

Modernist Fiction and “the accumulation of unrecorded life”

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Given the prominence of the concept of ‘everyday life’ in cultural studies, there are surprisingly few systematic considerations of its treatment in modernist art and literature. The practice of cultural studies itself emerged in opposition to the entrenched categories and hierarchies of the academy, and the wide-ranging inquiries into social life conducted under its rubric have been framed by a broader project of political critique. Theorists and researchers have turned their attention to the mundane as “both the locus of capitalism’s dreariness and the only site on which to revolutionize and change it;” they have sought to reveal the workings of power in the microstructures of social life the better to map the means of evasion and subversion.¹ In this way, as Laurie Langbauer and Rita Felski have argued, much of the work that privileges everyday life as an object of inquiry tends to value the activities that comprise it primarily insofar as they resist “the imposition of order, repetition, and coherence.”² Because modernism is generally characterized as an aesthetics of rupture, administering to sluggish convention ‘the shock of the new,’ it is often cast as an aesthetic forerunner or counterpart of the critical project of unsettling the comfortable groove of everyday life. The agonistic stance that has dominated writing about everyday life, however, has been subject to reconsideration, and modernism’s association with it should be re-examined as well. Recent revaluations of habit and routine in particular can help illuminate the ways modernist works do not just seek to disrupt or transcend the everyday, but also, in sometimes surprising ways, affirm it.

Rita Felski’s recent analysis of the role of the concept of everyday life in cultural studies suggests that the prevailing “hermeneutics of suspicion” has led to a devaluation of routine and habit that seems either to assume the possibility of perpetual disruption or to postpone the acceptance of routine until revolution has restored the integrity of the microstructures that guide our default behaviour. Felski draws a contrasting perspective from studies of everyday life in the phenomenological tradition, which typically understand routine and habit as “necessary rather than unfortunate.” Analyses of everyday life, she concludes, citing Agnes Heller, should at least begin from the recognition that “we would simply not be able to survive in the multiplicity of everyday demands and everyday activities if all of them required inventive thinking” and that “disengagement is an indispensable precondition for ... continued activity.”³

Distrust of the relative disengagement of everyday conduct also appears in many accounts of modern art. The repetitive nature of industrial and bureaucratic labour has been found by many since Wordsworth to induce “an almost savage torpor” and a consequent craving for “gross and violent stimulants.”⁴ Alternatively, as Carlo Ginzburg notes, the modern city has been seen itself as a gross and violent stimulant, effecting “an enormous increase of our sensorial life.”⁵ These opposing characterizations of the modern quotidian, however, are usually routes to the same conclusion. Chronic overstimulation has the same result as understimulation: a deadening of the senses and a “qualitative impoverishment of our experience” (20). Against this stultification, some disruptive or galvanizing force is then defined as the specifically modern function of art.

This conception of art as a pitched battle against the necrotizing forces of everyday life appears, in various modulations, in a number of modernist essays and manifestos. It is sometimes a component of a more general contempt for middle-class conformity. Wyndham Lewis, for instance, complained that the majority of people “wish to be automata: they wish to be conventional,” and the inaugural issue of his magazine *BLAST* declared its intention “to destroy politeness [and] standardization.”⁶ Other modernists insist more specifically on the need to rouse the senses out of somnolence. For Conrad the writer’s strenuous task and “only justification” is “to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you *see*.”⁷ “Cleansing the doors of perception,” Jed Rasula suggests, is “demonstrably the dominant argument for (and of) poetry from Blake to the present.”⁸ In one of the visions of Williams

Carlos Williams' feverish *Spring and All* that ambition appears *fait accompli*: "the imagination . . . has destroyed and recreated everything afresh in the likeness of that which it was. Now indeed men look about in amazement at each other with a full realization of the meaning of 'art'."⁹ But combat is not modernism's only mode of engagement with everyday life. In the case of fiction particularly, disruption, resistance, and other agonistic characterizations are inadequate. Modernist fiction continues the novelistic tradition of interest in the undistinguished life and even heightens it, diminishing the architecture of plot and magnifying the textures of the mundane. Structure gives way to the sensation of lived experience, which proves to be so diffuse and ephemeral that the ordinary life, even the ordinary day, appears too complex to be perceived or rendered whole.

Portrayals of everyday life in modernist fiction can be equivocal, even damning. Concentrated attention on domestic and family life in particular often reveals trapped and ossifying spirits, as in *Dubliners* or Hemingway's short stories. Mansfield's "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" depicts two creatures virtually crucified by household routine. It is possible to argue, further, that it is not just the petty tyrannies of the mundane that are subject to critique, but the phenomenology of everyday life as well. Its opacity may be transfigured in moments of illumination, its formlessness redeemed by embedded symbolic patterns. And yet, I will argue, in works by both Virginia Woolf and Djuna Barnes we can see how modernist attention to the spaces, activities, and temporality of everyday life can also be validating: it can attest to the significance of what is lost in "the remorseless rush of time," and can counter anxieties about conformity and stultification with affirmations of routine as both salutary necessity and inalienable pleasure (Conrad, xlix).

I Ordinary Things and Ordinary Lives: Defamiliarization, "Renovative Perception," and the Novel

Modernism's approach to everyday life is often described as a strategy of 'defamiliarization,' a term originating in Viktor Shklovsky's influential and still frequently cited essay "Art as Technique" (1917). The term does pick out an important component of much aesthetic experience, but it is ultimately imprecise. In Felski's overview of the concept of everyday life in cultural studies in *new formations* (1999-2000), for instance, defamiliarization appears as a technique that aligns modernism with the field's suspicious approach to routine and repetition. "On the one hand, literature is often passionately interested in the ordinary," Felski observes, invoking *Ulysses* in conjunction with "the great realist novels of the nineteenth century" and the postmodern *White Noise*, which is replete with "domestic details" (26). On the other hand, "it also tries to redeem the everyday by rescuing it from its opacity, de-familiarizing it and making us newly attentive to its mysteries" (26). In her second essay modernist literature is more clearly specified and again associated with defamiliarization. Citing Shklovsky's reflection that "habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife and the fear of war," Felski suggests that:

Modernism especially, with its roughened verbal textures and often startling juxtapositions, can inject a sense of strangeness and surprise into its portrayal of the most commonplace phenomena . . . jolting us out of atrophied perceptions and ready-to-hand formulae. The aesthetic encounter, one might say, is defined by a distinctive temporality; it pivots around moments of world-disclosing rupture and shock that are contrasted to the homogenous and soul-destroying routines of daily life. (608)

There is a difference between these two characterizations of defamiliarization. In the first there is actually no contradiction: aesthetic defamiliarization in that instance is not a critique of everyday life *per se* but of habitual inattention to it. It turns us *back to* the everyday, newly able to perceive the 'mysteries' already there. In the second characterization, modernist defamiliarization appears to be

pitching grenades at everyday life, which is understood by nature as degraded and degrading. The aim in this case is not to re-enchance our relation to the everyday but to knock us solidly out of it.

We have, then, two distinct aesthetics, issuing from contrary assessments of the nature of everyday life. If the term 'defamiliarization' seems reasonably applicable to both aesthetics, it is because almost all art can be said to be in some sense defamiliarizing. Shklovsky himself does not in fact identify defamiliarization as the special effect of a particular technique: "In my opinion," he writes, "enstrangement can be found almost anywhere (i.e. wherever there is an image)."¹⁰

Both of these (perhaps equally defamiliarizing) aesthetics appear in modernism. As engagements with everyday life they represent opposing impulses: the first towards sanctification, the second toward rupture. The aesthetic of sanctification is a central component of romanticism. M.H. Abrams has given it the more precise formulation "renovative perception"; his weighty *Natural Supernaturalism* is a comprehensive account of its genesis and permutations in English and German literature.¹¹ Some accounts of modernist engagement with everyday life see it as a continuation, or reprise, of what Abrams calls romanticism's "persistent enterprise:" "to make the old world new not by distorting it, but by defamiliarizing the familiar through a refreshed way of looking upon it" (95). Art generally, and poetry specifically, was to be a 'handmaid:' subordinate to life, training the bleary eye to see, ultimately, not the work of art but, with restored clarity, the brilliance of the world itself. Abrams himself posits a line of descent from William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's desire to overcome "the lethargy of custom" and "disimprison the 'wonder' in the 'familiar'" (379) to the various forms of what has been called modernist 'epiphany:' Ezra Pound's "radiant node or cluster", James Joyce's perception of the "soul of the commonest object" and Virginia Woolf's "moments of being."

The aesthetic of rupture, on the other hand, can be seen as a latter-day counterpart of the idealist aesthetics that Wordsworth and Coleridge sought to overturn. "Whatever ... in any way reminds us of what we see and hear every day" has no place in the "higher poetry or painting," instructed Sir Joshua Reynolds.¹² There are echoes of that principle in the writings of critics and artists such as Wilhelm Wörringer, José Ortega y Gasset, T.E. Hulme, and Lewis, who all, in slightly varying ways, saw the shift towards abstraction in the visual arts as a repudiation of the deficiency and defectiveness of actual life. The modernist version of Reynolds' idealism is anti-naturalistic, perhaps aggressively so, but akin to that aristocratic aesthetic in that it aims to give us a *different order* of experience, one that is, categorically, unattainable in everyday life.

Neither form of defamiliarization, however, renovative perception or rupture, adequately characterizes modernist *fiction's* engagement with everyday life. The history of everyday life in fiction is the history of the eclipse of the heroic by the ordinary life in the narratives of Western cultures – it is the history of the novel itself, which began with a certain facetiousness and prurience but ultimately issued in George Eliot's pronouncement that "Mr. Tulliver had a destiny as well as Oedipus." Thus the most in-depth work to date on fiction and everyday life is Laurie Langbauer's study of the grand-scale realism of the nineteenth-century series novel in her *Novels of Everyday Life*. Realism "located verisimilitude in the ordinary and domestic" (2), recognizing what is hidden there as "determinative, vitally informing" (44). The tradition affirms the intrinsic significance of ordinary lives, lives not without internal drama, but without historical consequence.

In distinction from the novelistic interest in ordinary lives, the aesthetic of renovative perception is focussed on the object-world. Its recurrent terms are the eye and the object: "the major poets coincide with Blake's view that 'As a man is, So he Sees,' that 'As the Eye—Such the Object'" (Abrams, 375). The significance of the individual life is not easily recuperable in these terms. A life has to be understood, not seen. As George J. Leonard argues, when late eighteenth-century aesthetics crystallized the idea that "beauty is not something inherent in certain objects, but an attitude to certain objects we sometimes have; that beauty is not something out there, but something we do," it delivered, if inadvertently, "a Magna Carta for everyday objects" (61).¹³ Objects, not people.

The series, Langbauer writes, does aspire to an "endless replication of what is already the very universe people take for granted around them" (36). But the project of realism was primarily the

imaginative chronicling of ordinary lives; the novel's meticulous replication of the material world, the 'reality effect', developed in the service of that. Verisimilitude rendered more comprehensively and vividly the mundane environments in which the dramas of those lives unfolded. The novelistic interest in the undistinguished life should not be conflated with the romantic sanctification of the ordinary world, even though the two sometimes appear in tandem. Wordsworth illuminates both the wild daffodil and the maid who "lived unknown," "whom there were none to praise / And fewer still to love" (Wordsworth, 245). Whitman, in his catalogue-psalms, honours the lowliest of things (the hay-rick, the dung-beetle, the pavement of town) and, like Wordsworth before him, the humblest of people (the labourer, the housewife, the tramp). Object and person are nonetheless distinct, and the will to recover the glory of common things may even devalue ordinary people, whose individual worth may be implicitly measured by their capacity to perceive it. Wordsworth sought to restore to the oppressed and stultified their access to the divinity in the mundane world, but that spiritual egalitarianism is in tension with the hierarchy of perception that surfaces even in the preface to *Lyrical Ballads*: "The human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants ... one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability" (64). The romantic aggrandizement of the artist is of course an easy step from there. Renovative perception orients us not so much to one another as to creation. It sanctifies the violet and the rail yard (and in a later stage, the Brillo box and the soup can), but not, or not necessarily, the ordinary person.

In "Art as Technique" Shklovsky's examples of defamiliarization are drawn primarily from Tolstoy's fiction. But like Abrams' renovative perception, his defamiliarization is characterized almost exclusively in terms of eye and object: "The object passes before us, as if it were prepackaged;" "Under the influence of ... generalizing perception, the object fades away;" "and so, in order to return sensation to our limbs, in order to make us feel the object, to make a stone feel stony, man has been given the tool of art;" "the purpose of art, then, is to lead us to a knowledge of a thing *through the organ of sight* instead of recognition" (Shklovsky, 4-6; emphasis mine). Shklovsky's emphasis on vision and thing is somewhat at odds with the passages of Tolstoy he cites, which are not redescriptions of overfamiliar objects, but of social practices – flogging, private property, burial, theatre – presented from a naïve or unsocialized point of view. Again, it seems not unreasonable to describe the effect of these passages as defamiliarization, but it is of a sort that belongs to a long tradition of moral and social criticism that uses naïveté (often that of the 'rustic' or 'savage') as a device, and which dates at least from Marcus Aurelius's "stoic program for the right perception of things."¹⁴ Carlo Ginzberg traces the recurrence of this device in the seventeenth-century French moralists (La Bruyère, Voltaire); we can extend the line, in English literature, to *Gulliver's Travels* and *Huckleberry Finn*, and, as Liz Barry suggests in this issue, through to Beckett's radically innocent and asocial protagonists, to whom the laws and observances that apply to the body seem arbitrary and contradictory.

Shklovsky does not clearly distinguish between making a "stone feel stony" and levelling criticism against cruelty, greed, and foolishness. The neat escalation in his essay's most often quoted line implies a correlation between sensory and political awareness. Our lives grow habitualized, and so "life fades into nothingness. Automatization eats away at things, at clothes, at furniture, at our wives, and at our fear of war" (5). But there is no necessary continuity between remaining sensitized to the ingenious construction of a sideboard (or the wifeliness of a wife), and remaining alert to the dangerous bellicosity of leaders. Indeed, these forms of awareness may well be at odds. The latter pressures you to act; the former easily shades off into aestheticism. For if art defamiliarizes by prolonging attention, it may yet teach you to see not neglected features of the world but simply itself. Hints of such autotelism do surface in the essay. Poetic devices, Shklovsky writes, are "means of intensifying the sensation of things," but he notes immediately that "this 'thing' may well be nothing more than the words or even just the sounds of the literary work itself" (3). This is certainly not the spirit in which Tolstoy offered to show us how the institution of private property would look from the perspective of a reasonable horse.

Shklovsky's concept of defamiliarization, either as renovative perception or as satirical method, does not address the distinctive attribute of the novel as an art form, which is not description but character – the creation of personalities and lives. And it is in fact the neglect of lives, not things, that concerns Tolstoy in the passage that Shklovsky uses to demonstrate the danger of automatization. In this much-quoted diary entry, Tolstoy records his distress over the virtually unconscious state in which he conducts his routine house-cleaning. Arriving at the sofa, he found himself unable to recall if he had already dusted it. If he had done so, the action left no trace in his memory. "This is tantamount," he concludes, "to not having done it at all." And if "no one had been observing me or observing me only unconsciously, if the complex life of many people takes place entirely on the level of the unconscious, then it's as if this life had never been at all" (5). Tolstoy's concern is not that his life is impoverished by insufficient attention to the sofa or anything else in the object-world. He is distressed about the *de facto* disappearance of the human life that is inattentive to *itself* – particularly if it is not subject to anyone else's attention either. Such *lives*, he says, are as if they "had never been at all." Lives, not objects. If routine hours are not retained in memory or otherwise witnessed, whole stretches of life itself vanish. It is this concern that fictions of everyday life can be said to uniquely address: not primarily by rendering strange the objects and practices of everyday life, but by observing, so to speak, imaginary Tolstoy's dusting – by offering to witness tracts of life otherwise lost.

II Modernist Fiction and Reclamation Work

"Reclamation work" refers to a wide range of historiographic and ethnographic efforts to salvage everyday life from the "'condescension of history,' [which] has clearly cast so much of social life into oblivion."¹⁵ Such work attempts to recover the everyday life of the obscure and oppressed, who are poorly represented both in the existing records of history and in the currently accumulating ones. It strives to bring the lives and worlds of the historically and socially invisible into the light of attention – not always or not just as a critique of power, but as an act of validation. Focus on the oppressed is not the rule of modernist fiction, but it has a significant affinity with reclamation work nonetheless. In its withdrawal from the grand historical sweep to the contracted temporal scope, from dramatic action and incident to the textures and sensations of experience, it marks a new stage of the novelistic interest in the undistinguished life. The world-historically unimportant character still has centre stage, but the substance of that character is not revealed by the tectonics of plot but by the accumulating sediment of everyday life.

One of the earliest critical analyses of everyday life in modernist fiction is Erich Auerbach's reading of *To the Lighthouse* in *Mimesis*. Auerbach finds in Woolf's magnification of the mundane both a revelation of a kind of secular sanctity and a distinctly egalitarian promise. Woolf "holds to minor, unimpressive, random events," Auerbach observes, "measuring the stocking, a fragment of conversation with the maid, a telephone call. Great changes, exterior turning points, let alone catastrophes do not occur." He sees the attenuation of plot and the dilation of detail as a modern loss of confidence in the possibility of synthetic or totalizing perspective. But epistemologically it is a fortunate fall: "In the process something new and elemental appeared: nothing less than the wealth of reality and depth of life in every moment to which we surrender ourselves without prejudice."¹⁶ Auerbach's reading echoes Woolf's reflection in *A Room of One's Own* that 'reality' seems to be:

something very erratic, very undependable – now to be found in a dusty road, now in a scrap of newspaper in the street, now in a daffodil in the sun. It lights up a room and stamps some casual saying ... and there it is again in an omnibus in the uproar of Piccadilly ... It is [the writer's] business to find it and collect it and communicate it to the rest of us.¹⁷

Auerbach finds the *value* of fictional reclamation of everyday moments not in the heightening of individual experience, however, but in the chime of recognition he assumes they will strike in

multitudes of readers otherwise dissociated. "It is precisely the random moment," he concludes, "which is comparatively independent of the controversial and unstable orders over which men fight and despair; it passes unaffected by them, as daily life. The more it is exploited, the more the elementary things which our lives have in common come to light" (552).¹⁸ Thus Auerbach turns Woolf's dilations on the mundane away from the aestheticism to which absorption in the sensory particular may incline and enlists them in the service of human fellowship.

This deeply humanist interpretation of fictional attention to the minutiae of everyday life coincides with Henri Lefebvre's claim in *Critique of Everyday Life* (published just one year after *Mimesis*) that "rehabilitating the masses of instants that philosophers condemn to 'triviality'" and rehabilitating the masses of "'peoples that poets relegate to the shadows'" are related tasks.¹⁹ And both these claims seem to be supported by the fact that Woolf, the collector of "moments of being," the recorder of "atoms as they fall," also writes of fiction as the reclamation of "infinitely obscure lives" into the redemptive light of attention. In *A Room of One's Own* she imagines asking an old working-class woman what she recalls of her life. The woman, Woolf surmises, would remember the dates that entered the history of the nation – the battle of Balaclava or the birth of Edward the Seventh. But pressed for information about any particular date of her own life, she would recall nothing: "For all the dinners are cooked; the plates and cups washed; the children sent to school and gone out into the world ... All has vanished. No biography or history has a word to say about it. And the novels, without meaning to, inevitably lie" (84). The imagination of the novelist, Woolf proposes, should respond "in the spirit of fellowship" to "the pressure of dumbness, the accumulation of unrecorded life" (85).

Auerbach's reading of Woolf, however, did not become a prevalent one; in fact, as Liesl Olson argues, Woolf's interest in everyday life has been consistently underestimated. One reason for the inattention to this aspect of her fiction is that, in spite of her expressions of solidarity with working-class women, she does not dramatize them sympathetically. The Dalloways' hard-pressed tutor Doris Kilman is curdled with *ressentiment*; Mrs. McNab, the cleaning woman who shatters the silence of the Ramsays' empty house in *To the Lighthouse* is a caricature, decrepit and witless. Nameless figures who walk the beach at night, sunk in existential questioning ("'What am I,' 'What is this?'"'), are vouchsafed wordless answers "so that they were warm in the frost and had comfort in the desert" – "But Mrs. McNab continued to drink and gossip as before."²⁰ Woolf's fiction "skims as lightly as a bird ... over the ordinary preoccupations of men and women;" "there is no place for commonplace reality, for the crude strife of material desires," concluded one critic in the thirties, and the charge of privileged disconnection endures.²¹ The assumption that everyday life is lower-class life, however, relies on a conception of the everyday as primarily *substantive*, constituted by particular environments and activities.

Because domestic and physical labour are commonly associated with routine, repetition, and even mindlessness, Felski observes, "some groups, such as women and the working class, are more closely identified with the everyday than others" (Felski 2000, 16). But this substantive conception of the everyday runs the risk of "slid[ing] imperceptibly into a ranking of persons: those exemplary individuals able to escape the quotidian through philosophy, high art or heroism versus the rest of humanity" (17). If the concept is to retain its usefulness, it must "not only describe the lives of ordinary people, but [recognize] that every life contains an element of the ordinary" (31). In short, "It makes much more sense to think of the everyday as a lived process of routinisation that all individuals experience," rather than "a circumscribed set of activities within the world" (31). The fictional reclamation of the vanishing instants of any particular life is not, therefore, necessarily related to the project of reclaiming the history of socially subordinate masses of people. The illumination of one everyday is not, as Auerbach hoped, the illumination of all: it is just as likely to reveal cultural fault lines as it is to establish common ground.

Woolf's distinction as a novelist of interiority, Liesl Olson shows, is a second factor that has obscured her attention to the everyday: "A general sense, in both popular and scholarly estimations of Woolf, is that her work explores a fluid state of consciousness, always heightened." Olson concedes too much when she grants that there is a "divide" between "psychological interiority and realism

rooted in the things that are shared among us,” and that “To render the ordinary is to describe experiences with which every reader is familiar, but the mind is a strange, unique entity”.²² There is no necessary or obvious disjunction between representations of common spaces and activities and explorations of interiority – the latter often prove amusingly or even painfully familiar. Our access to the unrarified ruminations of Leopold Bloom is but one example; Nicholson Baker’s *The Mezzanine*, to which I will turn shortly, is another. Nonetheless, Olson makes a compelling case that Woolf binds interiority and everyday life by revealing character not just through reflection and sensation but also through routine and habit.

Olson cites, for example, Clarissa’s reflections on Peter Walsh, whom she remembers most distinctly by “what seems trivial: ‘his pocket-knife, his smile, his grumpiness and, when millions of things had utterly vanished – how strange it was! – a few sayings like this about cabbages’” (50). We come to understand Clarissa herself in part through things of that scale. The momentous decision of her youth to take Dalloway, not Walsh, as a husband, is defining, but so is her announcement that she “would get the flowers herself,” which reveals both solicitude for a servant and the fact that she normally would *not* get them herself.²³ Both the care and the privilege of the gesture are echoed later in Woolf’s novel when Clarissa mends her own dress because “her maids had too much to do” – but momentarily cannot recall the word “thimble” (32). Similarly, Hugh Whitbread’s essential complaisance is revealed in his passing lunch-hour reflection that his daily view of the time on the Oxford Street clock of Rigby and Lowndes “naturally took the form later of buying off Rigby and Lowndes socks or shoes” (87).

Mrs. Dalloway is not focalized exclusively through Clarissa or other members of her privileged social set, but to a significant extent it is a novel of distinctly upper-class mundanity. There are elements of Clarissa’s day that most women of her time and ours could only wish were among their ordinary preoccupations (orders to the cook, choosing among evening dresses). But however exclusive the Dalloways’ world, the novel does retrieve and record it through its routines, habits, menial tasks, and banalities – not to deflate or expose but on the grounds that to pass these things over is to miss constitutive components of character and to distort the record of life. Woolf’s fiction does respond to “the pressure of dumbness, the accumulation of unrecorded life,” in the sense that obscurity, inconsequence, and ephemerality are conditions of most wealthy lives as well as most poor ones. The adjustment of the focus of fiction to the minutiae of everyday life *may* coincide with a politically egalitarian ideal, but there is no determinate connection between the two.

III Reclamation and Symbolism

For all the contraction of its scope, modernist fiction does not approach the countless passing moments of unrecorded life with the same confidence that romantic poets brought to the object-world. The idea of renovative perception entails an almost unlimited faith in the intrinsic wondrousness the world around it. What George Leonard calls the eighteenth-century “Magna Carta for everyday objects” had momentous implications for art. If all things are equally radiant when seen aright, the artwork has no legitimate principle of selection or logical boundary. And once the artwork’s purpose is to teach us to see the world anew, as Leonard argues, it is committed to a logic of self-elimination: “Wordsworth says ‘Enough . . . of Art.’ Like Emerson, he knows what he means and he has made no mistake. Enough of Art” (78). Thus Leonard traces the genealogy of the Wordsworthian sanctification of the commonplace through to the actual superseding of the art object, and then of even the readymade, in the work of John Cage. Wordsworth’s injunction to “Close up those barren leaves; / Come forth and bring with you a heart / That watches and receives,” Leonard argues, arrives at its logical conclusion in 4’ 33”.

