(I will try to keep these technical materials to the necessary minimum. We will be doing two things: 1) learning some more about the brain. 2) opening up some of the basic questions about literature and media that critics, theorists, and philosophers have asked over the ages.)

We will watch a video on basic information about brain structures and neurochemicals (Zellner 2003). By contrast, the encyclopedia article should get you started asking questions about the nature of literature, its difference from other kinds of writing, your response, its role in your life, and so on. It is these two quite different kinds of thinking that we are trying to put together.

Reading:

a. Look at essential terms (handout or online). Don't be intimidated! Follow out the links.
c. Look at a short list of perhaps helpful books. Online.
e. The "Aesthetics" article in the online Encyclopedia Britannica, available through the library's homepage > references > encyclopedias link. 68 pp. Also, here is the link: href="http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=108463".
f. Holland, Your Mind on Media (hereafter abbreviated as YMOM), ch. 1. "Why This Book?" Online. 19pp. This covers some of the generalizations we talked about on Jan. 5.

Discussion:

* What are some of the issues that have puzzled people about literature?
* What are the basic brain structures and systems important for literature?
* What is the relation between brain and mind?

Read the "Aesthetics" article in the online Encyclopedia Britannica, available through the library's homepage > references > encyclopedias link. 68 pp.

I. 3 approaches: "to identify not to explain." Philosophy not a science. No answers?
   A. study of aesthetic concepts
   B. philosophical, not psychological, study of states of mind
   C. philosophical study of the aesthetic object.

C. The aesthetic object
   Material vs. intentional. Latter is what counts. What it means to you--right away, psychological.
   Concept of art determines our response to art object. 3.8. "The points of similarity between the art of the dressmaker and that of the composer are of significance only because of a similarity in the interests that these arts are meant to signify."

B-C1. The aesthetic "recipient."
   4.5 Exposition of Kant's "disinterestedness." Disinterestedness is the most passionate form of interest. VERY IMPORTANT FOR PSYCHOLOGY OF LITERATURE & ARTS..

B. The aesthetic experience.
   1. Disinterestedness / Bullough's "distance." Not a vehicle for curiosity nor means to an end.
      Art as play (Freud, Erikson, Kris).
      Aesthetic object is an object of sensory experience.
      Aesthetic object is at same time contemplated.
Kant et al.: Aesthetic enjoyment vs. aesthetic judgment. nnh suggests a toggle. EB says contradiction.

2. Form & content. P. 6mid. Inseparable. Is that so? Movie close-up both focuses and excludes. Maybe can think of the two aspects (focusing and excluding or form and content) separately. EB says calls for a better theory of mind.

"Imagination" Kant 2 usages:
Ordinary thought: Synthesis of perception and concept.
Aesthetic: perception is concept-free; we play. Query.

Imagination - Sartre. We add an object to the not-real. (??willing suspension of disbelief?)
Last sentence p. 7. Imagination reconstructs experience of everyday life from the not real and that is why we are interested in what is not real. Hmmm.

(Class - note! P. 7.9 Aristotle - read this to understand mimesis. Andy Warhol's tomato soup cans.)


8.4: "We can allow ourselves to feel what we normally shun to feel precisely because no one [real] is threatened."

8.4+ EB says: Emotions are founded on beliefs. We will see that this does not fit either the Damasio or the Panksepp approaches to emotion.
Stupid argument against Coleridge. Misunderstands "willingly."
2 opposite views: 1) art corrects [or corrupts] emotions; 2) to seek (be interested in) the emotions we get from art is not to be disinterested, hence not "aesthetic." N.B. nnh thinx both are psychologically naive about emotions. #2 does not recognize that pleasure or enjoyment is an emotion. Problem is one of language. Does the term "emotion" cut nature at the joints?

C. The work of art

More interest in art than in natural beauty - maybe because we all live in cities now???

1. Understanding art.
What a muddle! Understanding art implies that art has "content,"

2. Representation and expression in art.
1.6 "Works of art are about the world in somewhat the way that language can be about the world." "About" = representation. Abstract art "contains meaningful utterances." Ow! We will discuss under "content."

3. 1.9 Expression is not representation: it presents. It simply is? What is "expression" here?

4. Symbolism
Goodman: art is essentially symbolic.
Langer: symbol and object possess same logical form.

5. Form.
Perception of order. (Not much sense of particular form - big generalities.)
Gestalt psychologists.

II. The ontology of art. Examples of a given work (e.g., copies of a novel)--what is their status? What is the work of art as a thing?

III. The value of art.
Extrinsic theories. Has good moral effect on people. "An education of the emotions"?
Intrinsic theories. Art for art's sake. 5.4 - What does this mean about the joke?
Are there good and bad reasons for laughter or valuing a work of art?

