

The presentation of education in the literature of the modernist period:  
1890 – 1939.

GWYN LLYWELYN HEDDWYN JENKINS

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## DECLARATION

I certify that the work contained in this thesis, or any part of it, has not been accepted in substance for any previous degree awarded to me and is not concurrently being submitted for any degree other than that of Doctor of Philosophy being studied at the University of Greenwich. I also declare that this work is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise identified by references, and that the contents are not the outcome of any form of research misconduct.

Signed (student): Gwyn Jenkins

Date

Signed (supervisor): John Morton

Date

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## ABSTRACT

James Joyce, T. S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf created educative works in a marketplace crowded with works of fiction about education, and with works that enabled newly-educated readers to gain a literary and classical education regardless of class. Demand within the publishing industry for school stories and for series of classics and translations of classics voiced a generalised regard for learning as a good in its own right. These modernists occupied and refashioned this landscape by producing works which offered readers what they wanted whilst at the same time querying the tenets of the school system, contributing to ongoing dialogue about education and its new keystone, English, through the educative work they composed. Their works made use of allusions which are significantly more alienating to a twenty-first century readership than to their contemporary readership, which was educated within a more literary framework in which the classical curriculum was evolving and expanding into an English-based and more diverse curriculum. The manner in which the works were structured recreated the sense of discovery and challenge experienced by pupils, students and autodidacts, rather than relying on conventional and popular clichés, destabilising fictive voices to wake the reader up, acknowledging different kinds of learning styles and engaging them in analytical play with multiple points of access and recognition. While the enchantment of linear narratives is as readily conjured by these writers as their Victorian predecessors, this is seldom permitted to continue for long, as the real world breaks through the daydream and learning begins. An educative methodology in the work which rewards curiosity with a mixture of new understanding and new avenues to explore borrows from an Arnoldian notion of perfection in culture in which education becomes not so much a finite commodity to be acquired but a dynamic process of continual flourishing.

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## Introduction

Curiosity is one of the strongest impulses of the human heart. To curiosity it is peculiarly incident, to grow and expand itself under difficulties and opposition. The greater are the obstacles to its being gratified, the more it seems to swell, and labour to burst the mounds that confine it.<sup>1</sup> (William Godwin)

Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture perceives it.<sup>2</sup> (Matthew Arnold)

At 2.30pm on 17 June 1937, English Literature students of the University of London sat down to complete a three-hour optional paper entitled *Modern Literature from 1880*. This was the first paper of its kind in a university that had spearheaded the teaching of English Literature as a degree subject since the end of the previous century. In this paper were questions on the Georgians, Kipling, Hardy, Galsworthy, and the war poets. There were also questions on James Joyce, T. S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf. Modernist writers are frequently referred to as ‘difficult’ or ‘obscure’ or ‘elitist’ and, to an extent, they were and are. But their being the subject of an optional undergraduate paper suggests not only that they could be studied, and not necessarily that they could *only* be studied, but also that they *invited* study and, furthermore, that they influenced the character of literary scholarship in the first years of English as a degree subject in England. This thesis will show that Joyce, Woolf and Eliot composed educative texts which responded to the educational environment they inhabited. Perceptions of difficulty or obscurity or elitism were not prohibitive to study but offered the incentive of challenge, the acquisition of learning through journeys of discovery that were quite unlike the narratives of learning in other disciplines. While these writers influenced the culture of literary scholarship, they were significantly indebted to an earlier change in reading and educational culture, expressed in such legislation as the Public Libraries Act of 1850, which vastly expanded the provision of free literature to all, the Revised Code of 1862, which set up the Education Department and made annual provision for the schooling of the children of manual labourers, and the 1870 Education Act which established non-denominational school boards to set up schools in areas which needed them. Alongside these reforms were changes in publishing culture responding to a market which was very interested in self-education, developments in the ethos and curriculum of schools, and the increasing popularity of such

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<sup>1</sup> Godwin, W., ‘Essay XV: Of Choice in Reading’, in *The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners and Literature*, (London: G.G.&J. Robinson, 1797), in *Reprints of Economic Classics* (New York: Augustus M. Kelly, 1965), p. 131

<sup>2</sup> Arnold, M., ‘Culture and Anarchy’, in Keating, P. J. (ed.), *Culture and Anarchy and Other Selected Prose* (London: Penguin, 2015), p. 187.



organisations as adult education colleges, writers' groups and literary societies. They were also influenced by the educational ideas of Arnold, Emerson, Godwin, Newman: moderate progressives who balanced a regard for the classical curriculum with a scholarly and humane appreciation of the importance of independence and curiosity in formal and informal learning.

### The Education of the Reader

Hansard's database gives 40,641 parliamentary references to education in the whole of the nineteenth century, 11,420 of which were in 1890s; in the 1900s, 21,827, in the 1910s, 16,304, in the 1920s, 13,328, and in the 1930s, 14,708. Over the period 1890 to 1939, Hansard's references to education amount to 77,587, more than double the number of references in the first ninety years of the nineteenth century in which much of the most influential legislation was passed; this indicates education became an ongoing matter of political interest and that continual efforts were being made to refine the provision of mass education. The numbers rise steadily through the decades of the twentieth century, suggesting the indebtedness of debates about education today to this earlier period of reform. The focus of this discussion was the education of the poor, and attitudes were initially regressive and entrenched: the Parochial School Bill of 1807 met opponents such as the Tory MP William Davies Giddy, who claimed on 13 June of that year that educating the poor would be 'prejudicial to their morals and happiness', 'enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books and publications against Christianity' and 'render them factious and refractory'; he concluded that supporting the bill would amount to 'taxing virtue for the maintenance of vice'<sup>3</sup>. But this impulse to improve educational provision for the working-classes progressively through elementary, secondary, tertiary and adult education has often been seen as one of the main reasons why a violent workers' revolution did not happen in Britain,<sup>4</sup> and Matthew Arnold contended that poets should add to both the knowledge and the happiness of mankind<sup>5</sup> and advocated culture as an influence of 'sweetness and light', conducive to 'freedom from fanaticism', with a 'single-minded love of perfection', and a desire 'to make reason and the will of God prevail'.<sup>6</sup>

Jonathan Rose in *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (2001) finds that English literature was the most commonly taught subject in the undenominational board schools set up nationwide after the 1870 Education Act, and notes that readings from 'standard authors' such as Shakespeare, Milton, Cowper, Byron, and Gray became required fixtures in the higher grades.<sup>7</sup> Publishers therefore had an incentive to produce large numbers of school editions of these authors.

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<sup>3</sup> Hansard, Parochial Schools Bill, 13 June 1807, Vol. 9, cc. 798-9: Mr William Davies Giddy.

<sup>4</sup> Hoggart, R., *The Uses of Literacy* (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Arnold, M., 'Preface to First Edition of *Poems* (1853)', in Keating, P. J. (ed.), *Culture and Anarchy and Other Selected Prose*, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 197.

<sup>7</sup> Rose, J., *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, rev. 2010), p. 33.

Indeed, the working-class autodidact, J. M. Dent, also included eastern literature such as *The Ramayana* and *Hindu Scriptures* in his catalogue of cheap classics, Everyman's Library;<sup>8</sup> while these were not published until 1938, a translation of the *Upanishads* from the Sanskrit by Robert Ernest Hume was published from Oxford University Press in 1921 before the publication of *The Waste Land* in 1922. This thesis argues that Eliot's explanations of the Vedic allusions in his 'Notes' to *The Waste Land* indicate his interest in educating the reader, and in a context in which publishers were providing the means for readers of all classes to follow up the allusions and read around them, the educative ethos of the work becomes more realistic than idealistic. Everyman's publication of *To the Lighthouse* in 1938 also indicates that modernist literature, well within the 50-year-rule established by the 1911 Copyright Act, was deemed sufficiently marketable to be sold at cheaper prices to a wider audience; Everyman usually only published classics in the public realm.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the Loeb Classical Library which offered affordable facing-page translations of the classics from 1911, a working-class reader might not only read, for instance, Storr's translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* (1912), but also go and see the play cheaply at venues such as the Little Theatre at the Sheffield Educational Settlement, one of the workers' amateur dramatic societies across the country, which also produced plays by Aeschylus, Euripides and Aristophanes as well as canonical English playwrights between 1919 and 1945.<sup>10</sup>

Rose's research into the history of working class education suggests that from the nineteenth century until the Labour Party's election in 1945 the working class reader experienced an expansion of opportunities for formal and informal self-education, and that this had an intellectually enfranchising effect, and that since then there has been a decline in public provision of literary education. The work is an extensive examination of autobiographical sources of working-class readers including their responses to classic literature, informal education, fiction and non-fiction, dead authors, primary education, reading comprehension, libraries (public libraries, Welsh miners' libraries and others), adult education (the Workers' Educational Association and other organisations), Marxism, school stories, popular culture and the avant-garde. Such a compendious examination does not give rise to a ready summary. Generally, the methods used are statistical and anecdotal, and as such they are indicative of cultural trends rather than conclusive evidence of a uniform experience. The autobiographical evidence of passionate reading is inherently more likely to be forthcoming than evidence of indifference, and statistical evidence is based on surveys of limited times and fields of respondents. The important point that Rose establishes for the purposes of this thesis is that the allusive range of modernist works, which included classical, canonical and even esoteric or exotic sources, was not beyond the educational sphere of contemporary readers across the social spectrum.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 135.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 134.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 79-80.

His work on the immense popularity of school stories in the period, which revisited the themes of *Tom Brown's School Days*, suggests that there was great public interest in education which spanned class boundaries;<sup>11</sup> by 1940, one in eight books read by boys due to leave school aged fourteen was a school story, and for girls it was one in four.<sup>12</sup> In writing about education, Joyce, Eliot and Woolf engage with a widespread and dearly held set of prejudices about education; its purposes, its character, its methods, its materials, its ethos. Education is the focus of several of their works. It provides the narrative substance of Joyce's parodic reformulations of learning in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, much of the material of *Ulysses*, the allusive source and substance of *Finnegans Wake*. It also provides the materials for the allusive collage of Eliot's *The Waste Land*; it is the subject of debates in 'Mr Apollinax', 'Portrait of a Lady', 'Cousin Nancy', and also his essays in *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* and his lectures on education collected in *To Criticise the Critic* and other essays. It is the narrative anchor of Woolf's *The Voyage Out*, *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, some of *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves*, her shorter fiction such as *The Mark on the Wall* and *Slater's Pins Have No Points*, and her essay-lectures, *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*, and many other essays and articles. These works engaged with a culture of writing about education in order to query the prevailing ethos, revivify the texts whose value could be lost in the grammar grind, and offer a new focus on the life of the mind and its development through the use of experimental narrative and structural forms. Rose argues that:

Much as the actual public schools created a common culture for affluent children, public school stories created a common frame of morality, ritual, and literary references that enabled working class children to socialise with one another. ... 'How my eight-year-old mind boggled at the heroic antics of Harry Wharton and Tom Merry,' recalled the son of a Camberwell builder's labourer, 'and how determined I was to emulate their true blue behaviour by my conduct in the more prosaic atmosphere of St George's [Church School], even if I sometimes wore no shoes and the arse was out of my trousers.'<sup>13</sup>

Publications like *Boys of England* and *The Boy's Own Paper* had enormous circulations of 250,000 and 200,000 in the late 1860s and 70s. In 1907, *Gem* and *Magnet* and the Greyfriars stories added to the range, with peak circulations of 200,000.<sup>14</sup> Later, their decrease in circulation was due to the vastly increased competition in the market with the appearance of *Wizard*, *Rover*, *Adventure*, *Hotspur*, and *Skipper*, to name a few of the school stories papers of the period.<sup>15</sup> If public school fiction created a common morality and culture centred on the 'heroic antics' of 'true blue' elites, this was something queried by these modernist writers, particularly by Woolf in *Three Guineas* and *A Room of One's Own*,

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<sup>11</sup> Rose, J., p. 324-5.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p. 322.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 325.

<sup>14</sup> Richards, J., *Happiest Days: The Public Schools in English Fiction* (Manchester, Manchester University Press: 1988), p. 289.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 289.

who was not alone in laying the blame for the imperialist grandstanding which led to the Great War at the gates of public school educational culture. Kipling's 1917 short story 'Regulus' has received postcolonial attention highlighting how even this reputedly imperialist author, after the loss of his son in the war, draws unsettling connections between the subject of study and training for war: a Roman general, Regulus, is put to death by the Carthaginians when he returns having advised Rome *not* to negotiate; the translating student, Winton, suffers as a result of his inability to challenge the *esprit de corps* of public school life.<sup>16</sup> *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which begins with Stephen's father telling him never to peach on a fellow, can be read as a critical response to the moral trend of school fiction: Joyce's school, Clongowes Wood, had already been the subject of a work of school fiction, W. P. Kelly's *Schoolboys Three* in 1895. The school fiction novels of the period are so numerous as to have been the subject of reference work catalogues such as Robert Kirkpatrick's *Bullies, Beaks and Flannelled Fools: an annotated bibliography of boys' school fiction 1742 – 1990*.<sup>17</sup> However, the notion of a common set of literary references is more than a shared set of fictional characters; this fiction includes references to texts studied, and even, as in Alec Waugh's *The Loom of Youth* and Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's School Days*, quotes them in descriptions of lessons and in epigraphs to the beginnings of chapters. Allusions to the classics and the canon were a feature not only of the formal education of readers, but also of their leisure time reading. In this context, it is unlikely that the use of canonical and classical allusion was part of a deliberate attempt to appeal only to an elite group of readers.

Lise Jaillant's *Modernism, Middlebrow and the Literary Canon: The Modern Library Series, 1917 – 1955* (2014) and *Cheap Modernism: Expanding Markets, Publishers' Series and the Avant-Garde* (2017) are recent monographs which highlight that Lawrence Rainey's 1999 presentation of modernist writers as writing for elite cliques of intellectual readers of the 'little magazines'<sup>18</sup> requires qualification due to the numerous cheaper editions of modernist works, whether as part of series such as The Modern Library, Everyman's Library or as part of the cheaper anthologies of the Oxford University Press. While Rainey considers the early editions of modernist work as an 'investment', querying a metaphor of the writers and their publishers, he himself acknowledges that the metaphor is problematic as it often implies purely commercial concerns<sup>19</sup>; while from an educational perspective the metaphor is tempting, it is imprecise. Since readers of all classes, including autodidacts of the working class, were creating demand for these works, this suggests that the project in which the

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<sup>16</sup> Montefiore, J., 'Latin, Arithmetic and Mastery' in Booth, H., & Rigby, N. (eds.), *Modernism and Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 115.

<sup>17</sup> Kirkpatrick, R., *Bullies, Beaks and Flannelled Fools: an annotated bibliography of boys' school fiction, 1742-1990* (London: R.J. Kirkpatrick, 1990).

<sup>18</sup> Rainey, L., *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

modernists were engaged was not exclusive but broadly based. For instance, Eliot's 'Preludes' and 'The Hollow Men' appear in the Oxford University Press anthology edited by A. C. Ward, *A Book of American Verse* (1928), alongside poets as diverse as H. D., Longfellow, Stephen C. Foster (composer of 'De Camptown ladies sing dis song'), Poe, Frost and Julia Ward Howe (who wrote 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic'); this implies that 'highbrow' poets had no real compunction with having their work mixing with less 'intellectual' texts, suggesting that these were texts supposed to educate and challenge rather than exclude the growing reading public. Jaillant's work adds to studies with a similar interest in popular culture and modernist writing such as Michael North's *Reading 1922*, and complements author-focused work such as Declan Kiberd's *Ulysses and Us*, David Chinitz's *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* and Melba Cuddy-Keane's *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual and the Public Sphere*.

Christopher Hilliard's study of writing clubs in the period extends this historicist argument to suggest that not only were working-class readers consumers of literary tradition but also increasingly involved in the process of literary creation. *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratisation of Writing in Britain* also suggests that as a result of the popularity of soldier poetry, other poetry also experienced healthy sales:

When Mass-Observation [a social research organisation founded in 1937] contacted Foyle's bookshop in 1944, an assistant there said there had been a huge demand for poetry. The managers of Better Books, Zwemmer's and Collett's agreed... What sort of poetry were people buying? Better Books and Zwemmer's sold 'plenty of the fairly modern stuff' – Eliot, Yeats, MacNeice and Day Lewis. 'You might put it that any book of poetry reviewed in the Sunday Times goes very well; that's an almost certain rule,' said the manager at Better Books.<sup>20</sup>

Since Eliot's poetry sold well, this indicates that some of Eliot's most difficult poetry – *Prufrock*, *Poems* (1920), *The Waste Land*, *Ash Wednesday* – was not purchased solely by a small group of elite intellectuals but had a much broader appeal. While the date of the report is five years after the scope of this thesis, the material is all the more valid because it suggests that the poetry of that period had been quickly adopted by a wider audience even at a time of increased financial hardship. This thesis argues that this was due to the increased provision of literary education and the increasing popularity of self-education publications and adult education courses, enabling a range of readers to engage with the canonical and classical allusions sufficiently well to want to buy experimental modernist poetry in greater volumes. Hilliard finds that Cyril Connolly, editor of *Horizon*, said in 1941 he was being 'inundated with poems, not only by professional poets', and that 'the poetry of today is classless and is no longer the preserve of the educated and the leisured.'<sup>21</sup> The fact that working-class readers were also

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<sup>20</sup> Hilliard, C., *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratisation of Writing in Britain* (London: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 220.

<sup>21</sup> Hilliard, C., p. 221.

increasingly poets themselves suggests that poetry was becoming seen as more, not less, accessible as an art form.

In *Heart Beats: Everyday Life and the Memorised Poem*, Catherine Robson argues that the recitation of poetry in schools in Britain and America was a fundamental part of educational programmes in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the focus progressively on the intrinsic merits of knowing a work well in addition to memory training. It was deemed to have cultural benefits too: poetry provided guidance and comfort, refined the uncultured, offered a beacon of civilisation, promoted democracy, engendered national pride, offered the best that had been thought and said, and it united individuals with their heritage and each other.<sup>22</sup> The ‘cultural ubiquity’ of Gray’s ‘Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard’ was due not only to its immediate and immense popularity in town and country<sup>23</sup> but also to its subsequent adoption into the curriculums of both state elementary schools on both sides of the Atlantic and also the elite public schools (when they taught English Literature as well as the classics)<sup>24</sup>. Its appearance in different forms in the work of Joyce, Eliot and Woolf is testament not only to its influence, its quiet power, but also to the writers’ interest in specific features of educational programmes. Repetition is also a prominent stylistic feature of all three writers. The recitation of fragments in the texts which echo the canonical poetry recited in classrooms – works and extracts from Shakespeare, Milton, Tennyson, Wordsworth, Cowper, Byron, Goldsmith – focus attention on the intrinsic meaning of the words through the reader’s recollection of them, revivifying what might once have been solely a test of memory, and point the reader to the educational source of these works.

### The Scope of the Thesis: Critical Surveys of Education and Scholarship in Literature

At the time of writing there has been very little scholarly debate specifically surveying the presentation of learning in the literature of 1890 to 1939, yet references to scholarship and learning are frequent and pronounced in the work of the period. This thesis will explore materials related to learning in the literature, essays, letters, diaries, lectures of Joyce, Eliot and Woolf, to show that modernist writing was educative in provenance, purpose, content, methods and effects. For the sake of brevity, other modernists whose work engages with the world of education such as Djuna Barnes, Dorothy Richardson, Ezra Pound, Hope Mirrlees, and David Jones are left for further study elsewhere. Pound, as the energetic architect and facilitator of modernist literature is the most obvious omission in a thesis about high modernists. He makes use of the materials of his education throughout his work, not just in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920); he lectured in Wabash, Crawfordsville, Indiana in 1907-8 and at

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<sup>22</sup> Robson, C., *Heart Beats: Everyday Life and the Memorised Poem* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p. 134.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* p. 135.

Regent Street Polytechnic in London in 1909 on Romance languages, Provençal poetry and Dante,<sup>25</sup> and he wrote about education in works such as the *ABC of Reading* (1934). His first volume of prose was published by Dent of Everyman in 1910.<sup>26</sup> His manuscript note on a poem, ‘I do not teach, I awake’<sup>27</sup>, is relevant to a consideration of the kind of educative process which this thesis argues is engendered by reading modernist literature. However, while Pound’s allusions remain unnoted, Joyce, Eliot and Woolf all work towards the education of the reader in more positive ways. Joyce supplied a ‘schema’ for Gilbert’s edition of *Ulysses*, Eliot produced ‘Notes’ for *The Waste Land* and Woolf directly addresses the issue of canonicity from her earliest works in naming and listing authors for would-be readers to explore, so the relationship with the sphere of education and, importantly, self-education, is clearer in these three modernists. While Litz argues that Joyce’s ‘schema’ and Eliot’s ‘Notes’ were ‘obviously... a part of the ‘cultic’ atmosphere that surrounded both writers’<sup>28</sup>, it is possible instead to read these additions as responses to a culture of autodidacticism.

‘Modernist literature’ is here defined as experimental works within the period which use significant or structural allusion. This excludes writers of the same period such as H. G. Wells who are sometimes referred to as ‘modernist’<sup>29</sup> and whose work may concern issues of ‘modernity’ but which is conventional in style and whose use of allusion is transient and non-structural. It also excludes writing which is experimental and intertextual from other periods; this is a necessary omission in the thesis and a more thorough survey of the relationship between education and literature across the history of the European canon is still necessary. ‘Education’ is here defined etymologically in terms of its Latin root, *educare*, ‘to lead out’: it is more broadly defined than the Greek word ‘pedagogy’ which implies the instruction of children, although some academics use this word to mean teaching more generally. Education is also understood to include both institutional learning and autodidacticism, and the spectrum of formal and informal educative praxis such as schools, universities, evening classes, writers’ clubs, affordable series of canonical works, primers, anthologies, books of quotations, abridged classics, public libraries, bookshops and bookshelves: all materials and practices directed towards the education of the reader.

In addition to major biographies by Richard Ellmann, Gordon Bowker, Peter Ackroyd, Lyndall Gordon, Quentin Bell and Hermione Lee, biographical works which have researched the education of individual writers are crucial to this thesis. Joyce’s education has been explored by Kevin Sullivan, Bruce Bradley and Peter Costello; Eliot’s education by Robert Crawford and Piers Gray; Woolf’s education by Lyndall Gordon and Katherine Dalsimer. Bantock and Schuchard have written on Eliot

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<sup>25</sup> Tytell, J., *Ezra Pound: The Solitary Volcano* (New York: Anchor Press, 1987), p. 31 & 39.

<sup>26</sup> Yao, S., & Coyle, M. (Eds.), *Ezra Pound and Education* (Maine: National Poetry Foundation, 2012), p. xiii.

<sup>27</sup> Tytell, J., p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> Litz, A. W., *Eliot in His Time* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> Brooker, P., ‘Early Modernism’ in Shiach, M. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Modernist Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 32.

and education in relation to, respectively, his lectures on education and his lectures for the extension programmes of the universities of Oxford and London. Gail MacDonald makes a case very similar to my own in her chapter on Eliot and Pound entitled 'Poets as Educators' in *Learning to be Modern*, but since there is no assistance of any kind either given or referred to in Pound's poetry, I find a difference between Eliot and Pound in that Pound may seek to awaken readers but Eliot actually begins the process of education, a leading out. Cuddy-Keane has considered Woolf's work as a model for an alternative pedagogy. Numerous studies have been written on the significance of the classics or particular classical authors to their work. But a survey of the relationship between high modernist writers' works and the sphere of education remains largely unexplored. This is possibly the result of the educational impact of Roland Barthes' 1967 work *The Death of the Author*, which led to the creation in English Studies of a critical myopia in new historicist discourse through its dictat that biographical context, including the education of the writer, is effectively irrelevant in textual appreciation; while this has not caused problems for a largely renaissance-focused historicism because of the lack of this kind of detail about the author's life, it raises objections in the discussion of modernist writers whose lives are very well-documented. This thesis holds that while biographical material can be unenlightening, this is not because the nature of language itself compels a strictly decentered interpretative approach but more plainly because correlation is not necessarily causation; indeed, to insist on a strictly decentered approach is to resurrect Barthes-as-author and Barthes-as-authority each time the argument arises. The same principle applies to modernist pretensions of impersonality because the author's own attempt to block scholarly curiosity rests on the same irresolute conception of authority, which in this thesis is something dynamic and shared. Educational context is distinct from other kinds of biographical context in the directness of its application, however, because education is about shaping habits of mind; for instance, knowing that John Milton was tutored by William Chappell, an Arminian in an otherwise Calvinist seventeenth-century Cambridge, is important for understanding his presentation of the concept of free will in *Paradise Lost* and *Areopagitica*. The author in this thesis is therefore not dead but, in a Foucauldian sense, more precisely a function of the discourses they inhabit. The critical approach of the thesis utilises historicism in accounting for the educational influences in play within the texts; at this point Russian formalist theory provides the main interpretative framework, because the ways in which these modernist writers create distinctly educative text is fundamentally through the reframing of earlier texts in different contexts through the use of allusive collages, thus exploding cliché and revivifying the source material by jump starting the reader's critical attention to dimly remembered or even entirely new works. At the point at which the reader's response is considered, the thesis engages a broadly new historicist framework: the power of the man and the power of the moment, as Arnold put it,<sup>30</sup> or tradition and the individual talent, as did Eliot,<sup>31</sup> collide to refine and challenge educational

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<sup>30</sup> Arnold, M., 'The Function of Criticism in the Present Time', in *Essays in Criticism* in Keating, P. J. (Ed.), *Culture and Anarchy and Other Selected Prose*, p. 109.

<sup>31</sup> Eliot, T. S., 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1999), p. 13.



discourse, influencing educational practice in concrete ways like the framing of examination questions in the new English literature courses at degree level. Works by Culler, Kristeva and Bloom on allusion are also relevant, and this thesis assumes that the allusion encountered within these writers is diachronic intertext in the sense that it engages in a generative dialogue with the original material<sup>32</sup>.

The usefulness of educational theory in literary criticism is difficult to establish owing to the inherent difference in evidential requirements in these disciplines. The frequent resonance between the texts' methods and educational theories does, however, suggest that these modernists created texts which act in more educationally identifiable ways than more linear forms. Bloom's taxonomy of thought<sup>33</sup> helps to show that these modernists engender high-level reading responses such as synthesis and evaluation in their work through a combination of fragmentation and allusion that leads readers out (*educare*) on a search for a deeper coherence. The taxonomy follows the pattern below:

Evaluation (interchangeable with synthesis)	In terms of internal evidence or external criteria.
Synthesis (interchangeable with evaluation)	Production and derivation.
Analysis	Elements, organisation, relationships.
Application	-
Comprehension	Translation, interpretation, extrapolation.
Knowledge	Facts, trends, conventions, terminology, categories, criteria, methodologies, principles, theories.

Vygotsky's notions of language acquisition<sup>34</sup> as inherently bound up with resolving an early sense of the totality of things into distinct conceptual classes are voiced in stylistic choices in all three writers. Piaget's theories of accommodation and assimilation<sup>35</sup> resonate strongly with conceptions of modernist difficulty or obscurity, highlighting that difficulty is a necessary part of any learning process and that memory is crucial in fashioning new concepts in relation to remembered learning. Dewey's insistence on the creation of an experience<sup>36</sup> as a means of ensuring interest and efficiency in learning is identifiable insofar as these modernist texts create that experience, necessitating reflection in order to find solutions to puzzles posed by the structure and allusions, rather than simply instructing the reader what to read and what to think about it. Jensen's idea about associative cognition<sup>37</sup> being detrimental in

<sup>32</sup> Machacek, G., 'Allusion' in *PMLA* Vol. 122, No. 2 (March 2007), 525.

<sup>33</sup> Krathwohl, D., 'A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy: An Overview', in *Theory into Practice*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (2002), 212ff.

<sup>34</sup> Ivic, I., 'Lev S. Vygotsky (1896 – 1934)', in *Prospects: the quarterly review of comparative education*, Vol. 24, no. 3/4 (1994), 471-485.

<sup>35</sup> Flavell, J., 'Piaget's Legacy', in *Psychological Science*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (1996), 200-3.

<sup>36</sup> Dewey, J., *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), p. 199.

<sup>37</sup> Townsend, M., & Keeling, B., 'The Relationship of Level 1 and Level 2 Cognitive Processes to a Test of Associative Responding' in *The Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (1977), 127-130.

education systems in which conceptual thinking is prioritised is also relevant since associative thinking in these texts can be by turns both absurd and crucial.

The two most pertinent published works offering a survey of the presentation of scholarship in literature at present remain John Carey's *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880 – 1939* (1992) and A. D. Nuttall's *Dead from the Waist Down: Scholars and Scholarship in Literature and the Popular Imagination* (2003).

### John Carey: *The Intellectuals and the Masses* (1992)

In *The Intellectuals and the Masses*, Carey argues that intellectuals of the early twentieth century were disturbed by low and middlebrow culture, overpopulation, the spread of the suburbs, the rise of working class literacy and the relative decline of the patrician middle classes of the Victorian era. He says:

...modernist literature and art can be seen as a hostile reaction to the unprecedentedly large reading public created by nineteenth-century educational reforms. The purpose of modernist writing... was to exclude these newly educated (or 'or semi-educated') readers, and so to preserve the intellectual's seclusion from the 'mass'.<sup>38</sup>

*Ulysses*, *The Waste Land*, *Jacob's Room* and other texts, were, according to Carey, anti-educative in their purpose, content, methods, and effects. When T. S. Eliot said, 'Poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be difficult'<sup>39</sup>, this was because intellectuals wanted to 'prevent [the masses] reading literature by making it too difficult to understand,'<sup>40</sup> and thus 'irrationality and obscurity were cultivated'.<sup>41</sup> He gives Arnold Bennett the credit for not falling into this trap.

Bennett's whole quarrel with intellectual contempt for the masses is that it is a kind of deadness, a mark of inferior not superior faculties – a dull, unsharpened impercipience shut off from the intricacy and fecundity of each human life. Hence for Bennett the heightened sensibility of the artist is not antagonistic to the masses but looks to the masses – or rather to the hidden lives which that crude metaphor deletes – for its natural succour.<sup>42</sup>

'Intricate' and 'fecund' are therefore words which do not describe modernist depictions of ordinary life, and while highbrow literature hides ordinary lives in depictions of the mass, middlebrow literature for Carey is enlivened by its contact with the everyday. But Carey's analysis does not focus on Joyce, Eliot or Woolf, even though these are seminal modernist writers of the period. His 'Case Studies' in Part II

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<sup>38</sup> Carey, J., *The Intellectuals and the Masses* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), Preface, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* p. 161.

are, instead, George Gissing, conventional naturalist author of *New Grub Street*, H. G. Wells, the science fiction writer, Wyndham Lewis, the vorticist artist, and Adolf Hitler, the dictator. The main sources of quotation in the opening pages are Ortega y Gasset and Friedrich Nietzsche. Neither the philosophers of the first chapter, nor the focuses of Part II, relate to the stated topic of the text:

the principle around which modernist literature and culture fashioned themselves was the exclusion of the masses, the defeat of their power, the removal of their literacy, the denial of their humanity.<sup>43</sup>

I would argue that Carey is unable to make these modernist writers the focus of his analysis because they were teachers and lecturers who used the materials of their education as the essential substance of their work in order to educate readers, not to exclude them. When Carey writes that *Ulysses* 'is for intellectuals only'<sup>44</sup>, he is right in the sense that it engages the intellect and invites extensive study, but in a context of rapidly widening access to education and literature, it does not make sense to imply that it is 'only' for anyone.

Education has been left largely unexamined in Carey's analysis, but it was the bridge between Arnoldian patricians of high culture and the vast influx of new readers into the expanding and changing literary marketplace. As Malcolm Bradbury points out,

Arnold saw the intelligentsia as a culturally reconciling force, a body of Guardians who transcended partisanship or class by being committed to culture, 'the best that was known and thought in the world'.<sup>45</sup>

Matthew and his father Thomas Arnold's views coloured and framed the views of university men and artists of the early twentieth century. Thomas Arnold the younger, Matthew's brother and a literary scholar himself, became the principal of University College Dublin while Joyce was studying there, providing a dynastic metonym for the reach of their influential ideas. Arnold instigated the study of history. His peer, Dr Welldon of Harrow, gave an address in 1892 to the HMC saying that he had made the study of English compulsory and in the same year the HMC resolved almost unanimously that English should be taught as 'the handmaid of the Classics', although initially it was to be taught 'on the old classical plan, being based on the grammar grind'<sup>46</sup>. By the time of the publication of the 1919 *Public Schools Year Book* it seems the division between classical and modern sides had disappeared entirely from Eton's description of their curriculum, whilst Winchester's curriculum includes classics,

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p.21

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p. 20.

<sup>45</sup> Bradbury, M., *The Social Context of Modern English Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), p.38.

<sup>46</sup> Hooper, H. M., (MA in Education thesis) *The Development and a Criticism of the Theory and Practice of Education as found in Imaginative Literature of the Nineteenth Century and After* (University of London Archives: 1920), p. 62.

mathematics and languages, Rugby lists classics, modern and science sides, and Clifton, Tonbridge and Bradfield mention their ‘engineering sides’<sup>47</sup>. These modernists’ indebtedness to the classical curriculum is equalled by their indebtedness to having studied History, English, languages and a range of other subjects including even, on occasion, science. The curriculum’s new engagement with history, culture and the world of utility and commerce finds expression in a literature which focuses precisely on this dialectic. The troublesome relationship between the abstract interior world of the intellect, the canon, and the temporal reality of everyday things is a central concern in Woolf, Eliot and Joyce.

*Anthony Nuttall: Dead from the Waist Down (2003)*

The satire of scholarship through depictions of scholarly characters is found in the work of Joyce, Eliot and Woolf. In *Dead from the Waist Down: Scholars and Scholarship in Literature and the Popular Imagination*, Anthony Nuttall presents the reader with the caricatures he finds in the work of the previous century and before. It is not the purpose of this thesis to dispute caricatures drawn in response to earlier literature, but is it useful to consider the extent to which paradigms change as educational culture develops in the early twentieth century.

Scholars are deathly, sexless, tedious; scholars are passionate, devoted heroes of the life of the mind. They are despised and they are to be feared. All who love fiction and poetry owe them a great deal.<sup>48</sup>

Nuttall begins with a reference to Dr. Faustus and the legend of Nicholas Ferrar, a friend of George Herbert, who, in 1637, made a bonfire of all his classical texts, comedies, tragedies, epic poems, love poetry in order to turn his back on the secular world ‘as a good Protestant must’, which the villagers took as a sign that he had repented: he ‘could not dye until he had burned all his Conjuring-Bookes’.<sup>49</sup> The suspicion of scholars by unlettered people was tempered by the fact that they were also very powerful. By 1610, Dr. John Dee had been consulted by half the fashionable society in London, Dr. Simon Forman was at the height of his reputation, Elizabeth employed an alchemist to experiment in Somerset House, and it was hoped that Edward Kelly would be able to ‘send her majesty ... a sum reasonable to defer her charges for this summer for her navy’.<sup>50</sup> But whether they are seen as particularly valuable units of economic production, or as dangerous renegades, neither of these visions of the scholar has much to do with the perception of scholars in the early part of the twentieth century. It is interesting to note that superstition of this kind finds its way into one of the most scholarly poems of the twentieth century, *The Waste Land*, with ‘Madame Sosotris, famous clairvoyante’ and her wicked pack of cards. The poem does not seem to cast any particular judgment on the use of the Tarot, beyond Eliot’s

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Nuttall, A. D., *Dead from the Waist Down: Scholars and Scholarship in Literature and the Popular Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p. ix

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p. x

<sup>50</sup> Knights, L. C., *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1937), p. 173.

characteristically sardonic presentation of a self-important character (she ‘had a bad cold’), but rather uses it symbolically for a variety of different ideas to do with the achievement of a spiritual regeneration. She advises the Smyrna merchant to ‘fear death by water’, which refers to the necessary death to worldly things – ‘the profit and the loss’ – prior to rebirth, salvation and enlightenment. But the scholar is no longer the magician, the alchemist or the seer, but the observer.

Nuttall’s first study of a scholar in the literature of the Victorian period is Browning’s grammarian of ‘The Grammarian’s Funeral’. His analysis presents the humanist scholar as one whose ‘contemptus mundi’ costs him dearly, and whose endeavours are ultimately unsatisfactory:

he proudly disdains the pitying glances of the worldly – indeed, he despises the world – but he turns away, not to contemplate Christian values, but to pursue learning.<sup>51</sup>

He refers us to Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* in words that resonate with Woolf’s early scholarly characters:

Wee that are university men ... wither away as a flower ungathered in a garden, and never used.<sup>52</sup>

He makes the point that the scholar in the Victorian imagination is one who sacrifices his health and happiness for his studies, and this is supported by the poem: ‘Calculus racked him’, ‘Tussis attacked him’, ‘his eyes grew dross of lead’, he is ‘dead from the waist down’. He contends that the thunder and lightning at the end of the poem, when the grammarian’s decisive treatment of ‘the enclitic *De*’ is recalled, is comic rather than heroic.<sup>53</sup> The scholar is indeed, ‘almost ridiculous’ as Prufrock says in that poem: the thunder and lightning are so hyperbolic as to be parodic in effect. Nuttall then connects this analysis with his reading of George Eliot’s Mr Casaubon from her novel *Middlemarch* (1871-72). He remarks that ‘old age has seized him prematurely’<sup>54</sup> and that Casaubon ‘is himself a ghost, conversing more with dead people than with living’. He points out that he himself is aware of this, as he says, ‘I live too much with the dead’<sup>55</sup>. Nuttall believes that Eliot may not have intended this self-mocking, self-deprecatory effect:

Within the story he is not supposed to know that he is death-in-life. As it is his speech is almost charming with its apparent degree of intelligent insight, seems on the edge of humour with a touch of self-deprecatory charm. This, I fancy, George Eliot, did not intend.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Nuttall, A.D., *Dead from the Waist Down*, p. 15.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* p.27.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* p.31.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32.

Regardless of whether Eliot intended it, the (occasional) self-awareness of the fastidious Casaubon paves the way for characters such as Stephen Dedalus and J. Alfred Prufrock. Nuttall then contrasts the depiction of scholars in literature ('mere pedants') with the rather more colourful real lives of 'great scholars' in the form of Mark Pattinson and Isaac Casaubon. He concludes with some reflections on what it means to be a scholar, bearing all of this in mind, and remarks:

The most obvious moral component in the scholarly ideal [is]... an altruistic reverence for truth, in all its possible minuteness and complexity.<sup>57</sup>

The modernists make use of these caricatures to explode them and revivify the ideas behind them. They take these notions of what a scholar is and then present an array of different qualities to humanise their characters and enliven debates about education which are happening at a deep, structural level within the text and, with their own reverence for truth, present these characters in all possible minuteness and complexity.

#### H. Marion Hooper: University of London, MA Thesis (1920): The Development and a Criticism of the Theory and Practice of Education as found in Imaginative Literature of the Nineteenth Century and After.

In addition to the above works by Carey and Nuttall, there is also a relevant University of London Master of Arts in Education thesis from 1920. This survey of Victorian and 'recent' school fiction is invaluable because, firstly, it draws attention to just how popular this kind of fiction was at the time, indicating a more generalised interest in education in wider society, and also because it discusses middlebrow novels about school life published before the sensation of what might be called 'scholarship-in-literature' in 1922 with the publication of *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses*. It explores none of the work that is now said to characterise the period: there is no Woolf, Joyce, Pound, or Eliot. It focuses instead on the (then) more popular work of Alec Waugh, Arnold Lunn, A. H. Gilkes, Thomas Hughes, H. G. Wells, Stuart Mais, and others. The thesis is a survey of the fictional presentation of teaching methods, school ethos and curricula and concludes that there is a correlation between developments in the real world of school life and the fictionalised one presented in the novels, and that dissatisfaction with the educational status quo is more common than approval in the literature of the period. It does not overtly advocate any curriculum changes, or altering teaching methods, but it speaks highly of creative new methods that are so established today that they appear somewhat unimaginative to a modern educationalist (for instance, reading Shakespeare round the class, creative writing exercises, essays, spelling tests, etc.). It also notes the very rapid rise of English as a subject on the curriculum. Since the thesis is a sociological study, the works mentioned are not analysed as literature; they are treated as indicators of developments in educational practice and theory over the Victorian period and beyond. As an artefact in its own right, this thesis indicates how fascinating the topic of literary

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p.194.

presentations of education was in 1920; it suggests that this was a connection which was deemed to be sufficiently academically interesting to form the subject of a 75,000-word MA thesis at the University of London. It is useful when exploring the work of Joyce, Eliot and Woolf to keep in mind the more mainstream works it mentions, too, to gauge where the modernist experiments begin and end, and how they engage with the educational norms they portray.

## Chapter outline

### Chapter 1: James Joyce

The chapter offers readings of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the episodes conventionally referred to as ‘Telemachus’, ‘Nestor’, ‘Scylla and Charybdis’ and ‘Ithaca’ in *Ulysses*, and a short excerpt from *Finnegans Wake*. Jesuit theology and educational culture influenced all three stages of Joyce’s formal education, and this encodes itself not only in the content of his work, from the depictions of school and university life to the books in use at those institutions, but also its narrative methodologies. However, Joyce’s texts seem conscious of these tendencies and find ways to query and satirise the educational norms they evoke. While educational scenes may appear to depict ways of thinking that are very low down the scheme of Bloom’s taxonomy (examined in the chapter) they engender responses in the reader that utilise the highest functions, and even query the validity of a hierarchy of categories of thought. Joyce also satirises academics and teachers in ways that explode Nuttall’s binary caricatures of scholarship and critique the emerging discipline of English Studies and influence the principles of examination through the texture of the reading experience. The materials with which Joyce learned stories such as those of Odysseus imply that the spirit of his endeavour is unlikely to be obscurantist as Carey suggests, since Joyce’s own formative reading, just like that of his audience, includes very popular abridged and simplified renditions of the classics. Through the classical and canonical allusive weave, Arnoldian ideas of culture and education find expression in the work. Through Joyce’s vast frame of interconnected reference and playful self-reflexivity, Newman’s notions of a university as a place of ‘teaching universal knowledge’<sup>58</sup>, ‘Thought and Reason exercised upon knowledge’<sup>59</sup>, and knowledge as an end in itself<sup>60</sup> can be traced, even as he mocks Newman’s new ‘Catholic University’: associative thinking and ideas of definition and difference are explored throughout the work. As with all satire, the author’s indebtedness to the target is clear, and this is acknowledged through research into the educational source material in several biographical studies.

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<sup>58</sup> Newman, J., *The Idea of a University* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1886), p. ix.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

## Chapter 2: T. S. Eliot

The chapter provides readings of poems which most literally depict narratives or discussions about education: ‘Cousin Nancy’, ‘Portrait of a Lady’, ‘Mr Apollinax’, and excerpts from *The Waste Land*. Other works are referred to where they make or suggest an engagement with educational culture. Since Eliot’s school English textbooks have not received much critical attention at the time of writing, a section is devoted to a consideration of their resonances in the work and the essays. Because Eliot makes so many public remarks about education, a section is also devoted to a consideration of these lectures, although Bantock has also written in this field. While a great deal has been said about Eliot’s university reading and the connections he made there, less has been written about the ideas about education and literary tradition absorbed in his formative secondary education. The worlds of autodidact publishing and formal educational publishing influenced one another towards the end of the nineteenth century as educationalists borrowed from popular books of quotations for the conversion of the curriculum from a classical grammar grind to an English-based grammar grind. From this vantage point, it is possible to see how attitudes to education and literary culture converge upon this new keystone subject, and also how Eliot’s authoritative voice can be seen shaping the nature of the discipline through changes in examination questions at university level. Eliot’s adult education lecturing has been very helpfully researched by Schuchard, and from this it is possible to identify a connection between his school textbooks and the material and processes he adopts in his lectures, such that Eliot becomes an Arnoldian and Emersonian influence within educational culture despite his misgivings about their religious and philosophical ideas after his 1927 conversion to Anglo-Catholicism.

## Chapter 3: Virginia Woolf

This chapter offers readings of several works because Woolf writes so frequently about education; here are only those which are most plainly relevant to the topic of education, and the examination of each has been abbreviated for the purposes of the survey this thesis seeks to provide: *The Voyage Out*, *The Mark on the Wall*, *Slater’s Pins Have No Points*, *Night and Day*, *Jacob’s Room*, *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*, and the lectures, *A Room of One’s Own* and *Three Guineas*. Woolf focuses on gendered narratives of education and satirises the elitism of Cambridge academics and their formative institutions, the public schools, to connect, along with many others of her time, the combative nature of the school system with the cultural foregrounding of the First World War. She also explores the relationship between the real world and the world of the intellect, insisting always on lived experience as an anchor for the imagination and as a guard against superficiality. Woolf uses allusion throughout her work to promote the education of the reader by combining allusion with luminous scenes of reading which sell the process of self-education while she acknowledges the limitations of reading within the current educational framework. Education for Woolf has to be less regimented and more discursive if it is to achieve its civilising ends, but given the programmatic way in which she learned and was inspired by the study of Greek through her tutors at King’s and



conventional public school textbooks, she may not be advocating anything as definite as an 'alternative pedagogy' as Cuddy-Keane suggests, but rather something more open and more blended even than this. Wollstonecraft's advocacy of female education and on training the understanding rather than merely the memory, together with Arnold's case against middle class utilitarian 'philistinism', are expressed in the fiction and the essays through Socratic patterns and motifs which do not so much seek resolutions to questions as prompt further exploration; echoing Arnold's notions of culture, perfection is 'not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming'.

## Chapter 1:

### James Joyce

#### Part One: The Education of James Joyce

From 1888 to 1891 Joyce attended Clongowes Wood College, then Belvedere College from 1893 to 1898, and from 1898 to 1900 he studied at University College, Dublin. As Ellmann points out in his foreword to Bradley's *James Joyce's Schooldays*, all three institutions were run by the Jesuits.<sup>61</sup> When asked about his Jesuit education, Joyce said, 'They taught me how to order and to judge'<sup>62</sup> and that from them 'I have learnt to arrange things in such a way that they become easy to survey and to judge.'<sup>63</sup> This becomes essential in the analysis of the narrative techniques of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* from an educational perspective: the Jesuits provided a knowledge of a doctrine which influenced the history of Western European culture, a clear metric for making moral judgments, and conferred fundamental processes of logical analysis and argumentation which Joyce exhibits and queries in his work.

#### The Ratio Studiorum

A Jesuit education is universally based on a document called the *Ratio Studiorum*, the system of education based upon the teaching of St Ignatius of Loyola, and expanded upon over time by lengthy debate amongst senior members of the Jesuit order in the years leading up to 1599, and adapted at various times since then. The Society of Jesus is monastic, and its most important mission is in education, just as other orders may have a particular calling to preaching (Dominicans) or contemplation (Cistercians). The *Ratio Studiorum* begins with the rules for the Provincial, the religious in charge of the province or area of monastic houses:

Since one of the leading ministries of our Society is teaching our neighbours all the disciplines in keeping with our Institute in such a way that they are thereby aroused to a knowledge and love of our Maker and Redeemer, the Provincial should consider himself obliged to do his utmost to ensure that our diverse and complex educational labour meets with the abundant results that the grace of our calling demands of us.<sup>64</sup>

The rules for all positions of responsibility begin with similar paragraphs, highlighting that the main purpose of a Jesuit education, from the perspective of the school, was evangelistic: James Joyce was to

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<sup>61</sup> Bradley, B. (S.J.), *James Joyce's Schooldays* (Dublin: Gill-Macmillan, 1982), Foreword: Ellmann.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Ellmann, R., *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p.27

<sup>64</sup> Pavur, C. (S.J.), *The Ratio Studiorum: The Official Plan for Jesuit Education* (Institute of Jesuit Sources, St Louis: 2005), p.7.

be given a knowledge and a love of God as creator and saviour. If the Belvedere retreat in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is based in reality, it would seem that some of his Jesuit teachers were more interested in making Joyce fear his Maker, as we shall see, and know more about hell and judgement, than about heaven and forgiveness. The paragraph also suggests that the fruits of this education are to be many and varied, and that part of what it means to come to a knowledge and love of one's Maker is to learn as much as possible about the world and humanity. The educational labour is to be 'diverse and complex', and the results 'abundant'. While Joyce's presentation of school life in *Portrait* suggests to most readers that the purpose of education in Jesuit schools was narrow and religious, the reality was broader than this. The Intermediate exam results display a predominance of arts and humanities subjects, even though there is a very progressive array of mathematical and scientific subjects: Euclid, Algebra and Arithmetic in 1894, Natural Philosophy and Chemistry in 1895, and Physics at university. Greek was optional, and very few took it, and although Joyce regretted not having studied it, its being optional demonstrates that the curriculum followed by the Jesuits was more recognisably modern than those of the English public schools: as late as 1892, shortly before Joyce sat his exams, J. C. Tarver identified a degree of antipathy towards the emergence of additional subjects in the curriculum in HMC schools:

Referring to the social disparagement of mathematics, he [a HMC headmaster] says that there was a tendency to confound Mathematics with Arithmetic and to despise this branch of study as being only fit for tradesmen.<sup>65</sup>

A. C. Gilkes, headmaster of Dulwich College at the time, also noted that Latin and Greek took the greater part of the curriculum and that maths and history occupied a very subordinate place<sup>66</sup>. In context, then, the educational provision at Clongowes and Belvedere seems varied, forward-thinking, flexible, and unfettered by the cultural weight of a three-hundred-year history of the classical grammar grind. In an educational context in which English public schools had only just started to add a 'Modern Side' to their purely classical curricula, Joyce's school-level study of Geography, Italian, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, English, French, History, Euclid, Algebra and Arithmetic, as well as Latin<sup>67</sup>, looks enlightened in comparison.

The *Ratio* was inspired by Parisian schools noted by early Jesuits for their effectiveness. Matthew Arnold's views on education were also inspired by a French system, albeit in a post-revolutionary and thus atheistic/ deistic culture: *The Popular Education of France* (1861) has more to do with the ideal of the provision of education for all through lyceums than with specific praxis, except

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<sup>65</sup> Tarver, J. C., *Debatable Claims: Essays in Secondary Education* (London: A. Constable, 1898), p.153.

<sup>66</sup> Hooper, H. M., MA Thesis: *The Development and a Criticism of the Theory and Practice of Education as found in Imaginative Literature of the Nineteenth Century and After* (University of London Archives: 1920), p. 60.

<sup>67</sup> Bradley, p. 110-11 and p. 116-7.

that the classics should be taught<sup>68</sup>, but it is fitting that Eliot and Joyce whose work is so indebted to European literature should have been indirectly influenced by continental ideas of education, whether through reading Arnold or by learning within continental frameworks. A regard for the sixteenth-century Parisian schools' spirit of orderliness can be seen in the rigorous structuring of the *Ratio*, which has a parodic echo in the playfulness of Joyce's structures, for instance in such moments as the 'Ithaca' episode analysed later. Students would not move up grades until a set average had been attained. Higher ranking subjects required preparatory study in other disciplines first. Theology required not just Latin and Greek, but also, principally, Hebrew and Aramaic. Etymological understanding of the source text, and an appreciation of the way in which translations cast different lights on it, are deemed necessary in the tradition in which Joyce was educated and, as a languages teacher himself, Joyce was engaged in these considerations professionally: using etymology to enliven the narrative style is a noticeable feature of Joyce's methodology.

Work was to be graded and corrected, and teachers were told to 'correct everything', meaning that the focus was on the elimination of error more than the positive development of specific skills articulated in assessment objectives. The teaching methods are implicit within the description of teacher training:

Teachers... will be trained by taking turns in giving lessons, dictating, writing, correcting, and performing the other duties of a good teacher.<sup>69</sup>

'Dictation' and 'writing' suggests that the copying of authoritative text was deemed to be a normal part of the educative process; yet adopting the voice of another in one's own writing is essential preparation for parody. 'Giving lessons' implies that the lesson was a gift offered by the teacher rather than a process participated in by the student. The independent learning of Joyce, and the self-education programmes and publications of the turn of the century embody a different, more Godwinian ethos, which Joyce's oeuvre appears to reflect, encourage and model.

The Jesuit *Ratio* also foregrounds the importance of literary study. The library is to be continually expanded from revenue produced by the household buildings:

So that Jesuits have a sufficient supply of books, he should set apart for the expansion of the library holdings some annual revenue either from the properties of the college itself or from elsewhere. It should not be permissible to switch this revenue over to other uses for any reason.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Arnold, M., 'The Popular Education of France' in Keating, P. J. (ed.), *Culture and Anarchy and Other Selected Prose*, p. 93.

<sup>69</sup> Pavur, p. 33.

<sup>70</sup> Pavur, p. 25.

The primacy of the library stock in the household expenditure is therefore evident. Jesuits esteem the things of the mind above more practical concerns, even to the detriment of other expenses. The fact that a Jesuit education was also a thoroughly literary education is evident from the description of the courses and their requirements:

Although the time period for the study of the humanities and rhetoric cannot be defined, and it belongs to the superior to judge how much time is good for each one to spend in these literary studies, he should nevertheless not send Jesuits to philosophy before they have spent two years on rhetoric...<sup>71</sup>

Humanities and rhetoric are not time limited; Joyce's education is based on a document that prioritises understanding in these subjects over practical considerations. That rhetoric should be seen as fundamental to a study of philosophy may signify the importance the Jesuits attach to language in the creation of meaning and in the channelling of thought. The Jesuits pre-empt Vygotsky's educational theories in which the role of language is second only to the role of social context in intellectual development:

An individual – the same also applies to a group, for that matter – who has mastered written language is not just one who also possesses a technical skill. Written language and book-based culture have a profound impact on the ways in which perception, memory and thought function. This is because written language contains within itself a model for the analysis of reality (treatment in discrete units, linearity and temporality in the organisation of thoughts, loss of the sense of totality, etc.) and psychological techniques including, in particular, an enhanced power of memory that alters the relationship between memory and thought.<sup>72</sup>

If Joyce's fascination with the relationship between words and the creation of meaning has a foundation, it may be the order's educational ethos. That he should seek to explode the 'linearity and temporality' of everyday expression is of a piece with his Aquinas-inspired desire to render his objects more vividly by parodying or bypassing entirely the deadening, emptying effects of clichés<sup>73</sup>, whether English or Gaelic. Where *Portrait* conveys the expository effectiveness of his Jesuit teaching, *Ulysses* and, more overtly, *Finnegans Wake* seek to recapture some of that sense of 'totality'. But in all three cases, 'the medium is the message'<sup>74</sup>. The idea of primacy of linguistic and literary studies in Jesuit education is given further credence by the obligations placed on the rector for teacher training:

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p.14.

<sup>72</sup> Ivic, I., 'Lev S. Vygotsky (1896 – 1934)', in *Prospects: the quarterly review of comparative education*, Vol. 24, No. 3/4 (1994), 471-485.

<sup>73</sup> Shklovsky, V., *Art as Technique* in Rivkin, J. & Ryan, M. (eds.), *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p.6.

He should prepare as many career teachers of grammar and rhetoric as he can.

