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SPACES OF PLAY:

INVENTING THE MODERN LEISURE SPACE

IN BRITISH FICTION AND CULTURE, 1860-1960

A Dissertation in
English
by
Shawna Ross

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The dissertation of Shawna Ross was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Janet Lyon  
Associate Professor of English, Women's Studies, & Science, Technology, and Society  
Dissertation Advisor, Chair of Committee

Jeffrey Nealon  
Liberal Arts Research Professor of English

Mark Morrisson  
Interim Head  
Professor of English and Science, Technology, and Society

Jonathan Eburne  
Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature and English

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School.
Abstract

This dissertation seeks to establish the very real and important relationship between British modernist literature and the emergence of the modern leisure space after 1867. At the core of this dissertation is that claim that as leisure spaces spatially, socially, and economically modernized—as the inn became the hotel, the coast became the seaside resort, the natural spring became the spa, and the sailing ship became the luxury liner—they territorialized (both literally and figuratively) the concept of leisure in a way that is both historically unique and significant for the study of literary modernism. In studying this relationship, this dissertation draws from leisure studies, an umbrella term for the study of leisure with roots in late nineteenth-century industrial geography. Literary criticism has largely abstained from these interdisciplinary conversations about leisure, and one of the goals of this dissertation is to disrupt this unproductive silence. Conversely, while a few leisure scholars of the past two decades have identified leisure and its cultural institutions as specifically modern constructions, scholars of literature, and scholars of modernism in particular, have much to contribute to leisure studies in the way of teasing out this fundamental yet neglected relationship between leisure and modernity.

In addition to foregrounding the mutual interdependence between scholarly discourses of modernist literature and of leisure studies, this project offers an account of nineteenth- and twentieth-century non-fiction written about the emergence of leisure as a central field of discursive, economic, and social investment in Great Britain. I juxtapose this non-fiction with fiction by James and Forster to emphasize modernist literature’s tendency to play self-reflexively with philosophical and political conversations about leisure. To investigate modernist literary representations of leisure, I focus on two of the chief leisure spaces in modern fiction: the hotel and the ocean liner. One chapter discusses the emergence of the modern hotel in the nineteenth century by way of works by Dickens, Chesterton, and Trollope, while the following chapter presents a survey of modernist hotel fiction, including works by Mansfield, Bennett, Lewis, and Bowen. Finally, two chapters on the cruise ship include a cultural studies style analysis of the ocean liner’s use as a representative figure for modernity, and readings of works by Waugh and Sackville-West situate modernist leisure fiction firmly within contemporary arguments about modernism’s relationship to transnational flows, empire, and mass media technologies.
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Introduction
Modernism at Play

Picture Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald lingering over drinks at the bar of the Paris Ritz, Katherine Mansfield and Jean Rhys exiting innumerable London hotels, Friedrich Nietzsche and D. H. Lawrence moving from one sunny health resort to another, Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell playing in the waves of St. Ives, or the Surrealists and Futurists creating new manifestoes at marble-topped café tables. In each of these examples, the iconography of modernism is an iconography of leisure. Consider, for example, the quasi-utopian community created by Mrs. Ramsay in her seaside cottage (Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*), Bloom's encounter on the water's edge with his “seaside girl” Gertie Macdowell (James Joyce, *Ulysses*), the Alpine resort that enables the climactic resolution of tension between four friends (D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*), the luxurious spa, casino and tourist attractions of Bad Nauheim, whose strict hydrotherapy schedule creates an institutional infrastructure supporting sexual intrigue (Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Solder*), and the dreary café from which the intriguingly unlikeable novelist Raoul Duquette narrates his life story (Katherine Mansfield, “Je Ne Parle Pas Français”).

Despite the ubiquity of such leisure spaces in modernism, no sustained attempt has yet been made within literary criticism to account for this phenomenon, and while some critics have explored the significance of specific leisure spaces to particular modernist texts, none attempt to contextualize these particular texts within a broader cultural history of modern leisure. By “modern leisure,” I refer not to content-free idleness, but rather to engagement in a constellation
of historically specific activities that typically consume disposable income and always consume
unentailed time—time theoretically free from work and any other necessary labors of bodily and
familial survival. This binary juxtaposing labor with leisure must be understood not as a mere
hermeneutic convenience, but rather as the constitutive property of leisure, as the birth of leisure
arrives simultaneously with the birth of modern concepts of work, the work week, and the
workplace, which discursively materializes in its apotheotic form with Marx's narrative of the
work day in the first volume of *Capital* in 1867. My choice of this date corresponds to histories
of leisure produced within the academic field of leisure studies, an umbrella term perhaps most
familiar to literary critics as the nebulous or even politically suspect field whose roots in late
nineteenth-century industrial geography are visible in present-day disciplines of sport and
kinesiology, tourism and hospitality management, and physical geography. Curiously, literary
criticism has largely abstained from these interdisciplinary conversations about leisure, and in
fact one of the goals of this dissertation is to disrupt this unproductive silence. Conversely, while
a few leisure scholars of the past two decades have identified leisure and its cultural institutions
as specifically modern constructions, scholars of literature, and scholars of modernism in
particular, have much to contribute to leisure studies in the way of teasing out this fundamental
yet neglected relationship between leisure and modernity.

Modernist scholarship in particular stands to benefit from attention to leisure if only for
the simple fact that many modernist works participate in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-
century public conversation on leisure occurring in newspaper articles, cartoons, advertisements,
popular and highbrow literature, and scholarly monographs, many of which presented leisure as
the cure for the ills of the modern workplace. Although such debates have antecedents in the late-
Victorian era (with the “Rational Recreation” movement and government sponsorship of public parks, galleries, and zoos), it was during the first three decades of the twentieth century that politicians, philosophers, social scientists, and journalists proclaimed the arrival of a “leisure society” and hypothesized its effects on the productivity and happiness of the middle and working classes. This discourse responded to the increasing availability of disposable income among all economic classes, the expansion of free time to the middle and working classes, and the proliferation of commercialized leisure spaces. Furthermore, increasing investment in the leisure industry placed play at the heart of modern capitalism, producing a dazzling variety of novel leisure activities, services, workers, and spaces, the latter of which included luxury hotels, spas, resort towns, cruise ships, shopping districts, “antique districts,” “art districts,” casinos, and cinemas. At the core of this dissertation is my claim that as leisure spaces spatially, socially, and economically modernized—as the inn became the hotel, the coast became the seaside resort, the natural spring became the spa, and the sailing ship became the luxury liner—they territorialized (both literally and figuratively) the concept of leisure in a way that is both historically unique and significant for the study of literary modernism. While many leisure activities of the early twentieth century predated modernism, it was during this period that leisure activities and spaces underwent a dramatic qualitative shift as they were networked, standardized, and publicized. Leisure, in other words, modernized largely by coding an abstraction into a space, or rather, a series of spaces materially, socially, and discursively isolated as leisure spaces.

