 Bleibtreustrasse—“stay true street”), pamphlets (the horse race), and indications of Molly Bloom’s infidelity (when Bloom refers to Blazes Boylan as merely “Him,” for instance). The physical world, then, to the reader is heavily influenced by the paranoid delusions of Bloom and Stephen, where their own fears, doubts, and sensations interpolate systems of meaning in physical space. For example, in “Lotus Eaters” Bloom’s lethargic sensations heavily influence the ways in which things are related to the reader: “Bury him cheap in a whatyoumaycall. With my tooraloom, tooraloom, tooraloom, tooraloom” (Joyce 58). We experience the events of the novel through proxy, in which we are presented with a variety of viewpoints, sensations, thoughts, and echelons of consciousness that we must attempt to juxtapose with reality. Due to this proximal relationship, I would argue one of the more paranoid chapters in Ulysses is “Wandering Rocks,” where this is a sense of “connection” between all of the characters’ vignettes and the paper boat (the crumpled throwaway, with its slogan “Elijah is coming”) wandering through the cistern: “Elijah, skiff, light crumpled throwaway, sailed eastward by flanks of ships and trawlers…” (Joyce 205). This description of the throwaway is used as a motif throughout the episode, a type of montage Joyce frequently utilizes in Ulysses to draw attention
to recurring elements. In this same episode, Joyce plays with classic modernist “delayed decoding” (or the gradual unraveling of “hazy” or unclear scenes) in the instance of the sailor catching the coin from Molly Bloom, whose identity is not immediately apparent to the reader until later: “A woman’s hand flung forth a coin over the area railings. It fell on the path” (Joyce 185). A greater part of Joyce’s paranoia is this envelope of mystery; most of the time, the reader has to wait for things or events to be revealed in their full panoply before complete sense is made of a given scene (cf. distinguishing between Stephen’s consciousness and the actual world). The “Circe” episode, then, is perhaps Joyce’s most Pynchonian moment of paranoia, where virtually all of Bloom’s paranoid delusions are laid bare in a hallucinogenic Gilbert and Sullivan-esque trek through multiple realities and modes of consciousness. The episode has its own internal logic of illusion channeled through Bloom’s fragmented memories; “reality” becomes acted upon by these illusions, such as the cigarette smoke and fan both acting as transitional devices to Bloom’s fantasies: “The fan, like the earlier cigarette smoke, wafts Bloom into the fantasy world, and some of the oddest desires and interests buried in the subconscious mind are interred” (Blamires 182). (As a side note, the sadomasochistic Bella in Bloom’s fantasy seems to be reminiscent of the dominatrix scene in Gravity’s Rainbow. Like Gravity’s Rainbow, we are never sure what exactly “happens” in this episode, what is illusion vs. reality—the reader can never really find an apt orientation.

Other than “Circe,” perhaps the most directly paranoid motif throughout Ulysses is Bloom’s obsession with Blazes Boylan. Joyce’s “camera eye” frequently interplays a type of voyeuristic viewing of Boylan’s eventual encounter with Molly Bloom. In the “Sirens” episode, “Boylan’s and Bloom’s notes are juxtaposed as Boylan leaves Ormond for 7 Eccles Street” (Gifford 291). As Bloom passes the window at Ceppi’s, Boylan’s affair with Molly seems to
haunt him: “At four, she said. Time ever passing. Clockhands turning…The sweets of sin” (Joyce 214). *The Sweets of Sin* and “Those Lovely Seaside Girls” are recurring thoughts in Bloom’s consciousness associated with Molly’s infidelity; it is as if there is a “Boylan Panopticon” in which seemingly unrelated external objects take on symbolic meanings for Bloom (cf. Stephen Dedalus’s fixation on religious imagery). As I mentioned previously, Bloom sees “connections” in advertisements (“He sees a poster with a swaying mermaid, advertising cigarettes, and the sensuousness of it takes him back to *The Sweets of Sin* again” [Blamires 108]) that interpolate images related to his failing marriage. Cuckold-related images abound throughout the novel, not only in reference to Bloom but also Stephen. Since Bloom is associated with the body and Stephen the metaphysical, Bloom’s status as a cuckold is more literal, whereas Stephen’s is perhaps metaphorical *vis-à-vis* Buck Mulligan or even his own fragmented identity (cf. “their common cuckquean,” “Cuck Mulligan”). The symbol of the cuckold bridges from “Scylla and Charybdis,” where Stephen discusses Iago as a cuckold, to “Circe,” where Shakespeare appears to be a part of Bloom’s consciousness, ostensibly a type of telepathic conduit between Bloom and Stephen:

“SHAKESPEARE: (in dignified ventriloquy) ‘Tis the loud laugh bespeaks the vacant mind. (to Bloom) Thou thoughtest as how thou wastest invisible. Gaze. (he crows with a black capon’s laugh) Iagogo! How my Oldfellow chokit his Thursdaymornun. Iagogogo!” (Joyce 463).

This image seems to solidify the link between Stephen and Bloom as cuckolds; even though Bloom was not present for Stephen’s discussion of Iago in “Scylla and Charybdis,” Bloom seems to be subconsciously aware of it—perhaps a cosmic paranoia similar to *Gravity’s Rainbow*. It appears as if Stephen is a cuckold in a metaphorical sense; perhaps history, Ireland, or even God
have all sinned against him, “cheated” him in some way. Most of the novel’s cuckold-related images are particularly concentrated in Bloom’s “trial” in “Circe” (which reveals Bloom’s past sins such as masturbation): “THE TIMEPIECE: Cuckoo. Cuckoo. Cuckoo” (Joyce 383). Boylan has various dialogues in Bloom’s fantasy as well:

“BOYLAN (sated, smiles): Plucking a turkey.

BOYLAN: Smell that.

LENEHAN (smells gleefully) Ah! Lobster and mayonnaise.

BOYLAN: Hello, Bloom! Mrs. Bloom dressed yet? Show me in. I have a little business with your wife, you understand?” (Joyce 460-461).

The truly “paranoid” aspect of these dialogues is that nowhere else in the novel does Bloom directly address Boylan unless in these subconscious spaces; Bloom tries to avoid contact with Boylan in the physical spaces of the novel (cf. “see me he might”), as if trying to avoid the eyes of the “Boylan Panopticon.”

I would also like to focus on the “Aeolus” chapter as one of Joyce’s pre-configurations of the portrayal of technology and mass communication in Gravity’s Rainbow. “Aeolus” presents a series of newspaper “headlines” through which the events in the episode are oriented, and there is also a notion of a mechanical process of relaying information: “The machines clanked in threelfour time. Thump, thump, thump. Now if he got paralysed there and no-one knew how to stop them they’d clank on and on the same, print it over and over and up and back...”(Joyce 98). This could be one of Joyce’s prophecies of cyberspace, where information essentially “floats” in the air in an intangible realm (similar to Pynchon’s notion of hidden, intangible worlds inhabited by the inanimate). These headlines also have the aura of a “Master Narrator” (perhaps an editor sitting in an office who becomes equated with a Pynchonian “They”) who interprets our reality
via information distribution. Joyce seems to critique this notion of a commercial ‘machine’ in which information is distributed *ad nauseum* in multiple forms: “The printing presses, with their ceaseless *Sllt Sllt*, the shouting newsboys, and [in a different sense] the screaming headlines, all help to create a feel of restlessness” (Blamires 45). This sense of restlessness attributed to modern informational processes seems to prefigure Pynchon’s notion of the extreme chaos resulting from these types of commodity systems and the ensuing difficulty in distinguishing between what is real and what is simulacrum: “There is ‘gas’ everywhere, not least the gas of inflated rhetoric and hectoring, wordy conversation. The rush of words, of rumour, of news, let loose daily from this pulsing, hectic organ, is pumped into the life of Dublin.”(Blamires 45). It is perhaps more appropriate to deem this formulation a specific type of paranoid alienation, in which it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between reality and simulation as a result of these very complex systems of information reproduction—where the simulacrum precedes the original model.

