That we may know the heart and what it feels: Love in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*

by

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

When James Joyce's *Ulysses* was first published, many people viewed it as a complete chaos. Since then, the attempts to understand *Ulysses* have spawned a critical industry that could quite possibly be viewed as being at least as chaotic as *Ulysses* would seem to be. In this post-modern era, then, any attempt to understand *Ulysses* (or any other text, for that matter) and discuss it within the professional field demands at least a minimal familiarity with this critical body's ocean of ideas.

This thesis is obviously no exception. One such idea in this ocean has to be love in *Ulysses*. And that is the idea with which this thesis concerns itself. The definition of love in *Ulysses* has been more or less taken for granted as a settled issue despite the fact that conflicting interpretations of love in *Ulysses* continue to circulate in Joycean essays. This study maintains that the best way to understand love in *Ulysses* is through a reader-response/structuralist method rather than a strictly formalist method, a method which can be defined as an "analyses generated by the assumption that meaning is embedded in the artifact" (Fish 1241). As a result of using this reader-response method, we can see how love in *Ulysses* doesn’t have any one conclusive meaning; rather, Joyce challenges us to examine love in all its multiplicity and uncertainty, to come to our own reflections concerning love by using *Ulysses* as a touchstone.

But to understand why this study ought to be conducted, we must understand the claims and needs of the critical industry in which it is attempting to situate itself. Fortunately, in its journey through this treacherous ocean that has laid waste to many a formidable critical ship, this thesis, unlike the hero Ulysses, has recourse to at least two
reliable guides: Bernard Benstock and Jeffrey Segall. Though I hope that I have not slavishly replicated their opinions and assessments of various criticisms, I found that my own literature review resembled theirs both in form and content, and felt that it could benefit from a fuller appropriation of the views of these two critics. More specifically, I found Benstock’s 1985 Introduction to Critical Essays on James Joyce particularly helpful in its division of Joycean criticism into the four chronological eras of “Early Assessments,” “Coterie and Pioneers,” “Mainstream,” and “Nouvelles Critiques.” Segall’s 1993 Joyce in America: Cultural Politics and the Trials of Ulysses became an asset when I was formulating my brief overviews of each critics’ assessment of Ulysses, especially since, as Benstock acknowledges, the Americans of the “late 1940s and early 1950s . . . were the first true Joyceans” (8). Benstock and Segall, then, served as convenient guides in deciding which Joycean critics best represent the most influential viewpoints in the history of Joyce Criticism regarding Ulysses.

Through the initial critical reactions to Ulysses as presented by Benstock and Segall, we can see that these early reactions seem to have set the precedent for all other readings since: intense and radical disagreement. Segall calls these reactions a type of “cultural warfare” (19); Benstock somewhat lightly calls them “uneven” (3). For instance, whereas Richard Aldington and Wyndham Lewis saw in Ulysses an overriding chaos, T. S. Eliot saw an order striving amidst the modern world’s chaos. As Segall points out, Eliot “argued that the Homeric parallels in Ulysses gave a shape and structure to the disorder of contemporary life” (143). In another view of Ulysses, Jung seems to combine these two contradictions in himself. While he sees Ulysses in one way as being a meaningless chaos, he also sees in it
the humanist ability to persevere and establish meaning within the chaos: "Bloom... experiences in the dirt something that had never happened to him before: his own transfiguration" (Benstock 1989 p.23). So, while these critics viewed a sense of order in Ulysses, they still understood Ulysses as being more a representation of chaos rather than of a meaningful human existence.

Unlike these early critics, later critics viewed Ulysses as primarily a humanist project. In defining humanism, I find Jonathan Dollimore’s assessment of humanism’s main characteristics to be particularly useful: “If [man] is to be redeemed at all he must redeem himself. . . . If . . . suffering is to be justified at all it is because of what it reveals about man’s intrinsic nature -- his courage and integrity” (189). To educate other readers about Joyce's methods and purpose in constructing this humanist vision, several critics and friends of Joyce began writing rather long explications offering overviews of the Joyce's entire work, or of just Ulysses. Among these critics and friends were Stuart Gilbert and Frank Budgen.

Of these two humanist critics, Stuart Gilbert offers the most significant formalist defense of Ulysses. In a detailed format following the Homeric findings of Eliot, Gilbert lays out how Ulysses is not at all a formless chaos, but carefully structured after Homer's Ulysses (Benstock 7). Joyce does not slavishly follow Homer, of course, but creates parallels at key points. As Gilbert points out, Joyce's careful use of form moves beyond his parallel to Homer; this formalism influences the smallest aspect of Ulysses. To illustrate, Gilbert carefully chooses several small examples which on the surface seem meaningless when reading the book, or incredibly pointless, but nevertheless show how Joyce uses a formal aesthetic. Thus, Gilbert disproves the charges that Ulysses is a formless mess, and shows
Joyce to be one of the most careful artists known, easily as careful as was Homer, or Shelley, or Dickens.

Budgen, while discussing Ulysses itself, was more interested in presenting Joyce as an accessible, human figure, rather than the myopic obscurantist which many saw him to be. In doing so, Budgen hopes to make Joyce more accessible to readers who may have been intimidated by his difficult writing (Benstock 8). He also shows how Joyce is not so much interested in anatomizing a meaningless chaos of physical forces as in portraying a difficult universe in which good and bad freely mix. For Budgen, then, the point of Ulysses is not the exposition of a wasteland (as it was for Lewis, Jung, and Eliot) but the exposition of a multi-faceted world in which good humans struggle to persevere amidst antagonistic obstacles such as hatred and other anti-humanist forces (Budgen 73).

These humanist critical leanings gained strength and continued through the 1950's. As Benstock points out, this new era of the "first true Joyceans... who encouraged their students to read and write about Joyce" was mostly driven by Richard M. Kain's Fabulous Voyager, W.Y. Tindall's A Reader's Guide to James Joyce, and Richard Ellmann's James Joyce. Like Budgen, these critics, too, sought to justify Joyce's Ulysses to the world at large by viewing his characters and work in a "positive" light. Consequently, Joyce, for them, displays "humanity and philosophy" in his attempt to respond to the "monumental changes... of the twentieth century" (Benstock 9). The chaotic Ulysses of Aldington had thus passed through the order-within-chaos Ulysses of Jung and Eliot, and had given way to the Ulysses of "a cosmic vision, an embracing of all mankind" (Benstock 9).
The opposition to this movement can be found in Hugh Kenner's *Dublin's Joyce*, which some saw, according to Benstock as, "a chilling antidote to . . . critical pollyannaism" (Benstock 10). In Kenner's *Ulysses*, as with the "positive critics," there is also a center and a meaning, but this center and meaning are beyond the grasp of any person in the modern world. The modern world's fragmentation prevents the characters of *Ulysses* from achieving any sort of enlightenment or purpose. Rather, they are left stunted, failures, human-wanna-be's living hollow lives: the walking dead (Segall 148).

And as a corrective criticism to both Kenner's anti-sentimentalism and the humanists' optimism came the Catholic critics. Works such as Kevin Sullivan's *Joyce Among the Jesuits*, William T. Noon's *Joyce and Aquinas*, and L.A.G. Strong's *The Sacred River* remind us that Joyce had grown up Catholic. This Catholic heritage, they claimed, shown through Joyce's work (Benstock 162), and, in fact, revealed that his religious sensibility informed his work as well (Segall 162). Though Segall himself is suspicious of these attempts as being a "literary reclamation project" (160) run by Catholics for Catholics, he does admit that this criticism "affirms at the very least that a moral sensibility and moral vision underlie Joyce's work" (Segall 167).

But with the 1970's, Joyce criticism, influenced by French literary theory, takes a turn. Through the works of critics such as Robert Scholes (especially his "Ulysses: A Structuralist Perspective"), Jacques Derrida, Thomas Staley, Jean Kimball and Suzette Henke, Joyce becomes more than an author of either nihilist chaos, humanist order, or Catholicism. Instead, Joyce's work manifests various power structures, feminist ideals, psychological constructs, Marxist politics, and structural forms, as well as (or perhaps replacing) the
Modernist, Biographical, and Catholic tendencies seen by previous critics. Though the humanist/Catholic claims survive in critical works such as Robert Boyle's *James Joyce's Pauline Vision: A Catholic Exposition*, the explanation of what Joyce's work does has taken on whole new meanings not before considered, or perhaps even thought fallacious.

Obviously, with such a great diversity in critical views concerning the meaning and purpose of *Ulysses* (indeed, if there is a meaning and purpose at all), there could only be just as great a difference, if not greater, in more specific considerations of the book. One specific issue is love in *Ulysses*. Certainly, this issue demands attention since so many of the characters of *Ulysses* are concerned with it: Bloom and Molly; Molly and Boylan; Mr and Mrs. Purefoy; a mother and her child; a father and his child; Stephen and his mother; Stephen and his father; Mulligan and his aunt; Stephen and his sister; Gerty and her secret lover; the citizen and his country. The list goes on and on and on.

Aldington, Lewis, Eliot, and Jung do not seem very concerned with love as an issue in itself; they are more concerned with whether the book offers a vision of chaos or some general humanist vision. Presumably, though, if the humanist vision does exist, then love would have to be a part of it. Nevertheless, none of these critics deal with love in particular, despite the fact that the three main characters seem to be very much preoccupied with it.

For Gilbert and Budgen, Joyce's methods and other issues seem to be of greater importance. Gilbert himself says nothing on the issue of love, whereas Budgen only makes a passing reference when he claims, "Of mother love not much is said. To father love is ascribed a significance rarely admitted" (73). He mentions love again when discussing his humanist vision of community, claiming "excessive individualism" as the sin against
"brotherly love" (215). But, as with motherly love, he fails to describe this brotherly love as it exists in the world of Ulysses.

Still, it is possible that this humanist Joyce is responsible for the discussion of love which popped up at times during the 1950's. In his own corrective vision of the humanist Joyce, Hugh Kenner sees Bloom as having "all the natural virtues [including charity] in some sort of laudable balance" (189). Yet he views Bloom's definition of love as "feeble," and more fit for nursery rhymes than serious consideration (255). From this information, Kenner dismisses the "sentimental" notion of Bloom as Messiah, and thus, presumably, of Bloom as preacher of love (256). Seemingly, then, Kenner's vision of Ulysses as the land of the dead leaves no room for love.

Tillyard and Ellmann, however, come to much different conclusions regarding love in Ulysses. Tillyard believes that Joyce "condemns pride... and commends charity, the greatest of virtues, [thus demonstrating] love's triumph" (125). Tillyard feels this so strongly that he claims charity to be "the radiance of this great whole [of Ulysses]" (134). Not surprisingly, then, Tillyard takes quite an opposite view to Kenner's in regarding Bloom's words in Barney Kiernan's: "Nowhere else in Ulysses is its moral theme more explicit or more evident. The conflict in Barney Kiernan's is the conflict of hate with love, of inhumanity with humanity, and of compassion with indifference or malice. In his capacity of Elijah, Jesus, and God, Bloom embodies and defends all that is opposite his surroundings" (134). Yet, Tillyard himself does little more than Bloom (or Kenner, for that matter) in the way of explicating what love is in Ulysses.
In a seeming echo of Tillyard, Ellmann, too, concludes in his biography *James Joyce* that the ultimate vision of *Ulysses* is one of love. Ellmann goes farther than Tillyard or other previous critics, though, in that he actually tries to give a general idea of what love is in *Ulysses*. For Ellmann, love is agape, a selfless giving of oneself to another. Ellmann develops this view further in *Ulysses on the Liffey*, but most particularly in his preface to the 1984 Gabler edition of *Ulysses*. He claims that Joyce attempts to show us love in *Ulysses* by contrasting it with what is commonly mistaken for love: sentimentality, hate, and beastly brutality. Unfortunately, Ellmann doesn’t proceed much further; except for providing a few examples concerning Gerty McDowell and Blazes Boylan, Ellmann doesn’t expand his discussion of love to a broader consideration of the rest of *Ulysses*. He seems content to let his claim that love is the word known to all men stand for itself (xiii).

As for the Catholic critics, they don’t discuss the actual form of love in *Ulysses* until Boyle’s 1972 "Miracle in Black Ink: A Glance at Joyce’s Use of his Eucharistic Image." During a brief aside in this article, Boyle mentions that the best word to describe the Eucharist is "love" (in Benstock 142). From there, he goes on to clarify the role of love in *Ulysses* by contrasting his understanding of the issue with Richard Ellmann’s. Whereas Ellmann claims love as the word known to all men, Boyle claims that love can’t be the word known to all men since it "does exclude a great deal --- all negative, perhaps, but profoundly operative nevertheless," and that Joyce "is unwilling to exclude the opposite of love in his coal-hole vision" (in Benstock 143). Instead of proposing love as the word, Boyle proposes "Shantih," or "Awmawn" (in Benstock 143). Where Ellmann sees Joyce’s refusal to name
love in the later sections of *Ulysses* as an attempt to avoid didacticism, then, Boyle sees Joyce's denial of love as being the word known to all men.

The debate about what love is (or is not) in *Ulysses* continued on its indirect track into the 1980's. In her 1980 essay "Theosophy, Guilt, and 'That Word Known to All Men' in Joyce's *Ulysses*," Cheryl T. Herr decides that love is only an aspect of a word which reflected various theosophical ideas, not the word itself (45). But this love, again, is a positive agape-oriented motherly love that may at times be regarded by Stephen with "discomfort" (51).

This debate about the nature of the word (and, therefore, the way love would be approached in the book) took a decided turn in 1984 with the release of the Gabler edition of *Ulysses*. In this edition, the debate about "what is the word known to all men" appeared to be settled with the restoration of what has come to be known as the "love passage" in Scylla and Charybdis. In this passage, Stephen wonders about the word known to all men and violently mocks himself, asking himself if he even knows what he is talking about in the most basic sense despite all his pretensions to genius: "Do you know what you are talking about? Love, yes. Word known to all men. *Amor vero aliquid alicui bonum vult unde et ea quae concupiscimus*" (*U* 9.429 — *U* 9.431).

Quite predictably, Ellmann was very happy about this development; Kenner, on the other hand, was rather silent (Kimball 143). But Ellmann makes an important decision in his reading of this fragment: it becomes clear that, though he may be convinced that love is the word known to all men, what that word exactly means in *Ulysses* remains to be articulated. As Kimball points out, Ellmann's interpretation of the fragment as "the definition of Aquinas . . .: 'Love truly wishes some good to another and therefore all desire it,'" [depends upon ]
viewing the quote constructed by Stephen as a complete sentence [rather than as the fragment as it is punctuated in *Ulysses*] and, with the expanded translation of 'concupiscimus' as 'we all desire it,' giving it a universal application to harmonize with the 'word known to all men' (145). Kimball thus claims that Ellmann, in doing so, fails to recognize the ways in which Stephen appropriates these words from Aquinas.

In her own 1987 "Love and Death in *Ulysses*: 'Word known to all men,'" Jean Kimball asserts that Stephen, rather than merely quoting Aquinas as Ellmann claimed, instead twists the fragments of one of Aquinas' definitions of love (*Summa Contra Gentiles* I.91 quoted in Kimball 146) so that they look like one of Aristotle's definitions of love. This twisting thus problematizes our understanding of what love is in *Ulysses* rather than settling it.

Kimball explains that, in his definition of love, Stephen thinks to himself, "Amor vero aliquid alicui bonum vult unde et ea quae concupiscimus . . . " (U 9.430-31, ellipsis in text). To construct this phrase, she, like Gifford and Seidman, recognizes that Stephen quotes Aquinas as follows: Stephen's choice of words in bold caps:

> 'Per hoc enim quod intelligimus vel gaudemus, ad aliquod objectum alicualiter nos habere oportet; **AMOR VERO ALIQUID ALICUI VULT**; hoc enim amare dicimur, cui aliquid **BONUM** volumus secundum modum praedictum; **UNDE ET EA QUAE CONCUPISCIMUS**, simpliciter quidem et proprie desidare dicimur, non autem amare, sed potius nos ipsos, quibus ea concupiscimus; et ex hoc ipsa per accidens, non proprie dicimur amare. (Ex Officina Libraria MARIETTI [1820, 1927], p. 82, qtd. in Gifford and Seidman 221)

In explaining how Stephen appropriates this quote, Kimball claims, "Stephen . . . excerpts bonum from [Aquinas] and adds it to the first part of his quotation, turning it into
Aristotle’s definition of love or friendship — “love wills something good to someone” —...[from] the Ethics” (Kimball 146). The second part of Stephen’s quotation

Unde et ea quae concupiscimus [Hence those things which we want] —... is left unfinished, and thus ambiguous. Stephen takes just enough text from this section of the Summa Contra Gentiles to include the secondary sense of love as well as the primary sense which his first proposition, as amended, states. (Kimball 147)

Having distinguished Stephen’s definition from the section of Aquinas’ text in question, Kimball discusses how this particular section of Aquinas’ text is busy discussing the primacy of love for people over love for non-human things, rather than, as Ellmann claims, defining love as a matter of self-giving. And these two different definitions of love aren’t really in competition; they are merely degrees of proper and improper love (146). But, as Kimball points out, “the distinction is more rhetorical than judgmental, a matter of what one can properly call love, as defined by Aristotle, rather than a contrast between a true love and love of self” (147). In fact, as she goes on to point out, both Aristotle and Aquinas saw a true love of self as a legitimate part of love for others (147).

With this argument in mind, Kimball then discusses how the word known to all men is not a choice between Ellmann’s love and Kenner’s death, but a combination: the word is "love' and 'death" (152). For Kimball, though, this love must have "a tie to the flesh;" it must be embodied in a fleshly body, not some esoteric spiritualist fantasy. Yet it is this enfleshed love which may conquer death, thus eliminating one half of the possibilities which Kimball presents as the Word Known to All Men.

And John Gordon in his 1990, "Love in Bloom, by Stephen Dedalus," doesn’t seem much affected by this discussion at all. He’s content with examining how love is the word
known to all men, seemingly implicitly defining it as "the confirmation of shared truths" (242). In this case, the shared truth is love, an agape-type love to be exact (248).

This discussion continued when Cheryl Fox wrote her 1993 essay "Absolutely: Redefining the Word Known to All Men." Here Fox claims that the word couldn't be love because of its "imprecision," its ability to "entail the subjugation and therefore the partial negation of the one loved." Fox sees these abilities of love to both affirm and negate as "mutually exclusive" and irreconcilable (800). Thus, she claims, the word is neither "love" nor "death," but "yes" which grants the affirmation which all of us seek (804). In doing so, though, she fails to make Kimball's assessment that what Thomas' competing definitions of love do is make a distinction between love of people vs. love of things; she maintains that the distinction is between Thomistic agape and narcissism. But by discussing the "negating aspects of love," Fox offers a nuance to love which Ellmann, Boyle, and Kenner had not thought of, and which Kimball had touched on: love isn't just all positive; it is negative as well.

Through these expositions, then, we can see that the debate about what love represents in Ulysses is still very much alive. Whereas the meaning of love is taken for granted very much by previous critics (even by Ellmann) as only being the Thomistic agape, Kimball and Fox raise the question of whether or not love can be more than that, can be positive as well as negative. As both Kimball and Fox point out, this quote of Aquinas never settles what love is; it merely raises two competing definitions, serves as a "'key,' [which] like so many other keys to meaning in Ulysses, appears to unlock a door that in turn leads to other doors rather than to some treasure house of guaranteed meaning" (Kimball 147). Perhaps
then, the desire to understand love as it is in itself in *Ulysses*, rather than as a peripheral question to some other issue such as the word known to all men, would grasp the minds of Joyce scholars in a way that it wouldn't have before the Gabler edition.

For the most part, though, love in these essays is not discussed as an issue in itself. Rather than directly addressing the shape of love itself, love usually is discussed only as the word known to all men. Rarely is it asked, "What is love itself in *Ulysses* regardless of whether or not it is the word known to all men?" The contribution of this essay is to do just that: to investigate love in *Ulysses* as love in *Ulysses*, not as a peripheral concern to some other issue such as the word known to all men or the general meaning of the book, though these two issues certainly touch on and inform our understanding of love in *Ulysses*.

In fulfilling the purpose of this essay to explore love in *Ulysses*, three main points demand attention: the epistemology of *Ulysses*, love as a material/nonmaterial phenomenon, and love as a positive/negative phenomenon. The second chapter discusses how our epistemological assumptions dictate the way in which we understand love in *Ulysses*. If we think that knowledge functions strictly linearly, working towards one final answer, we will be inclined to think that *Ulysses* offers one definition of love. But if love in *Ulysses* doesn't function in such a conclusive way, if it resists a conclusive definition, then we are missing Joyce's point. Epistemologically, then, this thesis posits a recursive construction of knowledge in *Ulysses* which allows for multiple possible definitions of love, no one definition receiving priority over the others.

Within this epistemological parameter, chapter three discusses love as a material/nonmaterial phenomenon. Here three possible definitions of love are considered.
First, love is considered as a strictly nonmaterial phenomenon. Second, love is considered as a strictly material phenomenon. And then love is considered as a combination of the nonmaterial and the material. Once all three definitions of love are seen as equally viable, I discuss this formalist indeterminacy in terms of being a sign in itself, rather than as an indeterminacy to be resolved.

The fourth chapter follows much the same format as the third. In this case, however, two definitions of love are considered. First, love is considered as a strictly positive phenomenon, something which in no way involves anything harmful. Second, love is considered as an ambiguous reality, constituted by both positive and negative realities. In other words, love can involve harming another person as well as doing good for them. As in the third chapter, once these equally viable formalist/structuralist readings are demonstrated to be mutually exclusive, I take this indeterminacy as another opportunity for a reader’s sign-making rather than as a problem to be solved by a more thorough formalist explication.

Finally, in my conclusion, I offer some general observations concerning possible consequences of this study.

In examining these various possible definitions of love in *Ulysses*, as I’ve alluded to before, I will be using a reader-response method rooted in structuralist principles which seek out type and categories (in this case, obviously, categories of love, and characters who act as types, exemplifying various definitions of love). Though the two methods would seem mutually exclusive (reader-response seeking meaning in the reader’s process of reading, structuralism seeking meaning in the book itself), Jane Tompkins points out that they can in fact go hand in hand, structuralism being one of the “theoretical orientations” which “shape
[the] definitions of the reader, or interpretations, and of the text" (ix) as used by reader-
response theory. In other words, what kind of readers are we analyzing, what structures are
they forming, and what method do they use to form these structures which are then read by
reader-response analysts as signs? This thesis, therefore, posits a reader who forms readings
through structuralist methods. And it is these structuralist readings which I will explore from
the perspective of reader-response methodology.

Of course, the question must be asked concerning what kind of reader-response theory
this thesis will be using. As Jane Tompkins points out, Jonathan Culler, for example, focuses
on the institutions which would teach readers the various forms applied in reading and
responding to literature (xviii). For another example, Wolfgang Iser would maintain,
according to Tompkins, that, though we use literature to improve ourselves morally, “the
ultimate object of attention is the literary text” (xvi). Tompkins indicates that the aversion to
viewing literature as an object external to the reader makes its most extreme shift, though, in
the work of Stanley Fish, wherein “the reader's activity is declared to be identical with the
text and therefore becomes itself the source of all literary value. If literature is what happens
when we read, its value depends on the value of the reading process” (xvi).

I find all of the above critics useful, but I find Fish's “Interpreting the Variorum” the
most useful. For while I may still believe in an object to which we respond, I'm more
interested in the process of reading in which the reader engages. Ultimately, I'm more
interested in talking about the structures of the reader's response and what they mean, how
those responses themselves are created in a joint-venture between us and the work. Rather
than fully explaining this method now, though, thus testing the reader's memory, this thesis
will offer a full explication of Fish's method in chapter two, thus demonstrating the appropriateness of reader-response for reading love in *Ulysses*. This way, the method (a type of epistemology in itself) will be closely situated near the explication of *Ulysses'* epistemology. Thus, before we come to those wandering post-structuralist rocks of reader-response, we must first pass through the Ithaca of epistemology and understand the importance of methodological self-consciousness.
CHAPTER 2. GENERAL EPISTEMOLOGY OF ULYSSES

In coming to understand love in Ulysses, it’s important that we learn how we come to understand anything in Ulysses. As many readers have indicated, understanding Ulysses, just trying to read it at all, is an immense challenge. And since Ulysses challenges our usual methods of developing a simple account of story, it would seem that Ulysses on a deeper level challenges the common conclusions that we usually reach based on these usual methods. In other words, what is the model of knowing which Ulysses itself presents to us, and, more importantly, how does this model influence the way we understand love?

In the practice of many critics of love in Ulysses, knowledge occurs in a linear way (a line from a starting point to a finishing point), resulting in conclusive knowledge, though this knowledge is only gained after a harrowing journey through the many obstacles, the many wandering rocks, which Ulysses tosses at the reader. This type of knowledge doesn’t seem appropriate for a book which is structured recursively, which “starts with an S and ends with an S, starts with techniques of narrative, catechism, and monologue and ends with them repeated in order in the Nostos. Like the world, the book has ‘no ends really because it’s round’” [U 378.30-1] (Thomas 86). My account of knowledge in Ulysses, therefore, goes contrary to the above notion of linear knowledge, and attempts to be more in tune with this recursive structure of Ulysses. In Ulysses, knowledge, rather than moving in a straight line from beginning to end and stopping, moves recursively, in a spiraling way: we begin somewhere, proceed through induction and deduction and back again, constantly reformulating definitions. Instead of conclusions, then, we are left with various possibilities which result from “[t]hat language, as part of a language system without beginning or end,
[which] allows Joyce continually to create new meanings and formal possibilities for his book” (Thomas 139). By examining the language in Ulysses (Thomas, for instance, “link[s] the book’s circularity to the nature of its language” [20]), and how language in Ulysses defuses linear thought, thereby leaving us with only possibilities, we can better see how Ulysses offers us a new model for knowing and, thus, for reading as a type of knowing: the constant reformulation of previously held definitions which result in new tentative definitions which will themselves tested and reformulated over and over again. But to understand why we need to re-examine how knowledge works in Ulysses, first we must understand criticism which how love is known in Ulysses: linearly, conclusively.

Regardless of how these critics assess love’s immaterial/material quality or its negative/positive quality in Ulysses, they all view the issue of love as something which can be brought to closure, whether through induction or deduction. Regarding the question of materiality, for instance, Ellmann reaches the conclusion that love, after much deliberation and testing against various false notions of love within the book, involves a union of body and soul which resists sentimentality on one hand and brutality on the other. Regarding the question of love’s positiveness or negativeness, Boyle concludes that love isn’t universal since it is only positive, not negative. In both instances, as in others, the critic finds a conclusive definition of love within Ulysses upon which to base further critical assessments such as claims concerning the word known to all men.

This practice of bringing love to a clear conclusion, of supplying a clear definition for love in Ulysses, is based on the notion that Ulysses ultimately functions clearly and linearly in its knowledge of love: it progresses from a starting point to a finishing point, or, as
Thomas puts it, "[T]he reader experiences the odyssey of reading the book only to return to the 'rock of Ithaca,' where the motion stops" (161). This progression (as with most criticism, it seems) usually moves inductively: the critic gathers many instances from the text and draws a general conclusion from them. John Gordon, for instance, in analyzing love's connection to the word known as all men examines the role of the material and the spiritual (immaterial) in how love is known. He concludes that Stephen's various musings on the beach regarding God and theosophy reveal that Stephen "assert[s] a real relation between matter and spirit" (47), and that that relation is reified by Ulysses as a whole, affirming that the spiritual (non-material) and the material are united in a "continuum" of which love is a part (52). In this appeal to form alone, Gordon seeks closure to this aspect of the question of love's nature in Ulysses.

This type of approach, a linear approach which functions in moving from a confusion of data to a resolution of the data in the form of a general conclusion, does great damage to knowing love in Ulysses, though, if love in Ulysses is not meant to be known in any conclusive manner through a process of induction and deduction. If knowledge of love in Ulysses operates perpetually recursively without closure, then to impose an epistemology based on closure would render us incapable of knowing exactly what love is in Ulysses. It would render us incapable of understanding, really, that love is never brought to a conclusion in Ulysses. That, rather, our inability to finalize love in Ulysses is itself meant to function as a sign of meaning which shifts the responsibility of determining and understanding love from the text to us, the readers. The critical decision, then, of bringing the issue of love in Ulysses to closure renders the text didactic; the critical decision to allow love in Ulysses its ultimate
ambiguity allows *Ulysses* an openness which is more in line with its epistemology of possibility instead of closure.

To understand *Ulysses* as perpetually recursive, though, is not the same as to understand it as functioning in terms of the hermeneutic circle. For the hermeneutic circle, meaning remains embedded in the text alone; eventually, the readers construct their senses of unity based on conclusions that can be found within the text. In my notion of recursiveness, I take Stanley Fish's understanding of the text's formal ambiguity as an opportunity for the readers' sign-making. The text, though we can certainly apply our notions of structure and form, in certain cases refuses closure, refuses the formation of a single coherent conclusion. In this case, the readers find themselves confronted with various mutually exclusive conclusions regarding the text's formal meaning. Rather than seeking the meaning in the text (which remains in a perpetual state of flux, recursiveness, formation and re-formation), the reader takes this inconclusiveness itself as a sign. In this way "[m]eaning occurs through the process of reading, and all reading requires interpretation" (Thomas 24).

For instance, in Fish's discussion of Milton's use of the word "spare", he points out that critics are stuck on a matter of interpretation: does "spare" mean that these delights in question are to be avoided or enjoyed? Rather than remaining caught in this endless spiral of formalist explication, Fish sees this ambiguity, this indeterminacy, as itself being a sign much as a word is a sign. He claims that since the word "spare" can be understood in both senses, as being avoided and being enjoyed, it remains for the readers in their own lives to decide when these delights should and shouldn't be enjoyed. The text in this case offers no closure or didactic lesson which the readers can use as a textbook for real life. Instead, the readers
must take responsibility for their choices, recognizing, as “spare” points out in its signness, that this is a difficult decision requiring much thought.

But even here I diverge from Fish. For Fish, this signification and the reader’s understanding of this signification takes place primarily in what he calls the temporal rather than the spatial formalist realm. I disagree. Following the structuralist principles, I believe that this formation of a sign can occur spatially as well as temporally; the readers not only form significations as they read the text, but as they read their readings of the text, and as they re-read the text itself. As Thomas puts it, “To produce one pattern we have to go through an act of reading, and to produce another pattern we need to go through another act of reading, creating an endless number of structures” (162). So, for instance, after two readings of Ulysses, I may formulate love as being a strictly material phenomenon. After a second reading, I may revise my previous assessment and consider love a nonmaterial phenomenon, and so on. Once I have decided that these readings are all viable yet mutually exclusive, I can then treat them as a sign for reader-response analysis. In other words, the data that readers have collected from the text is in itself a text which must be read in light of future readings of the work. In the case of this thesis, then, it is the inability to read this data-text in any coherent, closed way which demands that the readers read this lack of structural/formal closure as a type of sign.

Obviously, it is this notion of knowledge in Ulysses which allows us access to love as it is in Ulysses: an indeterminate group of contradictory signs which force us to recognize this recursive lack of closure as itself significant, as forcing the responsibility of reading back on us, refusing to tell us conclusively what love is in Ulysses.
Perhaps here readers may observe that the account of *Ulysses*' epistemology which I propose sounds suspiciously like those linear accounts of love which I claim are inaccurate: a conclusion (it functions recursively) based on an inductive process. I only think that this observation would be accurate if I claimed that every aspect of *Ulysses* was knowable only in a recursive, sign-forming manner. I don't. Rather, I believe that *Ulysses* functions much as a Mandelbrot set does: it is an infinite pattern which is limited in direction. In other words, the limited direction of the Mandelbrot set is, in terms of *Ulysses*, the epistemology which it establishes. The pattern which recurs indefinitely would be the definitions of love which never work to a resolution, but incessantly spiral outward within the limits of *Ulysses*' epistemology. And it is the fact that love spirals perpetually inconclusively which becomes the sign that we as readers must interpret. According to Thomas, Joyce makes several variations of themes in this way to "[show] the pattern's infinite variety by repeating and elaborating it *ad infinitum*" (87).