This transformation explains why I choose to investigate leisure as a spatial phenomenon, but to understand why modernists themselves were drawn to leisure as a provocation for aesthetic production, we must keep in mind that even as leisure was pushed to spatial margins
(rural counties, coastlines, mountaintops, and even the sea itself), these new leisure institutions were immersed more completely in the structures of capitalism. Consequently, they increasingly resembled the factories and offices that vacationers had left behind—an embedding of labor in leisure famously condemned by Adorno and Horkheimer. Yet decades before “The Culture Industry” claimed, “Entertainment is the prolongation of work under late capitalism...[so that] the off-duty worker can experience nothing but after-images of the work process itself” (109), the modernization and commodification of leisure were already the subject of critique in a wide range of modernist texts, including poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. Vernon Lee, Oscar Wilde, Ezra Pound, and Bertrand Russell, for example, argued that the expansion of leisure and concomitant reduction of labor would secure universal happiness, reduce international strife, and eradicate the poverty, overproduction, and unemployment coded in the social structure and boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism. Conversely, modernists like E. M. Forster, Elizabeth Bowen, Wyndham Lewis, Katherine Mansfield, Jean Rhys, Ford Madox Ford, and Vita Sackville-West—all inveterate patrons of spas, cafés, hotels, resorts, and other leisure spaces—scrutinized the ideology of modern leisure, which promised to free holiday-makers from the discipline of labor under capitalism by providing a temporary utopia of rest, romance, rejuvenation, and aesthetic pleasure. As a result, leisure spaces in these works are associated with opportunities for experiencing health, love, pleasure, comfort, or equilibrium, they are equally associated with death, frustration, social dissonance, and the breakdown of romance. Crucially, beyond creating a distinct archive of leisure by emplotting or thematizing leisure, beyond interrogating the possibilities offered or foreclosed by leisure institutions, this dissertation argues that modernism's attentiveness to the relations of work and play suggests that leisure serves for
modernity as what Foucault called a *dispositif*. Modern leisure does not effect an escape from work or from power, but rather constitutes “an especially dense transfer point for relations of power,” both a hermeneutic and a political strategy “endowed with the greatest instrumentality [and] useful for the greatest number of maneuvers” (*History of Sexuality* 103).

Consider the following line from a famous modernist poem: “I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.” This relatively simple statement is the final line of a stanza that begins with what is perhaps the most well-known line in modernist poetry: “April is the cruelest month.” To say that this line is more famous than the former is to understate the curious fact that Eliot's familiar portrait of a ruined London opens with a far less well-considered account of a luxury ski resort. The “Starnbergersee” of “The Burial of the Dead,” the first section of *The Waste Land* is Lake Starnberg, the center of a German resort town popular since the late 17th century—one of the first truly modern resorts in Europe, emerging roughly at the same time as the Georgian rejuvenation of the ancient Roman spa of Bath in England.¹ Known for its convenient proximity to Munich and for its role as a luxurious and fashionable watering-place for the rich and titled, this resort boasts the brisk mountain air for which the narrator longingly recalls, “In the mountains, there you feel free” (17). Lake Starnberg’s range of resort amenities are detailed by the narrator:

> Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
> With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,

¹ By “modern resort,” I refer to the rejuvenation of ancient Roman baths in Europe (having been abandoned as the spread of Catholicism condemned recreational bathing as sinful). This rejuvenation began in some areas in the late 16th and 17th centuries, although it was only during the early 19th century that truly modern spas emerged, complete with social calendars (both in terms of yearly “seasons” and a daily routine) and a supporting network of inns, restaurants, social halls, and shops. For more information about this shift, see Alev Lytle-Croutier, *Taking the Waters*. 
And went on in the sunlight, in to the Hofgarten,
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour. (8-11)

These lines suggest that the second narrator of “The Burial of the Dead,” supplementing the narrative of the corpse that modern scholarship associates with the poem’s first seven lines, is first and foremost a vacationer, a seasonal visitor enjoying Lake Starnberg’s impressive sport and leisure infrastructure. “Marie, Marie,” who remembers sledding as a child and as an adult still “go[es] south in the winter” (16), narrates her life-story through the temporal rhythm of the yearly winter holiday, creating a cyclical account of human life that competes with the mythical cycle of birth, life, and death represented by the corpse. At the same time, the invocation of Lake Starnberger suggests an identity for the corpse—a distant relation of the real Countess Marie, the “mad” King Ludwig II of Bavaria, found dead at the bottom of the lake in 1886.

The connection between mad Ludwig and “The Burial of the Dead,” which Harriet Davidson has called “perhaps the least discussed segment of an overly discussed poem” (98), has been analyzed in the impressive body of scholarship on “The Waste Land,” just as “Marie, Marie” has long been identified as the Countess Marie Larisch, an acquaintance of Eliot’s from his trip to Munich and the Starnberger See in 1911. Cautious reasoning and an unrelenting attention to detail has characterized such academic works. For example, “Sunlight in the Hofgarten,” the first chapter of Peter Edgerly Firchow’s recent monograph, Strange Meetings: Anglo-German Literary Encounters from 1910-1960, is devoted to a careful reconstruction of Eliot’s reasoning in changing the location of the resort from Koningsee in the first draft to Starnbergersee, which takes Firchow deep into Marie Larisch’s biography, translations, and writing style. Unexpectedly, Firchow ends his comprehensive survey with a reflection that such a formalist approach “neglects the unmistakeable historical and topographical links that the
poem...have with real events and real places” (33). This call to historicize is precisely what scholarship on “The Burial of the Dead” is lacking—at least, I argue, in regard to the resort. Yet Firchow’s subsequent discussion focuses on the politics of Lithuanian immigration: “real events,” yes, but where is the consideration for “real places?” With his customary specificity, Firchow points out that Eliot’s resort geography is not accurate; it is instead a fanciful mixture of the most impressive features of both the Koningsee and Starnbergersee resorts. While Firchow perceives this conflation as a problem preventing him from identifying “real places,” Eliot’s imaginative reconstruction suggests that resort geography is essentially a dream space particularly permeable to the vagaries of memory—or, more fundamentally, if we can venture that specific places may be the product of both physical features and subjective attributes and yet still be “real,” that the resort constitutes a unique, memorable, and aesthetically compelling site of modernity that contrasts with Eliot’s unreal city, the wasteland of urban modernity.

This academic disinterest in the significance of the resort in *The Waste Land* is even more striking in Laurence Rainey’s recent work, “Eliot among the Typists: Writing *The Waste Land*,” which documents in great biographic detail Eliot’s search for a space conducive to writing as financial stress, poor health, and overwork began to impede his composition of *The Waste Land*.² This search led him first, in October of 1921, to the English seaside resort of Margate and second, from mid-November to early January of 1922, to a quiet pension in Lausanne—yet Rainey makes no attempt has to relate the poem's sense of loss or its mode of production with Eliot's frustrated search for a peaceful and beautiful space of rest. Rainey painstakingly documents the material conditions of aesthetic labor by identifying the typewriter Eliot used in

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Lausanne, but what about the fact that he was writing from within a famous Swiss resort town?

This neglect is even more striking because he lists a bevy of interesting factual nuggets suggesting that the vacation space is central to the poem. Lines like “Summer surprised us all,” Rainey observes, were taken wholesale from the conversations, overheard by Eliot, of other guests taking rest in the resort (30) and that Vivien Eliot notes that at Margate, Eliot was "getting on amusingly" and appeared "younger, and fatter and nicer" (qtd. in Rainey 41). Focusing on leisure would reveal that it is more than coincidental that Eliot overcame writer's block and psychological collapse with a holiday at a Swiss resort, only to write a poem about the sterile monotony of urban capitalist modernity.

Modernist scholarship at present tends to explain Eliot’s use of Lake Starnberg by way of political or literary allusion. In 1967, Herbert Knust noted in passing that the Starnberger See was part of a “more fertile region” of Germany and “well into the twentieth century served as a resort for fashionable society” (9) but then interprets its use in *The Waste Land* as an adaptation of Wagner and the Grail myth. More recently, Brian Southam (2003) has accounted for the presence of the Starnberger See by noting this section’s resemblance to a poem by Valery Larbaud, and Burton Blistein’s *The Design of The Waste Land* (2008) treats the Starnberger See as a metonymic device reflecting Eliot’s interest in the Hapsburgs, Lithuanian nationalism, and “the death of royalty” (23). In all of these symbolic layers, Blistein does not consider the resort as a resort until he quotes from the *Brihatsamhita*, one of Eliot’s sources. This quote—“The gods always play where groves are, near rivers, mountains and springs and in towns with pleasure-
gardens” (qtd. in Blistein 24)—is suggestive, but he immediately returns to analyzing the
resort metaphorically, as an allusion to Dante’s use of Lake Nevi in the Paradisio (25). Yet in the
only overt discussion of leisure in the poem, Jerry Phillips and Ian Wojcik-Andrews’ “History
and The Politics of Play in T. S. Eliot's ‘The Burial of The Dead’ and Arthur Ransome's Swallows
and Amazons,” an acknowledgement of leisure in their observation that “Marie's social class is
committed to a world of leisure” is counterbalanced by their willingness to interpret the scene
figuratively. Not only do Phillips and Wojcik-Andrew find the sledding scene a metaphor for the
“integrated self lost in her personal and social history in the wasteland,” but also they find that
the “mountains are the appropriate metaphor of [modern subjects’] alienation. A landscape
traditionally...felt to be above quotidian society and impervious to time and history” (53). While
Phillips and Wojcik-Andrews helpfully illuminate the symbolic cultural weight carried by the
image of the mountain, their willingness to take seriously the discursive association of vacation
spaces with an ahistorical timelessness is not only unnecessary but also, for understanding “The
Waste Land,” misleading. In accepting and recapitulating this ideology—an ideology that masks
the turbulent and fascinating history of modern leisure—these scholars fail to consider that the
poem engages explicitly with this ideology and with the history of leisure. They instead retrench
around a politics of identity (Marie’s lost “selfhood”) that the poem’s structure, a complex
bricolage of speakers, transcends. Similarly, James Edwin Miller’s T. S. Eliot’s Personal
Wasteland: Exorcism of the Demons addresses the Starnberger See by claiming, “the rain shower
and sunlight are all suggestive of happiness and fruition and fulfillment, not only in nature, but
personally and creatively: it was in Munich that summer [in 1911] that Eliot completed ‘The
Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,’ a poem in a basic sense about a man who cannot love

women” (66). This identification of Munich and the resorts surrounding it as a powerful site of aesthetic production unfortunately remains a short biographical note in Miller’s argument, which, unconnected to the larger cultural significance for such spaces in modernity, somewhat bizarrely chooses to interpret Eliot’s capacious masterpiece in the more constricted terms of “Prufrock.”

This lack of reflexivity leads Miller to attribute Eliot’s use of Countess Marie Larisch’s conversations with him in 1911 as a result of a summer-time romance, explaining that “it was only natural” for Eliot that “fateful summer” to find himself attracted to such “an elegant, romantic personage” (67). It is perhaps fitting that Miller’s implicit and unreflective use of a popular leisure space script—the idea that romance is natural in leisure spaces, endemic to the atmosphere of resorts—marks an abrupt end of his consideration of Eliot’s use of the resort. By contrast, Marja Palmer wholly neglects this ideological weight accrued in modern leisure spaces when she claims, in spite of the idyllic aspects of Eliot’s resort imagery, that the Starnberger See is “underlines Marie’s homelessness and rootlessness....her disharmonious and shattered self” (160)—thus agreeing with Nancy Hargrove’s assertion in Landscape as Symbol in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot that the “fragmentary quality of the speaker’s life” is indicated by Eliot’s description of the resort (63). While Hargrove devotes a paragraph to describing the main features of the resort area (the public garden, the colonnades of the Hofgarten’s arcades, the groups of outdoor cafes) and its “international, cosmopolitan, and well-to-do clientele” (62), her assumption (reflected in her book’s title) is that Eliot’s resort geography is chiefly a symbol, a vehicle for other tenors rather than a bearer of cultural meaning in its own right. In her “The Great Parade: Cocteau, Picasso, Satie, Massine, Diaghilev—and T. S. Eliot,”6 Hargrove’s

assertion that the first lines of the poem, beginning with “April is the cruelest month,” are set in
the desert featured in “What the Thunder Said,” rather than also in the resort—but I see no
reason why to assume that the lines are not spoken from the resort (and in fact, due to Mad
Ludwig’s fate, there is good reason to believe that they are). Similarly dismissing the
significance of the resort scenery, Harriet Davidson, in “Eliot, Narrative, and the Time of the
World,” describes Eliot’s use of “Starnbergersee” as “an exotically particular word, a German
word, a place name, a word that does not seem to refer beyond itself compared to the portentous
‘meaningfulness’ of the opening lines” (99). Her subsequent detour from Marie’s narrative into
a discussion of “What the Thunder Said” (particularly the line “But there is no water” [359])
invokes Barthes, Ricoeur, and a host of other narrative theorists, but does not take seriously the
desire for a space that fills “What the Thunder Said.” This section, for example, laments, “Here
is no water but only rock / Rock and no water” (331-2) and desires for “A spring / A pool among
the rock” (351-2) distinct from “endless plains...in cracked earth / Ringed by the flat horizon
only / What is the city over the mountains” (370-2). These descriptions reflect an obsessive
desire for a very specific space: the leisure space of an alpine, lakeside resort, distant from the
“city over the mountains”—a resort like Lausanne, where Eliot in fact drafted “The Burial of the
Dead.”

Beyond The Waste Land, T. S. Eliot’s entire oeuvre is filled with evocative references to
the modern spaces of leisure, some filled with bitterness and some with longing, from the “one
night cheap hotels” of “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” to the seashore escapades of
Quartets. This emphasis on leisure as a powerful lens for visualizing and analyzing the

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affordances and shortcomings of modernity not only brings into focus a neglected discourse in
the work of T. S Eliot, but also begins to hint at the significance of leisure for modernism and
modernity in general—a significance that this dissertation strives to reconstruct for modernist
literary criticism.

In Chapter One, “Leisure Theory, Literary Criticism, and Modernist Studies,” I begin
tracing the usefulness of leisure spaces for modernism by reviewing the small body of current
modernist criticism about leisure and then by surveying the academic field of leisure studies, a
robust, interdisciplinary mode of inquiry whose considerable body of theoretical and empirical
studies are rooted in the field of industrial geography current during the era of literary
modernism. Although sustained critical academic interest in leisure emerged in sociology
departments during the 1960s and 1970s, most of the works I survey are drawn from the past
three decades in leisure studies, when, parallel to the ascent of literary theory, that leisure studies
began to mature as a humanist, qualitative inquiry active in nearly all disciplines in the
humanities and social sciences, including history, philosophy, cultural studies, anthropology,
sociology, human geography, and social psychology. I then read the work of contemporary
sociologist Chris Rojek against Karl Marx’s representation of the ideal balance between labor
and leisure in order to argue not only that can we fruitfully apply leisure studies concepts to
modernist literature, but also, and more fundamentally, that contemporary leisure studies is not a
field external to the definitions of modernity made by modern cultural critics and artists. Instead,
leisure studies, I argue, is itself a specifically modern discourse rooted in the arguments and
assumptions made about work and play during the era of literary modernism.
Chapter Two, “From The Leisure Class to Leisure Space: Early Modernism and the Case for Universal Leisure,” I begin charting what specific ideas and tropes that contemporary accounts of leisure owe to modernism by exploring modernist non-fiction about leisure. First, I analyze Thorstein Veblen’s The Theory of the Leisure Class (1899) and Max Weber’s The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1904-5) as early examples of how modernist works invert the Victorian discursive privileging of labor over leisure. Next, I present a quintet of modernist leisure non-fiction: Oscar Wilde's “The Soul of Man Under Socialism” (1891), Vernon Lee's Limbo and Other Essays (1898), Ezra Pound's ABC of Economics (1933), Bertrand Russell's In Praise of Idleness (1935), and Marion Milner’s An Experiment in Leisure (1937). All of these works cite leisure as a condition of modernist production, but more unexpectedly, they also argue for the creation of universal leisure through the egalitarian distribution of labor. To display these themes at work in early modernist fiction, I turn to Henry James’s New York Preface (1907) to The Portrait of a Lady and his novella Daisy Miller (1878); while the latter presents leisure as a pleasurable and productive struggle between erotic play and social convention, the former presents it as a struggle of production, an emotionally disruptive but aesthetically fertile friction between cognitive freedom and discipline.

Chapter Three, “Honor the Tourist: Possibilities for Leisure in Edwardian Travel Fiction,” turns from the theoretical and philosophical themes of the first two chapters in order to investigate early modernist leisure in the context of the larger social, spatial, and economic shifts in leisure. The works of fiction I discuss, Henry James' The Ambassadors (1903) and E. M. Forster's A Room with a View (1908), thematize the dramatic changes in leisure in modernity as leisure is territorialized into certain spaces, a process through which leisure is commodified,
homogenized, and aggregated in a “cluster” of leisure sites to create leisure zones—such as seaside resorts, the tourist’s Rome or Florence or Venice, or “the Lake District.” Nevertheless, as my readings of The Ambassadors and A Room with a View demonstrate, the modernization of leisure did not totally foreclose the leisure-seeker’s opportunities for self-determined, spontaneous, or positive leisure experiences; the production of leisure, James and Forster show, involves the dialectical interaction between commodified leisure institutions and the romantic expectations of Edwardian travelers like Louis Lambert Strether and Lucy Honeychurch.

With the end of the Chapter Three, I then move to a two-chapter consideration of one particular leisure space: the hotel. In Chapter Four, “The Hospitality Machine: The American Hotel Model and the Creation of a British Discourse, 1790-1900,” I begin by reviewing the contemporary body of work about hotels (including works by Andrew Standoval-Strausz, Bettina Matthias, Molly Berger, and Wayne Koestenbaum), then narrate the discursive history of the modern hotel as it developed in the United States (particularly through a cultural analysis of the Statler chain of hotels and the Waldorf-Astoria) and then migrated to Great Britain and Europe about half a century later. Brief accounts of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens’s reactions to the arrival of the American-style hotel in Britain are followed by longer accounts of the harsh criticism leveled at the modern hotel in the travel narratives of Anthony Trollope and (in a more humorous vein) of G. K. Chesterton. Both Trollope and Chesterton use the hotel as a convenient figure through which to conceptualize their critique of modern capitalism, although my readings of their works also emphasize how late Victorians often considered the modern hotel as an eraser of national difference that, through the commodification of transient lodgings, precluded—rather than enabled—cosmopolitan travel.
Although these four nineteenth-century writers largely condemn the hotel institution as an opportunistic bid for pure profit at the expense of style, comfort, and character, their attitudes contrast greatly with that of the modernist writers I explore in Chapter Five, “Modernism at the Grand Hotel: A Survey.” In this chapter, I briefly sketch a portrait of modernist hotel fiction in order to capture a multilayered snapshot of the diversity and ubiquity of hotel modernism and characterize the cultural position of the hotel in the early twentieth century by reading the London Ritz as an irrational, fluid space (despite the architect’s attempts toward the contrary). Next, the heart of the chapter consists of a broad overview of hotel modernism—the term I use for many works of poetry, non-fiction, and fiction by modernists that foreground the hotel as a unique, highly modernized space affording novel social encounters and economic transactions. While I incorporate a few works by French and German writers (in order to stress that hotel modernism was an explicitly international phenomenon), this overview focuses on works by English authors, including Arnold Bennett, Wyndham Lewis, George Orwell and Jean Rhys. Finally, I read Katherine Mansfield’s first book of short stories, *At a German Pension* (1911), as an apt allegorization of the relationship between leisure and modernism by showing how the intricate and often tangential relations of the stories of *In a German Pension* create a virtual map of the entire spa town. In doing so, Mansfield, like all the modernists featured in this dissertation, not only creates modernism by writing through the leisure spaces of modernity, but also creates a novel portrait of leisure—thus making the spaces of leisure a graspable or knowable object, as do the social analysis of hotels in the works of modernist non-fiction examined in Chapter Two. *At a German Pension* reveals that just as the hotel made Mansfield’s stories possible, so too did Mansfield make the hotel (and the spa environment around it) possible. Ultimately, these various
texts project incommensurable models of the hotel that reflect modernists’ changing analysis of the modern hotel’s role in the transnational flows of tourism.

Just as Chapters Four and Five serve the dissertation as a set about the hotel, Chapters Six and Seven are meant as a set of chapters that discuss the ocean liner and its dialectical partner, the cruise ship. In Chapter Six, “The Perils of Seagoing Comfort: Joseph Conrad, Evelyn Waugh, and the Metaliner Sublime,” I analyze Joseph Conrad’s response to the sinking of the Titanic as a means to introduce the ocean liner’s use in the modern public discourse of leisure as a test-case for the wisdom or folly of modernizing, commodifying, and standardizing leisure spaces. Next, I isolate what I call the “metaliner sublime,” the visual rhetoric of the Queen Mary (1936), whose interiors were filled with art that worked as a defensive, self-reflexive, self-mythologizing response to the increasing luxury (and decreasing sense of adventure) accompanying transatlantic crossings. Finally, I examine Evelyn Waugh’s career-long fascination with liners and cruisers, particularly in Brideshead Revisited (1944) and The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold (1957), as indicative of late modernism’s shrewd analysis of modern leisure’s affordances and limitations. While Brideshead Revisited comically and self-reflexively thematizes the fictional tropes that abounded in modern fiction and film about ocean liners, The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold locates the cruise ship as a means to visualize the end of modernity and beginning of postmodernity.

In Chapter Seven, “The Uses to which a Ship is Put: Le Corbusier, Vita Sackville-West, and Transnational Modernism,” I investigate the modern ocean liner’s role in conceptualizing modernity. I begin by addressing Le Corbusier’s curiously divergent representations of these modern ships by juxtaposing his use of the ocean liner as a provocation for an austere new architecture in Vers un architecture with his indulgence in leisurely relaxation, play, and romance.
with Josephine Baker on the *Giulio Cesare* and the *Lutetia*. Le Corbusier, I conclude, is a particularly compelling example of how modern subjects’ experiences of leisure always exceeded the social and economic constraints encoded in leisure spaces. Next, I look at the visual rhetoric of the ocean liner in the newspapers and publicity materials of the first half of the twentieth century, all of which deploy the ocean liner, I argue, as a mode of conceptualizing and visualizing modernity, particularly its increasingly global economic and demographic flows. Finally, my extended reading of Vita Sackville-West’s *No Signposts in the Sea* provides an example of the cruise ship in modernist fiction analogous to those striking and visionary illustrations of modern steamships. Cruising is, for West, a mode of touring not exotic islands but rather the global flows characterizing modern empire and postmodern neocolonialism—making the cruise ship and the ocean liner a significant though neglected figure that is central to the current trend in modernist literary criticism to focus on the “transnational.” *No Signposts in the Sea* not only provides a crucial representation of what is perhaps the most central material and institutional underpinning of transnationality—the ship—but also projects into the future of postmodern leisure with her depiction of a flow of tourists producing value through merely circulating, making them an unlikely but profitable and highly ironic replacement the flow of slaves, indentured servants, emigrants, and commodities that structured empire.

The conclusion, “Modernism as Leisure, Leisure as Modernism,” continues tracing the legacy of modernist representations of leisure not only for postmodern culture—via a brief look at Agatha Christie’s *At Bertram’s Hotel* (1965)—but also for leisure studies. In doing so, I hope to reveal the timeliness and relevance of this dissertation for understanding contemporary leisure.
Chapter 1
Leisure Theory, Literary Criticism, and Modernist Studies

This chapter attempts to situate my arguments about modernist fiction and non-fiction about leisure as simultaneously an adoption and revision of the existing body of scholarly work on leisure—the vast majority of which occurs at present outside of departments of English. By reviewing the academic field of leisure studies, I wish not only to introduce helpful critical concepts about leisure that will be used in the following chapters and, I argue, could be of use to literary critics outside of British modernism, but also to emphasize that leisure studies itself has been built upon the discourses on leisure that proliferated during the era of literary modernism. Work and leisure were cast discursively as opposites during the era of modernism (and, to a large degree, today as well), although, as I have argued in the Introduction, should not be regarded as mutually exclusive. Considering that the leisure industry employed a large number of people, and considering that many modernists (including Friedrich Nietzsche and T. S. Eliot) wrote many of their most well-known books in spaces of leisure, one man's leisure space is frequently another's work space. Even many actual leisure activities compel modes of participation more closely associated with the work environments of a capitalist economy; while I will discuss this at greater length below, I will note now that many leisure activities are teleologically structured (such as sports or hikes to a monument or famous views), some require a great amount of repetition, discipline, and rule following (such as performing music and arranging flowers), and some are organized around the circulation of money and commodities (such as shopping and
In terms of the organization of leisure itself, I point to the modern leisure space, itself a technology for organizing space, including a group of modern for-profit institutions, such as hotels, seaside and mountain resorts, spas, and cruise ships, designed to facilitate and, perhaps more significantly, centralize leisure activities. I consider the concept of the “leisure space” as more productive in the context of modernist literature and culture than the concepts of “travel” and “tourism” because those terms suggest an emphasis on experiencing an unfamiliar locale or culture. While these terms may be appropriate for characterizing a certain strain of Victorian travel writing, in modernist fiction and non-fiction, this emphasis on an encounter with a geographical or cultural Other is accompanied by, or indeed in most cases, wholly superseded by, an interest in leisure as a network of activities and social behaviors considered appropriate within a specific space—particularly insofar as they reinforce or question specifically British values rather than focusing on those of a foreign host culture. While leisure spaces in modernist fiction may invite a bending of social norms, these differences are not typically conceived as “foreign.” For example, whereas a Victorian travel writer might ponder the relative value of a British custom as opposed to a foreign custom (think, for example, of the Victorian obsession with comparing the harem and middle-class marriage), a modernist writer might ponder the relative value of activities and behaviors considered appropriate within a leisure space versus the different norms governing a non-leisure space. In particular, while the leisure spaces in these works are associated with singular opportunities for experiencing health, love, pleasure, comfort, or equilibrium, they are equally associated with frustrated goals or social dissonance, ineffectual release in the face of cultural breakdown, sexual experiences as sordid or partial interactions that lack profundity, death and destruction, and the temporary or delusional nature of romance. Thus,
although modernist works often recapitulate the dominant cultural discourse of leisure spaces as exceptional sites that enable positive or novel experiences that are regarded as impossible or impractical in a non-leisure space, they also critique this discourse by showing the limitations of such spaces' ability to facilitate health, romance, relaxation, rejuvenation, or artistic production.

**An Introduction to Leisure Studies**

The academic study of leisure is quite complex, spanning many departments and encompassing a wide variety of methodological approaches. In terms of sheer numbers of students, scholars, and publications, leisure is approached most frequently as an applied social science in a more or less dedicated department that may take a variety of titles, with each title reflecting a department's specific strengths and faculty interests. Those current academic approaches to the study of leisure, which are dedicated to training leisure professionals and developing contemporary leisure spaces and activities (rather than to probing leisure's function as a cultural institution), began in the 1930s in geography departments as “industrial geography,” making it the oldest and most long-lasting academic approach to leisure. Although some scholars in such departments materially contribute to theoretical discussions of leisure, the bulk of non-developmental, critical, and theoretical study of leisure relevant for the present project occurs within sociology, where “leisure studies” became a more or less cohesive subfield

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8 Examples of these department names include Leisure Studies; Recreation and Leisure; Kinesiology and Leisure Studies; Recreation and Tourism Management; Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism; Health, Leisure, and Exercise Studies; or Recreation, Sport, and Tourism.

9 Interestingly, Max Weber's brother, Alfred Weber, was a founding practitioner of industrial geography.
around the 1960s. Other disciplines contributing more or less frequent analyses of leisure include social psychology, anthropology (particularly in the form of studies of sporting culture), geography (where it began as a field of physical geography but is now chiefly

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10 Of course, sociologists considered leisure before this date; in *The Sociology of Leisure*, Joffre Dumazedier points to the 1950s as the moment when sociology began concerned with leisure, though he also lists Marx as a significant forerunner to leisure studies in his concern about the leisure time of the working class. In *Leisure and Capitalism*, Chris Rojek dials that date even further back, arguing that Weber, Adorno, and Marx initiated a “submerged” but powerful sociological analysis of leisure. While I agree with Rojek and in fact will make use of Adorno's late essay “Free Time” below and in Chapter Three, the point here is to summarize the evolution of leisure as a sustained topic of conversation among sociologists.

11 Aside from geography departments' early considerations of leisure as a facet of industrial geography, psychology was the first domain outside of leisure studies to consider leisure. Social psychologists, spearheaded by B. L. Driver, began looking at leisure in the 1970s to study the psychological motivation for and value of leisure, leading to works like John Neulinger's *The Psychology of Leisure* (1974), a textbook on the social psychology of leisure (Seppo Iso-Ahola's *The Social Psychology of Leisure and Recreation* [1980]), and a special edition of the journal *Society and Leisure* on the social-psychological perspective on leisure in 1984. More recently, social-psychological work on leisure has declined, while other domains in psychology have begun to consider leisure, such as behavior psychology (Douglas' Kleiber's 1999 *Leisure Experience and Human Development*) and economic psychology (Josef A. Mazanec, G. I. Crouch, and Arch G. Woodside's 2001 *Consumer Psychology of Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure*).

discussed within cultural and human geography), and history (usually as highly focused microhistories of specific leisure institutions in one cultural group at one historical moment).

Although many of these analyses of leisure outside of sociology are interdisciplinary in nature—for example, by making use of gender, postcolonial, or space theory—the majority are, I believe, limited by their neglect of current theoretical and methodological conversations occurring within leisure studies sociology. I do not wish to replicate that neglect in my consideration of leisure within the field of literary criticism because those conversations revolve around fundamental questions about leisure, including the definition of leisure, the relationship between leisure practices and the cultures they belong to, the distinction between work and leisure, the spatial and temporal properties of leisure, the commercialization of leisure, and the constitutive roles played by race, class, gender, and sexuality.

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13 Classic works of what we might call the geography of leisure were largely published in the 1990s, including Mike Davis's *City of Quartz* (1992), Nicholas Fyfe's *Images of the Street* (1998), and Dean MacCannell's *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1999); the end of this decade culminated in the founding of the journal *Tourism Geographies*. For a thorough account of scholarship on leisure within cultural geography, refer to Cara Aitchison, Nicola E. MacLeod, and Stephen J. Shaw's *Leisure and Tourism Landscapes: Social and Cultural Geographies* (2000) and David Crouch's *Leisure/Tourism Geographies* (1999). Geographical works dealing with leisure studies more recently have continued this focus on tourism, often focusing on tourism as consumption, tourism as a negotiation of or reworking of regional or national identity, and conflicts based in tourism (such as congestion and conflict between locals and tourists). These works include Irena Ateljevic, Nigel Morgan, and Annette Pritchard's *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies: Creating an Academy of Hope* (2007), Michael Haldrup and Jonas Larsen's *Tourism, Performance, and the Everyday: Consuming the Orient* (2009) and Cara Aitchison's *Gender and Tourism: Social, Cultural, and Spatial Perspectives* (2011). While geographical perspectives represent some of the most exciting work on leisure, the present project leans more heavily on leisure studies proper (that is, the tradition within sociology), partly because literary critics are already familiar with the theoretical concepts undergirding such work in geography (e.g., Foucault, De Certeau, Bachelard, Lefebvre, Soja, Bachelard, Harvey). Though my work certainly makes use of space theory, the foundational work for adapting space theory to the study of literature has already been done, in particular by the literary critics focusing on hotels in literature (Bettina Matthias and Joanna Pready) and by literary critics working on space and modernism (Andrew Thacker and Peter Brooker). Furthermore, I find the concepts of leisure and leisure space to be more productive for the present work than the concept of space in general because the thematic preoccupations of modernists writing about leisure spaces closely parallel the set of theoretical questions that underpins and organizes leisure studies.

No literary critic is, of course, obligated to agree with any of the answers given by leisure studies sociologists. Neither is it incumbent upon us to accept sociological concepts developed in the “real world” and apply them, immediately and unreflectively, to works of fiction. This is particularly true for modernist scholars because leisure studies as a rule works on contemporary leisure. Yet paying attention to leisure studies—and in particular, the “critical leisure studies” begun in the 1980s—will help us avoid two misleading extremes that I describe further in Chapter Four: defining leisure as a liberatory escape from the everyday world of social constraint and capitalist labor imperatives, and defining leisure as an exact “microcosm” of the society that creates it. While the former extreme ignores the fact that leisure too is bound by social rules and constructs, the latter extreme reduces leisure to a merely symbolic activity. Taking up this latter extreme as an example, it is important to note that many leisure studies scholars have, since the 1980s, complicated and in some cases rejected the view that leisure can be seen as a symbolic expression of the individual's position in a given culture. John R. Kelly's “symbolic interaction” model of leisure, which was influential in sociology during the 1980s and 1990s, complicated this simple, allegorical vision of leisure, yet many scholars investigating leisure within a number of disciplines (including the few analyses of leisure institutions within literary criticism on

15 In this common problem in leisure studies, in fact, I find an opportunity for literary critics and cultural historians to contribute a new dimension to leisure studies. Comparing past and present manifestations of leisure may help to isolate the historical and cultural specificity of leisure practices, as well as to trace the history of leisure with more depth, detail, and specificity than is typically found in leisure studies. In addition, literary critics, by analyzing fictional engagements with leisure, will help leisure scholars to give more recognition to the discursive dimension of leisure, thereby also encouraging an awareness of the intellectual history of leisure as a concept, which colors leisure experiences, no matter how novel or contemporary they may seem. Finally, literary critics can contribute to leisure studies an appreciation for the significance of fiction and poetry as not only a powerful influence shaping the popularity of certain leisure activities (consider, for example, the Romantic poets' influence on tourism in the Lake District and the number of tourists brought to Bath through the novels of Jane Austen), but also as one of the primary ways through which subjects experience, critique, and reinvent leisure. While readers “learn” how to experience leisure through reading (and vicariously experience the leisure activities described in that literature), writers also reveal the shortcomings of leisure experiences and spaces and, in many cases, imaginatively create a better leisure experience (my analysis of Forster's *A Room with a View* later in the present chapter will exemplify this mode of reinvention).
modernism) nevertheless treat leisure as merely a symbol of a culture rather than an active participant in culture. Kelly, for example, notes that the foundational figure in the anthropology of leisure, Garry Chick, treated leisure as symbolic, inhabiting a “derivative” position that was “expressive” of a larger culture that produces leisure as an automatic by-product. Kelly approves of Chick's work insofar as it regards leisure as closely related to economics and “material culture.” Though my work does emphasize the relationship between modern leisure and capitalism, it does not partake of the outmoded, “vulgar Marxist” superstructure/base model that Kelly appears to applaud in Chick's work. Instead, just as Raymond Williams argues in *Marxism and Literature* that culture is not a determined reflection of material conditions, neither is leisure merely a passive consequence of an economic system or of a larger culture.

This question of leisure's relationship to the culture it inhabits—or in other words, the question of its autonomy—has been a fraught one in leisure studies sociology, and indeed it is still a bone of contention today. This lack of concord is not, of course, an obstacle in the way of applying it germanely to literary criticism and theory. In fact, by presenting the following history of leisure studies in sociology as a series of challenges to common-sense ideas about leisure, I wish to illuminate potential pitfalls that literary criticism on modernist leisure and leisure spaces should avoid, while still presenting a portrait of leisure studies as a dynamic field capacious enough to hold often contradictory theses. At the same time, I intend that the readings of modernist leisure space fiction and non-fiction that follows in this dissertation will reveal the theoretical cruxes of leisure studies to be dominant in modernist texts as well—allowing me to suggest that leisure theory itself is an invention of the modern period. Though the most

17 See *Marxism and Literature*, 75-100.
influential contemporary leisure theorists, both inside and outside of sociology departments, more or less implicitly make use of concepts associated with theories of modernity—including seminal works by John Urry, Dean MacCannell, and Chris Rojek—they explicitly cast these discussions in the context of postmodern theory (particularly Baudrillard, Eco, and Jameson). Mainstream leisure theory, I argue, significantly underestimate the degree to which the spatial, temporal, political, and economic concepts they use to describe leisure, as well as the tensions they find constitutive of leisure, are emphatically modern concepts and tensions. I will return to this critique of leisure studies in the second half of this chapter; for now, I wish to turn my attention to leisure studies’ very useful and insightful critique of common-sense notions of leisure.

The sociological study of leisure as a specific object of analysis—that is, the conscious grouping of a certain set of activities under the abstract category of “leisure”—began after World War II. While sociologists had previously considered the significance of particular sports or recreational activities, leisure did not become a stand-alone object of academic inquiry until the growth of post-war optimism among philosophers, economists, and sociologists who asserted that Western societies were moving towards a society of leisure. As evidence, these academics pointed to the growth of the welfare state, the apparently imminent arrival of full employment in Keynesian nation-states, the reduction of the workweek with the intensification of industrial automation, and the massive post-war increase in the production of leisure commodities, combined with the rising wages with which consumers could purchase them. These attitudes were reflected in the “functionalist” method that dominated leisure studies sociology from the 1950s to the 1970s, best exemplified by Talcott Parsons and Joffre Dumazedier, whose *Toward a
Society of Leisure (published in French in 1962 and translated to English in 1967) is largely regarded as the foundational text of leisure sociology. Dumazedier asserted that leisure, defined as discretionary or “free” time, is constantly increasing, contributes to personal development, and successfully bridges the gap between the individual and the community by instilling communal values in the individual, thereby increasing social solidarity. According to functionalism, individuals play social “roles” assigned to them during their leisure experiences, and because these roles approximate the specific roles they play during non-leisure time, leisure activities are important contexts within which social solidarity is forged. For functionalists, the “function” of leisure, in short, is to provide a nominally playful environment for social training. As Karl Spracklen points out, under this conception of leisure, the function of researchers “is simply one of following [leisure] trends and explaining them;” thus, functionalists' belief that “there is a trend towards greater freedom of choice in leisure” took the critical edge off sociology and off leisure itself, which is reduced to being, in the words of William Bacon, “a part of a liberal capitalist industry that provides for our consumer needs” (qtd. in Spracklen 2). While functionalism became less important after the 1970s, it is still an approach used by some leisure sociologists, including Dumazedier himself (who published until the 1990s), Kenneth Roberts, and Stanley Parker, who divides leisure into three types that correspond with three types of work experience. According to Parker, workers who are intellectually challenged seek “extension” leisure that approximates the type of challenges they encounter as they work (but allows them to choose the tasks themselves), while workers (such as miners) who are physically or psychologically endangered by their work seek “opposition” leisure that repairs the ravages of
their work, and workers whose jobs are neither particularly oppressive nor fulfilling seek
“neutral” leisure experiences that require only passive participation.

We can see in Parker's tripartite model the basis for the large-scale critique of
functionalism that began in the 1980s. Leisure experiences are represented in Parker's model as
the negative images of labor experiences—a kind of after-effect determined automatically by the
conditions of work. This model of leisure, which values leisure through its social function of
relieving and refreshing workers despite inequalities in the division of labor, was reinterpreted
as, at best, an underestimation of individual choice and, at worst, an institutionalized apology for
restrictions on leisure imposed by economic forces. In general, functionalist assumptions
exposed and critiqued during the 1980s for their assertions that leisure is discretionary (that is, a
matter of personal choice) and that leisure is always a progressive social force. For example, in
Capitalism and Leisure Theory (1985), Chris Rojek adapts Durkheim's The Division of Labor in
Society to argue that some leisure activities invoke negative emotions like self-pity or aggression,
while others invite anti-social, egotistical behaviors, and others exacerbate feelings of anomie
and normlessness. Other leisure theorists in the 1980s uncovered more kinds of “negative” or
bad leisure (such as sociologists studying the use of drugs, like Gene Quarrick, and the followers
of Norbert Elias' “civilizing thesis,” which targets football as the simultaneous management of
and containment of cruelty), not in order to condemn such behaviors—Quarrick's book, for
example, is called Our Sweetest Hours—but rather in order to disrupt the functionalist habit of
morally “approving” the leisure activities as an inherent social good.

Significantly, the two dominant strains of leisure studies critiques in the 1980s and 1990s,
Gramscianism and feminism, posited the contrary: that leisure is quite often a negative social
force because it produces and reproduces social inequalities. Feminist leisure scholars like Karla Henderson, Daniel Dustin, and Jean Yule began to follow Rosemary Deem's pathbreaking *All Work and No Play: The Sociology of Women and Leisure* (1987) by critiquing leisure studies for its masculinist perspective that ignored women's experiences of leisure in their positing of a “neutral” subject of leisure who, upon further inspection, could only be a male. Because the binary leisure/work relies upon the concept of “work” as happening at a specific time and place outside of the home, leisure studies has privileged careers that have historically been reserved for males while casually categorizing women's activities as leisure. As a result, leisure studies scholars accepted the model of feminine leisure given in Thornstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), which argued that women vicariously perform leisure for their fathers and husbands. By contrast, Deem and other feminist leisure scholars argued that the home is a space of unpaid labor for girls and women of *all* socioeconomic classes, thereby invalidating for women the foundational leisure studies distinction between work and leisure. Even when women do leave the home for non-domestic leisure, they are often accompanied by their families and therefore perceive these leisure activities as extension of their duties as wives and mothers, while during private leisure experiences, they are often haunted by guilt at having abandoned their families.

The growth of feminist leisure studies, while it corrected decades of neglect regarding women's experiences of leisure, was quickly critiqued on two fronts. First, some scholars accused early feminist work of overstating the case, which resulted in more than a few arguments concerning women's positive experiences of leisure. Cara Aitchison, for example, points to the feminist deconstruction of the work/leisure binary as bringing to the surface a whole host of
previously ignored “informal” domestic activities that constitute “hidden forms of leisure” (122). Such works applauded, for example, the role of assembly rooms and balls as ways for women to take charge of the matrimonial market,\textsuperscript{18} the use of photography by women to record and express domestic life in new ways,\textsuperscript{19} and even the opportunity provided by the prescribed bed rest for women to enjoy time away from domestic duties.\textsuperscript{20} Second, this feminist work has been questioned for its neglect of issues of class and race. In fact, despite the large body of class-based critiques of leisure as a social force—a body of criticism that shares feminist leisure critiques’ deconstruction of the supposed “freedom” of leisure experiences—I would argue that leisure studies today as a whole (much less feminist-oriented leisure studies) is still relatively uncognizant of the role race plays in leisure. Despite these shortcomings, it is not a difficult conceptual leap to see the applicability of this gendered differential in leisure during the period of modernism. Though I would never posit a transhistorical, “universal” female experience of leisure, we can see distinct parallels in modernist representations of women struggling to negotiate the work-leisure divide, such as Virginia Woolf’s vision of Jane Austen hiding her manuscripts from social callers in \textit{A Room of One’s Own} and Jean Rhys’ many portrayals of women who, on the brink of financial and social ruin, seek necessary and

\textsuperscript{18} See Jane Rendell’s “Almack’s Assembly Rooms–A Site of Sexual Pleasure” in \textit{Journal of Architectural Education} 55.3 (2002): 136-49.


\textsuperscript{20} In \textit{Illness as Metaphor}, for example, Susan Sontag claimed, “The Romantics invented invalidism as a pretext for leisure, and for diminishing bourgeois obligations in order to live only for one’s art. It was a way of retreating from the world without having to take the responsibility for the decision” (37-8). Feminist historian Jan Marsh unfolds this argument in the context of the Victorian female invalid in her works on the Pre-Raphaelites, including \textit{Christina Rossetti: A Literary Biography} (1994).
immediate financial profit by manipulating the commodification of apparently “leisurely” or “domestic” female activities (most notably sex and shopping).

The Economic Critique of Leisure

At the same time feminist critics elaborated the constraints of female leisure, a range of analyses emphasized (and condemned) the commodification of leisure—some by adapting theoretical works of Marxism, and others by turning to the history of leisure. Both approaches emphasize how the industrialization of leisure constrains leisure experiences by structuring them to maximize profit rather than to increase the leisured subject's experience of freedom, pleasure, sociability, self-expression, and self-improvement, thereby eroding the very benefits of leisure that functionalist leisure sociology had cited as central benefits afforded to leisure-seekers. Also known as “critical leisure studies,” this heavily Gramscian analysis interprets leisure as a crucial form of hegemony, where economic and political power is maintained less by brute force than it is by the creation of a culture based on “voluntary” participation in a realm of leisure that is determined, paradoxically, by the structures of labor. For example, leisure is constructed as a reward for successfully completed work (not, say, as an inalienable right or common feature of human life in general), tolerated by the bourgeoisie upon the grounds that it recharges the worker for another day of successful labor. John Clarke and Charles Critcher's influential The Devil Makes Work, one of the earliest of such arguments (1985), denied that leisure experiences were rooted in choice, freedom, and self-expression, but rather argued that functionalism tacitly approved of the state's use of leisure as a disciplinary mechanism. A wave of similar arguments followed Clarke and Critcher's book, many of which explore how, in Shaun Best's words, commodified leisure is compromised as a domain of “freedom” because “the rhetoric of
consumer sovereignty is used to conceal power relationships” (38). Inspired by Marxist critique (including Weber's rationalization theory and Adorno and Horkheimer's work on the culture industry), by new research in the history of tourism, and by the empirical and theoretical work coming out of the Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies, leisure studies research on contemporary tourism reinforced this mounting distrust of the relationship between leisure, power, and capitalism during the 1980s and 1990s.