Accept some into the society only on condition that they are willing to dedicate their lives under holy obedience to this teaching of language and literary studies.<sup>75</sup>

For teachers and students, linguistic and literary training is deemed essential to intellectual training; it underpins theology, philosophy, and other humanities. Since the *Ratio* is a document which antedates the use of English as the *lingua franca* in British scholarly communities, and also the standardisation of spelling and grammar from the eighteenth century onwards, it is evident that the significance of this emphasis on language cannot be reduced down to a utilitarian acknowledgement of the importance of basic spelling and grammar in the Irish job market (which had opened up to middle-class Catholics in Ireland in the generation preceding James Joyce's). Joyce was taught in communities inspired by a love of words as well as a love of the Word. Compounding the stress which is laid on the Jesuit teacher to instil literary dexterity in his classes, the rector's obligations also include the following:

He should so arrange and regulate the rest of his work that he can foster and promote all the literary exercises.<sup>76</sup>

Costello agrees that the importance of literary study in Jesuit schools would have had an effect on the writer as he grew up:

The essential nature of Jesuit education, aside from its system, was its literary nature; it depended on reading and translation from Latin and Greek into English and vice versa. From his earliest days literature became for Joyce the basis of everything. And though his education was still only in its early stages when he left Clongowes – and probably had barely touched upon the elementary foundations of English and Latin – an attitude of mind had been laid.<sup>77</sup>

### The Ratio and the Filtering of the Canon

In 1889 Joyce was given four strikes of the cane for 'vulgar language'.<sup>78</sup> Joyce's Jesuit education unsurprisingly involved a strict ban on any kind of vulgarity; he responded by writing an educative text full of it. The banning of the publication of *Ulysses* in *The Little Review* in February 1921, *The Egoist* in October 1922 and January 1923, necessitated the publication of the novel first by Sylvia Beach in Paris in February 1922; charges of obscenity blocked publication in America until the Random House edition of 1934, and in Britain until the Bodley Head edition of 1936.<sup>79</sup> According to

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<sup>75</sup> Pavur, p.15.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>77</sup> Costello, *James Joyce: The Years of Growth* (London: Kyle Cathie, 1992), p. 84.

<sup>78</sup> Bradley, p. 38.

<sup>79</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, (London: Penguin, 1992), p. vi: Front matter supplied by D. Kiberd (ed.).

the *Ratio*, the class texts should be free from any vulgarity or unseemliness, to the extent that works that could not be edited were jettisoned entirely:

Taking it as a matter of the greatest importance, he should with all vigilance and caution see to it that in our schools we avoid entirely the books of poets or whatever material can injure moral integrity and good character, unless they have first been expurgated of unseemly language and subject matter; otherwise, if they cannot be expurgated, as Terence cannot, it is better that they not be read, so that the nature of the material does not damage anyone's innocence.<sup>80</sup>

The English public school, Westminster, at the time when Virginia Woolf's brother Adrian attended, had Terence on its reading list for the 'Classical Side'<sup>81</sup>, so there was a degree of prudery in the Jesuit curriculum which was not so evident in the public school ethos, so long as the text had the kudos of being classical. Joyce's library borrowing in his senior year at Belvedere worked around these curricular restrictions: the librarian at Chapel Street Library warned his unconcerned father that he was reading 'dangerous books'.<sup>82</sup> An oblique allusion to Terence in the library episode of *Ulysses*<sup>83</sup> may be a reference to Joyce's means of circumventing the restrictions of the curriculum. The bowdlerising principle of the *Ratio* was at work in the choice of texts made by the staff at the Jesuit institutions of Belvedere and Clongowes. The wildness and brutality of classical mythology was tamed by the popular 'Peter Parley' (the pseudonym of the American Samuel Griswold Goodrich), whose *Tales about the Mythology of Greece and Rome* ranks the gods, demi-gods and important characters, dividing them into different sections, starting with Jupiter, then Apollo, and so on, providing sets of short, numbered paragraphs on each; a neat classical analogue for the hierarchical monastic order and its *Ratio*. Joyce's first formal introduction to the story of Ulysses was in Charles Lamb's *The Adventures of Ulysses*<sup>84</sup> for the school Intermediate exam in 1894; Joyce's use of a 'schema' to underpin his narrative in *Ulysses* has its roots in a publication which is neither elitist nor obscure, but popular and widely available: Lamb's work had been in circulation since 1808.

The aim of both 'Parley' and Lamb was to make the classics, history, geography, Shakespeare cleaner and more accessible to a wider variety of readers. The preface to *Tales about the Mythology of Greece and Rome* has this:

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>81</sup> Westminster School Archives: 1896-1902.

<sup>82</sup> Ellmann, p. 53.

<sup>83</sup> Gifford, D., *Ulysses Annotated* (London: University of California Press, 1988), p. 244.

<sup>84</sup> Kenner, H., 'Homer's Sticks and Stones' in *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (1969), 285-298.

But though my principal design has been to make it agreeable and useful to young people... yet have I still endeavoured to render it acceptable for general use. ... Much that is in mythology requires judicious modification before it can, with propriety, be presented to youth.<sup>85</sup>

And *The Adventures of Ulysses* says:

By avoiding the prolixity which marks the speeches and the descriptions in Homer, I have gained a rapidity to the narration, which I hope will make it more attractive, and give it more the air of a romance to young readers.<sup>86</sup>

The significance of Lamb's work to Joyce has been discussed by Litz<sup>87</sup>, Kenner and others. Carey's notion of a wilful obscurity among the modernists is challenged by the popularity of Lamb, and the frame of reference is not as obscure as might be believed by some critics whose reading misses accessible re-workings of the classics, such as the *Odyssey* of Butcher and Lang<sup>88</sup> which Joyce's brother, Stanislaus, and Hugh Kenner agree he probably used<sup>89</sup> when writing the novel. In a letter to his aunt about *Ulysses*, Joyce recommended she read Lamb's text.<sup>90</sup> Joyce himself could not read Homer's original Greek (he studied Latin but not Greek at school<sup>91</sup>) and, being reliant on a translation himself, was not excluding readers by referring to the classics but relying rather on the evident popularity the stories of the *Odyssey* amongst the reading public.

The selection of school poetry was also influential. T. W. Lyster's anthology, *Select Poetry for Young Students*, included Byron, Browning, Southey and Wordsworth but not Tennyson<sup>92</sup>, the most recent poet laureate before Alfred Austin. Costello suggests that contemporary perceptions of Tennyson as 'feminine', mean that Stephen's fight with Heron in *Portrait* over who is the better poet, casts him as a student whose reading is in tune with contemporary taste; far from being an iconoclastic<sup>93</sup> reader, Stephen's literary tastes reflect those of the literary establishment.<sup>94</sup> This may be explained by the ubiquity of Tennyson in English courses: in fact, the 1898 exam uses Tennyson as an unnamed stimulus text for creative writing<sup>95</sup>. Indeed, in the years when *Portrait* was being serialised in *The Egoist*, Byron seems to be the subject of modernist reassessment, appearing as the subject of a leading article by

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<sup>85</sup> Parley, P. (pseud.), *Tales about the Mythology of Greece and Rome* (Dublin: Tegg & Co., 1839), p. iii-iv.

<sup>86</sup> Lamb, C., Introduction to 1808 edition, *The Adventures of Ulysses* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1848), p. iii.

<sup>87</sup> Litz, A. W., *The Art of James Joyce: Method and Design in 'Ulysses' and 'Finnegans Wake'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964).

<sup>88</sup> Butcher, S., & Lang, A., *The Odyssey of Homer – Done Into English Prose* (New York: Macmillan, 1906).

<sup>89</sup> Kenner, H., 'Homer's Sticks and Stones' in *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (1969), 285-298.

<sup>90</sup> Gilbert, S. (ed.), *Letters of James Joyce*, Vol. I (New York: Viking, 1957), p. 193.

<sup>91</sup> Bradley, p. 116-7.

<sup>92</sup> Lyster, T. W. (ed.), *Select Poetry for Young Students* (Dublin: Brown & Nolan, 1893).

<sup>93</sup> Morton, J., *Tennyson Among the Novelists* (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 48.

<sup>94</sup> Costello, P., p. 132.

<sup>95</sup> Bradley, p. 139.



Leonard Compton-Rickett in 1914, and with nine other references in other articles to the end of 1915.<sup>96</sup> Including such writers as Byron and Wordsworth, the set text for the end-of-year exams provided the student Joyce with Romantic depictions of solitude, and idealised notions of poet-as-prophet, and indeed a satirical voice (exemplified in *Don Juan*) at a formative stage in his intellectual development. The movement of the narrative of *Portrait* from the third person to the first supports the idea that the hero of the novel is one who is in some ways sincerely and in other ways ironically cast, self-styled, in the Romantic mode.

## Examinations

### *Intermediate Examination (1894)*

The Intermediate Examination paper found by Bradley would not in itself have encouraged Joyce to explore these ideas on Byron. The promising ‘why’ question on ‘The Gladiator’ below seems only to ask the student to identify the speaker’s feelings about the Dacian gladiator’s death, which is solely a source of amusement to the Romans, whose city is to be sacked by the Goths almost as a mark of divine retribution. The questions were mostly factual, narrative and very low down Bloom’s taxonomy of thought<sup>97</sup>. Bradley reproduces the following elements of the English paper of the 1894 Intermediate Exam.

[Poetry Section]

Why does Byron call on the Goths to arise and glut their ire? [On ‘The Gladiator’ in ‘Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage’.]

[On Lamb’s *The Adventures of Ulysses*]

1. Mention the circumstances in which Ulysses revealed his name to Alcinous, and state the country of which he was in search.
2. Give a brief outline of the means adopted by Ulysses and his companions to escape from the cave of the Cyclops.
3. Indicate the pronunciation of the following proper names by marking the long vowels thus – , and the short ones thus ˘: Cocytus, Penelope, Bootes, Menelaus, Alcinous, Cythera.
4. Mention a peculiar prejudice of the Phaeacians about whips [*sic* – probably ‘ships’], and the incident from which it arose.

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<sup>96</sup> *The Egoist*, 1914: Vol. 1, Nos. 1, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16; 1915: Vol. 2, Nos. 1, 3, 7.

<sup>97</sup> Krathwohl, D., ‘A Revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy: An Overview’, in *Theory into Practice*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (2002), 212ff.

5. In what circumstances did Ulysses exact an oath from his companions, and what was its nature?<sup>98</sup>

The details of the story of Lamb's version of the *Odyssey* recall the associated parodies in *Ulysses*: the first question of Joyce's exam gives us the last episode of the Bloom-Dedalus narrative, 'Ithaca', whose structure is exactly that of a comprehension paper such as this; the second question resonates with the moment in which the sun blinds the drunken racist citizen as he throws the tin after a retreating Bloom. Indeed, each of these questions involves paraphrasing a story, so that even if the questions may not place highly on Bloom's taxonomy, they nevertheless generate an interest in the interconnectedness of diverse strands of narrative: the Phaeacians' prejudice (Q4) against lending their fabled ships to strangers springs from the petrification of the sailors by Neptune for helping Odysseus return to Ithaca (Q1), on whom he had sworn vengeance after he blinded his son Polyphemus, the cyclops (Q2); Odysseus is cast ashore alone at Phaeacia because of the breaking of an oath (Q5) not to eat Apollo's cattle on Circe's island; Odysseus tells the Phaeacian king Alcinous his name (Q1) when a bard's stories of the Trojan war so move him that he can no longer contain his emotion. The relatedness of the questions becomes apparent when explored, which is structurally imitated in Joyce's technique of storytelling through symbolism and allusion.

### *Senior Grade Exams (1898)*

Bradley also provides some details of Joyce's Senior Grade exams from 1898. In his paper on the history of English literature to 1832 there is the question:

Point out some features common to the genius of Cowper, Crabbe, and Burns; or of Byron, Keats, and Shelley.<sup>99</sup>

The repetition of Byron across the Intermediate and Senior exams confirms that Stephen is defending a staple of the curriculum in his fight with Heron. Bloom's Byronic handsomeness is remembered by Molly in the 'Penelope' episode, prompted by her recollection that he gave her a book of Byron's poems to make up with her after an argument.<sup>100</sup> Bloom is a reader, often remembering and misremembering literary fragments: the 'schoolpoem' about the last pagan king of Ireland, 'The Burial of King Cormac' by Ferguson<sup>101</sup>; the ghost's words from *Hamlet*<sup>102</sup> poignantly reminding the reader of Bloom's lost son; the 'Eulogy in the country churchyard,'<sup>103</sup> he remembers at Paddy Dignam's funeral, and he is right that Gray eulogises the poor and the obscure, and the allusion is thoroughly relevant in its context, even if

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<sup>98</sup> Bradley, p. 108-109.

<sup>99</sup> Bradley, p. 139.

<sup>100</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, p. 878-9.

<sup>101</sup> Creasy, M., 'Error and Education in *Ulysses*', in Creasy, M. (ed.), *Errears and Erroriboose: Joyce and Error* (New York: Rodopi, 2011), p. 66.

<sup>102</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, p. 192.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

he misattributes it to Wordsworth or Campbell. The fact that Gray, Wordsworth and Ferguson are all present in Lyster's *Select Poetry* highlights that Joyce uses his own educational experience to draw Bloom as well as Stephen, highlighting to the reader the existence of a common store of literary reference engendered by the Intermediate Education Act of 1878,<sup>104</sup> which gave Lyster's anthology primacy in the English curriculum.

A comparison of the 1894 Intermediate and the 1898 Senior Grade exams indicates a significant step up Bloom's taxonomy. Joyce was no longer identifying narrative details in questions beginning 'Mention', 'Give a brief outline...' and 'Indicate'. Even though 'Point out...' here may not seem to encourage high-order thinking, the breadth of the word 'genius' invites an assessment of the artistry, the context and the artists' purposes. Synthesis, evaluation, analysis were all required in the response. Joyce was comparing and evaluating the stylistics of poets of the same movements, the Romantics and their Eighteenth Century forebears, in much the same way that candidates for synoptic A-Level units do today.<sup>105</sup> The choice might imply either, that Joyce was prepared for both questions in which case the teacher would have been able to make use of the contrast in the stylistic features of the groups to clarify the features of both by showing their difference (the concept of 'difference' being a key component in Joyce's learning as presented in *Portrait*), or that the school or the teacher made a decision about which genre to teach and selected Romanticism.

Joyce would have spent at least an hour on Composition (worth 250 marks out of 1200) on one of the following subjects:

- a) The desirability of making hand and eye training an ordinary branch of school education.
- b) 'Men may rise on stepping-stones/ Of their dead selves, to higher things.'
- c) The uses and abuses of Satire.
- d) A Liberal Education.<sup>106</sup>

Even though his other exam results were the lowest he had ever achieved (with an overall score of 650/1200 in English), Joyce still managed to win a £4 prize for this essay: Professor Magennis, an examiner, thought it publishable.<sup>107</sup> Bradley suggests Joyce may have answered on the fourth topic given his enduring regard for Newman which, Ellmann says, along with his love of Byron, lasted from

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<sup>104</sup> Creasy, M., p. 66.

<sup>105</sup> For instance, an exemplar question from the OCR specification for English Literature A Level reads: 'Dystopian literature is often characterised by its active engagement with social and political issues.' By comparing *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Road*, say how far you agree.'

<sup>106</sup> Bradley, p. 139.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

school throughout his life.<sup>108</sup> This suggests that Joyce wrote very perceptively on the topic of education. Indeed, the composition choices, with the exception of the satire question (which itself might have brought back recent memories of Joyce's parody of the rector's mannerisms as 'Dr Grimstone'<sup>109</sup> in the school performance of *Vice Versa*), all relate to education.

### George Dempsey

George Dempsey's classes – which included history and geography as well as English – were, according to Joyce's classmates, inspirational. On a visit to the school fifteen years after Joyce's essay 'heresy' was called out by Dempsey, school inspectors said he included too many definitions, dates and facts, calling his style 'coaching' rather than teaching, focused on achieving excellent examination results but not generating a real love of literature.<sup>110</sup> The breadth of factual recall expected of the students in assessments may account for these teaching methods; furthermore, Dempsey's methods may account for the impressive frame of reference of Joyce's work. If an idea of Mr Dempsey's lessons is assembled from a combination of the words of the inspector, the reflections of past pupils, and the nature of the exam, we get a picture of a very well-rounded education, far from the popular caricature of Catholic and turn-of-the-century public schooling, and rather different from the somewhat oppressive presentation of the experience in *Portrait*. Gorman, Ellmann, Bowker, and other biographers have noted the influence of Dempsey – fictionalised as 'Mr Tate' in *Portrait* – who not only encouraged and inspired him in his assignments, often selecting his work for reading out to the class to model good writing to them, but who also kept in touch when Joyce had become a teacher himself and, in the last two years of his life (1922-24), sent Joyce reference books and other materials as inspiration for *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>111</sup> Dempsey was one of the highest paid members of staff at Clongowes at £12 per annum, and one of the best connected: he was a reader for a Dublin publisher, and maintained a number of literary connections in England.<sup>112</sup> The fact that Joyce's main concern each week was the composition of Dempsey's essay, which would involve putting forward an opinion in a persuasive and eloquent style, indicates that creativity, and the honest development of a point of view were a crucial part of Joyce's curriculum. Joyce was from the outset an entertaining writer; when he read his compositions in class, as he was frequently called upon to do, his teacher, 'Dempsey would literally wriggle and chuckle with delight'<sup>113</sup>; from a photograph of the class room and the recollection of various pupils it seems that Joyce would have been very close to his teacher at the front of the class because of his short-sightedness. Joyce sat on the far left of the front row by the window and the teacher's desk, and Dempsey sat in a chair in front of the teacher's desk. Dempsey could have been sitting just in front of Joyce when he read

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<sup>108</sup> Ellmann, p. 39-40.

<sup>109</sup> Costello, p. 144.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p.105.

<sup>111</sup> Sullivan, K., *Joyce among the Jesuits* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 86.

<sup>112</sup> Bowker, G., *James Joyce: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2012), p. 46.

<sup>113</sup> Scholes, R. & Kain, R. (eds.) *The Workshop of Dedalus: James Joyce and the Raw Materials for 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man'* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1965), p.140.

his early work. The atmosphere of the classes described by Arthur Cox would have been even more pronounced for James:

Year after year examination results testified to his professional capacity; no less frequently his past pupils showed in some better way their affection and esteem. History, and particularly Irish history, he made a thing of life and actuality; Literature ceased to be a question of books and broadened out to meet the confines of thought and experience; geography became converted from a dull affair of names and lists into what it really is, the science of all peoples and of the world. He was a great educator, and approached more nearly to the best ideal of the University professor than the mere school teacher.<sup>114</sup>

### Expanding horizons and university learning

It is more difficult to characterise the nature of the influence of Joyce's university education on his writing because Joyce did not attend many lectures<sup>115</sup>. His friend C. P. Curran outlines some of his university reading and interests when studying for his modern literature degree, which required two foreign languages. Curran feels that Joyce might have felt there was more scope for exploration in independent reading, since English had been very ably taught at Belvedere and the degree course was cautious (stopping at the Romantics)<sup>116</sup>, and also because Joyce's six-year school study of Italian and French made the course quite easy for him.<sup>117</sup> This finds expression in *Stephen Hero*:

Stephen came seldom to lectures, prepared nothing and absented himself from term examinations ... it was supposed probable that he represented really the artistic type and that he was, after the fashion of that little known tribe, educating himself.<sup>118</sup>

This may also be due to a lack of regard for the institution itself. Ellmann suggests that when Joyce attended UCD, it was still 'struggling for distinction'<sup>119</sup>, but Sullivan goes further. He presents Joyce's university course as beneath his intellectual capacity, partly on the basis that the intake of the new UCD was rather broader than for other universities, and partly on the basis that some of the texts he was examined on were those he had studied in school. For Matriculation in 1899, in an English examination, he wrote on grammar, *Ivanhoe*, Book 1 of *Paradise Lost* and 'Lycidas'; Sullivan deems this absurd because he had already studied 'Lycidas' at school, as well as Milton's *Il Penseroso* and *L'Allegro*. But Joyce would have been prepared for his Matriculation exam at Belvedere, and Dempsey was as we have seen a very effective teacher. Nor should these texts be underrated: even the study of *Ivanhoe* could

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<sup>114</sup> Bradley, p. 105.

<sup>115</sup> Ellmann, R., p. 104.

<sup>116</sup> Curran, C., *James Joyce Remembered* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p.8-9.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>118</sup> Joyce, J., *Stephen Hero* (London: Paladin, 1991), p. 43.

<sup>119</sup> Ellmann, R., p. 47.

have sown the playful allusions to gothic romance and Scott in *Portrait*<sup>120</sup>, and the list of Celtic heroes to which the cyclops/ citizen is mockingly compared in *Ulysses*.<sup>121</sup> In Latin, Joyce produced a prize-winning response to Book XIV of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* which contains the stories of Circe and Scylla he would later use in *Ulysses*. Joyce may have found the repetition more welcome than Sullivan and Curran claim: Joyce would first have read Shakespeare at Clongowes and for his Intermediates in Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* and would have returned to the plays with an understanding of rhetoric and context.

While Sullivan denigrates provision at University College Dublin, the numbers had risen since the university was given to the Jesuits in 1880s, and it had been given its charter as the Catholic university that Newman had founded in 1854.<sup>122</sup> However, despite Newman's ethos holding knowledge as an end in itself, according to Costello, UCD was 'a college heady with ambition and rising fervour in which the arts and literature came second to the practical affairs of man and nation'<sup>123</sup>. This emerges in Stephen's discussion with fellow student, Davin, after the physics lecture in *Portrait*:

–When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets.

Davin knocked the ashes from his pipe.

– Too deep for me, Stevie, he said. But a man's country comes first. Ireland first, Stevie. You can be a poet or mystic after.<sup>124</sup>

Nationalism in formal education is implicitly criticised since Davin deems a straightforward metaphor 'too deep for me'. The Yeatsian revivalism of Davin prevents him from seeing Stephen's point, just as the citizen in the 'Cyclops' episode is symbolically 'one-eyed' in his nationalism.<sup>125</sup> Newman's formation of a catholic university in Dublin was not envisaged as a means to nationalist ends but as an end in itself for individual flourishing, distinct from the group-based competitive house and college systems of education in the English system.

## Part Two: Education in the work of James Joyce

### A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

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<sup>120</sup> Joyce, J., *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 247.

<sup>121</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, p. 383.

<sup>122</sup> Costello, p. 158

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158-9.

<sup>124</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 220.

<sup>125</sup> Blamires, H. (ed.), *The New Bloomsday Book* (London: Methuen, 1996), p. 118.

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* stands apart from popular school fiction of the period due, in large part, to its experimental narrative style of free indirect speech which gives voice to different incarnations of Stephen Dedalus from ‘Baby Tuckoo’ all the way through to the ‘artist’ at the end. *Schoolboys Three*, a mainstream novel with a conventional narrative style about life at Joyce’s own school, Clongowes Wood, had already been written in 1895 by W. P. Kelly.<sup>126</sup>

The impact of Joyce’s Jesuit education can be felt as deeply as the grammar of Stephen’s earliest utterances. *Portrait* begins by revolving around ideas of difference and distinction, reflecting the binary logic by which we learn to analyse, categorise and prioritise: Joyce said he had learned from the Jesuits ‘how to order and to judge’<sup>127</sup>. This thesis does not go so far as to work from the premise that logic itself is the oppressive machinery of an authoritarian regime, but rather the expression of natural human mental processes. Neither does this thesis accept exactly the ranking of different classifications of specific kinds of thought, which has been a point of contention in educationalist literature since Bloom’s *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* in 1956 and before: Stephen’s very first utterances seem to jump between ‘knowledge’ and ‘analysis’, Bloom’s classifications one and four respectively, indicating that at least for Stephen the process of discerning what something is, is inherently bound up with analysing its context to figure out what it is not. His later definition of aesthetic beauty involves precisely the same process:

In order to see that basket, said Stephen, your mind first of all separates the basket from the rest of the whole visible universe which is not the basket. The first phase of apprehension is a bounding line drawn about the object to be apprehended.<sup>128</sup>

This implies that for Stephen the very first stage in being an artist depends on a synthesis of two distinct levels of the taxonomy of thought; the ability ‘to order and to judge’ being the main skill set that Joyce said he acquired from the Jesuits.

The presentation of education from a stylistic perspective in *Portrait* is concerned with ideas of difference and distinction in terms of self-knowledge, in terms of hierarchy and merit, and in terms of the patterns of logical thought. The word ‘different’ itself recurs with such marked regularity in the opening pages of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* that one cannot fail to notice the significance of this thread in the novel’s overall pattern. One reads, first,

The Vances lived at number seven. They had a different father and mother.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Costello, p. 75.

<sup>127</sup> Bradley, Foreword: Ellmann.

<sup>128</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 230.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

The Vances are different not only insofar as they live elsewhere and have a different name, they are also protestants and, in real life, Dante Conway had highlighted for Joyce their difference by, albeit completely ineffectually, informing him that he would go to hell if he played with them.<sup>130</sup>

Then there is:

All the boys seemed to him very strange. They had all fathers and mothers and different clothes and voices.<sup>131</sup>

Joyce was different from the other pupils both in terms of his age – he boarded at Clongowes Wood College in the infirmary with a nurse initially because he was so young, aged just ‘half past six’ as he put it on arrival – and also in terms of his background. As Sullivan notes in *Joyce among the Jesuits*, ‘A few [pupils’ parents] were of the gentry ... generally they were the sons of well-placed civil servants, of well-to-do merchants and businessmen, or of a new professional class which, after Catholic Emancipation, began gradually to emerge into Irish public life’<sup>132</sup>. In fact, Stephen quickly learns to lie about his background in conversation with the other boys: ‘Nasty Roche had asked: - What is your father? Stephen had answered: - A gentleman.’<sup>133</sup> John Joyce was at the time a tax-gatherer, soon to be pensioned off at the age of 42.<sup>134</sup> He had no fixed profession, not having completed his medical degree, nor had he been able to retain his position as secretary in a distilling company, or his position as secretary in the United Liberal party, nor make careful use of the money from the many properties he had inherited upon his father’s early death. When asked the same question as a grown man, Joyce simply answered, ‘He was a bankrupt’.<sup>135</sup> And this fact had an effect on Joyce’s education, since he had to leave Clongowes, the school described at the beginning of *Portrait*, because the fees could not be paid. The difference in parentage, then, is a significant one in terms of Joyce’s relationship with education; his experience of the stability common to his upper or middle class peers was very limited. He would not have seen his path into ‘careers in the civil service or the army, in medicine or in law’<sup>136</sup>, or into the priesthood, or even into a more generalised middle-class respectability modelled for him by his father, as would have been the case with most of his classmates. Education, for Joyce, isn’t necessarily for the utilitarian creation of professionals or the Arnoldian moulding of responsible citizens. But ironically, as is the case with many artists, Joyce is now a very profitable part of the Irish tourist industry; he is a valuable establishment commodity, and a regular fixture in courses in English Literature both at universities and in ambitious sixth form classes.

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<sup>130</sup> Ellmann, p. 26.

<sup>131</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 9.

<sup>132</sup> Sullivan, p. 21.

<sup>133</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 5.

<sup>134</sup> Ellmann, p. 34.

<sup>135</sup> Ellmann, p. 22.

<sup>136</sup> Sullivan, p. 22.



Stephen learns geography in a similar way:

He opened the geography to study the lesson; but he could not learn the names of places in America. Still they were all different places that had those different names. They were all in different countries and the countries were in continents and the continents were in the world and the world was in the universe.<sup>137</sup>

Stephen is able to absorb the hierarchy of the categories before the detail of the individual places. He has a more holistic approach to learning than the more earth-bound serialistic learners in his classroom; he establishes the principle first, the broad distinctions, the Russian doll concept of widening geographical categories, before narrowing back down again to the fine detail of the place names. But what is interesting is the way he builds up to the largest possible picture first; from an educational perspective, he would be said to have given a broadly *serialistic* run-up to a more *holistic* perspective<sup>138</sup>, as if the principle of ‘one thing within another’ is somehow already there as an instinctive and innate framework for situating the things he sees and the things he has to imagine. This challenges the notion that learning styles occupy a binary dialectic in which the learner is either serialistic in their comprehension style or holistic, and subtly corroborates Malcik’s view that both are in some ways part of the process for all learners.

As Mezey points out, the fly-leaf of Stephen’s geography book skips over Great Britain, and moves from Ireland to Europe:

Had it been worded accurately, Stephen’s list would stand as an artefact of English colonial domination.... The omission of Great Britain confounds not only this geographical conception, but also the underlying history of Ireland as a British colony. Thus, the leap from Ireland to Europe calls attention to competing ways of representing Ireland as either a nation or a colony, as well as to the means of producing and reinforcing such representations in Stephen’s early Jesuit education. As a result, Stephen’s list emerges as the outcome of conflicting educational priorities. The contested territory involves two modes of curricular and political organisation – geographical and historical; British educational policy favoured their separation, while Joyce forces our attention back towards their interdependency.<sup>139</sup>

The ‘inaccuracy’ of the fly-leaf is in a sense only as inaccurate as a colonial subject in West Bengal writing ‘India, Asia’ rather than ‘India, British Empire, Asia’; Stephen, having given himself the task of increasing the category headings of each geographical label logically moves from Ireland to Europe,

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<sup>137</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 12.

<sup>138</sup> Malcik, M. & Miklosikova, M., ‘Holistic and Serialistic Thinking as a Factor Influencing Text Comprehension and Strategy for Dealing with Tasks’, in *Proceedings of INTED 2016 Conference, Valencia, Spain, 2897 - 2902*.

<sup>139</sup> Mezey, J. H., ‘Ireland, Europe, The World, The Universe’ in Levitt, M. (ed.), *Joyce and the Joyceans* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), p. 135.

from country to continent. The fact that the logic itself misses out the ‘proprietary’ colonial label of the United Kingdom actually shames the entire project in a beautifully gentle way; the errant ideological framework of colonial ownership does not intrude to clutter the logical path – it does not naturally occur within the logic of the progression – so Stephen steps over it, unaware of having done so; whether Joyce expects the reader to notice this is less clear. His Jesuit education does not stoop to pass comment, and so Joyce’s writing is marked by, ‘his pedantry, his perpetual seeking after first principles, his implicit sense of superiority that will not explain and cannot apologise’<sup>140</sup>. Indeed, his father’s favour is the very reason for his having been educated by the Jesuits in the first place, and the sense of distinction and superiority Sullivan remarks upon could have been reinforced by his father’s belittling of his brother Stanislaus, the ‘thickheaded ruffian’ named Maurice in *Portrait*.

Finally, one reads,

But though there were different names for God in all the different languages in the world and God understood what all the people who prayed had said in their different languages still God remained always the same God and God’s real name was God.<sup>141</sup>

Amongst all the jostling differences, Stephen’s mind rests with the concept of a God who can comprehend and countenance all differences and who is always the same despite linguistic boundaries. God provides Stephen with an organising, philosophical backboard against which to bounce all his thoughts. Joyce’s use of free indirect speech at the end of the sentence in ‘and God’s real name was God’ helps to gently mock the force or desperation of the assertion, whether from a Jesuit perspective or a sceptical one. The joco-seriousness of Joyce here is really the only valid response to the semi-serious British imperial conception of God as Anglophone. A cultural and political difference between Joyce and his contemporaries’ presentation of education is the fact that the educational world described is Irish and Jesuit, rather than Anglican and English. The difference is not as pronounced as it might have been. As Kevin Sullivan pointed out in *Joyce among the Jesuits*, and as various others have emphasised since, a Jesuit education at this time was a preparation for establishment careers<sup>142</sup> and ‘by the eighties [Clongowes Wood College] was ... certainly the most fashionable Catholic school in Ireland’<sup>143</sup>. But this does not mean that it is identical to an English public school education. Indeed, in one key respect, the very similarity of Joyce’s Jesuit education to public school education could be said to account for their difference. The very same collegiate sense of a distinctive heritage and identity which characterises the post-Arnoldian world of the early twentieth-century English public school is

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<sup>140</sup> Sullivan, p.10

<sup>141</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 13.

<sup>142</sup> Sullivan, p. 21.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

transposed into an alternative culture. Joyce's school is the Catholic, Celtic, anti-Anglo-Saxon and anti-Protestant shadow of the English public school; a powerfully mimetic and subversive double.

All this helps to convey two things. It depicts the young Stephen's preoccupation with his own sense of difference from other pupils and neighbours, their different mannerisms, parents, appearances, clothes, voices, etc., preparing the reader for the artist's movement towards isolation, alienation and self-sufficiency later in the novel. Significantly it also conveys the way by which Stephen as a scholar learned anything in the first place. Opposites continually emerge to draw clear lines of definition around people, places and ideas. There are white and red roses, but not green, as his babyish rendering of his father's song suggested ("O, the green wothe botheth"). There is a 'decent' fellow of a prefect, and 'mean' fellow called Wells. There are green and purple backs to Dante's brushes, at least until she tears off the green velvet when it emerges that Parnell was, in her words, 'a bad man'<sup>144</sup>. There are many antonyms. There are right and wrong, ill and well, hot and cold. There are different 'lines' for different ages at school. There is everything in the universe, and nothing outside it, with, Stephen posits, a thin line between to mark the boundary:

What was after the universe? Nothing. But was there anything round the universe to show where it stopped before the nothing place began? It could not be a wall but there could be a thin thin line there all round everything.<sup>145</sup>

When Stephen's head starts to reel from contemplating the edge of the universe, he suggests a line to rule off the 'everything' part of the page from the 'nothing' part, and he then moves on to another kind of binary – politics – wondering whether Dante or his father is right, reducing their partisan standpoints to colours, as if one could be innately superior to another, like the colour of the grass or the colour of the evening sky:

He wondered which was right, to be for the green or for the maroon... There were two sides in it: Dante was on one side and his father and Mr Casey were on the other side but his mother and uncle Charles were on no side.<sup>146</sup>

Joyce learned from the Jesuits to edge things round, and thereby lend shading and perspective to life in all its messiness and disarray. At the beginning of the novel the grammar almost strains under the sheer weight of these binary distinctions (my family/ their family; everything/ nothing; green/ purple; their voice/ my voice, etc.), bundled together as they are in sentences heaped high with conjunctions pulling them all together again, showing the struggle of learning through the syntax itself, with absorption and categorisation and prioritisation and synthesis all happening at once. Later on in

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<sup>144</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 13.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

the novel, Stephen defines beauty for a fervently intrigued but impatient Lynch, and having said that beauty has three qualities – wholeness, harmony and radiance – he talks about how apprehending wholeness involves ‘a bounding line drawn about the object to be apprehended... the esthetic image is first luminously apprehended as selfbounded and selfcontained upon the immeasurable background of space or time which is not it.’<sup>147</sup> Educational theorists such as William Powell have more recently argued that a theory of antonymy is needed to supplement vocabulary teaching based on synonymy, suggesting that Joyce preempts developments in teacher training in his depiction of the learning process.<sup>148</sup> Elizabeth Switaj agrees with Suzette Henke that binary oppositions enable the teachers to ‘turn learning into a war game’ (referring to the ‘York’ and ‘Lancaster’ competition) and adds that Mr Tate is uninterested in Stephen’s reason for his ‘heresy’ in his essay, suggesting that this is an education of indoctrination rather than flourishing.<sup>149</sup> But the understanding of difference is essential not only for workaday logical processes, but for art: it creates movement between the poles. These distinctions are useful for helping things make sense until, half-way through the *Portrait*, Stephen finds his own natural frayed humanity a source of pain because it simply will not resolve itself into the binary root from which all of his Jesuit education stems: the difference between the world of the flesh and the world of the spirit.

‘A restless feeling of guilt would always be present with him: he would confess and repent and be absolved again, fruitlessly.’<sup>150</sup>

‘Some instinct, ... stronger than education or piety quickened within him ... What had come of the pride of his spirit which had always made him conceive of himself as a being apart in every order?’<sup>151</sup>

The scholar here is anything but Nuttall’s paradigm of monk or renegade, bore or madman; he is a man tormented by ideas rather than delusions, more specifically the idea of having to split himself across either of those very dichotomies. He is the victim of his education as well as the beneficiary.

One of the ways in which the language develops is through an involved and sincere religious diction primarily concerned with judgment to a detached and independently creative use of words from that same sphere. Costello suggests that:

For Joyce, God seems always to have worn the visage of anger rather than the face of love. To the end of his life thunder announced the imminence of the end of the world, and the voice of Mrs Conway reading aloud the words of St John the Divine. In later years his Continental

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<sup>147</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 230.

<sup>148</sup> Powell, W., ‘Teaching Vocabulary through Opposition’, *Journal of Reading*, Vol. 29 (1986), 617.

<sup>149</sup> Switaj, E., *James Joyce’s Teaching Life and Methods* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016), p. 68.

<sup>150</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 166.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

friends in Trieste, Zurich and Paris were amazed at what seemed to them Joyce's seemingly irrational fears of thunder and lightning: he would close the shutters and hide in his bed.<sup>152</sup>

The effect of his first teacher, Mrs 'Dante' Conway, is important in considering the work of Joyce from an educational perspective. Stephen's agonised self-repudiations, and his equally tormented moments of self-doubt in *Portrait* may draw their reality and their energy from Joyce's having learned to fear – with abject certainty – the terrors of damnation; and this in turn lends correlative relief ('metallic clearness' is the way his voice has been described in some memoirs) to the ironic tone cast around these fears by the detached and post-theistic artist, the icily deft air-quotes around sincerely felt past traumas. Arguably it is this immanent and transcendent force which lends such fire to the other distinctions Stephen learns in his Jesuit education: it is the difference before and above all differences.

Joyce's free indirect style conveys the moment of Stephen's moral conviction during the words of the preacher, which have also been conveyed in this narrative voice, so that they become less obviously the words of the preacher and sound more like the conscience of the addressee:

Nor was that all. God's justice had still to be vindicated before men: after the particular there still remained the general judgment. The last day had come. Doomsday was at hand.... And lo the supreme judge is coming!<sup>153</sup>

We can feel the impact of his religious education in real time, Stephen's growing sense of unworthiness even before it is directly expressed in the narrative, so that when his feelings of self-loathing are expressed they are of a piece with the teaching he has just received from the preacher:

Every word of it was for him. Against his sin, foul and secret, the whole wrath of God was aimed. The preacher's knife had probed deeply into his diseased conscience and he felt now that his soul was festering in sin. Yes, the preacher was right. God's turn had come. Like a beast in its lair his soul had lain down in its own filth but the blasts of the angel's trumpet had driven him forth from the darkness of sin into the light. The words of doom cried by the angel shattered in an instant his presumptuous peace.<sup>154</sup>

The free indirect method, in which Stephen's rhetoric of shame echoes the violence and hyperbole of the preacher's language, serves many purposes. It creates sympathy for Stephen, whose sexual awakening was previously a matter of 'cold lucid indifference'<sup>155</sup>, and which here becomes a source of tremendous shame. It also casts an ironic mantle around the preacher's words, mocking their hyperbole in the all-too certain echoing of the sermon's message as fact. 'Every word of it was for him':

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<sup>152</sup> Costello, p. 64.

<sup>153</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 122-3.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123-4.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

no, it is directed at all of them to frighten them into piety. 'Against his sin, foul and secret, the whole wrath of God was aimed', which would leave no wrath to be aimed anywhere else. The preacher then becomes likened to an 'angel's trumpet' for having terrified the children. Once the irony is detected, it becomes more noticeable elsewhere; Stephen's 'peace' was not 'presumptuous' at all; it was merely indifferent, and not especially peaceful to boot. Stephen uses words like 'knife', 'beast', 'diseased', 'festering', 'filth', 'blasts', 'driven', 'doom', 'shattered'. The preacher uses words like 'prison', 'falling', 'hurled', 'howling', 'bloodred', 'death', 'blast', 'agony', 'miserable', 'hideous', 'terror' and 'disease'. He then goes on to use, in direct speech, words like 'poison', 'foul', 'guilty', 'degraded', 'sickness', 'striving', 'cruelty', 'despair', 'fallen', 'agony', 'wickedness', 'torment'. After a pause, he then resumes with a depiction of hell, which is as terrifying as it is humorous.

Imagine some foul and putrid corpse has lain rotting and decomposing in the grave, a jellylike mass of liquid corruption. Imagine such a corpse prey to flames, devoured by the fire of burning brimstone and giving off dense choking fumes of nauseous loathsome decomposition. And then imagine this sickening stench, multiplied a millionfold and a millionfold again from the millions upon millions of fetid carcasses massed together in the reeking darkness, a huge and rotting human fungus. Imagine all this and you will have some idea of the horror of the stench of hell.<sup>156</sup>

This is a caricature of a sermon based on the spiritual exercises of St Ignatius, which, according to Ignatius, 'must be adapted to the condition of the one who is to engage in them, that is, to his age, education and talent'<sup>157</sup>: the grotesque details and the heap of adjectives piled against the subject are there to appeal to the imagination of a schoolboy, or could be said to be the translation of the sermon into schoolboys' language. As Bradley points out, Joyce's fictional sermon was based on *Hell Opened to Christians, To Caution Them from Entering It* by Pinamonti, a seventeenth-century Jesuit; some of the words may bear a resemblance to passages which Fr. Cullen had in his possession from *Instructions for Youth in Christian Piety* by Gobinet, but owing to the similarity of hellish tropes it is difficult to establish whether the sermon given at the annual retreat (and Joyce went on five) happened in quite the same way as it does in the centre of *Portrait*.<sup>158</sup> That the language of darkness, revulsion, pain, and loss is driven to such a pitch of intensity over these pages may be taken as indicative of the degree of seriousness attached to mortal sin within a Jesuit educational context, rather than a genuine portrayal of a real sermon; hyperbole becomes, artistically, a rhetorical adjunct of the language of difference and distinction. Hell is so unimaginably different from earth and heaven that the preacher flounders in grotesque sensory detail until the point is lost in a quagmire of nonsense in which one is compelled to

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<sup>156</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 129-130.

<sup>157</sup> Sullivan, p.132.

<sup>158</sup> Bradley, p. 125-7.

try to imagine the unimaginable. Nevertheless, Stephen feels very different, and very abandoned, once the sermon is over.

Interestingly, this sense of difference is equally keen in relation to living in community with others:

To merge his life in the common tide of other lives was harder for him than any fasting or prayer...<sup>159</sup>

Stephen is more than a scholar, he is an artist. His being ‘marked off from his companions’<sup>160</sup> is something identified by the priest at Belvedere. But he is marked off not only by his very good (but not universally exceptional) academic achievements but also by his ‘piety’, his other-worldliness. That this otherworldliness is a performance or a self-delusion could be said to be suggested by his ‘worship’ of ‘mortal beauty’ when he sees the girl on the sea shore: ‘Heavenly God!’ he exclaims with ‘profane joy’.<sup>161</sup> To be an artist, for Stephen, is first to be uniquely moved by beauty in the world. It is different from the ‘unsustaining air’<sup>162</sup> of Jesuit scholarship, a kind of education bound up with ideas of piety and virtue and standing apart from the world in both a moral and an intellectual sense. Stephen stands apart from it in an aesthetic sense. This is not to say that the piety inspired by the hellfire sermon at Clongowes is a cynical performance; it is very genuine – there are pages of sincere and poignant soul-searching, perhaps lending weight to Sullivan’s assertion that ‘Joyce thought longer and more seriously about becoming a Jesuit than is generally supposed or admitted’<sup>163</sup>. Rather, his assumed piety could be said to be an attempt to inhabit what feels like a role ‘apart’ in some way. When he realises this will ultimately lead to his joining the rank and file priesthood as ‘The Reverend Stephen Dedalus S.J.’, he balks not so much at the ideology but at the merging of his life with a common tide of other lives. So whilst there is something engagingly different about being a scholar for Stephen, and a Jesuit scholar at that, it is insufficiently unique for the would-be artist: there is something perhaps rather workmanlike about the business of scholarship, as Nuttall puts it, ‘the steady elimination of error.’<sup>164</sup> What is interesting about this is that it puts in sharp perspective the assertions of John Carey because the work of ‘intellectuals’ is itself presented as part and parcel of the work of the ‘masses’; its air is ‘unsustaining’, which, for Dedalus, may mean it is not conducive to flight, or to rising above the ordinary mass of humanity. When Carey himself caricatures the Roman Catholic Church as ‘winningly authoritarian and anti-democratic’ and as an institution which ‘offered an attractive haven’ to ‘sensitive

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<sup>159</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 164.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>163</sup> Sullivan, p. 9.

<sup>164</sup> Nuttall, p. 197.

and intellectual persons'<sup>165</sup>, it is important to query the nature of the institution itself and whether it truly represented these qualities to modernist writers, since James Joyce's rejection of it is premised on the idea of not being part of any kind of corporate entity be that a school house, a school, a university, a nation, or a faith. Carey's definition of the word 'intellectuals' could therefore be said to include educated artists but not the educators of those artists, and this is problematic because the business of educators is the business of the intellect.

This idea is expressed in the passage in which Stephen visits the anatomy lecture theatre at Queen's College, Cork; while his father searches the desks for his initials, having physically etched himself into the fabric of the institution, Stephen is 'depressed more than ever by the... air it wore of jaded and formal study' and 'he seemed to feel the absent students of the college about him and to shrink from their company'<sup>166</sup>. As he listens to his father's student reminiscences, 'a faint sickness sighed in his heart. He recalled his own equivocal position in Belvedere, a free boy, a leader afraid of his own authority, proud and sensitive and suspicious, battling against the squalor of his life and against the riot of his mind'<sup>167</sup>. His position is 'equivocal' here primarily because his father's frittering away the family funds is having material consequences on their respectability, so that he is a leader, socially and academically an 'aristocrat' at Belvedere, at the same time as living increasingly with the Irish poor. But there is another level to this too: Stephen is becoming lonelier despite all his friendships and his family. Just once he expressly feels a common bond with his peers, and significantly this is when he is about to act, to pretend to be someone else, on stage, and just after recalling a moment in which Heron, Nash and Boland picked on him, thrusting him into a barbed wire fence, for being honest and not dissembling when challenged about his preference for Byron over Tennyson, a real event in Joyce's life:

For one rare moment he seemed to be clothed in the real apparel of boyhood: and, as he stood in the wings among the other players, he shared the common mirth ...<sup>168</sup>

During the Belvedere phase, Stephen becomes more artistic, more solitary, more sensitive, and more recognisably adolescent in his gloom and the sense of his difference. He is also becoming more sensitive to words: we read about how 'monstrous reveries' are drawn back to him by 'mere words'<sup>169</sup>. He also compares his love of words with his love of the colours of the sky:

He drew forth a phrase from his treasure and spoke it softly to himself:

– A day of dappled seaborne clouds.

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<sup>165</sup> Carey, p. 82.

<sup>166</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p.95.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.



The phrase and the day and the scene harmonised in a chord. Words. Was it their colours? He allowed them to glow and fade, hue after hue: sunrise gold, the russet and green of apple orchards, azure of waves, the greyfringed fleece of clouds. No, it was not their colours: it was the poise and balance of the period itself. ... the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose.<sup>170</sup>

The frequency with which words are repeated intensifies at this point: just as the word ‘different’ revolved regularly at the start, so other words start to form patterns of repetition later on the novel. With each successive repetition not only do we see the newly-learned or newly-esteemed word whirling in the mind of the poet-protagonist within the space of a few sentences or paragraphs, but we also see the querying of that word and its connotations by the author; repetition can both hollow out the meaning of a word and expand the meaning through ambiguity and further connotation. Examples of this around the recollection of the hell-fire sermon are ‘voices’, ‘hollowsounding’, ‘dull’, ‘cold’, ‘indifference’, ‘humiliation’, ‘confess’, ‘God’, ‘monstrous’, ‘hither and thither’, ‘hell’. Repetition is a necessary feature of learning, especially when learning or teaching languages; it was also the foremost weapon in the educational armoury of the time, and Stephen uses it consciously in the story even in informal situations. It is not just a stylistic feature of Joyce’s narrative, it is part of the presentation of learning on a more concrete level, too:

On Sundays, Stephen with his father and his granduncle took their constitutional. ... Trudging along the road or standing in some grimy wayside publichouse his elders spoke constantly of subjects nearer their hearts, of Irish politics, of Munster and of the legends of their own family, to all of which Stephen lent an avid ear. Words which he did not understand he said over and over to himself till he had them learned by heart: and through them had glimpses of the real world about him. The hour when he too would take part in the life of that world seemed drawing near and in secret he began to make ready for the great part which he felt awaited him, the nature of which he only dimly apprehended.<sup>171</sup>

Repetition is how Stephen prepares for tests, essays, exams; why would it not be the poignantly naive means by which he prepares for life beyond the schoolroom? As early as 1890, William James in his *The Principles of Psychology* had identified the importance of what he calls ‘habit’ to the learning process in relation to all kinds of developmental progression, from language acquisition to the retention of class hierarchies and the establishment of social and moral behavioural norms.<sup>172</sup> The use of repetition becomes more noticeable around crucial moments in the narrative; the hell-fire sermon has

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 180-1.

<sup>171</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 64.

<sup>172</sup> James, W., *The Principles of Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1890), p. 122

already been mentioned. Artistically, it is not only useful for signalling the approach of the epiphany, it is also beautiful in its own right. The chanting of verse, grammar, litany (Stephen repeatedly refers to reciting the Confiteor), is transformed into a Paterian end in itself: art. The moment of his epiphany, spread over six short pages towards the end of the novel, is almost defined by its echoic quality:

Brother Hickey. Brother Quaid. Brother MacArdle. Brother Keogh. Their piety would be like their names, like their faces, like their clothes, and it was idle for him to tell... It was idle for him... to tell... idle... of love... to love... of love... to love... of love. A day of seaborne dappled clouds... clouds... love... air ... sky... He passed from the trembling bridge... A veiled sunlight lit up the faintly grey... timeless air... city lay prone in haze... clouds, dappled and seaborne... sky... music... music seemed to recede, to recede, to recede: and from each receding trail of nebulous music... Again! Again! Again!... Stephanos... Bous Stephanoumenos! Bous Stephaneforos!... Bous Stephanoumenos! Bous Stephaneforos! ... prophecy ... So timeless seemed the warm grey air... prophecies... the hazewrapped city... the waves... the waves... the air... prophecy... soaring impalpable imperishable... His heart trembled... His heart trembled... soaring... radiant... radiant... Stephaneforos!... Yes! Yes! Yes! ... and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable... On! On! His heart seemed to cry ... warm isles... isles... currents... lightclad gayclad figures... rivulet... Emerald ... current... rivulet... drift... highdrifting... drifting... drifting... the grey warm air was still... to brood alone... He was alone... he was alone... alone... veiled grey sunlight and gayclad lightclad figures... alone and still... magic... emerald... soft and slight, slight and soft... alone and still... trembling... on and on and on... on and on and on...<sup>173</sup>

The repetition serves a narrative purpose, too, highlighting ideas of flight which are subtly connected to other bird images in the section and with his contemplation of his name, which he believes harbours intimations about his destiny, and the blissfully resounding effect of the echoes along with ideas of light and magic and transcendence reinforce the contrast between his secular heaven and his religious hell earlier in the text. Both moments are shot through with repetition, and his incantatory rendering of his dream of the circling, grey, goatish figures in the weeds scuttling ‘hither and thither’<sup>174</sup> is an infernal counterpart of this moment of artistic rapture, which, significantly begins by his rising beyond the anaphora and simile in chanting the names of the Jesuits and their uniform characteristics. Repetition, a habit born in the classrooms of Clongowes and Belvedere, then, becomes one of the most important devices of a work which enquires into the functioning of education itself. Where in the first case it imprisons, in the final section, it evokes an ecstatic moment of liberation and flight.

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<sup>173</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 180-6.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148-9.

Repetition is complemented by the impulse to experiment with the divisions between words and phrases; an impulse which finds its conclusion in the neologism of *Finnegans Wake*; one reads phrases like ‘amid the tumult of suddenrisen vapours’<sup>175</sup> and ‘manycoloured’<sup>176</sup> and ‘stubblecovered’<sup>177</sup> which show the beginnings of the tendency to fuse and explode meanings; the decorous hyphen, holding meanings at a conventional distance from each other, starts to disappear as early as *Portrait*. The beginning of this process in *Portrait* could be said to evoke the immediacy of the experience, or the singleness of the impression, in each case: Joyce jettisons grammatical conventions, learned from the Jesuits, which do not serve his purpose in this novel. In the case of hyphens, the reader can see how little is lost and how much can be gained by its removal in artistic discourse, which expands their notions of artistic decorum. Then the commas separating items in a list are also ejected, creating a sense of the inward rush of the impressions connected with Stephen’s feelings of spiritual abandonment after the hell-fire sermon:

One soul was lost; a tiny soul: his. It flickered once and went out, forgotten, lost. The end: black cold void waste.<sup>178</sup>

Joyce also systematically drops speech marks. For speech marks he substitutes an indentation followed by an elongated dash, or en-dash, which draws the reader’s experience of the novel away from that of conventional prose writing in English and towards a Finnish/ Swedish style, which sometimes uses the en-dash, or that of drama. As a general idea this may have been drawn from his reading of foreign language authors at the recently-opened Chapel Street library in Dublin. A more immediate effect of the en-dash is very subtly to render the distinction between direct and indirect speech more obscure and less familiar, which creates the sense that even when Stephen is speaking, the author is casting ironic ‘air quotes’ around his character’s, and indeed other characters’, performances, which more readily invites the reader’s intellectual engagement with and judgment on the conversation.

Standardised punctuation	New York, 1964 edition
<p>In fact, after some talk about their favourite writers Nash declared for Captain Marryat who, he said, was the greatest writer.</p> <p>“Fudge!” said Heron. “Ask Dedalus. Who is the greatest writer, Dedalus?”</p>	<p>In fact, after some talk about their favourite writers Nash declared for Captain Marryat who, he said, was the greatest writer.</p> <p>– Fudge! said Heron. Ask Dedalus. Who is the greatest writer, Dedalus?</p>

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., p. 152.

<p>Stephen noted the mockery in the question and said, “Of prose do you mean?”</p> <p>“Yes.”</p> <p>“Newman, I think.”</p> <p>“Is it Cardinal Newman?” asked Boland.</p> <p>“Yes,” answered Stephen.</p> <p>The grin broadened on Nash’s freckled face as he turned to Stephen and said, “And do you like Cardinal Newman, Dedalus?”</p> <p>“O many say that Newman has the best prose style,” Heron said to the other two in explanation.</p> <p>“Of course, he’s not a poet.”</p>	<p>Stephen noted the mockery in the question and said:</p> <p>– Of prose do you mean?</p> <p>– Yes.</p> <p>– Newman, I think.</p> <p>– Is it Cardinal Newman? asked Boland.</p> <p>– Yes, answered Stephen.</p> <p>The grin broadened on Nash’s freckled face as he turned to Stephen and said:</p> <p>– And do you like Cardinal Newman, Dedalus? –</p> <p>O many say that Newman has the best prose style, Heron said to the other two in explanation. Of course, he’s not a poet.<sup>179</sup></p>
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When the speech marks are removed we become more aware of ourselves as readers, deciding for ourselves when report starts and speech begins in those lines where they are blended. Curiously, we also engage less emotionally in the conventional narrative of the school bully scene, and adopt a more detached stance, as readers paring their fingernails behind the narrative. With the presentation of conversations in a style more akin to play scripts than novels, we are tacitly invited to consider the staging. The speech marks and commas are part of the world of the conventions of the novel, which nudge us into conventional responses. Their absence makes us directors in something new, liberating us to question our responses to the characters’ speech. Joyce is inviting us to explore the emotional functions of the different linguistic structures he would have learned about at school and university, and which he would have had to teach at the school in Pola. The grandstanding between the two academic rivals – Dedalus and Heron – a rivalry rooted very firmly in reality<sup>180</sup> (Joyce was often at the top of his form with Albrecht Connolly) becomes not just a scene to revel in, but to construct. It draws us away from personalities, and closer to the debate: which do we prefer, the gentleness of Tennyson, or the passion of Byron? Is one more the choice of the intellectual than the other? Does it matter? The fact that the whole scene is stripped back to the bare bones of a drama to be enacted between schoolboys invites the reader to reconsider ideas of an intellectual hierarchy of poets; the squabble is presented as manifestly infantile, and the boys forget about the poetry in their very normal adolescent struggle to self-identify as a member of a better tribe. Such divisions re-echo throughout the novel: Tennyson/

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p. 84-5.