To see how it is that *Ulysses* offers this vision of epistemology, we must understand how language in *Ulysses* reveals knowledge to be a construction, not a necessary revelation of truth. We must then consider the specific ways in which knowledge, despite appeals to either a pre-linguistic body or pre-linguistic God, is demonstrated to be an inconclusive construction, thereby challenging us to reread the meaning of love in *Ulysses* in light of this epistemology of perpetual recursiveness, of a non-transcendent center.

Before moving on, however, two problems with the following discussion need to be anticipated. First, for these upcoming examples and assessments of language, am I assuming that Joyce intended all of these ideas concerning the nature of language? No. Here I again
follow Thomas in his assessment of language and authorial intent: “[T]he nature of a book’s language shapes it as much as an author’s or reader’s consciousness” (9). “Thus, the tale of the telling ultimately comes to include even the play of language not consciously ‘intended’ by Joyce” (20). Thomas continues: “[I]n one sense, it is not really Joyce who is creating these meanings or potential forms. They are meanings and forms already available in a language that exists prior to any one reader or writer of that language” (139).

Am I saying then that Joyce didn’t know what he was doing, that he intended nothing? Again, following Thomas, no. “The examples of interpretation we find in Ulysses encourage us to pay attention to words rather than to authorial intention. We can even argue that Ulysses’ author intended it that way” (165). So when I claim that Joyce sets up a Mandelbrot set, part of his parameters is indeed that slippage of language with which we are now so familiar. Joyce could not have, though, anticipated every slip which his language would make. Again, Thomas comments:

As more and more “coincidences” start to create a pattern of meaning, the reader finds it impossible to believe that Joyce could have “intended” all the connections he finds. Indeed Joyce may not have intended every one of the connections. The connections may be the result of a system of signs that is prior to any one user of those signs. But does that make the coincidences illegitimate in the context created by Ulysses? Does not Ulysses encourage us to use our ingenuity to read what the play of language might reveal to us? (166)

But, further, the second problem must be anticipated: what then of the metaphors I use? Did Joyce intend, for instance, that Bloom’s entry into his home be understood as an epistemological statement? A good starting point again would be Thomas. Here Thomas assesses Stephen’s discussion of Shakespeare in the library: “While the chapter does not prescribe a method, it does present one example of what happens when understanding takes
place as the result of an encounter with a text” (167). In the same way, then, does Bloom’s coming home function: as an encounter with the world which demonstrates one way in which we form knowledge. However, that still begs the question concerning Joyce’s intention and metaphor.

Certainly, as Thomas points out, Joyce himself used “the possibilities of metaphor as an organizing principle” (2). A metaphor would serve as one of the “linguistic codes” since “the world and the self can be known only through a system of signs” (14). For instance, the book’s title, Ulysses, “serves as a metaphor, offering metaphors by which we can read it, such as a book of many turns or a book as an odyssey” (123). In this way, whether Joyce intended it or not, “Ulysses teaches us how to read it as we read. . . . It makes much more sense to read Ulysses according to the metaphors and interpretive models it provides than to try to base our reading on some external method that promises validity in interpretation” (146). Of course, as Thomas points out, “even coming up with the text’s interpretive models involves an act of interpretation” (146). Thus, we can’t say that it’s somehow “natural” to view “Aeolus” as “a way of thinking about the technique of the entire book” (Carol Schloss in Thomas 157); it’s a matter of interpretation. And, thus, the problem with trying to determine how Joyce wanted us to read Bloom at home for instance: epistemological statement, or Bloom just coming home, or both, or none? So, again, what’s important is not so much Joyce’s intent, but how well the metaphor operates as a method of organization and as an interpretive model. And this usefulness of metaphor as interpretive model is what Thomas focuses upon:

The pages of Ulysses are full of models suggesting how to interpret such passages. What these models offer is not a method by which we can be sure of hearing one correct voice but a lesson on how to tune our ears so as to hear many voices, just as Joyce did as he wrote, reread, and rewrote the book. Furthermore, these models imply
that, just as Joyce's voice mixes with any attempt to resurrect the voices of Dublin, so the reader's voice mixes with his attempt to resurrect the voices of Ulysses. (158)

With these considerations of intention, language, and metaphor in mind, we are now better prepared to examine how language in Ulysses problematizes knowledge of reality. Despite appeals to biology and to theology as methods of knowing a transcendent objective reality, language in Ulysses demonstrates to us the constructedness of all knowledge, our inability to access a transcendent center. Before understanding how language constitutes reality in Ulysses, we might be tempted to designate two primary ways of knowing objective reality in Ulysses: language, on the one hand, and on the other, what might be called pre-lingual experience, either biological (through our sensual bodies) or divine (religion, for instance).

First, language. Considering the torture which words themselves undergo in Ulysses, especially in episodes such as "Aeolus" and "Ithaca", not to mention "Oxen of the Sun". The apparent confidence with which these critics discuss the word "love" is surprising. Under this torture, words, rather than giving up their full identity, their full meaning, seem to recede further and further into mysterious nebulousness. Why?

One notion which Ulysses certainly challenges in its language is the notion that language is able to clearly convey information. In the notion of clearly conveyed information, closure is given when people think that they have perfectly matched the words that the speaker has said or written with the meaning which the speaker has intended. In this way, language is thought to operate on a type of one-to-one ratio to meaning.
By challenging this notion, *Ulysses* "[defamiliarizes] language itself" (Thomas 140), revealing language to be, instead of an exact tool which refers to a world outside itself, a self-reflexive entity. For if language operated on a one-to-one ratio to an external world, "[a] perfect alignment would imply an identity; the book’s action would coincide with the book’s title; Bloom would equal Ulysses. But the connections between Joyce’s tale and Homer’s tale never quite meet" (Thomas 122). As in "the case of M’Intosh," these inconsistencies "remind us of the split between signifier and referent" (Thomas 118). Thus, "the circularity that we encounter so persistently in the history of literature could well be a product of language itself, language that, in reaching out to portray a world beyond itself, inevitably turns back naming only itself. In trying to identify, language ends by announcing itself as a sign, leaving a gap between it and what it signifies" (Thomas 106).

The notion of language as a clear, well-lit path to meaning receives a serious blow in *Ulysses*. Rather than being a well-lit path, language in *Ulysses* proves to be much like an unlit New York subway at midnight with predators potentially at every turn. Language thus reveals itself as sign through its inability to adequately convey exact knowledge, and its ability to actively restrict knowledge.

As Stephen says to his imaginary conversation partner, "You find my words are dark" (U 3.419). These words, like Stephen’s writing, are "[s]igns on a white field" (U 3.415) which must be read (understood) to see what they signify. Rather than being clearly lit, these words, these signs, drag us into dark uncertainty; as Eglinton recognizes during the discussion of Shakespeare with Stephen, "The doctor can tell us what those words mean" (U
Stephen is himself stumped at the ambiguity, the darkness of language, “I believe, O Lord, help my unbelief. That is, help me to believe or help me to unbelieve?” (U 9.1079).

Stephen, of course, is not the only person who finds language somewhat inadequate to the task of securely conveying knowledge. In the lecture hall of Barney Kiernan’s pub, Leopold Bloom experiences this problem of language in a much more acute manner. Bloom is harassed into defining a nation: “A nation is the same people living in the same place” to which Ned Lambert replies, “By God, then ... if that’s so I’m a nation for I’m living in the same place for the past five years” (U 12.1422-5). And again to define love: “[T]he opposite of hate” (U 12.1485) to which the narrator responds ridiculously, “Love loves to love love” (U 12.1493). Seemingly, then, Bloom has a much more difficult time knowing what the word “love” means than many critics of Ulysses do.

Judging from these representative examples, it would appear that language in Ulysses, rather than offering an avenue to conclusive knowledge, instead involves us in some way with constructing that knowledge; we must choose from language’s various possibilities within our particular context. But this conclusion is only chosen out of convention, not because the words themselves have forced us into one specific interpretation.

In the above case of Stephen’s debate on belief/unbelief, a quick appeal to a Church authority would probably reveal that the conclusion that the particular community has drawn is that the Lord is meant to help the supplicant learn how to believe, rather than strengthening the disbelief. This idea of language only having meaning within a certain community is very much like Stanley Fish’s notion of the interpretive community in which, by convention not because the words have any necessary connection to their meanings, a community establishes
the parameters within which meaning may be allowed for a certain word or structure. So, Stephen’s meaning is shaped by the interpretive community within which he functions.

But language is not only dark because of its tentative relationship to meaning and thus to knowledge; it is also dark because it can blot out knowledge, act as an eclipse on the sun of knowledge. Language’s ability to do harm can again be indicated in one of Stephen’s thoughts. During the Shakespeare discussion, Stephen urges himself to “[U]nsheathe [your] dagger definitions” (U 9.84).

In a way, then, language can be seen as a type of cutting. But what is language cutting? Again, it’s cutting away information; it’s cutting away knowledge. The clearest example of this cutting away, of language obscuring knowledge rather than leading us to it occurs in the “Ithaca” episode. In this episode, language can convey nothing of the emotion or bonding between Bloom and Stephen. Instead, it can only scientifically report Stephen’s and Bloom’s actions, leaving out any other type of information which the reader might want to know. In this way, Thomas claims, “Ithaca” [leads us] to see the limitations of the question-and-answer method, which assumes that for each question there is a definite answer” (119).

This cutting of language could be viewed as a type of harm, a type of damage done to knowledge itself in that it excludes other possibilities in its desire for final closure. In fact, we see another example of language being viewed as limiting rather than conveying possibility during Stephen’s discussion with Deasy during “Nestor”. Deasy chooses an extremely punitive definition of the word “just” in his thinking on how much money should be given to others. In commenting on how everyone needs to be able to pay their own way
eventually, Deasy says, “We are a generous people but we must also be just” (U 2.263).

Stephen here recognizes that this definition, this word “just” as it exists in this context, does a type of limiting rather than allowing for possibility. He responds, “I fear those big words . . . which make us so unhappy” (U 2.264). Stephen here sees that Deasy, like others, can use a word a certain way to eliminate possibility (the possibility here that justice might entail more giving to the poor than Deasy is willing to accommodate), to bring about a closure which is amenable to his purposes rather than admitting to possibility. So just as the language of “Ithaca” restricts possibility, so do the words of Deasy.

But sometimes it is eagerly admitted that language acts as a barrier to possibility of knowledge, whether through its production of endless vague possibilities or through its elimination of possibility. In this way, some try to avoid the claim that language is everything. Instead, they appeal to a pre-linguistic knowledge, an intuitive experience perceived by the mind, usually mediated, not by language, but by direct experience of either the pre-linguistic body or of a pre-linguistic God. But as we see in Ulysses, even this supposed “direct experience” becomes subject to language.

In remembering how Leopold explained to her the meaning of metempsychosis, Molly indicates this dilemma of bodily knowledge: “. . . I asked him about . . . that word met something with hoses in it and he came out with some jawbreakers about the incarnation he never can explain a thing simply the way a body can understand” (U 18.565-7). Though Molly’s choice of the word “body” can surely be accounted for as an example of idiom (i.e. the way somebody can understand), it also indicates her desire to know something which language (Bloom’s “jawbreakers”) seems to obstruct. Probably because Molly is so
comfortable with her body (as her ruminations would indicate), she feels that if this knowledge could be conveyed directly, bodily, in a way that a body could understand, then she wouldn't have to deal with the difficulties of Bloom's jawbreakers.

Stephen shares this belief in bodily knowledge; knowledge will be conveyed to him through a physical, bodily encounter with a woman. Most clearly, Stephen sees his literary birth being associated with a woman, much as Shakespeare's was. When ruminating on Shakespeare's seduction by Anne Hathaway, Stephen wonders, "Wait to be wooed and won. Ay, meacock. Who will woo you?" (U 9.938) and then remembers his failed attempt to escape to Europe so he may become an artist, "You flew. Whereto? . . . Paris and back" (U 9.952-3). This artistic knowledge, then, is seen as being conveyed through a bodily, not a linguistic, experience.

A "direct experience" of the body, though, may be more problematic than these characters think. Rather than serving as a secure refuge of knowledge for those who have tired of language's inability to communicate knowledge, the body itself can be made subject to knowledge, and therefore problematized itself as an avenue of knowledge. The clearest example of this problematization of the body through language occurs in a book about the body which Bloom reads, "Aristotle's Masterpieces". Here, language shapes the way that Bloom, and we, for that matter, can understand and experience the body. Stephen Soud comments:

[Molly's disgust at "Aristotle's Masterpieces] is a feminist critique of a treatise for midwives perverted by its male author(s). Something in Bloom and the medical students responds to the near-pornographic titillation which the book offers them. As Molly surely recognizes, in a subtler fashion the book is a male inscription of a female process. "Aristotle's" usurpation of the feminine is borne out in passages like this . . . : "Such sometimes is the power of the [male] seed, that the male may be conceived in
the left side, as well as the right.” This male appropriation of the female body achieves explicit, visual representation in the chromolithographic illustrations, which treat a fetishized female body as the object of vivisection. (202)

The body, then, does not always exist in some way outside of language, but is indeed formed and shaped by language in our minds, thus restricting even the body’s ability to convey possible knowledge since it itself is language.

This notion that the body does not pre-exist language or exist outside of language can be found in the thought of Jacques Lacan. As Madan Sarap puts it, “Lacan understands the . . . that there is no such thing as the body before language. Biology is always interpreted by the human subject” (25). Thomas would add, “Language does not lead us to a direct apprehension of the world but instead reminds us of its existence as language” (10).

The body is not the only refuge to be sought from language’s seeming monopoly on constructing knowledge. The Divine can be seen as a secure avenue for knowledge, divine inspiration, if you will, a direct infusion of knowledge which bypasses the problematic and obstructing dark language. The clearest example of a divine knowledge which surpasses language is, ironically enough, the Incarnation of the Word as Gerty reflects on it: “Our Blessed Lady herself said to the archangel Gabriel be it done unto me according to Thy Word” (U 458-9).

And the narration of “Naussica” reflects this type of immediate divine experience stylistically when it describes Gerty exposing her underwear to Bloom: “[H]er face was suffused with a divine, an entrancing blush from straining back” (U 723). The pause which occurs after divine at first makes us stop and consider the word “divine” as a noun, as if a divine were a ghost or spirit of some sort of which Gerty gains direct knowledge. In other
words, this passage can obviously be read as merely describing a blush as divine (adjective),
but the style of the episode, the constant juxtaposition of Gerty to the Virgin Mary, allows
that this “divine” may also be considered to be a stylistic Incarnation.

This desire for an intuitive experience of the divine free from language, however, like
the word “divine” itself and the experience of the body becomes qualified, shaped by
language. We can see this qualification in the thoughts of Fr. Conmee during the
“Wandering Rocks” episode. Conmee considers the souls of the millions of unbaptized
people in the world and reflects that the “book by the Belgian jesuit, Le Nombre des Elus,
seemed . . . a reasonable plea” (U 10.183). According to Gifford and Seidman, this book, for
its time, was a rather liberal theological assessment of how many people would go to hell and
how many would go to heaven:

The book argued that the great majority of souls would be saved; it was immediately
attacked as too ‘liberal’ by the dogmatists, or ‘rigorists,’ who claimed that all who
were not baptized as Catholics were subject to eternal damnation. (263)

Here, it would seem, that we cannot be too quick to say that the divine is always and
everywhere capable of direct communication with our minds. We would be safer in saying,
then, that, at least in Ulysses, the divine’s ability to communicate with our minds is
problematized by language, specifically in this case, the language of theology, and for the
people who Gerty overhears at their retreat, the “familiar words” of prayer (U 13.289).

Once we see that the knowledge in Ulysses is at least problematized, if not simply
constructed, we can better recognize how its knowledge does function, how it functions
recursively without definitive conclusion. A model which we could use for this type of
epistemology is given to us in the tramcars at the beginning and end of “Aeolus”. At the
beginning of “Aeolus”, the tramcars, at the “HEART OF THE HIBERNIAN METROPOLIS” (U 7.1-2), are operating, bringing people to and from the central station. But by the end of the episode, the tramlines have fallen dead, as described in a section titled “HELLO THERE, CENTRAL!”:

At various points along the eight lines tramcars with motionless trolleys stood in their tracks, bound for or from [various places], all still, becalmed in short circuit. Hackney cars, cabs, delivery waggons, mailvans, private broughams, aerated mineral water floats with rattling crates of bottles, rattled, rolled, horsedrawn, rapidly. (U 7.1042-1059)

Linear-start-to-finish knowledge, then, it seems, functions much as the tramcars do: it’s short-circuited, made problematic. Perhaps it will be repaired, but, as is the case here, other forms of transportation, other forms of knowledge are still available, as they always have been. But the notion of a direct access to a central, conclusive, or beginning knowledge, to the heart of a matter, or to the intuitive heart of a person, must not be definitively held. What once worked no longer operates.

If we recognize the the tramcar incident was not put in the “Aeolus” episode by accident, we can further recognize, not only what this tramcar model says about the futility of previous epistemologies, but also what this episode says as a whole about present and future epistemologies and their existence in and applicability to Ulysses in which, as James Maddox says, “a collocation of details [point] toward an unnamable center” (in Thomas 13). Let us view the tramcars as people (readers, for instance) and the tracks as the various ways in which people come to know reality (the ‘meaning’ of Ulysses, for instance), the central station, if you will. If a central station cannot be accessed, what are we left with? We are left with no certain knowledge, only several possibilities, much as “Aeolus” itself leaves us with
many rhetorical linguistic possibilities from which we and the characters may choose how to construct reality.

As we've seen, language and knowledge are closely intermingled in Ulysses in a way which indicates that there is no central knowledge to which we gain access; there are only different linguistic constructions. So the question could be asked, which way of using language, which tramcar, is the best to one to use to construct knowledge? Or even, which construction of knowledge is best?

"Aeolus" offers us everything from Abbreviation (U 7.980) to Zeugma (7.427-28) (Gifford and Seidman 642-643) in an attempt to show us that we are left to choose; the book will not choose for us. Regarding Ulysses in general, Thomas claims that

[o]nce we realize that what we are given is not an objective account of a Dublin reality but someone's interpretation of it, we are in a better position to see that all the book's styles are interpretive schemas, ways of seeing the world, not the world itself. Since choosing one style assumes interpretive schemas that another style excludes, Joyce's encyclopedia of styles creates the illusion that language reaches out to "capture" a reality, but repeatedly falls short. (125)

These possibilities, therefore, are no longer joined by a coherent, stable center station of knowledge "out there" if you will. This notion of knowledge, of a center to which we respond that is no longer a stable center, is discussed by Stanley Fish as well. When asked what it is that we respond to when we construct our readings, if not a central text in the first place, something formally "out there", separate from our own constructing of it, Fish responds that he doesn't know. But he also adds that we don't know either (1249).

This doesn't mean, though, that we have no center, just that the center we have is always constructed and re-constructed. As Derrida indicates, the center "must be thought of
as a series of substitutions of center for center, as a linked chain of determinations of the center. Successively, and in regulated fashion, the center receives different forms or names” (960). This type of center-constructedness stands in sharp contrast to linear thought. As with the trams which go forth and to the same center over and again, so does linear thought return and go forth from the same center, the same definitions; it seeks to reify itself everywhere it sets its gaze. Recursive thought, though, goes forth from a "central" station and, like the trams in Dublin, never returns to that same central station. In the case of recursive thought, they never return because that center can no longer exist as a result of their having gone forth. It isn't a matter of returning to the same center that has added a few new features; the fact that it has new features makes it a different center, a new center. It is no longer center, but cEnter; never having been "natural" nor "pre-existent" to our gaze, the cEnter merely acknowledges it's createdness.

The notion of the unstable center, the way in which Ulysses “lacks a normative center” (Thomas 161), can be seen in the general workings of Ulysses itself (whatever that is) and its characters (whoever those are). A model for this type of recursive knowledge, a "return" to the cEnter (or the cEnter, for that matter) can be found when Bloom "returns" to his "home", the cEnter. As Thomas comments, "When Bloom returns home he finds the furniture rearranged. . . . In a world founded upon the incertitude of the void rather than the myth of the fixed center, things seem to fall apart. Or, if they do not fall apart, they do not lend themselves to perfect returns” (104). We can see this in several ways. First of all, Bloom does not use a linear method to enter, to gain knowledge, if you will. He has no key, no direct access. Rather, as with the people who use alternative indirect measures of
transportation with the trams having been shut down, Bloom enters through a window in his house, a surreptitious type of access. And, as with all accesses to knowledge gained through language, his entrance is into a dark area, a different area it soon becomes known when he smacks his head into the rearranged furniture.

This then, is the model of knowledge with which *Ulysses* presents us: rather than taking the tram (linguistic, experiential, you name it) directly to a never-changing, eternally same reality that can be known fully, we find ourselves working indirectly, coming to centers which are different from the centers which we had before, centers which we don't entirely recognize.

This inability occurs in two notable examples: other people's knowledge of Bloom, and Stephen's knowledge of himself. In the case of Bloom, visions of him fluctuate between the penny-pinching, horse-race winning Jew who won't stand for drinks to the good man who will put down five shillings for the poor Dignam boy; from the man who has a touch of the artist in him, to Molly's inartistic husband. Perhaps it could be said that ALL of these visions are Bloom, yet it is doubtful, for instance, that Bloom did and didn't win the race of the day. It is possible, though, that Bloom at times is artistic and at other times isn't artistic, but it isn't possible that Bloom always has something artistic to him yet at the same has nothing artistic to him. In this case, then, these various people could not say that their linguistic constructions of Bloom fully encapsulate a "central Bloom".

Like the trams, these vehicles for knowing Bloom short-circuit on their way to him (if there is a "him" to know in the first place). So we as readers are left with several possibilities rather than with a conclusive portrait of Bloom. Could we take all of these fragments and put
them together for a coherent Bloom? No, because we'd still have Leopold-who-won-the-Ascot-Race-bet-today-because-he-bet-for-Throwaway-but-is-too-cheap-to-pay-for-drinks-Bloom and Leopold-who-didn't-even-bet-on-the-race-and-has-no-idea-what-everyone-in-the-bar's-mad-about-Bloom. Certainly, as readers, we experience Fish's temporal process in which we formulate and re-formulate Bloom based on these characters observations and our own as we move from page one to that final "yes."

Not only do the characters in Ulysses have difficulty knowing a central other, they even have trouble knowing a central self. Take the example of Stephen again. During his discussion in the library, Stephen ruminates on what exactly constitutes who he is, his central self. When considering his debt to A.E., Stephen thinks


Here the difficulty of determining whether identity (a center) is consistent throughout time, or whether identity changes anew from moment to moment becomes particularly acute. What is perhaps most significant about this passage though in its commentary on this issue of centrality is exactly that: its significance. Rather than offering closure, it, in a much more overt way than the question of Bloom's identity, leaves the issue open to debate; this unresolvable contradiction itself becomes a sign of the difficulty of the question concerning centrality and the precariousness of knowledge. In this case, which is it? Is Stephen I, I (the continuous I which contains all the possibilities: Stephen is the I that sinned, the I that prayed, the I that fasted, the I saved by Conmee, the I who owes A.E. a pound, a cumulative
central I which, like snowball rolling down the ski-hill simply accumulates more and more content) or is Stephen I. I. (the discontinuous I: there was a Stephen who sinned who was different than the Stephen who fasted, who was different than the Stephen who prayed, who was different from the Stephen saved by Conmee, who was different from the Stephen who owes A.E. a pound, who was different than the Stephen who just had that thought, even, a series of skips in the water created by a stone of a world)?

What is left then to us as readers? To become sign-readers. To recognize the impossibility of resolving these conflicts and see the conflicts themselves as signs: to creatively fill in the gaps between the sign and its significance. A model for this, too, can be found in Ulysses. When the readers first come across the letters H.E.L.Y.'S, they may just read it as letter H, letter E, letter L, etc. Eventually, through an act of creative insight, the reader connects these letters, not as separate from each other (which they are), but as signifying the Dublin store, Hely's. So, just as each different identity of Bloom and Stephen functions as an H. or an E. upon first glance, we as readers can put them together, not necessarily resolving them formally into a coherent whole, but as seeing them signifying as a collected group something outside of themselves, in this case, the inability to know directly in a linear conclusive un-recursive way.

The further difficulty and challenge of this Ulysses-esque epistemology then is to see how is applies to our knowledge of love in Ulysses, how it leads us to a more satisfying account of love in Ulysses than previous accounts which relied upon a method which culminated in a linear, final conclusion about love's nature in Ulysses.
CHAPTER 3. LOVE AS MATERIAL/NONMATERIAL

Obviously, with a novel as complex as Ulysses, many questions arise during one’s reading. One of these questions that can arise from a reading of Ulysses concerns the relationship between the non-material and the material worlds. This dilemma becomes apparent in the scientific-materialist description of the non-material afterworld during the mock-seance for Paddy Dignam in the "Cyclops" episode; again in "Aeolus" when Bloom comments that a machine could smash a man to atoms (material), yet needs a mind (non-material) to keep them from printing the same thing "over and up and back" (U7.103); and again in "Aeolus" in professor MacHugh’s tirade against the British: "I speak the tongue of a race the acme of whose mentality is the maxim: time is money. Material domination. Domine! Lord! Where is the spirituality?" (U 7 557-8).

Symbolically, this dilemma of the material and non-material becomes painfully clear during the discussion of the human heart in "Hades": is it just another broken material pump in the graveyard (U 6.674), or is it indeed the seat of non-material human affections, of human love? Is it touched by Christ’s words, "I am the resurrection and the life?" (U 6.670), a place where matter and non-matter meet in union? Or, as Bloom puts it, is "the heart" just another powerless metaphor, a purely wishful, spiritualist fantasy?: “The resurrection and the life. Once you are dead you are dead. That last day idea. Knocking them all up out of their graves. Come forth, Lazarus! And he came fifth and lost the job” (U 6.677).

To understand love in Ulysses, we have to choose which aspects would most benefit from examination. Because of problematic images such as the heart, and the actions and thoughts of various characters such as Bloom, Stephen, Molly, etc., one aspect which would
seem to demand an examination of this relationship between the body (the material) and the soul/mind (the non-material) and their various roles in Ulysses' version(s) of love. To do so, I will first consider the formalist nature of previous discussions of love, thereby redirecting us to the type of method we'll be using to understand love in Ulysses: Stanley Fish's reader-response. I will then consider at great length the viable readings of love in Ulysses: the materialist, the nonmaterialist, and then the unionist readings of love. I will conclude with a brief consideration of how Fish's method allows us to make the seemingly insoluble formalist readings of love in Ulysses useful by allowing us to make them signify meaning in themselves rather than endlessly trying to bring about formalist closure. In this way, I hope to understand love in Ulysses in a way consonant with the epistemology of Ulysses as discussed in the previous chapter: an epistemology of inconclusion. As Stephen observes during "Scylla and Charybdis", the "world [is founded] upon incertitude" (U 9.843).

But first, to see this dilemma clearly, we have to at least have some definitions of the two main terms: nonmaterial and material. To do so, I'll use Ellmann's assessment of what becomes unified in love. He says that "love is a blend of mind and body", and that "love can . . . claim to be all soul or all body, when only in the union of both can it truly exist" (xiii). It seems, then, that the tension lies between two sources: the mind/soul on the one hand, and the body on the other. So, for purposes of this thesis, I will be viewing the mind/soul as nonmaterial (immaterial) realities, whereas the body (atoms, forms of tangible matter) will be material realities. The first is ethereal, spiritual, untouchable, invisible, whereas the second is earthly, material, touchable, visible.
That having been said, we can now focus on how, as Fish points out, the process of reading for recursivity demands "the equal availability of both interpretations" which results in "an apparently insoluble problem" (1242). Therefore, I hope to demonstrate that the problem of how the material and non-material relate concerning love in *Ulysses* is indeed an insoluble problem. To do this, I must discuss three possible, mutually exclusive interpretations of love in *Ulysses*: love as strictly material, love as strictly non-material, and love as union of the material and non-material.

So, with these definitions in mind, as indicated above, not only must we first choose which aspect to examine, we must also choose how to examine it. Though previous critics have underplayed the issue of materiality and non-materiality in regard to love, they have still made claims about this relationship. And as brief as these claims may be, they nevertheless display one commonality: they all follow a format of bringing the issue to conclusion or at least desiring conclusion. In the case of Hugh Kenner, for instance, Kenner claims that Molly resides over a world of the dead, the loveless. In making this claim, Kenner obviously believes that love cannot be considered solely as a material phenomenon. He would seem to view love as being, if not solely spiritual, at least as being a material which necessarily involves a spiritual, transcendent entity.

Fox, meanwhile, claims that love must be embodied, enfleshed. As with Kenner, Fox's assessment of the relationship between the material and non-material must be somewhat guessed at. Does she mean that the non-material spiritual entity of love exists first, and then becomes infused in the material world? Or that this spiritual reality is already
there and must only be acknowledged for love to exist? That love cannot exist without one or the other?

This last possibility sounds very much like Ellmann's claim that love is a union of the body and mind/soul. Love does not exist as just a material reality or as just a non-material reality. In fact, a solely material or non-material reality which claims to be love is, in actuality, only a foil against which we can determine love's true nature: union of the two. Otherwise, love "can degenerate into dreamy creaminess or into brutishness" (Preface xiv).

The problem with this type of approach to love in Ulysses is that it doesn't produce very desirable results. Rather than providing the conclusive answer to which it claims access, the conclusive center, a strictly conclusive formalist approach only produces answer after inadequate contradictory answer. This dilemma is very similar to what Stanley Fish describes in his "Interpreting the Variorum":

[E]vidence brought to bear in the course of formalist analyses --- that is, analyses generated by the assumption that meaning is embedded in the artifact --- will always point in as many directions as there are interpreters; that is, not only will it prove something, it will prove anything. (1241)

What can we do then? Obviously, we don't stop reading, but we can "substitute one set of questions for another" (Fish 1242). Rather than asking questions which seek formalist closure (i.e. What is the relationship between the material and non-material realities in regards to love in Ulysses?), we can ask the question in a way which parallels the way in which knowing itself takes place in Ulysses: not with closure as the goal, but with recursivity: what does it mean that the materiality/nonmateriality of love is an issue in readings of Ulysses?
This new process consists of

[beginning] with an apparently insoluble problem and proceeding, not to solve it, but to make it signify; first by regarding it as evidence of an experience and then by specifying for that experience a meaning. (Fish 1242)

And once I have established that this problem remains insoluble, I will demonstrate that this problem, rather than being best approached as a problem to be conclusively solved, may be more fruitfully approached as a problem to be viewed as a signifier. In doing so, I will explain how the problem of love's materiality/non-materiality evidence of an experience that has a meaning. In this case, we experience the confusion of determining how the material and the non-material interact in matters of love, that we can never be satisfied with our understanding of this confusion; we must constantly be revising it.

To understand the formalist viability of these three readings and their irreconcilability, we could begin with an examination of one viable interpretation: love as immaterial in Ulysses. One starting point could be that which Kenner makes: love cannot be a strictly material phenomenon. In Kenner's explication of love in Ulysses, love would seem to be one more transcendent virtue which exists apart from the world but can be possessed through our material actions just as other virtues are held by Bloom in some "admirable balance" (Kenner 189). Love, then, exists prior to and outside of any of our material actions; like a Platonic form, however, it must be accessed through our material actions which, devoid of these transcendental virtues, leave us at the level of soulless beasts. Once accessed, it would seem to become what Kimball refers to when she sees that love must have "a tie to the flesh" (152). But, as Kenner points out, Ulysses is a world which often shuts itself off from these
transcendent virtues through its own actions, leaving Molly to reign over a world of beastly materialist reality, love shining on in the seemingly overwhelming materialist darkness.

This view of Kenner's, of love as a pre-existing non-material reality which then infuses the world through our material actions, can be seen as a struggle throughout the book. We see this struggle in the imagery of the heart. What else, after all, is the material heart touched by but the promise of the resurrection whereby the material body is translated into a non-material world? "I am the Resurrection and the life. That touches a man's inmost heart" (U 6.670). If we then read Ulysses as Mr. Kernan here reads the world, we can see a non-material reality reaching out to infuse the dead material reality (the heart) with life, with a transcendent non-material reality. And these non-material realities such as the resurrection exist beyond and without the material world.

This placement of the spiritual above and before the material, much like MacHugh's lament that the world lacks spirituality in the face of materialism, gains more credence in this reading of Ulysses if we see how Fr. Conmee's view of how the Catholic Church reads the relationship between the spiritual and the material. When he regards the victims of a ferryboat accident in New York, he reflects, "[T]hey were God's souls created by God" (U 10.150-1), and he later considers God's activity in the material world: "Fr. Conmee reflected on the providence of the Creator who had made turf to be in bogs whence men might dig it out and bring it to town and hamlet to make fires in the houses of poor people" (U 103-6). In this example, we can see the belief that God pre-existed the world. And since this God is Love, love would seem to be primarily and foremost a non-material reality which infuses the material world with virtue.
An even clearer demonstration of this need for love to infuse a dead, beastly material world can be seen during Gerty's reflections upon the retreat at Mary Star of the Sea Church. She mentions the Incarnation, whereby Christ, the pre-existent Son of God, came "down" from Heaven, became conceived as a material human being in Mary's womb. Obviously, what enabled this Incarnation was the material cooperation of a human being already infused with God's love: Mary's great "Yes" to the angel, Gabriel.

And this infusion of immaterial love into an otherwise dead material world can still take place as other mothers model Mary's material cooperation with the non-material God. For instance, let us take Mina Purefoy. Mina's last name means "pure faith", foy being Greek for faith. Mina here has her pure faith in Christ's Church on earth that her refusal to use birth control and bear eight children is in God's eyes an act of love, infusing the world with the immaterial virtue. Mina thereby, according to this reading, re-enacts Mary's "Yes", and accepts God's will, infusing the world with love through her acceptance and birthing of a child.

Motherly love in Ulysses seems to be a great material medium for this non-material reality. When Stephen thinks of all that is real, he speculates as to whether a mother's love is the only truly real thing in the world (U 2.140). Without this spiritual infusion of love, motherly love degenerates into the sappy, cruel sentimentalism of a Gerty MacDowell, who at one moment can imagine herself being a great mother, and at the next, snap at the actual children for being too annoying, not quite displaying that pure faith which Mina displays in her patience for giving birth over a 17 hour period.
But non-material love may not only be conveyed through the material medium of the mother. The father as well may serve as this conduit. With the father, however, the issue of the spiritual non-materiality of love becomes more acute. Rather than the father being, as perhaps one may view it with the mother, a primarily biological function, the father is what is called in *Ulysses* "a mystical estate" (U 9.838). We can view the father, then, as itself, like love, existing apart from material reality.

We see this most clearly in the examples of Simon Dedalus and Leopold Bloom's relationships with Stephen. To those who hold the idea of fatherhood as being he who physically begets a child, Simon Dedalus would obviously be the father. But this notion ignores this argument's claim that there exists a spiritual, non-material world before and outside the material world. If we understand that fatherhood, like love, must infuse the material through a cooperation on the human agent's part, then we can better understand how Simon and Leopold function. In fact, we must understand that what constitutes fatherhood is exactly this infusion of love into the world on the part of a male for a son-figure.

From this point of view of fatherhood being a type of love being a non-material entity infused into the world through a material action, it could be said that Simon Dedalus does not love his children, is not a father. He drinks irresponsibly, spends his days in the bars, denies his child money when she confronts him just for some small change (U 10.680). In contrast, he waxes sentimental about his son rather than making any concrete actions to help him (U 6.63-71). It would seem that he only cares about his children's welfare when it allows him to appear indignant before his friends on the way to a funeral.
According to this line of argument, then, Stephen, fatherless, becomes fathered by Leopold Bloom who takes a material action which infuses the world with love. This material action would be Bloom's saving of Stephen from the brothel and continuing on to Bloom's taking Stephen home and nourishing him. In this sense, through an action, Bloom has tapped that transcendental love (despite what Kenner claims), said yes to love, and in that way, has fathered Stephen.

This view of love as a pre-existent, immaterial reality admits to possible problems, though. Love can easily be used as a convenient cover for cheap sentimentalization; the immaterial can become the stuff of immaterial fantasies and ghouls rather than the immaterial stuff of eternity. Love can become, rather than that which makes a woman stay in child-labor for seventeen hours for her child, a dreamy sentimental fantasy which makes the heart go "pitter-patter" (U 13.411), ending in a wish that children, rather than being born, would just go away so the fantasies can be indulged. As in the case of Gerty MacDowell, then, "love" can devolve into that which denies love being infused into the world rather than that which makes love incarnate; which, unlike Mary, refuses to bring Christ into the world, preferring its own pleasurable daydreams.

And the danger of misunderstanding the spiritual immateriality of love can also lead to paralyzing fear, superstitions which cripple the mind, render action impossible. It would seem that this misunderstanding of love's immaterial nature involves the mistaken imposition of our own imperfect world on that of the ideal immaterial world. For instance, when the seance of Paddy Dignam is described in the pseudo-scientific jargon of the theosophists, we can recognize the silliness of describing an immaterial world in spatial, material terms.
So it is with Stephen's 'vision' of his mother. In this case, Stephen imposes his material world experiences of jealousy and maternal possessiveness onto the pure world of immaterial love, of an immaterial God who exists outside of and before any sin or shortcoming in the material world. So just as Gerty MacDowell misunderstands the nature of the immaterial world, degrading it to the status of creampuff romanticism, so does Stephen misunderstand the immaterial world, reducing it to a realm of petty jealousies and manipulative mother-ghouls.

Ironically enough, it is this very misunderstanding of the immaterial, the reduction of the immaterial to nothing more than a shadow of our flightier desires and baser fears in this material world, which can be seized upon in a reading which turns this first viable reading of love upside-down. Rather than reading love as a non-material reality existent before and outside of the material world, this second equally viable reading would view the notion of non-material love as nothing more than a fantasy. The world, in this viewpoint, is nothing more than a material phenomenon, not incapable of being infused with love just because of a lack of material cooperation, but because love as a non-material phenomenon simply doesn't exist. And from a study of how various characters read the world as a strictly material phenomenon, we can construct a vision of Ulysses which would read love in much the same way: a fantasy made to mask the stark reality that the world is just a meaningless ball of atoms.

In this view of Ulysses, we can see throughout the book the reduction of seemingly eternal non-material realities to the status of mere material realities. The book, in fact, begins with this very reduction in Buck Mulligan's mock Mass. Here we see the reduction of the
Eucharist to the status of materiality. When Mulligan acts as the priest, it's not to change the bread into the body of Christ through a non-material spiritual mystical process. Instead, it's simply a matter of the material electricity: "Switch off the current, will you?" (U 28-9).

Other places throughout the book re-enact this same reduction: according to Bloom, the heart, rather than being that which hears the non-material call to Resurrection, only pumps blood until it breaks; according to Mulligan, death doesn't involve "a poor soul gone to heaven" (U 2.147); the brain's lobes simply stop functioning. This principle of reduction therefore, functions by looking at material phenomena, human actions, and offering an interpretation of these material phenomena based, not on any belief in a non-material world such as heaven, but on the belief that the world only involves atoms. Within this view, then, all nonmaterial considerations are wishful thinking, something we have created.

The question must then be asked, if we are to read the world, and Ulysses, as these characters do, what does this process of reduction mean for a non-materialist vision of love as pre-existent? The answer is quite a bit. A good place to start might be a mother's love, which for the non-material view of love holds a particularly important place, as we saw. As considered earlier, the mother's union with her child can be viewed through the metaphor Stephen uses: "Yet someone had borne him [Sargent], borne him in her arms and in her heart" (U 2.140). Once we view the heart as a mere pump, our belief in the non-material union of mother and child is betrayed, revealed to be that which it really is: a strictly material phenomenon. In this case, then, though Stephen would view it otherwise, all motherly love really is is the physical preservation of the child, keeping the child from being crushed by the race: "But for her the race of the world would have trampled him underfoot, a squashed
boneless snail" (U 2.141-2). In this sense, the materialist vision of love appears to be no more infused by some non-material will than does Darwinist evolution.

But this reduction involves more than a mother's love; it also involves the love between spouses. In the Catholic Church, sexual intercourse has been viewed by some theologians as a renewal of Christ's love for the world, much as the Eucharist renews Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. According to a materialist reading of Ulysses, though, this notion of intercourse receives serious attack. Rather than being a material action united with the love of an immaterial God, intercourse is merely an action undertaken for sheer material pleasure, not unlike the dogs which Molly watches before she urges Bloom to the intercourse which conceives Rudy. In this reading, intercourse does not share in the reality of an immaterial world; it is only two physical bodies in a material action.

A clear demonstration of this reduction occurs during the 'Oxen of the Sun' episode. As Ellmann points out, "[T]he medical students scorn love and deal only with the intromission of male into female parts" (xiii). Though Ellmann of course intends to demonstrate that this vision of intercourse-love serves to highlight the 'true' form of love (union of material [body] and non-material worlds [soul/mind]), I still agree with his assessment of the medical students.

In a materialist reading of Ulysses, though, the medical students don't serve as foils to the 'true' definition of love; they are it. The contrast between love as immaterial and love as material becomes acute in the medical student passage from "Oxen in the Sun." Just as Mulligan reduces death from a heaven-bound soul to the cessation of brain activity, so do the
medicals reduce love from an action partaking in eternal love to a time when two people
"sport, clip, clasp, sunder" (U 14.394).

We see this materialist view of intercourse when the medical students respond to
Stephen's Catholic considerations of contraception during "Oxen of the Sun". In response to
Stephen's dilemma "[b]ut, gramercy, what of those Godpossible souls that we nightly
impossibilize, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost, Very God, Lord and Giver of Life?"
(U 14.225-7) several of the drunken medicals respond that they would happily dispense of
their lust with a woman: "[Dixon] would ever dishonest a woman whoso she were or wife or
maid or lemen" (U 14.230-1). In this materialist reduction, the medicals praise that very
materialism which Stephen argues against: intercourse, rather than a marital sign of God's
love for the world, is only a material action. After all, if no pre-existent love exists out of the
world to be infused into the world, much as the soul is infused in the child, then the only
infusion is that which Ellmann discusses: the material infusion of sperm into egg. Their
praise of materialist lust appropriately echoes Mulligan's praise of beasts: "Whereat
Crotthers of Alba Longa sang young Malachi's praise of that beast the unicorn how once in a
millennium he cometh by his horn" (U 14.233-4).

So if intercourse can be understood in a materialist sense as less a marital sharing in
non-material, pre-existent love than as a strictly physical act, nothing remains in a universal
natural sense to distinguish marital intercourse from non-marital intercourse (wife from
maid). All we have left is the material action; no reality beyond the material action remains
to grant it meaning any different from any other material action. And we see this materialist
view of sex during Ulysses. Certainly, besides the medicals, the clearest example of sexual
intercourse as sheer brute action is Boylan. He views a woman not as a source of revelation, as the non-materialist Stephen seems to elsewhere, but as "a young pullet" (U 10.327).

Molly comments on Boylan:

...I didn't like his slapping me behind...I'm not a horse or an ass am I...He never goes to church mass or meeting he says your soul you have no soul inside only grey matter because he doesn't know what it is to have one yes when I lit the lamp because he must have come 3 or 4 times with that tremendous big red brute of a thing he has...like a Stallion driving it up into you because that's all they want out of you with that determined vicious look in his eye...not satisfied till they have us swollen out like elephants.... (U 18.122-166)

Here Molly raises possibilities for a materialist reading of *Ulysses*. If we insist that *Ulysses* argues for a materialist view of love (love is just a material action of pleasure and/or preservation), then we can see this possibility in the above passage. Boylan certainly does see Molly as a beast, a horse or an ass, and as far as he is concerned, if a woman is a beast, she certainly has no soul. Without this non-material reality, then, intercourse for Boylan is no more than acting as a stallion, a beast.

The animal imagery throughout the above passage indicates the materialist nature of Mulligan's view as well. As Mulligan says, "To me it's all a mockery and beastily... Look at the sea. What does it care about offences? Chuck Loyola, Kinch, and come on down. The Sassenach wants his morning rashers" (U 1.210-231). In this world, there is no Jesuit spirituality, no world infused with a spirit of love as A.E. would have us view the material world: "[T]he earth is not an exploitable ground but the living mother" (U 9.106-7). Instead, like the Homeric mother-sea, "our great sweet mother" (U 1.80), we are reduced to a collection of atoms, of sea-water, except we eat food, too.
Any appeal to a love beyond our immediate material experience would have to be met by the materialist with scoffing, or at least skepticism. Whereas the non-materialist would view sentimentalism as a misunderstanding of love's true nature, its true definition, the materialist would view any belief in love as non-material and pre-existent as sentimentalism. We never have a heart which hears the call to resurrection; all we have is the heart as a pump. Anything more can only be regarded as an example of Gerty's heartfelt "pitapat" (U 13.411), or as her "ministering angel too with a little heart worth its weight in gold" (U 13.325). And Molly's spirituality could be considered as a type of superstition when she says, "[T]he candle I lit that evening in Whitefriars street chapel for the month of May see it brought its luck, though hed scoff if he heard" (U 18.139-40).

But perhaps these two views do not satisfy the reader; perhaps dissatisfaction with the first viable reading of love as immaterial (Fox's "enfleshed love") or the second of love as material (Mulligan's 'beastliness'), leaves the reader seeking a third viable alternative. The most attractive alternative I've found is Richard Ellmann's love as a combination of material body and non-material soul/mind. He comments regarding Molly that "[s]he proves by her discrimination that love is a blend of mind and body" (xiv). He later claims, "[L]ove can claim to be all soul or all body, when only in the union of both can it truly exist" (xiv). Ellmann's idea here seems very similar to one of W.Y. Tyndall's notions. W.Y. Tyndall claimed during the fifties that Bloom constituted a synthesis, a union, of the body as represented by Molly and the soul/mind as represented by Stephen (120). Though in Ellmann's version, Molly constitutes this union, I find Tyndall's version more tenable. Thus in demonstrating the viability of this third equally viable reading, I will argue at length that
love can be best understood in *Ulysses* as a union of the material and non-material: Molly representing the material, Stephen representing the nonmaterial, and Bloom representing the union of the two.

First, we can use Molly as a model for the material world that must be united with the immaterial world for love to exist. Molly conveys a basic dislike for immaterial realities such as ideas (which Bloom claims are a type of soul, a type of immateriality [U 16.748-752]) while emphasizing her great appetite for bodily, material sex. She complains about Bloom's intellectualizations: "I asked him about . . . that word met something with hoses in it and he came out with some jawbreakers about the incarnation he never can explain a thing simply the way a body can understand" (U 18.565-67). Again, I think the word 'body' here is of great importance because, by emphasis, Molly is more of a material body than she is someone with a body and an intangible soul in balance. Even when she concedes that, to win Stephen, she will have to "learn a bit . . . so he won't think me stupid", she does it so that she may "teach him the other part Ill make him feel all over him till he faints under me" (U 18.1363-4). In this way, Molly pictures herself righting her nonmaterialist inadequacies only in a superficial way so that she might better be able to seduce Stephen (who seems to be lacking in materiality, but that's a consideration for later). So even here, Molly recognizes that her emphasis is on the material body, not the immaterial world.