Molly Bloom’s soliloquy could be viewed as the unravelling of the mysteries of the day, which we have spent a good portion of in Stephen’s and Bloom’s own paranoid frameworks. Molly Bloom has her own system of paranoia in which she feels Bloom has certainly “came” somewhere: “…he came somewhere Im sure by his appetite anyway love its not or hed be off his feed thinking of her…” (Joyce 608). Like Bloom, Molly is clearly suspicious of her husband’s ulterior motives, wondering why he has asked for breakfast in bed. She questions all of his various idiosyncrasies, while simultaneously reflecting on her own motives for committing adultery. The concept I mentioned in relation to reality in “Proteus” applies here as well, where we experience the events of the novel through proxy and become gradually aware of what is being expressed via a given consciousness (cf. when Molly hears the train, as well as when she
starts her period). I think these types of intrusive, stream-of-consciousness thoughts are Joyce’s pre-configurations of Pynchon’s notion of multiple realities that possibly have their own internal sets of knowledge systems. Whatever reality is, we certainly have difficulty in trying to represent it. Like Pynchon, Joyce ultimately has a paranoid reading of reality in which a multitude of perspectives are represented as both epistemological and ontological problems, where our problems of knowing are fundamentally related to our conceptions of being.
Chapter 2: Historical and Cultural Knowledge Systems

So far in my discussion of *Ulysses* and *Gravity’s Rainbow*, I have been exploring the unreliability of binary constructions between postmodernism and modernism. Usually critics attempt to separate the two by means of unreliable dichotomies, as illustrated in Ihab Hassan’s 1971 *The Dismemberment of Orpheus*, where he presents ideas such as a modernist hierarchy vs. a postmodernist anarchy or a modernist narrative vs. a postmodernist anti-narrative. As I have been attempting to illustrate, these configurations merely provide, perhaps, an introductory framework when discussing the terms but should not be used as absolutes. I originally chose *Ulysses* to discuss as a “modernist” novel because it so frequently departs from the modernist characteristics frequently cited by theorists such as Hassan. It is possible that *Ulysses* takes modernism to its utmost edges, which is why it appears to be so similar to Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow*. It is also worth noting Umberto Eco’s rather polemic post-structuralist work *The Open Work*, which argues that a text is ultimately indefinable—the artist has created an “open” text which must be interpreted by a given person’s particular knowledge systems. This same idea could be applied to both *Ulysses* and *Gravity’s Rainbow* in terms of historical and cultural relationships. It is not that Joyce and Pynchon did not have their own particular knowledge systems and aims when producing their work, but the interpreter’s own knowledge and applications can enrich readings of both of these novels. As such, in this chapter I shall discuss how both of the novels interact with historical and cultural sensibilities, considering theories such as the New Historicism and post-structuralism. It is not my aim to prove that Joyce and Pynchon are primarily post-structuralists; rather, I am merely using post-structural analysis as a method to show how the texts question binary relationships and interact within their own cultural
knowledge systems. Before delving further into these relationships, I will first discuss some of the defining tenets of post-structuralism and its relationship to postmodernism.

When discussing the terms “New Historicism,” “post-structuralism,” and “postmodernism,” there often arises some very interesting complications:

“Merely to contrast the labels ‘postmodernism’ and ‘new historicism’ is to sense possible tensions. New historicism suggests the newness of the past, whereas postmodern suggests the pastness of the new…In a world in which the modern is described as postmodern and that which is considered behind us referred to as the modern age, the new historicism and postmodernism could be considered complementary descriptions of the same condition…Appropriately, post-structuralism and postmodernism question the assumptions of self-conscious modern ages…‘New,’ in contrast implies an impulse toward the very modern that post-structuralism is at pains to discredit” (Thomas 25).

In this excerpt from Brook Thomas’s _The New Historicism and Other Old Fashioned Topics_, Thomas attempts to analyze the possible convergences and distinctions between all of these terms, but I think we should move to a higher level of dialectical reasoning in which we may use the terms as tools to enrich a text instead of limiting it to one particular theoretical view. When using these types of terms, it is very tempting to force the texts to conform to singular views instead of applying a multi-theoretical approach. It is my intention to argue that all of these analyses may be used in conjunction to give a complete reading to the texts, even if the terms themselves may prove to be contradictory on a purely ostensible level.

For some reason in critical theory, postmodernism is often equated with a “history-less” condition in which the very idea of history has collapsed. Perhaps this is due, in part, to Baudrillard’s book _The Illusion of the End_: 
“The end of history is, alas, also the end of the dustbins of history. There are no longer any dustbins for disposing of old ideologies, old regimes, old values. Where are we going to throw Marxism, which actually invented the dustbins of history? (Yet there is some justice here since the very people who invented them have fallen in.) Conclusion: if there are no more dustbins of history, this is because History itself has become a dustbin. It has become its own dustbin, just as the planet itself is becoming its own dustbin” (Baudrillard 26).

Baudrillard attributes much of this historical “flatness” to globalization, but Douglas Kellner’s essay “Globalization and the Postmodern turn” urges us to consider globalization as having a “fundamental ambivalence” in which both its “progressive and regressive” features should be assessed fairly. It is perhaps due in part to historical nihilists such as Baudrillard that the idea of history has become “old-fashioned” in postmodern discourse. I do not think the idea of history has been completed abandoned; rather, the concept of metanarratives has been questioned and reassessed: “Toward the end of the 1970s the uncertainty, ambiguity, and linguistic emphasis that was intrinsic to the post-structuralist stance was extended from texts to history and public affairs, and in this development the name of Jean-Francois Lyotard is central” (Thompson 14). Perhaps even Lyotard himself becomes grim in his assessment of historical totalisation: “This standpoint—which can justly be described as one of the leitmotifs of post-structuralism—is grounded in the conviction that the standpoint of totalisation is inherently oppressive” (Thomas 15). It seems by writing off totalisation as “oppressive” Lyotard is becoming trapped in one of the binary constructions post-structuralists argue against—that of representation’s fundamental inferiority to speech or “living in the moment.” Of course the task of attempting to understand every aspect of history is futile, since we only have representations (even “pop” images,
perhaps). Although we may not be equipped to understand the entire picture of history, we should at least attempt to decode artistic representations to understand their own internal realities.

Having all of this in mind, both *Ulysses* and *Gravity’s Rainbow* appear to question metanarratives, viewing history from a skeptical gaze. Although the novels question historicity, it is not a nugatory exercise to attempt to understand at least a fraction of the knowledge systems that contributed to the creation of the texts, which I will explore further in a discussion of cultural aesthetics after I have analyzed how the texts interact within their own historical dialectic.

Stephen Dedalus gives us an initial idea of his sense of the chaos of history in “Telemachus” with his comments on the “cracked lookingglass of history.” These types of comments segue into Stephen’s thoughts in “Nestor” and “Proteus” regarding his ideas of the “role” history has assigned to him, citing William Blake’s “wings of chaos” as well as Aristotle’s notion of entelechy (or actuality vs. possibility). Stephen seems to feel trapped by the clichés of history; what has history chosen to remember? It is as if history is an autonomous being capable of choosing its own players. Stephen’s conversation with Mr. Deasy reveals Stephen’s true anxieties: “History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake” (Joyce 28). For Stephen, history is an endless chaos of violence and racism—immoral acts against the Other, which could be a Levinasian formulation of an ethical responsibility for the collective. Stephen views art as a means to orient himself amongst the chaos; even though art is redemptive, Stephen attacks sentimentality because he cannot accurately represent it (Wachtel 118). Although Joyce seems to be playing with ideas surrounding subjective history, perhaps he also considers the notion of a self-imposed, oppressive subjectivity: “‘The 19th century dislike of romanticism is the rage of
Caliban at not seeing his own face in a glass’… it further suggests that Stephen suffers from romantic presumptions so virulent that he will not acknowledge the reality of what he is” (Wachtel 118). Stephen continually views history as a dream despite his knowledge otherwise, so perhaps Joyce is arguing against our romantic ideas of history—perhaps the past is the past. However, I do not think it would be accurate to label Joyce as some type of “historical objectivist”; even if the past is the past, there are many pathways to uncovering it and representing it, thus relying on a fundamental ambiguity (or at least a degree of ambivalence) of any type of historical sensibility. The past itself may be immovable, but I think Joyce acknowledges the chaos of history for those in the present. In Joyce’s Book of Memory, John S. Rickard focuses, as the title suggests, on the role of memory in Ulysses: “Hermeneutic memory in Ulysses is an attempt to search back through the past, or more accurately, through memories of the past to unravel the puzzle that is the present…” (Rickard 47). Rickard primarily focuses on the psychoanalytic aspects of Joyce’s “unconscious textual memory” and the “textual force or instinct that works constantly to recollect and repeat repressed elements from the characters’ pasts” (Rickard 47). If we apply this notion of memory to historical orientation in the novel, it would seem Joyce could be playing with the concept of an unconscious cultural memory (or collective memory) that has been repressed or forgotten (a history that we are unable to account for due to its overwhelming obscurity), which would be contradistinguished from individual memory. Since Rickard is primarily dealing with psychoanalysis, he focuses on “Circe” for obvious reasons in his discussions of memory. I think it is also worth mentioning the “Cyclops” episode with regards to this idea of a singular vs. a collective history: “The citizen, who approximates to Polyphemus, has a one-eyed view, a fanatical, unreasoning nationalistic passion that makes him incapable of seeing any other side to a question. Bloom is always able to see two
sides to a question. He is two-eyed throughout” (Blamires 118). According to Harry Blamires in *The New Bloomsday Book*, this type of two-eyed perspective is frequent in Joyce’s works, where Joyce “will never totally surrender himself or his reader to a single mood or style” (Blamires 119). This doubleness is appropriate when considering a concept as wide-ranging as history, where there is both the past as it truly happened juxtaposed with our individual conceptions of it.

Pynchon seems to similarly question our notions of historicity in *Gravity’s Rainbow* by, for one, exploring the connections between individual subjectivity and the physical world: “Perhaps our confident understanding of nature is more subjective than we had hoped…The physical world, then, ceases to be the predictable place it had been in the 17th century” (Brownlie 140). As I discussed in reference to paranoia, much of Pynchon’s discourse in *Gravity’s Rainbow* stems from an epistemologically ontological question of subjectivity and the difficulties of knowing one reality from another. In this same vein, Pynchon seems very close to Joyce’s ideas of history as chaos, which recalls Stephen Dedalus’s rather paranoid alternate history of the life of Shakespeare. In fact, the subjective possibilities inherent in Dedalus’s rant about Shakespeare is one of Joyce’s most Pynchonian moments in which our reliance on historical narratives is questioned. Pynchon, like Joyce, seems to be focused on uncovering histories unknown to us, asserting (in most cases a paranoid history) what David Cowart calls “the dark passages of history”: “Like Adams or Graves, Pynchon takes a keen interest in the history of his times, but he views historiographic mythopoeis with great skepticism” (Cowart 47). This skepticism is rooted in Pynchon’s, as Cowart calls it, “symbolic paranoia” stemming from the crucible of reliably documenting the phenomenological world. Pynchon thematically situates this paranoia in a Foucauldian question of authoritarian historicity: as I quoted from Chapter 1 of my discussion, “If there is something comforting—almost religious—about paranoia, there is also
anti-paranoia, where nothing is connected to anything, a condition that not many of us can bear for long” (Pynchon 434).

In his discussion of Pynchon’s *V.*, Cowart, like most theorists dealing with postmodern analyses of history, focuses on Pynchon’s entropic histories: “What, then, does the history of the 20th century move toward? Again, the very question assumes an unwarranted teleology, for in fact history moves toward nothing at all, unless it be oblivion, nothingness, universal inanimateness” (Cowart 51). Obviously *Gravity’s Rainbow* is a novel of apocalypse; this is apparent from the very beginning of the novel (“a screaming comes across the sky”) to the end where Rocket 00000 descends upon a movie theater amidst the song of the preterites. In postmodern discourse, there is supposedly a lack of redemption, whereas in *Ulysses* Stephen views the artist as the redeemer of the chaos of history. In *Gravity’s Rainbow*, it is apocalypse that is the savior of history: history must be rewritten, began anew, or perhaps reassessed. The confusion of the phenomenological world has brought about this chaos into which we have descended, but apocalypse can save us. Pynchon’s skepticism of “historiographical mythopoesis” should not be misconstrued as the nihilistic, ahistorical chaos Cowart asserts. Amongst the chaos and confusion of Pynchon’s paranoid histories, apocalypse is the answer to the dysfunction and uncertainty of the physical world. Pynchon seems to question existence beyond this inevitable apocalypse—what shall emerge from the ashes? Pynchon appears to be writing his own history: “Thomas Pynchon’s canon is wilfully idiosyncratic and frequently apocryphal…Pynchon produces a homogenous medium which is neither fiction nor history…Some parts of *Gravity’s Rainbow*, I think, might be best described as an attempt at writing a twentieth century ‘gospel’ (Marriott 69). By writing his own version of history, Pynchon falls victim to the extreme subjectivity that is apparently at the root of the confusion of documenting our existences. On the
other hand, Pynchon is perhaps attempting to illustrate a specific type of historical thinking that can possibly rewrite the entirety of history: “Gravity’s Rainbow is itself an expansive marginal commentary on the 20th century; an alternate, heretical history which cannot be assimilated with orthodox history…Pynchon wants to write a commentary on History which is not subject to history’s distortions” (Marriott 70-71). Marriott in “Gravity’s Rainbow: Apocryphal History or Historical Apocrypha?” examines the Roseland Ballroom episode in which Slothrop is nearly raped by a group of African Americans: “In the Roseland Ballroom incident, however, Pynchon does not merely use fictional sources; he draws on several first-person, ostensibly historical sources, exploring perhaps Thomas Carlyle’s notion that true ‘History is the essence of innumerable biographies” (Marriott 73). By admixing both fictional and historical (e.g., The Autobiography of Malcolm X) accounts, Pynchon does not seem to be suggesting that history is doomed to nothingness; instead, Pynchon merely deconstructs our ideas surrounding history, questioning, once again, the instauration of history after apocalypse.

How does all of this relate back to post-structuralism and the New Historicism? Post-structuralism and the New Historicism seek an understanding of historical contexts in the present, while simultaneously questioning all pre-conceived historical relationships. For instance, post-structuralists would ask how Joyce’s understanding of the 19th century is interplayed in Ulysses and what this can tell a reader in the present. I would like to present a rather “old-fashioned” structuralist argument of descriptive historicity in both Ulysses and Gravity’s Rainbow: while both novels do, in fact, question metanarratives and historical sensibilities (as well as commentate on how cultural concepts have changed over time), I would suggest that a mere structuralist reading of the novels, in which we attempt to understand the knowledge systems both Pynchon and Joyce were aware of in their own time periods, is worth our attention.
Both *Ulysses* and *Gravity’s Rainbow* (like *Moby Dick*, *Don Quixote*, or *Infinite Jest*) can be classified as encyclopedic novels, or, rather, microcosms of the cultures in which they reside. For instance, both novels play with many avant-garde sensibilities of specific cultural moments, such as Joyce’s very “Impressionistic” writing (cf. delayed decoding in “Proteus”) or Pynchon’s countercultural sensibilities (cultural inversions that are transformed into “high” art) reminiscent of 1960s camp or even kitsch, both of which are represented primarily though extreme obscenity (cf. the Anubis orgy, Katje and the sadomasochistic coprophagy). To get back to the ultimate question of modernism vs. postmodernism, in both novels various cultural commentaries surface that are not clearly modernist or postmodernist: interactions with pop culture, tech culture, and a growing cultural hybridity.

For the longest time, modernism has been closely associated with “high” culture, but *Ulysses* completely challenges this idea via ironic juxtaposition of both “high” and “low” cultures: “Joyce is the epitome of a high modernist, an artist for and of the cultural elite, and as such, it was generally felt he had nothing significant to do with the popular culture of his time…Today the situation has radically changed; Joyce and popular culture is one of the most dynamic and fruitful areas of modernist study…” (Kershner, *Joyce and Popular Culture* 1).

Within *Ulysses*, you will just as likely find references to a sensationalist novel such as *East Lynn* as you are likely to find references to Dante, Milton, or Shakespeare. Joyce seems to prefigure the supposed postmodern phenomenon of a cultural hybridity between “high” and “low” cultures, in which cultural distinctions have been eliminated or at least blurred significantly. The question of “high” and “low” in *Gravity’s Rainbow* is similarly questioned: numerous references to famous film stars of the 1930s and 40s are juxtaposed with extremely advanced mathematical and scientific observations on the liminal existence of postmodern society. What is very
interesting about this relationship between “high” and “low” cultures is that it shifts dramatically in context between post-structuralist and structuralist configurations. In a post-structural analysis, Joyce’s and Pynchon’s references to pop culture are rather obscure to present day readers, which accounts for much of the inaccessibility of the novels to the general public. The term “obscure pop culture” is truly a post-structural phenomenon, where the present-day general public has possibly forgotten pop culture figures such as Lillian Gish, Sarah Bernhardt, or Rose Hobart.

This same public is well aware of whilom “high” culture from the same time periods—which culture proceeds and what is left behind is a rather illusive concept. A structuralist view, however, would focus on how Joyce and Pynchon understood these cultural distinctions in their own time. For instance, John Galsworthy would not have been as obscure of a name for Joyce as it would appear to a present-day reader: Galsworthy was one of the most celebrated English novelists and playwrights of his time, but, for whatever reason, he is little remembered by most of today’s readers. Even in Gravity’s Rainbow, Pynchon’s references to Harry Earles will probably escape many readers.

I discussed at length Pynchon’s interconnection of paranoia and technology in the previous chapter, but it is also worth noting Joyce’s, like Pynchon’s, cultural interactions with tech culture. In the paranoia chapter, I discussed Joyce vis-à-vis the press in “Aeolus,” but Donald F. Theall in James Joyce’s Techno-Poetics extends this discussion further with Joyce’s electro-spatial relationships in both Ulysses and Finnegans Wake: “Joycean space-time dramatizes the contemporary reductive relativization of space and time…The dream world in the Wake provides him with the closest fictive simulation of the virtual and simulated worlds that were already in 1920 the future preterite of electrification” (Theall 146). Theall then references a “scene” from Finnegans Wake which appears to recapitulate Joyce’s analysis of communication
theory ("a pinch of time of the ideal where we roll away the reel world"). The dream world of *Finnegans Wake* and *Ulysses*, McLuhan’s theory of intersensory perception via television and film, as well as Wyndham Lewis’s condemnation of Joyce’s space-time relationships all appear to be a “prehistory of cyberspace”: “Joyce’s dream action uses the mechanical technology which immediately preceded TV—the scophonic system of supersonic light control…The interplay here of aspects of tone, light, colour, time, and energy indicates the complex way that Joyce presents the space-time complex and its role in communication” (Theall 150). Although these discussions are focused on *Finnegans Wake*, it is worth mentioning again the “Aeolus” and “Circe” episodes in *Ulysses* as prefigurations of Joyce’s more extreme play with these spatial-temporal relationships in *Finnegans Wake*, where Joyce interacts with both the “codification, production, reproduction, or transmission of all types of texts” and “the total virtuality of a dream” (Theall 150).

No matter which theoretical schools you apply to either of the novels when discussing historical and cultural relationships, it should begin to become clearer the ambiguity of the modernist vs. postmodernist spectrum, which fluctuates according to changing modes of theoretical and interpretive discourses.
Chapter 3: Meta-Aspects

With the advent of postmodern theory, metafiction has become a much debated topic in its alleged “postmodern” applications. In my final two chapters, my primary concerns focus on how metafiction is not clearly linked with either modernism or postmodernism specifically and how the novels have intertextual elements that create a meta-sensibility. Theorists such as Fredric Jameson have argued that we have entered into a period of “postmodern pastiche,” where there is no presence of modernism’s satiric edge often associated with parody, but instead we now have a characteristic “blank parody” in postmodernism. First of all, I do not think in either *Ulysses* or *Gravity’s Rainbow* that there is a clear division between parody and pastiche; often, the two are linked very closely together in relation to intertextuality with literature, pop culture, and history. It may appear in some instances that the novels celebrate a cultural hodgepodge (pastiche), but in other cases these same cultural modes may be parodied. Supposedly texts have become more “meta” in the postmodern age, drawing attention to their own artifices (cf. Clement Greenberg’s notion of an increasingly self-reflexive avant-garde). Truly, however, metafiction has been a type of narrative structure in literature since Chaucer. *The Canterbury Tales* clearly “view” themselves as fiction, where there is a narrator who acknowledges he is in the realm of fiction.

As aforementioned, it is worth noting the implications of Fredric Jameson’s notion of pastiche, which, although limited in some senses, provides an interesting commentary on how postmodernism has departed from modernism:

“Jameson sees this turn to ‘blank parody’ as a falling off from modernism, where individual authors were particularly characterized by their individual, ‘inimitable’ styles: the Faulknerian long sentence, for example, with its breathless gerundives; Lawrentian
nature imagery punctuated by testy colloquialism; Wallace Stevens's inveterate hypostasis of nonsubstantive parts of speech ('the intricate evasions of as')… In postmodern pastiche, by contrast, ‘Modernist styles... become postmodernist codes’ (Postmodernism 17), leaving us with nothing but ‘a field of stylistic and discursive heterogeneity without a norm’ (Postmodernism 17)” (Felluga, “Modules on Jameson: On Pastiche”).

These types of formulations factor heavily in how theorists have decided what is “modernism” and what is not. *Ulysses* is still mostly regarded as part of the modernist canon, even though clearly Joyce arguably utilizes a postmodernist “blending” of the past. Despite their innovations, the modernist “individuality” should not be mistaken for a complete departure from the past. This implies *Gravity’s Rainbow* is not completely removed from modernism, if, in fact, “modernist styles become postmodernist codes.” However, what exactly characterized the “modernist style”? These supposed “codes” developed out of long-standing literary traditions pre-dating the modernist period (cf. *Tristram Shandy*, or even novels by Charles Dickens); therefore, to suggest that the modernist style was “individual” and “inimitable” seems rather inaccurate. Of course the modernists have their own individual style, but the modernist style was influenced by a variety of sources. Moreover, I do not think it is accurate either to suggest the postmodernists do not have an “individual” style that is recognizable, albeit clearly influenced by the modernists. It further seems counterintuitive to suggest a “stylistic and discursive heterogeneity without a norm” if the postmodernists do not have a recognizable style, as a heterogeneity suggests a variety. I would argue that both the modernists and postmodernists are, as Jameson refers to specifically as “postmodern,” a “cannibalization of all the styles of the past, the play of random stylistic allusion, and in general what Henri Lefebvre has called the
increasing primacy of the 'neo' " (Felluga, “Modules on Jameson: On Pastiche”). It seems Jameson falls victim to stereotypes about the “high art” of the modernists. Joyce always seems to be the exception to the rules attached to modernism; in fact, many have viewed Joyce’s works as a whole as the bridge into postmodernist discourse. Kevin Dettmar writes in the Illicit Joyce of Postmodernism: “Ulysses is certainly a modernist classic; but in its playful unwillingness to take itself or its modernist devices too seriously, it is at the same time pregnant with a nascent postmodernism” (Dettmar 11). Even in Dettmar’s reading, Ulysses takes on this “double-consciousness” in which it appears to know it is a modernist text; this level of playfulness with the modernist school is certainly one of Joyce’s meta-commentaries, which, as Dettmar has suggested, gives Ulysses a certain duality between both the modernist and postmodernist schools. However, even other writers such as T.S. Eliot defy modernist codes as well, not in the least Jameson’s romanticized notion of a modernist individuality.

To segue back into my original discussion of metafiction, both novels form an intertextuality with their own specific cultures through parody and pastiche, where there is both a representation of allusion and simultaneously a parody of these selfsame references. This begs the question of why this intertextuality is classifiable under metafiction. Metafiction brings attention to its own devices, more specifically the art of fiction in itself (cf. Joyce bringing attention to the modernist devices and “playing” with them). The novels seem to be “aware” of themselves and possible worlds outside of their own fictive milieus. Terms such as “breaking the fourth wall,” for instance, factor heavily in metafiction in instances where a novel recognizes it is being read or experienced by an outside audience. All fiction could be classified as inherently “meta” in this sense, especially in cases where there is a first-person narrator. Where Ulysses and Gravity’s Rainbow have their own “meta” moments are in instances of intertextuality (or “meta-
textuality”) with other cultural sources, whether it be fiction, history, film, etc. These interactions usually involve some sense of the mock-serious, jocular, or playfulness associated with absurdity (cf. the theater of the absurd—*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*?).

Any attempt to provide some type of intertextual reading of *Ulysses* is in itself a colossal exercise:

“The sheer mass of allusion to popular literature and other aspects of popular culture in *Ulysses* are often dismissed as either random bits of period ‘furniture’ thrown in to add historical verisimilitude or as evidence of an encyclopedic technique run amok. But, as Cheryl Herr argues in her ground-breaking study of popular culture in Joyce, Joyce’s allusions are both structural and functional. In their broadest implications, they testify to ‘the force of culture on the writer, the extent to which what we conceive to be an individual consciousness is composed of materials derived from sources outside the mind’ ” (Kershner, *Joyce, Bakhtin & Popular Culture* 2).

As Kershner in *Joyce, Bakhtin, & Popular Culture* indicates in the above excerpt, there is a specific system in all of Joyce’s various allusions. Even in *Finnegans Wake*, there is a “figure in the carpet,” an order amongst the chaos in which Joyce’s seemingly nonsensical idioglossia is rich with specific historical and linguistic meanings (cf. “commodious vicus” a reference to the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus). The Gifford Annotations are perhaps the most widely known attempts to trace Joyce’s idiosyncratic referentiality, which unapologetically make allusions to medieval literature, Irish history, pop culture of the 19th century, and other errata much out of the public realm of knowledge: “Some of this material is made of obscure high-cultural allusions such as ‘agenbite of inwit,’ but especially in *Ulysses*
some appear as spoken references to topics of the day (in 1904), so that non-academic Dubliner’s of Joyce’s generation were at times inclined to dismiss his writing as simply a compilation of ‘pub talk’” (Kershner, “Intertextuality” 1-2). Brandon Kershner’s essay “Intertextuality” focuses on a theoretical analysis of Joyce’s allusions, citing Bakhtin’s dialogism (where allusions contribute to the concept of a multiplicity of contextuality) as well as Derrida’s statements regarding the text as a “signifier of a signifier.” Kershner quotes Roland Barthes’s idea of the displacement of the author: “The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture” (Kershner, “Intertextuality” 10). As Kershner delineates, early Joycean theory focused on Homeric parallels and classical antiquity (which, especially the Homeric parallels, are particularly attuned to a meta-discourse), but more recently Joyce and popular culture has become a burgeoning field of critical discourse. It is not my concern here to provide an overview of these critical theories; my focus, rather, is on specific areas in *Ulysses* where the text crosses the boundaries between parody and pastiche in allusive configurations of culture.

*Ulysses* has its own moments of intertextuality with not only Joyce’s other works such as *Dubliners* and *Portrait of the Artist* (cf. Stephen Dedalus himself is a recurring character), but also instances in which real life and fiction cross, where Joyce bases characters and plot structures on real-life people and events (cf. Shakespeare’s life). Joyce’s allusive intertextual universe often distorts (or parodies) the sources from which the allusions originate, such as the Homeric parallels in the chapter “Nausicaa,” where Joyce infuses masturbation and sexual fantasy in his configuration of this Homerian episode. Throughout *Ulysses*, there are these types of moments of ironic juxtaposition in which Joyce’s allusiveness makes homage to a specific source, but he simultaneously mocks a given reference as well. “The Sirens” episode is a great example, where Joyce superimposes references to opera with Bloom’s flatulence. Less subtle of
Joyce’s “meta” moments are instances in which the characters seem to be aware of a “master narrator” or even make references to literature or fiction they are currently reading, such as the secretary reading *The Moonstone* in “The Wandering Rocks.”

I would argue that the most salient examples of Joyce’s relationship with intertextuality, parody, and pastiche occur in “Oxen of the Sun,” where Joyce both celebrates and parodies the entire “gestation” of the English language. In fact, as I mentioned in my previous chapter, the structures within which Joyce models each episode factor heavily in the meta-aspects of *Ulysses*; the narrative structures in a given episode take on a certain form based on Joyce’s symbolism and discourse (I will focus more prevalently on how metafiction and form interplay in my final chapter): “The theme of embryonic growth is reflected in a series of often brilliant parodies (or pastiches) of English prose style of Anglo-Saxon days to the 20th century…Moreover, there is a highly technical connexion between the detailed development of the foetus and allusions” (Blamires 146). Note here the interesting interconnection between parody and pastiche: especially in this episode, Joyce plays with both devices in varying extremes. For instance, the entire opening sequence of the episode begins with a Latinate, pre-English dialogue that is nearly impossible to read coherently. Joyce’s style continues to evolve through Mandeville, Sir Thomas Mallory, Pepys, Addison, Steele, political oratory, the Gothic novel, De Quincy, Dickens, and finally descends into a chaotic 20th century slang. Concomitant with these transitions are specific historical milieus that Joyce parodies, such as the highly inflated priggishness of Victorian society or the chivalric modes of medieval life. It seems as if Joyce very much blurs the modernist/postmodernist dichotomy that Jameson asseverates: Joyce’s style is both characteristic of a modernist parody as well as a postmodern pastiche.
Gravity’s Rainbow’s relationship with parody and pastiche vis-à-vis its intertextuality operates in a very similar vein to Joyce’s Ulysses. Where Joyce’s “grand meta-text” is Homer’s Odyssey, Pynchon creates an alternate vision of World War II, a “meta-history.” Pynchon uses World War II as a template for the story arch in Gravity’s Rainbow (the title itself parodies the Biblical tale of Noah’s ark and the rainbow). The interconnection between parody, pastiche, and absurdity factors heavily in Pynchon’s novel. The opening segment of the novel presents a motif rampant throughout the “narrative,” that of a theatricality that is firmly grounded in absurdity: “He will actually then skip to and fro, with his knees twirling a walking stick with W.C. Fields’ head, nose, top hat, and all, for its knob, and surely capable of magic, while the band plays a second chorus” (Pynchon 13). In many instances in Gravity’s Rainbow, there is this level of intertextuality with popular culture of the early-to-mid 20th century, a type of “show biz” sensibility in which the characters often say words such as “jeepers” or speak in a noir-ish vernacular reminiscent of The Big Sleep. Slapstick comedy also prominently rears its head, which even further enhances the degree of cultural intertextuality with film culture. For instance, the episode in which Slothrop is fleeing from Marvey and his Mothers (the Russians who sing dirty limericks), there is a custard pie fight before reaching the Nazi scientist’s laboratory, which is itself an interesting representation of the science fiction genre (cf. the main antagonist, Blicero, the “crazed” scientist). The unnamed narrator often refers to the reader as “folks,” and the list of references to popular culture is “encyclopedic”: Fay Wray, 57; "horror-movie devilfish," 51; "Disneyfied look," 70; Marx Brothers, 197; "from a German camera angle," 229; "Wild West movie," 338; "Nazi movie villain," 360; Donald Duck, 146; "a De Mille set," 71; “There's the son of Frankenstein in it,” 536; "this cartoon here," 263; Dumbo, 135; "comic-book colors," 186; "Saturday-afternoon western movies," 264; "paint FUCK YOU in a balloon coming out the
mouth of one of those little pink shepherdesses," 203; Green Hornet, 376; Plasticman, 314, 752;
"comicbook shoes with enormous round toes," 254; "a Sunday-funnies dawn," 295; Rocketman,
376; The Lone Ranger & Tonto, 752; Captain Midnight Show, 375; Superman, 751; "the only
beings who can violate their space are safely caught and paralyzed in comic books," 379; Mickey
Mouse, 392; Porky Pig, 545; "comic-book cats dogs and mice," 586; Bugs Bunny, 592;
"comicbook-orange chunks of island," 634; Porky Pig tattoo, 638; Robin Hood, 664; Wonder
Woman, 676; comic-book Kamikazes, 680; "down comes a comic-book guillotine on one black
& white politician," 687; Philip Marlowe, 752; etc.

Amongst these references, you begin to see patterns in the form of film, movie,
television, and comic book references, where Pynchon seems to be playing with “pop” images to
create an intertextuality with the specific time period in which Gravity’s Rainbow is set. Like
Ulysses, Gravity’s Rainbow’s referential methodology has a specific meta-aspect to its
“madness,” where Pynchon is playing with the notion of not only the blending of historical time
periods, but also the notion of cultural parody and pastiche as forms of meta-textuality. The
entire novel (very similar to a picaresque novel, actually) appears to take on the form of a movie,
where, as I mentioned, the narrator not only addresses the “audience” but also gives the reader a
sense of a theatrical omniscience (cf. when the narrator informs the reader that Slothrop will
meet Greta eventually). The novel even closes in a movie theater:

“The rhythmic clapping resonates inside these walls, which are hard and glossy as coal:
Come-on! Start-the-show! Come-on! Start-the-show! The screen is a dim page spread
before us, white and silent. The film has broken, or a projector bulb has burned out. It
was difficult even for us, old fans who’ve always been at the movies (haven’t we?) to tell
which before the darkness swept in. The last image was too immediate for any eye to
register. It may have been a human figure, dreaming of an early evening in each great
capital luminous enough to tell him he will never die, coming outside to wish on the first
star. But it was not a star, it was falling, a bright angel of death. And in the darkening and
awful expanse of screen something has kept on, a film we have not learned to see…it is
now a closeup of the face, a face we all know…” (Pynchon 763).

Pynchon appears to play with a very complex metaphor in which life becomes equated with a
fatalistic “movie,” which could be related back to Pynchon’s more fundamental level of
paranoia—who is the “director”?  

This focus on multiple layers of allusions to popular culture operates in a similar stylistic
manner to Ulysses and the advent of the “hypertext”: “Unlike conventional novels, Ulysses is an
intricate, dense web of reference—both self-reference and references to all levels of culture,
from high-cultural allusions to classical writing…Like any hypertext, Ulysses encourages the
reader to move along unpredictable paths through its words because its own logic is not simply
linear” (Kershner, “Intertextuality” 14-15). Gravity’s Rainbow certainly meets this categorization
as well: references to popular culture are juxtaposed with extremely complex mathematical and
scientific concepts, not to mention references to “high” literary culture as well. For instance, the
name “Blodgett Waxwing” recalls Nabokov’s Pale Fire, and the character Sir Stephen could
even be a reference to Stephen Dedalus—and, of course, plenty of references to high culture like
Wagner and Rossini (Bell). Like Ulysses, Gravity’s Rainbow has its own textual “universe” in
which characters from Pynchon’s other novels (such as “Pig” Bodine from V. or Clayton Chiclitz
from V. and The Crying of Lot 49) make reappearances (Bell). Other meta-aspects of the novel
include very Joycean linguistic pastiches, such as a soap opera dialogue between Narrisch and
von Goll or Slothrop’s Philip Marlow-esque patois, as well as abrupt shifts in the prose
depending on the situation in the novel (Bell). Whoever is “hosting” the current episode dictates the style of the prose (cf. changing prose styles in *Ulysses*). Pynchon, like Joyce, parodies popular culture in some very interesting (often salacious) ways, such as an extremely graphic portrayal of an orgy stimulated by Bianca’s Shirley Temple act:

“‘Let’s hear ‘Animal Crackers in my Soup’!’…Beautiful little-girl buttocks rise like moons. The tender crevice tightens and relaxes, suspender straps shift and stretch…erotic and audible now that the group have fallen silent and found the medium of touch, hands reaching out to breasts and crotches, Adam’s apples bobbing, tongues licking lips…”(Pynchon 466).