<sup>180</sup> Bradley, p. 98-9.

Byron; Parnell/ Davitt; Catholic/ Protestant; Religious/ Secular; Feminine/ Masculine; Saved/ Damned. The language of difference and distinction is ubiquitous.

All of Joyce's work makes significant use of imitation and parody, which bespeaks the teaching methods of the time – the rote learning of poetry (recently explored by Catherine Robson in *Heart Beats*) the chanting of grammatical declensions, the copying of themes, and the informal absorption of a variety of teachers' stylistic patterns along with the content and values conveyed within these linguistic packages in an atmosphere more authoritarian than today's classroom, in which opinions were not given equal weight. The incident of Stephen's 'heresy' in *Portrait* confirms this last point: his English teacher, Mr Tate, challenges his claim that it is impossible to draw nearer to divine perfection, when a more orthodox theology would have preferred to say it was impossible ever to reach it.<sup>181</sup> Not all opinions were equally valid, especially on matters of religion; and the school essay for Joyce was often an exploration of a different moral message such as 'trust not appearances' or 'a life of labour or a life of idleness'. The daily and weekly round of prayers and services would have involved a great deal of chanting and repetition of set phrases, and Stephen's quoting of prayers and references to elements of the litany confirm this. Imitation, therefore, was not just a stylistic tool; the point of Jesuit education was primarily evangelistic, so the pupils' moral compasses were to be identically set, and imitation served the purposes of indoctrination in the precise sense of the word.

In *Portrait*, Stephen's extemporised villanelle, which he spends more than a few pages composing, is the creation of a mind which takes imitation sufficiently seriously to put passing thoughts into highly poised metrical forms, and using imagery that is itself borrowed from the worlds of Jesuit worship and troubadour love poetry:

While sacrificing hands upraise  
The chalice flowing to the brim,  
Tell no more of enchanted days.

And still you hold our longing gaze  
With languorous look and lavish limb!  
Are you not weary of ardent ways?  
Tell no more of enchanted days.<sup>182</sup>

This poem echoes Stephen's first imitative attempt on the novel's very first page:

O the wild rose blossoms  
On the little green place.

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<sup>181</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 83-4.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

He sang that song. That was his song.  
O the green wothe botheth.<sup>183</sup>

The use of imitation is expressive in both cases. In the villanelle, Stephen conveys his indebtedness to and his liberation from Jesuit education, ritual and morality. In the song, he is copying and learning from his father, and we can also infer his later indebtedness to Irish folksong. In a novel about learning, unconventional though it may be as a *bildungsroman*, the use of imitation precedes the creation of original discourse, thereby emulating the learning process in its structure at a very deep level. Joyce seems to take the mechanism of language acquisition and make it a central stylistic principle of his work and, in doing so, subtly suggests that this learned skill (learned so early as to appear instinctive<sup>184</sup>) continues to be an influential process of thought long after it has served its purpose as a means of acquiring basic language function. While one response is markedly more sophisticated than the other (and markedly more pretentious too), the process is the same; it precedes the creative work that Stephen envisages for himself.

John Morton has noted that Joyce himself composed lyrical pastiches, imitating Tennyson's style and content in a number of his 1907 collection of poems, *Chamber Music*.<sup>185</sup> Indeed, Myra Russel has gone so far as to say that 'most of the thirty-six little poems in James Joyce's *Chamber Music* do not belong in the twentieth century... it is to the graceful 'ayres' of the Renaissance – those delicate, finely crafted songs for solo voice and lute that Joyce loved and spent hours copying out – that *Chamber Music* is closest in spirit, content and style,'<sup>186</sup> imitating a register that would reappear in episodes of *Ulysses* such as 'Oxen of the Sun'. The most staggering irony in Joyce's career from an educational perspective is that having learned to imitate, analyse and differentiate so persuasively and judiciously from the Jesuits, he then begins to try to recapture some of the bewildering 'sense of totality' which language has fragmented.

Free indirect style lends itself to talking about education. The language of the narrative can imitate language development from simple and meandering primary school expression to the more pretentious language one might associate with a self-important sixth former:

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>184</sup> Kymissis, E. & Poulson, C., 'The history of imitation in learning theory: the language acquisition process', in *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behaviour*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (1990), 113-127.

<sup>185</sup> Morton, J., p. 47.

<sup>186</sup> Russel, M. (ed.) *Joyce's Chamber Music: The Lost Song Settings* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 13.

The face and the voice went away. Sorry because he was afraid. Afraid that it was some disease. Canker was a disease of plants and cancer one of animals: or another different.... It was not Wells' face, it was the prefect's.<sup>187</sup>

Stephen, though in deference to his reputation for essay writing he had been elected secretary to the gymnasium, had had no part in the first section of the programme but in the play which formed the second section he had the chief part, that of the farcical pedagogue. He had been cast for it on account of his stature and grave manners for he was now at the end of a second year at Belvedere and in number two.<sup>188</sup>

The language of the report is so close to the language of the character in each case that the tone becomes that of free indirect speech. In the second passage, the pomposity of the language evident in the archaic use of 'for' as a conjunction, the unnecessarily complex sentence structure, and the overly classicised diction (in 'farcical pedagogue') mirrors the peacockery of the references to Stephen's academic and co-curricular distinction. The reference to his having played the part of the rector himself serves only to highlight Joyce's delight in imitation, and specifically in imitating the world of education. In the first passage, Stephen's delirium as a young pupil at Clongowes is very gently conveyed through the non-sequiturs, the blending of a fragment of a lesson taken (in all probability) from 'Doctor Cornwell's Spelling Book'<sup>189</sup> with the story of the infirmary, the simplicity of the rump-sentences, and the way he corrects himself about whose face he sees, and the way he gives up on whether canker or cancer is the disease of animals. Just as in his education, in his art he renders his material more clearly through imitation.

## Ulysses

Having defended Byron against Tennyson in the fight scene in *Portrait*, Stephen's narrative is ironically cast into a novel bearing the title of one of Tennyson's most famous poems, in which the reader is presented with an ageing Odysseus heroically encouraging his fellow sailors to keep going. Perhaps Joyce is signalling to his learner-readers and reader-learners that Odysseus' endurance, and his cunning, will be needed to navigate the text. Perhaps he also offers a narrative which rebuffs the grandiloquence of Victorian classicism<sup>190</sup> with the humour of the everyday. The method of *Ulysses* is particularly imitative, and the clamour of different voices is one of its most noted characteristics. The

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<sup>187</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 19.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6: Cornwell, J. & Allen, A., *A Grammar for Beginners* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1838).

<sup>190</sup> Butcher & Lang's *The Odyssey of Homer*, which Hugh Kenner and Stanislaus Joyce believe Joyce used, is an archaic translation.

tone, however, is very different from *Portrait*. The high seriousness of the protagonist which threads its way through the earlier novel displays only glimpses of the artist's humour in comparison with *Ulysses*, which makes education both a source of fun and a source of a whole scheme and frame of reference. Indeed, the novel is thoroughly educative: Joyce himself suggested that his own immortality was bound up with creating a substantial task for scholars:

If I gave it all up immediately, I'd lose my immortality. I've put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant, and that's the only way of insuring one's immortality.<sup>191</sup>

The effect of all these puzzles and enigmas is educative because Joyce Studies is now a specialism almost in its own right: in addition to vast archive collections and numerous author societies and journals, in 2006, UCD established the James Joyce Research Centre. Hugh Kenner suggests that 'the reading of the Pound Era, like its writing, discerns patterns of diction and gathers meaning from non-consecutive arrays', going so far as to say that while we can tell one page of *Ulysses* from another, our grandparents would have found them featureless.<sup>192</sup> Educationally, the landscape is more complex than this. Joyce's allusions would have been more recognisable to his contemporaries owing to the effect of the Intermediate Examinations in normalising a specific range of canonical literature across the country. But the arrangement of the text, its allusions, its non-linear polyphony, would challenge contemporaries perhaps even more than post-Joycean readers. In 1922, while conceding the importance of *Ulysses*, Dr Joseph Collins said that the 'average intelligent reader' would receive little more than 'bewilderment and a sense of disgust.'<sup>193</sup>

Stephen Dedalus is, despite his ineptitude, a teacher for the duration of the narrative. His teaching (mercifully) is seen in just one episode of the novel, but the narrative is focalised through Stephen for around a third of the text and his perspective is adopted wholly or partly in eight of the eighteen episodes. When the narrative voice or Stephen's is allusive, therefore, it expresses indebtedness to and querying of things learnt formally in school and university and informally in libraries and bookshops. The characterisation of Stephen as a teacher at the time when the novel is set is also indebted to Joyce's few weeks' experience as a school teacher at Clifton School, Dalkey.<sup>194</sup> It suggests that one of the main voices of the novel has to be one which inhabits (however indifferently) the world of education, and this is completely apposite because *Ulysses* is a text which is inherently scholarly and apparently fascinated by the processes of thought, as evident in such features as the

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<sup>191</sup> Ellmann, p. 521.

<sup>192</sup> Kenner, H., *The Pound Era* (London: Pimlico, 1971, repr. 1991), p. 67.

<sup>193</sup> Collins, J., 'James Joyce's Amazing Chronicle', 28 May 1922, 'Book Reviews': *The New York Times*.

<sup>194</sup> Ellmann, p. 152-3.



allusive scheme and the persistent use of interior monologue registers. In foregrounding the process of thinking, Kiberd suggests that Joyce may be ‘motivated by a need to save Victorian literature from the stock characters of Victorian novels to prevent the complexities of real persons from collapsing into mere types.’<sup>195</sup> So, Joyce’s use of interior monologue displays his preoccupation with education to be interwoven with his desire for truthfulness in psychological representations of character. Examining the ways in which, and the extent to which education leads to illumination, is one of Joyce’s main concerns in this text.

Since the subject of the thesis is a survey of the presentation of education, the episodes which have most directly to do with education have been selected. Bloom has received some attention in the first part of this chapter and the focus on Stephen in this part simply expresses the limitation of the survey method, in which material which is most obviously relevant rises to the top – scenes in which students and scholars discuss education and academic topics, scenes of teaching, scenes in libraries, and narratives which are reminiscent of educational exercises.

#### *‘Telemachus’: fun with religious education*

The novel begins with Mulligan’s parody of the eucharist with his shaving bowl:

He held the bowl aloft and intoned: - Introibo ad altare Dei. ... For this O dearly beloved, is the genuine Christine: body and soul and blood and ouns. Slow music, please. Shut your eyes, gents. One moment. A little trouble about those white corpuscles. Silence, all.<sup>196</sup>

The ‘trouble’ with white corpuscles is that they would reject invasive cells, such as those of the body and blood of Christ in a Catholic mass, mocking transubstantiation with medical science. The irreverently parodic tone continues with his doggerel towards the end of the chapter as they make their way along the shore and Buck runs towards the water to bathe:

If anyone thinks that I amn’t divine  
He’ll get no free drinks when I’m making the wine  
But have to drink water and wish it were plain  
That I make when the wine becomes water again.<sup>197</sup>

There is not only the indignity of the reduction of scripture to tripping rhyming couplets, but also the reference to how the body naturally turns wine back into water. The crude humour is that of the subversive schoolboy or undergraduate. Joyce’s university and schools, perhaps by making religion a topic of study, also reduce it to the level of the everyday, a subject for analysis, the subject of a performative teacher-student dynamic, and thereby make it ripe for parody. The joke-eucharist at the

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<sup>195</sup> Kiberd, D., *Ulysses and Us* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 75.

<sup>196</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, (London: Penguin, 1992), p.1.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

start of *Ulysses* is an extension of the joke Latin amongst the students at the end of *Portrait*. Educational institutions create the means and the material for lexical fun and games, and the way in which Buck Mulligan has a dig at the expense of Stephen, the once ‘fearful Jesuit’, highlights this. Haines’ idea that joking about the Church ‘takes the harm out of it somehow’<sup>198</sup> helps to account for the difference in tone adopted in *Ulysses* after the dark night of the soul depicted in *Portrait*. The Church is no longer a fearful source of authority, but a source of amusement.

*‘Nestor’: making a mockery of learning*

The presentation of the realm of education as a thoroughly worldly and knockabout place continues the hilarity in the ‘Nestor’ episode, which depicts the schoolhouse. The episode takes as its inspiration the few weeks that Joyce spent at Clifton School in Dalkey as a part-time teacher in 1904.<sup>199</sup> Having made the transition from student to teacher, Stephen now attempts to guide his pupils through classical history and literature, but the treasury of scholarship that his education has bestowed on him creates a rush of association with each successive line read or answer given. For instance, when a pupil is reading aloud Milton’s *Lycidas* Stephen drifts off into his own thought in a way which demonstrates that he is not entirely engaged in his own lesson, because he is there simply to stave off penury rather than to fulfil any sense of vocation or interest in his subject:

– Weep no more woeful shepherd, weep no more

For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,

Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor...

It must be a movement then, an actuality 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 sin of Paris, night by night. ... Fed and feeding brains about me: under glowlamps, impaled, with faintly beating feelers... Thought is the thought of thought. Tranquil brightness. The soul is in a manner all that is: the soul is the form of forms. Tranquillity sudden, vast, candescent: form of forms.

Talbot repeated:

– Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,

Through the dear might...

– Turn over, Stephen said quietly. I don’t see anything.

– What, sir? Talbot asked simply, bending forward.

His hand turned the page over. He leaned back and went on again having just remembered. Of him that walked the waves. ... To Caesar what is Caesar’s, to God what is God’s. A long look from dark eyes, a riddling sentence to be woven and woven on the church’s looms. Ay.

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>199</sup> Ellmann, p. 153.

...  
– Who can answer a riddle? Stephen asked.<sup>200</sup>

Stephen the teacher drifts through association after association, and Joyce's use of free indirect discourse here adds to the humour; while daydreaming about the enchanted hush of the library in Paris, noting the 'fed and feeding brains about [him]', he neglects the business of feeding the brains of the pupils around him, who are simply listening to an ad hoc recital of an extract from a poem they may or may not understand. Since Milton's *Lycidas* concerns in part the ruin of the catholic clergy, it could be said to be an attention-grabbing poem for the former prefect of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary to hear. But Stephen does not, at least not initially, recall the poem's meaning, lost as he is in his own Platonic and Aristotelian musings. Indeed, when he does recall its meaning, prompted by 'Him that walked the waves', not only does his thought replace the capital 'H' with the lower case, indicating his disbelief in the divinity of Jesus, he also latches on at random to his own word for the biblical verses about rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's, 'riddle', and from there proceeds to conclude his class with a riddle. The chaotic and pretentious thought processes of Stephen as teacher are a product of his own compendious education, but the detachment which makes his thinking so irrelevant is a product of his lingering sense of superiority. This is not to say that Joyce is challenging the educational methods with which he was taught; if anything, he is mocking his own ineptitude as a teacher. But the point remains fixed in the stream-of-consciousness rendering of the classroom scene: thought is not straightforward precisely because the process of learning is inherently partly associative, and sometimes the associations are incorrect or irrelevant,<sup>201</sup> like the definition of Pyrrhus as a pier, or the tangential exploration of ideas of thought and soul in response to *Lycidas* while the assessment of the pupil's delivery of a poem should really be the focus.

Stephen's colleague, Mr Deasy, continues this motif of inaccuracy and irrelevance, only his is voiced, not thought, and his is political, not academic:

He raised his forefinger and beat the air oldly before his voice spoke.

Mark my words, Mr Dedalus, he said. England is in the hands of the jews. In all the highest places: her finance, her press. And they are the sign of a nation's decay. Wherever they gather they eat up the nation's vital strength. I have seen it coming these years. As sure as we are standing here the jew merchants are already at their work of destruction. Old England is dying.... Dying, he said, if not dead by now. ... They sinned against the light, Mr Deasy said gravely. ... Who has not? Stephen said.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, p. 30-31.

<sup>201</sup> Townsend, M. & Keeling, B., 'The Relationship of Level I and Level II Cognitive Processes to a Test of Associative Responding', in *The Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (1977), 127-30.

<sup>202</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, p. 41-42

Mr Deasy's words as the headmaster of the school affirm the anti-semitic attitudes of pre-Vatican II catholic preaching. Stephen's querying of the racist logic of Deasy's hatred in the terms of his own theology pre-empts the changing attitudes of the catholic hierarchy. That neither Stephen nor Deasy are reliable teachers parodies the part of the *Odyssey* which gives its name to this episode: neither is able to fill the role of Nestor, the wise counsellor, yet both have that societal role by virtue of their position as teacher. While Stephen knows that he is not destined to remain in the profession, equably accepting Deasy's assessment of his abilities with the reply that he is 'a learner, rather'<sup>203</sup>, Deasy is filled with a sense of his own self-importance, spiritedly and ignorantly quoting at random the aphorisms of such villainous characters as Iago ('put but money in thy purse'<sup>204</sup>) as well as letting fly a torrent of pro-British and imperialist nonsense. Institutional academic authority is empty in Joyce's *Odyssey*. The irony is clarified at the end of the chapter:

Ireland, they say, has the honour of being the only country which never persecuted the jews. Do you know that? No. And do you know why?... Because she never let them in, Mr Deasy said solemnly. A coughball of laughter leaped from his throat dragging after it a rattling chain of phlegm... On his wise shoulders through the checkerwork of leaves the sun flung spangles, dancing coins.<sup>205</sup>

Deasy is associated with wealth in this chapter; Stephen goes to see him about his salary, which gives Deasy an opportunity to congratulate himself on his financial independence. Deasy is hypocritical, and the idea that the sun applauds him and throws money after him is every bit as absurd as the assertion that his are 'wise shoulders'; highlighting the more serious point that a man responsible for opening the intellectual doors of others should be so closed-minded himself.

#### *'Scylla and Charybdis': monsters in the library*

'Scylla and Charybdis', set in the director's office in the beautiful National Library, is important from an educational perspective because it parodies the rhetorical excesses of the literati. In his analysis of the intellectuals of the early twentieth century Carey suggests that because the novel is 'for intellectuals only... there is a duplicity in Joyce's masterpiece' and that 'the novel embraces mass man but also rejects him'<sup>206</sup>; but the library episode of *Ulysses* implies that Joyce's duplicity is in fact multiplicity: he embraces and rejects intellectuals, too. The episode shows how learning can be used and misused, and Joyce seems to contribute to an ongoing debate about definitions of literary scholarship because, while the pseudo-academic writers and essayists (Russell/ 'AE', Magee/ 'Eglinton', and Stephen) are engaged in impassioned, playful and allusive interpretation, the published academics (the librarians Lyster and Best) are more cautious, more sincere, and more diplomatic. Joyce

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>206</sup> Carey, p. 20-1.

contrasts the use of learning for gaining insight into text or context, with a less purposive kind of learning which is purely for the playing of intellectual games, for grandstanding, and for creating and decoding riddles. The difficulty of the writing emulates Odysseus' struggle to survive the dangers of Scylla and Charybdis, the rock in which the hydra-headed monster lives and the deadly whirlpool opposite: exactly who is who within the mythical framework is not easy to say, and critics offer different readings<sup>207</sup>, but most of the time, it feels as if it is the reader battling against both the whirlpool of Stephen's argument and the many-headedness of others' responses to it. It could be said to both depict and emulate the difficulty of negotiating wayward scholarly discussions: the difficulty of the debate itself threatens to draw the reader in, first one way, now another, so that the reader too has the experience of the scholar's struggle to find a route through. Kiberd argues that the 'wisdom offered by the story of Scylla and Charybdis' is that:

the healthy mind must not submit to either extreme, but entertain both possibilities in a mode of openness. ... all binary oppositions – England and Ireland, Aristotle and Plato, Mulligan and Russell – are perfectly useless, unless one learns how to position oneself at some point in between.<sup>208</sup>

If anyone within the text is Odysseus in this episode, it is the tentative and quick-stepping librarian, Mr Lyster. Learning is itself that process of balancing and refining; 'position oneself' is too static here for something which exists in perpetual motion like the restless Lyster.

The materials for the episode are drawn from disparate elements of Joyce's education: his Jesuit background comes through frequently in theological references, distinctively Catholic exclamations, rhythmic liturgical phrases and moral values; his schoolboy reading in the anthologies of poetry he studied at school; and, as Costello says, 'the kind of conversation in which he and his friends indulged'<sup>209</sup> in the summer of 1904 at the library. He points out that Richard Best, the librarian and Irish philologist (who became director in 1924), and William Magee, the pseudonymous writer and essayist 'John Eglinton', would have been literary friends of Joyce's. George Russell, 'AE', the poet and essayist, was also a friend, and one with whom Joyce corresponded. The fact that the characters are real, and not hidden behind fictional names, may indicate that Joyce is prepared to risk libel action to highlight this episode as an accurate reflection of literary conversations, theories that have not yet undergone the rigours of publication, proof reading, and longhand transcription. The 'quaker librarian', Thomas Lyster, was the Director of the National Library from 1895 to 1920, only the second in the library's history, and crucially also the editor of the poetry anthology Joyce would have studied at

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<sup>207</sup> Compare for instance Blamires, H., *The New Bloomsday Book*, p. 76, in which Stephen is said to be Scylla and Russell et al. Charybdis, and Gifford, D. and Seidman, R., *Ulysses Annotated*, p.241, where Stephen is said to be Charybdis.

<sup>208</sup> Kiberd, D., *Ulysses and Us* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 144-145.

<sup>209</sup> Costello, p. 227.

Belvedere and Clongowes, *Select Poetry for Young Students*. Joyce would therefore have known him before he met and conversed with him. In a chapter about the relationship between fathers and sons, and in an allusive framework in which Telemachus awaits the return of his father, the librarian takes on a kind of parental role. Continually flitting in and out of the room, not taking sides in the dispute, he seems to be engaged in the more material business of keeping the project of public education afloat, as opposed to the participants whose childish squabbles over airy suppositions about the purposes of art and the identity of Hamlet's ghost rarely touch the solid ground of textual or historical evidence. His quasi-paternal enthusiasm about Russell's 'gathering together a sheaf of our younger poets' verses<sup>210</sup> is also a lightly-veiled reference to his anthology of *Select Poetry for Young Students*. Costello has discovered that, on the mantelpiece of his office, Lyster had a copy of the portrait of Shakespeare from the First Folio<sup>211</sup>, so it is possible that the image prompted the fictional discussion in this episode, and perhaps gave rise to similar real ones in the director's office. The fact that Lyster is both anthologist and librarian is important because in some ways it shows the continuity between the various stages in Joyce's education, from schoolboy to schoolman: an anthologist selects the material for study, and, on a much larger scale, a librarian sources, arranges and preserves the material for more expansive study beyond school. In a sense, Lyster controls the literary context at school and beyond. As anthologist, Lyster leaves out Tennyson (the 'Lawn Tennyson' Stephen sneers at later in the chapter), providing the frame of reference and much of the impetus for the fight between Joyce and Connolly as represented in Stephen and Heron in *Portrait* over whether Byron or Tennyson is the better poet. As librarian, Lyster provides the setting for an equally self-aggrandising discussion between Stephen, Russell and Eglinton, about the relationship between art and artist but is careful not to get very involved. As the professional academic in the discussion, this is significant because it presents the real business of academia as politely disinterested, but nevertheless obliged to countenance the kind of hysterical pastiche in which Stephen and his fellow writers engage.

The librarian's quiet and non-confrontational manner, conveyed by virtue of its contrast with the intellectual pugilism of Dedalus, Eglinton and Russell, is aided by the way Joyce changes Thomas Lyster's churchmanship. The real-life Lyster was christened in the Church of Ireland, the denomination aligned with the Church of England and colonial power; Quakers are non-conformists, non-sacerdotal and non-sacramental, at the other end of the religious spectrum, and so Stephen, the lapsed Jesuit, and Lyster, the Quaker, may have an uneasy kinship as regards their suspicion of conformist Anglican practice, and indeed their doubts about Catholic doctrine. Lyster is rendered less contentious by the little fiction Joyce introduces. Not only this, but Joyce gives the word "quaker" in lower-case letters, perhaps doing more to suggest the timidity and caution which characterise his movements and

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<sup>210</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, p. 246.

<sup>211</sup> Costello,, p. 227.

observations than simply denoting his religious adherence. His timidity is ironically at odds with his power over the keys to the gates of learning, and his stewardship of the institution in which they debate.

He came a sinkapace forward on neatsleather creaking and step backward a sinkapace on the solemn floor. ...

– The beautiful ineffectual dreamer who comes to grief against hard facts. One always feels that Goethe’s judgments are so true. True in the larger analysis.

Twicreakingly analysis he corantoed off. Bald, most zealous by the door he gave his large ear all to the attendant’s words: heard them: and was gone.<sup>212</sup>

His poised movements suggest dancing, a courante being a sixteenth-century dance characterised by little glides and hops, and a cinquepace being a lively five-step dance. The homophonic “sinkapace” ominously prefigures the direction of the discussion, and indeed the speed of its descent, and also suggests moving around something in which he might sink, like a whirlpool. The motions suggest a tentative manoeuvring between obstacles reminiscent of Odysseus navigating the whirlpool and the rock, and they are mirrored by his qualified assertions about Goethe’s judgments, they are “so true” and then “true in the larger analysis”, and therefore possibly not true when the details are considered. His exit, “twicreakingly analysis”, in addition to expertly depicting through neologism the precise moment and manner of his exit, conveys the idea of his somehow moving between the analysis, or perhaps two analyses. Later, after Stephen has asserted that Hamnet is Hamlet, his movements back into the room are equally humorous and tentative:

The quaker librarian, quaking, tiptoed in, quake, his mask, quake, with haste, quake, quack.<sup>213</sup> In 1883, the real T. W. Lyster translated Johann Duentzer’s *The Life of Goethe*, so the librarian is a scholar himself, and concerned as much with the life of the mind at university level as he is with helping pupils to reach that level through studying smaller selections of verse at school for Intermediate examinations. Unlike Lyster, German was not Joyce’s forte: Yeats wrote to Joyce in 1904, criticising his attempts at translating Hauptmann’s *Before Dawn* and *Michael Kramer*:

I gave them to a friend who is a German scholar to read some time ago, and she saw, what indeed you know yourself, that you are not a very good German scholar. I have been meaning however to go over them, and have just got into them. I think however it is very unlikely that we can make any use of them for the theatre.<sup>214</sup>

The chapter dramatises an attempt made by writers to perform the part of academics at a time when the distinction was still being drawn in literary studies.

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<sup>212</sup> Joyce J., *Ulysses*, p. 235.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>214</sup> W.B. Yeats to James Joyce, 2 October 1904, in Ellmann, R. (ed.) *Letters of James Joyce, Volume II* (New York: Viking, 1966), p. 58.

Lyster's cautious approach to analysis is markedly different from that of Stephen and the others, who prefer to assert and to attack. When he later engages in the discussion as the narrative style gives way to a libretto format, his contribution is given as "a tempo", a return to the original pulse, as opposed to Stephen's "stringendo", a speeding up or tightening of the rhythm. At this moment the subject of conversation is whether Shakespeare's brothers cuckolded him, and Best has taken exception to Stephen's use of his name, Richard, as a by-word for 'villain'. While Mulligan revels in the coarseness of the discussion, and Stephen rattles on in his wildly associative patter, Lyster simply quotes Iago in sympathy with Best's objections:

QUAKERLYSTER: (A tempo) But he that filches from me my good name... .<sup>215</sup>

He then questions Stephen when he claims that Shakespeare's birth was marked by "a daystar, a firedrake":

– What is that Mr Dedalus? The quaker librarian asked. Was it a celestial phenomenon?

At this point Stephen takes his Bardolatry to an even more absurd pitch and claims it was a star by night and a pillar of cloud by day,<sup>216</sup> equating Shakespeare with God by referring to the birth of Christ and the deliverance of the Israelites in their exodus from Egypt. Lyster then questions Stephen further about his earlier assertion about the brothers' cuckolding of Shakespeare:

The quaker librarian springhalted near.

– I should like to know, he said, which brother you... I understand you to suggest there was misconduct with one of the brothers... But perhaps I am anticipating?

He caught himself in the act: looked at all: refrained.

An attendant from the doorway called:

– Mr Lyster! Father Dineen wants...

– O! Father Dineen! Directly.

Swift rectly creaking rectly rectly he was rectly gone.<sup>217</sup>

Lyster's approach is to question and to seek clarification. He notices that he is in danger of quite easily puncturing the enchantment Stephen's argument has cast over his audience, and the ellipses and colons, like musical rests, depict the rapid process of realisation that he, as a real academic, is about to spoil their fun, stalling, and gratefully creaking out of the room again on real academic business. Rev. Patrick Dineen was in the process of composing his *Irish-English Dictionary*, published in 1904; the very subject matter of the enterprise itself – facilitating understanding between the ruling culture and the governed by means of a dictionary – conveys ideas of the kind of conciliatory approach to conflict that the librarian comically models throughout the episode. The ellipses in his speech are strategically polite,

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<sup>215</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, p. 269.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269-270.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270.



and his hesitations are part bewilderment and part diplomacy. It is in marked contrast to the headlong fluency of Stephen's strident, lyrical, and near-meaningless, wittering:

He has hidden his own name, a fair name, William, in the plays, a super here, a clown there, as a painter of old Italy set his face in a dark corner of his canvas. He has revealed it in the sonnets where there is Will in overplus. Like John O'Gaunt his name is dear to him, as dear as the coat of arms he toadied for, on a bend a sable a spear or steeled argent, honorificabilitudinitatibus, dearer than his glory of greatest shakescene in the country.<sup>218</sup>

Stephen's spoken analysis has now taken on the neologistic, allusive and playful characteristics of his earlier internal monologues: abundance becomes "overplus", aristocrat becomes "super", the heraldic terms are heaped one on top of the other, the schoolboy mock-Latin is grandiloquent and empty, and the contraction of "shakescene" cancels out the superlative "greatest" in describing the scale of Shakespeare's achievement. He seems to be saying that since Shakespeare hid his own name in plays and sonnets, he must therefore have been referring to his brothers Richard and Edmund when he named those characters, too; but here the logic breaks down because one does not necessarily imply the other, and Stephen decides to rattle on with an irrelevant legend about a star on Shakespeare's birthday. After all, since Richard and Edmund are already historical characters and commonplace names (unlike 'Hamnet'), it would be more likely that his brothers were named after them rather than the other way round. Stephen's analysis is more poetry than scholarship; more artifice than sincere inquiry.

Stephen's argument is an intellectual monster every bit as much as Russell's and Eglinton's. The whirlpool and the rock/hydra-headed monster may seem like polar opposites, just as Stephen's may seem very different from his opponents' arguments, but they are in essence the same; they are equally fuelled by emptiness, a staggering lack of evidence. Lyster takes a pace forward and then a pace backward, and then we hear nothing from him for several pages; he navigates away from the monsters while the debate flares up:

- All these questions are purely academic, Russell oracled out of his shadow. I mean, whether Hamlet is Shakespeare or James I or Essex. Clergymen's discussions of the historicity of Jesus. Art has to reveal to us the formless spiritual essences. The supreme question about a work of art is out of how deep a life does it spring. ... The deepest poetry of Shelley, the words of Hamlet bring our mind into contact with the eternal wisdom, Plato's world of ideas. All the rest is the speculation of schoolboys for schoolboys. ...
- The schoolmen were schoolboys first, Stephen said superpolitely. Aristotle was once Plato's schoolboy.

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid., p. 269.

And has remained so, one should hope, John Eglinton sedately said. One can see him, a model schoolboy with his diploma under his arm. ...

– Upon my word it makes my blood boil to hear anyone compare Aristotle with Plato.

– Which of the two, Stephen asked, would have banished me from his commonwealth?

Unsheathe your dagger definitions.<sup>219</sup>

The barbarism of the rivalry is underscored by the violence implicit in the image of unsheathing daggers, resonating, as we shall see, with arguments Woolf and others made about the connection between the education system and the military. The oracle Russell's superlatives in 'the supreme question about a work of art is', 'the deepest poetry', and the dismissive 'all the rest is the speculation of schoolboys for schoolboys' highlight his pomposity and in fact his contempt for learning, as opposed to inborn genius. Eglinton echoes the sentiment, sneering at Aristotle as 'a model schoolboy', 'waxing wrath' at the comparison of Aristotle with Plato. Ironically, Russell's eschewing asking about real-life analogues in literature at the same time as asserting that the supreme question concerns the depth of the artist's life, reveals a paradox: the ideas empty each other out, meaning that the only thing left to respond to is the contempt with which he treats his opponent. When Stephen ventures to suggest that learning is a continuum and that academics would have had to have been schoolboys once, he is pointing out that Russell himself was once a learner, receiving instruction rather than opining in oracular fashion; he attempts to re-dignify the process of learning, rather than simply celebrate the fact of someone's genius, and present understanding as something which is passed on in a gradual, workaday manner.

The presentation of Lyster as a liberal, quietist protestant, and one who is impartially accommodating of all literary arguments howsoever absurd, is significant because it models a sane, constructive and kindly response to Stephen's well-informed yet bizarre defence of an indefensible argument, and because it models the ethos behind public libraries: all are welcome to learn, and all who publish may be read.

Yes, indeed, the quaker librarian said. A most instructive discussion. Mr Mulligan, I'll be bound, has his theory too of the play and of Shakespeare. All sides of life should be represented. He smiled on all sides equally.<sup>220</sup>

The National Library had been opened in 1878 following the Dublin Science and Museum Act of 1877 and, as director, the real Lyster actively encouraged UCD students to make use of it, partly because the resources of UCD were at that time quite limited.<sup>221</sup> As a librarian, he provides the space for the arguments, and houses and anthologises the literary and historical sources upon which Stephen and the others draw to fuel their discussion and which whirl hopelessly around their empty assertions. His

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid., p. 237-8.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p.253.

<sup>221</sup> Hutton, C., 'Joyce and the Institutions of Revival', in *Irish University Review*, Vol. 33, No. 1, (2003), 129-130.

language when addressing Mulligan is well-meaning in tone, but at the same time devastatingly humbling for both Eglinton and Stephen: Buck, he is sure, will have ‘his theory too of the play and of Shakespeare’. This is not a contest, Lyster reminds them, vainly encouraging them to work collaboratively, and therefore Buck’s more satirical responses can be as readily accommodated as theirs:

– Shakespeare? he said. I seem to know the name.

A flying sunny smile rayed in his loose features.

– To be sure, he said, remembering brightly. The chap that writes like Synge.<sup>222</sup>

Stephen’s argument bespeaks his education: the frame of reference is often Jesuitical and his education at Clongowes and Belvedere, and the library at Chapel Street, provides him with a ready store of allusions and associations. When Stephen is trying to persuade them of the importance of context to a reading of literature, and of Shakespeare’s own life to the composition and performance of Hamlet, he invokes the aid of the founder of the Jesuit movement, summoning a saint as his muse:

Composition of place. Ignatius Loyola, make haste to help me!

When Stephen is talking about the way that great philosophers are created, Stephen refers to a developmental process, saying:

What useful discovery did Socrates learn from Xanthippe? Dialectic, Stephen answered: and from his mother how to bring thoughts into the world.

Stephen sees intelligence as something which is developed through experience, necessity and imitation. He suggests in a very down-to-earth manner that Socrates’ ability to argue was learned from his nagging wife Xanthippe, and that he learned to speak from his mother, and, through the discussion of Socrates, Stephen is able to show how ideas pass from one mind to another, so that Aristotle is partly indebted to Plato, who in turn is partly indebted to his teacher Socrates. Stephen’s use of language supports his general point here because, since the Jesuits have taught Stephen from the age of ‘half-past six’, as he says in *Portrait*, he naturally thinks in their terms even when he has lapsed from their faith. His responses to Plato and Hamlet, while undercut with parodic variations on religious language, are both woven in with his theological training. On Plato we hear first from Russell that,

Art has to reveal to us the formless spiritual essences... the words of Hamlet bring our mind into contact with the eternal wisdom, Plato’s world of ideas,<sup>223</sup>

and then Stephen reflects in these terms:

Formless spiritual. Father, Word and Holy Breath. Allfather, the heavenly man. Hiesos Kristos, magician of the beautiful, the Logos who suffers in us at every moment. This verily is that. I am the fire upon the altar. I am the sacrificial butter.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, p. 254.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

On the subject of Shakespeare/ Old Hamlet, Stephen uses religious language increasingly as part of his spoken analysis. He says,

He is a ghost, a shadow now, the wind by Elsinore's rocks or what you will, the sea's voice, a voice heard only in the heart of him who is the substance of his shadow, the son consubstantial with the father,<sup>225</sup>

and then thinks to himself,

He Who Himself begot, middler the Holy Ghost, and Himself sent himself, Agenbuyer, between Himself and others, Who, put upon by His fiends, stripped and whipped, was nailed like bat to barndoor, starved on crosstree....<sup>226</sup>

The use of the grotesque simile likening the crucified Christ to a bat on a barn door is knowingly blasphemous (and borrowed from the writing of the German anarchist, Johann Most),<sup>227</sup> and the contraction of friends to 'fiends' is a conscious condemnation of those who betrayed and sentenced him; the efficiently condensed biblical and liturgical words and phrases 'begot', 'stripped and whipped' and 'crosstree' suggest his instinctive responses to mystery, so that they pour into the vacuum left by the evidence about Shakespeare's life, and the difficulty of Hamlet. The use of a narrative style that flits between spoken analysis and internal reflection is crucial here. The two voices become closer in style and technique over the course of the chapter as Stephen relaxes into his performance, so that, ironically, it becomes less performative and more embarrassingly raw and shapeless, to the extent that toward the end of his argument, and after a long passage of continuous nonsense, he has to laugh:

He laughed to free his mind from his mind's bondage.<sup>228</sup>

In her study, *Heart Beats: Everyday Life and the Memorised Poem*, Catherine Robson cites a poem entitled 'The Overworked Elocutionist' by Carolyn Wells, which seems to query the educational point of memorising poetry. The final verse runs:

His elocution was superb, his voice and gestures fine;  
His schoolmates all applauded as he finished the last line.  
'I see it doesn't matter,' Robert thought, 'what words I say,  
So long as I declaim with oratorical display!'

Stephen could be said to fit into this category because of his near-random casting about for relevant allusions. But Stephen doesn't forget his lines and weave together fragments of half-remembered verses to bluff his way through; his memory is extremely retentive; what is at issue is the fact that his welding

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., p. 253.

<sup>227</sup> Lang, F. K., *Ulysses and the Irish God* (London: Associated University Presses, 1993), p. 156.

<sup>228</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, p. 272.

of materials for argument is driven solely by an associative process that channels the logic. Unlike Wells, Joyce is not querying the method of memorising poetry for recitation; he is interested in the way the unconscious processes of earlier teaching control the scope of the associations. That Stephen is bound to blend life and literature and religion is evident in his phrasing, in his parading of his learning:

Because the theme of the false or the usurping or the adulterous brother or all three in one is to Shakespeare, what the poor is not, always with him.<sup>229</sup>

The irrelevant references to the trinity, the ‘three in one’, and Jesus’ prophecy that ‘the poor will always be with you’<sup>230</sup> indicate just how engrained these phrases are. Stephen’s education is so influential that it continues to shape and colour his thought outside of its own sphere of relevance; this is not a theological discussion but a literary one, and yet it is expressed in highly liturgical terms. But Stephen’s decision to use his learning playfully rather than purposively in a sincere desire to inquire after truth is his own. Even though debating is held in high esteem as a method of assessment and learning in the *Ratio Studiorum*, and students and pupils would be encouraged to play devil’s advocate and defend anti-religious, or anti-Christian, or heterodox perspectives in order to deepen the intellectual foundations of their own doctrinal beliefs, Joyce’s presentation of Stephen in this episode leads the reader to query less the methods and ethos of the institutions in which he has been trained, and to query more what Stephen thinks he is doing with all of his learning. Behind every irrelevant allusion and every tangential reference through vocabulary and phrasing to other works by Shakespeare, is the sense of someone with a highly retentive memory, a superabundance of reading on which to draw, a good knowledge of how to make an idea more persuasive through rhetorical flourishes, yet thoroughly lacking in the humility and sense of purpose to make it count in any constructive academic way. The point of education for him is to create intricate, beautiful, imaginative explorations, rather than to establish anything useful, reminiscent of Pater’s intriguing but meandering essays on the Renaissance. For Stephen, art is indeed for education but, more importantly, education is for art.

### *‘Ithaca’ and the microscope of science*

Leopold Bloom has so far been left out of this analysis of *Ulysses*, and this could be said to be ironic since Carey contends that he is ‘expelled from the circle of the intelligentsia’<sup>231</sup> and this thesis contends that the spirit of the novel is more democratic. Bloom is the predominant focaliser in the text and in a sense Carey is right that he is not admitted to the circle of the intelligentsia through the institutions that Stephen frequents. However, the purpose of the foregoing analysis has been to show that ‘the circle of the intelligentsia’ is by far the greater target of satire than ‘mass man’ in *Ulysses*. In

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p. 272.

<sup>230</sup> Bible: Mark, 14:7.

<sup>231</sup> Carey, p. 21.

episodes such as ‘Oxen of the Sun’ and ‘Ithaca’, in fact, these two worlds quite easily fall together; and in any case Bloom is closer to being the flawed medieval Everyman<sup>232</sup> rather than truly a symbolic Brechtian representative of mass man in the way that Carey’s argument requires him to be. In both of these episodes, too, the narrative voice submerges the distinguishing features of individual voices and registers in the tide of its own uniqueness. In ‘Oxen of the Sun’, this voice is one which imitates the style of a timeline of literary styles from Anglo-Saxon and medieval language onwards. In the ‘Ithaca’ episode, Bloom and Dedalus’ conversation is depicted in the question-and-answer register of an English comprehension or a school science test. The crystal clarity of the delivery in this episode which, according to the Gilbert schema<sup>233</sup>, Joyce associated with science, is in stark contrast with both the indiscipline of much of Stephen’s delivery in the ‘Scylla and Charybdis’ episode and the drowsy, unpunctuated thought-stream we hear from Molly in the next and final episode, ‘Penelope’. In the library episode, Stephen’s voice is much closer to the surface, with direct speech alternating with unmarked passages of his own internal commentary on the debate; in the Eccles Street episode, intellectual decorum has seemingly reasserted itself through indirect speech transforming the words of the characters into objective, Latinate, carefully phrased sentences conveying concrete points of fact. Stephen and Bloom are contemplated like specimens through a microscope. The contrast between the diffuseness of the literary discussion in ‘Scylla and Charybdis’ and the pedantry of the scientific report of Stephen and Bloom’s interactions in ‘Ithaca’ is not only extremely funny, it also raises questions about educational discourses, their fields of relevance, their purposes, and their value. Once Stephen and Bloom have made their way into the house, the robotic narrative voice observes that Bloom leaves the tap running after filling the kettle and asks why, before answering that he needed to wash his hands; it misses something, and we have to infer that Bloom then asks Stephen if he would like to do so too.

What reason did Stephen give for declining Bloom’s offer?

That he was hydrophobe, hating partial contact by immersion or total by submersion in cold water (his last bath having taken place in the month of October of the preceding year), disliking the aqueous substances of glass and crystal, distrusting aquaticities of thought and language.

What impeded Bloom from giving Stephen counsels of hygiene and prophylactic to which should be added suggestions concerning a preliminary wetting of the head and contractions of the muscles with splashing of the face and neck and thoracic and epigastric region in case of river or sea bathing, the parts of the human anatomy most sensitive to cold being the nape, stomach, and thenar or sole of foot?

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<sup>232</sup> Steinberg, E., ‘Leopold Bloom’s ‘Flag of Distress’’, in *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No.4 (1978), p. 386.

<sup>233</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, p. xxiii.

The incompatibility of aquacity with the erratic originality of genius.<sup>234</sup>

Not only is the point that Stephen makes complete nonsense – that he won't wash his hands because he dislikes all things watery, including watery ideas – it also highlights Stephen's vanity and Bloom's acceptance of it. As a result of his education, his reading and his sense of distinction, Stephen presents himself as a genius. The fact that "aquacity" cannot be incompatible with intellectual processes does not seem to bother either of them in their inebriated state and nor does it bother the narrative voice, which simply delivers observations without making judgments, allowing or, indeed, inviting the reader to supply their own. Neither the artistic nor the scientific perspective offers enlightenment in *Ulysses*; but the two together might. The diction is that of a scholar, the grammar that of a textbook or school examination paper; the 'Ithaca' episode pursues this method relentlessly to nearly one hundred pages. The etymology of the vocabulary is overwhelmingly classical, with all its attendant precision and formality and strangeness. And not only the sheer extent to which this is taken but also the jingling rhymes that naturally follow from latinate endings – '-tic', '-tion', '-ity' – lend a humorous tone to the depiction of a practical man and an artistic one in conversation: it also telescopes and dramatises the distinction and connection between the two pursuits identified by the dean of studies in *Portrait* – 'there is an art in lighting a fire. We have the liberal arts and we have the useful arts. This is one of the useful ones.'<sup>235</sup> The process of kindling a fire is explored in scientific detail in *Ulysses*' 'Ithaca', too:

He ...kindled it at three projecting points of paper with one ignited Lucifer match, thereby releasing the potential energy contained in the fuel by allowing its carbon and hydrogen elements to enter into free union with the oxygen of the air.

Of what similar apparitions did Stephen think?

Of others elsewhere in other times who, kneeling on one knee or on two, had kindled fires for him, of Brother Michael in the infirmary of the college of the Society of Jesus at Clongowes Wood, Sallins, in the county of Kildare: of his father, Simon Dedalus, in an unfurnished room of his first residence in Dublin, number thirteen Fitzgibbon Street.... : of the dean of studies, Father Butt, in the physics theatre of University College, 16 St Stephen's Green, North... .<sup>236</sup>

Bloom's lighting of the fire is conveyed in utilitarian, scientific terms perhaps beyond his own comprehension, whereas Stephen's literary and artistic mind is again shown to work by association, remembering his visit to Brother Michael in the Clongowes infirmary at the beginning of *Portrait*<sup>237</sup> and his conversation with the dean of studies at Belvedere<sup>238</sup>. And whilst the scholarly Stephen operates

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<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 785 – 6.

<sup>235</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 220.

<sup>236</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, p. 781 – 2.

<sup>237</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p. 16.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

by differentiation in *Portrait*, as a would-be artist in *Ulysses* he works by connection. But whilst these could be said to be opposed habits of mind, it would be wrong to say that a scholar for Joyce is one who differentiates and an artist one who connects, because both methods are part of the process of categorisation, prioritisation and synthesis we see at work from the very beginning of the *Portrait* to the end of *Ulysses*. But one could argue that Joyce uses associative artistic methods and more scholarly or scientific methods of delineation to try to present fractured phenomena in a beautiful, harmonious, meaningful whole, and that while his caricature would-be artist associates almost at random, finding connections where there are none, his scholars and scientists tend to split hairs, question, and distinguish and label the fragments without the aesthetic impulse to create a kind of unison out of a harmony, or a harmony out of discordant clashes. Joyce as the mature artist is able to weld his learning into symphonic form, so that it is educative, edifying, inspiring and yet joyously irreverent with all forms of intellectual authority.

‘Ithaca’s ‘catechetical’ method has been commented on by Robert Hampson in his article ‘Allowing for Possible Error’<sup>239</sup>, which responds to the partial treatment of this point by A. Walton Litz in his more general analysis of the episode in Hart and Hayman’s *James Joyce’s Ulysses*<sup>240</sup>. Hampson identifies the influence of two possible catechisms in the method of the chapter, one being either the Deharbe or the Maynooth catechism and the other being Richmal Mangnall’s *Historical and Miscellaneous Questions*; one Catholic catechism and one British imperialist catechism. Hampson suggests that ‘Joyce’s appropriation of the catechetical method introduces dialogism into the catechism’s monologic simulacrum of dialogue, and works to subvert the catechism’s claim to authority and complete knowledge’<sup>241</sup>; he also cites a letter from the series editor Andrew Gibson, saying that ‘Joyce is concerned to resist an epistemology that can only function according to the totalising premise that underlies the two monologisms’.<sup>242</sup> From an educational perspective, this is important because it means that the use of free indirect discourse leads to our being able to fully appreciate the insufficiency of the catechetical method in depicting what is quite a funny and tender exchange between the novel’s putative Telemachus and Odysseus, thereby showing the limitations of this very popular kind of Victorian publication. Hampson points to the success of a series of eighty three catechisms published by William Pinnock, a former schoolmaster, on subjects as diverse as agriculture and astronomy<sup>243</sup>. This tends to indicate that catechisms, far from being imposed by religious and imperialist establishments, are actually the result of market forces; their clarity, their shortcuts to knowledge, their

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<sup>239</sup> Hampson, R., ‘Allowing for Possible Error’: Education and Catechism in ‘Ithaca’, in Gibson, A. (ed.) *Joyce’s ‘Ithaca’* (Atlanta: 1996), within Senn, F. (ed.) *European Joyce Studies* 6, 229ff.

<sup>240</sup> Litz, A. W., ‘Ithaca’, in Hart, C. and Hayman, D. (eds.), *James Joyce’s ‘Ulysses’* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 385ff.

<sup>241</sup> Hampson, p. 230.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.



dialogic structure which aids memory, were popular with readers, which would have been reading them out of interest rather than for an exam as is evident from the varied subject matter of the books. When Hampson says that ‘the slippage between religious and secular catechism sets up interference between their different systems of knowledge and different regimes of power’<sup>244</sup>, there may be other ways of interpreting Joyce’s methodology in this chapter. By the time of composition, the catechetical method had been used for centuries in religious instruction in the Catholic Church and had become very popular with an increasingly literate population while the Victorian educational project was gathering momentum. Joyce is not just querying the establishment’s use of catechetical methods, he is querying its value to ordinary readers who have created such high demand for these publications, and asking the reader to locate its rightful place by placing the genre in a wholly unsuitable context; a semi-sober night-time conversation between the novel’s notional father and son.

### *The end of the Odyssey*

In *Portrait*, Joyce presents us with a *bildungsroman* in which the journey of learning is depicted not only in terms of the content but also in terms of the style of the narrative. As Stephen changes, so does the language. Even though the novel does not follow traditional narrative structures, dropping the reader into conversations, reminiscences and events with no introduction, throughout the novel the central character (via the novel’s focalisation) has a tendency to delineate, to clarify, and to explain. Simultaneously, however, there is a persistent musicality to the style, and a contained experimentation with language and stylistic conventions which paves the way for later work. But the artist is still the scholar. In *Ulysses*, the presentation of inner thoughts as a rambling, tumultuous, chaotic eddying of association, and the way in which these seem to control the direction of Stephen’s rational, real-world speech, and then finally to blend with it, highlights the change of direction that Stephen anticipates in ‘Nestor’ when he admits he is no teacher; he is a fledgling artist, spinning stories among the gaps in historical record as he does with his Shakespeare theory, shoring up his argument with laudable but irrelevant allusions to give the impression, the tone of scholarly debate without that sincerity of purpose embodied by the quaker librarian. At the end of his novel, the question-and-answer narrative voice is amusingly unsuited to convey the gentleness of the relationship between Stephen and his notional father (albeit under the influence of large quantities of alcohol), and then between Bloom and Molly as he then reflects on his circumstances and finds his way to his wife in bed. Its very strangeness is enough to make the reader more alert to what would truly have been said and noticed. The involvement of the reader in the creation of meaning in turn paves the way for *Finnegans Wake* and its associative logic. That Joyce wanted all readers involved is evident from his determination (before the involvement of Sylvia Beach) that *Ulysses* would cost no more than the average price of a British novel, six shillings.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>245</sup> Gilbert, S. (ed.), *Letters of James Joyce, Vol. 1*, p. 25.

*Ulysses* has a variety of narrative centres and voices and stretches the limits of conventional language use, and as such it can be seen as the developmental bridge between the two works, refining the technique of the one and preparing for the technique of the other. As Tom McCarthy points out, as *Ulysses* started as an additional story for *Dubliners*, so *Finnegans Wake* began as a nineteenth chapter of *Ulysses*; the works are ‘part of a continuum’.<sup>246</sup> Joyce’s stylistic experiment is refined from one work to the next.

## Finnegans Wake

*Finnegans Wake* is very different not only from the mainstream novels of the period but also from Joyce’s previous work; the step from moments of stream-of-consciousness narrative and persistent free indirect speech to consistent neologism is a significant one because the linguistic base, or something very near it, is replaced. Language is used not to express distinction or similarity, nor to communicate meanings clearly and simply: it is used to ‘suggest’ in several different directions at once, refusing to run the language into a single stream by using either scholarly or traditional artistic discourse.

The method of *Finnegans Wake* models ideas of deferral and multiple signification, becoming more playfully representative of the language of thought before and after the operative functioning of everyday discourse. In a sense it emulates the scholarly pursuit of meaning itself, the decoding of each successive riddling portmanteau or neologism depending on the spinning connotations of the others around them. John McCourt goes so far as to say that Joyce’s experience as a teacher in Pola could be said to have inspired the method of *Finnegans Wake*:

Early on in Pola, however, many of his problems arose from his genuine inability to understand and make himself understood. His scholarly Italian was, as his friend Alessandro Francini Bruni put it, ‘a strange species [...] It is better to say archaic than strange, a crippled Italian full of ulcers [...] At any rate, it was a dead language, which joined the babble of living languages coming out of that pit of poor devils at the school.’ That same babble would later become one of the major inspirations of *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>247</sup>

Joyce’s education continued when he became a teacher, and it influenced his development as a writer. McCourt suggests that,

In order to teach English grammar, syntax, phonetics, and pronunciation, Joyce was forced to analyse patterns that he had always taken for granted, so as to render them understandable to

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<sup>246</sup> McCarthy, T., ‘*Ulysses* and Its Wake’, in *London Review of Books*, Vol. 36, No. 12 (19 June 2014), p. 39-41.

<sup>247</sup> McCourt, J., *The Years of Bloom: James Joyce in Trieste, 1904 – 1920* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2000), p.13.

students. In thus distancing himself from his own language, Joyce was in fact deepening his appreciation of it.<sup>248</sup>

The fact that his first textbook required him to speak to his students only in the focus language (English) means that at the time when he was continuing to work on drafts of *Stephen Hero* and the *Dubliners* stories, and absorbing bigger stylistic ideas for expression in later works, the author was learning about – and in all probability quietly evaluating – the means by which we absorb information and ideas. This heightened degree of linguistic self-reflection dovetails with his writing to produce highly varied and highly mimetic vocabulary and grammatical structures. While Ellmann presents Joyce's attitude towards his teaching jobs as thoroughly mercenary<sup>249</sup>, not unlike the attitude of the impoverished Stephen in the 'Nestor' episode of *Ulysses*, Switaj has recently suggested that his career was more vocational than has been supposed, and that his anti-authoritarian or non-authoritarian narrative methodologies stem directly from his experience of teaching English in the Berlitz Schools in Pola and Trieste<sup>250</sup>. Indeed, the Berlitz method is immersive and conversation-based rather than rules-based, which relates strongly to the experience of reading *Finnegans Wake*; it was a reaction against the grammar grind of learning Greek and Latin in schools.<sup>251</sup>

The prevalence of neologism in *Finnegans Wake* means that the clamour of possible signification is almost deafening:

the crame of the whole faustian fustian, whether your launer's lightsome or your soulard's schwearmood, it is that, whenas the swiftshut scareyss of our pupilteachertaut duplex will hark back to lark to you symibellically that, though a day be as dense as a decade, no mouth has the might to set a mearbound to the march of a landsmaul, in half a sylb, helf a solb, holf a salb onward the beast of boredom, common sense, lurking gyrographically down inside his loose Eating S.S. collar is gogoing of whisth to you sternly how – Plutonic loveliaks twinnt Platonic yearlings – you must, how, in undivided reawlity draw the line somewhawre).<sup>252</sup>

The passage seems to hint at an interesting paradox in education that whilst the ambition of scholarship is to advance human understanding (suggested by the words 'faustian fustian', 'no mouth has the might to set a mearbound', 'half a sylb, helf a solb, holf a salb onward', 'undivided reawlity'), its methodology involves delimitation and containment ('the beast of boredom, common sense', 'you must... draw the line somewhawre', 'the swiftshut scareyss of our pupilteachertaut duplex', and the jocoserious parody of a traditional recital of Tennyson's 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' which will 'lark back to you

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<sup>248</sup> McCourt, p. 21.