IV. Taste, criticism, and judgment.
2 kinds of critical discussion: interpretive and evaluative (taste)
Kant: Is aesthetic judgment free of concepts? If so, taste is perception not evaluation.
Sublime vs. beautiful.
Burke: beauty = positive social feelings. Sublime = ultimate loneliness.
Kant: beauty = harmony & intelligibility of world. Sublime = give up attempt to understand.
Kant: judgments are grounded in subjective experience while valid for all rational beings. We will consider under evaluation.

Taste, criticism, judgment: What is the role of the critic?
Intentional fallacy.
2 possible purposes of criticism:
study & interpretation of aesthetic object
articulation of a response and justifying it
Leavis and moralistic criticism

[7.3 Note how these authors separate object and experience of object. Cp. Lakoff's experientialist approach to art and life.]

I am less concerned with the historical sections of this article.
Sanskrit Rasa theory is interesting.
Also Japanese aesthetics.

Siddarth's article on Indian aesthetics.
Encyc. Brit.

VI. Note that issues are phrased with little attention to what the reader/audience is doing, the psychology of art.
What issues are relevant for us? What do we/I hope to shed light on through study of the brain?

1) The aesthetic object. Feb. 2.
2) "Absorption" - disinterestedness. Feb. 9-16.
3) Form and content. March 9-23.
Plus creativity.

VII. Three kinds of brain. See appropriate cartoon. Bring out IGOR. Check the diagram. Idea of 1970s. Not quite correct, but gives us a way of thinking about brain functions. Imagine what a lizard can do, what a dog/cat can do, an ape, a human. What can the "top" do that the lizard can't and v.v.

1. Reptilian. Within the big repertory of human actions, what can reptiles do? Blood pressure, heartbeat. Four Fs. Coordinate legs, tail, tongue, etc. Enormously successful species. Dinosaurs lasted for 100s
M yrs. Note that invertebrates with very differently structured brains can also get quite sophisticated: cockroaches; octopuses. Pleasure-unpleasure at least.


3. Neo-mammalian or primate. Vastly increased cerebral cx, particularly the association exes. From monkeys to apes, tool use. More complex social relations. More complex communication, planning. Neo to other mammals: just more, diff'ce in degree, not kind. As you go from apes to humans, language and long-range planning (=greater inhibitory abilities, less stimulus-bound) are really the only new things for humans. Derived from cerebral cx. A difference in amount, rather than a difference in kind from other mammals. But what a difference. (Next week, ask me about the fold just below your nose.)

4. So far as literature is concerned, what levels of brain are important? Human level for language, but mammalian for emotion, imitative response, empathy. This is an important conclusion for today's session. Large cerebrum allows the cognitive functions that make reading, moviegoing, understanding lit/art possible, but the fun of it, the emotion of it, the play of it, uses the the limbic system, mammalian. Connections betw the two crucial. PLAY.

VIII. Six kinds of brain science, in order of size: molecular (neurochemistry; neuropharmacology); genetic (evolutionary psych); cellular (neurochemistry; neurobiology); systems (neuroanatomy; neurophysiology); behavioral (neurophysiology; neuropsychology); cognitive (neuropsychologists).

These constitute six modes of brain explanation.


2. Genetic. Very hot right now. BUT a gene requires an environment to express! A gene expresses by making a protein! Genetic explanation: X is the expression of a gene, where X is a protein, mechanism (e.g., saccades of eyes), function (choice of mate). Which of these? The media: "gene for language." Question of creativity: are poets born, not made?

The expression of a gene is a protein which may provide the environment for another gene. Key: What triggers a gene is environment--inner, local environment (proteins) or outer environment beyond the body. Innerly, genes work out geography of wiring of neurons. Genes in serotonin and outer violence. Not a single gene for X, always a combination.

Stages in gene expression. 1) presence or inheritance of the gene. 2) activation of the gene by the environment. 3) Gene produces protein. 4) Protein leads directly or indirectly to trait or behavior or functional system.


5. Functional. Look at particular brain functions, e.g., inhibiting motion, limb movement, hormonal control of e.g., heart rate, blood pressure.

6. Behavioral. Look at complex activities like reading, laughter, naming, finding your way around (London cabbies). Uses the previous levels of explanation or takes for granted. Block diagrams. Flow charts. Strong at UF: neuropsychology, particularly attention and aphasia. Luria. Heilman. We will be operating mostly at these last two levels.

Next week:
Session 3. January 19. More about the brain and some discussion of aesthetic issues. We will watch a video on basic information about how the brain does emotions (Turnbull 2003). Again, the encyclopedia article should open up questions which we are going to try to address with brain information.

Reading:
Keep studying your brain materials.
Solms and Turnbull, The Brain and the Inner World, chs. 1 and 2. "Introduction to Basic Concepts" and "Mind and Brain," 1-43, 45-78. 75-78 summarize the theoretical underpinnings of this course. 44+34pp.