But Molly can be considered primarily a materialist for more reasons than just her distaste for the immaterial mind. In addition to her dislike for ideas, we can also see how Molly's sexual intercourse concerns itself with only the material and not nonmaterial love (Hayman 108). As considered previously, her sexual intercourse with Boylan, with all its
bestial imagery (ass, horse, Stallion, elephant), very much falls short of any considerations of an immaterial love.

And because of Molly's obvious preference for the material world almost to the entire exclusion of the nonmaterial world, I don't find her to be the figure of unitive love which Ellmann sees her as. He claims that she's the unitive figure of love since she concretely acts out love:

Finally, in the last episode of the book, Molly Bloom, after some equivocation between her physical longing for Boylan and her thoughts of Bloom, comes down firmly on the side of Bloom and of their old feelings for each other. She proves by her discrimination that love is a blend of mind and body. . . . [H]er memories culminate in a practical demonstration of the nature of love which bears out what Stephen and Bloom have said more abstractly. (xiii-xiv)

As I've said, I don't see Molly this way. First of all, I'm not too sure a unitive reading of love in Ulysses demonstrates that Molly "comes down firmly on the side of Bloom". Certainly, Ulysses ceases to record Molly's memory with her saying "Yes" to Bloom on the Howth. But this doesn't necessarily mean that she is saying "Yes" to Bloom for tomorrow and forever.

We don't know, for instance, if she's really going to make him his eggs (the symbol of rebirth for their marriage perhaps?), or if she'll even stop her affair with Boylan. The ambivalence of Molly toward Bloom even occurs in the memory which Ellmann cites as Molly's definitive "yes" to Bloom: she claims, regarding Bloom's kiss on the Howth, "... I thought well as well him as another" (U 18.1604-5). Not only is Molly indifferent in this passage, but we don't even know if the person she is saying "Yes" to is Bloom, or Mulvey under the Moorish wall.

Furthermore, Molly's "Yes" is balanced by several No's throughout the last chapter. In this
way, then, Molly's memories leave her attitude toward Bloom inconclusive at worst, suggestive at best.

And Ellmann's claim that her memories end "in a practical demonstration of the nature of love which bears out what Stephen and Bloom have said more abstractly" can be seriously questioned in a unitive reading of love. A memory doesn't seem to constitute a practical demonstration. If anything, it indicates that Molly's days of loving Bloom are either in the past, or in a future to which we as readers do not have access. A practical demonstration would seem to demand an action in the here and now. And later we will see that Bloom, as the unity of body and soul/mind (the material and nonmaterial) indeed demonstrates a practical action of love within *Ulysses* which can hardly be considered abstract.

Understanding Molly as *primarily* a materialist, though, implies that she has some inclinations to beliefs in the nonmaterial. Molly's marginal desire for nonmaterial realities, then, sets her off from extreme materialists such as Boylan and Mulligan, thus indicating a desire for union with the nonmaterial world that involves love. As mentioned before, she hardly finds Boylan's disapproval of the soul's existence credible. And she even has an abstract understanding of love as a type of sacrifice, a way through which a non-materialist may argue that love enters the world:

> [I]t must be real love if a man gives up his life for her that way for nothing I suppose there are a few men like that left its hard to believe in it though unless it really happened to me the majority of them with not a particle of love in their natures to find two people like that nowadays full up of each other. (*U* 18.1056-1060)
Notice, though, that Molly primarily describes even this notion of love primarily in spatial/material terms: particle, full up. But even with these notions of love, Molly, as argued above, still finds herself primarily interested in a nonmaterialism which constitutes more a type of superstition (the lucky candle in Whitefriars chapel, for instance) than it does a divine reality independent of our personal whims. In this way, though, she demonstrates that she is the other half, the material half, with which Stephen, being the nonmaterial half, needs to become acquainted so that he may become a Bloom.

As Molly’s counterpart, Stephen can be understood as the nonmaterial half of unitive love. Like Molly, Stephen, too, has an emphasis in his experience of the world. He primarily experiences the world in nonmaterial terms (ideas of Catholic theology, for instance). And again like Molly, Stephen avoids an extreme (in this case, the extreme of Gerty’s sentimental spiritualism) that would entirely exclude him from ever achieving unitive love. Stephen appears to vacillate between an extreme point of view denying the reality of the material world, and a more wary confrontation with questions regarding the relationship between the material and intangible worlds. At one point, Stephen displays his allegiance to the former point of view when he wonders if “[t]he soul is in a manner all that is” (U 2.75) during his ruminations on what is real in the world. He later walks on the beach during “Proteus” considering Berkeley’s and Aristotle’s thoughts concerning the reality of the material world, going so far as to speculate whether or not the material world ceases to exist when he closes his eyes, whether or not it exists as anything outside of his nonmaterial mind (U 3.25-29). Unlike the materialist, Stephen seems much more willing to question the existence of the material world than the spiritual world.
And death for Stephen, far from being a reduced materialist experience of beastly brain death, means dealing with his mother’s soul, who comes back to him from the grave in a drunken vision during “Circe”: “THE MOTHER (wrings her hands slowly, moaning desperately) O Sacred/Heart of Jesus, have mercy on him! Save him from hell,/ O Divine Sacred Heart!” (U 15.4231-3). Some readers may be skeptical and think this is just an alcohol-induced illusion on Stephen’s part, but it’s never made totally clear whether it was merely Stephen’s mind or whether a ghost actually did appear to Stephen. This answer would depend a great deal on how reader reads Ulysses: as a materialist novel, or as a nonmaterialist novel. In a spiritualist, nonmaterialist sense, a ghost here could carry on a very real life of its own, quite unlike Mulligans’ dead tripe.

But Stephen is obsessed with a nonmaterial reality even more significant to him than death. And that reality is love. Risking another extreme spiritualist position, Stephen wonders at one point, “Was that then real? The only true thing in life [a mother’s love]?” (U 2.143) The problem for Stephen, though, is knowing whether or not he even knows what love is. At one point he simply asks himself, “Do you know what you are talking about? Love, yes” (U 9.429).

I have to seriously question Stephen's response to himself, however. For here in a unitive vision of love, the spiritualist/nonmaterialist meet the dilemma of the materialist: love demands both a body and a soul. In Stephen, we see someone who has plenty of nonmaterial soul/intellect, but a great reluctance to admit the body as a way of knowing love. Concerning love, rather than speaking from any type of experiential knowledge (as Molly says above when she claims that she would know love if it happened to her), Stephen can
only speak from his “mental organs” (U 16.788) as he does concerning the soul and the material world when speaking with Bloom in the diner. Stephen has heavily relied on his intellect to understand his world, including such immaterial realities such as love. This intellect proceeds carefully and exactly “syllogistically from the known to the unknown” (U 17.1012-3). In its exactness, his intellect has trapped Stephen in his own mind, wanting human intimacy, love. And rather than bringing him to this intimacy, his intellect has become an instrument of separation, “dagger definitions” (U 9.84).

The greatest evidence of Stephen’s trappedness, of his materially-lacking intellectual knowledge of love, is manifested in his intense physical longing for a woman. When discussing Shakespeare in the library, Stephen raises the issue of the seduction of Shakespeare by Anne Hathaway, Stephen wonders, “And my turn? When?” (U 9.261). His lonely musings continue when he spots a book for sale and reads some of it: “How to win a woman’s love. For me this” (U 10.847). As long as Stephen’s world includes only the nonmaterial soul and ideas, Stephen will be left alone with his mind, separated from that body so necessary for love.

Despite his reluctance to leave his world of nonmaterial ideas, Stephen, as he does while walking on the beach, still investigates the relationship between the material and nonmaterial worlds. Stephen recognizes this precarious relationship when he defines God as a “shout in the street” (U 2.386): And despite his philosophical queries regarding the material world, Stephen, being the nonmaterialist that he is, can “scarcely distinguish an acid from an alkali” (U 14.1296-7). Stephen, then, would seem to have at least a passing familiarity with the material bodily world much as Molly does with the nonmaterialist
spiritual/intellectual world. In this sense, then, we can take Stephen not as an extreme nonmaterialist, but as someone struggling to understand this relationship between the material and nonmaterial.

With these two view of reality in mind, the material and the nonmaterial, Molly representing the material and Stephen as representing the nonmaterial, we can more clearly see that (to use Ellmann's words in a way that he didn't exactly use them) "love is a blend of mind and body" (xiv). Though this combination by no means makes a human being perfect, it allows love to exist in its fullest form: in the material realm and in the nonmaterial realm. We see this combination most clearly in Leopold Bloom. Though Bloom himself doesn't seem to realize it, he displays love as a true union of both the material and the nonmaterial, a union which characters like Stephen and Molly cut themselves off from in their emphasis of one aspect over the other.

Bloom displays a layman's passion for the material world throughout the novel. At various points in the day, he tries to apply his scientific knowledge (the rate of falling bodies for instance [U 15.2781]) to physical phenomena he encounters. Scientifically grounded in the material world as he is, Bloom firmly believes that "every phenomenon has a natural cause" (U 15.2795-6) whether it's the thunder or, as it is in this case, a prostitute making him submit to her. He wonders elsewhere if "[b]lack conducts, reflects, (refracts, is it?), the heat" (U 4.79-80). He dreams up inventions "to stop that" hard childbirthing (U 8.377-8). And he comments on the fact that cells, the building blocks of material life, live "for ever practically" (8.781).
Bloom’s familiarity with the material world, however, has not made him callous, as it has Blazes Boylan, to the nonmaterial qualities of the world, women in particular. Though, like Boylan (Bloom’s not perfect), he ogles women, as when he tries to get a view of a woman’s stocking as she boards a tram (U 5.98), Bloom still recognizes at other times that a woman is more than just a pullet. For Bloom, a woman’s (Molly’s) “bedwarmed flesh” represents “[l]ife, life” (U 4.238-9). Moreover, according to Molly herself, Bloom can appreciate a woman’s intangible qualities because he can understand and feel “what a woman is” (U 18.1579). Quite unlike Boylan the strict materialist, then, Bloom is capable of understanding the nonmaterial qualities of a woman.

Bloom’s understanding of the material world goes beyond his intangible understanding of women, of Molly’s world, and into the nonmaterial/spiritual world of ideas, of Stephen’s world. Both Stephen and Bloom consider the idea of metempsychosis throughout the day. While walking on the beach, Stephen wonders, “God becomes man becomes fish becomes barnacle goose becomes featherbed mountain” (U 3.477-8). Bloom, of course, spends part of his morning attempting to explain “Met him what?” to Molly (U 4.336).

But Bloom and Stephen are not mere clones. For instance, they both think about the nonmaterial afterlife. Whereas Stephen experiences his mother’s ghost, Bloom holds that, though the Resurrection may warm Mr. Kernan’s heart, “Once you are dead you are dead” (U 6.677).

Though this comment seems to echo Mulligan at the tower, thus betraying Bloom as a materialist, this does not mean that Bloom holds no place for a nonmaterial essence to human
beings. As he later explains, what Stephen calls the soul, Bloom calls the intelligence, thus reinforcing Ellmann's assessment of the mind and the soul as parts of the same nonmateriality:

You as a good Catholic, he observed, talking of body and soul, believe in the soul. Or do you mean the intelligence, the brainpower as such, as distinct from any outside object, the table let us say, that cup. I believe in that myself. (U 16.748-51)

Thus does Bloom stake his belief in the nonmaterial world, but in the strictly secular nonmaterial world of the mind.

This intelligence is another way in which Bloom and Stephen, though similar in that they both partake of the nonmaterial world, are very different. Whereas Stephen's intelligence traps him, paralyzes him, prevents him from loving, Bloom has learned in what situations his intelligence is useful and when it is an obstacle. For situations of explaining material phenomena, Bloom uses his intelligence well. One instance of Bloom's intellectual prudence occurs when he explains how thunder works to a terrified Stephen during "Oxen of the Sun." Stephen hears the thunder and fears that God is speaking in his thunder, disapproving of Stephen's humorous blasphemy. Whereas Stephen quakes, Bloom explains that the thunder was not the sign of God's wrath, but the "discharge of fluid from the thunderhead, look you, having taken place, and all of the order of a natural phenomenon" (U 14.426-8). Unlike Bloom, then, Stephen has yet to learn the boundaries of the intellect concerning an explanation of the nonmaterial.

When intellectual prudence such as Bloom's is not followed, farces such as Dignam's seance result. Here, rather than a union of the material and nonmaterial, the two are mistakenly exchanged, one falsely imposed on the other, in this case, the material upon the
nonmaterial. We see this through the spatial terms used to describe the nonmaterial:
"whereabouts," region," "directed to the proper quarter," "sensations," and "divide" (U 12.337-73). Bloom himself comments, "[I]t is one thing to invent . . . a farreaching natural phenomenon such as electricity but it's a horse of quite another colour to say you believe in the existence of a supernatural God" (U 16.766-771).

And, in a reading which views love as union between the material and the nonmaterial, the realization of this line between the material and nonmaterial worlds enables Bloom to love. Unlike Stephen who is trapped in his own mind by his "dagger definitions", Bloom has no definitions to offer of this most important nonmaterial phenomenon: love. Upon getting into an argument with an angry citizen at Barney Kiernan's pub concerning violence in Irish history, Bloom responds:

- But it's no use . . . Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not what's life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life.
- What? says Alf.
- Love, says Bloom. I mean the opposite of hatred. (U 12.1481-5)

In this one passage, Bloom demonstrates the reality of the intangible by showing it to be beyond rational thought; with our intellect, we can only hint at love, fumble over inadequate definitions and slipping words. Having been taught in the "University of Life" (U 15.840), Bloom, "more experienced" (U 16.777) than Stephen, speaks and loves from that experience.

Thus, despite his foibles and shortcomings, it is Bloom who, unlike any other character, performs an actual act of kindness which, with his thoughts and words, create an act of love, an act which creates love by using both the soul/mind and the body in one act. Unlike Molly, Gerty, or Stephen, who reminisce or fantasize about love, Bloom acts. When
he rescues Stephen from the brothel district, physically picking him up from the gutter in a Samaritan-esque action, Bloom wills Stephen's good.

And, if we trust Thomas Aquinas, this willing Stephen's good is an act of the highest form of love. As Gifford points out, during the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode, Stephen's quote of Aquinas ("Amor vero aliquid alicui bonum vult unde et ea quae concupiscimus" [U 9.430-1]) concerns Aquinas' distinction "between True love [which] requires one to will another's good' and self love, which wills another's good primarily as conducive to one's own good" (Gifford 221). Rather than being infused from a higher, nonmaterial source, then, Bloom's act demonstrates that love comes into existence through a life which recognizes both the nonmaterial and material worlds as co-existent. Otherwise, Bloom's action would be no more an act of love than Mulligan's saving of the drowned man (whose harm or death, presumably, would be nothing but a beastly end according to Mulligan).

By willing Stephen's good in mind and body, then, Bloom has made an act of love, an act of connection which so many of the characters in their own frustrated ways have tried to achieve: Molly in her reminiscing of her old love with Bloom, and Stephen in his desire to be touched: "Touch me. Soft eyes. Soft soft soft hand. I am lonely here. O, touch me soon, now. What is the word known to all men? I am quite here alone. Sad too. Touch, touch me" (U 3.434-6).

