This will be our last session that develops the knowledge of the brain that we will be using throughout the rest of the seminar. We will watch a video giving basic information about how the brain does memory—something that will be important further on in the seminar (Yovell 2003). We will open up some fundamental issues about the relation of mind and brain with respect to literature. And we will be taking a look at the ideas behind reader-response criticism.

Do you want some test quizzes? You do. And I will provide, in due course.

Reading:
Holland, "Reader-response already is cognitive criticism." Online. 2pp.
Holland, "Reader-Response Criticism." Handout. 9pp.
Holland, YMoM, ch. 3, "Where Is a Text?" Online. 21pp.

I. Neurology. Holland, "Where Is a Text?" What did you learn from this about r-r? The brain actively constructs the world we perceive. That doesn't mean the world "out there" doesn't exist. Repeat. What does this say about the outside world? NOTHING! It means you can't talk about it as if you knew all about it. Any sentence in which the "out there" is the subject of an active verb is suspect.

II. Brain Stuff.
a. Go over some basic structures on Igor. Do functions as you go.
   Longitudinal fissure
   "peri-" = around
   "hyper" = over, more than. Also "super"
   "hypo" = under, less than. Also "sub"
   Cerebrum
   Central sulcus - variability. Each brain has different-looking sulci, gyri; differs in size also.
   4 lobes + cerebellum

b. Brain stem (2 words)
   Medulla
   Pons
   Midbrain

c. Between brain stem & cerebrum, basal ganglia (mammalian) and limbic system (mammalian, maybe reptilian). Nested C-shaped structures.

   Thalamus - hypothalamus - subthalamus (subthalamic nucleus)
Thalamus as gateway: 10X as many connections back as forward. What does this imply? That we see in terms of what we know and remember. Yovell made a big point of this.

Learn terms: top-down and bottom-up. Most thinking about literature is bottom-up.

Hippocampus
Hypothalamus --> pituitary --> body

II. Newspapers: Types of brain imaging--read newspapers with skepticism. Skepticism a lost art.

Ways of imaging the brain:
- single neuron: very accurate time and space. Milliseconds
- EEG - electroencephalogram. hundredths of seconds. Millimeters in space
- ERP - event-related potential. hundredths of seconds Millimeters in space
- MEG - Magnetoencephalography: hundredths of seconds; millimeters in space.
- x-ray. Not so good on soft tissues.
- x-ray CT (computerized tomography) : 1mm w x 5 mm h.
- MRI - magnetic resonance imaging. Depends on blood flow.
- fMRI - functional MRI (while you're doing something). 1 mm. in space; 1-3" in time. Averaging.
- Talairach space. Noise of machine.
- PET - Radioactive - measures blood flow. 40 seconds.
- single neuron studies. Requires penetrating the skull.
- TMS - transcranial magnetic stimulation

Problem of the resting condition.

Do you want me to put up pop quizzes? Roger. Willco.

III. Reader-response. Is a text something "out there" in the world beyond your skin? What is the role of your senses? Given the brain's role in creating what we take to be reality, how can we talk about texts at all?

You've had three texts on this topic. What are the basic questions behind reader-response theory?

1) How do we explain variability of response? 2) How do we explain sameness of response?
   a. Variability of response.
      How do you explain the variability?
      Text-active. Reader-active. Bi-active. There is no psychological justification in the idea that text imposes meanings, deconstructs, shapes thinking, etc. Texts are not active. Hence a bi-active explanation is half wrong, all wrong.
   b. How does reader-active explain shared responses?
      i. We test the world by means of hypotheses. Think of a sense organ as a filter or hypothesis. Does this fit within the visual spectrum? Does this fit within the auditory spectrum? Only a way to think about same--not literally true.
      ii. We get shared hypotheses from our 1) physiology, and 2) our culture.

Holland, "Reader-response already is cognitive criticism." Response to Herbert Simon
Holland, "Reader-response Criticism" For psychoanalysts.
IV. How does r-r affect what we say about literature?
Blocks claims of "the" reading, "the" effect, etc. Go to non-gradable Exercise #2.
Not much. Any given reading is that reader's reading: character analysis; themes, marxism; deconstruction, evaluation, etc., etc.
But if you bracket or enclose what you say in some phrasing that means "It seems to me," "I think that," etc., you can do any kind of reading you like.

Do if you have time.

III. Newspapers: Evolution
1. Twice as many Americans believe in miracles as believe in evolution.
   Genetic change/mutation ---> replication ---> selection and go round again.
   Darwin & problem of the eye: how could so complicated a thing evolve by chance?
   God as engineer. Good at materials. Not so good at apparatus.
2. Variance (Darwin-farmers)/genetic change/mutation ---> replicate ---> select and circle.
   Middle is lawful but the first and last are random!! Not "survival of the fittest."
3. Phenotype - genotype. Not about survival of phenotypes but of genotypes. back.
4. How would you evidence evolution to the 43% unconvinced?
   1. Fossil evidence - v imperfect. Odds against fossilization, odds against finding a fossil.
   2. Embryology. Haeckel's law. Total/partial recapitulation of evolution. Embryos of diff't species are similar. You had gills and arteries to match. Tail ---> cocyx.
   4. Geographical distribution of species. Similar habitats widely separated have similar biota.
   Different habitats near one another have different biota. Selection by habitat or environment ultimately determines species.

Next week:

5. February 2. A second group of questions: What is the "willing suspension of disbelief"? How does it work? Why does it work?

Reading: