Plans, decisions and necessities in action

The conceptualization of language proposed by Lashley was strongly psychological, despite the physiological camouflage with which he decorated his presentation. The key to this mechanism of production was a limitation of productive capacity, namely, that you plan to communicate a concept that you can hold in mind all at once, but you cannot utter the concept except by saying a small bit of it in each tick of the clock. Language provides a way to take the simultaneously imagined sense of your utterance and transform it by means of a grammar into sounds that are produced successively. Animals, we can presume, have complex thoughts—pertaining to nest structure, location of food, evaluation of mates, migration to distant shores, etc.—but, lacking a grammar to cast their thoughts into a succession of forms, the most that they ever communicate is, "me, me, me, me." Of course, animals are capable, as are we, of lots of acts which unfold over time. Do all acts manifest a problem of serial order, in Lashley's terms? Please consider these three, and some of your own which may or may not pose problems of serial ordering:

• catching a dinner roll tossed to you with great accuracy;
• unlocking your front door, opening it and stepping over the threshold;
• waltzing, or doing any other dance.

If you can, include in your description a brief statement of the serial order problem.

Specific details. Write no more than 500 words on this topic. (These paragraphs contain 262 words.)

Bring this little essay with you to class on February 12.