<sup>249</sup> Ellmann, p. 198-9

<sup>250</sup> Switaj, E., *James Joyce's Teaching Life and Methods* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. xiii.

<sup>251</sup> Stieglitz, G., 'The Berlitz Method' in *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 6 (1955), p. 300.

<sup>252</sup> Joyce, J., *Finnegans Wake* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 292.

symbolically'). Even in the process of categorising these phrases the meaning of the words will not stay still under closer scrutiny. 'Pupilteachertaut' implies that learning is not necessarily a top-down process since the pupil is both taught and a teacher, and that both pupil and teacher co-teach each other in 'duplex' and that the interwovenness of the process is so complex as to be 'tight' ('taut'). But the 'loose Eating S.S. collar' suggests that even here there is something potentially restrictive, collaring, about the delineating process of scholarship itself. There may also be a reference to the 'raw edge of [Stephen's] turned and jagged collar'<sup>253</sup> as an increasingly shabby and impoverished student at Belvedere, conveying in stark terms the connection between money and educational opportunity in turn-of-the-century Dublin, despite the efforts of various philanthropists and politicians; Joyce's father had secured him a place, but only by virtue of the generosity of the Jesuit community there<sup>254</sup>. 'Symbolically' implies that the allusion to Tennyson is to be taken symbolically in some way, perhaps the military image suggests a scholar's self-sacrificing, blind obedience to some blundered imperative to charge headlong into the unknown; or, since we are perhaps 'larking back with a belly laugh' to a classroom recitation of this poem, is the reactionary methodology of recitation presented as being hilariously at odds with the progressive impetus of scholarship, which is therefore laughably presented as a kind of charge, half a syllable (or rather a mimetically shortened 'syllb') at a time? Morton argues that the allusion is part of a wider set of allusions to the poem throughout the novel which convey Joyce's invective against militaristic imperialism, drawing on Tennyson's own misgivings about the battle of Balaklava in that poem.<sup>255</sup> However we interpret the words, the identification of a precise meaning is deferred through neologism, making the process of reading even more active and creative than in *Portrait* or *Ulysses*. Interestingly, the chaotic interplay of familiar and unfamiliar parts of words could emulate both early and higher learning processes: the discovery of new words, sounds and ideas, whether in terms of general practical vocabulary or a specialist academic register. The way we experience the pursuit of meaning through the labyrinth of signification is in itself scholarly in its dynamic.

Joyce's Jesuit education is still present in the structural allusions of *Finnegans Wake*; the narrative depicts a fall and subsequent forgiveness or resurrection, and the novel runs for only two words before the first biblical allusion is made:

riverrun, past Eve and Adam's...<sup>256</sup>

The method of using religious allusions comically and bathetically is continued from *Ulysses*, and the fall is onomatopoeically delivered in an immense parenthesis:

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<sup>253</sup> Joyce, J., *Portrait*, p.83.

<sup>254</sup> Bradley, p. 81.

<sup>255</sup> Morton, p. 63.

<sup>256</sup> Joyce, J., *Finnegans Wake*, p. 3.

(bababadalgharaghtakamminarronkonnbronntonnerronntuonnthunntrovarrhounawntoooord  
enenthurnuk!)<sup>257</sup>

His religious education is one of many allusions on which Joyce now draws. Vico's theory of 'ricorso' in history provides another structural motif. Newspapers and histories also feature as part of the allusive fabric. But writing itself becomes the subject in this novel. Early on, the narrator, "Shem the penman", tells us that the writing will evoke a variety of different readings because of its continual use of portmanteau words:

Every word will be bound over to carry three score and ten topsical readings throughout the book of Doublends Jined (may his forehead be darkened with mud who would sunder!)<sup>258</sup>

The quiz in Book I, part 6, is there to encourage the reader to engage with the riddling methodology of the novel. It begins with:

So?

Who do you no tonigh, lazy and gentleman?<sup>259</sup>

It gently mocks the reader for his inferred wearied objection to the hundred-page onslaught of near-nonsense – we can either be "lazy" or a "gentleman" – and then proceeds to ask questions about the characters without leaving Joyce's language of instruction, following the advice of the textbook he used in his teaching in Pola and Trieste. Joyce is proving that learning is something that can happen even in the absence of the certainty provided by conventional discourse; he provides his reader with the sense of their ability to deduce meaning in a world of strange language, reintroducing them to a feeling of discovery lost in the early stages of language acquisition.

### Part Three: Joyce and Education

In a literary market flooded with school and campus fiction, Joyce accomplishes great innovation whilst never really leaving the world of education. His novels are saturated with allusions to his reading from school, university and beyond; they invite the reader to puzzle out their riddles like mathematical equations; they employ educational motifs like recitation, subject-specific vocabulary, quizzes, comprehension, the chanting of declensions; they use educational settings like schools, universities, college hospitals and libraries. Joyce's education also provides many of the characters and stories in the novels. Through his presentation of education, Joyce shows the whole process from start to finish and then, in *Finnegans Wake*,

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

brings us by a commodious vicus of recirculation back.<sup>260</sup>

Joyce expresses his age's preoccupation with developing educational provision through his re-rendering of school fiction to the extent that he risks repeating Kelly's recent novel about Clongowes Wood. His decision to use a less conventional, and increasingly multi-directional and suggestive style in his work indicates that his purpose is rather larger than that of these other novels. Indeed, his more conventional style in *Stephen Hero*, the jettisoned draft manuscript of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, implies that the developing sophistication of the free indirect discourse he ultimately chose is part of the novel's meaning itself; the development of the person is shown through the narrative voice, not merely asserted or described<sup>261</sup>. In *Portrait* the voice is one which revolves around ideas of difference: defining things through difference is the way Stephen learns about the world, and the way he creates a space for himself within it. Throughout the novel, repetition and emulation are continual features which remind the reader of the pedagogical methods used in his schools: recitation, the chanting of grammatical cases or prayers, the catechism, and others. With each repetition, a new context creates a difference in meaning or tone. In *Ulysses*, education continues to be presented through the use of a free indirect style, but the narrative centre shifts; this broadens the range of characters and situations with which the reader may empathise, and which may engage the reader's critical apparatus. The style also becomes more challenging than in *Portrait*, and the reader is compelled to identify the genre or the style of writing in order to explore the relationship between the playfully subversive narrative voice, the surface narrative and the overarching *Odyssey* metaphor. Difference is still crucial here, but its function is distinct.

In the English Literature examination papers for 1937 of the University of London, the *Modern Literature from 1880* was an optional paper first offered to students that year. James Joyce appears immediately in this paper, as do Eliot and Woolf, although Joyce could readily be the subject of at least three questions, unlike the other two. The following questions could all be answered with Joyce as their focus:

4. Give a particular account of the work of any important modern Irish writer.

7. What innovations in structure or psychological method do you find in the work of any two of the following: Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Dorothy Richardson, E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence.

9. Survey the decline of the essay or the rise of the short story since 1880.

Since Joyce had published *Ulysses* in 1922 the novel had been in circulation only in magazines and abroad in Paris, New York and Hamburg until its eventual thousand-copy publication in Britain in 1936 by the Bodley Head<sup>262</sup>. This means that the most readily usable texts for students answering these

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>261</sup> Lanser, S., 'Stephen's Diary: The Hero Unveiled', in *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1979), p. 418.

<sup>262</sup> Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, p. lxxxiii.

questions on Joyce might have been *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and *Dubliners* (1914), although it is also possible that the students could have been excited enough by the controversy caused by the banning of *Ulysses* that they took it up eagerly in time for their final examinations in June 1937. The fact that the focus is on psychology in one question highlights that the early scholars are aware that an important focus of the fiction of the High Modernists is the way in which life occurs to the thinking and learning mind, and are finding ways to express this connection.

In 1939, 'Consider and compare the contribution to modern prose fiction of any two of the following...' was the next question to include a reference to Joyce. The last question also had an implicit comparative element, and it is interesting to note that for a writer in whose work we can find so much stylistic focus on difference and association that the first questions which occur to the examiners to ask have to do with qualitative contrasts, and of the kind that Joyce himself was asked in his Intermediate exams at school. The 1940 paper contains only a general question on the condition of Irish literature providing an opportunity to write on Joyce, but in 1941, Joyce is specifically singled out as one author whose 'intrinsic importance' is to be examined, and this theme continues in subsequent years. These lists of authors in the first few years repeatedly group Joyce with Woolf, Forster, Conrad and James, highlighting the fact that in the early years of formal degree study of English Literature the more 'difficult' novelists are already considered as a distinct group: for one such list, the topic in 1944 was that the modern novelist considered the novel more as a work of art than as a criticism of life, addressing a topic raised by one of Joyce's classmates about the way in which George Dempsey would make literature more than a question of books but something that intersected with life. This theme returned in 1950 and 1951 in questions about the value of Joyce's technical virtuosity or, in the words of the 1950 question, the possibility of Joyce or Forster having 'too much art'.

Joyce's work is educative and framed so as to be analysed and thought about. His novels had an immediate place in the academic canon for the modern period, and he was placed by the faculty in the same grouping as writers often deemed to be difficult; Conrad, James, Woolf, Forster, Richardson. The questions asked have to do with the nature of his contribution to the modern novel, and compare his art with others in a way that is reminiscent of his own education and, indeed, the play fight over Byron and Tennyson in *Portrait*. While the fiction itself seems to move in some senses from difference to the deferral of meaning, then, scholarship about the fiction remains concerned primarily with the ordinary business of estimation, categorisation, classification, and evaluation. It is precisely this distinction which Joyce queries throughout his work as he moves from presenting the nature of early learning to presenting that pre-educational world in which the sense of the 'totality' of things has yet to be arranged into its linguistically determined sets. While Eliot is given a variety of questions, including for instance Christianity and religious symbolism (1946), Joyce, who writes explicitly about Jesuit education at school and university, has no such questions, and the educational establishment remained

focused on his style throughout the 1940s and early 1950s. The university at that moment was concerned exclusively with 'finished' works of art rather than 'Work in Progress' in important senses: and this may be the reason why the focus remains the style. *Finnegans Wake* was called 'Work in Progress' until its publication in 1939, and it is this notion of progression and deferral of conclusive meanings that seems to have been so alien to the first students of the modernists, and yet so tantalising that Joyce returns frequently to the University of London's examination paper.

The experience of reading Joyce is in some ways more educative than the experience which Joyce himself had when learning at school and university. An interesting experiment would be to apply Bloom's taxonomy and Jensen's Level 1 and 2 cognitive processes analysis to the experience of reading Joyce. Applying Bloom to *Portrait*, first we know that we are dealing with a narrator who is mimicking the speech of an infant and then possibly that the voice is Irish. Next we could say that we comprehend that this is part of a pattern because the speech changes as the narrator goes to school in the first few pages and then we might say we apply this understanding when we notice that the writer is trying to help us experience this alongside him and relate to his story more sympathetically. The analysis of this could be something which happens throughout as we ask why sympathy is so important to our response to this character in what it can tell us about the learning process itself, or the nature of Jesuit education, or how questions of Irish politics play out on a personal level. In doing so we may realise that our knowledge of these related subjects is insufficient and that in order to push our analysis further we will need to do some research to supply more material for synthesis; it is this stage which is crucial for modernist writers and their relationship to education. There has to be this friction in order to spark scholarly creativity, and it is evidently quite intentional in each of the authors considered here as well as Joyce. When this synthesis happens it may, for instance, become more apparent why repetition and imitation are such fundamental parts of the technique beyond the use of free indirect speech; educative processes are a significant part of the novel's focus. Out of this synthesis the reader may begin a process of evaluation in which Joyce's method is connected to his purposes in commenting on how the tools of indoctrination can be readily turned to the purposes of self-education and liberation. Here we might also add Jensen's Level 1 and 2 cognitive processing tiers to refine our responses in the analysis to synthesis movement, in which purely associative thinking must be modified by conceptual or comparative thinking to arrive at more relevant or accurate answers, that is, to avoid the pitfalls of Stephen's thought processes which are quite chaotically associative with fairly sporadic conceptual refocusing. In comparison with the kinds of question Joyce had to sit in his exams, and the kinds of task he had to complete in his schoolwork, the thought processes in simply responding to stimulus in style and structure, references and allusion, are demonstrably more educative; and even if we do not accept Bloom's taxonomy exactly or Jensen's ideas of cognition, the work itself in its form and content is a textual teacher or mentor encouraging learning.



Samuel Beckett's famous line 'habit is a great deadener' evokes something of the spirit of Joyce's enterprise. But Joyce plays with the outward forms of habit, such as imitation, parody, repetition, predictive association, conventional literary assumptions, cliché, the canon, conventional forms, etc., in order to actually use literary habit to reinvigorate the reader and to turn us from consumers into learners, to keep us busy for the next few centuries. In doing so, he turns his education on its head and progresses ever further back into a chaotic language acquisition stage in which readers become more equal in that not even the most scholarly of readers can readily make linear sense of the text. Carey is mistaken when he suggests that mass man is ejected from Joyce's writing; there is no such thing in the work at all, and if there were, it would be an entirely different work more reminiscent of Forster's *Howards End*, which Carey also criticises for being insufficiently sympathetic. The true antagonists of Joyce's writing are incuriosity and prejudice, both of which involve the principle of an unwillingness to learn, to *self-educate*.

## Chapter 2:

### T. S. Eliot

#### Part One: The Education of T. S. Eliot

##### The Eliots in Education

‘Real education is self-education’<sup>263</sup> was the academic mantra of Abbott Lawrence Lowell, whose inaugural lecture as Harvard’s President in 1909 would have just antedated Eliot’s departure from the college for Europe. Lowell was aligning himself with his predecessor, Charles Eliot (a relative of the poet’s), who had masterminded the implementation of the elective system thus broadening the Harvard curriculum from a predominantly classical one to a more modern one. Charles Eliot had also spearheaded Harvard University’s foray into canon formation, *The Five Foot Shelf*, a collection of important and affordable works in English, or translated from Latin or Greek. Self-education series were established and widely available by the time Eliot began publishing his allusive poetry.

Charles Eliot’s *The Five Foot Shelf of Books* or *Harvard Classics* series, published in 1909, just before Eliot’s departure for Europe, included writers like Benjamin Franklin, notably taking pride of place in volume 1 over Plato in volume 2; selected works by Milton, Marlowe, Homer, and, in volumes 40, 41 and 42, a selection of ‘English Poetry’. The *Loeb Classical Library* of 1912, published by Harvard University Press three years after Charles Eliot’s *Harvard Classics* series, was another harnessing of the reins of mass production for educational purposes, making the classics accessible via facing-page translations of the original texts to a wider audience.<sup>264</sup> James Loeb himself had graduated from Charles Eliot’s Harvard in 1888, and Sheets writes of a continuing ‘genteel tradition’<sup>265</sup> of patricians who believed in both the social utility and the innate necessity of cultural literacy.

American educational histories such as *New Essays on ‘The Education of Henry Adams’* by John Carlos Rowe, *Expanding the American Mind* by Beth Luey and *The Battleground of the Curriculum* by W. B. Carnochan make the popularisation of literary culture and the new centrality of the humanities in curricula their focus, and they reveal the scale of the demand within the literary market for these kinds of works. Charles Eliot initially mentioned his idea for a five-foot shelf of books as ‘a good substitute for a liberal education’ in a speech to an audience of working men<sup>266</sup>, which suggests that the readership was intended to be broader than academics and students; it was to provide the elements of a liberal education to anyone who had the curiosity to pursue it, regardless of demographic

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<sup>263</sup> Chase, G. H., ‘Real Education is Self-Education: The Academic Principles Realised by Mr. Lowell during His Presidency of Harvard’, in *The Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 4, No. 6 (1933), p. 283.

<sup>264</sup> Sheets, K. B., ‘Antiquity Bound: The Loeb Classical Library as Middlebrow Culture in the Early Twentieth Century’, in *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2005), p. 149.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150-1.

<sup>266</sup> Kirsch, A., ‘The Five Foot Shelf Reconsidered’, in *The Harvard Magazine* (November - December 2001), p. 52

differences; Arnold Bennett offered something similar when he produced a reading list, fully costed, in his *Literary Taste: How To Form It*, in 1909<sup>267</sup>. Charles Eliot had no plan to publish this collection until the publishers Norman Hapgood and William Patten for P. F. Collier took him at his word and suggested it: they went on to sell 350,000 copies in the first twenty years,<sup>268</sup> indicating that there was significant commercial demand for Cousin Charles' canon, so this self-education series was widely read by non-academic readers. Eliot's own family was already involved in the process of widening access to literary education: Eliot's poetry can be read as an extension and development of this principle. Even if the market was interested in forming 'taste', as Bennett's title suggests, Eliot's poetry was interested in using this to inspire dynamic and continued learning.

The biographers Gordon, Ackroyd and Crawford all highlight the intellectual influence of Eliot's mother, Charlotte, who had been a schoolteacher. Her college testimonial described her as a scholar of 'unusual brilliancy'<sup>269</sup>. She wrote devotional poetry throughout her life: Gordon suggests that 'her gift is didactic'<sup>270</sup>, contrasting her poetry with the 'freshness' of her son's, but since Gordon's notion of Eliot's creation of the reader<sup>271</sup> implies educational power, which provides the inspiration for my argument for high modernists more generally, her son's poetry is here distinguished as educative but less didactic. Charlotte published the biography of the poet's grandfather William Greenleaf Eliot and dedicated it to her children 'lest they forget': Eliot attended a school his grandfather founded, Smith Academy from 1898 to 1905, and his English programme there is discussed in this chapter. His grandfather had also founded Washington University (initially called Eliot Seminary), an Academy of Sciences, and a girls' school, the Mary Institute. A portrait of him hung in the gallery of relatives at his home, and Eliot said he 'rules his son and his son's sons from the grave'<sup>272</sup>. The Eliots, like the Lowells, were Boston Brahmins<sup>273</sup>, that class of New England gentry whose custodial influence manifested itself in educational projects such as the foundation of universities and schools across the states.

After Smith, Eliot took a preparatory year at Milton Academy, whose course is considered alongside Smith's later. He attended Harvard from 1906 to 1910, the Sorbonne in 1910 for his Master of Arts, and back to Harvard in 1911 for his doctorate; in 1914 a travelling fellowship took him to Oxford to complete his thesis on F. H. Bradley, whose 'finite centres' of experience<sup>274</sup> push solipsistic and fragmentary depictions of the self in poems like *The Waste Land*, which refers to Bradley in its

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<sup>267</sup> Bennett, A., *Literary Taste: How to form it*. (New York: George H. Doran, 1909).

<sup>268</sup> Kirsch, A., p. 52.

<sup>269</sup> Ackroyd, P., *T. S. Eliot* (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 19.

<sup>270</sup> Gordon, L., *The Imperfect Life of T. S. Eliot* (London: Virago, 2012), p. 10.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, p.146.

<sup>272</sup> Ackroyd, p. 16.

<sup>273</sup> Archambeau, R., 'T. S. Eliot and the Vanishing Brahmin', in *The Battersea Review*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (2013).

<sup>274</sup> Ackroyd, p. 69-70.

‘Notes’<sup>275</sup>. This chapter suggests that Eliot conceives of education and educative structures as the scaffolding for bridging gaps between these Bradleyan spheres, unifying culture through learning. There is an interesting analogue between the humility required in learning and the humility advocated in *The Waste Land*; that which is necessary in Vedic and Augustinian ideas of selfless love. His university career has been thoroughly examined by others such as Gray, McDonald, and those with specific author and text focuses, and this thesis will not rehearse this work. While he was destined for a career as a Harvard philosopher, after meeting Ezra Pound in London through a mutual friend, Conrad Aiken<sup>276</sup>, he ultimately engaged with education in arguably more impactful ways in his career as a poet, university extension lecturer and public intellectual; this thesis sees this as a move which actually took him closer to the educational ethos of his family, not further away.

Crawford points out that Eliot’s father, brother and sisters were all well-educated, too. Eliot’s father casually quoted Latin around the house, and surrounded himself with books, having harboured a love of writing poetry from his youth, and re-read Greek authors in the original in his retirement<sup>277</sup>. His elder brother Henry studied at Washington University, Harvard, and then Harvard Law School, and became sufficiently financially successful to be able to support Eliot generously in London later on. He says, ‘Tom grew up in an idealistic, bookish household where knowledge of saints and martyrdoms was readily taken for granted.’<sup>278</sup> Education formed the very pattern of his character as ‘an Eliot’. Eliot’s informal education, given such a family environment, started very early and continued throughout school and university, and it endured his careers in banking, teaching and publishing. It was so powerful that even his early informal reading was purportedly axiomatic in his development as a poet; Eliot said in a *Paris Review* interview that the formative moment came when he read Edward Fitzgerald’s *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*.<sup>279</sup> Not only this, but we can hear echoes of this poem in his first great published poem, ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’:

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!  
Smoothed by long fingers,  
Asleep... tired... or it malingers,  
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me...  
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me...<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Ricks, C., & McCue, J., *The Annotated Text: The Poems of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I (London: Faber and Faber, 2015), p. 77.

<sup>276</sup> Ackroyd, p. 55.

<sup>277</sup> Crawford, R., *Young Eliot* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2015), p. 14.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>279</sup> Eliot, T. S., ‘The Art of Poetry I, T. S. Eliot’ (interview by Donald Hall), *Paris Review*, 21 (1959), p. 49.

<sup>280</sup> Eliot, T. S., *The Complete Poems and Plays*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 15.

There was a door to which I found no key:  
There was a veil past which I could not see:  
Some little talk awhile of me and thee  
There seemed - and then no more of me and thee.<sup>281</sup>

The echo is more than linguistic; it carries with it the same ideas as the original: of the passing of time, the transience of life and love, the certainty of death, and the veil between one consciousness and another. But Eliot's informal reading has received more critical attention than his formal education.

### T. S. Eliot's Schooling

Eliot's formal education was a wide-ranging, progressive and rigorous private American education. At Smith he studied, according to his own transcript in a letter sent from his mother to Milton in April 1905, elementary courses in English, French, Latin, Greek, Algebra, Plane Geometry, Physics, and Greek and Roman History for the Harvard exam, and advanced courses in Greek, Latin, French and English. He also took courses in German, History, 'Trig. and Phys.' and Chemistry.<sup>282</sup> His curriculum is broader than that of his contemporaries at public schools in England, and the same arguments that have been made about Joyce's diverse frame of reference creating nodes of connection with a wider variety of readers from across the social spectrum is therefore equally applicable to Eliot. Crawford's observation that Eliot's was a 'markedly literary education'<sup>283</sup> is a further tie which binds him to the Jesuit-educated Joyce; one important difference being that Eliot, like Woolf, like public school elites, studied Greek.

Robert Crawford has recently identified Eliot's English textbooks: *Palgrave's Golden Treasury*, Herrick and Damon's *Composition and Rhetoric for Schools*, Curd's *A New Method in English Analysis*, Adam Sherman Hill's *The Principles of Rhetoric*, and Henry Pancoast's *Introduction to English Literature*. An analysis of these textbooks offers new background information which casts original educational perspectives on the poetry.

### *Herrick & Damon: 'Composition and Rhetoric for Schools'*

*Composition and Rhetoric for Schools* by Robert Herrick and Lindsay Damon<sup>284</sup>, was a relatively new textbook published in 1899, the year after Eliot enrolled at Smith. The authors begin by suggesting that at first the pupil be 'encouraged to write freely, even unconsciously at first, to form habits of thought and of invention before his expression is minutely criticised and pruned.'<sup>285</sup> The

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<sup>281</sup> Fitzgerald, E., *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (London: T. N. Foulis, 1905), stanza xxxii.

<sup>282</sup> Eliot, V. and Haughton, H.(eds.), *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Vol. 1*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 5.

<sup>283</sup> Crawford, p. 56.

<sup>284</sup> Herrick, R., & Damon, L., *Composition and Rhetoric for Schools* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1899).

<sup>285</sup> Herrick and Damon, p. vi.

relative neatness of most of Eliot's manuscript papers, with a few emendations per page, and the polished state of even the typescripts<sup>286</sup> for *The Waste Land* which rarely have 'x's or brackets, and which were written at a time of great personal suffering, suggests that Eliot heard the lines first, thought about them carefully, drafted them out, and added a few alternative word choices or revisions later. He critiques the work at a later date, having written freely, though not unconsciously. The method of the rhetoric textbook is discernible in the creative process.

It is a process which includes a teacher of sorts: the facsimile and transcript of *The Waste Land* contains pages which are heavily edited by Pound, but only lightly edited by Eliot where we have been supplied with the manuscripts. McDonald has spoken of Pound and Eliot as 'educators'<sup>287</sup> in their poetry and I agree, but I would suggest that Pound is a teacher of poets, whereas Eliot's educational range is broader. Valerie Eliot's rendering Pound's corrections in red<sup>288</sup> is quite adroit. Only eight lines remain at the end of an original ninety-two line 'Death By Water'<sup>289</sup>. All that Pound writes on the manuscript of 'Death By Water' is, 'Bad - but can't attack until I get typescript', the rest is crossings out.<sup>290</sup> That the manuscript is immaculate may be due to the fact that it was copied longhand at Lausanne from an original written at Margate Sands which no longer exists<sup>291</sup>, but that it contains no corrections on second draft is curious; perhaps far from 'connect[ing] nothing with nothing' he connects his childhood holidays sailing around the New England coast with the symbolic death of the Phoenician sailor, and expresses a desire to escape from the everyday clamour of the world of the unreal city, 'the profit and loss'. Eliot would seem to be ineffectually at odds with his teacher here, but Pound's repeated imprecations in late January 1922 to excise this more anecdotally-based material seems to have rendered the moment quieter, more reflective, less personal, more universally applicable, more focused on the symbol, the image, than the story. Eliot defended his initial version, saying that he accepted criticism 'so far as understood'.<sup>292</sup> According to Eliot it had been vetted by Pound three times in its longer form, but finally the 'superfluities' had to go<sup>293</sup>: the text itself was subject to schoolmasterly assessment according to Pound's modernist mark scheme, 'A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste' and it fell down on the objective to 'use no superfluous word'.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Eliot, V. (ed.), *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts* (London: Harcourt, 1971); also Rainey, L., *Revisiting 'The Waste Land'* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

<sup>287</sup> McDonald, G., *Learning to be Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 136.

<sup>288</sup> Eliot, V. (ed.), *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts*.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.* p. 55.

<sup>291</sup> Gordon, L., 'The Waste Land Manuscript', in *American Literature*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (1974), 563.

<sup>292</sup> Gordon, L., *The Imperfect Life of T. S. Eliot*, p. 183.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182-3.

<sup>294</sup> Rainey, L. (ed.), *Modernism: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), p. 95.

Eliot's early composition showed the same imitative tendency as his published poetry. His favourite English teacher at Smith, Mr Roger Hatch, seasoned his praise with suspicion of plagiarism when presented with his first publicly presented poem, saying he 'commended' the poem 'warmly' but also asked 'if [he] had had any help in writing it'<sup>295</sup>:

If Time and Space, as Sages say,  
Are things which cannot be,  
The sun which does not feel decay  
No greater is than we.  
So why, Love, should we ever pray  
To live a century?  
The butterfly that lives a day has lived eternity.

The flowers I gave thee when the dew  
Was trembling on the vine,  
Were withered ere the wild bee flew  
To suck the eglantine.  
So let us haste to pluck anew  
Nor mourn to see them pine,  
And though our days of love be few  
Yet let them be divine.<sup>296</sup>

Hatch's comments suggest his recognition of the echoes of Marvell, Donne, Jonson, Charlotte Brontë, Dickinson; the blending of these different voices is distinctly Eliotesque. Like the poems in Joyce's *Chamber Music* or the poem Stephen composes in *Portrait*, the verse depends on the precision of the echoes of these earlier writers and forms. Hatch very cautiously authorises Eliot's allusive method at the same time as he warns against one of the possible objections to it. Indeed, Eliot suggested that one reason for supplying 'Notes' to *The Waste Land* was to 'spike the guns of critics of my earlier poems who had accused me of plagiarism'<sup>297</sup>; and this was a method which had been employed in his class assignments, and also in playful parody in his own writing at home in the *Fireside* magazines of 1899<sup>298</sup>.

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<sup>295</sup> Eliot, T. S., 'American Literature and Language' (1953), in *To Criticise the Critic* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), p. 45.

<sup>296</sup> Eliot, T. S., *The Complete Poems and Plays*, p. 590.

<sup>297</sup> Eliot, T. S., 'The Frontiers of Criticism', in *On Poetry and Poets* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2009), p. 121.

<sup>298</sup> Crawford, p. 43.

*Curd: 'A New Method in English Analysis'*<sup>299</sup>

Eliot's principal at Smith, Charles Curd, had in a sense composed no new method, merely an old method for a new subject: the classical grammar grind was here transposed into English. Crawford notes that from Curd's (and Hill's) books, Eliot would have become initially familiar with canonical literature in 'snippets' and that 'years later the use of resonant quotations became part of his allusive compositional technique'<sup>300</sup>. The diffuse nature of most this material makes it difficult to shepherd into a line of argument; it is the aggregate which makes up the foundational material on which Eliot's later learning rests.

The textbook finishes with a series of practice sentences; a-hundred-and-thirty-one quotations from a range of writers, a few of which are repeated from elsewhere in the textbook. The selection itself is revealing. It is canonical: thirty-two of the quotations are from Shakespeare, and the next most popular source is Byron with seven, followed by Milton with six; five of the quotations are anonymous, four are from Cowper and Colton, and Pope has three. It is classical: five quotations are translations from classical sources (Cicero, Seneca, Cato, Martial and Publilius Syrus). It is continental: La Rochefoucauld<sup>301</sup> with two, Lavater with two, and Rabelais, Melancthon, La Bruyere, Gresset, and Van Knebel, each with one. It is scriptural: the Bible has just one, although theology and scripture featured quite heavily in the earlier exercises. Eliot's grammar book blends sources in a polyphonic way reminiscent of reading annotated guides to his poetry. These 'Sentences for Practice' at the end of the textbook give the names of their sources, while the quotations in the sixty chapters of exercises are left unattributed, impressionistic, though many are fairly well known. The preface acknowledges that the textbook is not purely for purposes of instruction in grammar but also for the Arnoldian moral, cultural or social education of the pupils:

While the sentences throughout this book have been selected with careful regard to the grammatical points involved, there has been an effort involved to find these constructions in sentences, valuable for the sentiments they contain.<sup>302</sup>

*Laconics, or the Best Words of the Best Authors* was edited and published by John Timbs in several volumes more than fifty years before Curd wrote his grammar textbook; volume three was in its fourth edition by 1831. The selection of material in these volumes, and particularly the selection of authors, is markedly similar to Curd's though not identical. It is possible Eliot's principal may have sensibly used a mass-produced book of quotations for inspiration. The final page of his textbook contains a quotation from a now obscure writer he accurately calls Melmath, and whom Timbs refers to obliquely by his pseudonym 'Fitzosborn', and the identical quotation is simply cut by one sentence at the start by

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<sup>299</sup> Curd, C. P., *A New Method of English Analysis* (St Louis: American School Book Company, 1883).

<sup>300</sup> Crawford, p. 76.

<sup>301</sup> La Rochefoucauld is apparently one of the sources whom the curious young Eliot followed up, because he appears, named, in one of Eliot's early poems, *The Boston Evening Transcript*.

<sup>302</sup> Curd, p. iv



Curd.<sup>303</sup> Thirty-four of the sixty writers named in just this section, including especially the lesser known writers like Shenstone, Bruyere, Temple, Rowe, Chesterfield, etc. appear in the earlier work by Timbs. Curd's quotations are sometimes identical<sup>304</sup>, but in most it is as if he is reminded of his wider reading when he quotes the same authors on similar topics. Correlation is not causation, but even if this were pure coincidence, the use of the book of quotations format is significant.

The book of quotations was already current and very popular when Eliot's teachers were being educated. If Curd accomplishes something 'new' in his textbook on grammar, it is the transposition of the grammar grind from Classics to English via the synthesis of two rather humble genres: the book of quotations and the school grammar primer.<sup>305</sup> But what is important is the set of premises that Eliot absorbs while parsing: that some words are so important they have to be passed down; that the selection of material is not only necessary but desirable; that tradition is a living thing; it also gives Eliot a first taste of the Shakespeare, La Rochefoucauld, Milton, Pope, Byron, Cowper on whose work he would draw in his poetry.

The fact that Timbs's *Best Words of the Best Authors* appeared before Arnold's educational writing also shows that the selection of 'the best that has been thought and said'<sup>306</sup> was not only very topical but also very marketable by 1867 when Arnold delivered his *Culture and Anarchy* lectures. It is the selection of the best parts of canonical literature that makes the unassailable bastion of erudition more accessible; it is not only because of the expansion in the provision in school education and higher rate of literacy, nor only because of the availability of cheaper books, but also because of the kinds of books that were being written in this pragmatic spirit of educational fervour to bring the riches of culture to as wide an audience as possible. Eliot's allusive collage method is indebted to the educational ethos of writers, anthologists, publishers, teachers and academics who selected what morsels of their literary tradition to use to nourish and enlighten new readers and spur them into further learning. The epigraphs in Timbs's *Laconics* could be said to encapsulate the justification of Eliot's allusive method:

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<sup>303</sup> Curd, p. 203, cf. Timbs, J., *Laconics, or the Best Words by the Best Authors*, vol. 3 (London: H.G. Bohn, 1831), p. 320. 'Were I to make trial of any person's qualifications for an union of so much delicacy, there is no part of his conduct I would sooner single out, than to observe him in his resentments. And this not upon the maxim frequently advanced, "that the best friends make the bitterest of enemies;" but on the contrary, because I am persuaded that he who is capable of being a bitter enemy, can never possess the necessary virtues that constitute a true friend. — Melmath.'

<sup>304</sup> For instance, William Shenstone in Timbs, *Laconics*, Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: William Brown, first American edition: 1829), p. 218, and Curd, p. 192; Andrew Young in Timbs, *Laconics*, Vol. 3, p. 11, and Curd, p. 199; Lord Clarendon in Timbs, *Laconics*, Vol. 1, p. 86, and Curd, p. 195.

<sup>305</sup> In fact, this was suggested in the introductory 'Note the Reader' in the first American edition: a finger points to the words: 'It forms a suitable parsing book for schools'. See footnote above. (n.p.)

<sup>306</sup> Arnold, M., 'Preface', *Culture and Anarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), p. 6.

Abstracts, abridgements, summaries, &c. have the same use with burning glasses, to collect the diffused rays of wit and learning in authors, and make them point with warmth and quickness upon the reader's imagination. - Swift<sup>307</sup>

Huge volumes, like the ox roasted at Bartholomew Fair, may proclaim plenty of labour and invention, but afford less of what is delicate, savoury, and well-concocted, than smaller pieces. - F. Osborn.<sup>308</sup>

Eliot's allusions in *The Waste Land* accomplish the same excision of recondite but beautiful and culturally salutary fragments of larger works to make them more, rather than less, palatable for the reader. This premise can be accepted because it is the premise on which the marketability of the book of quotations relies, and on which the success of Curd's *New Method of English Analysis* depends. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot takes Curd's and Timbs' model of a patchwork of allusions and weaves a coherent creation of such power that it engenders and rewards a more meaningful kind of scholarship than Curd could have envisaged.

#### *Pancoast: 'An Introduction to English Literature'*

Henry Pancoast had previously published *Representative English Literature* in 1892, having been asked by his publisher, Henry Holt, to assemble a collection of representative excerpts and to arrange them in chronological order, together with some biographical and historical notes on writers ranging from Chaucer to Tennyson. The later work, *An Introduction to English Literature*, was published in 1901 in time for most of Eliot's secondary education; it excluded the literary quotations and focused on the historical background and gave some fuller biographies of the writers Bunyan, Dryden, Steele, Cowper and others.<sup>309</sup> The idea behind the first publication was to provide for the poorer classroom where the range of texts would not be affordable. Pancoast was one of Eliot's first encounters with literary criticism. While the writer professes that he has 'as far as possible, shunned controversy'<sup>310</sup>, his first words draw upon racial and nationalistic ideas which the undergraduate Eliot who ordered two volumes of Laforgue, read Baudelaire, studied eastern philosophy, and longed to travel to Europe would have treated with some scepticism:

English literature is the expression in memorable poetry and prose of the life and character of the English people. ... How have they been able to produce this literature? Not because they were naturally fond of talking like the Gauls; not because they had any peculiar talent for making verses, or any special turn for saying graceful or pretty things. English literature, like English history, is memorable and inspiring because it is the genuine expression of a

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<sup>307</sup> Timbs, Vol. 1, p. 1.

<sup>308</sup> Timbs, Vol. 3, p. 3.

<sup>309</sup> Pancoast, H., *An Introduction to English Literature* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1917, 4th edn.), p. iii-iv.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, p. iv.

great race. When a brave, earnest man, who has felt, and seen, and done much, tells you his innermost thoughts he is worth listening to; and when a nation like the English speaks to us out of its heart through its books, its books are worth reading.<sup>311</sup>

Pancoast has made a very bold opening statement for one who would avoid controversy, and Eliot would later query the idea that poetry has any personality at all to express, and his frame of reference, like Joyce's, explodes the idea of a national literature. But Pancoast contradicts himself with his own structure, which delineates what he feels are the chief divisions in English literature: 'The period of preparation: about 670 to 1400. The period of Italian influence: about 1400 to 1660. The period of French influence: about 1660 to 1750. The Modern period: since about 1725.'<sup>312</sup> The writer characterises the periods in terms of *influence*, so that whilst he praises the English for their literature, he nevertheless acknowledges where the writers take their inspiration: it tells Eliot the schoolboy that the greatest literature is the product of other influences and traditions; in a sense, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' finds its earliest expression in this inauspicious tract. A well-known passage highlights the connection:

We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors; we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but also the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously.<sup>313</sup>

Furthermore, the fact that his syllabus at Smith also included a long list of classical and French works from Virgil, Homer and Ovid to Hugo, Racine and Balzac<sup>314</sup> would have supported this more Mediterranean understanding of the canon.

After exploring the various linguistic influences on the language, Pancoast then begins his panegyric on the English race, with a family tree diagram at the top of which is the word in capitals 'ARYAN', followed by the subgroups 'Eastern', 'Classic', 'Celtic' (including Gaelic and Cymric) 'Teutonic' (including English) and 'Sclavonian'.<sup>315</sup> The seed of Eliot's alleged racism can be seen even in his English textbook, where it has no relevance to the topic, and his coarse Bolo and Sweeney verses may be expressions of this early prejudice which merges considerations of literature with those of race, in which eastern, classical and European literatures are the expressions of an Aryan culture, as distinct from Semitic or African cultures. Principal Curd's use of Froude's anti-semitic text in his *New Method*

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<sup>311</sup> Pancoast, p. 1.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>313</sup> Eliot, T. S., *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1932), p. 14

<sup>314</sup> Schofield, M., *T. S. Eliot: The Poems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 14.

<sup>315</sup> Pancoast, p. 16.

of *English Analysis* textbook<sup>316</sup> can be seen to be supported by other popular educational work used in his school, which clarifies the cultural context in which the modernists were operating. Indeed, the fostering of nationalism in the education system is an idea which will come to the forefront of the argument in the next chapter on Virginia Woolf. Racism had been spoon-fed to nearly everyone through the expanding formal schooling system. What follows is sixteen unedifying pages about national natures and temperaments, and a discussion of British geography, illuminated with occasional quotations from Shakespeare; but the other side of this is that Eliot is learning about different cultures while he is learning about English; the interconnectedness of other cultures with English is the implicit message underneath the outmoded and sententious caricature and *ad hominem*.

Since Pancoast's text is one of Eliot's criticism primers, it is interesting that their thoughts on Milton correspond. Both contrast Shakespeare and Milton, and both thus imply equivalence in terms of literary magnitude, and while Eliot's life/artifice notion is different from Pancoast's human/divine, grace/ righteousness dichotomy, the idea that Shakespeare is warm and kind, whereas Milton is cool and austere, appears to work its way into his writing. In his essay on Ben Jonson, Eliot talks about Shakespeare's characters having a 'third dimension' which is absent in other works of the age, which is born partly of their greater emotional complexity<sup>317</sup>; he also seems generally to agree with Arnold (at the same time as being admittedly infuriated by his 'patronising' tone) that one kind of poetry is 'conceived and composed in [one's] wits, and genuine poetry is conceived and composed in the soul'<sup>318</sup>, and this immediately before contemplating Shakespeare. But he also develops his ideas, and queries the simplicity of the distinction in his essays on Milton, in which he shows an awareness of the popularity of this binary in his analysis of Milton's *style*, while allowing that Milton the man is 'unsatisfactory' theologically, psychologically, morally, and generally 'antipathetic'<sup>319</sup>. He quotes his sparring partner Middleton Murry and then challenges his 'confident affirmation':

'...It is quite different with Shakespeare. Shakespeare baffles and liberates; Milton is perspicuous and constricts.'

... He appears to assert that the liberative function of Shakespeare and the constrictive menace of Milton are permanent characteristics of those two poets.<sup>320</sup>

The idea that Milton constricts is deliberately provocative, since Milton's verse was supposed to evoke liberation, and a freedom from the tyranny of rhyme and the ostentation of earlier poetry. Eliot does not

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<sup>316</sup> Curd, p. 125: Lesson XXXIX, Clauses as Subjects, Ex.255(3): 'How it found its way into the canon, smiting through and through, the most deeply seated Jewish prejudices, is the chief difficulty about it now.' The phrase can be found in Froude, J. A., 'The Book of Job', in *Essays on Literature and History* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1911) p. 84; the essay is keen to stress that Job, a model of Christian forbearance, was almost certainly a gentile.

<sup>317</sup> Eliot, 'Ben Jonson', *The Sacred Wood* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), p. 100-1.

<sup>318</sup> Eliot, 'Matthew Arnold', *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 117.

<sup>319</sup> Eliot, 'Milton I', *On Poetry and Poets*, p. 156.

<sup>320</sup> Eliot, 'Milton II', p. 170.

rise to this, but sees Murry's words as an expression of the uncontroversial standpoint of the contemporary teachers and scholars he refers to elsewhere in 'Milton II'. Nevertheless, even in his purely stylistic analysis of Milton's legacy he retains the same essential division Pancoast gave him, that Shakespeare is vital, dynamic, human, and Milton is abstract, static, remote. Words he uses about Shakespeare's writing are: 'perpetual novelty', 'the feeling of being in a particular place at a particular time', 'infuse new life'. Words he uses about Milton's writing are: 'dead language', 'artificial', 'conventional', 'tortuous'.<sup>321</sup>

Pancoast also gives Eliot some useful bibliographies in his 'study lists' at the end of the book. It is highly likely that Eliot would have independently read around in these lists, and that his teacher would have used them when deciding on which texts to focus on. Eliot, for instance, talks about how, 'in my youth I was a fervent admirer of *Culture and Anarchy*' and how he knew passages of it 'by heart'<sup>322</sup>, and Arnold's influence is acclaimed by Pancoast. As a secondary school text his *Introduction to English Literature* is impressive in comparison with today's set texts, since it includes a full history of English literature in 703 pages, critical engagement with the texts and authors, illustrative quotations, contextual influences, and an overview of the development from one author, or tradition, or period, to another. When Eliot writes his brief author studies in his essays on Dryden, Ben Jonson, Coleridge, Swinburne, Arnold, Dickens, Shelley, Wordsworth and Keats, he is in some ways emulating the form which Pancoast went through in simpler, more expository fashion when pausing in his history of English literature to reflect on precisely the same authors. Pancoast, like Eliot, makes liberal use of value judgement, but he responds to the authors in such a genuine and heartfelt way that he in some respects disproves Eliot's complaint that his contemporary culture dissociates intellectual and emotional sensibilities; Eliot's greater focus on artistic technique as crucially distinct from the personality of the poet in his essays seems to suggest that he and not his educational culture (New Critical discourse excepted) promotes this distinction.

### *Palgrave: 'The Golden Treasury'*

*The Golden Treasury* was first published in 1861 and, just like Pancoast's *Representative English Literature*, Charles Eliot's *Harvard Classics* and Timbs' *Laconics*, Palgrave sought to make his work an anthology of the best lyric poetry in the language, and it was an established school anthology by the time Eliot attended Smith Academy. Eliot's indebtedness to anthologies and books of quotations belies his avowed disapproval of them in his letter to an anthology editor in 1923 in which he said,

I am opposed to anthologies in principle. I wrote one or two letters to the *Times Literary Supplement* on this subject two years ago. I do not know why authors should make a present of

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<sup>321</sup> Eliot, 'Milton I', p. 158-9.

<sup>322</sup> Ricks, C. & McCue, J., Vol. 1, p. 433.

their works to publishers and editors, in a form which does not lend itself to understanding, and for an indiscriminating public – for if it discriminated, it would not buy anthologies. Especially as the appearance of verse in anthologies is likely to reduce the sale of the collected works of the authors included.<sup>323</sup>

The kind of anthology which Eliot seems to favour in his lecture reading lists is the kind of expository criticism alongside the texts found in works such as Lytton Strachey's *Landmarks in French Literature* (available to his students for 1s. 3d. from the *Home University Library*) or Amy Lowell's *Six French Poets*, in which the full text of selected poems is given and then explored by the critic; this format is identical to that which was used by Pancoast in his school textbook. Furthermore, Eliot seems to have softened his stance over time because in 1928 his work appears in *A Book of American Verse* edited by A. C. Ward, and in 1954 his work appears in Cecil Day Lewis' edition of *Palgrave*, an editor with whom Strong (the addressee of the above letter) composed other verse anthologies.<sup>324</sup>

The preface to the original edition explains the selection, the arrangement and the ethos of the anthology in ways which perform for the pupil Eliot the ideas which he absorbs into his artistic methodology. Of the ethos, Palgrave says,

Like the fabled fountain of the Azores, but with a more various power, the magic of this Art can confer on each period of life its appropriate blessing: on early years, Experience, on maturity Calm, on age, Youthfulness. Poetry gives treasures 'more golden than gold', leading us in higher and healthier ways than those of the world, and interpreting to us the lessons of Nature.<sup>325</sup>

For Palgrave, poetry is not just for academics, or aesthetes, or practising poets; its reach is decidedly broader, and its purpose is helpful – not as consolation or therapy – but as a kind of magic which provides what is spiritually lacking; wisdom, tranquillity, liveliness. That poetry should have this kind of power seems to be a view shared by a writer whose works can be as contemplative as *The Waste Land* and *Ash Wednesday* and as playful as *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*.

On the issue of structure, Palgrave says:

A rigidly chronological sequence, however, rather fits a collection aiming at instruction than at pleasure, and the Wisdom which comes through Pleasure ... And it is hoped that the contents of this anthology will thus be found to present a certain unity, 'as episodes', in the noble language of Shelley, 'to that great Poem which all poets, like the cooperating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world.'<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> TSE to L.A.G. Strong, 3/7/1923, *Letters, Vol. II* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 173.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>325</sup> Palgrave, F. (ed.), *The Golden Treasury* (London: 1906), p. xvii.

<sup>326</sup> Palgrave, p. xvi.

The idea of assembling selections of poetry into episodes which convey a certain unity is one which is relevant to a consideration of *The Waste Land* with its impressionistic, allusive and musical coherence. The distinction Palgrave draws between instruction and pleasure is also relevant if Eliot's educative purpose aims higher than the production of a list of authors and works for the reader to follow up to become a more informed reader. In his 1939 essay, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, Eliot makes points about the fragmentation of culture that are reminiscent of his comments about the need for a coherent understanding of tradition in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' when he says,

By destroying the traditional social habits of the people, by dissolving their natural collective consciousness into individual constituents, by licensing the opinions of the most foolish, by substituting instruction for education, by encouraging cleverness rather than wisdom, the upstart rather than the qualified, by fostering a notion of *getting on* to which the alternative is hopeless apathy, Liberalism can prepare the way for that which is its own negation: the artificial, mechanised or brutalised control which is a desperate remedy for its chaos.<sup>327</sup>

If Eliot's purpose is to instil wisdom, the emotional unity of the fragments he refers to in his work must be preeminent. Here too is the idea of a living tradition of poetry in the quotation from Shelley; poetry which becomes one poem as if from one great mind has exactly the kind of organic coherence which Eliot advocates in his considerations of poetic tradition and culture. It is an idea that Woolf also turns to at various points in her own writing.

On the issue of selection, we read:

That the pieces chosen, and a far larger number rejected, have been carefully and repeatedly considered; and that he has been aided throughout by two friends of independent and exercised judgment, besides the distinguished person addressed in the Dedication [Alfred Lord Tennyson]. It is hoped that by this procedure the volume has been freed from that one-sidedness which must beset individual decisions: but for the final choice the editor is alone responsible.<sup>328</sup>

In the production of *The Waste Land* the poet had various advisers, not least Ezra Pound and Vivienne his first wife. The amount of material rejected by the editing influence of Pound is significant, and the project was manifestly collaborative, and far from 'one-sided'. Palgrave also explains the selection process as one which uses 'popular estimate ... as a guidepost more than as a compass,'<sup>329</sup> and therefore the poems which took pride of place in this anthology themselves reflect the evolution of a broad kind of cultural consensus, though Palgrave as Professor of Poetry at Oxford would have used his understanding of the craft to ensure that his other criteria were also met, such as,

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<sup>327</sup> Eliot, T. S., *The Idea of a Christian Society* (London: Faber and Faber, 1939), p. 15.

<sup>328</sup> Palgrave, p. xiv.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid*, p. xiv.

perfection commensurate with [the poem's] aim, ... finish in proportion to its brevity,...that passion, colour and originality cannot atone for serious imperfections in clearness, unity or truth,... that Excellence should be looked for rather in the Whole than in the Parts.<sup>330</sup>

The criteria by which *The Waste Land* was first adversely criticised are apparently the criteria which were conventionally applied to critical appreciation more generally, and also the criteria by which the poem was praised by those who applauded its achievement. The selection of the poems themselves, furthermore, is also important for the same reason: it illustrates the conventional base from which Eliot was working and to which he was responding. Tennyson's apparent involvement in the choice of the poetry, together with the eminent position held by Palgrave, would have given the anthology an authoritative weight, and the ubiquity of work such as Gray's *Elegy* in classrooms would explain why Eliot's work seems so haunted by it. George Wright tabled the similarities between Gray's *Elegy* and the *Four Quartets* in his article 'Eliot Written in a Country Churchyard', saying that,

The ground is indeed similar. Both the *Elegy* and *Four Quartets* are quiet, elegiac poems, set in country places whose landscapes and remoteness from the pressures of urban life encourage in the meagrely characterised speaker-poet a train of melancholy reflections on the relation of the dead to the living, of the past (and other temporal dimensions) to the present, of time to eternity, and of himself to his world.<sup>331</sup>

It is not only the *Four Quartets* that seem influenced by it. The typist and clerk episode of 'The Fire Sermon' seems in some ways inspired by similar, though more sympathetic, considerations of the life of the poor in the *Elegy*. Interestingly, Rainey dates the third part of the poem first in the order of its composition, and Kenner noted the shared use of elegiac quatrains.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;  
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the Poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave  
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour: -  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.<sup>332</sup>

And Eliot writes:

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back  
Turn upwards from the desk, when the human engine waits  
Like a taxi throbbing waiting...

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid., p. xiv.

<sup>331</sup> Wright, G., 'Eliot Written in a Country Churchyard', *ELH*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (1976), 228-229.

<sup>332</sup> Palgrave, p. 149.



He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,  
A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare,  
One of the low on whom assurance sits  
As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.

The meter and rhyme scheme in the episode are identical, as is the contrast between the lives of the rich and the poor; both offer a reminder of death, both suggest that the work of the poor is in some ways more creditable than that of the ambitious entrepreneur. But Gray connects them primarily in terms of their shared mortality, and Eliot highlights their connectedness in the capitalist economy, drawing attention to the urban rather than the rural poor, and highlighting the frailties of his characters rather than hushing them up as Gray does in his final stanza ('No farther seek his merits to disclose,/ Or draw his frailties from their dread abode'). The echoing of ideas of 'waiting' for an 'inevitable hour' are most likely musical rather than consciously allusive, but Eliot does use this construction elsewhere too, for instance in lines such as 'the infirm glory of the positive hour' and 'the hour of our death' in *Ash Wednesday* and 'in the uncertain hour before the morning' in *Four Quartets*. But there is something of the same sentiment as in Gray's poem around each of these iterations, as all of these passages contemplate the passage of time and the certainty of death. In 'The Fire Sermon' Tiresias' remembrance of the Theban dead provides this within the same verse paragraph. In *Ash Wednesday* the two quoted examples are from the first (short) section, which repeats 'death' in the last two lines. In *Four Quartets* the line comes after the three stanzas on the deaths of air, earth, and water and fire. The motif is triggered by ideas of a similar nature, suggesting that Eliot's early reading is quietly but profoundly influential. The fact that Gray is mentioned so casually by early reviewers of the poem<sup>333</sup>, connecting various aspects of his life and artistry with Eliot's methodology, highlights how totemic his work was; and this is important, because it means that Eliot's early readers would have been more alive to these subtle connections with a poet whose work has now all but disappeared from school poetry anthologies; after all, they would most likely have had to recite it at school; crucially, therefore, it means that Eliot can rely on its influence to trigger certain connections in the mind of the reader, based on a shared frame of allusive reference from their own education.

### Eliot's Schooling: Summary

Eliot's textbooks still have yet to be explored in real detail. While their importance to Eliot's work does not compare with that of Laforgue, James, Dante and so on they offer a larger fabric of influences that can help to demythologise an intimidating scholar-poet. The sense that one should arrive at university with a knowledge of the canon is common amongst prospective English students regardless

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<sup>333</sup> Grant M. (ed.), *The Critical Heritage* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1982): p. 190, Clive Bell on shared charges of 'obscurity'; p. 232, John Middleton Murry on their shared use of literary allusion in a discussion on 'classicism'; and p. 246, Allen Tate on their 'intellectual' poetry and their inability to speak out directly.

of the assurances they are given. The application of the message of this thesis is that learning is a growing and a becoming even for Old Possum. Eliot is able to speak knowledgably about the canon and literary history partly because he was given a simple introduction to it in Pancoast. His greatest work was marked and corrected by his teacher, Pound. His difficult allusive style can be seen as a parody of his grammar book. His breadth of canonical reading can be accounted for partly through the selection of texts in *Palgrave*, and while a passage of *The Waste Land* is annotated as a Goldsmith allusion, it is all underpinned by the recitative standard, Gray. A metaphor for this message can be found in the grammar book itself: the classics are anglicised, the grammar grind is in English, the quotations come from a mass market book of quotations. The genius of Eliot is in creating a poetry which is educationally more generative than his own education out of the very materials of which it was composed.

## Part Two: Education in the work of T. S. Eliot

‘Mr. Apollinax’ is the only poem in which Eliot directly presents an academic and the world of academia. Unlike Joyce, whose narratives use vast amounts of autobiographical detail from his school and university experiences, Eliot’s work tends to refer more often to literature accessed predominantly through conventional educational sources than to the materials which might make up the very popular campus fiction of the period. These poems are no less important because they illustrate how Eliot filters his poetic voice through the prism of his education, highlighting its importance to him as a poet and recommending it to his readers as a means of reconnecting with a shattered past. Since ‘Mr. Apollinax’ is the most fully realised depiction of an academic world in the poetry, it makes sense to start with him.

### ‘Mr. Apollinax’

Ω της καινοτητος, Ηρακλεις, της παραδοξολογιας, εὐμήχανος ἄνθρωπος, - LUCIAN

When Mr. Apollinax visited the United States  
His laughter tinkled among the teacups.  
I thought of Fragilion, that shy figure among the birch-trees,  
And of Priapus in the shrubbery  
Gaping at the lady in the swing.  
In the palace of Mrs. Phlaccus, at Professor Channing-Cheetah’s  
He laughed like an irresponsible foetus.  
His laughter was submarine and profound  
Like the old man of the sea’s  
Hidden under coral islands

Where worried bodies of drowned men drift down in the green silence,  
Dropping from fingers of surf.

I looked for the head of Mr. Apollinax rolling under a chair  
Or grinning over a screen  
With seaweed in its hair.

I heard the beat of centaur's hoofs over the hard turf  
As his dry and passionate talk devoured the afternoon.  
'He is a charming man' – 'But after all what did he mean?' -  
'His pointed ears... He must be unbalanced.' -  
'There was something he said that I might have challenged.'  
Of dowager Mrs. Phlaccus, Professor and Mrs. Cheetah  
I remember a slice of lemon, and a bitten macaroon.

Based on the typeface and the paper, Lyndall Gordon dates the work to January 1915<sup>334</sup>, Lawrence Rainey to mid-April 1915<sup>335</sup>. It is the work of T. S. Eliot as a graduate student at Harvard, back from the Sorbonne and Oxford, a reader for some years of contemporary French poetry, and one engaged in the life of the university, expecting, and expected, to be an academic. So when he satirises the world of academia in this poem, he does so with a self-mocking irony which is in keeping with the tone of much of the *Prufrock* collection to which it belongs. Eliot quotes ancient Greek in his epigraph in a line he attributes to the satirist Lucian, which translates roughly as, 'O, what a novelty! Hercules, what a paradox! That very skilled man!'<sup>336</sup> But the epigraph is not present in the 1916 publication of the poem in *Poetry*, in which four of the poems which make up the 1917 *Prufrock* collection are printed.<sup>337</sup> Yet, referring to this publication later, he does not mention the loss of the epigraph at all, but does mention how Harriet Monroe 'expunged' the line 'He laughed like an irresponsible foetus.'<sup>338</sup> One question here has to do with why he seems less bothered about the loss of the epigraph, and another has to do with why this line was removed. Since the missing line creates exactly the kind of unexpected, Laforguean rhyme Eliot seems to have enjoyed in his early work<sup>339</sup> ('Channing Cheetah's'/'foetus'), it may be that the playfulness of his verse is more important to the poet than the 'parade of erudition' even when his work has precisely to do with this kind of posturing in the presentation of Bertrand Russell's intellectual celebrity.<sup>340</sup> The fact that this is avowedly about Bertrand Russell may have something to

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<sup>334</sup> Gordon, L., p. 533.

<sup>335</sup> Rainey, L., *Revisiting The Waste Land* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 15.

<sup>336</sup> Eliot, T. S., *The Complete Poems and Plays*, p. 31.

<sup>337</sup> Eliot, T. S., 'Mr. Apollinax', *Poetry*, Vol. 8, No. 6 (1916), p. 293.

<sup>338</sup> TSE to John Quinn, 14/3/1918, *Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 254.

<sup>339</sup> Crawford, p. 123.

<sup>340</sup> Gordon, L., p. 29.

do with the erasure of the line, but if Monroe were concerned about defamation issues, the reference to his 'pointed ears' would surely have had to go, too. Eliot seems to believe it had to do with the word itself. Since Russell had had an affair with his wife, Vivien, the portrayal here is particularly poignant, and foreshadows his casting of Russell as his 'Second Tempter' in his later verse drama, *Murder in the Cathedral*.

Hercules is presented in the epigraph as a wonder and a walking contradiction: according to Greek legend he is a god and a man; and according to Lucian, in conversation with a Gaul, a man of great physical strength and also oratorical skill. If the implication is that Russell has some kind of deific power, it is paradoxically supported and undercut by the poem. His laughter is at once, 'submarine and profound/ Like the old man of the sea's' and also that of 'an irresponsible foetus'; his talk is simultaneously 'dry and passionate'; he is both 'charming' and 'unbalanced'; he is both the shy 'Fragilion' and the virile 'Priapus'; the speaker looks for him both '*under* a chair' and '*over* a screen' (italics mine). The confluence of these contending characteristics defies the straightforward caricatures of scholarship in Nuttall's *Dead from the Waist Down*, indicating that the presentation of scholarship in literature has become something far more nuanced and wide ranging than it had been in the nineteenth century. His sole defining characteristic is his paradoxical nature: he is both wise and utterly infantile, dull and also inspiring, refined and socially adept yet also somehow its antithesis: insane. We can intuit from the context of the poem that Apollinax is a celebrity academic, since Professor Channing Cheetah is modelled on a variety of less vociferous (though very successful) academics, and who is one of those who remarks simply and ineffectually, at the end of the talk which 'devoured' an entire afternoon, with phrases such as, 'There was something he said that I might have challenged.' Donald Childs<sup>341</sup> gives a greater variety of possible originals for this character than Lyndall Gordon, who names Professor Benjamin Fuller (Philosophy) as the source; other academics who serve to make up this composite character are William Schofield (Comparative Literature), whom Childs says Eliot told him was his source for this character, Edward Channing (Ancient and Modern History; he also helped develop the graduate school system in which Eliot was enrolled); Childs also suggests that Eliot would have included himself in this character, since his own 'ultra-civilised' manner and his lack of any vigour or *joie de vivre* aligns him with the mere mortals of the tea party, as opposed to the god-like 'Apollinax' whose name suggests life-giving power, as indeed do the references to the old man of the sea, and to Priapus. It is possible to read Childs' research in other ways, however. It is not straightforward potency which is unsettling: he is not quite the bull in the china shop tacitly suggested by the imagery of his laughter 'tinkling among the tea cups'; the disturbance is more complex than this. It is rather the fact that Apollinax defies definition, and from the perspective of educational theory this is important:

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<sup>341</sup> Childs, D., 'Mr Apollinax', Professor Channing-Cheetah and T. S. Eliot', in *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (1986), 172-177.

Russell himself engaged in educational theory in *Education as a Political Institution* (1916) and *Education and the Social Order* (1932) in which he presented his concern that in the real business of educating individuals within a system, that system will most likely stifle individual creativity, vitality, sensitivity and intelligence. Edward Channing, by contrast, was a systematiser. The contrast between the two educational camps could hardly be more stark; on the one hand the champion of ‘individual culture’; on the other, Principal Lowell’s right-hand man, who reorganised the graduate school while he adjusted the undergraduate arrangements.

In *Education as a Political Institution*, Russell writes the following inspirational paragraph, which picks up on Emerson’s notion of ‘respect’<sup>342</sup> for the pupil in his essay on *Education*, which likewise recommends a degree of laissez-faire in teaching methods:

It is reverence that is lacking in those who advocate machine-made, cast iron systems; militarism, capitalism, Fabian scientific organisation, and all the other prisons into which reformers and reactionaries try to force the human spirit. In education, with its code of rules emanating from a government office, with its large classes and fixed curriculum and overworked teachers, and its determination to produce a dead level of glib mediocrity, the lack of reverence for the child is all but universal. ... He feels in all that lives, but especially in human beings, and most of all in children, something sacred, indefinable, unlimited, something individual and strangely precious, the growing principle of life, an embodied fragment of the dumb striving of the world.<sup>343</sup>

Since Russell is writing these words shortly after the poem is written, and shortly after the party or parties which are presented in the poem, it is reasonable to assume his ideas had been discussed with Eliot in those meetings that they had in which he had come to know him as ‘ultra-civilised’. One can also sense in passages like this the passion with which he spoke and the principled lack of concern for the forms and strictures of bourgeois society that he felt had an imprisoning effect on the human spirit. Indeed, supporting self-education, he contributed a text to the affordable *Home University Library* collection referred to by Eliot in his syllabuses.<sup>344</sup> He goes on to say:

Eton and Oxford set a certain stamp on a man’s mind, just as a Jesuit college does. It can hardly be said that Eton and Oxford have a conscious purpose, but they have a purpose which is none the less strong and effective for not being formulated. In almost all who have been through them they produce a worship of ‘good form’, which is as destructive to life and thought as the medieval Church. ‘Good form’ is quite compatible with superficial open-mindedness, with readiness to hear all sides, with a certain urbanity towards opponents. ... Its essence is the assumption that what is most important is a certain type of behaviour: a behaviour which

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<sup>342</sup> Emerson, *Education*, in *Lectures and Biographical Sketches* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co.: 1884), p. 142.

<sup>343</sup> Russell, B., ‘Education as a Political Institution’, *The Atlantic* (June: 1916).

<sup>344</sup> Russell, B., *Religion and Science* (Home University Library: 1935).

minimises friction between individuals, and delicately impresses inferiors with a conviction of their own crudity.<sup>345</sup>

Good form is fitting in. It is the opposite of that creative ‘friction’ which Eliot talks about in *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*:

As individuals we find our development depends upon the people whom we meet in the course of our lives. (These people include the authors whose books we read, and characters in works of fiction and history.) The benefit of these meetings is due as much to the differences as to the resemblances; to the conflict as well as the sympathy between persons. ... So, within limits, the friction, not only between individuals but between groups, seems to me quite necessary for civilisation. The universality of irritation is the best assurance of peace.<sup>346</sup>

He gives an illustration here discussing how Breton and Welsh cultures flourish by being divided from each other and rubbing up against French and English cultures respectively, which, ‘benefiting each other, benefit the whole.’ Too much conflict is harmful to creativity, but so is too much uniformity; he also mentions Italy and Germany here. The essay is written a long time after the poem: it seems to be his meeting with Bertrand Russell which generates the necessary friction for creativity.

Eliot presents contending ideas about education very subtly in this poem. On the one hand, there is the vital and imaginative Apollinax, who inspires the speaker to use a kaleidoscope of allusions and metaphors, on the other, there is the ‘slice of lemon, and a bitten macaroon’ by which he remembers Professor Channing Cheetah and his dowager mother Mrs. Phlaccus – acidic, insubstantial, delicately abstemious, the odds and ends left over after the event that was Apollinax. This is what he remembers, what he retains. Eliot seems to be presenting Apollinax as one whose passion for the dry detail of scholarship ignites the mind. Perhaps it is this life-giving characteristic which explains and resolves the paradoxes in the imagery: the old man of the sea, Apollo, Priapus, the allusion to a painting by Fragonard in which two men vie for the affections of a woman on a swing, the irresponsible foetus, the centaur, all convey vitality; Apollinax is metaphorically potentially everywhere, under and over, real and surreal. This is not to say that Eliot necessarily advocates eccentricity or extraversion in teaching; his audience are rather bewildered by what Apollinax says: ‘But after all what did he mean?’ So, while Apollinax is quite able to light a fire, his line of argument is apparently difficult to follow for some. It is interesting in this respect that the only direct speech we hear is that of the other academics; Apollinax’s speech remains mysterious, veiled behind the indirect report of the speaker. His speech belongs in some other realm beyond words, the ‘green silence’ under the ‘fingers of surf’. In fact, what is remembered of his speech is his personality more than his point, so it would be necessary to have some indication that his audience has learned something in order to reach such a straightforward

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<sup>345</sup> Russell, B., ‘Education as a Political Institution’, *The Atlantic* (June: 1916).

<sup>346</sup> Eliot, T. S., *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), 58-9.

conclusion. Eliot is advocating neither the bland systematisation of education, nor the reduction of education to a consideration of the personal charisma of the instructor, but something else instead. He seems to be advocating the focus on the text which the allusions prompt.

When Eliot's speaker says, 'I heard the beat of centaur's hoofs over the hard turf/ As his dry and passionate talk devoured the afternoon', according to Crawford, he refers to work by his Merton lecturer, Harold Joachim, a Bradleyan critic of Bertrand Russell's philosophy. Joachim said that Truth was composed of 'significant wholes' in which 'constituent elements reciprocally involve one another or reciprocally determine one another's being as contributing features in a single concrete meaning'.<sup>347</sup> So when Eliot characterises Russell's talk as a centaur galloping over hard turf, he is doing more than presenting Russell as a force of nature and a wonder; he is casting his talk in the same terms as the kind of paradoxes Joachim rejected as intellectual 'Centaur', combinations of ideas which do not belong together. When Eliot makes his allusion to Hercules, he refers to a man who has been deified for his great strength and skill, and a character who slew centaurs. The allusion connects him to centaurs when talking about him as a paradox, but there is a further paradox in the poem because Hercules/ Apollinax is both the slayer and the propounder of paradox. This suggests that while it is Russell's role as an academic to elucidate and explain, his celebrity, or academic 'godhood', paradoxically depends on his ability to mystify. The speaker of the poem is the only voice which is able to educate the reader about the truth of the situation and about mythology, using these constituent literary elements which make up a coherent whole. The speaker alone has a clear overview of the afternoon, both the bewilderment of the other academics and the incoherence of the speech careering over difficult matter ('hard turf').

The fact that Apollinax's title is 'Mr.' in contrast to 'Professor' or 'Dr.' suggests that he is more a personality than a university teacher, a celebrity rather than a member of a department. And the fact that he is 'charming' and his meaning is in some sense 'hidden' aligns him with the occult scholarship of Cornelius Agrippa, Johann Faustus, John Dee and other renaissance scholar-magicians that Nuttall contrasts with the dry and cheerless Victorian Casaubon of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. This is not to say the other academics or Eliot himself escape censure: the 'good form' which Russell claims stifles intellect is the reason why no one responds with queries any more incisive than 'there was something he said that I might have challenged'. Their good form is manifest in the references to the elements that make up a bourgeois tea party: teacups, lemon slices, macaroon; and the fragility of this structure is evinced through the way in which these elements are consigned the edges of the poem, and through the pseudo-mythological reference to 'Fragilion' in the amongst the 'birch trees', known for their bending trunks and their shattering bark. The name 'Fragilion' also introduces the motif of big cats continued in the name of Professor Channing Cheetah; if Apollinax is a Centaur, a weird hybrid from the realm of

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<sup>347</sup> Crawford, p. 216.

symbol and fantasy, Professor Channing Cheetah is a fragile lion, a pack animal, but one unable to be quite the big cat he should be, nibbling a macaroon where the other devours an afternoon; he is thus almost as much of a paradox as Apollinax. The reference to Fragonard is interesting because it presents these two ideas of education so *irreverently* – one stridently individualistic and passionately incoherent, the other quietly systematic and conformist. The painting depicts the shy gentleman, in shadow and away to the right, pushing the swing, and the more engaging gentleman in the light and the foreground, with his face, arm and knee directed upwards to the skirts of the flirtatious lady who has just kicked her shoe towards him and given him a glimpse of her petticoats. The metaphor is so irreverent it almost resists serious interpretation, but the poem seems to require our awareness of Channing Cheetah's propriety and utility in his pursuit of the muse, learning, and Apollinax's unseemly taking advantage of it. The exuberance of the metaphor is conveyed through its extension in the invention of an allusion in 'Fragilion' followed by the brutal honesty of the allusion to 'Priapus' when characterising the engaging gentleman. In either case, that of the composite conventional professor Channing/Fuller/Schofield or that of Russell and his beguiling celebrity, the muse of learning is something to be wooed and fought over; this is in so many ways a world away from the primness of the tea-party of the dowager Mrs. Phlaccus, whose name suggests impotence and indolent flabbiness, and also a personal connection to the Classics through the Roman poet (Quintus Horatius Flaccus)<sup>348</sup>; and yet Eliot seems to insist that learning is a *pursuit* and that both the flamboyant and the reticent are engaged in the same process of courting enlightenment, which swings first towards the one and then back to the other.

### 'Cousin Nancy'

Miss Nancy Elicott  
Strode across the hills and broke them,  
Rode across the hills and broke them –  
The barren New England hills –  
Riding to hounds  
Over the cow pasture.

Miss Nancy Elicott smoked  
And danced all the modern dances;  
And her aunts were not quite sure how they felt about it,  
But they knew that it was modern.

Upon the glazen shelves kept watch

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<sup>348</sup> Ricks, C., & McCue, J., Vol. 1, p. 443.



Matthew and Waldo, guardians of the faith,  
The army of unalterable law.

Eliot's essay on Matthew Arnold, the eminent Victorian educationalist, was a long time coming. He had lectured on Arnold in courses delivered at Southall (West London) for three years from 1916, at Ilkley (Yorkshire) and a school in Sydenham (South London) in 1917. In May 2017, Schuchard gave a centenary lecture at Senate House (which holds many of the syllabus papers) on Eliot's work for the University of London Extension Lectures in 1916-19, working with an article he wrote in 1974 on Eliot's lectures which he later developed into a chapter in his more recent *Eliot's Dark Angel* which reproduces the syllabi of Eliot's lectures.<sup>349</sup> On Arnold, Eliot proposes the following:

*Prose:*

Survey of literary criticism in England. French influence upon Arnold. Arnold as a guide to literary taste. Importance of the *Essays in Criticism*.

Arnold as a moralist. His view of society. Comparison with Carlyle and Emerson. Attitude toward Christianity. Read: *Essays in Criticism, Culture and Anarchy*.

*Poetry:*

The elegiac spirit. Technique. Quality of emotion. Classical tastes. Restraint. Read: *The Scholar Gipsy, Rugby Chapel, Dover Beach, Sonnets, Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse, Heine's Grave, Tristram and Iseult, Empedocles on Etna*.<sup>350</sup>

One could almost replace Arnold's name and titles with Eliot's. 'Cousin Nancy' expresses the connection in Eliot's mind between Arnold and Emerson, and this is something which is expressed again in the detail of the syllabus for his lectures. The structure of the syllabus echoes Pancoast, except that the subheadings on prose and poetry are reversed so that Eliot starts with the prose, and Pancoast adds to these some useful critical works on Arnold, which Eliot might have worked into his initial overview of literary criticism in England. When Eliot talks in his letters about how he has had to develop a 'knack' of getting together materials at short notice on less familiar authors for his lectures,<sup>351</sup> it is not impossible that he used Pancoast's indexes and study lists or similar introductory educational texts to help prepare. Where Ackroyd sees these programmes and says 'it demonstrates the facility with which he was already able to organise his knowledge and reading into a coherent framework'<sup>352</sup>, an educational reading reveals the structure was not developed but borrowed from Pancoast, an academic engaged in a similar endeavour. The list of key texts is also indebted to Pancoast: *The Scholar Gipsy, Tristram and Iseult, Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse, Dover Beach* and certain of the *Sonnets* are there in the

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<sup>349</sup> Schuchard, R., *Eliot's Dark Angel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 32-36.

<sup>350</sup> Schuchard, p. 34.

<sup>351</sup> TSE to Charlotte Eliot, 6/2/1918, *Letters, Vol. I*, p. 249.

<sup>352</sup> Ackroyd, p. 75.

textbook he would have used at Smith, and their reiteration by an increasingly (though latterly) influential Eliot continues the process by which a sense of a canonical oeuvre is created. *The Waste Land* may owe one of its first allusions ('Frisch weht der wind... Oed' und leer das meer') not only to Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, nor even solely to Arnold's *Tristram and Iseult*, but ultimately to Pancoast's selection of it for study, and thus its having been edged round as an important, canonical text for scholarly attention. His selection of *The Scholar Gipsy*, *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse* and *Rugby Chapel* all suggest that Arnold's thoughts on education and its purposes play a part in Eliot's thinking on the writer before he writes *Arnold and Pater* in 1930.

On Emerson, the connection is less direct because he lectured on Emerson in 1917, two years after the poem was written. We read about the problems he had in preparing this series of lectures due to the fact that 'it will involve reading a number of authors about whom I know very little', and Emerson is third in the list which follows.<sup>353</sup> Eliot also remarks in a letter just over a fortnight later that he is 'busy reading Emerson', and he continues,

He strikes me as very wordy. He has something to say often, but he spreads it out and uses very general terms; it seems more oratory than literature.<sup>354</sup>

This implies that while the allusion to 'Matthew' in the poem is one which is very securely rooted in careful reading and personal thought, the reference to 'Waldo' is a little less confident, since two years later, Eliot is giving his work serious attention possibly for the first time. However, Eliot would probably have known quite enough to make the allusion. His reference to the ten volumes of Emerson's *Journal* in his 'Supplementary Reading'<sup>355</sup> section of the syllabus does indicate that this is the level of detail that he is sifting through in preparation for the course, alongside his work for Lloyds, *The Egoist*, *The Monist* and the various other periodicals he wrote for, and the evidence of the letters and the syllabuses does indeed suggest what Schuchard finds, 'that he approached his extension lectures as seriously as he would have a course of lectures at Harvard.'<sup>356</sup> Interestingly, his Emersonian self-education continues beyond this: in a 1919 letter to his mother about what he would like from the old family home in Locust Street he asks for 'anything to do with Emerson and his circle'.<sup>357</sup> Even more interesting is that 'Emerson and his Circle' is the title of one of the 'suggestions for papers' he lists for the 1917 *Syllabus for a Tutorial Class in Modern English Literature, Second Year's Work*.<sup>358</sup> Eliot creates syllabuses that reflect his own intellectual projects; real education, for Eliot, is self-education.

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<sup>353</sup> TSE to Charlotte Eliot, 2/9/1917, *Letters, Vol. I*, p. 214.

<sup>354</sup> TSE to Charlotte Eliot, 19/9/1917, *Letters, Vol. I*, p. 218.

<sup>355</sup> Schuchard, p. 43.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>357</sup> TSE to Charlotte Eliot, 27/2/1919, *Letters, Vol. I*, p. 325.

<sup>358</sup> Schuchard, p. 44.

‘Cousin Nancy’ immediately precedes ‘Mr Apollinax’ in the *Prufrock* collection, and inhabits a similar territory in terms of its focus on perceived threats to convention. However, the last line is too often read as presenting Arnold and Emerson as formidable proponents of educational orthodoxy, frowning on the modern, taking the side of the aunts in their fretful consideration of Cousin Nancy. Neither Arnold nor Emerson represents this kind of educational thought. Both speak of education as something for the poor as much as the rich, and both speak of education as something that must inspire the pupil, tending to liberate; so do Matthew and Waldo watch Nancy’s unconventional behaviour with alarm, or do they rather caution the aunts about the dangers of over-zealous regimentation and restraint? Since the poem’s final line quotes from George Meredith’s ‘Lucifer in Starlight’, ‘the army of unalterable law’ is aligned through allusion with divinity, and from the perspective of a poet who was a self-confessed free-thinker (and whose novel *The Egoist* shares its name with the literary periodical edited by Eliot from 1916). Arnold himself was so liberal in his Christian belief that he drew fire from the recent Anglo-Catholic convert Eliot in *Arnold and Pater* in 1930 for ‘the flimsiness of his religious views’<sup>359</sup>, but the poem was written in 1915 during a time when Eliot ‘could almost repeat passages by heart’<sup>360</sup> from *Culture and Anarchy* so it is less likely that Arnold is really satirized here, and it is not likely that Kirsch is correct when he talks about Eliot resembling the teenager mocking his parents’ record collection,<sup>361</sup> because it was at this time of his life when Eliot said he had the ‘greatest respect’<sup>362</sup> for Arnold. Regardless of whether Nancy is ‘satanic’, or whether Lucifer is read sympathetically in the original, nevertheless the works of Arnold and Emerson, both of which at times invite Eliot’s critical censure, are equated with the unalterable movement of the stars, remote perhaps, but eternally present and harmonious and beautiful, a guide for travellers, and lights in the darkness.

The poem is further complicated by virtue of the fact that neither Arnold nor Emerson was dogmatic in his religious faith, so for these to be guardians of any faith is not what lends the law its unalterability; their certainty is of an entirely different colour. Their faith seems rather more to be placed in the power of education to unlock human potential, and in a natural and balanced way, which does make use of what Emerson calls ‘Drill’, but not to the exclusion of a consideration of creating whole people, offering moral education as much as intellectual training. Leaving aside for a moment a consideration of the poem, and considering instead the influence of Emerson and Arnold on Eliot, it is interesting to read what each say about how learning happens. Emerson writes of a gentleman he met in London named Sir Charles Fellows, who discovered on the Xanthus river a collection of statues, and then set about learning all he could about them, teaching himself the language, asking scholars about

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<sup>359</sup> Ricks, C. & McCue, J., p. 433.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 433.

<sup>361</sup> Kirsch, A., ‘Matthew Arnold and T. S. Eliot’, in *The American Scholar*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (1998), p. 65.

<sup>362</sup> Ricks, C. & McCue, J., p. 433.

the other artefacts he had found with them, until eventually he himself had become an expert, earning a knighthood for his work.

But mark that in the task he had achieved an excellent education, and had become associated with distinguished scholars whom he had interested in his pursuit; in short, had formed a college for himself; the enthusiast had found the master, the masters, whom he sought.<sup>363</sup>

Fellows' curiosity led him to self-educate, and the corners of the statues in the dust he first saw compare well with Eliot's allusive method and the experience of coming to know his work. Emerson speaks elsewhere of the virtue of patience in education<sup>364</sup>, as an alternative to the impatience of more 'military' methods of schooling, and this is what we see embodied in Eliot's implied instructions for reading his own collected artefacts in *The Waste Land*; since he offers notes, he would seem to accept that the poem should be treated as an object of patient study. This understanding of how education happens might also explain Eliot's hostility to editors including extracts from *The Waste Land* in anthologies, since the fragments cohere only as part of a whole, which like the discoveries of Fellows along the Xanthus, are valuable precisely because they belong to a larger collection, in that case 'the perfect model of the Ionic trophy-monument, fifty years older than the Parthenon of Athens'.<sup>365</sup>

Emerson and Eliot agree about education, even though Matthiessen is often quoted as suggesting that Eliot had a 'sustained distaste'<sup>366</sup> for his work: indeed, there are ways in which Eliot is antipathetic to Emerson, for instance in Eliot's Trinitarian Anglo-Catholicism (from 1927) as opposed to Emerson's transcendentalist notion of the 'Over-Soul'<sup>367</sup>, but in terms of education Emerson and Eliot both advocate an approach which rewards curiosity. Emerson gives examples of the kinds of non-mechanistic teaching he would condone, and interestingly this includes bringing in books which are off topic but nevertheless show evidence of a lively literary curiosity:

I advise teachers to cherish mother-wit. I assume that you will keep the grammar, reading, writing and arithmetic in order; 'tis easy and of course you will. But smuggle in a little contraband wit, fancy, imagination, thought. If you have a taste which you have suppressed because it is not shared by those about you, tell them that. Set this law up, whatever becomes of the rules of the school: they must not whisper, much less talk; but if one of the young people says a wise thing, greet it, and let all the children clap their hands. They shall have no book but school books in the room, but if one has brought in a Plutarch or a Shakespeare or Don Quixote

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<sup>363</sup> Emerson, R. W., *Education, an essay and other selections*, ed. Suzzallo, H. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), p. 22.

<sup>364</sup> Emerson, R. W., 'Education', in *Lectures and Biographical Sketches: Emerson's Complete Works, Vol. 10* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co. 1884), p. 152.

<sup>365</sup> Emerson, ed. Suzzallo, p. 22.

<sup>366</sup> Cook, R., 'Emerson's 'Self-Reliance', Sweeney, and Prufrock' in *American Literature*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (1970), p. 221.

<sup>367</sup> Emerson, R. W., *Essays*, ed. Quinn, A. H. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 147.

or Goldsmith or any other good book, and understands what he reads, put him at once at the head of the class.<sup>368</sup>

The celebration of *canonical* literary curiosity is of a piece with Eliot's artistic method, not only in terms of what he does, but also in terms of what he expects of us. Emerson has a clear sense of the overall purpose of a liberal education and is happy to subordinate curriculum requirements to that purpose. Eliot suggests something very similar in relation to his own syllabus; in his report to the Joint Committee on his first series of lectures he said:

I ask the students all to read some particular work on the current author, in order that there may always be a common basis for discussion; but when (as is usually the case) a student has very little time, I recommend further reading of one author in whom the student is interested, rather than a smattering of all. Because of the students' lack of time... it seems to me on the whole desirable to devote more time to fewer authors, even if it is necessary to sacrifice altogether some of those named in the analysis.<sup>369</sup>

Far from being a mere parade of erudition, Eliot's work celebrates the interconnectedness of literary achievement throughout tradition, and 'Cousin Nancy' is no exception in its nod to Meredith in the final line. The celebration of vitality is implicit in the verbs, imagery and allusions made throughout the poem; Nancy does things, she rides with tradition, hunting over the hills of New England, Emerson's country (not Eliot's); she also follows fashion and smokes and dances the modern dances; the army of unalterable law is made up of progressive intellectuals like Emerson and Arnold, comically personified as their books lining a glazen shelf, keeping watch, but they are progressive intellectuals whose educational ideas incorporate and rely on the classics and tradition. The authorities and Nancy blend the same qualities of convention and innovation. Just as in 'Aunt Helen', Eliot uses the motif of the maiden aunt to signify ideas of prim reticence and fretful care. This poem satirises anxieties about the development of the next generation, and the identification of Emerson and Arnold highlights this educational subject matter, since the connection around which these names turn has to do with their influence on education. The gusto of youth, like the fervour of innovation, turns in the course of time to sedate decorum, as the bound volumes on the glazen shelves attest. Tradition absorbs and is made from this energy, as age absorbs and is made from youth, and indeed vice versa. The only potential problem is the glass of the glazen bookshelf, separating the reader from tradition, such that tradition becomes something remote and lifeless: admired, but not engaged with, and then forgotten.

Allusion compels us to engage. The tone of the last line is so different it invites further exploration, an engagement with other readers, creating learning communities which use tradition to unlock the vitality of seemingly simple poetry such as 'Cousin Nancy'. Emerson himself in *The*

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<sup>368</sup> Emerson, ed. Suzzallo, p. 32-33.

<sup>369</sup> Schuchard, p. 37.

*American Scholar* voiced such a concern about scholars as ‘Man Thinking’ becoming merely bookworms, at worst, mere parrots for the views of others rather than those who engage with authors across time<sup>370</sup>, realizing that Cicero, Locke and Bacon were just young men in libraries like themselves:

Hence, instead of Man Thinking we have the book-worm. Hence the book-learned class who value books as such; not as related to nature and the human constitution, but as making a sort of Third Estate between the world and the soul.... They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system.<sup>371</sup>

Eliot aims to revivify the book and literary tradition by presenting authors jostling alongside each other contributing from their different perspectives to the same current of feeling. To see Arnold and Emerson on the bookshelf together at the end of this poem is only one example of Eliot’s extensively used collage method. Eliot invites us by means of the texture of the poetry itself to resuscitate older authors by making them part of a system, so that the reader can place themselves and their own sense of tradition within a pattern of luminaries, a constellation.

The audience of the poem is identical to the subject of the poem, the middle class patricians established in America and the emerging middle class of the British industrial revolution. Nancy Elicott is as Arnoldian as she is Emersonian. In ‘riding to hounds’ she is presented as a powerful new member of the new aristocracy. She is a member of the class which Arnold speaks about as educators in *The Popular Education of France*:

They arrive, these masses, eager to enter into possession of the world, to gain a more vivid sense of their own life and activity. In this their irrepressible development, their natural educators are those immediately above them, the middle classes. If these cannot win their sympathy or give them their direction, society is in danger of falling into anarchy.<sup>372</sup>

Putting aside our instinctive twenty-first century antipathy for the language of hierarchy, we remember that the educational culture in which Eliot grew up was shaped by Arnoldian influences. Cousin Nancy belongs to a class whose central purpose from Arnold’s point of view is paternalistic and educative, and one with responsibility for reshaping their own educational institutions, the classical and commercial academy. So when the aunts look on, uncertain about the behaviour of Nancy Elicott, it is because she seems almost too liberated to take on this almost sacred obligation herself, and her carefree existence seems to entrust too much to the more liberal, elective, student-centred kind of learning advocated by writers like Rousseau, Godwin, Arnold and Emerson. This said, Arnold’s regard for the classics is of a piece with Eliot’s own thinking about education, and in terms that seem to dispel the charges of

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<sup>370</sup> Emerson, *Essays*, ed. Quinn, p. 44.

<sup>371</sup> Emerson, *Essays*, ed. Quinn, p. 43.

<sup>372</sup> Arnold, M., *Culture and Anarchy and Other Selected Prose*, ed. Keating, P., p. 94.

intellectual elitism levelled at modernist writers by Carey in *The Intellectuals and the Masses*. Arnold writes:

In the conversations recorded by Plato, or even by the matter-of-fact Xenophon, which for the free yet refined discussion of ideas have set the tone for the whole cultivated world, shopkeepers and tradesmen mingle as speakers. For anyone but a pedant, this is why a handful of Athenians of two thousand years ago are more interesting than the millions of most nations our contemporaries. Surely, if they knew this, those friends of progress, who have confidently pronounced the remains of the ancient world to be so much lumber, and a classical education an aristocratic impertinence, might be inclined to reconsider their sentence.<sup>373</sup>

Eliot is a writer whose classical education is important to him. In fact, when he spoke about his own education, he wished there were only more of the classics, and this should be read in the context of what Eliot writes about 'classic' literature rather than as an expression of a reactionary spirit, which is curiously reminiscent of Arnold's words. In 'What is a Classic?' Eliot says,

If there is one word on which we can fix, which will suggest the maximum of what I mean by 'a classic', it is the word *maturity*. ... The maturity of a literature is the reflection of that of the society in which it is produced: an individual author – notably Shakespeare and Virgil – can do much to develop his language: but he cannot bring that language to maturity unless the work of his predecessors has prepared it for his final touch. A mature literature, therefore, has a history behind it; a history which is not merely a chronicle, an accumulation of manuscripts and writings of this kind and that, but an ordered though unconscious progress of a language to realise its own potentialities within its own limitations.<sup>374</sup>

In utilising the classics, and indeed other canonical or 'mature' literature, Eliot throughout his early poetry creates a sense of the literary history behind his words. Indeed, Arnold speaks about tradition in almost identically historicist terms as Eliot when he says,

...and the genius of the English nation is greater than the genius of any individual, greater even than Shakespeare's genius, for it includes the genius of Newton also.<sup>375</sup>

In Eliot's poetry, an accumulation of writings in the form of allusions evokes precisely this progress of a language evolving to realise its potential within very different limitations, perhaps a language struggling with an influx of vocabulary, rhythms and motifs from the world of commercial advertising and the post-industrial revolution business world, an idea which will be dealt with later in a more detailed consideration of *The Waste Land*.

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<sup>373</sup> Arnold, p. 95.

<sup>374</sup> Eliot, T. S. 'What is a Classic?' - an address delivered before the Virgil Society on the 16th October 1944, in *On Poetry and Poets*, p. 54-55.

<sup>375</sup> Arnold, p. 97.

Eliot's educationalist forbears not only influence but also appear in his poetry; and not only that, but act as English and American advocates of a blended education which prioritises the pupil's own interest and curiosity. It advocates an education which gives due regard to the classics, to history, and to great literature, even where pupils' interest leads them to discuss off-syllabus texts. In its allusive pattern, Eliot's poetry meanders curiously seeking the right blend of texts in quotation to evoke a specific idea or emotion; a method suggested in Eliot's discussion of the 'objective correlative' in his essay on *Hamlet*<sup>376</sup>. So the Godwinian, Emersonian, Arnoldian educational principle of curiosity is embodied in the naming of Arnold and Emerson in the poetry, their homely familiarity evoked through the use of given names 'Matthew and Waldo', and this principle of exploration is further suggested in the comical pushiness of Nancy Elicott, and the anxiety of middle class aunts over whether the exploration is quite right, encapsulates the whole worrisome process of shepherding and guiding the next generation of thinkers, citizens, 'guardians of the faith'. The poem is so carefully put together that the reader experiences a similarly thoughtful treatment; first we laugh at Nancy's vitality, her absurd strength, and her spirited disregard for convention, then we notice her conventional tastes, next we are amused by the aunts' decorous near-disapproval of her behaviour, then we are puzzled by the blended signals in the lines about Arnold and Emerson; as 'guardians of the faith' upon 'glazen shelves' they seem to inhabit a realm closer to the aunts, the world of convention, decorum, tradition, but as 'Matthew and Waldo', and as prominent progressive liberalisers in England and America, they seem to inhabit a realm closer to Cousin Nancy's informal, modern, liberated world. The key, as suggested before, is education, because here not only do these two thinkers collide and cohere, but also tradition and innovation, convention and experimentation, the past and the present, the previous generation and the next, the literary canon and new writers, the old world and the new, old forms and ideas and new ones, also collide and cohere. The process by which we have been led to this fusion is itself educative, because we learn about Arnold and Emerson, writers who shaped the educational culture out of which that of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries emerged, we learn about the patrician New Englanders whose educational fervour established profoundly influential academic institutions, and we are invited to learn about the inter-generational dynamics within those families in which progress *is* tradition and tradition *is* progress. The words shepherd us first one way, then the other, and tentatively, at the end, launch us out on our own to unpack the complex counterpoint of the last three lines. The tendency of the verse itself is worrisome, fretful: this is an anxious, caring aunt of a poem.

### 'Portrait of a Lady'

That Eliot's grandfather should have been a pioneer of women's education – the girls' school was, just like Smith, the boys' school, a preparation for Washington University – may be important for

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<sup>376</sup> Eliot, T. S. *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 145.



further consideration of educated female characters in Eliot's verse. Whilst Eliot's very early poetry is full of misogynistic portrayals of women, and indeed very brutish portrayals of men, his published poetry, such as 'Portrait of a Lady' in the 1917 collection (composed and published earlier in 1910, closer to the student days it evokes)<sup>377</sup> may be read as the reflective verse of the Unitarian Brahmin masquerading as the playful Harvard dandy. Towards the end of the poem, the disingenuous speaker, an undergraduate taking tea with an older woman based on Adeleine Moffat, who offered tea to Harvard students in her home behind the State House in Boston<sup>378</sup>, is surprised by her insight:

'I have been wondering frequently of late[...]  
Why we have not developed into friends.'  
I feel like one who smiles, and turning shall remark  
Suddenly, his expression in a glass.  
My self-possession gutters; we are really in the dark.

The speaker has privately rather ungraciously mocked his host's Jamesian sensitivity, her love of Chopin (perhaps the 'Raindrop Prelude' with its 'hammering' 'monotone'?), even her voice, which he compares to 'the insistent out-of-tune/ Of a broken violin on an August afternoon', and at the same time as she very graciously gives him a chance to practise the pretend friendship that could weave the first threads into the tapestry of a more genuine one, saying,

'I am always sure that you understand  
My feelings, always sure that you feel,  
Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand...' <sup>379</sup>

The poem then wryly continues to explore the internal contortions of the monologue's guilt-ridden speaker, which would be funnier if the poem as a whole did not possess the profundity that the allusion to James insists upon. At the end of a subsequent stanza in which the speaker has considered the circumstances under which he can retain his self-possession, he asks himself, 'Are these ideas right or wrong?', and later at the end of the poem when he considers the possibility of her death and how that will impact his delicate sense of who has the social 'advantage', he asks, 'And should I have the right to smile?' In all of this, it is the educated and refined Boston lady who has our sympathy, because for all of her arranging of the scene, the music, the lilacs and the bric-à-brac, the mindless refrains ('I shall sit here serving tea to friends') and the continual discussion of fine feelings, her candour could be said to shame his duplicity. The speaker's questions about right and wrong are not answered, and remain rhetorical flourishes that render morality as cute and insubstantial as the bric-à-brac of the parlour. Without the ability to be unguarded – to lose his countenance, to relinquish his precious self-possession – the speaker is reduced to the level of 'a dancing bear, ... a parrot, ...an ape'. While Eliot would later

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<sup>377</sup> Ricks, C. & McCue, J., p. 400.

<sup>378</sup> Gordon, L., p. 37.

<sup>379</sup> Eliot, T. S. 'Portrait of a Lady', *The Complete Poems and Plays*, p. 19.

scorn both the European affectations of his Harvard cohort and his Unitarian upbringing as thin and shallow, it is a moral ascendancy which the lady achieves, and she achieves it through kindness and honesty by way of the forms of etiquette, in a way which is reminiscent of the dynamic between Merton Densher and Milly Theale in James' other novel, *The Wings of the Dove*. She seems to understand about right and wrong, and what is done and not done<sup>380</sup>, without having to ask herself in the rather hopeless, spineless way the speaker does. So Eliot's family background influences his depiction of educated female characters in a way that perhaps acknowledges both his grandfather's promotion of women's education, and his mother's scholarly and literary interests and achievements.

## The Waste Land

Constructivist education theory, such as that of Piaget, holds that knowledge is not innate but constructed through continual engagement with unfamiliar stimulus, and also that the learner is not a *tabula rasa* but is equipped with tools to accommodate new knowledge.<sup>381</sup> One crucial tenet of constructivist theory is that difficulty is an innate part of learning because it provides the stimulus for acquiring more complex ideas.<sup>382</sup> Self-education and constructivism dovetail in this analysis of Eliot, because the difficulty of the job the reader has to do is accommodated for by the self-education publishing culture in which it is written and complimented by the burgeoning of provision in, and popularity of, public libraries and adult education courses. When Eliot uses allusion in *The Waste Land*, he is not alienating readers. He is telling them to study. This may account for the ambivalence detected by Gregory Jay and David Chinitz in Eliot's 'often affectionate imitation of [working class] voices' which conveys a 'respect for ordinary lives and feelings' while the 'strain shows'<sup>383</sup>: the effort is not that of a snob but an educator; the strain is that of collaborating in the messiness of learning. Seamus Perry emphasises the poem's enduring popularity 'not just among the cognoscenti or the degree bearing', citing Ted Hughes' recollection of teaching fourteen-year-old boys in a secondary modern school: 'of all of the poetry I introduced them to, their favourite was *The Waste Land*.'<sup>384</sup>

Eliot's early readers, and his subsequent critics, often speak of his obscurity. F. L. Lucas wrote about Eliot's allusions in *The Waste Land* with distaste, saying that 'the borrowed jewels he has set in

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<sup>380</sup> Ackroyd, p. 18.

<sup>381</sup> Flavell, J., 'Piaget's Legacy', in *Psychological Science*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (1996), 200-3.

<sup>382</sup> Fox, R., 'Constructivism Examined', in *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (2001), 23-35.

<sup>383</sup> Chinitz, D., *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide*, p. 43-44.

<sup>384</sup> Perry, S., *The Connell Guide to T. S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land'* (London: Connell Guides, 2014), p. 3.

its head do not make Mr Eliot's toad the more prepossessing'.<sup>385</sup> In the same year, 1923, Louis Untermeyer passed condign judgment on the poem, while praising Eliot's earlier work in some respects:

The result ... is a pompous parade of erudition, a lengthy extension of the earlier disillusion, a kaleidoscopic movement in which the bright-coloured pieces fail to atone for the absence of an integrated design.<sup>386</sup>

According to Lyndall Gordon, when *The Waste Land* was published, even the most scholarly readers responded with hostility; All Souls opposed his election to fellowship, a group of Cambridge dons opposed his appointment as a distinguished lecturer for a very long time, and his own Oxford college, Merton, as late as the 1950s said that 'he is not a poet at all'.<sup>387</sup> His academically very accomplished brother Henry Eliot remarked it was 'like something in cipher'.<sup>388</sup> Eliot's poems are educative creations that endeavour to challenge and to open minds, to ignite and facilitate intellectual development. The fragments are from an array of European, American and ancient religious sources, but their obscurity is not a function of Eliot's erudition so much as they are a function of his intellectual and emotional honesty. To read the poem is to be stimulated to learn more about these other texts, and to learn about what Eliot himself has learned: it is an exercise in intellectual empathy.

David Chinitz gives several examples of the characteristic objections to Eliot's perceived intellectual hermeticism within the first few pages of his article bearing the same name as his book length study, *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide*: Huysen asserts that Eliot had emphasised 'time and again that it was [his] mission to salvage the purity of high art from the encroachments of ... modern mass culture'; Berry talks of Eliot's and Pound's efforts to 'preserve the autonomy and integrity of institutional art' and to '[fortify] the boundaries between genuine art and inauthentic mass culture'; Stade speaks of the 'modernist dogma of hermetic art'; and Ozick casts Eliot's work as a monument to 'absolute art... high art, when art was at its most serious and elitist'.<sup>389</sup> Chinitz finds evidence of Eliot's love of popular culture, even vulgarity, in a wide variety of places, and emphasises that Eliot warns against a division between aristocratic and popular art, preferring to see high art as a refinement of, rather than a separate project from, the mainstream of culture:

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<sup>385</sup> F. L. Lucas, 'The Waste Land', *New Statesman* 22 (November 3, 1923): 116, in Grant, M. (Ed.), *The Critical Heritage*, vol. 1, p. 195.

<sup>386</sup> Untermeyer, L., 'Disillusion vs. Dogma', in *Freeman*, 17 January 1923, vol. vi, 453, in Grant, M. (Ed.) *The Critical Heritage*, p. 151.

<sup>387</sup> Gordon, L., *The Imperfect Life of T. S. Eliot*, p. 190-1. According to the diary of A. L. Rowse, however, opposition to his appointment at All Souls had more to do with perceived obscenity than obscurity: <http://thebatterseareview.com/critical-prose/216-eliot-s-letters-volumes-three-and-four>

<sup>388</sup> Gordon, p. 190.

<sup>389</sup> Chinitz, D., 'Eliot and the Cultural Divide', in *PMLA*, Vol. 110, No. 2 (March, 1995), p. 236.

Eliot attacks Westcott's implication that the popular is merely a degradation of high art; on the contrary, all art, to be valid, must be rooted in the popular. 'Fine art', Eliot argues, 'is the refinement, not the antithesis of popular art'.<sup>390</sup>

Chinitz is quoting Eliot's essay on Marianne Moore of 1923; the date is important because it indicates that *The Waste Land* of 1922 is not written by an intellectual aristocrat. When Eliot says, 'Poets in our civilisation, as it exists at present, must be difficult'<sup>391</sup> it is more helpful to read this in context than to conclude with Carey that 'irrationality and obscurity were cultivated' and that 'the placing of art beyond the reach of the mass was certainly deliberate'.<sup>392</sup>

Casual use of classical allusion was nothing new, and one of Eliot's continental kinsmen, Baudelaire, had made liberal and, at first glance, pretentious use of allusion in 1857 in *Les Fleurs du Mal*. 'The Swan' begins characteristically in flaneurial fashion:

Andromache, I think of you! That stream,  
the sometime witness to your widowhood's  
enormous majesty of mourning – that  
mimic Simois salted by your tears  
  
suddenly inundates my memory  
as I cross the new Place du Carrousel.<sup>393</sup>

Spivak contends that the use of the Andromache allusion at the beginning of 'The Swan' means that the poet remains in some sense closed off from the reader, especially where that reader does not inhabit the same cultural sphere:

Thus Andromache is the condition of the emergence of the image of the swan. But she is also its effect.... Lines 29 to 33 ('Paris change ... un image m'opprime' – Paris is changing ... an image oppresses me) stand on their own. In fact we cannot be sure what image oppresses the poet; he guards the secret. Here the poet's 'self' is made to remain hermetically other to the reader.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> Chinitz, p. 238.

<sup>391</sup> Eliot, T. S., *Selected Essays*, p. 289.

<sup>392</sup> Carey, J., *The Intellectuals and the Masses* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), p. 17.

<sup>393</sup> Baudelaire, C., 'The Swan', *Les Fleurs du Mal*, trans. Howard, R. (Boston: David R. Godine, 1983), p. 90-2.

<sup>394</sup> Spivak, G., *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1999), p. 150.

But while Spivak elsewhere asserts that Baudelaire uses allusion to align himself with a ‘brotherhood’ of European poets<sup>395</sup>, she also acknowledges in the same sentence that the use of the allusion has more immediately significant applications:

Andromache is... not only celebrated as Homer’s good heroine beside the erring Helen, not only used to establish the continuity of the brotherhood of European poetry – celebrating women from Homer through Virgil to Racine now to Baudelaire – but also utilised thus by way of the careful invocation of a woman mourning her husband.<sup>396</sup>

When Spivak acknowledges these other uses, she suggests that the poem is trying to communicate something more directly and evocatively than could be achieved with a more prosaic or expository method. ‘Baudelaire and Virgil: A Reading of ‘Le Cygne’’ by Lowry Nelson is one such article, which carefully explores the resonances of the allusions throughout the poem<sup>397</sup>. Virgil’s *Aeneid* is so widely translated, and so universally celebrated (and so relentlessly brilliant) that following up this allusion of Baudelaire’s could engender a love of classical literature in and of itself.

This is the heart of the matter: the allusions made by Eliot and Baudelaire give their readers recommendations for places to start, and frame these in contexts to which readers can relate, and within which readers can retain echoes of what they have read and learnt; sometimes even specific places in Paris or London are used in this way. Furthermore, they suggest a kinship between past and present which reanimates the reader’s connection with the past and constantly darns back together (much as Vivien was continually doing with Eliot’s socks<sup>398</sup>) the disjunction between what is thought ‘modern’ and what is thought ‘traditional’.<sup>399</sup> As Baudelaire puts it in ‘The Swan’,

new buildings, old  
neighbourhoods turn to allegory,  
and memories weigh more than stone.<sup>400</sup>

Lyndall Gordon in *The Imperfect Life of T. S. Eliot* writes about Eliot’s connection with Whitman, Thoreau and Dickinson, in his use of a fragmentary method:

Their confessions, like *The Waste Land*, are fragmentary and, left so deliberately incomplete, demand a reciprocal effort. The point lies not in their content so much as in the reader’s act of

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<sup>395</sup> Spivak, p. 149.

<sup>396</sup> Spivak, p. 149.

<sup>397</sup> Nelson, L., ‘Baudelaire and Virgil: A Reading of “Le Cygne”’, in *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (1961), pp. 332-345.

<sup>398</sup> Eliot, *Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 178.

<sup>399</sup> Educational theorists sometimes speak about using higher-level cognitive engagement as a way of ensuring better retention of detail, e.g. Semb, G. & Ellis, J., ‘Knowledge Taught in School: What is Remembered?’, in *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (1994), 253 - 286.

<sup>400</sup> Baudelaire, p. 90-2.

self-discovery and judgment. The purpose is not to expose the speaker but to create the reader.<sup>401</sup>

Regardless of whether we agree that the content of confessional poems has little to do with our response to the texts, and whether we agree that it is the incompleteness of the fragments which renders the work more or less difficult, *The Waste Land* does indeed demand a significant reciprocal effort from the reader. Being confronted with lines that are faintly reminiscent of something gathering dust at the back of our own internal literary, historical or musical libraries, even if only rhythmically, is a stimulus which perplexes and coaxes the reader into learning. The process requires a curious blend of mystification and enchantment, so that when we hear the lines and see glimpses of their meaning, we are led further into the allusive (and elusive) heart of the poem, and, because the poem's allusive heart is so expansive, the experience of exploring it is like the experience of exploring a library. At the end of the first stanza of 'The Fire Sermon', there is a particularly useful example of Eliot's use of an allusive weave:

By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept...  
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,  
Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.  
But at my back in a cold blast I hear  
The rattle of bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.<sup>402</sup>

On the library shelf of the excerpt is, first, a well-known psalm, which Eliot does not reference in his 'Notes' perhaps because most of his interwar Christian Anglophone audience would recognise it, even if they did not know the number. Southam, Hayward and Ricks<sup>403</sup> helpfully supply Psalm 137:

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?<sup>404</sup>

The allusion opens a window onto ancient history, and depicts a defeated and captive people cruelly being made to sing of their lost city. That this should take place within the context of an early twentieth century London, on the banks of the Thames, renders the sense of loss at once more abstract, because the city is not lost but all around the putative psalmist at this moment in the poem, and also more powerful, because the city is lost in a different way; it is unreal. The next two lines set this allusion in the context of Spenser's 'Prothalamion' (1596), each stanza of which ends with the refrain, 'Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song'. As a poem celebrating marriage, as Blistein points out, it is in a

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<sup>401</sup> Gordon, L., *The Imperfect Life of T. S. Eliot*, p. 146.

<sup>402</sup> Eliot, T. S., *The Complete Poems and Plays*, p. 67.

<sup>403</sup> Ricks, C. & McCue, J., p.72.

<sup>404</sup> Bible: Psalms, 137: 1-4.

sense the antithesis of the Buddha's 'Fire Sermon'<sup>405</sup>; or perhaps it is a near-antithesis, because the allusion more readily highlights the difference between the dignity of the loving commitments made in marriage and the tawdry nature of the perfunctory assignations between the 'loitering heirs' and their departed 'nymphs'. The reference to Marvell in 'But at my back in a cold blast I hear/ the rattle of bones, and the chuckle spread from ear to ear' strips the original of its beguiling playfulness and renders it grotesque, darkly comic, and essentially serious ('But at my back I always hear/ Time's winged chariot hurrying near'). The 'nymphs' are identifiable with the Thames daughters at the end of 'The Fire Sermon', whose lamentation, like that of the speaker and (implicitly) the captive Israelites at the beginning, conveys a profound sense of emptiness, like the despair of the Rhine-maidens lamenting the loss of the Rhine-gold in Wagner's Ring cycle:

Weialala leia  
Wallala leialala

'Trains and dusty trees.  
Highbury bore me, Richmond and Kew  
Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees  
Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe.'

'My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart  
Under my feet. After the event  
He wept. He promised "a new start."  
I made no comment. What should I resent?'

'On Margate Sands.  
I can connect  
Nothing with nothing.  
The broken fingernails of dirty hands.  
My people humble people who expect  
Nothing.'

la la<sup>406</sup>

The *aboulie* of the Thames daughters is effectively foreshadowed by the space between the idyllic Spenserian allusion and the dull reality (or unreality) of the London in which it is uttered. And

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<sup>405</sup> Blistein, B., *The Design of 'The Waste Land'* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2008), p. 183.

<sup>406</sup> Ricks, C. & McCue, J., p. 66.

this creates an unexpected extension to the poem's argument at this point: the lack of real intimacy in relationships seems actively to lead to a lack of connection with anything. Eliot's own relationship with Vivienne during the composition of *The Waste Land* provides the emotional authenticity here; Margate was one of the places Eliot visited to recover from his nervous illness, one which was engendered in the fraught and icy exchanges between husband and wife, recalled in Part II of the poem in the passage beginning 'My nerves are bad tonight...'; a passage poignantly annotated with the word 'wonderful' by Vivienne herself in the draft.<sup>407</sup> The references to Spenser's 'Prothalamion', Marvell's 'To His Coy Mistress', his own 'Prufrock' and the Buddha's 'The Fire Sermon' all combine to engage the reader in a consideration of generative and fulfilling ways of engaging with the world in time, by way of contrast with those ways that manifestly will reduce the mind and the heart to a state of emotional frigidity, *aboulie*, or spiritual disconnection. So when Eliot uses allusion the reader's attention is drawn to those things he currently does not understand, so that finding the new connection becomes important. The note which Eliot provided to lines 411 to 416 in Part V provides an interesting gloss not only to these verses about the Thunder's 'dayadvham' commandment, to sympathise, it also elucidates the purpose behind the allusive method: Eliot quotes the words of F.H. Bradley, the reclusive tutor he was supposed to be supervised by in Oxford, but whom he never met.<sup>408</sup> One reads, from *Appearance and Reality*,

My external sensations are no less private to myself than are my thoughts and feelings. In either case my experience falls within my own circle, a circle closed on the outside; and, with all its elements alike, every sphere is opaque to the others which surround it... In brief, regarded as an existence which appears in a soul, the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul.<sup>409</sup>

The lines he thus explains are evoked more expansively in the image of a prison, rather than Bradley's circles or spheres:

We think of the key, each in his prison  
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison...<sup>410</sup>

The aim of the poem *is* the aim of the Thunder, and the aim of the Thunder *is* the aim of the poet's artistry more generally. The poem begets scholarship because it encourages curiosity, and the poem also encourages empathy, which involves a comparable exploration beyond the safety of one's own 'sphere', or the dissolution of the 'forgetful snow' which blankets the little life that only *seems* to keep us warm, mentioned at the beginning of the poem; it is a call to action that encourages the selfless giving the Thunder commands in the lines,

My friend, blood shaking my heart  
The awful daring of a moment's surrender

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<sup>407</sup> Eliot, V. (Ed.), *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript*, p. 11.