Having explored these various levels of intertextuality with culture, parody, and pastiche, my final chapter will focus on what has appeared to carry over stylistically from Joyce to Pynchon—not directly, of course, since it would be quite difficult to prove Pynchon was directly influenced by Joyce. Rather, I will analyze specific textual forms, once again, in light of metafiction; more specifically, I am interested in the “methodology to the madness” that does not seem purely modern or postmodern. I will examine how both writers seem to abandon traditional literary forms via extremely dynamic texts that abruptly switch styles or format altogether.
Chapter 4: Form, Style, and Prose

In the previous chapter, my discussions were focused on the “meta-cultural” intertextuality of *Ulysses* and *Gravity’s Rainbow*, in which the texts utilize parody, pastiche, and allusion to very similar stylistic ends. This final chapter is an extension of these same arguments with a focus on the dynamic stylistic forms canvassed in the texts. As I mentioned in the introduction, this section will explore at length what has appeared to carry over stylistically from the modernist to the postmodernist period and why many of these tropes are now considered “postmodern.” A couple of theoretical trends are worth noting here: modernism’s experimental edge is often undermined in an attempt to accommodate postmodernism’s alleged heterogeneity, and the terms “modernist” and “postmodernist” are often used in historical senses that belie how closely linked the aesthetics of the movements truly are. This section is an attempt to move away from considering these terms in the neat “boxes” we have created in efforts to understand complex aesthetic constructions; rather, my focus is on how these texts are very closely related in terms of stylistic experimentation with the form of the novel, an experimentation, I think, that is fundamentally ambivalent (i.e., is not more modernist than postmodernist or vice versa).

Obviously without Joyce’s seminal innovations there would be no such thing as a “postmodernism,” so it is important to not forget the debt postmodernism owes to modernism. I do not think the writing of the 20th century has truly changed significantly from Joyce to Pynchon; more importantly, interpretative techniques (such as postmodern theory) have influenced the ways in which we read and understand textual material. At the risk of contradiction, I do not aim to suggest tropes such as “stream-of-consciousness” did not originate in modernism; *a fortiori*, it is not the tropes themselves that have changed but the theories attempting to canonize them. (Perhaps thinking in terms of a “canon” is part of the problem
when discussing modernism and postmodernism.) As such, I would like to underscore once again the crux of the proceeding textual analysis: although metafiction has become so closely concatenated with postmodernism, it is important to analyze how both writers experiment with form in ways that are fundamentally inseparable.

Perhaps it could be said that the true stylistic foundation of *Ulysses* and *Gravity’s Rainbow* is fragmentation of the individual consciousness: often in a “stream-of-consciousness” style, the form of the texts are apt to change based on a given situation or perspective, a fluidity that is a mirror of the overarching chaos of the consciousness of the individual perception. Both novels feature a fragmentary narrative through a series of constantly changing narrators, metamorphoses of identities (Stephen’s questionable “role” or Slothrop’s eventual “fizzing out” of the corporeal world), digressive texts, experiments with punctuation and syntax (e.g., ellipses, nouns as verbs, word compression, portmanteaux, multilingual puns), various filmic techniques such as montage and “zooming in” (cf. the “Ithaca” episode in *Ulysses* in which an extremely detailed description of water is featured ), episodic “fragments,” instances of pictorial representations (e.g., Joyce’s insertion of music sheets or Pynchon’s images of the Schwarzkommando symbol– both recall Kurt Vonnegut’s illustrations in *Cat’s Cradle* or *Slaughterhouse-Five*), and various uses of a variety of textual formats such as poetry, limericks, songs, haiku, mathematical equations, etc.

I would like to call attention to a few of these instances in the texts in order to formulate a closer examination of meta-textuality and the deconstruction of the novel’s traditional form. Typically, novels feature a linear plot with a prose style that remains mostly consistent. In *Gravity’s Rainbow* and *Ulysses*, however, each episode becomes a microcosm of an individual perspective, and the shifts in style from episode-to-episode underscore these relationships. In
Ulysses, for instance, the shift in style from the initial episodes to Bloom’s chapters is very significant. A passage in “Nestor” reads: “It must be a movement, then, an actually of the possible as possible. Aristotle’s phrase formed itself within the gabbled verses and floated out into the studious silence of the library of Saint Genevieve where he had read, sheltered from the sins of Paris, night by night” (Joyce 21). Contrast Stephen’s very eloquent, flowing sentences with Bloom’s rather staccato, terse thoughts: “His vacant face stared pityingly at the postscript. Excuse bad writing. Hurry. Piano downstairs. Coming out of her shell. Row with her in the XL. Café about the bracelet. Wouldn’t eat her cakes or speak or look. Saucebox” (Joyce 54).

Gravity’s Rainbow also features very similar types of shifts in prose style. For example, a Slothropian passage would read (notice the omniscient narration, as in Ulysses, is fused with a given character’s perspective): “But then last September the rockets came. Them fucking rockets. You couldn’t adjust to the bastards. No way. For the first time, he was surprised to find that he was really scared… Christ, it wasn’t supposed to keep on like this…” (Pynchon 21). The style and tone of another character may be entirely different, such as Tchitcherine’s episode:

“The Zone is in full summer: souls are found quiescent behind the pieces of wall, fast asleep down curled in shell-craters, out sewing under the culvers with gray shirttails hoisted, adrift dreaming in the middles of fields. Dreaming of food, oblivion, alternative histories…He has marched here, with his limp as permanent as gold, out of coldness, meadows, mystery” (Pynchon 341-342).

The obscene style of Slothrop’s episodes could be contrasted with these sublime images of a wasteland—Slothrop’s carnivalesque absurdity vs. the graveness of Tchitcherine’s mission. In fact, this type of juxtaposition between the sublime and the grotesque is mirrored in another passage dealing with Blicero and Gottfried’s sadomasochistic love affair:
“Blicero’s seed, sputtering into the poisoned manure of his bowels…it is waste, yes, futility…but . . . as man and woman, coupled, are shaken to the teeth at their approaches to the gates of life, hasn’t he also felt more, worshipfully more past these arrangements for penetration, the style, garments of flaying without passion, sheer hosiery perishables as the skin of a snake, custom manacles and chains to stand for the bondage he feels in his heart…all become theatre as he approached the gate of that Other Kingdom, felt the white gigantic muzzles somewhere inside, expressionless beasts frozen white…there have to be these too, lovers who genitals are consecrated to shit…a gathering of the fallen—as many in acts of death as in acts of life—or a sentence to be alone for another night…Are they to be denied, passed over, all of them?” (Pynchon 736).

This passage illustrates a recurring stylistic motif in both novels where the obscene becomes transformed into the sublime through elegant prose—or, conversely, that which is beautiful or sacred is transformed into the obscene. Recall the dichotomy in “Nausicaa” between Gerty’s romanticized view of Bloom’s masturbation and Bloom’s very different perspective:

“She would fain have cried to him chokingly, held out her snowy slender arms to him to come, to feel his lips laid on her brow…Mr Bloom watched her as she limped away. Thought something was wrong by the cut of her jib. Jilted beauty. A defect is ten times worse in a woman…Glad I didn’t know it when she was on show. Hot little devil all the same” (Joyce 300-301).

This shift in prose style also plays with the concept I discussed earlier of dynamic texts that change according to a particular point of view, in this case a contrast between Gerty’s foolishly sentimental account of Bloom’s masturbation and Bloom’s post-coital thoughts (and, of course,
his “wet shirt,” which underplays Gerty’s romanticism on a visceral level) revealing a rather gritty, “male” point of view.

What is most striking about these abrupt shifts in style is a relationship to “filmic” viewings of a given event: it is almost as if the reader is experiencing jump cuts, montage, and various degrees of “zooming” (in and out of a particular consciousness, for example). Moreover, the fragmentary perspectives of the novels contribute to a quasi-cinematic experience, which is an interesting configuration of the texts as meta-commentaries on the form of the novel. As the “cinematic experience” is dynamic in nature (i.e., it constantly changes forms and perspectives), the texts also shift in form. *Ulysses* features many types of experiments that accentuate its own artifices: the “Sirens” episode opens with a montage of the upcoming events, “Aeolus” has various “headlines” that appear to speak to the reader, “Circe” is entirely in “play format,” and “Ithaca” is structured as a catechism. Once again alluding to both Joyce and Pynchon’s mock-seriousness, “Ithaca” features (in agonizing detail) the trajectory of a urine stream, which recalls Pynchon’s passage in *Gravity’s Rainbow* of Imoplex G’s “erectile” capacities. Like Joyce, much of Pynchon’s abrupt changes in style take the form of songs, “headlines,” and dialogues in “play format” (cf. “Loonies on Leave!”). For example, “Jubilee Jim” appears suddenly in Slothrop’s episode with Saure:

“Jubilee Jim, just a-peddlin’ through the country
Winkin’ at the ladies from Stockbridge up to Lee—
Buy your gal a brooch for a fancy gown,
Buggy-whip rigs for just a dollar down,
Hey come along ev’rybody, headin’ for the Jubi-lee!” (Pynchon 384).
These types of instances (cf. “The Ballad of Joking Jesus” in *Ulysses*) appear to be aligned with the overarching mock-seriousness rampant throughout both novels. Accompanying the authors’ mockery of culture, religion, and society is a lack of reverence for the traditional form of the novel.

In addition to these textual structures, Joyce and Pynchon have a penchant for linguistic and grammatical experiments. Nouns become verbs (in *Gravity's Rainbow*: chevoring, palimpsested, ganstering, rattlesnaking), words are compressed (in *Ulysses*: peacocktwittering, snotgreen, crystalclear), and languages shift quite often (Herero in *Gravity’s Rainbow*: mba rara m’eroto ondoyoze; Latin in *Ulysses* seguing into French: *Et vidit Deus. Et errant valde bona…Tiens, quel petit pied!*). I would argue that the best example of experimentation across both novels is Molly Bloom’s soliloquy, where there is a complete departure from all sense of grammatical form: “Yes because he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs since the City Arms hotel when he used to be pretending to be laid up with a sick voice doing his highness to make himself interesting for that old faggot Mrs Riordan” (Joyce 608). The stream-of-consciousness technique in Molly Bloom’s soliloquy is a type of pre-configuration of Joyce’s “Wakese” dream language in *Finnegans Wake*. *Gravity’s Rainbow*’s style is certainly related to stream-of-consciousness in the sense of a fragmentary narrative structure, but it does not completely abandon structure to quite the same degree as Molly Bloom’s soliloquy.

Truly some of the most striking meta-experiments in the novels present very abrupt shifts in format altogether. For instance, in “Ithaca” Joyce includes a budget list in a different font and form than the preceding text. In this same episode, he inserts a photocopy of “this changed legend of Little Harry Hughes,” which, due to the juxtaposition of the verse with the photocopy,
illustrates Joyce’s penchant for montage through multiple textual mediums. Pynchon’s “illustrations” take the form of equations (cf. the yaw control equation) or self-conscious indications of the text as a medium being viewed by an outside party: “So, next to the other graffiti, with a piece of rock, he scratches this sign” (Pynchon 636). Here Pynchon actually includes the picture of the sign instead of merely describing it.

It would seem that Pynchon owes much to Joyce in terms of stylistic innovation, especially in the realm of metafiction. Although Pynchon certainly employs some very Joycean aesthetics, this should not be mistaken for a lack of individual style; Pynchon’s style is truly unique, of course, but his possible influences should certainly be accounted for. Truly meta-aesthetics, although now closely associated with the postmodern novel, are perhaps neutral in the modernist/postmodernist spectrum. Even if you apply a theory of postmodernism’s “extremity,” the modernist’s radical experimentations are “extreme” themselves compared with the pre-modern period. Thus, instead of focusing on creating sub-sets of aesthetic movements, we should focus on which aesthetics have transferred into new sensibilities and how these frameworks influence the ways in which critical theory attempts to canonize representational art.
Conclusion

How can we begin to classify any of these tropes as either modernist or postmodernist? Even though Joyce has been increasingly read in a postmodern light, the other modernist writers employ very similar types of experimentation, such as Faulkner’s depiction of an eye in *The Sound and the Fury* (“Keep your <o> on Mottson”). Certain writers labelled as postmodern frequently interplay pictures with text (cf. Kurt Vonnegut), so unsurprisingly these types of meta-experiments have been gradually categorized as postmodern. Frequently clichés such as “ahead of their time” apply to the modernists who utilized these very same techniques, and, as I discussed vis-à-vis Fredric Jameson, the postmodernists often use “modernist codes.” However, this type of distinction usually segues into the supposed distinctions between the modernist and postmodernist logic: the modernists “make it new,” where the postmodernists supposedly recycle old material, “making the old new.” I am not entirely convinced this distinction can be applied universally. For instance, as I have argued, for all of Joyce’s highly experimental writing, he, as Joyce himself put it, was a “scissors and paste” kind of writer. Despite Pynchon’s highly innovative alternate histories and allegories, he himself owes much of his own experimental edge to novels like *Ulysses*. In fact, with the advent of “post-postmodernism,” it logically follows that postmodernism could have obeyed the same modernist codes of “make it new.” These texts have the potential to be both modernist and postmodernist simultaneously in terms of critical theory and aesthetics. When aesthetic configurations are viewed from historical constructions, however, Procrustean binaries arise attempting to limit these dynamic spectrums. Using historical and aesthetic constructions interchangeably has created confusion. “Postmodernity” and postmodern art are not always necessarily part of the same framework. Modernism and postmodernism are comprised of a huge spectrum of stylistic tropes and sensibilities that are far too abstract to force
into dichotomous relationships. Artistic modes of discourse are fluid in nature, often subject to
the vicissitudes of cultural theory. Instead of highlighting the ways in which modernism and
postmodernism are separate, we should focus on how these complex terms, when used in
conjunction and not in separation, underscore important aspects of constantly changing
representational aesthetics.
Works Cited/Consulted


