

E: STYLESHEET

- E1.** This Stylesheet is intended as a guide to students in the presentation of written work submitted for assessment. It deals with the lay-out and documentation of essays and projects. This should not be regarded as an incidental or secondary matter: clear and consistent presentation of material is an essential part of the process of lucid and effective communication. Every effort should therefore be made to ensure that the use of conventional forms of reference and annotation becomes habitual at an early stage, and certainly long before the final year project has to be written.
- E2.** For further details and examples, consult the MHRA *Style Guide*, which can be downloaded for free here:
<http://www.mhra.org.uk/Publications/Books/StyleGuide/download.shtml>
- E3.** This Stylesheet is arranged as follows:
1. Format
 2. Punctuation
 3. Quotations
 4. Referencing
 5. Sample Essay

Format

- E4.** Essays, other written assignments and projects should be written or printed on **both sides** of decent quality paper (A4 or other standard size). All essays should be double-spaced.
- E5.** Each piece of written work submitted must use as its opening page the departmental **Cover Sheet** which will be available on the English Studies webpage or can be collected from the pigeonholes by the departmental office. **In addition, the front page of your essay must carry on its first page the following information:** (1) registration number (no names or other forms of identification should appear on any assignment submitted for assessment); (2) the title of the module for which the work is submitted; (3) the module code; (4) the essay question number, if applicable; (5) the essay question or other assignment identification; (6) the name of the writer's tutor. Failure to give this information may result in the essay being misdirected and delayed. For the form of title-pages to Semester VIII projects, see §B50.
- E6.** An even margin of approximately 5cm (2 inches) should be maintained on the left-hand or right-hand side of every page for markers' comments.
- E7.** Paragraphing is a technique to enable the reader to discern, grasp and absorb the key points in an argument. Paragraphs should be regarded as clearly-defined stages in the development of an argument. An essay constructed with many short paragraphs gives the impression of ill-digested notes, or jottings; an essay with

only a few very long paragraphs appears to ramble aimlessly rather than to argue pointedly. Both will seem to their readers to be disorderly pieces whose ideas have not been thought through. Do not indent after a long quotation unless it is intended to begin a new paragraph at that point.

- E8.** Paragraphs should consequently be clearly marked off, *either* by noticeable indentation (that is, starting the line a short distance (at least 1.5 cm) to the right of the left-hand margin), *or* by leaving a line blank, *or* by both. An essay in which the paragraph divisions are not easily detected will appear rough and unfinished.
- E9.** Students should resist the temptation to use more than one style (or size) of font.
- E10.** The titles of longer works and of books should be either underlined or *italicized*. This includes novels, plays, long poems, collections of poems or short stories, and books of criticism. Shorter pieces (individual poems, stories, essays) should appear within inverted commas. Thus: 'Epithalamion' but The Faerie Queene or *The Faerie Queene*; 'We are Seven' but Lyrical Ballads or *Lyrical Ballads*; 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', but The Waste Land or *The Waste Land*. **Never use both underlining and quotation marks.**
- E11.** Each page should be clearly numbered; pages should be pinned or stapled together in the top left-hand corner only (otherwise they are not easy to read and annotate).
- E12.** Essays should not exceed the prescribed word-length (which includes quotations and footnotes, but excludes the bibliography).

Punctuation

- E13.** Modern punctuation serves to define the structure of a sentence by marking off its constituent parts. The neglect or misuse of marks of punctuation will obscure meaning and hence is likely to mislead the reader.
- E14.** Full stops are the heaviest marks of punctuation. They signal the completion of a sentence: that is, they distinguish one coherent, self-contained statement from the next discrete point to be made. Commas should *not* be used between sentences, even simple one-clause sentences.
- E15.** The colon distinguishes two sentence elements (the first always being a full clause), where the full significance of the second depends upon its relationship to the first. It is usually followed by a conclusion drawn from the preceding statement, or by an enumeration, summation or illustration of the point which has been made, e.g. 'There was an obvious solution: she would have to drive herself to the hospital'; 'There were three colours in the mix: red, green and yellow'. One of its commonest uses in literary essays is to introduce indented quotations.
- E16.** The semi-colon is a lighter stop, used between related points of equal

significance, usually two independent clauses, e.g. 'I opened the envelope; the news was not good'; or sometimes two independent clauses linked by a connecting adverbial: 'He was on holiday; however, his mind was still at the office'. A semicolon can always, in principle, be replaced either by a full stop (yielding two separate sentences) or by the word *and* (possibly preceded by a joining comma). However, it tends to be used in place of a full stop where the two parts are felt to be closely related.

- E17.** Commas are used to distinguish parts of a single statement, but not to distinguish separate statements. Typical uses include: the separating off of an introductory adverb (*However, Chaucer...*; *Nevertheless, Chaucer...*); the distinguishing of items in a list; marking out simple phrases and relative clauses which are readily detachable from the sentence.
- E18.** Dashes should not be used as a means to avoid choosing the appropriate punctuation mark. A dash can be used to set off an additional point, appended to a sentence as if in afterthought, often in an ironic or exclamatory way. It is better not to use dashes as if they were brackets.
- E19.** A pair of brackets encloses a comment within the course of another statement while keeping it syntactically distinct.
- E20.** Omissions should be indicated by three dots. (This is most commonly required within quotations.) E.g. 'The sea-cucumbers were...three hundred dollars a pound'.
- E21.** Single quotation marks should be used for quotations within your own prose and double quotation marks for quotations within a quotation. Note that **indented quotations are not enclosed within quotation marks** (since it is already clear that these are quotations).
- E22.** Exclamation marks should be used sparingly, if at all. Their frequent use gives the impression that the writer is over-excited.
- E23.** The apostrophe needlessly gives much trouble. It serves two purposes: *first*, it is used as a mark of omission, in the place of letters which have been left out (o'er, didn't etc.); *secondly*, it is used to signify possession.
- E24.** When used to signify possession, the apostrophe is placed *before* the 's' with single nouns (e.g. Dorigen's, Bilbo's, Lady Macbeth's); with plural nouns, it is placed *after* the 's' (e.g. the Metaphysicals' fantasticality, the Romantics' morbidity). (Note, however, that when the plural form of the noun does not take an 's', the apostrophe is placed *before* the possessive 's': so, children's, not childrens'). This distinction should be observed, since it involves a difference of meaning: the sonnet's structure and the sonnets' structure do not mean the same thing. Care should be taken with nouns which end in 's': the possessive form of Keats is not Keat's but Keats's (in such cases the possessive 's' is sometimes omitted: Keats'). Yeat's would be the possessive form of Yeat,

not Yeats.

E25. 'Its' and 'it's' are the commonest cause of confusion in this connection. 'It's' is an elision of 'it is'; the apostrophe signifies omission of the 'i' in 'is'. The problem arises with 'its', which is the possessive form of the pronoun 'it', but does *not* have an apostrophe. This possessive pronoun was coined in the late sixteenth century, and came into common use in the seventeenth century ('his' was formerly the neuter pronoun), though until the early nineteenth century it was commonly spelled 'it's', indicating its possessive nature (it + possessive s). However, the apostrophe has now been dropped for two hundred years and 'its' has become the fixed form of the pronoun, on the analogy of 'his'. So:

it's	=	it is
its	=	of it (possessive)
its'	=	does not exist

Spelling: Common Errors

E26. The ability to spell is an elementary but an essential skill in a student of English. It is worthwhile always working with a dictionary by your side to check spellings. It is a useful practice to maintain a list of the correct spellings of words which, through experience, you find you commonly misspell.

E27. The following are pairs of words which are commonly not properly distinguished. It is worthwhile looking them up and learning their meanings:

affect/effect	complementary/complimentary	council/counsel
dependent/dependant	discrete/discreet	

d
i
s
i
n
t
e
r
e
s
t
e
d
/
u
n
i
n
t
e
r

enormity/enormousness	forego/forgo	imply/infer
licence/license	loathe/loathe	may/might
naught/nought	practice/practise	prophecy/prophesy
stationary/stationery	who's/whose	

E28. The following are words commonly misspelt:

Accessible	accessory	accommodation	
admissible	anonymous	argument	
biased	cantos	commitment	
committed	corollary	cynical	
definite (ly)	desperate	disappointment	
embarrass	epitome	existence	
existential	fulfil		fulfilment
hierarchy	humorous		idiosyncrasy
independent	indigenous		infinite
instalment	knowledgeable		metaphor
metonymy	misogyny		occurred
occurrence	parallel		precede
pseudonymous	receive		rhetoric
rhyme	rhythm		rigorous
separate	simile		similes
skilful	soliloquy		soliloquies
supersede	synonymous		tragedy
truly	withhold	wilful	

(Endings in ence/ance, ent/ant and able/ible give particular trouble and should be watched.)

E29. The following singular and plural forms are often confused, misused or misconstrued:

antithesis/antitheses	criterion/criteria	crux/cruces
datum/data	erratum/errata	matrix/matrices
medium/media	phenomenon/phenomena	
tableau/tableaux		

Abbreviations

E30. Avoid colloquial abbreviations such as 'don't', 'aren't', 'I'll'.

E31. Avoid the use of 'etc.': it suggests that you cannot be bothered to write down what you have in mind.

E32. Common and accepted abbreviations are: e.g. (= for example); i.e. (that is); cp. or

cf. (= compare); ff. (following, after a page reference). Their use, however, should be confined to references and annotation; they should not appear within the body of your prose.

Quotation in Literary Studies

- E33.** A good essay will analyse literary texts in detail and will pay close attention to specific passages within them. To this end, quotation is essential.
- E34.** As a rule of thumb, comment on a quotation should be at least as long as the quotation itself.
- E35.** Quotations may be **either** run into the text of an essay, **or** marked off from it: if the quotation is no more than three lines long, it should be enclosed within quotation marks and run into the text; if it is longer, it should **not** be within quotation marks but should be separated from the body of the text by: indenting every line; single spacing; and the leaving of a line space before and after. Both forms are illustrated by this passage from Catherine Belsey, *John Milton* (1988), p. 34:

Alastair Fowler cites a comment of 1734 which is more to the point than some of the subsequent debate:

Milton's language is English, but 'tis Milton's English; 'tis Latin, 'tis Greek English; not only the words, the phraseology, the transpositions, but the ancient idiom is seen in all he writes, so that a learned foreigner will think Milton the easiest to be understood of all the English writers.

F. R. Leavis, for whom Englishness was more or less synonymous with virtue, would evidently have derived no pleasure from the notion of the 'learned foreigner' with easy access to Milton's work. In his view, 'cultivating so complete and systematic a callousness to the intrinsic nature of English' Milton forfeits all possibility of subtle or delicate life in his verse.

- E36. Run on quotations should look like this:**

Poetry

It is characteristic of Herbert to doubt his capacity to fulfil his Christian commitment: he thinks of himself as a 'guest' not 'worthy' to be admitted into Christian communion. However, when he wishes that he were 'an Orange-tree/

That busie plant', it seems to be the exotic and improbable which he desires as much as to be productive and useful.

Lines are separated by an oblique stroke, and begin with a capital letter if they do so in the original.

Drama

After Ananias' expostulation in Jonson's Alchemist that 'Thou look'st like antichrist in that lewd hat' neither apocalyptic terrors nor seventeenth-century fashions can ever be so fearsome again.

The extract is enclosed within quotation marks, but there are no quotation marks around dialogue within it; should verse be quoted, the lines are separated as in quotation from poems. Always be sure to indicate which character in the play is speaking.