<sup>408</sup> TSE to Norbert Weiner, 9/11/1914, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 72.

<sup>409</sup> Eliot, T. S., Notes on *The Waste Land*, *The Complete Poems and Plays*, p. 80.

<sup>410</sup> Eliot, T. S., *The Complete Poems and Plays*, p. 74.



Which an age of prudence never can retract  
By this, and this only, we have existed...<sup>411</sup>

Eliot's 'Notes on *The Waste Land*' support the idea of the poem as an educative piece. Indeed, Wilson's early prediction that the work would probably be received as 'a puzzle rather than a poem'<sup>412</sup> picks up on this very idea. Eliot does not lower the portcullis and raise the drawbridge to the world in his poetry; from an educational perspective, he invites readers in. When Litz takes Eliot at his word when he calls his expanded notes 'bogus scholarship'<sup>413</sup>, this is part of his broader objection to treating Eliot's work as 'a sacred text in need of an ordinary gloss'<sup>414</sup>. If we refine his hyperbole from 'sacred' to something closer to what he means, namely, mysterious, special, intriguing, then we have a description of something which sounds very much like the work of high modernists and something which does not merely need but which positively invites an educational response, almost in the manner of a monastic *lectio divina*. On this note, freeing the poetry from 'the burden of spiritual significance'<sup>415</sup>, as Litz puts it, actually limits the educational responses it can engender and this is at odds with the spirit of the notes themselves. Eliot's regrets about the 'wild goose chase' some readers pursued on the Tarot or the Holy Grail are neither regrets about the educative methodology of the poem nor its spiritual referents; these are regrets about shutting down avenues of critical exploration to serve an overriding code or key. Of the 'Notes' Eliot said, 'I had at first intended only to put down all the references for my quotations'<sup>416</sup>. Rather than offering a simple study guide, he offers notes which themselves necessitate further learning. Eliot gives us untranslated quotations from Dante, Ovid, Hesse, and refers his readers to a German translation of the *Upanishads* which he believes to be the best: far from being 'bogus scholarship' it is a part of the educative artistry of the whole text that the reader will have to find a translation or a translator to piece together the meaning while simultaneously enjoying learning a snippet of another language, and also appreciating the difficult processes of translation itself. The difference between this and Pound's use of untranslated material is that Eliot provides a reference point, a way in. While Litz says that such parts are like the references that 'we all use from time to time to dress up or to pad out our own work'<sup>417</sup>, they can be read as attempts to keep the educative dynamic of the poem open, so that the text does not only attach a study guide, or offer the 'answers' at the back in the style of a textbook, but it maintains the momentum of library visits, book buying, evening classes, and so on, which is generated by the text of the poem. To borrow Gordon's phrase, the whole thus

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<sup>411</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>412</sup> Wilson, E., 'The Poetry of Drouth', *Dial* (December 1922), Vol. 73, p. 611-16, in Grant, M. (ed.), *T. S. Eliot: The Critical Heritage*, Vol. 1, p. 142.

<sup>413</sup> Litz, W., *Eliot In His Time*, p. 10.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>416</sup> Eliot, T. S., 'The Frontiers of Criticism' in *On Poetry and Poets*, p. 121.

<sup>417</sup> Litz, A. W., *Eliot in His Time*, p. 10.

creates readers and also educational communities: scholarship. It accomplishes something in the direction of the creation of a common educational culture advocated by Eliot in his education lectures<sup>418</sup>.

The use of notes in *The Waste Land* also signals a rowing back on the more Poundian *Poems* (1920), a move which may be inspired by his university extension lectures from 1916 to 1919: Ricks and McCue note that the appearance of epigraphs using quotations from Elizabethan dramatists coincides with his Southall lecture class asking him for Elizabethan Literature in 1918-19<sup>419</sup>, so it is possible that these epigraphs were partly aimed at a very small group of working class readers. ‘Burbank with a Baedeker: Blistein with a Cigar’ interweaves six allusive sources in its opening epigraph alone, and without crediting the authors, two of which are to renaissance plays; three other poems are given epigraphs from Elizabethan drama.<sup>420</sup> However, these poems of the *Ara Vos Prec* group bespeak the elitist spirit of the *Little Review* in which many of them were first published, whose banner proclaimed, ‘making no compromise with the public taste’. Carey’s assessment of modernist obscurantism becomes much more persuasive in respect of the 1920 poems. ‘Sweeney Among the Nightingales’ even in its first iteration contained an untranslated and uncredited Greek epigraph from Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, which was both inaccurate and also referred to in a confused reference at the end of the poem which conflated the moment of Agamemnon’s death with a moment in Sophocles’ *Oedipus at Colonus* in which nightingales are actually present.<sup>421</sup> This means *The Waste Land* and its notes represent an educative step to include more helpful starting places for readers to begin learning, and this may have been engendered by a growing sensitivity to the needs of the curious reader and autodidact during the years Eliot spent as a teacher and lecturer.

In his letter of 26 February 1922 to Maurice Firuski, the proprietor of the Dunster House Press in Cambridge Massachusetts, Eliot wrote:

My poem is of 435 lines; with certain spacings essential to the sense, 475 book lines; furthermore it consists of five parts, which would increase the space necessary; and with title pages, some notes that I propose to add, etc., I guess that it would run from twenty-eight to thirty-two pages.

Have had a good offer for the publication of it in a periodical. But it is, I think, much the best poem I have ever written, and I think it would make a much more distinct impression and attract much more attention if published as a book.<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> Eliot, T. S., ‘The Classics and the Man of Letters’ in *To Criticise the Critic* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), p. 158-9.

<sup>419</sup> Ricks, C. & McCue, J., Vol. I, p. 456.

<sup>420</sup> ‘Gerontion’: Shakespeare; ‘Sweeney Erect’: Beaumont & Fletcher; ‘Mr Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service’: Marlowe.

<sup>421</sup> Ricks & McCue, Vol. I, p. 545.

<sup>422</sup> TSE to Maurice Firuski, 26/2/1922, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 638.

Less than a month earlier, Ezra Pound had written to Eliot with some final editorial advice on the poem, involving very significant decisions such as whether to retain the Phlebas section in ‘Death By Water’, whether to include ‘Gerontion’ as a prelude, and whether to retain Conrad as the title page epigraph<sup>423</sup> (curiously, he does not mind keeping Conrad, meaning that the Petronius is a very late substitution, a name which sounds weightier owing to its classical provenance, but which really isn’t because of the bawdy satirical nature of most of the *Satyricon*). This means that the ‘Notes’ proceed directly from the creative process, and suggest a tacit admission by Eliot that his work is obscure, difficult, cryptic. However, the ‘Notes’ also suggest that Eliot is both a scholar and a poet, one who reads to learn and not merely to be enchanted, indeed who finds enchantment in the process of learning itself. The fact that the ‘Notes’ were decided upon in the February before its first publication in October (in which they are absent owing to its being in a periodical)<sup>424</sup>, suggest that they are an integral part of its purpose and design, meaning that the idea of using the poem as a way of encouraging readers to learn about literary tradition, to find out about the spiritual value of these fragments that the speaker shores against his ruins, is present before any readers respond to the poem’s obscurity. The poem had to be longer in order to justify its publication as a book, and this is the reason Aiken had suggested Firuski’s press in the first place, because he had read John Freeman’s *The Red Path, and The Wounded Bird* of a similar length in book form by this printer.<sup>425</sup> But even the possibility that the solution to its brevity was to print notes to the poem, which was not a common practice,<sup>426</sup> indicates that at the very least they were seen to be in keeping with the composition of the poem as a whole; a poem to be studied as much as to be enjoyed as a piece of music; a poem which teaches the reader about tradition. Geoffrey Faber also noticed this and wrote to Eliot a very kind but bewildered letter in 1925. It is necessary to quote almost all of it because it is so apposite.

You *are* obscure, you know! With an obscurity compared to which Meredith at his most bewildering (and *he* can baffle, too) is the purest ray serene.<sup>427</sup> I wonder if you realise how difficult you are? And alternatively I wonder if I am specially stupid.<sup>428</sup> Is it that you are using a language of which I have learnt only the vocabulary but not the syntax? – I haven’t yet got the key to your poetry, I say frankly. You try the stranger a bit high; only those who have trod the same labyrinth as yourself can follow the clue. The others must put too much detective work into their reading, to lose the sense of the chase in the understanding of the thing captured –

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<sup>423</sup> Ezra Pound to TSE, 28/1/1922, *Letters, Vol. I*, p. 630.

<sup>424</sup> Ricks, C. & McCue, J., p. 547.

<sup>425</sup> TSE to Maurice Firuski, 26/2/1922, *Letters, Vol. I*, p. 638.

<sup>426</sup> In 1919, Virginia and Leonard Woolf’s Hogarth Press had published Hope Mirrlees’ ‘Paris’, which included a very short section of notes at the end.

<sup>427</sup> He quotes Gray’s *Elegy* here, imitating the casual allusive method of Eliot’s verse. In doing so, he refers to a stanza in which the speaker observes that many beautiful things may be lost or unappreciated (‘Full many a gem of purest ray serene/ The dark unfathom’d caves of ocean bear’); Eliot would not have missed the tacit suggestion that many of his rare achievements may be lost in obscurity.

<sup>428</sup> He wasn’t. He was called to the bar (though never practised), a fellow of All Souls, a publisher and a poet.

and, moreover, one asks oneself if it isn't really something quite other than one has at first thought.

Please understand me – this is not a criticism. I am profoundly sensible, in reading *The Waste Land*... of a meaning not the less truly there because I can only grasp it fragmentarily – of astounding vivid glimpses now of the pit beneath the human mind, and now of beauties seen and painted in the sharp startling precision of which, at your best, you are master. ...

...I suspect that a good many people have praised *The Waste Land* who hadn't the faintest atom of an idea what it was all about!! You have the pull on them – but more on me. I dare say posterity will wonder that anybody could have found you obscure – we puzzle at people's obtuseness over Browning now.

Having said that, you won't suspect me of flattering you, when I reiterate that you *do* impress, and impress with a sense of a new way of seeing and relating things which will be understood all in good time; and meanwhile gives bright unforgettable landing-places.<sup>429</sup>

Faber speaks about his experience of reading the poetry as like reading a foreign language, one in which he has grasped the vocabulary but not the syntax. One way of reading his metaphor is in connection with what he says later about Eliot having found a new way of seeing and relating things, so that the obscurity of the poetry has not so much to do with the content of the allusions themselves – the vocabulary – but with the order in which they are arranged – the syntax, the way of relating things, the structuring of the material. This is interesting because when he speaks about Meredith, he is speaking about a poet whose syntax is sometimes obscure, rendering the interpretation mysterious, even if the images and voices are more conventional and predictable, presenting the reader with little difficulty at the basic level of accessing the poem. When he speaks about losing the sense of the chase in the understanding of the thing captured, what he dislikes is the fact that he remains aware of the process of interpretation at all stages of the poems, never losing himself in the more instantly rewarding and relaxing sense of full comprehension. This highlights the fact that this is a poem with an educative dynamic; the exercise, the research, the continual learning. He is sure, however, that his verse will be understood 'all in good time', and he remains sure throughout that there is a purpose and design which is there to be grasped: he is 'profoundly sensible' of a 'meaning not the less truly there because [he] can only grasp it fragmentarily.' If Eliot is a teacher in this poem, he keeps his student on the path towards understanding; the obscurity of it has 'the pull on them' as Faber puts it. Faber's use of light imagery in 'bright unforgettable landing-places' very nearly describes the step by step way in which we all learn; his use of the word 'unforgettable' is telling because it shows how effective the poem is in its method. It not only inspires curiosity and further learning and thought, it also creates memorable stages from

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<sup>429</sup> Geoffrey Faber to TSE, 28/5/1925, *Letters, Vol. II*, p. 662.

which it is possible to set off again into the less easily navigable passages. Also telling is the way in which Faber finds himself questioning his initial assumptions; after the ‘detective work’ comes the suspicion that the meaning might be ‘really something quite other than one has at first thought’; this in connection with the unusual ‘syntax’ or patterning of the material engenders a greater intellectual flexibility, as the poem flits between voices and registers, between genres and authors, countries and continents, genders, ages and races, and different interpretative types:

Unreal City  
Under the brown fog of a winter noon  
Mr Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant  
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants  
C.i.f. London: documents at sight,  
Asked me in demotic French  
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel  
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.<sup>430</sup>

It begins with Baudelaire and an evocation of nineteenth century Paris, the squalor of industrial degradation. It passes to a biographical allusion appreciable by readers in London, St Louis, any industrial city, grounding the passage in reality. It continues with a name so unusual and exotic as to draw attention to itself: the etymology revealing that the character Eugenides is ‘well born’, though unshaven and speaking in lazy colloquial French (the initial draft has ‘abominable’) he invites the speaker for a lunch and a weekend away in luxury hotels; he is one weathered by the tarnishing effects of the infernal city. We then hear the language of business in ‘c.i.f London’, itself obscure to many, so obscure in fact that Eliot himself might have been mistaken in his notes which gloss the abbreviation ‘c.i.f’ as ‘cost, insurance and freight’ instead of ‘carriage and insurance free’<sup>431</sup>. The reader then switches to ancient history: as a Syrian merchant Eugenides would have carried the Grail legend (the Grail symbolising the sacrificial love advocated by the poem), but now he has only a pocket full of currants, grounding the passage in contemporary autobiographical reality: Eliot himself was once propositioned in this way.<sup>432</sup> This encounter, like the one that follows between the typist and the clerk, generates nothing; no future, no relationship, no fulfilment, no sharing, no love, nothing spiritually real. The reader has been invited to adopt several different modes of thinking to puzzle out the meaning of the passage, and has been rewarded with an idea which blends them all together: if the city, civilisation, were not so focused on acquisition, trade, the *quid pro quo* of business and commerce, it may be more

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<sup>430</sup> Eliot, T. S., *The Complete Poems and Plays*, p. 68.

<sup>431</sup> Ricks, C. & McCue, J., Vol. I, p. 658.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 657.

emotionally habituated to true friendship and love, rendering civilisation more real, wholesome, cohesive and fulfilling.

Education itself is a journeying out into the unknown; it is an attempt to understand the world, and the thoughts and feelings of others; it models the process of difficult empathy which Eliot advocates in the poem, particularly in the final passages of 'The Fire Sermon'. It is through this analogous process of learning that Eliot proposes and models an inquiring intellectual or spiritual attitude more broadly. The education of the reader is also unashamedly about the improvement of the reader, inspired by the zealous educational writing of Arnold and Emerson (particularly about the 'genius'<sup>433</sup> of individuals and society), nurturing in the face of a dehumanising, mechanising, hedonistic economy, a thinking, feeling, sympathetic soul.

Ezra Pound once wrote:

T.S.E. is (as the *Spectator* said of me some years since) 'that rare thing among modern poets, a scholar'. That means not only an advantage in the initial sprint, it means much more: a chance of being able really to finish 'a long distance race', a chance of having matter and volume enough in one to keep on writing more and more interestingly, with increasing precision and development. Mental stamina... (ellipsis Pound's).<sup>434</sup>

Eliot is a scholar-poet: his writing is scholarly and invites scholarship. Because of its difficulty, the writing has beneficial educational, intellectual outcomes for the reader. It uses innate curiosity as its fuel. The shape of the silences in the reader's knowledge and understanding resonate with the elements which are recognised, and with the things which are enjoyed, and with the certain sense that there is some real meaning there to be grasped, and these cooperate to compel the reader to find their own way through, and with each addition to knowledge the richness of the music becomes more and more enchanting. The obscurity works differently from that of Meredith, whose obscurity hints at transcendence, or even Browning, whose obscurity flows from his love of characters and stories discovered in an unconventional education, because with Eliot there is a whole literary tradition to learn about, and so much more reason for learning it, because the process itself of discovering and learning is part of the poem's message. It engenders, in Pound's words to Eliot's brother, with its ellipsis suggestive of continuation and perseverance, 'mental stamina...'.

### Part Three: Eliot and Education

This chapter began with a consideration of the importance of self-education in the culture in which Eliot was brought up. In 1950, beyond the primary scope of the thesis but precisely relevant to

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<sup>433</sup> For instance: Emerson, *Education, Lectures and Biographical Sketches*, p. 142; and Arnold, M., *Essays in Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1918), p. 189.

<sup>434</sup> Ezra Pound to Henry Ware Eliot, 28/6/1915, *Letters, Vol. I*, p.110.

it, Eliot said in *The Aims of Education*, ‘we all like to blame our educators, or the system within which they were compelled to work, for our failure to educate ourselves’ and ‘education means something different... when we are talking of education as something done to people and when we mean what they do for themselves’<sup>435</sup>. In an earlier paragraph he discounted his own public lectures as being ‘no part of education’<sup>436</sup>, and in a later paragraph he gently ridicules territorial notions of specialisms as involving academics putting up signs such as ‘keep out’, ‘trespassers will be prosecuted’ or ‘Beware of the Bull’<sup>437</sup>. Eliot characteristically treads a fine line between saying that education is entirely holistic and can be anything including his public lectures (in which he is dissemblingly modest, since they are plainly educative), and saying that education is only these very specialised areas with no interdisciplinarity allowed. The phrase ‘Beware of the Bull’ is surely designed to draw a laugh from his Chicago audience, who will more readily grasp the pun than a British audience, and deduce that Eliot is suggesting that hyper-specialisation leads to nonsense precisely because it ignores other fields and disconnects lines of inquiry from their source in the real world; here Eliot repackages his reading on Emerson, whose *The American Scholar* talks about academics’ apotheosis of books which creates a ‘Third Estate’ between man and the world. Eliot is keen to stress elsewhere in his lectures on education that any deficiencies in his own education are due to his own ‘laziness and caprice’ rather than with Smith Academy, which he remembers as a ‘good school’ with a ‘well-mixed variety of local types’.<sup>438</sup> The implication is, then, that self-education is different from formal education because it picks up from where the latter leaves off, perhaps acknowledging that formal systems of mass education are likely to have inconsistencies and that individuals who are dissatisfied with their knowledge in some areas are able to supplement their education for free (or for very little money) under their own steam using libraries, evening classes such as those given by Eliot himself in Southall, Ilkley and Sydenham, and the numerous books composed specifically for the purposes of self-education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The fact that his school is said to comprise a mix of local types, rather than just wealthy patrician families, is also important to his argument, since he is suggesting that, contrary to the implications of the public school system, a good education is not about belonging to a certain class. Indeed, Eliot himself was very impressed by the ‘quite sane’ and ‘remarkably clever’ working class students who attended his lectures<sup>439</sup> and spoke of how he had ‘to do [his] best to keep up with them in discussion’.<sup>440</sup> He makes an exception for Mrs Howells and Mrs Slogett, who were ‘both mad’, one a spiritualist and the other an astrologer, who, in trying to cure Eliot of a cold in the head with mental treatment, and offering a character study, are together reminiscent of Madame Sosostriis in *The Waste*

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<sup>435</sup> Eliot, T. S., *To Criticise the Critic*, p. 62-3.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>439</sup> TSE to Eleanor Hinkley, 23/3/1917, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 185.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

*Land*.<sup>441</sup> Eliot repeatedly talks about how much he enjoys lecturing and how it is the work which gives him the greatest pleasure.<sup>442</sup>

Carey refers to Eliot's involvement in these classes in *The Intellectuals and the Masses*, conceding that they happened, and contrasts this more egalitarian note in Eliot's life with the more 'reactionary' sentiments expressed in some of his essays, but he offers no explanation of the paradox, saying that 'we should hardly guess'<sup>443</sup> that the Eliot of the letters is so different from the Eliot of the essays in this respect. An analysis of the essay in question, *The Aims of Education: The Conflict Between Aims*, reveals that Eliot, far from proposing a retraction of educational provision as Carey claims, would actually favour an increase in the number of teachers available first, before extending the school leaving age.<sup>444</sup> It is also important for his argument in *The Aims of Education* because 'culture, development of powers, formation of character'<sup>445</sup> are such onerous and nebulous obligations that no school could honestly say they confer them, and so they really remain the preserve of self-education, perhaps because not even the public school system which traditionally made these claims could truly deliver them, as Woolf highlights in her criticisms of the public school system.

Self-education is a recurring motif in the lectures: Eliot's depiction of the 'educated man' is 'one who has done much to educate himself since he ceased to be a pupil'<sup>446</sup>; and he queries notions of educational institutions in which 'we expect them to do for society what society ought to do for itself'.<sup>447</sup> Part of what Eliot believes society is to do for itself is to acquire wisdom rather than mere cleverness. It is this which he addresses in his more philosophical and theological work such as *The Waste Land*, *Ash Wednesday* and *Four Quartets*. Nevertheless, he does not therefore believe that formal education should limit itself to utilitarian aims; on the contrary, he believes that religion, tradition and the classics form a crucial part of the project of education, and he says that if we only train our pupils for society as it currently stands they will be 'completely incapable for any change or improvement, unable to make discoveries or experiments, or to adapt itself to those changes which go on perpetually'.<sup>448</sup> But when Eliot advocates the cultivation of classical or traditional knowledge he is not advocating the public school system:

But for that cultivation of our powers and faculties which tends to make us educated men, apart from our professional occupations, disinterestedness is necessary: you have to pursue studies

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<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>442</sup> TSE to J. H. Woods, 23/3/1917, and to Eleanor Hinkley, p. 188 & 185.

<sup>443</sup> Carey, p. 15-16.

<sup>444</sup> Eliot, T. S., *To Criticise the Critic*, p. 100-101.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>447</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.



for their own sake, for the love of truth or wisdom, or at least curiosity, ignoring any practical advantages which may come to you from mastering them.<sup>449</sup>

The public school system took the study of the classics and turned it into a grammar grind (the process Browning depicts in ‘The Grammarian’s Funeral’, the poem Nuttall uses to exemplify his caricature of a scholar in *Dead from the Waist Down*), and took the study of divinity and turned it into a competition for a house prize. The love of truth or wisdom or curiosity was, according to the more mainstream literature of the period, such as Alec Waugh’s best-seller, *The Loom of Youth*, completely subordinate to the project of the house or the school or the individual’s winning. Eliot’s defence of the study of traditional texts has as much to do with reworking this material for the present day as it has with reworking the present day for that material, an idea suggested as early as his famous essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent*.

While it is true that Eliot sounds reactionary at several points in his lectures on education, his aim remains always idealistic and forward thinking. When for instance he speaks of ‘illiteracy’ as ‘a new phenomenon... aggravated by the effects of radio and cinema, and by the replacement, in popular periodicals, of words by pictures’<sup>450</sup>, he is speaking as one who used the medium of radio to broadcast his work on the BBC as early as January 1936 (*Murder in the Cathedral*)<sup>451</sup>, and who went as part of a delegation to the BBC to complain about cuts to the ‘Third Programme’ (art and culture).<sup>452</sup> It is not the medium itself which is at fault, only the material which is broadcast, and which he believes should be educative.

Ultimately, Eliot advocates a system which allows for a common inheritance of literary and religious understanding:

And what I plead for is what Matthew Arnold spoke of as ‘the knowledge of the best that has been thought and said in the world’ (and, I might add, the best that has been done in the world, and that has been created in the arts in the world); that this knowledge of history, in the widest sense, should not be reserved to a small body of experts – reserved to them and parcelled out among them – but that it should be the common possession of those who have passed through the higher grades of nonspecialised education that it might form, for most of them, the foundation for many of the more modern studies which now tend to be substituted for it.<sup>453</sup>

Matthew Arnold, the army of unalterable law of ‘Cousin Nancy’, is commandeered for the argument to advocate not the improvement of an elite set of scholarly custodians but everyone who has completed

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<sup>449</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>451</sup> Ackroyd, p. 228.

<sup>452</sup> Ackroyd, p. 323.

<sup>453</sup> Eliot, T. S., *To Criticise the Critic*, p. 120.

the secondary school curriculum. The irony is that the more modern studies which are substituted for classical education include that of English Literature, the field which Eliot had already begun to influence when he gave these lectures.

Douglas Simpson discusses Eliot's notion that education is about wisdom, placing it in the context of his post-1927 conversion, Anglo-Catholic understanding of wisdom:

The Christian philosophy of life postulates more than an intelligent person; it seeks a wise individual. ... Wisdom is gained by a study of 'human nature through history, the actions of men in the past and the best that they have thought and written, and a study through observation and experience of men and women about us'. ... The general education that Eliot said cultivates wisdom is what may be broadly described as intellectual history. As a consequence of being convinced that a study of intellectual history is foundational to Christian wisdom, Eliot concluded everyone, as much as is possible without being rigid, should share the same educational background. When people are given a common intellectual foundation, they will gradually develop a Christian culture.<sup>454</sup>

Simpson quotes Eliot's essay on *Catholicism and International Order*, but in this quotation, Eliot is quoting Arnold, who in turn may be quoting the anthologist John Timbs (whose *Laconics, or The Best Words of the Best Authors* was in circulation before the coronation of Queen Victoria). The education of the reader is therefore more broadly the improvement of the reader, and this involves familiarising them with the best that has been thought and said in trimmed, repackaged form for a modern reader who, with the time and inclination only to glimpse fragments, must be given fragments that all combine to convey a unified sense of tradition and a broadly coherent moral sensibility. Eliot, drawing on Arnold and Emerson, 'Matthew and Waldo', seeks to educate the reader not to create super-subtle aesthetes, but to reassemble the fragments of a broken Christian tradition and to steady a culture reeling from the shocks of mechanisation and the radical counter-narratives of evolutionary theory, Marxism, Freud, and the horror of the war. Interestingly, Simpson also finds Eliot surprisingly democratic in his educational stance; while there are different ability levels, there is no arcane, gnostic curriculum for the elites in his educational writing.<sup>455</sup>

### T. S. Eliot and the University of London BA (Hons) English Examinations

In 1937, Eliot's name appears in the University of London's first *Modern English Literature from 1880* paper:

8. Discuss the work of any important poet killed during the war, or of T. S. Eliot.

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<sup>454</sup> Simpson, D., 'T. S. Eliot: An Educational Dabbler', in *Journal of Thought*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1973), 44-45.

The question is rather loose, but nevertheless contains the suggestion that Eliot is considered important enough to rank alongside the poets lost in the First World War. In 1939, we read:

*12. Attempt an estimate of T. S. Eliot's critical work.*

Eliot is already being studied as a critic, suggesting that not only his work but also his critical opinions have already gained a degree of general interest and authority. In 1940, the question becomes more literary and precise:

*8. Trace W. B. Yeats, or H. G Wells, or T. S. Eliot to their Victorian antecedents.*

Already the questions are responding to the author: the examiners reflect in their choice of task Eliot's concern with tradition and his use of allusion to what were then fairly recent literary forbears. They also pre-empt specialist literary research into the Victorian allusions of Eliot's poetry. Eliot taught a significant amount of nineteenth century literature in his Southall lectures: his first course, entitled 'Modern English Literature', he began with Tennyson, then Browning, then Elizabeth Barrett Browning. He speaks in his letters of how Browning in particular elicited 'great enthusiasm' from his class.<sup>456</sup> In his Sydenham course he places a lecture on 'Characteristics of Victorian Verse' immediately before a lecture on 'Tennyson as a Representative of his Age'<sup>457</sup>, possibly suggesting Tennyson's centrality in Eliot's understanding of contemporary literary tradition. In 1941, the questions develop further:

*8. T. S. Eliot alleges that he is poet of tradition. Estimate the justice of this description of his work.*

Already, students were being asked to assess the extent to which Eliot describes his own artistic practice in his criticism. The educational establishment very quickly responds to and understands and adopts the concerns of the author himself, suggesting that Eliot's work is educative in a very real sense, since it invites the kinds of inquiry which connect readers with a cultural past through the very mechanics of the response itself. Eliot's own education fuels his understanding of what this inheritance should be, and how it should be passed down, and we know this because of the similarity between Pancoast and the syllabi he composes for the lectures Eliot gave in London and Yorkshire between 1916 and 1919, shading into the publication history of his first major collection *Prufrock and Other Observations*: 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' was published in *Poetry* and *Catholic Anthology* in 1915 and the collection in *The Egoist* in 1917.<sup>458</sup> Most of these poems had been composed from 1909 onwards, but this means that Eliot's poetry is even closer to its educative sources, since owing to the various teaching jobs and lecturing commitments he undertook after deciding not to take up a post at Harvard after his travelling fellowship ended he had never quite left the world of education.<sup>459</sup> The refrain running

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<sup>456</sup> TSE to Eleanor Hinkley, 23/3/1917, *Letters, Vol I*, p. 185.

<sup>457</sup> Schuchard, p. 40.

<sup>458</sup> Ricks, C., & McCue, J., p. 373 and 363.

<sup>459</sup> Eliot, V., & Haughton, H., *Letters, Vol. I*, p. xxiv – xxvii.

throughout his 1940 poem *East Coker* is apposite here: ‘In my beginning is my end.’<sup>460</sup> From an educational perspective, Eliot’s alleged obscurity is educational in the sense that it is rooted in real educational materials and practice from his first encounters with literary education onwards. It is educative in its method, which piques curiosity and sets the reader about the business of connecting different cultures and time periods. It is educative in its purpose, which is to offer everyone a trove of blended historical, literary, religious and popular allusions as a ‘common possession’.

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<sup>460</sup> Ricks, C., & McCue, J., p. 192.

## Chapter 3:

### Virginia Woolf

#### Part One: The Education of Virginia Woolf

‘What form of speech is not an echo?’<sup>461</sup> asks Lyndall Gordon in her consideration of Woolf’s first novel *The Voyage Out*. Echoes abound in the fiction, and in this part of the chapter, the influence of Leslie Stephen, Thoby Stephen, and the King’s College tutors – G. C. Warr, Clara Pater and Janet Case – will be considered alongside Virginia Stephen’s responses to her learning.

It is the rapture I get when in writing I seem to be discovering what belongs to what; making a scene come right; making a character come together. From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we – I mean all human beings – are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art. *Hamlet* or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass that we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God. We are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself.<sup>462</sup>

The process of writing itself was educative for Woolf in the way that Joyce’s Jesuit education was for him: it taught him how to survey and to judge, to know what belongs to what. Her sense of there being a pattern behind the ‘cotton wool’ of the sense of chaos generated by modern life is something she gains from her voracious reading too. She writes to Thoby saying, ‘I want to read myself blue in the nose’<sup>463</sup>; again in 1903 she writes enthusiastically about these periods of prolonged and focused reading:

I believe I begin putting aside books in my mind, to read in the summer, about October, Shakespeare for instance & the Bible – Then the time really comes, & I actually take a bit of paper & write Homer, Dante, Burkes speeches &c. &c. upon it. I get the volumes together – lay them out on my table & I think exultingly that all that thickness of paper will be passed through my mind... I feel sometimes for hours together as if the physical stuff of my brain is expanding, larger & larger, throbbing quicker & quicker with new blood... I think I see for a moment how our minds are threaded together - how any live mind is of the very same stuff as Plato’s & Euripides. It is only a continuation & development of the same thing. It is this common mind that binds the whole world together; & all the world is mind.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Gordon, L., *Virginia Woolf: A Writer's Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 108.

<sup>462</sup> Woolf, V., 'A Sketch of the Past' in *Moments of Being* (Florida: 1985), p. 72.

<sup>463</sup> Lee, H., *Virginia Woolf* (London: Vintage, 1997), p. 171.

<sup>464</sup> Leaska, M. (ed.) *A Passionate Apprentice: The Early Journals of Virginia Woolf* (London: Hogarth Press, 1990), p. 178-9.

Woolf refers exactly to the sense of tradition that Eliot refers to when he speaks about the value of the classics. Modernists self-educate to immerse themselves in a tradition, a fellowship of thinkers whose ideas are the emanation of one great mind. Her novels' incandescent scenes of reading shine with the sense of fulfilment she says she feels when she reads Plato, Shakespeare, Dante, Burke in these long quiet summers away from London. It is in the images of various characters delighting in their reading; the 'rubicund, drowsy, entirely contented figure of Mr Carmichael, reading a French novel, on a deck chair';<sup>465</sup> Mr Ramsay's legs 'curled up' and 'twisted' as he reads in the boat to the lighthouse; Cam's enchanted moment when she realises that 'standing there with her book open, here one could let whatever one thought expand like a leaf in water; and if it did well among the old gentlemen smoking and *The Times* crackling, then it was right.'

And watching her father as he wrote in his study, she thought (now sitting in the boat) he was most loveable, he was most wise; he was not vain, nor a tyrant. Indeed, if he saw she was there, reading a book, he would ask her, as gently as anyone could, Was there nothing he could give her?<sup>466</sup>

While Woolf identifies with Eliot and Joyce in her connectedness to a great mind or tradition through literature, she is less sure than they are of her ability to sustain this connection. For Woolf, it is nature which reignites her sense of connection to the world through literature, rather than the other way round.

I wish I felt sure it would leave any impression there, but that is a doubt I put far from me, before I begin. ... And then, some speck of dust gets into my machine I suppose & the whole thing goes wrong again. I open my Greek book in the morning & feel worlds away from it all – worse than that – the writing is indifferent to me. Then I go out into the country – plodding along as fast as I can go – not much thinking of what I see, or of anything, but the movement in the free air soothes & makes me sensitive at once.<sup>467</sup>

Nature renders her more sensitive to literature, rather than literature making her sensitive to nature. When she says in the same entry, 'Learning seems natural in the country', she is not just playing with words, but echoing a Romantic Wordsworthian<sup>468</sup> notion of there being a mystic kinship between the mind of man and the spirit of nature which could signal that for Woolf the 'too hot' and 'too fretful'<sup>469</sup> atmosphere of London and the regimented, urbanised culture of bourgeois intellectuals actually stifles the mind's connection to that 'common mind that binds the whole world together'; this queries the

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<sup>465</sup> Woolf, V., *To the Lighthouse*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 126.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>467</sup> Leaska, M. (ed.), p. 178-9.

<sup>468</sup> 'O the Prelude. ... Do you know its so good, so succulent, so suggestive, that I have to hoard it, as a child keeps a crumb of cake?', in Nicolson, N. & Trautmann J. (eds.), *Letters of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 6* (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p. 73.

<sup>469</sup> Leaska, M. (ed.), p. 178-9.

notion that modernist writing is necessarily anti-romantic,<sup>470</sup> since the process of learning which informs the writing bears an Emersonian notion of a transcendent connection between the individual and the nature.<sup>471</sup> Eliot's retreats to Margate and Lake Geneva, and his comments about the 'unreal' city, his depictions of stifling urbanite culture in *Prufrock and Other Observations*, the sense of refreshment and liberation in his sailing imagery, resonate with this sentiment. Stephen's epiphany on the shore in *Portrait* confirms that for Joyce too there is an environmental dimension to learning.

Woolf's parents took responsibility for different aspects of her education but it was Thoby who seems to have had the gentlest but most benign effect. Quentin Bell says that before she was seven, Julia was trying to teach her Latin, history and French, and that Leslie taught them mathematics. Bell is sceptical of the effectiveness of their efforts; Virginia 'continued throughout her life to count on her fingers', and 'may have learnt some Latin from her, but she was never fluent in any modern language and her history... was learnt later in life.'<sup>472</sup> But in 1895, Julia Stephen died, and Leslie Stephen entered a period of profound grief from which he hardly recovered in his last nine years. Virginia was also becoming unwell, and was suffering sexual abuse from her half-brothers George and Gerald. In a letter to Vanessa her sister, Virginia said that her tutor Janet Case 'always had a profound dislike of George, & used to say 'Whew – you nasty creature' when he came in and began fondling me over my Greek'.<sup>473</sup> It is partly due to her brother Thoby that her love of Greek endured. Bell notes:

There were other sources of enlightenment. Thoby returned home from his first school – Evelyn's – and in an odd shy way, walking up and down the stairs as he talked, told Virginia about the Greeks, about Troy and Hector and a whole new world which captured her imagination. Perhaps it was then that she decided that one day she would learn Greek; and perhaps it was then that she realised that the Greeks belonged to Thoby in a way that they didn't belong to her, that they formed part of the great male province of education – this I think was how she saw it – from which she and Vanessa were to be excluded.<sup>474</sup>

Bell is right to suggest that Thoby helped foster Woolf's love of the classics. She writes excitedly to him in 1897:

I am beginning Greek at Kings College [London] and two history lectures - we have got as far as the first verb in Greek, and by the Christmas holidays you will have to take me in hand.<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Bradbury, M., & McFarlane, J., *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature: 1890 – 1930* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 237-8.

<sup>471</sup> Luttrell, R., 'Woolf's Emersonian Metaphors of Sight in *To the Lighthouse: Visionary Oscillation*', in *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (2013), 69-80.

<sup>472</sup> Bell, Q. *Virginia Woolf: A Biography* (London: Pimlico, 1996), p. 26.

<sup>473</sup> VW to Vanessa Bell, 25/7/1911, in Bell, Q., p. 43.

<sup>474</sup> Bell, p. 27.

<sup>475</sup> VW to Thoby, 24/10/1897, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Vol. I*, ed. Nicolson, N., & Trautmann, J., (New York: 1975), p. 10.

From the start she reached out for sources of help with this difficult enterprise, and her first port of call was her brother, someone who was actively engaged in the process of formal, public school education at Evelyn's and then Clifton. Her brother Adrian, who was nearer in Westminster, had less to do with her reading, but he nevertheless remains an educationally structural presence in the letters where he accompanied his sister in Cambridge, Venice, Florence, and even very briefly as a fellow teacher at Morley College.<sup>476</sup> Education for Woolf and Eliot received its impetus from a family of informal tutors and fellow readers. The materials and the methods by which her learning at King's were supported were echoes of a standard classical education.

The textbooks used by Professor G. C. Warr and Miss Clara Pater at King's were intended for use in public schools, and in the introduction to *Greek for Beginners*<sup>477</sup>, the author, Joseph Bickersteth Mayor, talks specifically about his audience and methodology in a way that indicates at once how close and how far Virginia was from being an educational insider:

I hope I have done something to lessen the feeling of strangeness with which a boy enters upon the study of Greek, and at the same time supplied him with a clue which will give him an interest in the subject from the first.<sup>478</sup>

According to the frontispiece of the textbook, Mayor had been the headmaster of Kensington School, and a Fellow and Tutor at St John's College, Cambridge. This author was a member of the educational establishment and also very local; King's College Ladies' Department was at 13 Kensington Square. The continual reference to 'boys' is a bitter irony that would not have been lost on any of the women studying Greek at King's, and the sense of exclusion and inferiority this confers is channelled into Woolf's depiction of female characters who collide with male-dominated academia: Rachel Vinrace, Katherine Hilberry, Julia Hedges and Miss Umphelby, Cam Ramsay, Lady Orlando, Rhoda and Susan.

Thoby also sent her books, such as the books of Greek epigrams she mentions in her letter with such excitement, which would have been a welcome companion to the Greek textbook she would have used at King's: Morice's *Stories in Attic Greek*.

Your book has come, and delights me. These little epigrams I think I appreciate most of all Greek, as the feminine mind would, according to my theory. And MacKail<sup>479</sup> [the editor and translator of the selection] isn't so precious as I thought – and some – most that I know – of the

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<sup>476</sup> VW to Violet Dickinson, 4/4/1904, 6/5/1904, 18/6/1905, 9/11/1905, *Letters, Vol. I*, pp. 137, 139, 192, 210.

<sup>477</sup> King's College London Archives: Cited in *King's College Department for Ladies: Syllabus of Lectures: 1897-98*, p.10.

<sup>478</sup> Mayor, J. B., *Greek for Beginners* (London: Macmillan, 1869), p. vi-vii.

<sup>479</sup> Mackail, J., *Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology* (London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1908).



epigrams are divine. I read them over and over again ... and the reading is made so easy by the crib at the bottom.

Thank you a thousand times, as old Ladies say. This is a real addition to my library.<sup>480</sup>

The short, epiphanic moments of description and narrative prefigure her fragmented style of impression following on impression in her nonlinear, modernist novels. Thoby's gift would have reinforced the effect of a classical education, that is, learning by fragments as well as by whole books of larger works and oeuvres. The fact that she loves these epigrams, enjoying the sound even when she cannot understand the words<sup>481</sup>, suggests that this prismic, miniature method of literary evocation was very dear to her, and was learned in much the same way that Eliot and Joyce learned their classics. The fact that she appreciates the help of the crib at the bottom renders the idea of modernist difficulty more complex, since the authors themselves express an indebtedness to ordinary educational materials in deciphering 'great' literature, especially since the 'crib' referred to is a full translation, rather than just a few glossed words.

When she writes to her brother Thoby on the subject of what she is to read on holiday in the New Forest, she identifies Sophocles in particular, one of the first sources of direct classical allusion in her first published work *The Voyage Out*.

Father has begun to say 'We must talk about what you are to read at Fritham'. I have told him that you promised to help me with a Greek play or two – Sophocles I think. Father wants to get for me from the library Jebbs Sophocles, only it is in seven volumes. So he says would you send a line with your invaluable advice – which play had it better be? I have read the Antigone – Edipus Coloneus – and I am in the middle of the Trachiniai. I should rather like to read the Antigone again – and any others you advise. I find to my immense pride that I really *enjoy* not only admire Sophocles.<sup>482</sup>

Koulouris has examined the influence of Sophocles and Greek tragedy on Woolf's writing in his book *Hellenism and Loss in the Work of Virginia Woolf*<sup>483</sup>. Sophocles' depictions of female characters, particularly Antigone, offer Woolf inspiration for female characters ruined by the patriarchy: Antigone, Jocasta, Eurydice. She is directed by her father here only insofar as she is prompted to consider a list of authors or a reading plan for the holiday, and he makes Virginia and Thoby study partners encouraging independent learning. Her father is recommending Jebb's Sophocles, a facing page translation like the Loeb Classical library, so the modernists are not classical purists. Just as Joyce had his abridged versions of the classics, and Eliot's family is involved in the publication of such texts for the *Harvard Classics* series, so Woolf has her Jebb's and Thoby's book of Greek epigrams.

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<sup>480</sup> VW to Thoby, 29/1/1902, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 46-7.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.: a likely reading of a torn MS; the details are at p. 46-7 of the volume of letters above.

<sup>482</sup> VW to Thoby, -/7/1901, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 42.

<sup>483</sup> Koulouris, T., *Hellenism and Loss in the Work of Virginia Woolf* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

Her diaries show that she is a very diligent independent translator of Aristotle, Sophocles and others, and that she generally would prefer to translate rather than read translations. This said, her 1917 review in *The Times Literary Supplement* of the Loeb Classical Library demonstrates how, as an ‘amateur’, she cherishes these editions which help the reader get over the difficulties of translating Ancient Greek.<sup>484</sup> She says that ‘it is important to read quickly’ so that the business of laborious translation does not dissuade the reader, even if this creates the momentary illusion that one knows exactly what Aeschylus meant.<sup>485</sup>

Woolf was an unselfish and almost evangelical student of Greek. In her letters to Emma Vaughan (addressed with school-type nicknames like ‘Toad’, ‘Todkins’, ‘Toadlebinks’), she is continually encouraging her cousin Marny to keep up her studies, occasionally even relaying homework assignments from ‘dear old Warr’ their tutor:

This afternoon I went to Greek for the first time. There was only Miss Holland, tell Marny, who said she worked two hours a day at her preparation and thought that too little! Dr Warr has asked most tenderly after Marny and said that he should be very much pleased if she would do the exercises and send them to him to correct, and he will give them to me... So will you tell her that the exercises for next time are Nos. 56 and 58?<sup>486</sup>

Woolf seems to interpret education as conversation; she invites Emma Vaughan along to classes, she continually writes to Marny via Emma to suggest that she keep going with Greek, she writes of conversations about Sophocles with Charles Eliot Norton, she writes about how many attend the classes,<sup>487</sup> and of course she writes to Thoby. She writes about education in terms of conversation in a letter to her brother:

I have to delve from books, painfully and all alone, what you get every evening sitting over your fire and smoking your pipe with Strachey etc. No wonder my knowledge is but scant. There’s nothing like talk as an educator I’m sure.<sup>488</sup>

She primarily conceives of Thoby’s advantage as a *social* one rather than an *institutional* one; she does not envy Thoby his schoolmasters and curricula, but his friends. Whether or not she is right to do so is a different question, but some modern educational thought does promote the value of conversation with intelligent people as an efficient means of enhancing intellectual development<sup>489</sup>. Dialogic questioning encourages teachers to reconsider their modes of questioning and their organisation of group discussion to encourage more exploratory and expansive responses with higher cognitive value than in questions

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<sup>484</sup> Woolf, V., ‘The Perfect Language’, *The Times Literary Supplement* (24 May 1917), p. 247.

<sup>485</sup> Woolf, V., ‘The Perfect Language’, *TLS*, p. 247.

<sup>486</sup> VW to Emma Vaughan: -/1/1898, *Letters, Vol. I*, p. 13.

<sup>487</sup> VW to Emma Vaughan: pp. 13-35.

<sup>488</sup> VW to Thoby Stephen, -/5/1903, *Letters, Vol. I*, p. 77.

<sup>489</sup> Mercer, N., & Hodgkinson, S. (eds.), *Exploring Talk in School* (London: Sage, 2008).

which require the simple recall of subject content.<sup>490</sup> Melba Cuddy-Keane offers recent research into what she refers to as ‘pedagogical Woolf’, as distinct from (but related to) ‘feminist Woolf’<sup>491</sup>. She focusses on the essays and their ‘turn and turn about’<sup>492</sup> technique as a modern version of Socratic dialogue, and she suggests that this teaches the reader to engage with text in less simplistic, more dialogic ways than traditional criticism.<sup>493</sup> But ‘turn and turn about’ is part of ‘leading out’, and it relates to the associative patterns found in Joyce, and the indecisiveness of Eliot’s conclusions; the generation of further learning is an end in itself for these modernists.

In her diaries Woolf reflects on her tutors and what she learned from them. From the records of King’s College it appears that Dr Warr<sup>494</sup> was her tutor to begin with, but gradually the classes are taken on increasingly by Miss Clara Pater from 1898 until 1901<sup>495</sup>, when he died, curiously unmentioned in her letters and diary. Clara Pater, Walter’s sister, seems to be something of an unsung hero in the education of Virginia Stephen, with critical attention having been given to Janet Case – she gets an extensive memoir in the 1903 diary<sup>496</sup> – and Janet Case’s tutor, Jane Harrison. But Clara Pater continued the business of formal tuition from King’s, apparently on behalf of Professor Warr, until 1902, when Janet Case took over. Pater’s class is referred to as being ‘perfectly delightful’<sup>497</sup> by Woolf, even if the entries after this refer more to her pallor and her frailty than her classes. This means that Pater, despite having very few references in the diary, took Woolf for Greek and/or Latin for more of the time she was at King’s than is often supposed.

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<sup>490</sup> Alexander, R., *Towards Dialogic Teaching: Rethinking Classroom Talk* (York: Dialogos, 2015).

<sup>491</sup> Cuddy-Keane, M., *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.2.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>494</sup> The coincidence of his name is suggestive when one considers how much Woolf has to say about the connection between public school, university and the First World War in *Three Guineas* and *Jacob’s Room*.

<sup>495</sup> King’s College London Archives: In the records of classes offered, the staff teaching them, and the numbers of students, it appears that in Michaelmas Term 1897, when VW started at King’s, Warr taught both Latin and Greek (7 per class), he was replaced by a Prof. Walter in Lent 1898 (5 and 6 per class), and was back in Easter 1898 (5 and 4). But in Michaelmas 1898 he took only Greek (6 students) and the Latin was taken by Miss Pater (5). In Lent 1899 he took only Greek (4), and Pater Greek and Latin (3 and 6, with Pater taking 4 private tutees too), and in Easter 1899 Pater held the fort, taking all Latin and Greek (5 and 6) plus private tutees (5). In Michaelmas 1899, Warr took a class of 1 for Latin, and Pater took care of the rest of Greek and Latin, including private tuition, plus German private tuition (19 students across all classes); classes in Lent 1900 and onwards were taken completely by Miss Pater. Warr is referred to as ‘dear old Warr’ by VW on a few occasions in her letters; tragically he was not old, only 55, when he died. Miss Clara Pater quietly went about the business of taking on his work in the last two years of his life; so when in 1903 Woolf comments on Miss Case being more professional than Miss Pater, she may be unaware that Pater was shouldering the teaching burden of a whole department, thus in some ways more professional than she realised.

<sup>496</sup> Leaska, M. (ed.), p. 181-184.

<sup>497</sup> VW to Emma Vaughan, 13/6/1899, *Letters, Vol. I*, p. 26.

It is clear from the fiction and the letters that Woolf knew who she was. Indeed, she is often cited as the source for the character Miss Craye in the short story 'Slater's Pins Have No Points'<sup>498</sup>: the references to her dead brother, a famous academic, her sickly sister, her living alone in a small house in Kensington; but since there was also a real Miss Clay teaching Greek and Latin at King's in 1901 with Clara Pater, it would seem the character is a composite. The casual observation by the piano teacher, Miss Craye, that 'Slater's pins have no points' seems to let loose a flood of empathy in her student, Fanny Wilmot, who then imagines her life apart from the 'cool, glassy world of Bach fugues'; she imagines her music teacher as a human being, a pitiful old spinster, then a star, and finally as her lover. While Virginia Stephen had no romantic relationships with her tutors, she did form very intimate relationships with women such as Violet Dickinson which blended real affection with intellectual mentorship. Indeed, 'Miss Craye' becomes 'Julia' during the course of the story, perhaps reflecting the way in which education for Virginia Stephen was a much more personal and far less professional or institutional process than for the formally educated, such as Joyce and Eliot. The political point of the piece seems to be an unpinning of social prejudices about spinsterhood, attitudes to educated women in society, and attitudes to sexuality. Beneath all of this, however, the final image of the ageing tutor as 'burning like a dead white star'<sup>499</sup> passes comment on the lost potential of all the Miss Paters, Clays, and the multitude of other Misses whose names adorn such staff registers as those of the Ladies' Department of King's College London; potential which has been overlooked and hindered, far from the mainstream of education. The image is one of illumination, of elucidatory power and celestial influence which is still observable, but now, to all intents and purposes, quite dead, and remote as the light of ancient stars. The flower which falls as a result of Slater's pins having no points, is every bit as symbolic as the pin which drops in this epiphanic vignette of social awkwardness. The fallen rose is the shattered illusion of perfection, the pin dropping the customary cliché of realisation, and together, the unraveling of a veil. The bathos of the phrase 'Slater's pins have no points', used at the beginning and repeated at the end, also serves to make the story funny, a visionary journey which starts and finishes with embarrassed muttering. How would this have been presented by Eliot? A few more references to the art of fugue, perhaps; an epigraph like the one which adorns his comparable 'Portrait of a Lady', a few more literary references, oblique portrayals of Pater's work as well as Pater's person (brother Julius, the archaeologist, in this story), such as in Eliot's portrayal of Bertrand Russell in 'Mr Apollinax'. But Woolf's interest is always the life more than the literature, and this emphasis finds its reason in an education which is avid, personal and informal throughout, based on social ties rather than institutional regulations and expectations.

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<sup>498</sup> Woolf, V., *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf* ed. Susan Dick (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), p. 215-220.

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

While she took exams in German in 1899 and 1900<sup>500</sup> she makes hardly any reference to it in her letters or her diary; instead, the study she refers to most frequently is her Greek, and it is telling that the subject Woolf truly values is that which is not for examination but purely to satisfy her own intellectual curiosity. The reason for her not taking many examinations could have been partly a response to Dr Savage's advice following her illness after the death of her mother, but the choice of German for examination, and the scarce references to it in her papers, tend to suggest a certain distinction in the mind of the writer between learning for qualifications and learning for learning's sake. Since Virginia and Vanessa had decided early on that they were to be respectively writer and artist, and since they had published the spoof newspaper *The Hyde Park Gate News* between 1891 and 1895, writing and learning were evidently bound up together. Joyce's theatrical productions for his family, Eliot's *Fireside* magazine and Woolf's *The Hyde Park Gate News* are similar in the sense that they suggest an early love of the writer's craft for its own sake. Woolf's lack of a stellar academic school career separates her from Eliot and Joyce only because there was nothing for her to achieve, such as the essay, translation and composition prizes won by these other, male, formally educated, modernist writers. It is this which gives Woolf's use of structure and allusion that more conversational, dialogic quality; as if it were a representation of intellectual conversation, a *social manifestation* of learning rather than an *academic* one.

The great Newnham classicist Jane Harrison was a personal friend of Virginia Stephen from 1904 until her death in 1928; Jane Harrison taught Janet Case, Woolf's tutor in Greek. Jean Mills writes in detail about Woolf's relationship with this Cambridge 'Ritualist' from a specifically feminist perspective, but there is significant overlap with the world of education in her analysis. Mills disclaims the shamanistic associations of her favoured term of Miller's, 'transpersonalism', which carries suggestions of a consciousness or state of being which transcends personal identity. This is not to say that Woolf herself did not espouse views like this: her comments about communing with one great mind when reading the works of ancient authors tend to suggest she may have drawn something from the anthropological approaches to religion adopted by academics such as Harrison and Frazer at the time. The term transpersonalism may be too broad for what is intended by Miller and Mills; when Harrison engaged her students with her enthusiasm Mills dubs her, less precisely, 'intergenerational' and 'transpersonal'. The reason for the use of these terms appears later, when linearity and order are synthesised with ideas of patriarchy and are therefore, in principle, at odds with the standpoint of the work.<sup>501</sup> But Woolf herself queries whether logic is truly the exclusive domain of the patriarchy, with

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<sup>500</sup> King's College London Archives: She achieved Second Class in both Elementary German and German Grammar and Reading according to the King's College Ladies' Department Magazine editions for 1899 and 1900.

<sup>501</sup> Mills, J., *Virginia Woolf, Jane Ellen Harrison, and the Spirit of Modernist Classicism* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2014), p. 35.

Katharine Hilbery in *Night and Day* secretly poring over mathematical problems, loving their crystal clarity despite being surrounded by and descended from literary women and men<sup>502</sup>: gender, as the stellar, polymathic Jane Harrison and the very gifted Virginia Woolf both apparently believed<sup>503</sup>, is both more and less complex than this; it is a highly elaborate and pervasive social construct whose premises were very keenly experienced by these women in various ways throughout their education and careers. Woolf remains just as ‘untranspersonal’ as Joyce and Eliot, taught and guided and engaged with, influenced by her tutors and her parents like any other learner or common reader; furthermore, this influence may be even more ‘linear’ and direct precisely because it was more personal and individuated than the detached, formal influence of Eliot and Joyce’s teachers and tutors, which was diluted by impersonal syllabi and the ordinary run of administering programmes of education with large numbers of students year on year. What Mills really means by transpersonal is informal, conversational, collaborative, unorthodox, practical, lively; in terms of linguistic analysis and translation, it means to focus on the meaning of utterances rather than grammatical analysis and memorisation; it means the opposite of a caricature of formal education, with a teacher or lecturer endlessly dictating truth from on high, which in this work is deemed to be a method which is exclusively patriarchal and male.<sup>504</sup> The relationship between Woolf and Harrison is one which can stand as a metaphor for the kind of relationship she requires with the reader in her work, and Mills finds illuminating analogies in several places, for instance:

Harrison’s early work, stylistically, calls to mind Virginia Woolf’s own early experimental writing that can be linked to Pater, as well. Her idea of capturing ‘moments of being’ in her prose, intense instances that climax into deeply felt flashes of insight, for example, in her shorter works, such as ‘Slater’s Pins Have No Points’, which condenses an intensely felt female mentorship into a matter of seconds, or the more well-known ‘The Mark on the Wall’, which expands and amplifies the meaning of a moment, echoes a Paterian sensibility.<sup>505</sup>

What Mills calls Woolf’s ‘Paterian sensibility’ is the idea that ‘every moment is the centre and meeting place of an extraordinary number of perceptions’, an idea expressed in her essay ‘The Narrow Bridge of Art’,<sup>506</sup> and this is common to both Harrison in her analyses of Ancient Greek artefacts and Woolf in her treatment of the minutiae of everyday life. The problem with applying the epithet ‘Paterian’ here is that it implies Clara’s story is being cast in Walter’s terms. In fact, Woolf is just as likely to subvert with bathos as to dazzle with epiphanic insight, particularly in her shorter work, which

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<sup>502</sup> Woolf, V., *Night and Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 42.