Modernist fiction’s affirmation of everyday life is never quite so expansive and unequivocal. Langbauer cites May Sinclair’s response to Dorothy Richardson’s vast fictional project, *Pilgrimage*: “Nothing happens. It is just life going on and on” (164). Richardson, however, is more the exception

than the rule. Modernist fiction does not generally refrain from embedding in its ordinary lives the patterns of larger significance that lived experience lacks, or from investing with symbolic portentousness elements of everyday life that are, in lived experience, opaque. This is true not just of James, Forster, and Woolf, but also of Hemingway, in whose works the sharply focussed particulars of the immediate environment often function as a bulwark against psychological vertigo or the existential void. In "Big Two-Hearted River," for instance, the grasshoppers and sweet ferns so intently registered are simply brute, unsignifying *things*, and therefore points of restful absorption for Nick Adams' fugitive attention. But the eponymous river signifies more than its own internal division, and the deep shadowed swamp Nick turns away from at the end contains more than big trout.

Modernist fiction's approach to everyday life balances between reclamation and symbolic transfiguration. Symbolism predicates a connectedness in things; it hints at an underlying order. It is a form of resistance to the randomness, opacity, and open-endedness of everyday life; it creates patterns, compensates for diminished plot structure by propping up formlessness from within. The elaborately scaffolded mundanity of *Ulysses* actually comes closest to relinquishing symbolic structure by making, through sheer excess, a sanguine joke of the need for it. Still, Joyce needed to joke. There is also a self-conscious defiance in his use of the utter quotidian, and a sense, therefore, in which he is asserting himself at least as much as it. The application of his antic and protean linguistic virtuosity to the greasy meals and the satisfying bowel movement, the rambling and the chatter, is at least in part a way of declaring that the author is a sovereign not a supplicant – that literature bestows value, rather than deriving it from what it represents.

We need not discount modernist fiction's inclination to write depths and signs into the matter of the uneventful day and the unremarkable life, but we should attend as well to the explorations of the untransfigured commonplace that that degree of symbolic anchorage made possible. Modernist treatment of the quotidian laid the ground not just for the slice-of-life stories of the later century, but for a work like Nicholson Baker's *The Mezzanine*, which takes its cue from the modernist mundane, but outstrips it both in degree of magnification and sheer relish. *The Mezzanine* is not hung on the framework of *Ulysses* as that work is on the *Odyssey*, but this novel of a lunch hour is the progeny of the novel of a day, and in its *homme moyen sensuel* protagonist, a twentysomething paper-pusher in a glossy American office tower, there is a discernible trace of the practical, curious, even-tempered Bloom. In *The Mezzanine* we find neither the romantic poet's "World in a Grain of Sand / And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,"²⁴ nor the symbolic portentousness of a golden bowl or a lighthouse, but a long-standing fascination with escalators. "Grooved surfaces slid out from underneath the lobby floor," observes the narrator, "and with an almost botanical gradualness segmented themselves into separate steps;" then, approaching the top, they began to "flatten themselves for their Trophonian redescent."²⁵

The commonplace for Baker is wondrous – but in the sense of being fascinating rather than mysterious, because it is manufactured and therefore thoroughly knowable, given the will to inquire. The mystery of the escalator is resolved by observing repairs at a subway station: "the triangular shape of the steps finally became clear: before that, the subsiding of what I believed to be a rectangular block into a two-dimensional surface at the end, like the folding up of a travel alarm clock, seemed impossibly complicated" (64). Full explanation of other little miracles requires only a little research:

Perforation! Shout it out! The deliberate punctuated weakening of paper and cardboard so that it will tear along an intended path, leaving a row of fine-haired white pills or tuftlets on each new edge! It is a staggering conception, showing an age-transforming feel for the unique properties of pulped wood fibre ... why don't I have any clear idea even now, after years of schooling, how the perforation of the reply coupon or the roll of toilet paper is accomplished? ... Circular pizza cutters with diamond-tipped radii? (74)

Baker's attention to the commonplace is not exclusively object-oriented; like the modernists, he attends to routine and repetition as constitutive and revelatory of character. The difference is that he attends not in the spirit of reclamation, of poignant or urgent human self-preservation, but in the same

spirit that he contemplates the evolution of vending machine design since the mid-century – equanimous and empirical:

[I]t seemed to me then that we needed a measure of the *periodicity* of regularly returning thoughts, expressed as, say, the number of times a certain thought pops into your head every year ... If we could assign a periodicity number in this way to every recurrent thought a person had ... We would know the relative frequency of his thoughts over time, something that might prove to be more revealing than any statement of beliefs he might offer, or even than a frozen section of available, potential thoughts (if that were possible) at any one time in particular. Just as the most frequent words in English are humdrum ones like 'of' and 'in' and 'the,' so the most frequent thoughts are bland and tiresome things like, 'Itch on face,' '[fleeting sexual image],' and 'Is my breath bad?' But below the 'of' and 'in' level of thought-vocabulary, there was a whole list of mid-frequency ideas. (126-7)

He then offers a sample two-column chart of mid-frequency ideas, with thoughts on the left and "Number of Times Thought Occurred per Year (in descending order)" on the right. The left-hand column goes from his lover at the top (clocking in at 580.0) to (excerpting just a few) "bill-paying" (52.0); "Friends, don't have any" (33.0); "Shine on moving objects" (25.0); "Gasoline, nice smell of" (8.0); "Zip-lock tops" (2.0); "Kant, Immanuel" (0.5).

The Mezzanine is very funny, but not a joke. Baker finds wonder in the utterly commonplace without forcing it to signify or to open onto some underlying connection or unity. His empirical, anatomical method, in fact, seems designed to deflect symbolic interpretation, or better, to make it ridiculous. Baker represents routine, habit, and the banality of consciousness, untransfigured and unredeemed, with an unapologetic and thoroughgoing cheerfulness the modernists could not have mustered. But he could not have written the novel without them.

IV Modernist Fiction and Psychological Extremity

Modernist fiction's approach to everyday life may be anxious compared to Baker's pleasurable detailing and placid accounting, but this does not mean that it positioned itself against everyday life, provoking, disrupting, or urging always a heightened awareness. Long-standing interest in the continuity of romanticism and modernism, however, particularly with respect to epiphanic vision and psychological extremity, has helped to obscure the ways modernist fiction accepts and even finds security in the half-attended stream of ordinary consciousness.

Acute perception in modernist fiction is not necessarily represented as revelatory; it is also shown to be a painful and sometimes quite senseless correlate of trauma. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Septimus' psychosis does not open onto some truth concealed beneath the order and civility of the city's daily functioning, as in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, where the narrator, Marlow, descends vicariously into what he calls Kurtz's "extremity."²⁶ Returned to Brussels, Marlow is repelled by the sight of people "hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other, to devour their infamous cookery, to gulp their unwholesome beer" (170). Because "they could not possibly know the things I knew," he finds these "commonplace individuals going about their business in the assurance of perfect safety" both offensive and risible: "I had no particular desire to enlighten them, but I had some difficulty in restraining myself from laughing in their faces, so full of stupid importance" (170). But as Olson argues, Septimus's inability to readjust to civilian life is the pathological deviation from the broader scene of postwar Londoners 'normalizing' change: "'daily life' in *Mrs. Dalloway* functions as something [Woolf's] characters crave, as a natural reaction against the deformations of time;" "Clarissa's simple actions ... as well as the movements of other characters throughout this June day, make up the substance of the novel's action; they dominate – even hold in check – moments of anxiety or self-realization" (49). The news of Septimus's suicide shocks and dislocates Clarissa; she withdraws

from the scene of life to contemplate death. But the novel concludes with the absorption of shock by the persistence of ordinary life. She and others “went on living;” “she would have to go back; the rooms were still crowded; people kept on coming” (156). The affirmation of this return to the current of life is even sealed with an image of generational continuity, as the Dalloways’ daughter Elizabeth detaches from the disruptive Miss Kilman and begins to replicate the pattern of her mother’s life. She is there at the party as requested, gracious and beautiful, and her marital destiny seems foretold in her response to her father’s gaze. The young Willy Titcomb holds Elizabeth in conversation; Richard Dalloway looks on wondering, “who is that lovely girl?” Feeling his eyes on her, Elizabeth crosses the room to take her place by his side: “she went over to him and they stood together” (164).

The consolatory role of everyday life in modernist fiction may become clearer particularly if we understand the concept primarily, as Felski suggests, as experiential, “a lived process of routinisation that all individuals experience”. Djuna Barnes’ *Nightwood* is one of the English-language modernist fictions that seems to have broken most dramatically from the project of representing everyday life, and which has been read almost exclusively in terms of abnormality and extremity. Readers have been most consistently impressed, whether negatively or favourably, by its dramatic staging of otherness, of difference from those assumed to constitute its audience. In *Nightwood*, “we see the modern city through the eyes of the unconventional, the marginalized, the abjected,” as one recent argument puts it.²⁷ Another, citing “the circus freaks that people its text,” argues that *Nightwood* is directly linked to “the premier low culture form of the era, the freak show, or display of human curiosities.”²⁸ “Great fiction is more ordinary than this,” wrote Mark Van Doren in 1937, and a sample of adjectives from Jane Marcus’s survey of other initial reviews is indicative of the terms that still characterize discussion of the work: “grotesque”, “hideous”, “surreal”, “insane”, “gothic”, “horror”, “nocturnal”.²⁹ It does not follow, however, that *Nightwood* condemns the current of everyday life as somnolence and delusion and proclaims the illumination of night over the benightedness of day.

The seedy demimonde of *Nightwood* is the antithesis of the circles of the Ramsays and Dalloways; one reviewer assumed the novel was “conceived to convulse the Bloomsburys of the world.”³⁰ But freakish as *Nightwood*’s characters have appeared to reviewers and critics, they are more or less ordinary to each other, and spend much of their time absorbed in everyday activities: they dress, dine, converse, get drunk, ride in carriages, walk the streets. If we accept Fredric Jameson’s observation that, with modernism, fiction splits into the plotless art novel and the artless plot novel there can be little question where *Nightwood* falls.³¹ *Nightwood* is a novel in which, at least in the nineteenth-century sense of the verb, nothing *happens*. I am not about to propose that it is a meditation on the mundane. On the contrary, its dramatic centre is Nora’s violent expulsion from everyday life, not socially, or at least not from the social world she normally moves in, but psychologically. Robin’s desertion has cast her into an anguish that renders impossible the comfortable, inattentive navigation of daily life. “Robin can go anywhere because she forgets, and I nowhere because I remember,” Nora cries to the ‘doctor’ Matthew O’Connor; Nora is left “holding her guts,” O’Connor reflects, “as if they were a coil of knives.”³² This state of psychic perdition is the night; the expressionistic distention and dense grotesquerie of the book seem to issue from the excruciating, arresting agony at its centre.

The oracular O’Connor channels the socially and psychologically repressed; he is the voice of the addict, the drunk, the profligate, the lover, of those who in misery and alienation “can never again live the life of the day” (94). “There is not one of us who, given an eternal incognito ... would not commit rape, murder, and all abomination” (88), he assures Nora; and he warns the smirking tables of the café, “I talk too much because I have been made so miserable by what you are keeping hushed” (162). Is this tour of the spectacle of the night not a version of what Lefebvre calls the “modern marvellous,” a degraded supernaturalism that, obsessed with “the paroxysmal moment dispossesses mundane, everyday existence, annulling it, denying it”?³³ “*Terra damnata et maledicta*” (125), O’Connor might reply heartily; “nothing but wrath and weeping” (166).

But the anguish of loss in *Nightwood* is portrayed as a fixation holding the mind back from the passage of days, and that condition of arrest is a torment: “Every hour is my last,” Nora cries to the doctor, “and one can’t live one’s last hour all one’s life (134).” Monogamous domesticity is the habit

of all habits, and the book is not an assault on it but, at least in part, a dirge for its loss. When Robin met Nora “she kept repeating in one way or another her wish for a home, as if she were afraid she would be lost again” (55). Some construction of “home,” Felski argues, is “central to the spatial organization of everyday life;” a home is made when a space becomes an “object of cathexis,” a “symbolic extension and confirmation of the self” (Felski 2000, 25). And home is what Nora and Robin establish, externalizing their relationship, forming a protective shell. The objects that accrete around them are consonant with the book’s baroque, perhaps outlandish, atmospherics: “circus chairs, wooden horses bought from a ring of an old merry-go-round, venetian chandeliers from the Flea Fair, stage-drops from Munich, cherubim from Vienna” and so forth. But Robin and Nora relate to this space as *home*. “In the passage of their lives together every object in the garden, every item in the house ... attested to their mutual love, the combining of their humours” (55). No more and no less than any cohabiting pair do they create “the museum of their encounter” (57).

The deserted Nora goes unconsolated in *Nightwood*, and Robin, spectacularly, goes down like a beast. But the doctor’s monologues are not just paeans to the truth of darkness and the darkness of truth. “God,” he says wryly at one point, “I never asked for better than to boil some good man’s potatoes and toss up a child for him every nine months” (91). He affirms the reality of the night, but he denies that it is absolute:

Man’s sorrow runs up hill; true it is difficult for a man to bear, but it is also difficult for him to keep. I, as a medical man, know in what pocket a man keeps his heart and soul, and in what jostle of the liver, kidneys and genitalia these pockets are pilfered. There is no pure sorrow. Why? It is bedfellow to lungs, lights, bones, guts and gall! (22)

The regular processes and compulsions of the body will ineluctably reassert themselves, steadying the afflicted the heart, drawing it back into the rhythm of life. The urges of the body are an affront, but the heart, in spite of itself, is soon forced to start ceding the holy ground of its grief to ingestion and digestion, and, soon enough, to the regathering current of libidinal desire, which precedes and persists beyond any particular lost object. When Nora cries desperately, “What will happen now, to me and her?” O’Connor affirms the inevitability of the mind’s release, the necessary return of the familiar day: “‘Nothing,’ the doctor answered, ‘as always. We all go down in battle, but we all come home’” (129).

Heightened experience, with its sensory acuteness and temporal suspension, is sometimes the ailment, then, not the cure. Modernist fiction may document such states, but it does not always claim them as authentic, epiphanic, or replenishing reprieves from a general consignment to semi-consciousness. In works as different as *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Nightwood* we can find acceptance and affirmation of routine and repetition, of undistinguished moments of everyday life, not heightened, transfigured, or opening onto transcendent experience but, precisely because of that, necessary and restorative.

V The Revaluation of Everyday Life

Given the long denigration of routine and habit in intellectual culture, a revaluation was inevitable. In her introduction to *Novels of Everyday Life*, Langbauer avows that, for her, a main point of interest is that “one reaction to the everyday can be pleasure, and not just with the banalized tedium that someone like Henri Lefebvre or Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno wants to locate in serial production ... My version of the everyday brings me lasting comfort, deep and abiding joy (and in ways that go beyond the strategic cleverness that theorists like the situationists or Michel de Certeau want to accord the everyday)” (3). Felski was writing “The Invention of Everyday Life” at about the same time, and breaking down the concept into three components – temporality (repetition), space (home), and modality (habit) – making a case for the necessary and salutary aspects of all three.

Olson's recent work on Woolf, as well as on Stein and Stevens, brings the revaluation to the analysis of literary modernism.³⁴

The point of this theoretical revaluation is not to recommend subsiding peacefully into the pleasures of the everyday; it is a dialectical move, not an inversion. It is not to advocate a generalization of the complacent pleasure of *The Mezzanine's* lunch in the sun. Sated, drowsily thumbing the Penguin edition of the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, Baker's narrator recoils from the old emperor's "unrelenting and morbid self-denial":

I sat with my eyes closed, my arms outstretched on the bench ... a current of complete peaceful contentment began to flow from the shade hand to the sun hand, passing through my arms and shoulders and whorling up into my brain along the way. 'Manifestly,' I repeated, as if scolding myself [with an Aurelian dictum], 'no condition of life could be so well adapted for the practice of philosophy as this in which chance finds you today!' Chance found me that day having worked for a living all morning, broken a shoelace, chatted with Tina, urinated successfully in a corporate setting, washed my face, eaten half of a bag of popcorn, bought a new set of shoelaces, eaten a hot dog and a cookie with some milk ... What, philosophically, was I supposed to do with that? (124-5)

Indeed, *The Mezzanine's* ingenious miniature acrobatics of perception and cogitation, the extraordinary linguistic resourcefulness it brings to the examination of the plastic straw, the vending machine, the shoelace, and its whole great dilatory luxuriousness comprise a performance that, I will venture, could only have been executed by an author white, male, and middle-class. Emphasizing affirmations of everyday life in the work of Woolf and Barnes may be particularly troublesome, as the old depoliticized sanctification of domestic life was one of the girders of patriarchy that feminists fought to dismantle. Women, George Leonard observes, have been less likely than men to profess the wonder of the commonplace. In 1956 John Cage wrote that "Our intention is to affirm this life, not to bring order out of chaos nor to suggest improvements in creation, but simply to wake up to the very life we're living, which is so excellent once one gets one's mind and one's desires out of its way and lets it act on its own accord."³⁵ Feminist performance artists after him acknowledged their "debts to his aleatory methods," but were inclined to use them for a contrary purpose. As Yvonne Rainer put it, they aimed, rather, to awaken us "to the ways in which we have been led to believe that this life is so excellent."³⁶

The sanctification of everyday life, which issued in part from the liberatory and egalitarian impulses of romanticism, may contain depoliticizing, potentially oppressive, tendencies, as Rainer's neat inversion of Cage's credo indicates. Advocative characterizations of modernism, therefore, stress its disruptive, revolutionary energies, presenting it as defiantly opposed to everyday life, particularly that of urbanized mass societies. Modernism in this reading is a counter-offensive against rationalization, bureaucracy, and the regimentation of labour; against the restrictive conventions of domestic and family life; and against the cultural uniformity fostered by mass production, media, and entertainment. A concept of everyday life that is primarily experiential rather than substantive, however, and that recognizes the psychological necessity of habit and routine, can help us define more precisely the place of individual modernist works within the long and broad aesthetic trend that begins with the romantic turn towards the commonplace, reaches a logical extreme in the work of Cage, and persists in multiple modes and forms in contemporary art, literature, and film. This theoretical reconsideration can help reveal the centrality of the mundane in modernism, the full range of ways it is defined and represented, and the highly variable political inflections of both affirmative and antagonist treatments of it. Considerations of the everyday in modernist fiction in particular need to be oriented less by the idea of defamiliarization and more by the history of the novel and the distinctive characteristics of the form: the reclamation of the undistinguished life, the constitution of character, and the representation of consciousness and temporality. Even when critical of the substance of everyday life, modernist fiction draws closer to the phenomenal experience of it – its somewhat erratic points of attention, banal exchanges, and formless continuity, within which, nonetheless, a process of

shaping and meaning-making inevitably takes place, sometimes with anxiety, sometimes with irony, sometimes with satisfaction.

Notes

¹ Laurie Langbauer, *Novels of Everyday Life: The Series in English Fiction 1850-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 177.

² Rita Felski, "Introduction," *New Literary History* 33: 4 (Fall 2002): 612. Neither Felski nor Langbauer presents cultural studies as monolithic. Their characterizations of it are based on the Marxist heritage of the most foundational and influential theorists of its conceptions of 'culture' and 'everyday life': in the British tradition Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall; in the Continental, Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord, and Michel de Certeau.

³ Rita Felski, "The Invention of Everyday Life," *new formations* 39 (1999-2000): 27.

⁴ William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. Michael Mason (London: Longman, 1992), 64.

⁵ Carlo Ginzburg, "Making Things Strange: The Prehistory of a Literary Device," *Representations* 56 (Fall 1996): 20.

⁶ Wyndham Lewis, *The Art of Being Ruled*, ed. Reed Way Dasenbrock (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1989), 151; Wyndham Lewis, *BLAST* 1 (Santa Barbara, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1981), 7.

⁷ Conrad, Joseph, *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), xlix.

⁸ Jed Rasula, "Strategizing the Ordinary," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 67: 3 (Summer 1998): 721.

⁹ William Carlos Williams, *Imaginations*, ed. Webster Schott (New York: New Directions, 1970), 93.

¹⁰ Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamin Sher (Elmwood Park, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1990), 9. Sher renders Shklovsky's neologism *ostraniene* as 'enstrangement,' rather than the more standard 'defamiliarization,' which he claims is nothing less than "dead wrong!": "Shklovsky's process is in fact the reverse of that implied by this term. It is not a transition from the 'familiar' to the 'unknown' ... On the contrary, it begins with the cognitively known ... the rules and formulas that arise from a search for an economy of mental effort" and leads to "the familiarly known, that is, to real knowledge that expands and 'complicates' our perceptual process" (xix). Sher's objection is that the term 'defamiliarization' implies a one-way trip from the familiar to the unfamiliar, to a vision, perhaps, of pure novelty or the bizarre. I am not convinced his alternative term effects the discrimination he aims for; I retain 'defamiliarization' in any case precisely because it remains the most common in English criticism, along with its particular connotations.

¹¹ M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), 95.

¹² Cited in George J. Leonard, *Into the Light of Things: The Art of the Commonplace from Wordsworth to Cage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 59.

¹³ Leonard identifies Archibald Alison's *Essays on the Nature and Principle of Taste* (1790) as the most forceful articulation of the idea, and, for Wordsworth and Coleridge, the most influential one. He

notes, however, that "Alison is emphatically *not* Wordsworthian in his conclusions: 'habit' and 'familiarity' ... must eventually conquer"; nothing "can long stave off our sensibility's decay" (59-60).

¹⁴ Ginzburg, 21. Ginzburg cites a typically withering and, permitting the anachronism, quite Tolstyan passage of Aurelius: "Surely it is excellent plan, when you are seated before delicacies and choice foods, to impress upon your imagination that this is the dead body of a fish, that the dead body of a bird ... and in matters of sex intercourse that it is attrition of an entrail and a convulsive expulsion of mere mucus." To identify the Aurelian vision as an early instance of 'defamiliarization' is "fully justified," Ginzburg argues, as Tolstoy admired Aurelius and was indebted to him for his "uncompromising approaches to law, ambition, war, and love" (11).

¹⁵ Ben Highmore, *The Everyday Life Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002), 223.

¹⁶ Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 546; 552.

¹⁷ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London: Granada, 1977), 104.

¹⁸ Auerbach's reading of the function of the mundane in fiction is underwritten by a now bewildering confidence in the imminent cultural unification of the globe: "The strata of different societies and their different ways of life have become inextricably mingled ... beneath the conflicts, and also through them, an economic and cultural leveling process is taking place. It is still a long way to a common life of mankind on earth, but the goal begins to be visible. And it is most concretely visible now in the unprejudiced, precise, interior and exterior representation of the random moment in the lives of different people" (552). Auerbach was of course writing in refuge from WWII; it is therefore not the *hope* that is bewildering, but that it is expressed as a certainty. People who cherish this era for its "abundance of life" in spite of its "catastrophes," Auerbach writes, "are few in number, and probably they will not live to see much more than the first forewarnings of the approaching unification and simplification" (553).

¹⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, trans. John Moore (London: Verso, 1991), 127.

²⁰ Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 142-143.

²¹ Cited in Langbauer, 184.

²² Liesl Olson, "Virginia Woolf's 'cotton wool of daily life,'" *Journal of Modern Literature* 26: 2 (Winter 2003): 44.

²³ Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

²⁴ William Blake, "Auguries of Innocence."

²⁵ Nicholson Baker, *The Mezzanine* (New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 1990), 59; 64.

²⁶ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*, ed. Cedric Watts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

²⁷ Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik, "Flanerie in *Nightwood*" in *Gothic Modernisms*, eds. Andrew Smith and Jeff Wallace (Palgrave, 2001), 78.

²⁸ Robin Blyn, "From Stage to Page: Franz Kafka, Djuna Barnes, and Modernism's Freak Fictions," *Narrative* 8:2 (2000): 148; 135.

²⁹ Jane Marcus, "Mousemeat: Contemporary Reviews of *Nightwood*" in *Silence and Power: A Reevaluation of Djuna Barnes*, ed. Mary Lynn Broe (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1991), 195-204.

³⁰ Quoted in Marcus, 200.

³¹ Frederic Jameson, *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, the Modernist as Fascist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979). Jameson's exact phrase is "the plotless art novel and the styleless bestseller" (7).

³² Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood* (New York, New Directions, 1961), 152; 154.

³³ Lefebvre, 124-125.

³⁴ See Liesl Olsen, "Gertrude Stein, William James, and Habit in the Shadow of War," *Twentieth-Century Literature* 49:3 (Fall 2003), and "Wallace Stevens' Commonplace," *The Wallace Stevens Journal* 29:1 (Spring 2005).

³⁵ Cited in Leonard, 174. Leonard stresses, however, that the attitude of reverential awareness is not the terminal point of Cage's thought and work. Cage came to recognize that in an age of industrial despoliation the merely receiving heart betrays by its quietism the creation it reveres, and consequently devoted his life to environmentalism. Because those who write about Cage are primarily interested in art, Leonard notes, 'the entire culmination of his life, the thirty years Cage has spent as an ecologist, goes virtually unrecorded' (174). There are, however, 'two Cages, and the second one is the best critic of the first' (178).

³⁶ Cited in Leonard, 176.