Prose

When the outraged Stephen rounds on Maggie
'"Good God! ...you rave. How can you go back without marrying me?...You see nothing as it really is"' he begins to realise how misplaced has been his confidence that Maggie would feel compelled by social pressure to comply with his wishes.

In the case of prose, dialogue is contained within double quotation marks, while the whole extract is placed within single quotation marks.

Indented quotations should be introduced by a colon and should look like this:

Poetry

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burred as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through,
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

'And hast thou slain the jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Calooh! Callay!'
He chortled in his joy.

The lay-out of the original is reproduced without quotation marks around the extract. Should there be speech within the verse, it (but it alone) is included

within quotation marks, as in the original.

Drama

Estragon: Fancy that. (He raises what remains of the carrot by the stub of the leaf, twirls it before his eyes.)
Funny, the more you eat, the worse it gets.

Vladimir: With me it's just the opposite.

Estragon: In other words?

Vladimir: I get used to the muck as I go along.

Estragon: (After a prolonged reflection.) Is that the opposite?

There are no quotation marks around what characters say in a drama, nor around the set-in quotation as a whole. The characters should be named if more than one of them speaks in the quotation.

Prose

'Never mind, Harriet', said Emma, 'I shall not be a poor old maid; and it is poverty only which makes celibacy contemptible to a generous public! A single woman, with a very narrow income, must be a ridiculous, disagreeable, old maid! the proper sport of boys and girls; but a single woman of good fortune, is always respectable, and may be as sensible and pleasant as anyone else'.

Although there are no quotation marks around set-in quotations, dialogue in prose, unlike dialogue in drama, is enclosed within quotation marks.

- E37.** After indented quotations, the resumed text should **not** be indented unless a new paragraph is intended. **All indented quotations should be given in single spacing.**
- E38.** All quotations should faithfully reproduce the form of the original. Any omissions or alterations should be clearly indicated (cf. §E20).
- E39.** Care should be taken not to break up sentences by incorporating long quotations within them. Almost invariably, the result is that the reader loses the thread. After a long quotation, begin a new sentence.
- E40.** Indented quoted extracts should make sense within themselves as isolated passages; run-on quotations should make sense within the sentence in which they are placed.

- E41.** Run-on quotations should not generally be placed within brackets in order to incorporate them into sentences since this reduces them to parenthetical asides.

Presentation of Linguistic Data

- E42.** If cases or data from spoken English or from written texts are lengthy (i.e. more than four or five lines) they should be included in an appendix to your written work. Lines should be numbered and your transcription and notation conventions (if not immediately obvious) should be provided. The appendix will not be counted towards the total length of the submitted work.
- E43.** When referring to data, the relevant passages should be quoted if they are short; when they are longer, reference should be made to the appendix. In either case, always give the line number allocated in the appendix. Quotations included in the text will count towards the total length of the essay and should therefore be kept as short as possible.
- E44.** If your written work consists entirely, or almost entirely, of analysis of data, with little prose description, consult your tutor on how to lay it out.

Referencing (see the example essay given in E.48)

- E45.** All quotations and citations in your essay should carry a supporting reference giving details of their source. The point of such reference is to make available the evidence on which an argument is based. If the reader is to be able to look at this evidence, she or he must be able to identify **both** the particular book which has been used **and** the place in the book where the relevant passage may be found. References therefore need to give specific and clear information about: title; edition; page.
- E46.** References should be given as numbered footnotes at the bottom of each page of your essay. In most word-processing programmes, footnotes are accessed through the Insert menu. The important thing to stress is that the numbering of notes must be clear and sequential.

When you insert a footnote, the word-processing programme automatically places a superscript numeral in the body of the text, and opens a footer space for you to enter the details of the source you are citing.

Instructions for Referencing

The **FIRST** reference you make to any source takes the form of a footnote. All **SUBSEQUENT** references to the same source are NOT footnoted, but instead appear in abbreviated form and in parentheses (details in E.47 below).

Note on abbreviations used: in the case of books (as opposed to journal articles)

the abbreviation p. is used to indicate the page number being quoted or cited; pp. is used where the quoted or cited material extends over more than one page. For example: p.3; and pp.36-7.

First Reference Formats

For the **first** reference you make to a particular source, you should mimic one of the sample formats below, depending on the nature of the material being referenced. **NB:** for place of publication, give the first place listed on the title page. Publishers often have offices in various locations and will sometimes list some or all of these; but for purposes of this stylesheet, you should give only the first place of publication mentioned.

(a) For books:

Ian McEwan, *On Chesil Beach* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), p.23

Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (London: Viking, 1988), pp.3-4

Where there is more than one author:

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: the woman writer and the nineteenth-century literary imagination* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979), p.26

And where the book is in a later edition (i.e., not its first edition):

M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 4th edn (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981), p.132

Editions often go through several impressions or printings (listed, or summarized, with dates, on the imprint page). It is not usually necessary to specify which reprint of an edition is being used, since these will all have the same pagination. So, an imprint page which reads 'First published in 1973/ Published by Virago Press, 1979/ Reprinted 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991' may be rendered:

Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing* (London: Virago, 1979), p.9

(b) For edited books:

Janet Todd, ed., *A Dictionary of British and American Women Writers 1660-1800* (London: Methuen, 1987), p.72

Hugh MacDiarmid, *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, ed. by Kenneth Buthlay (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic

Press, 1987), p.xii

(c) **For pieces within printed books:**

Here it is important to give the author and title of the piece you are quoting or citing, as well as the author, title and other publication details of the book within which the piece appears. To make the reference as informative as possible for your reader, you should give page numbers indicating the extent of the piece, **and** the specific page or pages you are quoting from or citing. So, in the first example below, the tale by Henryson is printed on pages 37-41 of the *Oxford Book of Narrative Verse*, and the page quoted from is page 38. In the second example, the whole article is being cited:

Robert Henryson, 'The Tale of the Upland Mouse and the Burgess Mouse', in *The Oxford Book of Narrative Verse*, ed. by Iona and Peter Opie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp.37-41 (p.38)

Ruth Praver Jhabvala, 'How I Became a Holy Mother', in *The Secret Self: Short Stories by Women*, ed. by Hermione Lee (London: Dent, 1991), pp.274-91

Often, you will want to reference an article in a book where the book has more than one editor. Where there are two or three editors, this should be indicated thus:

Maria DiBattista, 'Virginia Woolf and the language of authorship', in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Sue Roe and Susan Sellers, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.130-44 (p.139)

Ian Sampson, 'Henry James and the Market', in *Modernist Writers and the Marketplace*, ed. by Ian Willison, Warwick Gould and Warren Chernaik (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp.2-22 (p.16)

In the first example above, p.139 is being quoted from; the article in the book runs from pages 130-44; in the second example, it's page 16 of an article which runs from pages 2-11. And so on.

Where there are more than three editors, as is often the case with large anthologies like the *Norton*, only the name of the first editor should be given, followed by the phrase 'and others':

Robert Browning, 'Memorabilia', in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, 3rd edn, ed. by Alexander W. Allison and others (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983), p.737

(d) For translated titles:

Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. by H.M. Parshley (London: Pan, 1988), p.88

Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, trans. by William Weaver (London: Secker and Warburg, 1983), p.6

(e) For articles in journals:

Note here that the volume number of the journal comes after the title, with the year of publication following in brackets. Note also that the page numbering abbreviation 'pp.' used for marking the page extent of pieces within printed books (as in section d. above) is omitted in the case of journal articles. So, in the first example here, the article runs from pages 13-21 of the journal and the whole article is being cited; in the second example, the article runs from pages 143-65, but only page 145 is being cited or quoted from:

Catherine Belsey, 'The Illusion of Empire: Elizabethan Expansionism and Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy', *Literature and History*, 1 (1990), 13-21

Peter Lake, 'Feminine Piety and Personal Potency: The "Emancipation" of Mrs. Jane Ratcliffe', *The Seventeenth Century*, 2 (1987), 143-65 (p.145)

Sometimes a journal will give a volume number and a part number within that volume. Where that is the case you should follow this model (here page 190 of part 4 of volume 30 is being cited):

David R. Olson, 'On the Language and Authority of Textbooks', *Journal of Communication*, 30.4 (1980), 186-96 (p.190)

(f) For materials from the internet

As far as possible, follow the style used for printed publications as detailed above. Information should be given in the following order:

- Author's name
- Title of item
- Title of complete work/resource
- Publication details (volume, issue, date)
- Full address (Universal Resource Locator (URL))
- Date at which the resource was consulted (in square brackets)
- Location of passage cited (in parentheses)

For example:

Steve Sohmer, 'The Lunar Calendar of Shakespeare's King Lear', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 5.2 (1999) <<http://purl.oclc.org/emls/05->

2/sohmlear.htm> [accessed 28 January 2000] (para. 3 of 17)

(g) Plays and Long Works

The first full reference to a play or long work should indicate the edition used. Small capital roman numerals should be used for the numbers of acts of plays, and for the numbers of 'books' and other major subdivisions. Smaller subdivisions (scenes, cantos, chapters, etc.) and line numbers are usually indicated by arabic numerals. For example, to cite lines 99-107, in Act 3 scene 4 of *Macbeth*, one would give the first reference thus:

William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. by A. R. Braunmuller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), iii. 4. 99-107

Likewise, a first reference to *Paradise Lost* citing or quoting lines 342-7 of book 9 would appear in the footnote/endnote thus:

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. by Alastair Fowler (Harlow: Longman, 1971), ix, 342-7

References to the **Bible** should be in the following form: Isaiah 22. 17; ii Corinthians 5. 13-15, and so on. Note that books of the Bible are not italicized; roman numerals are used for the numbers of books, arabic numerals (separated by a full stop) for chapters and verses.

E.47 Subsequent Reference Format (see the example essay given in E.48)

As you will see in the sample essay following, the above conventions apply to the **first** reference the essay makes to a source text. Once the reference has been given in its full form, there is no need to repeat it in its entirety. Instead, an abbreviated form of the footnote reference should appear between parentheses, after your quotation but outside the closing quotation mark. In the case of **secondary** sources, your parenthetical reference will consist of the author's name and a page reference. For example:

(McArthur, p.62)

(Chadwick and Chadwick, iii, 72)

If there can be no doubt which author is being referred to but more than one of his or her works has been cited, use the short title of the specific work followed by the page reference:

(*Worlds of Reference*, p.9)

('The Lover as Icarus', p.12)

Remember: your reader must always be able to trace these subsequent abbreviated references back to an initial full reference to the work in question.

For first mention of a **primary** text, provide full bibliographic details (as above) in a footnote. For subsequent references use the title of the poem, novel etc (rather than author). Abbreviations are also acceptable:

Novels:

(*Frankenstein*, p. 101)

Short stories:

('The Dead', p. 179)

Poems (here the number refers to line rather than page):

('Leda and the Swan' (or LS), l. 12)

Plays (here the numbers refer to act, scene and line(s))

(*Taming of the Shrew* (or TS), V.2.139)

E.48 Bibliography

Every essay must conclude with a list of all works cited or quoted from in your essay. In addition, you should include any relevant works you referred to when writing your essay but which your essay does not mention explicitly. (As you will see in the sample essay below, three relevant works are listed in the bibliography but not directly cited in the essay).

The bibliography is arranged alphabetically by the surname of the first named author or editor of the work in question. The names of collaborating authors or editors are listed in the normal order (i.e., not surname first).

The bibliography is a list of sources, not a list of references. Accordingly, books should be listed with their full publication details (as in the footnote reference), but page references for your first quoted passage should be removed. This also applies to journal articles or book chapter: include the page extent of the source, but omit the page reference for the quotation your footnote reference supports.'

The simplest way to assemble your bibliography is to copy and paste your first full footnote reference to a work, remembering 1. to reverse the name order of the first author or editor; and 2. to remove any page numbers referring to the specific passage you quoted from the book or article. Page numbers which denote the page extent of an article in a book or journal should remain: see, for example, the entry for Benjamin in the bibliography below.

If the bibliography includes more than one work by the same author or editor, a long dash should be substituted for the name after the first appearance, and the works should be arranged in alphabetical order of title, disregarding initial definite or indefinite articles (i.e., 'A' or 'The').

The sample essay following exemplifies most of the referencing formats detailed above.

E. 48. Referencing Example

[Note: this mock essay is solely for the purpose of illustrating reference conventions; its content is spurious and should not be relied upon]

In his book on modernist literature, Peter Childs describes in detail the formal characteristics of a number of ‘richly allusive and ambiguous’¹ short stories by James Joyce, Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf. Tim Armstrong augments Childs’ formalist account with a discussion of the role that different publishing venues had in the development of the short story in this period:

By the time we arrive at the short fictions of Turgenev, Joyce and Mansfield, the short story has become definitional to modernism: epiphanic, ambiguous, formally perfect—but still a basic unit of magazine publication. [...] The position of the short story can be taken as emblematic of modernism as a whole: quality cannot be dissociated from a consumer culture in which it identifies a particular audience.²

The significance of Armstrong’s contribution to short story criticism lies in the relationship it perceives between the formal character of the short story, the cultural contexts of its production and reception, and rise of modernist coterie magazine publishing. In this essay, I will explore further the relationship between these three elements with particular reference to two stories by Virginia Woolf.

In the minds of many critics, the coterie magazine functioned as the ‘engine of modernism’ (Armstrong, p.53). Mark Morrison, for example, argues that the medium offered modernist writers an outlet that was uncontaminated by mass commercial values.³ A similar case is made by Leonard Diepeveen who suggests that the magazine was the principal mechanism of ‘cultural elevation’⁴ for modernist writing.

¹ Peter Childs, *Modernism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p.93

² Tim Armstrong, *Modernism: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), pp.52-3

³ Mark Morrison, ‘The Little Magazines’, in *Modernist Writers and the Marketplace*, ed. by Ian Willison, Warwick Gould and Warren Chernaik, 2nd edn (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1996), pp.1-19

⁴ Leonard Diepeveen, ‘T.S. Eliot and the Modernist Magazine’, in *Marketing*

At the same time, other modernist critics have begun considering the ways in which particular literary forms might be said to be ‘calibrated’ (Childs, p.107) to the broader cultural conditions of modernity. Fundamental to this school of thought is the work of Walter Benjamin, who, in his essay ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, suggests that art does not simply reflect modernity, but inhabits and produces it too.⁵ It is an idea strongly echoed in recent criticism. Frederic Jameson, for example, regards the cultural function of the modernist text as a matter of making the reader feel ‘at home in what would otherwise be a distressingly alienating reality’.⁶ That is to say, in the way that it makes an aesthetic virtue out of social phenomena of fragmentation, dislocation and isolation, the modernist text participates in the process of ‘acclimatizing’⁷ the subject to the experience of technological modernity.

[...]

Modernism, ed. by Kevin J. H. Dettmar and Stephen Watts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp.2-23 (p.16)

⁵ Walter Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, in *Illuminations*, trans. by Harry Zohn (London: Pimlico, 1999), pp.211-44

⁶ Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981), p.236

⁷ Lloyd Smith, ‘The Rise of the Modernist Short Story’, *English*, 98 (1999), 13-31 (p.20)

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