The key, then, to an authentic love similar to what Ellmann and Tyndall call for would seem to be not materialism, nor a nonmaterialist spiritualism/idealism, but a love which embraces both the material and the nonmaterial as a co-existent One. In this view, then, James Joyce teaches us this meaning of love.
After such an extended discussion of the three primary ways in which love in *Ulysses* can be viewed, we can see that they all involve viable takes on the issue, each reading having its particular merits. Thus, here is where we go to the next step of Fish's method: rather than solving this dilemma of finding the exact nature/definition of love as it is promulgated through *Ulysses*, we can make this formal ambiguity signify within an established expectation. As we learned from Fish how Milton's sonnet establishes an expectation that the nature of delights will be resolved, we have seen that *Ulysses* establishes an expectation of its own: the nature of love will be determined. With Fish's method in mind, rather than perpetuating endless formalist readings, let us assign a significance to this ambiguous formalist debate over love in *Ulysses* within the context of the expectation of determining love's nature.

Just as in Milton's sonnet "everything in the line before 'spare' creates the expectation of an imminent judgment . . . and transfers the pressure of judgment to us" (Fish 1242), much in the same way does *Ulysses* present the nature of love regarding its materiality and its nonmateriality. *Ulysses* doesn't so much offer a prescriptive answer to how we ought to view this dilemma as much as it points out that we must consider the issue and decide for ourselves. Rather than offering us clear cut definitions of love, we get Aquinas' mangled definition from Stephen, and a word known to all men which is never explicitly stated. As Bloom has sent Stephen, then, so too are we sent into the inexact, unsure night by a catechism-avoiding teacher. We don't know exactly how the material and nonmaterial interact in love, but it's up to us to somehow be open to the issue now that we're aware of it.
The key to doing so, as this reading experience of *Ulysses* seems to indicate, then, is not so much to define the nature of love in *Ulysses* as much as it is to recognize its centrality to the book and, thus, to our lives. Bloom throughout the day is obsessed with his crumbling life with Molly, most particularly in their inability to consummate the physical act of sexual intercourse, and their growing nonmaterial emotional distance from each other. Stephen cannot shake his need for physical and emotional intimacy --- this need disrupting his intellectual thoughts seemingly at will even during the heated Shakespeare argument. Mina Purefoy, Gerty, Simon Dedalus and his daughters, all are in some way concerned with love, with intimacy and what to do about it concerning their bodies' well-being and their spiritual well-being.

This centrality of love and its material/nonmaterial dilemma points out that how we love depends a great deal on how we understand this dilemma. In other words, how we resolve the material/nonmaterial dilemma goes a long way in shaping how we treat ourselves and others. Most criticism on love in *Ulysses* usually seems to resolve this issue by claiming that love is either a material, nonmaterial, or material/nonmaterial phenomenon. In reality, it seems, all three could very possibly be present in *Ulysses*. In the face of this possibility, we can only really observe how character's actions formulate a certain understanding of love. When someone understands love as a material phenomenon, they seem to act as does Mulligan and Boylan, or even, perhaps mothers and Bloom. When someone understands love as a nonmaterial phenomenon, they seem to act as does Gerty by fantasizing and, possibly, Stephen in his intellectualizing, and, possibly, various church members such as Fr. Conmee, in his theologizing and belief in a pre-existent God Who is Love. In the case of
someone who views love as a union of material and the nonmaterial, they may act as Bloom does: many intellectual thoughts, but also material action as when he helps Stephen.

But in trying to understand the nature of the material and the nonmaterial in love in *Ulysses*, we come across another issue which also doesn't seem to be resolved in *Ulysses* but bears greatly upon love in *Ulysses*: the very question of 'what is real?' Particularly in the Modern and Postmodern worlds, this question becomes striking. In a world of continued technological growth (such as the printing presses of 'Aeolus'), where do older beliefs in a nonmaterial God go? If atoms are seen as 'real' and 'ghosts' such God as unreal, what does that mean for love, supposedly the very essence of God? As with Mulligan's reduction of the mystical Catholic Eucharist to a Frankenstein-esque electrical show, does love, too, fall under the scientific sway?

And in attempting to answer such questions, we see how *Ulysses* problematizes even our attempts to understand the questions, let alone formulate answers. As we see in our formalist efforts to define love in *Ulysses*, the temptation to make what we see into the only vision possible remains strong. Just as various characters attempt to restrict Bloom, for instance, (Lenehan's "Bloom has a bit of the artist in him", or Molly's insistence that he doesn't, though he does know what a woman feels), so may we attempt to restrict love. It's only material, or it's only nonmaterial, or it's a union of the two, or even some other conclusion: all these conclusions potentially create that same catechistic parody from which *Ulysses* warns us. By showing us how many characters (as in the above example) can view the same character (the same object, the same phenomenon) in mutually exclusive ways, *Ulysses* makes it even more difficult for us to say conclusively, "This is the nature of love."
But the nature of love involves more than its materiality/nonmateriality. As critics have pointed out, we can even ask if love is a positive and/or negative force. As with the question of love's materiality/nonmateriality, perhaps Fish's method of making mutually exclusive viable readings signify rather than stretch endlessly toward formalist closure can again be of help.
CHAPTER 4. LOVE AS POSITIVE/NEGATIVE

What has been mentioned thus far of Ulysses has focused on the uncertainty in Ulysses, its ambiguity. And this ambiguity has not only stemmed from the critical realm, reaching from Kenner's vision of Ulysses as the great negation to Ellmann's vision of Ulysses as affirming the essential goodness of humanity, but it has also been seen in the characters own ruminations. Various characters wander through the day considering good and bad events, personal and historical. Perhaps the most famous vacillation between negation and condemnation occurs in the final chapter, wherein Molly vacillates between "no" and "yes" throughout the chapter.

So when these critics read these characters, perhaps it should come as no surprise that such vacillation occurs in the discussion of several issues in Ulysses. And, of course, this vacillation would include love in Ulysses as well. Critical opinion runs from the vision of love in Ulysses as being an entirely positive phenomenon (however it may be constituted as material and/or nonmaterial) to love being a phenomenon both positive and negative.

We can see the vision of love in Ulysses as being a positive phenomenon most clearly in the criticism of Richard Ellmann, particularly in his introduction to the Gabler edition of Ulysses. Here Ellmann cites Stephen's reveries about Aquinas during "Scylla and Charybdis:

'Do you know what you are talking about? Love, yes. Word known to all men. Amor vero aliquid alicui bonum vult unde et ea quae concupiscimus...’ The Latin conjoins two phrases in Thomas Aquinas's Summa contra gentiles. Aquinas is distinguishing between love, which as he says in the first six words, 'genuinely wishes another's good,' and, in the next five, a selfish desire to secure our own pleasure 'on account of which we desire these things,' meaning lovelessly and for our own good, not another's. (xii)
Even though Kimball may be correct in her claim that Ellmann misunderstands the butchered Aquinas fragments here, what's important about Ellmann's statement is not so much how he understands Aquinas, but the definition of love which he creates. Love, here, for Ellmann is a type of agape, the selfless willing of another's good. And against this love Ellmann sets brutality, hatred, and selfishness, because, according to him, "[t]he nature of love has to be more intimately anatomized, subjected to attacks of various kinds" so that we may better understand the different between authentic love and those false pretenders to the throne.

Ellmann's definition of love as being an entirely positive phenomenon receives support from another Joycean even as he tries to refute Ellmann in Ellmann's claim that love is the word known to all men. Responding to Ellmann's claim that love is the word known to all men, Boyle states that he himself sees Joyce as "unwilling to exclude the opposite of love in his coal-hole vision" (in Benstock 143). And since love "does exclude a great deal --- all negative, perhaps," it can't possibly be the word known to all men.

And it is in Boyle's recognition that Joyce would be unwilling to exclude the opposite of love in his vision that leads us to consider another critic who examines love in Ulysses, Cheryl Fox. Fox's definition would eliminate this problem of Boyle's and Ellmann's since love in this definition does indeed include much that is negative. Fox discusses love's "imprecision", and its ability to "entail the subjugation and therefore the partial negation of the one loved;" love's ability to both affirm and negate are mutually exclusive capabilities and irreconcilable (800).
And in understanding this discussion, we understand the issues. Is love only positive? Is it both positive and negative? And in both cases, how so? In Ellmann's terms, how do we "anatomize" love in both cases so that we may understand it?

As with the previous discussions concerning knowledge in *Ulysses* and the constitution of love (material and/or nonmaterial), I will show that these above discussions of love could benefit from a reading patterned after the method of Stanley Fish: read for signification rather than formal closure. In other words, we want to concern ourselves with what it means that these issues get discussed rather than focusing on determining whether or not love is really all positive or positive/negative.

In doing so, I will demonstrate how the two above ways of reading the positive/negative problem with love in *Ulysses* depend on a formalist method which necessarily seeks closure. And in their demand for closure, these two above readings start and finish with definitions which are not revisited recursively, thus shutting themselves off from the play of ambiguity within which *Ulysses* revels and which it demands of the reader.

But first we must examine the Ellmann/Boyle position of love as positive, and then the Fox position of love as positive/negative. Thus will I show how both these readings make use of the formalist method (which Fish describes as being capable of proving everything and anything) on similar formalist features. Having established the equal formalist viability of both readings, I can then proceed to make this unresolvable problem signify.

First, we can offer the anatomy of Ellmann's love in *Ulysses* as being all positive. Ellmann begins with the definition of love as "genuinely wish[ing] another's good" (xii).
This love, then, would not cause harm or any other type of negative effect. And love need not just be one type of action. Instead, it can take several forms: "sexual, parental, filial, brotherly, and by extension social" (xiv). We can see love's utter positiveness clearly from the examples which Ellmann chooses to exemplify his definition of love. One such example is Bloom's rescue of Stephen from Nighttown. Ellmann claims that Bloom does so out of a "comradely and paternal love" (xiii). Nowhere does Ellmann speculate as to whether or not Bloom's motives may have been mixed, that perhaps Bloom rescued Stephen in a self-serving way to fulfill his own need to be a father, as Bloom's hallucination of Rudy after the rescue could indeed suggest. If there were any such motive, for Ellmann, it certainly wouldn't be a part of love as he knows it.

And this insistence of Ellmann's on love's absolute incorruptibility extends to his assessment of Molly and Leopold's marital affection for each other. He claims they "cherish moments of affection from their lives together as crucial points from which to judge later events" (xiii). Again, these "moments of affection" would seem to exclude Molly's affair with Boylan or Bloom's affair with Martha Clifford or his dallyings with Gerty. Rather than their love for each other involving both good and bad, both being responsible for helping and hurting each other, Ellmann would seem to have it neatly divided: good actions and affections which are loving over here, and, over there, the bad things that spouses do to each other.

With this notion of love as incorruptible as a basis, I think it's safe to say what Ellmann would assign as motherly love and what isn't. Certainly, Sargent's mother, saving him from being crushed by the race of the world, would constitute love since she was willing
Sargent's good. But as for Stephen's mother, her ghost tormenting Stephen with "threats of hellfire" (xiii), her actions cannot be construed as actions of love. Rather they are part of what Stephen "defies" in the name of the love which wills the good of the other (xiii).

But the question remains: if these actions by people who supposedly love you (Molly and Bloom's mutual infidelity, Stephen's mother to him, Bloom's possibly mixed motivations for rescuing Stephen) aren't part of love, then what purpose do they serve? Ellmann answers that question by saying, "The nature of love has to be more intimately anatomized, subjected to attacks of various kinds" (xiii). So when we see Bloom and Molly being unfaithful, it's so we can better recognize their fidelity; Bloom being selfish allows us to better see his selflessness; and May Dedalus' threats show us by contrast the deep love of a mother.

Two specific examples which Ellmann cites as being particularly helpful in anatomizing love become useful here: Mulligan and Boylan. Regarding "Love's bitter mystery," Ellmann claims, "It is something that Buck Mulligan, though he is the first to quote the poem, cannot understand, being himself the spirit that always denies. It is also alien to the experience of the womanizer Blazes Boylan" (xiii). It would appear here that Mulligan and Boylan's deep concern for themselves prevents them from willing another's good. In Mulligan's case, for instance, perhaps it could be argued that, like Bloom, he, too, is a savior since he saves a drowning man. But Mulligan does this deed for his own glory, whereas Bloom genuinely wants to help Stephen. In Boylan's case, he may wish another person pleasure, thus appearing to wish someone good will, when in reality he only wishes this good (if at all) to the extent which it brings himself pleasure. Ultimately, then, whatever good Mulligan and Boylan can wish for others ultimately only serves to glorify and satisfy
themselves. Thus are Mulligan and Boylan barred from the realm of love as all-positive giving of self for the good of the other.

But besides reading love as agape, utter giving, we could read love more as Fox does. Here love, rather than being a precise case of willing another's good, contains "imprecision;" it has an "ability to entail the subjugation and therefore the partial negation of the one loved" (800). So, whereas the above reading by Ellmann (and presumably by Boyle as well) constructs a love as all positive, Fox's reading would construct a love both positive and negative.

But Fox never gets around to explaining exactly what she means by "imprecision" and or giving examples of the "subjugation of the one loved." As with Ellmann, Boyle, and other critics who mention love, Fox doesn't see the need for a clear explication of her terms regarding love. By "imprecision" I take her to mean that love unavoidably slides between the positive and negative, perhaps becoming an indistinguishable mix of the two. By positive, I mean love as giving, as willing, to one extent or another, the good of someone or something else --- the exaltation of the one loved. In that sense, then, this positive is still indeed understood by Fox in Thomistic terms. By negative, I take what Fox says: "the subjugation and partial negation of the one loved." In other words, the negative aspect of love entails the harm done (intentionally or unintentionally) to someone who is supposedly loved by the person who is supposed to be doing the loving[ISU1]. In this sense, then, love for Fox appears to be a mix of willing good to a desired someone/thing, as well as willing bad to a desired someone/thing[ISU2]. Love can thus function for the loved one's good, or to gain power over the loved one.
We can understand love as the willing of good for others by looking at the above comments regarding Ellmann and Boyle’s reading of love in *Ulysses*. Here, then, because she offers us no examples, we must find examples which would support Fox’s claim that love can enact the subjugation and partial negation of the one loved. In doing so, we’d see how Fox’s reading gains viability and contradicts Ellmann and Boyle’s reading of love in *Ulysses* as a strictly positive, agape love.

On the individual level, we can find perhaps the most clear example of love’s subjugating and negating abilities in Stephen’s father, Simon and in his mother, May. In Simon’s case, his love for his children sets up a scenario which allows him to neglect them. For instance, when his daughter, Dilly, confronts him outside the auction hall demanding money for food, we can clearly see how dependent the children remain upon Simon. Simon “nervously” gives her “two pennies” so that she can buy “a glass of milk for [her]self and a bun or something” (*U* 10.700-07). They depend on Simon because of his expected fatherly love for them. This fatherly love sets up the expectation that he will provide for them as the other children indicate:

-Shirts, Maggy said.
Boody cried angrily:
-Crickey, is there nothing for us to eat? . . .
-[Katey pouring peasoup] A good job we have that much. Where’s Dilly?
-Gone to meet father, Maggy said.
Boody, breaking big chunks of bread into the yellow soup, added:
-Our father who art not in heaven.
Maggy, pouring yellow soup in Katey’s bowl, exclaimed:
-Boody! For shame! (*U* 10.271-293)
In this way, not only does Simon's love for his children enable him to provide for his children, to will their good, it also allows him to make them his subjects, to do bad things to them.

But love can be both positive and negative in more cases than just that of a lazy, neglectful father. Subjugation can also occur as a result of the most concentrated of efforts at a child's well-being. In this case, May Dedalus serves as a good example. Her concern for Stephen's soul leads her to teach him her beliefs in heaven and hell. We see this effect in Stephen's harrowing vision of his mother during Circe, warning him about his hell-bound soul:

> Who saved you the night you jumped into the train at Dalkey with Paddy Lee? Who had pity for you when you were sad among the strangers? Prayer is allpowerful. Prayer for the suffering souls in the Ursuline manual and forty days' indulgence. Repent, Stephen... I pray for you in my other world. . . . Years and years I loved you, O, my son, my firstborn, when you lay in my womb. . . . Repent! O, the fire of hell! . . . Beware God's hand! O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on him! Save him from hell, O Divine Sacred Heart! . . . Have mercy on Stephen, Lord, for my sake! Inexpressible was my anguish when expiring with love, grief and agony on Mount Calvary. (U 15.4193-4240)

Obviously well-intentioned by love, the inculcation Stephen received from his mother nevertheless leaves Stephen emotionally and intellectually crippled, even after her death. In his shattering of the chandelier, we see Stephen make yet another attempt to free himself from this subjugation born of love.

And this type of well-intentioned love begetting subjugation in the one loved occurs not just on the personal level with mother and father, but at the institutional level as well with Church and State. Here, the contrast between Fox and Ellmann could quite possibly become most acute. Whereas Ellmann sees both Bloom and Stephen affirming love against the threats
of religion as embodied in Stephen’s “mother’s threats of hellfire” and “the sadistic nun,” and against the State’s brutalities of “violence and history in the form of the British soldiers” (xiii), Fox could very well see both of these types of subjugation as a natural possibility inherent in a love of “imprecision” which can “entail the subjugation and therefore the partial negation of the one loved” (800).

We can see subjugation as a part of the Church’s love for its people as represented in Ulysses if we first consider Fr. Conmee and then the effects which Catholicism has on the inhabitants of Ulysses’ Dublin. Conmee, like May Dedalus, obviously has the best intentions for the people of God entrusted to his care. He, in other words, wills their good. For instance, he carefully considers the then unorthodox view that perhaps souls dying unbaptized may still go to heaven (U 10.143-152). But even here, elements of the narrative betray his love’s subjugative capacity. Fr. Conmee is “honoured,” nature “curtsey[s]” to him as he passes; the narrator comments, “He was their [the students] rector: his reign was mild” (U 10.180-8).

Though perhaps “reign” in the above citation could be construed as being benevolent, the “reign” of the Catholic Church proves otherwise. As Bloom observes, the communicants at Mass take the Eucharist as if it were a “[l]ollipop. . . Not so lonely. . . Blind faith. Safe in the arms of kingdom come. Lulls all pain” (U 5.360-8). That this scene occurs during the “Lotus Eaters,” the producers of pleasure who seduce Odysseus and his men into living a life of pleasure and sloth, is no accident. Here, the loving concern of the Catholic Church has resulted, not in the freedom of the Resurrection as promised, but in the sleepy subjugation of the childish and helpless in need of their sweets, their sedative lollipop Eucharist.
But rather than dismissing the Church as a mere opiate substitute for the higher good of the State, *Ulysses* demonstrates how the State, too, acts subjugatively while attempting to ensure its subject's well-being. This notion of the State's willing our good and thus subjugating us can be summed up particularly well by Edward the Seventh's rhyme: "My methods are new and are causing surprise./To make the blind see I throw dust in their eyes" (U 15.4478-9). The clearest exemplification of this type of "imprecise" love, then, would be Stephen's encounter with Pvt. Carr outside the brothel. Stephen recognizes both the Church and State as those who would will our good, but who, in the process, subjugate us, when he says, "But in here it is I must kill the priest and the king" (U 15.4436-7). Here, Carr defends the King who would ensure all his subject’s well-being: "I’ll wring the neck of any fucking bastard says a word against my bleeding fucking king" (U 15.4642-44). But, ironically, to enforce his notion of the king as a figure who would will our good, Carr must make Stephen heel to his power; symbolically, the State must break its subjects to show them how much it loves them, how sincerely it wishes to will their good.

And lest we think that the solution to the tyranny of the Church and State be a refuge called the intellect, as Stephen seems to believe when he resists his mother with the cry, "The intellectual imagination!" or when he resists Pvt. Carr, "He provokes my intelligence," we can also see how the intellectual’s love for the world can act subjugatively. In this case, Haines allows us an opportunity to examine. Haines, the intellectual, claiming to love Ireland, its culture, its literature, enacts through this love the subjugation of this very same culture. He would enslave it, "I intend to make a collection of your [Stephen’s] sayings if you will let me," buy it for himself, view it as an article which he can possess as he possesses
“his newbought book” of Irish lore (U 10.1060). Haines’ role as subjugator of Irish culture is well exemplified by his identity as an English subject. And as an Englishman, like Carr, Haines represents the subjugation of the Irish by a foreign agent, as this conversation with Haines would indicate:

I am the servant of two masters, Stephen said, an English and an Italian. . . . I can quite understand that, [Haines] said calmly. An Irishman must think like that, I daresay. We feel in England that we have treated you rather unfairly. (U 1.638-649)

This reading of love in Ulysses as both positive and negative could possibly account for the confusion which many characters experience regarding love during the novel.

Bloom’s assessment of Simon Dedalus would be a good example of how love as positive and negative would explain a problem. When Bloom hears Simon Dedalus singing “Love’s Sweet Song,” the narrator (to use the term loosely) comments that Bloom thinks the song is “heard from a person wouldn’t expect it in the least” (U 11.679) because, as Bloom later thinks, Dedalus “[w]ore out his wife [with child-bearing and his alcoholism]: now sings” (U 11.696-7). What Bloom seems to have difficulty understanding here is how someone who treated his wife so poorly could appear to so feelingly understand true love and express it in art. Perhaps Bloom is operating under Ellmann’s assumption that love is all good. If that’s the case, then Bloom wouldn’t see how Simon’s love for his wife had created his subjugation of her as well. And in Simon’s ability to wear his wife out in his love for her, love’s confusing “imprecision” makes itself known with a vengeance.

The problem with both of these readings, though, and what gives birth to their equally valid readings, is that they both begin with a definition of love in mind and carry it throughout the novel, denying it any of the recursivity or instability which a center such as a
definition would seem to have in *Ulysses*. In this case, again, Fish proves useful. Because rather than attempting to resolve a formalist issue which seems without conclusion (a conclusion which, in fact, *Ulysses* seems to do its best to thwart in so many ways), we can instead use the reader’s experience to make this conflict into a sign. So what, then, do these readings signify about a reader’s experience while reading *Ulysses*?

First of all, and as it seems for so much of the experience of reading *Ulysses*, love proves to be very confusing. Questions arise such as how much can someone hurt you and still be thought of as loving you, or, conversely, how much can you hurt someone and still be considered to love them? We see this dilemma particularly in Simon’s treatment of his children. Our view of whether or not Simon loves his children certainly takes shape depending on our view as to how love is actually enacted towards another’s well-being.

Our view of love in this respect, as it does for Bloom in his thoughts of Simon, greatly shape how we think of other people. Certainly, if love is what Ellmann and Boyle claim it to be, an experience strictly of agape, then there isn’t much room for compassion for people like Simon who would seem to fail so miserably. But if love entails both the willing of good and the willing of bad, intentional or not, then the picture becomes more cloudy, and perhaps demands more compassion.

But love extends past the ties between individuals. We have to question love as it involves institutions and how they shape our abilities to act. Do these institutions paralyze us in their actions of love? Do they enable us to act ourselves? Certainly to a great extent, the State and the Church influence our abilities to love as Ellmann points out. But whether or
not they are merely forces for evil as Ellmann seems to claim or indeed have some benevolent motives regarding our well-being remains a consideration.

And with this consideration in mind, we need to think about the role of will in love. Perhaps, after all, love could quite possibly be a will to choose good and/or bad. It is a choice we continue to make in how we treat others and want to be treated.

But as the two above readings regarding the negativeness and positiveness of love indicate, understanding love, its definition, its effects, its nature, is at best a difficult and confusing experience, full of many possibilities, never really standing still long enough for us to get a good look at it and say, “Aha! So THAT’S it!” Instead, we are left sitting with Bloom, eating lunch, wondering at our immense capacity to harm and be harmed by the very same people we claim to love.

Whatever love is, of course.
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS

Considering the amount of critical effort expended upon *Ulysses*, perhaps one could suspect that any topic would be exhausted by now. For the most part, though, critics have not extensively treated the topic of love in *Ulysses*. Those few who have dealt with this topic have done so rather briefly, using a formalist method. And in their investigations, these critics have explored love through two main avenues: one, they considered love as a dilemma concerning the relationship between the material and the nonmaterial; two, they considered love as a dilemma concerning whether or not love was a positive or negative phenomenon.

Furthermore, in the above reading, we’ve seen how this same formalist method can be used to develop even more contradictory readings of these issues, readings which the critics themselves have not yet considered. Concerning love as a material and/or non-material phenomenon, using formalist methods, love can be viewed as being a solely spiritual phenomenon, or a solely material phenomenon, or even as a combination of the two. When reading love as a positive or negative phenomenon, we’ve seen how formalism can lead us to consider love as both all-positive or all-negative, depending on which definition of love we choose to start with in our examination.

The problem, then, as Fish points out, is that this formalist method can’t achieve the closure it desires (1241). So, rather than endlessly seeking formalist closure, a more fruitful way of examining an issue so resistant to formalism would be reader-response: “What, in other words, if for the question “what does ‘spare’ mean?” we substitute the question “what does the fact that the meaning of ‘spare’ has always been an issue mean”?” (1241). Here, as
Fish suggests, we can take these various conflicting reading responses to the topic (love) and, rather than resolving them into one answer, make the critical disagreement itself into a sign which has meaning (1240), in fact, several meanings, depending on how the readers consider love as they read Ulysses.

This study, therefore, was done to demonstrate how love in Ulysses could be understood as an opportunity for the reader’s sign-making rather than as an issue subject to the demands of formalist closure. Regarding the question of love’s nature, Ulysses challenges us, not to find the answer in the book as if it were a type of Ithacan catechism, but to create meaning, prompted by the various issues raised during the course of Ulysses.

And what allows this meaning-making to occur is the very epistemology of Ulysses, one which denies conclusive certain knowledge in favor of recursive uncertain consideration of various possibilities. Ulysses itself, in fact, works to thwart formalist closure, valuing an epistemology of uncertainty, open possibilities, and reader involvement in constructing meaning. In other words, Ulysses encourages the reader’s production of multiple possibilities, possibilities which Fish would have the readers make into a sign, possibilities which formalism would whittle down to one final objective meaning to be found in the text, not the reader. So, regarding Ulysses, we can see that formalism, in allowing us to discern the epistemology of recursivity which Ulysses privileges, points us in the direction of a critical methodology which seeks meaning, not only “in the text” but in the reader’s response as well.

Ulysses, therefore, doesn’t begin with a set standard and then apply it to the world, nor does it take various samples and attempt to narrow them into one monolithic universal rule which would apply in any and all situations. Rather, in its complication of our notion of
"the center" from which we leave and to which we return (and to which we respond), in its
complication of "the knowable object" and thus knowability itself, Ulysses challenges us to
consider again and again the various "objects" with which we concern ourselves: love,
friendship, death, eternal life, etc. And Ulysses does this, not so that it may offer us the
“answer” after we have looked hard enough and pieced together the pieces as a formalist
would, but so that we ourselves may take these modernist fragments and consider them, turn
them this way and that, view them from as many angles as possible, and discover what these
“objects” mean for ourselves, how we respond to them. Questions seem to be more Ulysses’
business than do answers.

So what questions are being asked? And, judging from these questions, what sign is
being made? I don’t think that a definitive answer to this question is possible, considering
that with every reader, there is a new reading, and, thus, new meaning, but we at least can
make a start with the samples given above. Ulysses asks us, particularly in this modern
scientific age which challenges non-materialist notions such as “Providence” (Monk 6-7), to
consider love in light of the struggle between the material and the non-material. For instance,
does love exist as anything more than a material phenomenon? Is love now just a spiritualist
fantasy? Does it somehow exist in a union of the two?

Moreover, in light of darker understandings of humanity such as Freud’s (Snead 146),
how do we understand love’s nature Joyce’s Ulysses? Can we still see love as a strictly
positive reality? Or must we see love negatively, as producing the negation of that which is
loved even as it wills the loved object’s well-being? These are just a few of the many
questions which we must take as a sign to interpret, as an opportunity to take responsibility for ourselves and our answers.

Perhaps one of the implications of this approach to love in *Ulysses* is that we must reconsider other seemingly endless formalist discussions of other topics in *Ulysses*. For instance, what of the man in the macintosh? Who is he? Why is he there? What does he symbolize? Rather than thinking that the man in the macintosh offers us a meaning explicable in formalist terms, perhaps the man in the macintosh is more important for the responses which he elicits. By the very fact that formalist responses to the man in the macintosh are seemingly endless, conclusionless (Cosgrove 681), the man in the macintosh exemplifies what *Ulysses* in general demonstrates. The object of study, the references, the source which elicits the response, can never be fully known. Instead, the object remains but a vague dingy brown macintosh, damp in muddy graveyard rain, subject to various responses and formulations such as “M’Intosh.” The man in the macintosh, like the responses, is a vague sign to be read which never offers up definitive meaning and in fact can never be taken to be the same; it must capable of being revisited over and over.

More broadly regarding *Ulysses*, we can even revisit questions such as “Is *Ulysses* an affirmative or negative novel?” (in Ellmann, for instance), “Is it a novel of the dead or of the living?” (one of Kenner’s questions), or even “What is the meaning of the Homeric parallels in *Ulysses*?” (Spoo 179). In other words, we can ask what it means that we even raise these issues, that we want to read *Ulysses* as a Homeric myth, that we want to read *Ulysses* as an affirming or negating novel. We can make these questions and their answers into signs which have meaning.
Beyond particular considerations within Ulysses, reader-response might be particularly useful in understanding Finnegans Wake. In light of the frustration which formalist methodology has endured at the hands of the Wake (Bishop 3, 26), perhaps it would be useful to turn our attention to how readers respond. What formalist constructions do they create? What particular issues do readers (critics) raise in their responses to Finnegans Wake? And, as we did with love, what sign can we form from these readings and how would we read this sign? What is the meaning of this reading, of this sign?

And, more importantly I think, this approach reminds me of why we read. We read because we enjoy creating meaning and we enjoy considering issues. What's most important then is not so much the answers we make, but the questions we ask. And I think that it is reader-response which most allows us to focus on this part of the novel. It allows us to consider what people think, what it means that they think it, and the significance of these thoughts.

With the above considerations in mind, it's easy to see that Ulysses appeals to us because it allows us the opportunity of responding to, of considering issues which we have found particularly gripping. Before I decided to read Ulysses through a reader-response lens, I had thought to read Ulysses as a structuralist/formalist. Examining Ulysses through a strictly structuralist method caused me to re-examine how I thought about literature. I had mostly thought of literature as something containing hidden meaning, a one-line answer to deep questions. But the more I read Ulysses using this formalist method, the more frustrated I became. I couldn't find the one answer, and the more I read criticism, I realized that they
couldn’t either --- that the point of literature wasn’t so much finding an answer as much as it was something else.

But what was that something else? Asking this question, we can realize that we enjoy reading because of what it prompts us to think about. Not so much finding answers as much as just thinking about the answers and the questions. And the more I thought of Joyce and of structuralism, the more reductionist I considered finding one final authoritative structuralist response to *Ulysses*. Structuralism, therefore, especially when seen from the perspective of reader-response, and considering the various structures formed during my response and the responses of others, doesn’t necessarily have to be reductionist.

As Fish points out, the only way we can respond to the book is in the terms we have learned (1252), so being reader-response doesn’t mean that we have abandoned structuralism. It’s just that now we can see our use of structuralism as a means to construct responses. Using such structural tools as “type” and “category” (in this case, love as positive/negative, or love as material/non-material), we can better understand the meanings which we construct and what they signify, as well as understanding the constructs of others and what they signify.

We are also reminded by Charles Rossman that “[the text] is a product of the interaction between the (never fully knowable) object-in-itself and the (fallible) mind of the perceiver, a synthesis which is open to infinite correction and revision” (22). Thus, in paying attention to how people have read love in *Ulysses*, to how we read love in *Ulysses*, to how “[a]s is often the case in *Ulysses*, two possible interpretations evolve from the evidence, neither necessarily cancelling the other out” (Benstock Nature 50), and to how we make signs
out of these readings, we can truly come to better understand love in *Ulysses*, an understanding which is always a combination of the text and of us.
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