<sup>503</sup> Harrison, J., “‘Homo Sum’: Being a letter to an anti-suffragist from an anthropologist”, in *Gender and Modernism*, ed. Scott, B. K. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2008), p. 209: ‘To be meek, patient, tactful, modest, honourable, brave, is not to be either manly or womanly; it is to be humane, to have social virtue.’

<sup>504</sup> Although this did not happen in the teaching of Joyce or Eliot in their all-male schools.

<sup>505</sup> Mills, J., p. 20.

<sup>506</sup> Woolf, V., ‘The Narrow Bridge of Art’, *Granite and Rainbow* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1958), p. 23.

is, as we have seen, rather more playful than Mills suggests. 'The Mark on the Wall' actually pokes fun at the very process in which Harrison engaged as a teacher. The analysis of the image of the mark on the wall is so overblown and drawn out that when it turns out not to be a 'the head of a gigantic old nail driven in two-hundred years ago'<sup>507</sup> (or indeed anything else of any historical significance) but, in fact, a snail, the reader is permitted to question precisely the kind of 'problem photograph' analysis that Harrison used in her lectures on archeological discoveries.<sup>508</sup> The short story is structured so as to give greater effect to the bathos; it defeats and disappoints the scholarly desire for further discovery and enlightenment. If Woolf presents 'flashes of insight' in these moments, she is quick to mock, undercut and inoculate them with the perfect image of the recalcitrant, obstinate dullness of fact: the snail in its shell stuck to the wall. To read Woolf is mostly to be woken up and refreshed by the pace of the 'plunge' and the fun of the 'lark', to borrow terms from the beginning of *Mrs Dalloway*. The exchange at the end of the short story mocks the remote and detached kind of academic analysis which posits theories but never gets up to look at the actual evidence; in a sense, Woolf supports Harrison's methodology insofar as she never lectured on artefacts she had not seen herself (having been upbraided for doing so on one occasion by Darwin's son early in her career). The 'armchair anthropologist' J. G. Frazer could therefore be a possible model for the narrator of the story, one who is never going to undertake the necessary 'field work' to respond to the evidence himself.<sup>509</sup> Woolf herself goes directly to life in her writing, too, more than she does to samples of life distilled in literature like Eliot, whom she called 'the schoolmaster'.<sup>510</sup>

Woolf's use of the word 'schoolmaster' in other contexts is derogatory and defensive. Cuddy-Keane finds that, in response to Empson's criticism of *Mrs Dalloway*'s arbitrary connections, in which he suggested the connections should be coordinated into a system, or even an index, by which our curiosity could be satisfied, Woolf said, 'all they can do is to schoolmaster'.<sup>511</sup> To schoolmaster, then, is to require schemes, objectives, charts, satisfactory responses to questions evoked by the text, and this is something which she finds boring and limited as a response to literature, as it is 'all they can do'. It is far from the leisured, idle, self-directed learning she describes in her essay, *Reading*:

The house had its library; a long low room, lined with little burnished books, folios, and stout blocks of divinity. ... Here they all are; Homer and Euripides; Chaucer; then Shakespeare; and the Elizabethans, and following come the plays of the Restoration, more handled these, and greased as if from midnight reading, and so down to our time or very near it, Cowper, Burns, Scott, Wordsworth and the rest. ... I liked to read there. One drew the pale armchair to the

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<sup>507</sup> Woolf, V., 'The Mark on the Wall', *The Mark on the Wall and other short fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 8.

<sup>508</sup> Mills, p. 16.

<sup>509</sup> Mills, p. 31.

<sup>510</sup> Bell, A. (ed.), *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, Vol. 2 (London: Penguin, 1978), p. 204.

<sup>511</sup> Cuddy-Keane, p. 76.

window, and so the light fell over the shoulder upon the page. The shadow of the gardener mowing the lawn sometimes crossed it... and the figures of the players passed to and fro. But they did not distract me from my book; any more than the butterflies visiting the flowers, or the bees....<sup>512</sup>

The image is idealised, yet indolent, and troubling in its implicit recommendation of a life of privilege as a means of acquiring a literary education. The gardener works while the narrator reads and looks out over the countryside, and while the ladies and gentlemen play tennis. In this light, it is immaterial whether Keats and Browne come to life on the page for her<sup>513</sup>, because the common reader here is shown to be aristocratic, and this experience of reading is remote from the overwhelming majority of her busier and more obligated readership, some of whom she would have met during her time at Morley College from 1905 to 1907. Equally troubling is the listing of authors without opening the book covers by means of an allusion: while the canon is being recommended, it is being kept from the reader until they have the leisure to enjoy the lifestyle of the narrator. Woolf's writing here is not so far removed from Arnold Bennett's in his long essay, *Literary Taste: How to Form it*.<sup>514</sup> Peter McDonald suggests that if Bennett is opposed to the intellectual writing of High Modernism, he is 'equally antagonistic to the anti-intellectualism of the masses'<sup>515</sup>. But as Rose, Hilliard, Jaillant and Hoggart have pointed out, 'anti-intellectualism' is not a charge which can be applied to the myriad autodidacts of the working classes, and antagonism which manifests in the provision of reading lists, is, really, Arnoldian stewardship. If Woolf's writing here is anything as programmatic as an 'alternative pedagogy',<sup>516</sup> as Cuddy-Keane suggests, it is distinct from the 'schoolmasterly' journey of discovery that can be traced in Eliot and Joyce in that it sells the experience of reading while offering suggestions for how to make the best use of that time. However, it remains informed by the same spirit of curiosity, for knowledge for its own sake, and a regard for the best that has been thought and said, that they draw from Arnold, Emerson, Newman, Godwin.

What emerges from a consideration of the education of Virginia Woolf is that she believes that learning happens through discussion, ideally with a well-read scholar such as Lytton Strachey, Jane Harrison, or her father, Leslie Stephen. She is Romantic in her insistence upon nature as a means of re-sensitising her thoughts to this pattern behind 'the cotton wool' of everyday life, despite the urban

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<sup>512</sup> Woolf, L. (ed.), *Collected Essays*, Vol. 2, (London: Hogarth Press, 1967), p. 12-13.

<sup>513</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>514</sup> Bennett, A., *Literary Taste: How to form it*. (New York: George H. Doran, 1909), p. 112: In addition to many generalisations about how one should read, what makes great literature, and various admonitions about daring to believe oneself possessed of literary taste, Bennett produces a reading list in three chronologically ordered sections without delving into the books in any instructive way, merely enumerating the volumes (335) and highlighting that acquiring literary taste is cheaper than one might think, mere pennies a day.

<sup>515</sup> McDonald, P., *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice, 1880 – 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 95.

<sup>516</sup> Cuddy-Keane, p. 2.



setting of much of her work. We find that she values leisured and self-directed reading, assembling her own lists and seeking advice and guidance from her father and her brother, which means that her learning is both that of the ‘tea table’ and also indirectly a more formal education filtered through her Cambridge and public school educated father and brother. The materials used at King’s were identical to those used in schools. Woolf was highly intelligent, highly motivated and very diligent in her study, and her education was spared the competitive, recitative regimen of school, and this, as we shall see, manifests itself in the works. Cuddy-Keane’s idea that a ‘turn and turn about’ or ‘both/ and’ thinking evident in the essays is an alternative pedagogy is helpful insofar as it identifies discursive rather than linear didactic patterns in the essays, but it feels partial as one expands the focus from the essays to the oeuvre more generally. And while Woolf does offer both lesser known and canonical recommendations for reading in her essays and novels in the vein of Joyce and Eliot, she stops short of opening the door to these works in ways that aid the reader in their journey of discovery, leaving the reader freer to arrive at their own conclusions. Her writing is therefore less schoolmasterly than that of Eliot and Joyce, and this is an expression of her own informal home education, receiving help with reading lists from Leslie and Thoby Stephen, rather than a deliberate attempt to advocate more discursive alternatives to institutional systems, which in fact she replicates in her own study of Greek and Latin. Compared with Joyce and Eliot, there is a greater focus on literature as it sits within a life, and a far more intense focus on what it feels like to read and what it means to read, rather than literature as saviour, or author as conscience creator.

## Part Two: Education in the work of Virginia Woolf

In this part of the chapter, Woolf’s treatment of education in the novels is considered in the light of her own education. Her more linear works, such as *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Night and Day* (1919) and *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) are all relevant to the topic of education, but her modernist works are more educative and in the context of this thesis are therefore most interesting. The short story, *The Mark on the Wall* (1917), is a fascinating forerunner of her more experimental style, but there is not space for it here. *Jacob’s Room* (1922), then *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *The Waves* (1930) will be considered in connection with other works. *Between the Acts*, *The Years*, *Orlando* and *Flush* are left to one side for the sake of brevity, although a persuasive case could be made for their inclusion on the grounds of their allusiveness and literariness. The essays, *A Room of One’s Own* and *Three Guineas*, will be considered in part three which has to do with Woolf’s educational thought and practice, and the place of her work in English studies.

## Jacob's Room

*Jacob's Room* sits alongside *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses* as a modernist text published in 1922, which is experimental in form and narrative style, and which, like these other two texts, also makes use of allusion to canonical writers, and also refers to the distinctiveness of modern consciousness and the impact of war, mechanisation, commercialisation, etc. A reference to Jacob as a 'battered Ulysses' at one point in the novel may be a reference to the work of Joyce which Woolf had read in 1918-19, and which she privately thought might be more accomplished than her own work in *Jacob's Room*, notwithstanding her well-known reservations about Joyce's achievement<sup>517</sup>. Is her *Jacob's Room* a 'battered' *Ulysses*? The question is one which she effectively answers for herself when she points out in her letters that her contemporaries are quite simply on a different track – or, 'doing the same thing on another railway line'<sup>518</sup> – and she characterises her own literary ambitions in terms of giving a sense of life rather than accomplishing an intellectual or aesthetic revolution, or 'forging in the smithy of her soul the uncreated conscience of her race'. De Gay's analysis of Woolf's relationship to the literary past connects the 'railway line' sentiment to what she has to say about Sterne and Thackeray<sup>519</sup>, pointing out that when she criticises *Ulysses* she talks about how Sterne and Thackeray leave her 'convinced that there are other aspects of life, and larger ones into the bargain'.<sup>520</sup> For Woolf, then, at around the time when she is composing *Jacob's Room* she is distinguishing herself from the more intellectually programmatic work of Joyce and Eliot, and in doing so is trying to write a kind of modernist fiction which uses the classics and the canon in a way that is more suggestive of the vastness of experience and less inclined to offer an intellectual route through the chaos of modernity. This might explain the turn and turn about methodology identified by Melba Cuddy-Keane and others more usefully than the notion that she is proposing and modelling an alternative pedagogy in her writing. Following up De Gay's train of thought, it seems Woolf celebrates (in her own poised and fastidious way<sup>521</sup>) the eccentricity of *Tristram Shandy* and this offers us a clue as to what she draws from Sterne. The flight from one idea to the next, and the famous use of a motley emblem to evoke the narrative method, the characterful narrative voice, is surely germane to a discussion of the structure of *Jacob's Room*. If depictions of

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<sup>517</sup> Bell, A., (ed.) *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 2:* (London: Penguin, 1978), p.69: Sunday, 26 September 1920: 'what I'm doing is probably being better done by Mr Joyce'.

<sup>518</sup> VW to Ethel Smyth, *Letters, Vol. IV* (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), p. 315.

<sup>519</sup> De Gay, J., *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 15.

<sup>520</sup> Woolf, V., 'Modern Fiction' in *The Common Reader* (London: Hogarth Press, 1925), p. 192.

<sup>521</sup> Woolf, V., 'Sterne' in *Collected Essays, III* (London: Hogarth Press, 1967), p. 91: 'Yet there are moments, especially in the later books of *Tristram Shandy*, where the hobby-horse is ridden to death, and Mr Shandy's invariable eccentricity tries our patience. The truth is that we cannot live happily in such fine air for long, and that we begin to become conscious of limitations; moreover, this astonishing vivacity has something a little chill about it. The same qualities that were so exhilarating at first – the malice, the wit, the irresponsibility – are less pleasing when they seem less spontaneous, like the grin on a weary face; or, it may be, when one has had enough of them.'

education are framed in chaotic and nonlinear narrative episodes, this tends to imply that education as a tool for learning about life is fundamentally different in nature from experience of life itself.

### *Motion, stasis and love*

Synecdoche makes the fragments of modernist characters stand for the whole, such as the image of Jacob's shoes in the final sentence of the novel<sup>522</sup>, presenting the character in terms of travel and tourism more than scholarship. Before this, indeed, it is movement which characterises his final moments in the story:

'Now I know that face ...' said the Reverend Andrew Floyd... 'Oh, Jacob Flanders!' he remembered in a flash. But he was so tall; so unconscious; such a fine young fellow. 'I gave him Byron's works,' Andrew Floyd mused, and started forward, as Jacob crossed the road...'<sup>523</sup>

Jacob is moving, he is unconscious, he has been given Byron's works but it is not a discussion which is remembered, only the loan. Before this we read:

The long windows of Kensington Palace flushed fiery rose as Jacob walked away... 'Jacob,' wrote Mrs Flanders, with the red light on her page, 'is hard at work after his delightful journey...'.<sup>524</sup>

Jacob has had a journey<sup>525</sup> but is not hard at work, and this friction highlights his character – for all his education, like Stephen Dedalus, he is no scholar. Being a man, this does not matter; unlike real scholars like Jane Harrison and Janet Case at Newnham and Girton, he can take a degree. Indeed, his place at Cambridge seems to be the result of nepotism, suggested in a conversation between his mother and Captain Barfoot in which Jacob's place seems dependent upon his being appointed to a Council<sup>526</sup>. The connection between the military and the world of education is suggested here by the mention of rank, too. He is, again much like Stephen Dedalus, defined by movement, until he is killed in the First World War, obliquely suggested in the repeated references to red light and things 'ablaze', in the following sentence in which a faraway voice in Whitehall talks about his meeting with the Kaiser, and the notion that Jacob was never going to come back<sup>527</sup>.

Cambridge is presented as a place of lifeless statuary<sup>528</sup>, in much the same way that William Rodney is presented as a Roman head cast in stone in *Night and Day*:

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<sup>522</sup> Woolf, V., *Jacob's Room* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 247.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>525</sup> He 'begins his journey on weakly legs' at the very start of the novel: *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>528</sup> De Gay, J., p. 72.

Look, as they pass into service, how airily the gowns blow out, as though nothing dense and corporeal were within. What sculptured faces, what certainty, authority controlled with piety, although great boots march under the gowns. In what orderly procession they advance.<sup>529</sup>

Scholarship is here connected with stasis or restricted movement through the motif of statuary; it is dignified, authoritative, but also ghostly and eerily connected with the world of the military through the references to marching boots and the pun on the word 'service'. The orderliness of the imagery is subverted by the way in which the narrative voice immediately digresses to compare insects in a forest gathering around a lantern to the chapel service, debasing scholarship to the level of instinct. Woolf alludes again to Bishop Berkeley's tree falling in a forest, querying the notion of objective reality, undermining the certainty of the pious faces just described, and blends this with the sound of a pistol firing, a sound which was mentioned at the very start when Jacob began his journey, in order to foreshadow the ultimate end of the course on which Jacob is now set, and to further cement the connection between the educational establishment and the war machine.

The mindless inertia and misogyny of this culture is satirised by Woolf through internal monologue and free indirect speech:

But this service in King's College Chapel – why allow women to take part in it? ... a dog destroys the service completely. So do these women – though separately devout, distinguished and vouched for by the theology, mathematics, Latin or Greek of their husbands. Heaven knows why it is. For one thing, thought Jacob, they're as ugly as sin.<sup>530</sup>

The fact that this is not said, but thought, highlights the tokenism and insincerity of Cambridge's efforts at female education in allowing eminent scholars such as Jane Harrison and Janet Case to study and to teach but not to graduate.<sup>531</sup>

Jacob is a traveller whose institutional education threatens to render him emotionally static: an inability to move may be connected with an inability to love. Jacob is dubbed a 'battered Ulysses'<sup>532</sup> in the British Museum by Fanny, one of a number of girlfriends with whom Jacob fails to establish a meaningful relationship, the irony of whose absence is made all the more poignant because, unlike Odysseus, he never comes back, and, unlike Penelope, Fanny does not have his love. At that moment, Jacob is in Hyde Park and, according to the narrator, 'might have been thinking of Rome; of architecture; of jurisprudence'<sup>533</sup>, and his thoughts are so far from her that even the omniscient narrator has to resort to a conditional mode to suggest what they might have been. Jacob resents the way in

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<sup>529</sup> Woolf, V., *Jacob's Room*, p. 38.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>531</sup> Nicholson, N. & Trautmann, J. (ed.), *Letters, Vol. 6, 1936-41* (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p. 132n.

<sup>532</sup> Woolf, V., *Jacob's Room*, p. 238.

<sup>533</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

which his learning has placed a barrier between him and Florinda. He is repulsed by her ‘brainless’<sup>534</sup> expression and notes how ‘beauty goes hand in hand with stupidity’<sup>535</sup>. But at this moment he ‘had a violent reversion towards male society, cloistered rooms, and the works of the classics’<sup>536</sup>; he laments that ‘The problem is insoluble. The body is harnessed to a brain’, evoking Socrates’ *Phaedrus* again in the notion of a conflict between decorum and abandon. The episode ends:

But when she looked at him... straight and beautiful in body, her face like a shell within its cap, then he knew that cloisters and classics are no use whatever. The problem is insoluble.<sup>537</sup>

The simple desire for a relationship just overcomes his intellectual vanity. Education is no replacement for real life in the work of Virginia Woolf.

The self-educated character of *Mrs Dalloway*, Septimus Smith, is a useful foil for the formally educated Jacob Flanders. A version of Forster’s Leonard Bast, he too is doomed to die, but as a result of the PTSD he suffers after the war, and despite his attempts to check his trauma with learning:

To look at, he might have been a clerk, but of the better sort; ... he was, on the whole, a border case, neither one thing nor the other... one of those half-educated, self-educated men whose education is all learnt from books borrowed from public libraries, read in the evening after a day’s work, on the advice of well-known authors consulted by letter.<sup>538</sup>

Woolf lectured at Morley College from 1905-7, the same place as the woman with whom he falls in love, Isobel Pole, who is ‘lecturing in the Waterloo Road upon Shakespeare’<sup>539</sup>. Woolf might seem to be mocking self-education, but her mockery is directed at herself. She wrote to Violet Dickinson in October 1907,

I gave a lecture to 4 working men yesterday: one stutters on his ms – and another is an Italian and reads English as though it were Medieval Latin – and another is my degenerate poet, who rants and blushes, and almost seizes my hand when we happen to like the same lines. But I don’t have any notes – I can tell you the first sentence of my lecture: ‘The poet Keats died when he was 25: and he wrote all his works before that.’ Indeed, how very interesting, Miss Stephen<sup>540</sup>.

It is Woolf’s own experience of lecturing which is being mocked; in contrast to Eliot, the diligent producer of detailed syllabi, the poet who initially wrote out his lectures verbatim, she makes no notes and slips into tautologous jokes. If Septimus is ‘half educated’, this is certainly not his fault. London

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<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>538</sup> Woolf, V., *Mrs Dalloway* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 71.

<sup>539</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>540</sup> VW to Violet Dickinson, 1/10/1907, *Letters, Vol. I* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1975), p. 313.

has made Septimus ‘shy, and stammering, made him anxious to improve himself’<sup>541</sup>. He may have his original in a composite of some of Woolf’s students, the stammerer and the poet; indeed the reference to Keats at this point suggests that she has transmuted this experience almost directly into art. The stammer likens him to Cloten, the subject of one of the novel’s first allusions, from the elegy in *Cymbeline*:

Fear no more the heat o’ the sun  
Nor the furious winter’s rages.<sup>542</sup>

Cloten is now beyond the suffering of the world, safe in death, and the lines in their context suggest that Septimus is still characterised by his struggle with the world, which manifests itself in his stammer. He is a caricature of an amateur scholar whose enthusiasm begs the same question as Woolf asks in *Jacob’s Room*: ‘what do we seek through millions of pages?’<sup>543</sup> His attitude to learning is characterised in various instances by the asyndeton list, rising to a crescendo of hyperbole and then suffering a bathetic aposiopesis, a comic tripwire from the real world, anticipating Mr Ramsay’s own blundering in *to the Lighthouse*. The following two examples illustrate the pattern:

He, Septimus, was alone, called forth in advance of the mass of men to hear the truth, to learn the meaning, which now at last, after all the toils of civilisation – the Greeks, Romans, Shakespeare, Darwin, and now himself – was to be given whole to... No crime; love; he repeated, fumbling for his card and pencil, when a Skye terrier snuffed his trousers and he started in an agony of fear.<sup>544</sup>

He thought her [Miss Pole] beautiful, believed her impeccably wise; dreamed of her; wrote poems to her, which, ignoring the subject, she corrected in red ink; he saw her, one summer evening, walking in a green dress in a square. [The gardener] ... found him writing; found him finishing a masterpiece at three o’clock in the morning and running out to pace the streets, and visiting churches, and fasting one day, drinking another, devouring Shakespeare, Darwin, *The History of Civilisation*, and Bernard Shaw.<sup>545</sup>

Unlike Jacob, the restless Septimus has if anything too much emotion, and indeed too much motion. But having served his public school and university educated officers, men like Jacob, ‘with great distinction’ in the war<sup>546</sup>, he is now mentally unwell. When he finds in the warm and human Shakespeare a kind of misanthropy and cynicism<sup>547</sup>, this is a symptom of his suffering, not a cause. The words are in free indirect speech and mark a point when we start to worry about Septimus’ sanity. Woolf also

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<sup>541</sup> Ibid. p. 63.

<sup>542</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>543</sup> Woolf, V., *Jacob’s Room*, p. 132.

<sup>544</sup> Woolf, V., *Mrs Dalloway*, p. 51.

<sup>545</sup> Ibid. p. 63.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid. p. 71.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid., p. 66: ‘How Shakespeare loathed humanity’ and ‘Love between man and woman was repulsive to Shakespeare’.

reiterates here the ideas in her diaries, letters and fiction about literary tradition: the great mind. The journey motif blends with the presentation of Clarissa Dalloway as a Penelope<sup>548</sup> character, answering Joyce's Stephen Dedalus, whose scholarly meandering is perhaps satirised here through Septimus himself, a tragicomic Telemachus to *Mrs Dalloway's* mock-Odysseus, Peter Walsh. The fact that Isabel Pole is not only beautiful but 'impeccably wise' also suggests that in projects like the WEA, women in education are beginning to be more highly esteemed, contrasting their portrayal in *Jacob's Room*.

### *The Room and the Essay*

The description of Jacob's room in Cambridge is crucial to an understanding of Woolf's attitude to education, as suggested by the reference to it in the novel's title.

Jacob's room had a round table and two low chairs. There were yellow flags in a jar on the mantelpiece; a photograph of his mother; cards from societies with little raised crescents, coats of arms, and initials; notes and pipes; on the table lay paper ruled with a red margin – an essay, no doubt – 'Does History consist of the Biographies of Great Men?' There were books enough; very few French books, but then anyone who's worth anything reads just what he likes, as the mood takes him, with extravagant enthusiasm. Lives like the Duke of Wellington, for example; Spinoza; the works of Dickens; the *Faery Queen*; a Greek dictionary with the petals of poppies pressed to silk between the pages; all the Elizabethans. His slippers were incredibly shabby, like boats burnt to the water's rim. Then there were photographs from the Greeks, a mezzotint from Sir Joshua – all very English. The works of Jane Austen, too, in deference, perhaps, to someone else's standard. Carlyle was a prize. There were books upon the Italian painters of the Renaissance, a *Manual of the Diseases of the Horse*, and all the usual textbooks. Listless is the air in an empty room, just swelling the curtain; the flowers in the jar shift. One fibre in the wicker armchair creaks, though no one sits there.<sup>549</sup>

In this vignette of a Cambridge student's empty room, Woolf characterises the learner in their absence through the things they have left there. It is a method that prepares us for 'Times Passes' in *To the Lighthouse* in which the war rages on outside the empty holiday home, and the house's impassivity passes silent comment on the immense waste of life in the Great War. This, too, foreshadows Jacob's death in war in his absence from the room.

The episode begins with a description of a round table and two chairs, almost exactly the kind of set-up required for the tea table training considered by Woolf: the egalitarian, intimate arrangement evokes friendly conversation rather than didacticism. The yellow flags are irises native to the fens and

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<sup>548</sup> De Gay, J., p. 92.

<sup>549</sup> Woolf, V., *Jacob's Room*, p. 48.

suggest that Jacob is also becoming more at home in Cambridge, not sticking with favourite flowers from home but acclimatising himself to his surroundings. His photograph of his mother on the mantelpiece suggests his devotion to her and also her pivotal role in his getting to Cambridge at all. The society cards with coats of arms, initials, etc., belong to the world of Whitaker's Table of Precedency repeatedly referred to in 'The Mark on the Wall': they imply that Jacob is a member of exclusive groups like school houses with traditions and secrets and interests to protect, honour codes and unique systems of etiquette, hierarchies, and all thoroughly assured of their place in the establishment. In the heraldry there is also a scintilla of military regiments and oaths to ancestral powers.

The notes and pipes are the fragments of thought and the detritus of idle pondering, valuable and worthless alike, of the kind exemplified in 'The Mark on the Wall' and referred to in her letter to Thoby about his evening conversations with Strachey; the meandering, turn and turn about kind of thinking which Cuddy-Keane finds in Woolf's essays. Then there is the essay itself – it is a symbol, albeit a work in progress, of formal education, like Ridley's three-volume Pindar in *The Voyage Out*, or the paper delivered by William Rodney in *Night and Day*, signifying an attempt at directed, purposeful thought, and it asks a crucial question for Woolf: whether history consists of the biographies of great men.

The life of the Duke of Wellington is an obvious choice for an essay about the lives of great men directing the course of history; the Duke of Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. The reader begins to imagine the course the essay might take: what if Napoleon had been met by one less adept at responding to changing conditions in a battle? Spinoza's conception of a philosophical, non-anthropomorphic God, in which all things exist as properties of God<sup>550</sup>, is not too far removed from Woolf's own conception of a single great mind, of which Plato and Shakespeare are passing expressions<sup>551</sup>. Here Jacob might consider whether history is a matter of decisive linear influences or simply the expression of an array of unconscious, cultural forces. Dickens writes the literature of social reform, the arts given a utilitarian crusade. Emerging in the allusive weave is the assumption of a narrative of history as progress; and yet the marching boots of the scholars in the chapel sound prophetically in the mind of the post-war reader. *The Faery Queen* draws the essay back to the world of Elizabethan England and the allegorical world of mythology and chivalry, further examining the notion of progress; Woolf talks about Spenser as one who writes on the cusp of a world which is changing from one defined by magic and symbol to one defined by reason and observation.<sup>552</sup> The

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<sup>550</sup> Spinoza, B., *Ethics* (trans. Hale, W.), (London: Trübner & Co., 1883), p. 9.

<sup>551</sup> Woolf, V., *Jacob's Room*, p. 147-148, 149: 'There is in the British Museum an enormous mind. Consider that Plato is there cheek by jowl with Aristotle; and Shakespeare with Marlowe. This great mind is hoarded beyond the power of any single mind to possess it.' & 'Stone lies solid over the British Museum, as bone lies cool over the visions and heat of the brain. Only here the brain is Plato's brain and Shakespeare's.'

<sup>552</sup> Woolf, V., *Collected Essays, Vol. I* (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), p. 17.



Greek dictionary with the poppies pressed between its pages resonates with his surname and suggests that Jacob's classical education is preparing him for death in war; it also suggests that the dictionary is so rarely opened that the poppies are becoming silk, and it supports the notion that an early twentieth-century public school education was less about learning than it was about Thomas Arnold's notion of the formation of character. The Elizabethans are bound together, a Golden Age bookended by conflict. His slippers and the mezzotint by Joshua Reynolds mark the end of the chaotic search for a line of argument through the essay; and Jacob's slippers, frayed and looking burned, are a further foretelling of his absence at the end of the novel, and they suggest that he is perpetually moving, having worn them to rags. Jane Austen, Jacob's token woman, reminds the reader of women's confinement to the domestic sphere, as Woolf discusses in *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*, and also of the fact that there are great and influential women who might feature in his essay, including Queen Elizabeth herself, implicitly referred to in the previous allusion.

Carlyle, 'a prize', suggests the results-driven nature of his education, as distinct from the self-directed education Woolf acquires; when Woolf refers to Carlyle it is not as a prize but as one of the first 'lives' she reads in her early journals in January 1897.<sup>553</sup> Carlyle contains the seed of the idea for the essay title:

For as I take it, Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realisation and embodiment, of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world: the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these.<sup>554</sup>

That Carlyle himself becomes a 'great man', influencing undergraduate essays in the next century, is an irony not lost on the author. But there is a further irony that she should use it to question its premise, to explore the very idea of influence itself, the gender politics of influence, and the elusive concept of character, and become educationally influential herself.

Jacob's book on the diseases of the horse is, according to de Gay, part of an allusive pattern of horse motifs relating to Socrates' *Phaedrus* (specifically mentioned in the British Museum Reading Room episode of the novel<sup>555</sup>) in which the soul is likened to a charioteer driving two horses, one of which is wild<sup>556</sup>. A consideration of the essay ultimately leads us to a consideration of the soul, an

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<sup>553</sup> Leaska, M. (ed.), *A Passionate Apprentice*, p. 8, 10, 13, 17.

<sup>554</sup> Carlyle, T., *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 3.

<sup>555</sup> Woolf, V., *Jacob's Room*, p. 149.

<sup>556</sup> De Gay, J., p. 82.

educative process in itself. The heart of the essay is that the answer depends on one's conception of the character involved, and one's way of explaining and defining character at all. Does one consider the deliberate and rational only, or the unconscious and irrational too? Is a mezzotint portrait in 'the grand style' of Joshua Reynolds, in all its delicate subservience to the requirements of the sitter, what we truly mean by character? The reference to Italian Renaissance painters supplies the notion of the influence of patronage and establishment ideology on the portrayal of soul or character in art. If the war is considered here too, the reader is invited to ask whether the conflict is an expression of human instinct or human reason. And in what sense is this 'all very English'? Is there such a thing as Englishness: is it deference, or self-control, or domesticity and adherence to the rules of etiquette; is it reform without revolution, scepticism rather than superstition? Woolf opens these questions alongside the essay as she refers to books and objects; but she does not go so far as to offer comment through the third person narrator, who seems to temper omniscience with decorous impartiality. She takes us to the doors of learning, and leaves us. The round table and two chairs is a space for conversation, not for laborious and painstaking inquiry.

Biographies end with a death. The fictional biography of Jacob, based in part on Woolf's brother Thoby, who had died of typhoid contracted on a journey to Greece in 1906, similar to the journey Jacob makes, ends with the death of Jacob in war. Woolf seems to reflect that had Thoby lived, he might have died soon after in the carnage of the war, as did her acquaintance, Rupert Brooke, of sepsis at Skyros; Woolf also lost her cousins, Charles Fisher and John Isham, and Cecil Woolf, one of her husband Leonard's two brothers, the other, Philip, having been wounded by the same shell.<sup>557</sup> Jacob's biography is not one which makes its mark on the stage of history, but one which is subservient to the narratives of 'great men', utterly expendable and wretchedly transient. If education is for human flourishing, what is the point if Jacob is killed the moment that he returns from the world of academe to the real world in which he can continue his learning and apply his lessons?

### *Cambridge Dons: High Priests of Education*

The depiction of other rooms in the episode is also useful for a consideration of Woolf's responses to education. Learning is still associated with light, but the situations described are more informal than the lecture hall or the supervision, and the celebration of formal learning more ambivalent than Woolf's depictions of self-education:

If any light burns above Cambridge, it must be from three such rooms; Greek burns here; science there; philosophy on the ground floor... It is not simple, or pure, or wholly splendid, the lamp of learning, since if you see them there under its light (whether Rossetti's on the wall,

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<sup>557</sup> Nicholson, N., (ed.), *Letters*, Vol. II (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), pp. 75, 94, 100, 171, 209.

or Van Gogh reproduced, whether there are lilacs in the bowl or rusty pipes), how priestly they look! How like a suburb where you go to see a view and eat a special cake! 'We are the sole purveyors of this cake.' Back you go to London; for the treat is over.<sup>558</sup>

Learning is very plainly still symbolically enlightening, but the scenario is domestic and servile regardless of the spirit and originality of the copied art works on the wall. The academics, the votaries of learning, are priestly and suburban: they are bound by convention and ritual, utter the same words, convey the same values, wear the same vestments. Knowledge is made palatable and decorous; an additional sweetener to the more substantial fare of everyday obligation. Not wholly splendid, not pure. The narrator imagines the pride of the university in terms of the pride of a baker, skipping over the class divide and equating learning with the production of sugary comestibles. Learning is consumption; it is a niche product available solely at certain kinds of 'shops'; and it is a holiday from the business of the real world symbolised by London.

The ambiguity of the word 'paper' in the subsequent description of Professor Huxtable suggests that there is an overlap, and that the application of intellect is not necessarily limited to the realms of Greek, or philosophy or science.

Old Professor Huxtable, performing with the method of a clock his change of dress, let himself down into his chair; filled his pipe; chose his paper; crossed his feet and extracted his glasses. ...Now, as his eye goes down the print, what a procession tramps through the corridors of his brain, orderly, quick-stepping, and reinforced, as the march goes on, by fresh runnels, till the whole hall, dome, whatever one calls it, is populous with ideas. Such a muster takes place in no other brain. Yet sometimes there he'll sit for hours together, gripping the arm of the chair, like a man holding fast because stranded... Strange paralysis and constriction – marvellous illumination. Serene over it all rides the great full brow, and sometimes asleep or in the quiet spaces of the night you might fancy that on a pillow of stone he lay triumphant.<sup>559</sup>

The word 'paper' means a newspaper before it means an academic article or essay according to the OED; the dates of first usage are 1642 and 1669 respectively. Woolf uses the word 'newspaper' at the end of 'The Mark on the Wall' to denote a space in which the war makes up all of the news, and the above description of thought in military terms such as 'muster' and 'march' and 'quick-stepping', imply that it may be a newspaper he is reading. In the context, it is likely that the Professor is puzzling over an academic article, but the image of an eye going down the print, of his choosing a paper, could just as easily apply to an evening newspaper as a typed article. The image of reading as a physical activity, or as an intellectual activity with physical effects, is one which recurs in Mr Ramsay's descriptions in *To the Lighthouse*, and the idea of needing something to hold on to while adrift on the seas of thought

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<sup>558</sup> Woolf, V., *Jacob's Room*, p. 49.

<sup>559</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50-51.

is found in 'The Mark on the Wall'. The experience of reading is sufficiently real for the reader that it can evoke the sense of physical exploration and peril that causes Professor Huxtable to grip the arm of the chair as if stranded, undergo a strange paralysis and constriction, and experience a marvellous illumination. Furthermore, the experience is one which is fundamentally social: the hall or dome of his mind is 'populous with ideas', and Woolf could have used any metaphor to suggest a multitude of thoughts. The adjective suggests that ideas appear as people: complex, mingling, partial, changing.

A different kind of academic is presented in the gregarious Sopwith, but the motif of motion here becomes the motif of stasis and death once more.

Indeed, to Sopwith a man could say anything, until perhaps he'd grown old, or gone under, gone deep, when the silver disks would tinkle hollow, and the inscription read a little too simple, and the old stamp look too pure, and the impress always the same – a Greek boy's head. But he would respect still. A woman, divining the priest, would, involuntarily, despise.<sup>560</sup>

Both academics are associated with death, whether the image is of a tomb's effigy with a pillow of stone, or of the silver disks subtly alluding to Charon's obol, the coin placed in the mouth of the dead to pay for the journey over the Styx. The aphorisms and inscriptions he offers are manifestly all too hollow and simplistic, too pure even, to smooth the transition from life into the unutterable immensity of oblivion. In *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), Mrs Kilman, the governess, is 'very able' and has 'a really historical mind'<sup>561</sup>; her being an educated woman ought to cast her in a more favourable light, but her sad piety, her role as governess rather than professional teacher or academic, and, indeed, her very name suggest the deathliness of formal, gendered, institutionally-cowed and limited scholarship; Woolf utilises the caricature Nuttall identifies in Victorian literature in characters such as Casaubon to pass comment on authority in education.

The reference to the woman despising the 'priest' in the academic is interesting as it continues the notion of academia as fundamentally associated with a group of men whose privilege is based on obscure and intuitive ideas of vocation rather than merit; it suggests also that academics in some ways control access to enlightenment in the way priests control access to salvation through rituals such as baptism and communion. The disks 'dissolving'<sup>562</sup> in the minds of the young men are analogous to the host in the mouth of a communicant. The image equates scholarship with a pursuit of the ineffable. Interpretation, like biblical exegesis for the priest, is the business of the academic: academics are intermediaries in the world described by Woolf, ferrying ideas back and forth from the world of the enlightened cognoscenti, the world of Forms, to the world of privileged catechumens.

At the end of this episode, 'old Miss Umphelby' is mentioned as an afterthought, a female academic:

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<sup>560</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>561</sup> Woolf, V., *Mrs Dalloway*, p. 9.

<sup>562</sup> Woolf, V., *Jacob's Room*, p. 51.

her lectures, therefore, are not half so well attended as those of Cowan, and the thing she might have said in elucidation of the text for ever left out.<sup>563</sup>

She is introduced singing Virgil on her way along the Backs, over Clare Bridge, towards Newnham, and she is stopped mid-flow, as always, by the thought of what she should wear if she should ever meet Virgil. There are the hallmarks of an oppressive and exclusive world all over this description. That she should sing Virgil (and ‘accurately too’) and yet be silenced in print, and not regarded when she speaks implies the hypocrisy of the establishment for which she works. When she considers what dress would be appropriate for a meeting with a great male author she echoes the sentiment of Woolf’s diary entry on 1 July 1903 when she writes about her reading:

I read – then I lay down the book & say – what right have I, a woman to read all these things that men have done? They would laugh if they saw me.<sup>564</sup>

What would Virgil, whom she adores, say if he saw that she was leading classes on his work. This heart-breaking notion of one’s idol disapproving of one’s reading and interpreting his work conveys a stern criticism of the kind of establishment that would engender such feelings of exclusion and worthlessness. Cambridge would not give women full degrees until 1948, and her position outside of the centre of the city, beyond the Backs referred to as a kind of moat between the inner sanctum and the notional narthex of the apprentices, further symbolises the sense of her exclusion from the high priesthood of the university. In a letter to Lady Simon in 1937, the same year as the first University of London paper in which students were asked about her work, she wrote about the question of Cambridge’s continued, and by this time solitary resistance to conferring degrees on women:

It seems incredible that there should be all this humming and hawing – about the university question I mean. ... I never understand what ‘membership of the University’ exactly means. ... As for the gowns, there we enter a world of such unreality that only a cave dweller can see the wood for the trees.<sup>565</sup>

A related notion is prefigured in the Reading Room episode:

Miss Julia Hedge, the feminist, waited for her books. They did not come. She wetted her pen. She looked about her. Her eye was caught by the final letters in Lord Macaulay’s name. And she read them all round the dome – the names of great men which remind us – ‘Oh damn,’ said Julia Hedge, ‘why didn’t they leave room for an Eliot or a Bronte?’<sup>566</sup>

The point is plainly made, and the 1922 reader cannot dodge the meaning. The heart of learning in London lauds the efforts of great men, just as another great seat of learning, Cambridge, pays only lip service to notions of female education, female greatness, and female intellect.

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<sup>563</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>564</sup> Leaska, M. (ed.), *A Passionate Apprentice*, p. 178.

<sup>565</sup> VW to Lady Simon, 3/6/1937, *Letters*, Vol. 6, p. 133.

<sup>566</sup> Woolf, V., *Jacob’s Room*, p. 145.

## To the Lighthouse

### *Recitative Poetry*

One of the first repeated allusions in *To the Lighthouse* (1927) is to a poem of school recitation<sup>567</sup>, Tennyson's 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' and Mr Ramsay absurdly chants the poem in fragments as he walks his thoughts all over the garden: 'Boldly we rode and well', 'stormed at with shot and shell', 'someone had blundered', all delivered as he blindly stumbles into people.

His eyes, glazed with emotion, defiant with tragic intensity, met theirs for a second, and trembled on the verge of recognition; but then, raising his hand halfway to his face as if to avert, to brush off, in an agony of peevish shame, their normal gaze, as if he begged them to withhold for a moment what he knew to be inevitable, as if he impressed upon them his own childlike resentment of interruption, yet even in the moment of discovery was not to be routed utterly, but was determined to hold fast to something of this delicious emotion, this impure rhapsody of which he was ashamed, but in which he revelled – he turned abruptly, slammed his private door on them; and Lily Briscoe and Mr Bankes, looking uneasily up into the sky, observed that the flock of starlings which Jasper had routed with his gun had settled on the tops of the elm trees.<sup>568</sup>

The portrait of a male scholar is not too far removed from the portrayal of Septimus Smith, hypnotised as he is by the incantatory hyperbole, the realm of poetry, away from the here and now. His use of the pronoun 'we' in 'Boldly we rode and well' is a misquotation which suggests how education can not only facilitate imaginative sympathy, but also delusion since Mr Ramsay is applauding his own success at Balaclava. He is enchanted by the heroic tone of the poem, feeling through the dactylic pulse of the verse the pounding of the hooves of the cavalry in its courageous charge against the Russian guns. The scholar here is one who is all too moved by his reading. The length of the sentence highlights his unwillingness to leave the idea just as he is enjoying it; the sentence lingers on the verge of capitulating to reality but the scholar simply slams his private door and continues on his way. It is a childlike resentment of the real world, however, the narrator insists; it is an unwillingness to give supremacy to the immediate demands of the present moment and preferring the indefinite deferral of having to deal with others. It is an impure rhapsody, and he is ashamed of it, but he clings to it nevertheless. He defines his rapture in terms of a military last stand; he is not to be 'routed utterly' from his reverie by the sudden blundering of Lily and William, nor Jasper's shooting, perhaps inspiring the notion of his being 'stormed at with shot and shell'. His detachment is also the detachment of Leslie Stephen in his later years, and his childishness is partly the judgement of a young Virginia Stephen who endured his

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<sup>567</sup> Robson, p. 37.

<sup>568</sup> Woolf, V., *To the Lighthouse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 24.

protracted grieving for Julia. In her notebook on the novel Woolf writes, ‘how much more important divisions between people are than between countries’.<sup>569</sup>

The fact that a connection exists between the depiction of Mr Ramsay and Septimus Smith suggests that Woolf finds that education is a means of intellectual transport for whoever engages with it, regardless of the formality of their education. And the fact that once again the associative process leads the reader back to the tragic consequences of war, suggests that education is not only the forerunner to such destruction, but also a safe alternative to it. The men ‘stormed at with shot and shell’ here become, in the episode ‘Time Passes’, the men of the First World War, whose death is mentioned in parentheses:

[A shell exploded. Twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay, whose death, mercifully, was instantaneous.]<sup>570</sup>

The Tennyson continues to apply: someone had blundered. The parentheses convey the neglectful way in which the soldiers were treated as disposable in the ill-fated strategies of the generals of the Great War, since the parentheses are not only visually emphatic but also convey how subordinate the enclosed clause is. When the Cowper allusions to *The Castaway* begin towards the end of the novel, Woolf uses another poet of school recitation who would have been very well known to late Victorians and Edwardians<sup>571</sup>, and Cam’s idle reflections on Mr Ramsay as he reads in his boat prompt her to think of how ‘we perish each alone’(p.142), and later he too considers bursting out ‘But I beneath a rougher sea’ (p.152). The struggle with faith evoked by Cowper in later poems such as *The Castaway* also reflects Leslie Stephen’s own scepticism and loss of faith, articulated in his 1903 work, *An Agnostic’s Apology & Other Essays*.<sup>572</sup> The Cowper allusions suggest that both characters realise their isolation even as their learning connects them.

Even more persistent than the allusions to canonical recitative poetry, however, are the allusions to ‘Luriana Lurilee’ an unknown poem by an unknown poet, recited in the novel by a failed mathematician, highlighting a motif of outsiders’ voices:

Then, surging up, puffing slightly, old Mr Carmichael stood beside her, looking like an old pagan god, shaggy, with weeds in his hair and the trident (it was only a French novel) in his hand. ... He stood there spreading his hands over all the weakness and suffering of mankind; she thought he was surveying, tolerantly, compassionately, their final destiny.<sup>573</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> Dick, S. (ed.), *To the Lighthouse: the original holograph draft* (London: Hogarth Press, 1983), appendix A, p.47-50.

<sup>570</sup> Woolf, V., *To the Lighthouse*, p. 109.

<sup>571</sup> Robson, p. 38.

<sup>572</sup> Stephen, L., *An Agnostic’s Apology & Other Essays* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1903).

<sup>573</sup> Woolf, V., *To the Lighthouse*, p. 169.

Mr Carmichael is based on a failed but brilliant mathematician who ‘spiced his mathematics with opium’<sup>574</sup> and who used to visit the family in St Ives – a man named in Quentin Bell’s biography as Mr Wolstenholme. There is another possible source for this character, too, whom Quentin Bell does not mention. Charles Isaac Elton’s poem is transcribed into the frontispiece of one of Leonard Woolf’s books<sup>575</sup> and ‘Luriana Lurilee’ or ‘A Garden Song’ is recited by Mr Carmichael, who adorns himself in a sheet while doing so, playing the part of a Greek orator. Charles Isaac Elton was a barrister known to Leonard Woolf, a very round-bellied gentleman according to his caricature in *Vanity Fair*<sup>576</sup>, like Mr Carmichael whose ‘capacious paunch’ is mentioned on a number of occasions. The ‘pagan god’ of the novel is both an insider and an outsider, whether because they are a brilliant but failed mathematician, or a barrister who is also an unknown poet; Charles Elton’s poetry was not published until 1945 by Vita Sackville-West,<sup>577</sup> four years after Virginia Woolf’s death, and ‘Luriana Lurilee’ first appears in print in Woolf’s novel, a poem which was itself a side project for a gentleman who published several treatises on arcane matters of English law. That the god of the novel should be an insider who is also an outsider is entirely consistent for a member of the Stephen family who advocates an ‘Outsiders’ Society’ for ‘educated men’s daughters’ in *Three Guineas*.<sup>578</sup> That this minor poem should implicitly take precedence over the Tennyson, the Cowper, the Shakespeare by being recited by the novel’s putative deity indicates Woolf’s love for sidelined, obscure voices; her fascination for the experimental poetry of the ‘Jesuit’ Hopkins in her letters<sup>579</sup> suggests that this is something which applies in her reading as well as in her writing, Hopkins being a non-establishment Christian and therefore an ideological outsider.

### *Hierarchy*

The hierarchies of formal education are satirised through the children’s comments on Mr Tansley’s conversations with Mr Ramsay, highlighting how much it seems to have to do with winning rather than learning for its own sake:

He was such a miserable specimen ... forever walking up and down, up and down, with Mr Ramsay, and saying who had won this, who had won that, who was a ‘first-rate man’ at Latin verses, who was ‘brilliant but I think fundamentally unsound’, who was undoubtedly the ‘ablest fellow in Balliol’, who had buried his light temporarily at Bristol or Bedford, but was bound to be heard of later when his Prolegomena, of which Mr Tansley had the first pages in proof with

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<sup>574</sup> Bell, Q., p. 32.

<sup>575</sup> Shaw, J., ‘Charles Elton ‘A Garden Song’ or ‘Luriana Lurilee’: another inscription by Leonard Woolf; the original version of the poem?’, in *Notes and Queries*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (2007), 171-3.

<sup>576</sup> Ward, L., ‘Charles Isaac Elton’, *Vanity Fair*, 6 August 1887: The National Portrait Gallery (NPG: D44344)

<sup>577</sup> Briggs, J., *Virginia Woolf: An Inner Life* (London: Penguin, 2006), p. 169.

<sup>578</sup> Woolf, V., *A Room of One’s Own & Three Guineas* (London: Vintage, 2001), p. 204.

<sup>579</sup> VW to Janet Case, 23/7/1919 & 5/1/1920, *Letters*, Vol. II, p. 379 & 415.



him if Mr Ramsay would like to see them, so some branch of mathematics or philosophy saw the light of day.<sup>580</sup>

In her notebook for the novel, Woolf remarked, ‘Tansley the product of the universities had to assert the power of his intellect’.<sup>581</sup> Tansley is considered first in imitative direct speech, reflecting the children’s mimicry of the pompous man’s conversation, and evoking how tired they are of his ‘walking up and down, up and down’ with Mr Ramsay, but then the inverted commas give way and the narrative voice is on-side, agreeing with the children about how tedious this scholar is, obsessed as he is with hierarchies, success, and prizes, given as he is to superlatives, and pretentious as he is by offering the fruits of another man’s work for Mr Ramsay to inspect, to whom he defers with unctuous reverence.

### *The Mind/World Balance*

Mr Ramsay’s abecedarian approach to philosophy further satirises and celebrates the formal education of the early twentieth century. It also alludes to Leslie Stephen’s work for the *Dictionary of National Biography*, in which the ‘lives of great men’ are sequenced alphabetically according to surname rather than by date, so that the compartmentalising of knowledge renders the production of a meaningful narrative impossible:

He stopped to light his pipe, looked once at his wife and son in the window ... so without distinguishing either his son or his wife, the sight of them fortified and satisfied him and consecrated his effort to arrive at a perfectly clear understanding of the problem which now engaged the energies of his splendid mind.

It was a splendid mind. For if thought is like the keyboard of a piano divided into so many notes, or like the alphabet is ranged in twenty-six letters all in order, then his splendid mind had no sort of difficulty in running over those letters one by one, firmly and accurately, until it had reached, say, the letter Q. ... He dug his heels in at Q. Q he was sure of. Q he could demonstrate. If Q then is Q – R ... ‘Then R...’ He braced himself. He clenched himself.

Qualities that would have saved a ship’s company exposed on a broiling sea with six biscuits and a flask of water – endurance, foresight, devotion, skill, came to his help....

Qualities that in a desolate expedition across the icy solitudes of the polar region would have made him the leader, the guide, the counsellor, whose temper, neither sanguine nor despondent, surveys with equanimity what is to be and faces it, came to his help again. R...<sup>582</sup>

The fact that the sight of Mr Ramsay’s wife and son ‘consecrates’ the moment of reflection implies that while he retains something of priestly character of the Cambridge dons this is authorised

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<sup>580</sup> Woolf, V., *To the Lighthouse*, p. 10.

<sup>581</sup> Dick, S. (ed.), *To the Lighthouse: the original holograph draft*, appendix A, p.47-50.

<sup>582</sup> Woolf, V., *To the Lighthouse*, p. 30-31.

by his impulse to provide for his family. Katherine Dalsimer suggests that he is the ‘personification of Victorian patriarchal culture’ and that ‘if Mr Ramsay’s intellectual range extends to Q, his emotional range is much narrower.’<sup>583</sup> ‘Personification’ might read ‘educative parody’, and the ‘consecrates’ signals some emotional depth here. That he inwardly compares himself to a Shackleton or a Scott not only causes the reader initially to scoff at the hyperbolic notion that education is like an expedition in the wilderness, but it also presents thought as an arduous physical activity, just as it was in *Jacob’s Room* in the presentation of Professor Huxtable: the motif of journeying is also suggested there, with the image of the professor being like a ‘man holding fast because stranded’. The references to digging one’s heels in, to bracing and clenching, to navigating a churning sea, to enduring and traversing desolate polar landscapes dramatise the process of thinking. It also curiously makes the experience of such an adventure rather more possible for the common reader than might otherwise be the case. Far from being a writer who claims that the reader cannot access the heights of scholarship, disdaining the efforts of the common reader to self-educate, the way in which Woolf describes the processes of thinking (or in other places the experience or feelings associated with reading or studying) actually sell the whole endeavour to the reader. As Katharine Hilberry realises in *Night and Day*, it is the journey not the arrival which matters:

‘It’s life that matters, nothing but life – the process of discovering, the everlasting and perpetual process,’ said Katharine, as she passed under the archway, and so into the wide space of King’s Bench Walk, ‘not the discovery itself at all.’<sup>584</sup>

Metacognitive thinking, such as has been popularised in schools over the last 20 years,<sup>585</sup> is presented as utterly meaningless. The very notion of knowledge as an alphabet, something that one can progress through in a linear way, as if everyone is on the same track, is satirised by the simplicity of the analogy itself; as an alphabet, it is really too basic an intellectual task for one of such a ‘splendid mind’. The question ‘if Q then is Q, then R’ is also reminiscent of algebra problems and takes Mr Ramsay back to school, belittling him and reducing the seriousness of his search for knowledge. In fact, the pointlessness of the exercise is hilariously apparent throughout because he has not defined his terms; the problem exists only in metaphor. To think effectively one must think in relation to something, not merely about the process of thinking. He is unable to know what R is because he never actually defines what Q is; if Q is the last thing he proved, then R is something out there in the ether, possibly completely unrelated to Q, as distant as the red-shift of a dead star. The earlier metaphor of a piano keyboard is also useful here; it presents Mr Ramsay as one learning his scales, learning his letters, in effect a child. Woolf may be doing more than just mocking scholarly vanity; she may be suggesting that all learners

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<sup>583</sup> Dalsimer, K., *Virginia Woolf: Becoming a Writer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 11.

<sup>584</sup> Woolf, V., *Night and Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 138.

<sup>585</sup> Harman, H., ‘Metacognition in Teaching and Learning: An Introduction’, in *Instructional Science*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1998), p. 1-3.

are alike, that ultimately we hammer away at the unknown until something clicks and suddenly we know it. None of us, even Mr Ramsay, are above the simple process of trial and error, effort and gradual enlightenment.

Woolf presents scholarship as something which, for all that it is distinct from the real world, existing in its own time and with its own emotional landscape, intersects with experience. Throughout this passage (as quoted), there have been moments of reality omitted, when Mr Ramsay notices his wife and son, his emotions for them affected by how he perceives he is faring on his quest, and when he fusses with his pipe, or kicks a stone, or stares at the hedge or the geraniums. In the case of Septimus Smith, the intersection was tragic, and the mind drew damaged impressions from reality which urged him unwittingly to commit suicide as a means of escape from living in a home when the opposite reality is about to embrace him. Mr Ramsay continually blends the life of the mind with the outside world, so that there is a blending of thought and sense, so that for all his desire to compartmentalise and order his knowledge there is always an interplay between different aspects of experience: the body is harnessed to a brain, as the narrator observes in *Jacob's Room*; the problem is insoluble:

He slipped, seeing before him that hedge which had over and over again rounded some pause, signified some conclusion, seeing his wife and child, seeing again the urns with the trailing red geraniums which had so often decorated processes of thought and bore, written up among their leaves, as if they were scraps of paper on which one scribbles notes in the rush of reading – he slipped, seeing all this, smoothly into speculation...<sup>586</sup>

So the pattern of his thought is mapped in the horticultural landscaping of the holiday home. What Woolf suggests throughout her work and her essays and indeed her diaries and letters is that there is a connection between the experience of reading or thinking or studying and the material, physical surroundings in which one reads, thinks or studies; that sense is wedded to thought. Her references to notes on leaves presents Mr Ramsay as a Cumaean Sybil, both seriously – since he is an esteemed and sought after academic – and also humorously – since he is no prophet.

## The Waves

The first three 'parts' of *The Waves* (1931), signposted by passages in italics which symbolically depict the stages of the sun across the sky in the course of a day, directly relate to preparatory, secondary and tertiary education. Each of the characters is presented with distinct intellectual, artistic and emotional traits, and through these first three episodes of the narrative Woolf presents the reader with different kinds of learners and aptitudes in order to challenge notions of the mind as a mere receptacle for filling with facts or programming with skills, and in order to expose

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<sup>586</sup> Woolf, V., *To the Lighthouse*, p. 37.

gender prejudice in education. The style is experimental, and its poetic intensity enables Woolf to express non-linear patterns of inner monologue; *The Waves* had been referred to as a prose poem from its first reviews<sup>587</sup>.

The more successful scholars are Bernard, Louis and Neville, while Jinny, Susan and Rhoda display comparatively little interest in formal study. Just before they are called in from the garden by their governess, Miss Hudson, at the beginning of the novel, Rhoda says, 'I have a short time alone, while Miss Hudson spreads our copy-books on the school room table. I have a short space of freedom.'<sup>588</sup> Rhoda then continues in her imaginative play, making petals stand for ships, and twigs stand for rafts, and a head of Sweet Alice stand for a lighthouse, and rocks the basin so the 'ships may ride the waves'. In this self-referential way, Woolf aligns Rhoda with her own literary imaginative play in *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. She therefore rescues the notion of an aversion to formal scholarship by association with her own literary success.<sup>589</sup> Neville, however, responds to the bell from inside with a sense of obligation and relief at no longer having to deal with Bernard's whimsy:

He is like a dangling wire, a broken bell-pull, always twangling. He is like seaweed hung outside the window, damp now, now dry. ... I hate dangling things. I hate dampish things. I hate wandering and mixing things together. Now the bell rings and we shall be late. Now we must drop our toys. Now we must go in together. The copy-books are laid out side by side on the green baize table.<sup>590</sup>

His preference for the order of the school room is implicit in his precise observation that the copy books are side by side on the green baize table and the sound of the bell ringing purposefully, as opposed to the straggling image of seaweed and of the jangling of broken bell-pulls. His simile, however creative, is controlled by his strict use of isocolon throughout in the repetition of 'He is like' and 'I hate' and 'Now... we'. Anaphora, isocolon, epistrophe, polyptoton and other kinds of repetition are features of the language of all of the characters, however, and they suggest the persistence of particular kinds of thoughts in their interior monologues, which reflects the orderly recitation of ideas in a copy-book, which is in itself a significant word for an exercise book, highlighting the main objective: imitation. The use of repetition as a signal feature of all of the characters' internal monologues in this novel resonates with her reflection in her diary that 'The Waves is my first work in my own style'<sup>591</sup>, and this only a few years after she had written *A Room of One's Own*, an essay about the difficulty of achieving individual potential as a woman in a patriarchal culture.<sup>592</sup> This motif of recycling words is more than

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<sup>587</sup> Kronenberger, L., 'Poetic Brilliance in the New Novel by Mrs. Woolf', 25 October 1931, 'Book Reviews': *The New York Times*.

<sup>588</sup> Woolf, V., *The Waves* (London: Vintage, 2000), p. 11.

<sup>589</sup> Lee, H., *Virginia Woolf*, p. 514: Woolf won the Femina Vie Heureuse Prize for *To the Lighthouse* in 1928; soon afterwards she started refusing honorary doctorates and awards such as the Companion of Honour from the Prime Minister (p. 664).

<sup>590</sup> Woolf, V., *The Waves*, p. 12.

<sup>591</sup> Bell, A. (ed.), *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 4* (London: Penguin, 1983), p. 53.

<sup>592</sup> McGee, P., 'Woolf's Other: The University in her Eye' in *NOVEL* Vol. 23, No. 3 (1990), p. 229.

just a neat compositional harmony echoing the rolling of the waves in the overarching metaphor of the novel's title. Neville here tries to articulate what it is about Bernard that jars so much with his own personality; the grammatical parallelisms enable him to try different labels to come closer to a composite idea of this essential difference between them. He uses rhyme in 'dangling' and 'twangling', as if, subvocalising, he hears a sound like this which articulates the notion he seeks; the common sound being 'angling', a metaphor which Woolf used in *A Room of One's Own* for her own kind of thinking<sup>593</sup>, suggesting something patient, aimless, hopeful, and characterised more by stasis and the drift of chance than by design, or a purposive quest. It is like the technique of a later Eliot, who revolves the same words or sounds in *Ash Wednesday* and *Four Quartets*, although with a very different objective which has more to do with articulating mystical or religious notions of ineffability and a philosophical stillness at a point of axiomatic truth. The distinctiveness of the presentation of education in Woolf is partly influenced by her ideas about the nature of thought, and what could be said to be a rejection of the quest paradigm in favour of something more gently *laissez faire*.

While the characters learn as the day symbolically brightens over the course of the first three parts, formal education is not unequivocally associated with enlightenment. In addition to the symbols of light and darkness, education and religion, there is also the dissonance between the highly articulate discourse and the ages of the characters, so that unlike the voice of Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Woolf's characters' voices do not shift and progress in step with the intellectual and emotional development of the characters themselves.

'Let us now crawl,' said Bernard, 'under the canopy of the currant leaves, and tell stories. Let us inhabit the underworld. Let us take possession of our secret territory, which is lit by pendant currants like candelabra, ... we can sit under the canopy of the current leaves and watch the censers swing. This is our universe. ... The skirts of Miss Hudson and Miss Curry sweep by like candle extinguishers. ... This is our world, lit with crescents and stars of light; and great petals half transparent block the openings like purple windows.'<sup>594</sup>

The world of imagination and story-telling is the one which is lit up, and the governesses, Miss Hudson and Miss Curry, representatives of formal education, are associated with the extinction of light through the metaphor of the candle extinguishers. The universe they inhabit is likened to 'vast cathedrals'<sup>595</sup> and its semi-transparent purple windows, candelabra and crescents of light suggest there is something sacred about this intellectual space. The fact that Hudson and Curry also inhabit this space, almost as votaries, trimming the candles, echoes the notion from *Jacob's Room*, that formal scholarship for Woolf is a kind of priesthood, moderating, channelling and regulating the light of the mind. It is

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<sup>593</sup> Woolf, V., *'A Room of One's Own' and 'Three Guineas'* (London: Vintage, 2001), p. 3.

<sup>594</sup> Woolf, V., *The Waves*, p. 14.

<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

interesting that she should use the metaphor of a candle extinguisher, choosing to focus on the suggestion that scholarship is defined by what it leaves out or leaves obscure rather than what it illuminates.

If the six characters are arranged on a spectrum ranging from pure imagination on the one side to pure academic rigour on the other, Rhoda is further away from intellectual purposiveness than even Bernard. In the schoolroom, we witness her fear of mathematics in ways that not only exemplify Woolf's own difficulty with the subject but also sympathise with the experience of failing to understand:

'Now Miss Hudson,' said Rhoda, 'has shut the book. Now the terror is beginning. Taking her lump of chalk she draws figures, six, seven, eight, and then a cross and then a line on the blackboard. What is the answer? The others look; they look with understanding. Louis writes; Susan writes; Neville writes; Jinny writes; even Bernard has now begun to write. But I cannot write; I see only figures. The others are handing in their answers, one by one. Now it is my turn. But I have no answer. The others are allowed to go. They slam the door. Miss Hudson goes. I am left alone to find an answer. The figures mean nothing now. Meaning has gone. The clock ticks. The two hands are convoys marching through a desert. The black bars on the clock are green oases. The long hand has marched ahead to find water. ... The world is entire, and I am outside of it crying, 'Oh save me, from being blown forever outside the loop of time!''<sup>596</sup>

The shortening of the sentences, the repetition of the verb 'write', the use of the present continuous, all combine to convey her increasing anxiety and sense of isolation; the fact that Miss Hudson simply leaves her to it suggests that formal education can be as isolating as self-education if teachers do not intervene to help those who have difficulty connecting the ideas together correctly; careful explanation and a consideration of the individual student's requirements is as important as meaningful task setting. The brevity and simplicity of the sentences, and the way in which connectives such as 'but' are severed from their adjoining clauses by full stops, serves to highlight the absence of any synthesis. Into this void, imagination pours, and in a way that suggests that Rhoda needs a narrative and a sense of purpose within that narrative to understand abstract ideas, and finds the abstract perplexing unless mingled with reality, nature or experience; analogy is now seen as a crucial tool in teaching mathematics.<sup>597</sup> The fact that Woolf's narrative style creates a voice that is so subtle and lyrical suggests rightly or wrongly that Rhoda has abilities beyond those required for the completion of a meaningless sum; it suggests that formal education fails to harness the imaginative and expressive talents of the learner. It highlights that the sink or swim method used by Hudson here merely creates a sense of shame and inferiority, clarifying that independent learning is about creating settings in which students can find their own ways to succeed.

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<sup>596</sup> Woolf, V., *The Waves*, p. 13-14.

<sup>597</sup> Zwicky, J., 'Mathematical Analogy and Metaphorical Insight', in *For the Learning of Mathematics*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (2010), p. 9-14.

Unlike Rhoda, as a boy, Neville is a creature of the educational establishment. After the vignette beginning the episode on school (dawn), Neville's voice, filtered through the articulate mind of the narrator, expresses how at home he feels:

I come, like a lord to his halls appointed. That is our founder; our illustrious founder, standing in the courtyard with one foot raised. I salute our founder. A noble Roman air hangs over these austere quadrangles. Already the lights are lit in the form rooms. Those are laboratories perhaps; and that a library, where I shall explore the exactitude of the Latin language, and step firmly upon the well-laid sentences, and pronounce the explicit, the sonorous hexameters of Virgil, of Lucretius; and chant with a passion that is never obscure or formless the loves of Catullus, reading from a big book, a quarto with margins.<sup>598</sup>

The sense of solemn occasion tells us that Neville is experiencing a sense of vocation. The sophisticated lexis and syntax is only slightly reined in through the use of a few simple sentences in a row (beginning 'I salute our founder'), and the striking simplicity of the words 'big book' in their context of more Latinate and professional choices like 'sonorous', 'hexameters' and 'quarto'. The narrative voice anticipates Neville's later scholarliness while simultaneously reminding us of the current stage of his education. This is more than simply stream of consciousness writing, because the consciousness is both in and beyond the moment described. The use of the anticipatory style subtly conveys the idea of learning as a quest, since Neville has yet to (but certainly will) attain the eloquence of the voice given here. The notion of learning as a quest is something which is further emphasised by Neville's attachment to the character Percival, whose name and description cast him symbolically in the role of the ideal Christian knight by its allusion to the work of Chretien de Troyes and by Bernard's imagination later on at the friends' dinner in London:

'I see India,' said Bernard, 'I see a pair of bullocks who drag a low cart along the sun-baked road. The cart sways incompetently from side to side. Now one wheel sticks in the rut, and at once innumerable natives in loin-cloths swarm round it, chattering excitedly. But they do nothing. ... But now, behold, Percival advances; Percival rides a flea-bitten mare, and wears a sun-helmet. By applying the standards of the West, by using the violent language that is natural to him, the bullock cart is righted in less than five minutes. The Oriental problem is solved. He rides on; the multitude cluster round him, regarding him as if he were – what indeed he is – a God.'<sup>599</sup>

While Woolf's use of hyperbole and archaism in both this and the previous quotation, and indeed throughout the work, has the potential to create humour – the bathos of Percival's 'flea-bitten

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<sup>598</sup> Woolf, V., *The Waves*, p. 20-21.

<sup>599</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

mare' renders the description at once both Christ-like and quixotic – the connection between the quest motif, education and imperial action remains strong yet troubling even in Woolf's later fiction. The idea of Neville's journeying through study is further suggested when he speaks about how he will 'explore the exactitude of the Latin language' and 'step firmly upon the well-laid sentences', as if the words of Virgil, Catullus and Lucretius were stones in an immutable Roman road, seeming to be so because of the adamantine traditions of the public school curriculum, which, even at the start of the last century seemed to many to be the only secure basis on which to proceed as a scholar. The militaristic nature of formal education is also suggested in the use of the word 'salute', and interestingly the Hogarth Press had recently published Starr's *Lies and Hate in Education* (1929) concerning the way in which nationalism and imperialism were infecting educational culture.<sup>600</sup> The religious vocabulary is also still present, so that Percival, the object of the scholar Neville's adoration, is a 'God', and he will 'chant' his Latin, so that study remains something sacrosanct. The religious and military theme continues with Bernard's observation that 'on the left side of [the headmaster's] waistcoat, his taut, his drum-like waistcoat, hangs a crucifix.'<sup>601</sup> There are the references to the drum, the tightness of the material, and the crucifix, suggesting the uneasy combination of New Testament self-sacrificial non-violence and military pageantry and advancing to drums.

Throughout the opening description of the girls' school there are references to light: the name of the teacher, Miss Lambert, is etymologically very close to 'lambent'; Rhoda comments on 'the purple light', describing it as a 'vinous... amorous light'; and Jinny talks about a dress that 'would gleam in the firelight ... when the lamps were lit'.<sup>602</sup> Only Susan uses no references to light in her opening monologue on school; for her, 'all here is false; all is meretricious'; the novel's earth mother has no use for the tools of civilisation, preferring the directness and honesty of nature and a life of simple agricultural subsistence to the opportunities which education might provide. The purple light of Miss Lambert's ring is an echo of the purple windows of the earlier description of the garden before the governess' lesson, and Woolf here blends the earlier ecclesiastical connotations with the suggestion that the light of her mentor is also 'vinous', intoxicating, and also romantic or 'amorous', suggesting perhaps the power of education to enchant or inflame as well as to 'lead out', *educare*. And Woolf also draws on her relationship with her friend and mentor, Violet Dickinson, in both the colour and the suggestion of romantic attachment here. Jinny's dreams of fine clothing and 'pirouetting' suggest that for her, just as for Mrs Hilbery in *Night and Day*, education for women is properly a matter of acquiring a degree of polish so as to become ornamental; Jinny imagines her dress making a 'flower shape' as she sinks down 'in the middle of the room, on a gilt chair'. The fact that she imagines her dress as 'thin as a veil'

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<sup>600</sup> Willis, J., *Leonard and Virginia Woolf as Publishers: The Hogarth Press: 1917-1941* (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 1992), p. 241.

<sup>601</sup> Woolf, V., *The Waves*, p. 21.

<sup>602</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.



further suggests the ambition to achieve some Pre-Raphaelite ideal of femininity rather than anything more fulfilling or substantial. Her thinking is apparently contrasted with Neville and Bernard's focus on scholarship, and Woolf offers a critique of a gendered educational world in the early episodes of even this, her most consciously style-focused work, *The Waves*.

The Australian Louis, later the frustrated scholar working in the City of London, may possibly stand for T. S. Eliot, the poet-banker from St Louis. The function of religion within formal education is further highlighted here as the focaliser's whirling thoughts spiral down towards a still point provided by faith.

...my ignominiously agitated mind – how we danced round the Christmas tree and handing parcels they forgot me, and the fat woman said, 'This little boy has no present,' and gave me a shiny Union Jack from the top of the tree, and I cried with fury – to be remembered with pity. Now all is laid by his authority, his crucifix, and I feel come over me the sense of the earth under me, and my roots going down and down till they wrap themselves round some hardness at the centre. I recover my continuity, as he reads. I become a figure in the procession, a spoke in the huge wheel that is turning, at last erects me, here and now. I have been in the dark; I have been hidden; but when the wheel turns (as he reads) I rise into this dim light where I just perceive, but scarcely, kneeling boys, pillars and memorial brasses. There is no crudity here, no sudden kisses.<sup>603</sup>

Christ and Dr Crane root Louis to the earth. In a reversal of the meaning of Ovid's Daphne and Apollo myth, identified here by Jane de Gay<sup>604</sup>, Louis' transformation into a tree signals his being brought closer to the Apollonian values of Christianity and saved from the advances of the sudden kisses of Jinny. The use of allusion is educative not only because of the gender reversal of the conventional pursuit, but also because the source grows beyond its original confines to talk about ideas of tradition, individual flourishing and rootedness, and about the necessity of historical memory to intellectual creativity.

The university episode of the novel expands on the theme of self-fashioning, with the characters of Louis, Bernard and Neville styling themselves on favoured authors, suggesting that education is not merely a means of acquiring knowledge and skills, but a means of trying out different ways of being. Woolf lists without comment or allusion the names of canonical works and authors from the public school curriculum: the Bible, Plato, Catullus, Virgil, Lucretius, Horace, Euripides, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, Keats, Matthew Arnold, Tennyson. As we have seen in the textbooks of

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<sup>603</sup> Ibid., p. 22-23.

<sup>604</sup> De Gay, p. 173.

Eliot, these texts were used as tools for the teaching of grammar, the instilling of ethical principles, texts for rhetorical and poetic analysis, and as models for rhetorical imitation.

The impact on the immediate context in which they are mentioned is interesting. Louis sees himself as ‘Virgil’s companion, or Plato’s’, imagining himself as a lesser classical poet-philosopher, but only when the school day is over, and he can put off his ‘unenviable body’ and ‘colonial accent’<sup>605</sup>, bringing to mind Socratic dialogues on the perishability of the body and the world of immortal forms, and the composition of dignified verse on fortitude and honour. Neville says:

It would be better to breed horses and live in one of those red villas than to run in and out of the skulls of Sophocles and Euripides like a maggot, with a high-minded wife, one of those University women. That, however, will be my fate.<sup>606</sup>

The implied nihilistic disdain for both academic and more ordinary livelihoods, and the allusion to fate, alongside the references to Sophocles and Euripides suggests that Neville’s conception of himself is contaminated by his reading: academic life represents for him a kind of distinction akin to aristocracy, where the red-villa-dwelling horse breeder is the moderately happy man and the student of tragedy becomes tragic himself: great, noble, and doomed. The use of the simile ‘like a maggot’ in proximity to a reference to Sophocles also echoes her letter to her brother Thoby about her holiday reading, in which she says she can ‘feel a maggot in [her] brain’<sup>607</sup>. It implies either that her appetite for reading tragedy is unhealthy, or that she is unhealthy unless she reads it in vast quantities, or possibly both – as if she were addicted to the study of it. There is, too, the more obvious suggestion of his own sense of inadequacy in comparison with the great masters of antiquity, a sentiment Woolf herself expressed in her diaries. The irony of this becomes apparent during the university episode, in which the notion that one can become greater by emulating the great is implied by the fact that this self-conscious self-fashioning is actually rather funny. Byron is the romantic rival of and replacement for Tennyson, just as he was in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*:

‘How strange,’ said Bernard, ‘the willow looks seen together. I was Byron, and the tree was Byron’s tree, lachrymose, down-showering, lamenting. Now that we look at the tree together [he and Neville], it has a combed look, each branch distinct, and I will tell you what I feel, under the compulsion of your clarity.

‘I feel your disapproval, I feel your force. I become, with you, an untidy, an impulsive human being whose bandana handkerchief is forever stained with the grease of crumpets. Yes, I hold Gray’s *Elegy* in one hand; with the other I scoop out the bottom crumpet, that has absorbed all the butter and sticks to the bottom of the plate. This offends you; I feel your distress acutely.’<sup>608</sup>

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<sup>605</sup> Woolf, V., *The Waves*, p. 36.

<sup>606</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>607</sup> VW to Thoby Stephen, -/7/1901, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 42.

<sup>608</sup> Woolf, V., *The Waves*, p. 58.

Then follows Neville's response:

Once you were Tolstoi's young man; now you are Byron's young man; perhaps you will be Meredith's young man; then you will visit Paris in the Easter vacation and come back wearing a black tie some detestable Frenchman whom nobody has ever heard of. Then I shall drop you.

I am one person – myself. I do not impersonate Catullus, whom I adore. I am the most slavish of students, with here a dictionary, there a notebook in which I enter curious uses of the past participle. But one cannot go on forever cutting these ancient inscriptions clearer with a knife. Shall I always draw the red serge curtain close and see my book, laid like a block of marble, pale under the lamp? That would be a glorious life, to addict oneself to perfection ... to be ridiculous in Piccadilly.

But I am too nervous to end my sentence properly. ... I hate your greasy handkerchiefs – you will stain your copy of *Don Juan*. You are not listening to me. You are making phrases about Byron. And while you gesticulate, with your cloak, your cane, I am trying to expose a secret told to nobody yet; I am asking you (as I stand with my back to you) to take my life in your hands and tell me whether I am doomed always to cause repulsion in those I love?<sup>609</sup>

Bernard is seen as immature for modelling himself on a succession of writers; Neville remembers when a Christian Tolstoy was his idol, and posits that an atheist Meredith might be the successor to a libertine Byron, and following that he might take a Baudelaire or a Rimbaud as his mould for an even more dilettantish persona. Ironically, the references to the rebel Byron are undercut somewhat by the references to Gray's *Elegy*: a 'block of marble' itself, serious, standard fare of the British educational establishment. Neville is struggling with his feelings for Percival and ultimately his frustration with Bernard's vacuous posturing is a response to his own desire to speak seriously and honestly to his lifelong friend in a way that neither Catullus nor Byron could help to frame in words; his character is one which is given to clarity, and yet he finds it impossible to bring his love out of obscurity. He longs to devote himself to perfection, but struggles in the disarray of real emotion because his view of perfection is defined by notions of finitude, rather than growing and becoming.

## Overview of the fiction

To conclude, in Woolf's work, education is presented as the confluence of personal, historical, societal and canonical forces. It is because education is this nexus that she does not say unequivocally what is for, what it should be, how it should work, and how one should engage with it. She makes it the almost exclusive subject of her work from her early conventional narratives to her experimental modernist works and her poetic prose writing. In *Jacob's Room*, Woolf finds her modernist voice and

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<sup>609</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

the fractured narrative style enables her to encapsulate in brief vignettes the limitations of the public school system, university education and the canon of male writers more generally. She again uses the technique of the reading list to offer a canon to the common reader. She highlights how literature can be hijacked for the purposes of bullheaded nationalism. She draws out an emerging theme of education as something at once deathly and sacred, and something which is the preserve of a priestly caste of privileged men. She makes use of a more archly epigrammatic style reminiscent of the books from which she learned Greek and Latin. She introduces the idea that education can be divisive and alienating, and more likely to bring about a kind of spiritual petrification than personal fulfilment. In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf dramatises the experience of reading in a way which sells it as an activity and a mode of transport and exploration in which the real world and the world of ideas blend. She acknowledges the limitations of inhabiting this realm too fully in the depiction of Mr Ramsay. She gives primacy to the realm of lived experience more than she does to the written word, preferring biographical allusions to more canonical ones. In *The Waves*, Woolf presents education as so gendered that it alters the thought patterns of the individual characters, who all speak about different preoccupations and with different linguistic patterns and allusive motifs. She includes comments on the educational biases of her literary friends and makes use of her compendious study of the classics and the canon to tread a dispassionately observant line between sympathy and judgement while using biographical material, having studied biographies and histories from an early age and observed her father producing his *Dictionary of National Biography*. She comments again on scholarly self-importance borrowing from her experiences of her father, her family friends and the Bloomsbury group, blending hyperbole and comic bathos: unlike for Eliot and Joyce, for whom the real world is arrived at most completely and most consciously through scholarship, in Woolf there is always the acknowledgement that learning, busily and delightedly contemplating the clouds, trips on the kerbstones of the real world.

### Part Three: Woolf and Education

Woolf was fascinated by education. In addition to *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*, and in addition to all the scholarly characters, references to women in education and intellectual circles, and the many classical, canonical and other literary references in the fiction, the Hogarth press published numerous titles on education. In 1925 there was Harrison's *Reminiscences*; there was then Starr's *Lies and Hate in Education* (1929) on the ideology of colonialism expressed in educational conferences and the BBC's educational programming, Wise's *English Village Schools* (1931), Snell's *Public Schools: Their Failure and Their Reform* (1932), *Progressive Schools: Their Principles and Practice* (1934), Calder-Marshall's *Challenge to Schools: A Pamphlet on Public School Education* (1934) concerning class and social conditioning, Birkinshaw's *The Successful Teacher* (1935), Snell's *The Military Training of Youth* (1937) on the O.T.C. and *Co-education* (1939), and Auden's *Education Today and*

*Tomorrow* (1939).<sup>610</sup> Woolf writes in the reformist tradition of Mary Wollstonecraft, profoundly sceptical of the value of formal boarding school education and rote learning, regardless of gender.<sup>611</sup>

A laissez faire approach to learning extends from the fiction and the essays into Woolf's ideas about the manner in which students should approach their reading. In 1926, Woolf gave a lecture at Hayes Court School entitled 'How Should One Read a Book?', an essay included in the *Common Reader*. Lee discusses how this and her 'Women and Fiction' lecture were received by certain students, apparently with varying degrees of apathy, irrelevance and boredom.<sup>612</sup> Nevertheless, the lecture ends with a vision of heaven:

I have sometimes dreamt, at least, that when the Day of Judgment dawns and the great conquerors and lawyers and statesmen come to receive their rewards... the Almighty will turn to St Peter and will say, not without a certain envy when he sees us coming with our books under our arms, 'Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them here. They have loved reading.'<sup>613</sup>

Woolf suggests that reading can be a beatific experience if we go about it in the right way, and these are more than just encouraging words to motivate the students; she believes what she writes, and we know this from the numerous and numinous descriptions of reading in her work. The essential message of the essay is that first one must read with an open mind, without prejudices absorbed from the value judgments of academics, without set expectations based on genre, and attentively, fully immersing oneself in the movement of the words:

If we could banish all such preconceptions when we read, that would be an admirable beginning. Do not dictate to your author; try to become him. Be his fellow worker and accomplice. If you hang back, and reserve and criticise at first, you are preventing yourself from getting the fullest possible value from what you read. But if you open your mind as widely as possible, then signs and hints of almost imperceptible fineness, from the twist and turn of the first sentences, will bring you into the presence of a human being unlike any other. Steep yourself in this, acquaint yourself with this and you will soon find that your author is giving you, or attempting to give you, something far more definite.<sup>614</sup>

In this, Woolf seems to challenge received educational wisdom: prediction exercises, close analyses of opening paragraphs, information about the genre and style are all a part of current educational practice in the teaching of English literature. She seems to be saying that one should try to climb without rope

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<sup>610</sup> Willis, J., p. 241-4.

<sup>611</sup> Wollstonecraft, M., *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London: J. Johnson, 1792), p. 375-77; and *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (London: J. Johnson, 1787), p. 49: in both, Wollstonecraft insists that memorisation is inferior to understanding, which improves character as well as intellect.

<sup>612</sup> Lee, p. 563-565.

<sup>613</sup> Woolf, L. (ed.), 'How Should One Read a Book?', *Collected Essays*, Vol. 2, p. 11.

<sup>614</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

or footholds, which is of no help at all in a lecture to school pupils. But Woolf is actually describing the reading process more generally, and we know this because she later starts to talk about reading more books, finding patterns, imagining the scene of the composition, disagreeing with critics and other readers in a way that is anything but ‘alternative’. In addition, it is possible that she is responding to an academic culture in which the students of the newly incorporated English courses are asked questions like ‘Estimate the importance of...’ and ‘Discuss the contribution of...’<sup>615</sup> various modern authors, querying this aspect of literary criticism at the start of the twentieth century, this tendency to estimate the value of an author’s work. She is describing how she reads, and how she wishes to be read; essentially, she does not wish there to be an artificial barrier between the writer and reader, so that there is sufficient intellectual ease between them to accomplish an efficient and edifying relationship which cuts through cliché and generic shorthand. This kind of relationship between writer and reader is echoed in the dynamic established between Woolf and her tutors, and Woolf and her students.

*A Room of One’s Own* was to be read, in part, at Girton and Newnham Colleges in October 1928. After a prologue in which she explains her method, Woolf talks about the circumstances in which she approached the topic of women and fiction:

That collar I have spoken of, women and fiction, the need of coming to a conclusion on a subject that raises all sorts of prejudices and passions, bowed my head to the ground. Thought – to call it a prouder name than it deserved – had let its line down into the stream. It swayed, minute after minute, hither and thither among the reflections and the weeds, letting the water lift it and sink it until – you know the little tug – the sudden conglomeration of an idea at the end of one’s line.<sup>616</sup>

Woolf balks at the idea of finding a conclusion, and this supports the work of Cuddy-Keane insofar as it suggests she prefers a turn and turn about kind of thinking, but this is not to say that Woolf necessarily never finds conclusions, or makes decisive claims. She refers to the sudden conglomeration of an idea at the end of a line of thought. The image of fishing itself is interesting because it implies that she considers thinking as a matter of patience rather than endeavour, in allowing the thought to find its way to the hook, rather than pursuing and capturing by dint of great intellectual exertion. This from one who worked hard to teach herself Greek may be initially surprising, but the fact that the movement belongs to the stream which brings the idea rather than the one focusing on catching the idea, subverts traditional educational norms about diligence and perseverance; the angling metaphor tells us that Woolf considers preparation, context and environment paramount, rather than one’s intellectual strength, speed or dexterity. Having told an allegorical tale of her being, first, forbidden to walk on the

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<sup>615</sup> University of London Archives: Examination Papers, Internal Students, 1937, Vol. 1, *Modern English Literature from 1880*, Thursday June 17<sup>th</sup>, q. 6 & 10.

<sup>616</sup> Woolf, V., ‘*A Room of One’s Own*’ and ‘*Three Guineas*’, p. 3.

‘Oxbridge’ college lawn, next, forbidden to enter the library to research the drafts of Lamb and Thackeray, and, finally, unwilling to enter the chapel, Woolf goes on to explain some of the material constraints that mean women have necessarily been excluded from the world of academia and of letters. Woolf notes that the initial endowment of a mere £30,000 means that the college’s meals and hall are significantly less inspiring than those of the magnificent colleges in the city, still the preserve of male students and academics. Less investment means less opportunity for the sense of enchantment and privilege necessary for the other-worldly insights that are the hallmarks of works of genius:

Meanwhile the wine glasses flushed yellow and flushed crimson; had been emptied; had been filled. And thus by degrees was lit, half-way down the spine, which is the seat of the soul, not that hard little electric light which we call brilliance, as it pops in and out upon our lips, but the more profound, subtle and subterranean glow which is the rich yellow flame of rational intercourse.<sup>617</sup>

The passage is partnered with its mirror image at the ladies’ college:

Biscuits and cheese came next, and here the water jug was liberally passed round, for it is the nature of biscuits to be dry, and these were biscuits to the core. That was all. The meal was over. Everybody scraped their chairs back; the swing doors swung violently to and fro; soon the hall was emptied of every sign of food and made ready no doubt for breakfast next morning. ... The lamp in the spine does not light on beef and prunes.<sup>618</sup>

Education is dependent on context; ‘degrees’ is a word notably absent from the second passage. Woolf reminds us of our rootedness in material circumstances. She does this even more pointedly later on when explaining why so few women had been poets and so many were novelists, suggesting that the necessity for women to write in the sitting room led many who might have written differently to write novels:

Her sensibility had been educated for centuries by the influences of the common sitting room. People’s feelings were impressed upon her; personal relations were always before her eyes.<sup>619</sup>

But the connection between education and the outside world is also dramatised very casually in the narratives she spins, in a Paterian blurring of essayistic and literary styles, in which real world images stand for symbols of interior reflections, just as they do in the poetry of Baudelaire or Eliot. In addition to the imagery at the start of the essay, in which a line is dropped into a river, from which the speaker walks to the college lawn, library and chapel, which is ambiguous as it is both symbol and reality, one also reads such passages as this:

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<sup>617</sup> Woolf, V., *A Room of One’s Own*, p. 8.

<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>619</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Moreover, in a hundred years, I thought, reaching my own doorstep, women will have ceased to be the protected sex. ... The shop woman will drive an engine. ... Anything may happen when womanhood has ceased to be a protected occupation, I thought, opening the door.<sup>620</sup>

Reaching her own doorstep is reaching the subject of her essay: women in fiction. The opening of a door is not only an introduction to the next chapter, it symbolises the opening of opportunities to women. So Woolf actually dramatises the connection between the world of the intellect and of education and the real world outside the head, just as she did with Mr Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse*, or similar moments of bathos in *Mrs Dalloway*. Interconnectedness is crucial for Woolf's model of education, and she insists that the education necessary for literary achievement is dependent on the influences of other people as well as individual reflection:

For masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice. Jane Austen should have laid a wreath on the grave of Fanny Burney... All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn...<sup>621</sup>

Learning for Woolf, as for Eliot, is part of a tradition, and the borders of the authorship of the products of education blur in their indebtedness to each other, 'for books continue each other, in spite of our habit of judging them separately'<sup>622</sup>. Learning is something that happens in informal contexts as well as formal ones, and the canon can be personal as well as societal and totemic. Learning is presented as something which occupies a unique position in relation to the here and now, which is both beyond it and related to it – frustrated by it, nourished by it, shut out, let in, encouraged or dissuaded by it. Learning, in the form of self-education, is something which happens by accident, in the flowing succession of associations, suggestively symbolised in the form of a river, something which remains in its nature fundamentally the same while responding all the time in fine and infinitesimal ways to the changing landscape as it runs. This metaphor curiously is also employed by Joyce in *Finnegans Wake*, which begins and ends with the motif of a river running to the sea, and using a style throughout the text which compels the readers to notice how contexts shape our interpretations of the obscure from moment to moment.

When Woolf describes 'male' and 'female' ways of writing, she acknowledges the benefits of access to formal education, but also suggests that exemption from it can also be beneficial, advocating a 'man-womanly' or 'woman-manly' way of thinking and writing, instead of one or the other, citing Coleridge's notion of an androgynous quality as being the hallmark of a great mind. In describing a male critic's observations she says:

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<sup>620</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>621</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>622</sup> Ibid., p. 69.



Very able they were, acute and full of learning; but the trouble was that his feelings no longer communicated; his mind seemed separated into different chambers; not a sound carried from one to the other. Thus, when one takes a sentence of Mr B into the mind it falls plump to the ground – dead; but when one takes a sentence of Coleridge into the mind it explodes and gives birth to all kinds of other ideas, and that is the only sort of writing of which one can say that it has the secret of perpetual life.<sup>623</sup>

She suggests that formal education has an unhelpful ethos of competition that gets in the way of the consummation of this ‘marriage of opposites’<sup>624</sup>:

All this pitting of sex against sex, or quality against quality; all this claiming of superiority and imputing of inferiority, belong to the private school stage of existence where there are ‘sides’, and it is necessary for one side to beat another side, and of utmost importance to walk up to a platform and receive from the Headmaster himself a highly ornamental pot. As people mature they cease to believe in sides or in Headmasters or in highly ornamental pots.<sup>625</sup>

Education must be about enlightenment and revivification rather than merely ‘winning’, and this is a theme she picks up on in a sense in *Three Guineas*.

In *Three Guineas*, written in 1938, Woolf is responding to a letter in which she has been asked, by an educated man, how she as a woman believes war might be prevented:

We can say that for educated men to emphasise their superiority over other people, either in birth or intellect, by dressing differently, or by adding titles before, or letters after their names are acts that rouse competition and jealousy – emotions which, as we need scarcely draw upon biography to prove, nor ask psychology to show, have their share in encouraging a disposition towards war. If then we express the opinion that such distinctions make those who possess them ridiculous and learning contemptible we should do something to discourage the feelings that lead to war.<sup>626</sup>

Woolf finds that education is desecrated by petty-minded competition where there should be openness and truth-seeking. She speaks of how the shelves of any public library are unanimous on the point that ‘the value of education is among the greatest of all human values’, and further illustrates this by adding together the endowments of universities and public schools. However, even where women’s colleges exist, and even if women are eventually allowed to graduate with a BA which would enable them to find suitable employment, they will exist in a patriarchal system, destined to operate on the same lines as male colleges:

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<sup>623</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>624</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>625</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>626</sup> Ibid., p. 119-120.

That then was the ‘reality’ ... students must be taught to earn their livings. And since that reality meant that she must rebuild her college on the same lines as others, it followed that the college for the daughters of educated men also must make Research produce practical results which will induce bequests and donations from rich men; it must encourage competition; it must accept degrees and coloured hoods; it must accumulate great wealth; and, therefore, in 500 years or so, that college, too, must ask the same question that you, Sir, are asking now: ‘How in your opinion are we to prevent war?’<sup>627</sup>

This leads her to the ‘rather lame and depressing answer’ that the daughters of educated women can exert a very indirect influence:

If we are asked to teach, we can examine very carefully into the aim of such teaching, and refuse to teach any art or science that encourages war. Further, we can pour mild scorn upon chapels, upon degrees, and upon the value of examinations. We can intimate that a prize poem can still have merit in spite of the fact that it has won a prize ... If we are asked to lecture we can refuse to bolster up the vain and vicious system of lecturing by refusing to lecture.<sup>628</sup>

Woolf’s Swiftian satire in her attack on the ‘vain and vicious system of lecturing’ condemns the foolhardiness of her own lecturing at Morley College, and even the lectures at Newnham and Girton. How vacuous are those exhortations to female students to do anything when the whole structure of society is rigged against them, she seems to say. In her note on this point, reminiscent of Eliot’s notes on *The Waste Land*, anticipating and encouraging scholarly attention, she says that the words, ‘vain and vicious’ require qualification, but she only makes the words apply more precisely to her own circumstances:

The words in the text refer only to the sons and daughters of educated men who lecture their brothers and sisters upon English literature; and for the reasons that it is an obsolete practice dating from the Middle Ages when books were scarce; ... eminence upon a platform encourages vanity and the desire to impose authority. Further, the reduction of English literature to an examination subject must be viewed with suspicion by all who have firsthand knowledge of the art, and therefore of the superficial value of an examiner’s approval or disapproval; and with profound regret by all who wish to keep one art at least out of the hands of middlemen and free, as long as may be, from all association with competition and money making.<sup>629</sup>

The whole business of teaching English literature is queried by an English teacher herself. Lecturing and examining is vilified in no uncertain terms. Lecturing gives rise to the assumption of innate authority. Approval or disapproval by examiners is a woeful corollary of this assumption of omniscience. Lecturing is worse than writing because it has to be engaging for an audience and this jeopardises the refinement of the argument. The tone, with its appeal to individual liberty, its long

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<sup>627</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>628</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>629</sup> Ibid., p. 255.

sentences, its persistent use of isocolon and lists, is reminiscent of *A Modest Proposal*, and Woolf seems to be adopting this mode in order to turn up the volume of her protest. If the purpose is to identify what is superior and inferior literature, or to win prizes, to be right in one's estimation of the importance of a writer to a period or genre according to one examiner, to pit one school of literature against another, to pander to the literati's desire to self-identify as such, then that is indeed a vain and vicious enterprise. The protest is not against the teaching of literature but the manner in which it is to be taught and examined.

### *Virginia Woolf and the University of London B.A. Examination in English*

Woolf very quickly appeared on English Literature examinations in the University of London. One year prior to the publication of *Three Guineas*, the University of London's first *Modern English Literature from 1880* was an optional paper offered on the afternoon of Thursday, 17 June, starting at 2.30pm, finishing at 5.30pm. Three questions were to be answered, equally weighted, which gave the student one hour to answer on each. Woolf is here, right at the start of the syllabus; her work is being studied just eight years after the publication of *A Room of One's Own*. The question in which Woolf appeared is:

7. *What innovations in structure or psychological method do you find in the work of any two of the following: - Henry James; Joseph Conrad; E. M. Forster; Dorothy Richardson; Virginia Woolf; James Joyce; D. H. Lawrence?*

The nature of the question might not have displeased Woolf. Since another question asks students to 'estimate the importance of' Kipling, Galsworthy or Bennett, and another to consider the 'contribution' of Wells to the modern novel, and another to say which two Georgian poets will 'survive', her question is reassuringly more focused, technical and helpfully comparative. The other questions mentioned are precisely of the kind that she indicates she would object to, the kind that superficially pits writers against each other in competition. However, the notion of innovations in structure is problematic, particularly for a student of Woolf, who might see 'innovation' as a myth because all writing is indebted to earlier writing. In addition, the framing of the question as a 'what'/'identify' question is surely unhelpful for a student of literature whose metier is the exposition of text and the analysis of the interplay between rhetorical decisions and various contexts and purposes. But this is a paper from the very first years of English Literature as a subject, and it is possible to see the influence of Woolf's criticism of these 'estimate the importance' questions in the kind of question that is asked about her work. However, after a year in which the whole paper is withdrawn (1938), the next question is exactly the kind she would have detested ('Consider and compare the contribution to modern prose fiction of two of the following...'), although it appears alongside a few more recognisable questions involving the words 'discuss' or 'compare and contrast', so while it seems the exam board have taken a year to reconsider the paper and how to examine it, and they have made some improvements, the style of questioning

remains of the kind that Woolf objects to. She returns to the paper in 1942 in two of three parts of an either/ or question:

5. *'Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind'* (Virginia Woolf). Discuss this with reference to any one or two twentieth century novelists.

Or

*Assess the importance of Virginia Woolf in the literature of the twentieth century.*

It is interesting that the examiners should ask about the importance of the person rather than the work in her case; it invites the student to consider her critical influence as well as her fiction. For the first time, she has been given a leading quotation, followed by a discussion in relation to the work. The next time she appears, too, she is accorded a more 'Woolfian' class of question in that she is not being pitted against anyone else, and the quotation for analysis is thoughtfully chosen with the writers in mind; in 1944 the question is designed to enable the student to come to a deeper understanding of the work itself, rather than to rehearse them for delivering their judgements about books as reviewers:

5. *'The modern novelist is more concerned with the novel as a work of art than as a criticism of life.'* Discuss generally, and with particular reference to the work of any one of the following:  
- Henry James, James Joyce, Virginia Woolff (sic), E. M. Forster, Ronald Firbank.

The paper seems to be making progress, and English Literature as a subject is adopting more and more the kinds of questions that Woolf would prefer to explore. They have less to do with competition and arriving at a generalised assertion about writers and their worth, and more to do with the *assessment* of such critical assertions about specific oeuvres. In a few years, whether through Woolf's influence or through the simple process of trial and error – as the new teachers of English Literature realised for themselves how pointless is the business of ranking and categorising art – the questions of the University of London, one of the first to open a faculty of English Literature, become less naïve and more sophisticated.

The relationship between life and art is a frequent theme in Woolf's work, and it has been a recurring argument of this chapter that for Woolf, the relationship between life and education is intertwined with it, and just as important, and that this relationship between life and learning is dramatised in such a way throughout the fiction and the essays on education that the reader can be in no doubt of their inter-dependence for Woolf. Rather than employing conventional Bildungsroman tropes, Woolf shows us the world of intellect and the real world of things fusing and separating chaotically, and both frustratingly and serendipitously in a way which is open-handed. She speaks quite prudently of both formal and informal modes of education with a degree of scepticism balanced against an awareness of the advantages of both. She adopts a turn and turn about pedagogy to an extent, and then realises that progress must be made with the argument and returns to her theme or motif; in *A Room*

of *One's Own* she catches herself having 'said 'but' too often'<sup>630</sup>. But she insists that the progress of an avenue of inquiry must not be one which is defined by ideas of competition and reward, or polluted by material ambitions beyond the reward that the *journey* of education itself provides. Woolf seems to be suggesting throughout her work, from *The Voyage Out* to *The Waves* that education is truly about discovery rather than achievement or admission to an elite priestly caste of intellectuals, such as the family and society into which she was born. When she describes libraries, and casually drops authors into conversation, it is to advocate reading without any interference on her part as a literary authority; she does not wish there to be any hindrance or middleman between the reader and the work dictating on meaning, or directing attention to specific items for consideration above others. Woolf's conception of education therefore has ultimately to do with liberty, and she begins to open the closed doors within and without public school and university culture gently with her laughter.

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<sup>630</sup> Woolf, V., *A Room of One's Own*, p. 86.

## Conclusion

Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture perceives it.<sup>631</sup> (Matthew Arnold)

A study of the presentation of education across the work of these three significant modernist writers was necessary because while much had been written about individual writers' education as seen in their writing, no sustained analysis had been made of the educative methodological connections between them. It was important because in filling that gap it becomes possible to arrive at a more complete and balanced view of the modernist project, which has been subject to partial analysis leading to a caricature of the modernists as wilfully obscure and elitist: this gave rise to Carey's argument that the modernist project was about the removal of the literacy of the masses when, as this thesis shows, the creation of the reader was the aim.<sup>632</sup>

A survey of the work of Joyce, Eliot and Woolf is useful in adjusting this interpretation because a survey shows trends, and Joyce, Eliot and Woolf are writers whose work most clearly falls into the category which Carey writes about: it is allusive, non-linear, polyphonic, difficult. This method is also useful because it contextualises author-focused studies. A survey of this kind is also useful because it prevents problems of over-selection in surveys like Anthony Nuttall's<sup>633</sup> which present caricatures of scholarship through an examination of a very limited amount of literature. It also circumvents problems of under-selection in surveys of modern poetry like that of David Perkins<sup>634</sup>, whose characterisation of the modernists necessarily remains conventional because in a survey incorporating hundreds of writers there is only room to remark that they are more difficult than their immediate contemporaries, with insufficient space for further examination as to why that difference was there. Indeed, the main limitation of the survey method has been the exclusion of several texts by the authors and in particular the analysis of the *development* of the works' educational resonances and effects over the career of each writer, which has only been hinted at. It may be possible to amend this gap with subsequent publications in articles on education in modernist literature.

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<sup>631</sup> Arnold, M., 'Culture and Anarchy', in Keating, P. J. (ed.), *Culture and Anarchy and Other Selected Prose*, p. 187.

<sup>632</sup> This idea is drawn from Eliot-focused work by Lyndall Gordon; this thesis expands this idea to include modernist technique more broadly and audiences wider than poets and academics.

<sup>633</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>634</sup> Perkins, D. (ed.), *A History of Modern Poetry, Vol. I: from the 1890s to the High Modernist Mode* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), e.g. p. 512.

An application of this analysis is the re-humanising and de-mythologising of these totemic writers for English Literature students, whose experience of leaving school and starting their English course is fraught with the sense that they have not mastered the canon.<sup>635</sup> Not only does an awareness of the modernists as learners make these imposing figures more human by accounting for their impressive range of reference and technique with often quite humble mass-market or educational texts, or the recommendation of books by family members, but students also start to learn about the canon and canon formation in the educative exercise that is reading it, because to read the modernists is to study them, and then to study the canon more widely. Another application is in educational theory, in which Dweck's fashionable 'growth mind-set'<sup>636</sup> doctrine of limitless potential can be reconnected with the Arnoldian notion of 'growing and becoming' and recast in the light of the work and techniques of writers whose purposes were educative in almost exactly this spirit, and whose work was so influential in shaping English studies at its inception, as an analysis of the papers of the University of London suggest.

This thesis speaks to other recent works published while the thesis was being written such as those of Lise Jaillant<sup>637</sup> whose work on *Cheap Modernism* and *Modernism, Middlebrow and the Literary Canon* focuses on how the existence of cheap editions of modernist writing highlights the broad appeal of their work, adjusting the findings of Lawrence Rainey<sup>638</sup> on the 'little magazines' which had implied their elite readership. This meshes with the work of Rose and another very recent book by Hilliard which shows how publishing and working class self-education movements meant that the frame of reference modernist writers used could not be elitist. The only potential barrier that remains is the form: Russian formalism tells us that it is the purpose of art to explode cliché to awaken the reader, and this is where modernist writing becomes more educative than its contemporaries', because its readers, even its most educationally privileged, were challenged and hooked by its new structures. It is a way of ordering material which ensures that the text 'suggests' in many directions at once in its unconventional context. This thesis also engages with the very recent work of Elizabeth Switaj<sup>639</sup> on Joyce's teaching methods and the reappraisal of texts in the light of his work in the Berlitz Schools. Despite the work of Schuchard<sup>640</sup> and Cuddy-Keane<sup>641</sup>, there is still more room for analyses of Eliot and Woolf as teachers in relation to their texts, and there is a need for wider surveys of educative writing more generally. In terms of its overall argument, the thesis also engages with Gail McDonald's *Learning to be Modern*<sup>642</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> This is anecdotal evidence based on 12 years' teaching experience, university extension lessons and Oxbridge and ELAT preparation programmes.

<sup>636</sup> Dweck, C., *Mindset* (New York: Ballantine, 2006).

<sup>637</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>638</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>639</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>640</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>641</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>642</sup> Op. cit.

in which she argues that Pound and Eliot were writing to educate the reader, although I query whether Pound supplies starting points like Eliot does which enable wider access to the poetry. The thesis also responds to Crawford's *Young Eliot*<sup>643</sup>, also published while the thesis was being composed, in which the author seeks to adjust the caricature of Eliot as intellectual colossus by showing his developmental journey in a biographical study of his early years; the thesis responds by analysing the textbooks which are mentioned but unexplored.

The thesis makes a contribution to established individual author fields by taking the vast amount which is known about the writers' education, work, teaching and remarks about education and redirecting that material towards a consideration of the ways in which the work is itself educative in purpose, methods and effect. In this process, other small contributions are made. An analysis of the King's College London archives shows that Clara Pater, one of Woolf's teachers, was in many ways more professional and more valuable to the Ladies' Department than her other tutor Janet Case, whose teaching load was considerably lighter, and whom she applauds in her diaries while Pater has only a handful of references in the letters: this can be brought to bear in analyses of the tutor in *Slater's Pins Have No Points* and indeed in analyses of her portrayals of male and female academics: Walter, her brother, was a celebrated writer, she an underappreciated and overworked pioneer of female education. Another small contribution is in Eliot's school textbooks, mentioned by Crawford<sup>644</sup>, which are useful because they show how Eliot developed an understanding of literary history, a good grasp of a range of canonical authors, a grounding in literary criticism which helped to shape his own educational programmes, and how he might have absorbed some of their prejudices. In Joyce, Creasy's finding that Stephen and Bloom engage with the same Intermediate curriculum (albeit anachronistically) is adapted to align with Eliot's call for a common literary inheritance, suggesting that Irish education had already achieved this through Lyster's anthology, which pointedly excluded the last English poet laureate, Tennyson, while including his contemporaries.

The main benefit of using the survey method is the ability to identify trends, similarities and differences with the broad comparative framework that it invites. The writers shared biographical characteristics: they all had a very literary education, whether because of the influence of the *Ratio*, or an Emersonian curriculum, or a literary family and social circle. All were avid independent learners, all spoke other languages, all were teachers, two wrote about and published on education, and all were drawn into academic programmes very quickly, such as the 1937 Modern Literature paper of the University of London.

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<sup>643</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>644</sup> Op. cit.



One trend is the use of an educative technique which is a combination of allusion to canonical texts and fragmentation of narrative. Both elements provoke thought by compelling the reader to drop their predictive responses (to linear and conventional art) and begin again, learning the new discourse. Combined, they generate recalibrations of the original which takes the reader from ‘knowledge’ – which can be arrived at through the educational dialogue with other texts, materials and other learners, which in itself creates scholarly communities – to ‘synthesis’ and ‘evaluation’ in Bloom’s taxonomy. Comparisons of the uses of allusion in best-selling novels of education such as Hughes’ *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* and Waugh’s *The Loom of Youth* show that allusion was actually used very frequently but in a way which did express the elitism of the institutions described precisely because it did not have any real educative function and was simply there to parade learning without its having a deep structural role to play in the pursuit of meanings in the text.<sup>645</sup> Education as a process (not an institution) is a bridge: it negates the categories of ‘mass’ and ‘elite’. When text is educative, it takes the reader beyond social categories by encouraging continued reading and thinking. Therefore, another trend is the suspicion of anything which restricts intellectual liberty, and this is a symptom of an educative method which is intrinsically associative (though not to the exclusion of orderly conceptual thinking, such as in Joyce’s schema, Eliot’s notes and Woolf’s lists of authors). This includes a suspicion of group categories whose aim is not the intellectual flourishing of its members (sharing knowledge, opening pathways, discussing arguments) but the harnessing of education through its necessary institutions to utilitarian national and military aims. The fear that education could be made to serve these ends was more widely held than in cosmopolitan artistic circles: a history professor at the military college, Sandhurst, Thomas Seccombe, the writer of the first preface to Waugh’s novel, said the public school system ‘has fairly helped, you may say, to get us out of the mess of August 1914. Yes, but it contributed heavily to get us into it.’<sup>646</sup> Carey’s analysis could be usefully modified to explore the relationship of the individual thinker and the group in the works of these writers.

A related trend is canon formation: the recommendation of reading. Joyce, Eliot and Woolf name authors frequently in their work, and this bespeaks the contemporary marketability of lists of the best ever books. By making reading lists a part of their work they not only draw attention to the issue of canon formation, but also sell the canon to readers as something which enables them to take part in

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<sup>645</sup> Hughes quotes Lowell, Shakespeare, the Bible, Homer in the original Greek, untranslated school songs in Latin, and others. Waugh quotes Verlaine, Tennyson, Homer, and refers to writers such as Baudelaire, Keats, Byron, Dobson, Catullus, Virgil, Xenophon, Sophocles and so on. Hughes quotes Wordsworth on learning from Nature before introducing a boy known as ‘Madman’ who collects animals and stores them in pockets and cupboards. Waugh uses Verlaine’s description of autumn leaves blowing in the wind to signal that his Carruthers is now going through a time of change, but Carruthers is far from being the metaphorical dead leaf (‘feuille morte’) of the poem, and in fact he remains as bouncy as usual.

<sup>646</sup> Waugh, A., *The Loom of Youth* (London: Bloomsbury Reader, 1917), p. xi.

the games of the text; Ricks once noted in passing in a lecture on Eliot that allusion derives from *ludere*, 'to play'. In doing so, they themselves became canonical.

All three writers visibly changed the nature of English studies and this is evident in the changes to the University of London paper in the question framing, which develops from considerations of writers' importance to assessments of works according to more recognisable patterns such as comparison or the discussion of a critical quotation, possibly from the writer themselves, about their work or a part of their work. In comparison with the writers mentioned in the University of London 1920 MA thesis about depictions of education in the fiction of the nineteenth century and after<sup>647</sup>, these modernists evidently became rapidly more educationally interesting.

This survey also finds differences between the writers in terms of their relationship to the life of the mind and the life of the world. Joyce's prose filters experience through literary learning, so that his characters, Bloom, Stephen, or the narrator on behalf of characters such as the citizen/cyclops, go to literature via allusions to remembered text to frame, interpret and spark meaning in experience. Eliot's verse has a similar tendency, which is to reach for experience through literature, to recapture the truth of the past and in doing so the truth of the present. Woolf's prose is very different: literary and academic thinking stumbles continually on the blunt fact of the real world. In all of these, however, education is the conduit and the dynamo.

When Arnold spoke of perfection as 'a growing and a becoming', not 'a having and a resting', he described culture in terms of the means by which one acquires it. Education is not something which one possesses but which one passes on; it exists in motion, and it is this which this thesis finds best expresses the nature of modernist achievement.

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<sup>647</sup> Alec Waugh, Arnold Lunn, A. H. Gilkes, Thomas Hughes, H. G. Wells, Stuart Mais.

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