The most influential texts of this period in leisure studies include McKendrick, Plumb, and Brewer's group of essays, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (1982) and John Urry's *Consuming Places* (1995). Plumb's “The Commercialization of Leisure” chastises “both economic historians and social historians [who] have scarcely paid attention to the early history of commercialized leisure” (265). Plumb argues that the commercialization of leisure, which began in the 1690s, led to the creation of a leisure industry firmly in place by the 1760s—the same dates usually given as the beginning of modern industrial formations, thereby identifying the leisure commodity as a contemporary of modern capitalism, rather than as the uniquely postmodern formation enumerated in Baudrillard's *America* and *Simulacra and Simulation* and in Eco's *Travels in Hyperreality*. Plumb identifies the printed word as the first leisure commodity, pointing to the dramatic increase in newspapers during the 1690s, the creation of circulating libraries in the 1720s, the establishment of music publishers in the 1750s, and the steady decline in the price of printed matter over the 18th century. A rhetoric of self-improvement pervaded these commodities and associated the consumption of leisure commodities with investment in the self, turning leisured women and children into commodities produced by the consumption of other commodities. Advertisements for fox hunts, balls, pleasure gardens, and cricket matches
compounded the commercialization of leisure through print and contributed to the growing number of upper- and middle-class leisure fads and “manias” (such as urban gardening and print collecting) in the 18th and 19th centuries. Pet ownership, music, and sports were transformed into increasingly regulated, specialized, and homogenized activities supporting lucrative business ventures to supply commodities necessary for these domestic leisure activities, while public leisure opportunities increased dramatically with the creation of for-profit dedicated leisure spaces such as music halls, concert halls, assembly rooms, shopping districts, sports fields, bingo halls, betting shops, pleasure gardens, spas, and seaside resorts. Ultimately, Brewer concludes that the commercialization of leisure propped up industrial growth by creating and then continually intensifying consumer demand for products that exceeded the “realm of necessity,” to borrow Marx's phrase.

A second work of history that heavily influenced leisure studies is Gary Cross's *A Social History of Leisure Since 1600* (1990), which emphasizes the role of economic and political power as engines of historical change in leisure activities. Cross's work documents how the traditional leisure calendar, which had been dominated by the agricultural season and had been punctuated by an irregular though frequent stream of days traditionally freed from work (such as May Day, Mardi Gras, and “St. Monday,” in which skilled artisans enjoyed three-day weekends), was increasingly stripped free of holidays from the last half of the 16th century onward. The rise of Puritanism in the 17th century outlawed the enjoyment of traditional Sunday leisure activities (cards, drinking, bear-baiting, and dancing), and most of these new limitations were kept on even after the Restoration in 1660. While the aristocracy had before subsidized many laboring class leisure activities, including team sports and local festivals, the Industrial Revolution created an
affluent class intent on limiting the leisure of the working class by whose work they profited—
thereby resulting in a six-day work week purged of the majority of traditional holidays and a
twelve- to fourteen-hour work day purged of the three-hour lunches that were common in the
Medieval and Renaissance eras. By the 1870s, the medley of socially guaranteed worker's
holidays had been reduced to one Bank Holiday. As a result of this concentration of work into a
specified time and place, between 1780 and 1850, Cross argues that work and leisure
“increasingly be[came] experienced as radical opposites, rather than as complementary, or even
indistinguishable activities....Gradually, people expected less intrinsic satisfaction from work
and, instead, sought increased compensation for it and more time free from it” (62). Cross's text,
then, can be read as an historical narrative of the creation of leisure as another facet of the
capitalist transformation of work.

Critical leisure studies did read the kind of work done by researchers like Cross, Plumb,
Brewer, and McKendrick in this way, using it as historical proof for their claims that leisure is
not an escape from the rhythms of capitalist labor, but rather another manifestation of it—a
broadening of its terrain, not a limiting of it. Although this recognition of “leisure” as a cultural
and historically contingent construct that developed parallel with the modern concept of work had
long been a staple in leisure studies, the new Gramscian “twist” on the argument insisted that this
dependence deconstructed leisure—unmasking it as another kind of work and making leisure
unavailable as a figure for absolute freedom and personal choice outside of the necessity of labor
and the constraints of consumer society. These Gramscian analyses interpreted early versions of
the thesis that industrial work created the modern concept of leisure as reiterating capitalist
ideology rather than critiquing such ideology. For example, whereas E. P. Thompson's influential
“Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism” (1967) argues that before industrialism, time “was not experienced as an external constraint, which is somehow 'outside' the self, and which structures life in a fixed and inflexible way” (qtd. in Rojek 1985: 25), Marxist analyses of leisure in the 1980s and 1990s reject Thompson's emphasis on the phenomenological experience of time in favor of regarding the labor-leisure divide as a particularly damaging form of double consciousness. In addition, though newer constructions of the labor-leisure divide build off of arguments like Thompson's regarding the commodification of time, they focus on the spatial (rather than temporal) dimension of the work-labor divide in order to critique modern leisure as yet another impetus for consumption. John Urry's *Consuming Places*, for example, enumerates no fewer than four modes of consumption associated with contemporary tourist destinations: the restructuring of destinations as commodities (making them resemble shopping malls), the traveler's passive visual consumption of the space (denoting a lack of “deep” interaction with the space), the destructive consumption of the space through the environmental damage caused by mass tourism, and the traveler's consumption of his or her own identity (as a differential effect produced by viewing the Other). Works that, unlike Urry's, deal with the cultural symbolism of leisure rather than any actual leisure experiences serve to illuminate even more clearly this gap between the promises and reality of leisure; for example, Dean MacCannell's *The Tourist* argues that tourists seek a space untouched by both industrial and postindustrial capitalism.

As one might expect from the pessimism of this Gramscian strain of leisure studies, such works often explicitly invoke the attitude towards leisure found in Horkheimer and Adorno's *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* and Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Although Walter Benjamin displayed optimism concerning the revolutionary potential of film in
“The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” for the history of leisure studies, the more influential arguments include Horkheimer and Adorno's notorious assertion that leisure activities are inescapably dominated by the values and rhythms of capitalist industrialism and Weber's confirmation of critical leisure studies' insight that the moral codes of capitalist societies privilege work over leisure. Horkheimer and Adorno point to the capitalists' control over modern leisure—for what else is the culture industry?—as the reason why “[c]ulture today is infecting everything with sameness” (94) and serves to reproduce docile working bodies. “Consumers” of leisure can never use leisure to escape capitalism because leisure as a capitalist industry thrives on mass production, so that “[e]ven during their leisure time, consumers must orient themselves according to the unity of production” (98). Aesthetic beauty in the Kantian sense—as unmoored from utilitarian ends, as “purposiveness without purpose”—is thus perverted by its territorialization around profit, which Adorno and Horkheimer term “purposelessness for the purposes dictated by the market” (128). As a result, leisure in no sense provides a genuine alternative to the constraints of capitalism:

Entertainment is the prolongation of work under late capitalism. It is sought by those who want to escape the mechanized labor process so that they can cope with it again. At the same time, however, mechanization has such power over leisure and its happiness, determines so thoroughly the fabrication of entertainment commodities, that the off-duty worker can experience nothing but after-images of the work process itself. The ostensible content is merely a faded foreground: what is imprinted is the automated sequence of standardized tasks. The only escape from the work process in factory and office is through adaptation to it in leisure time. This is the incurable sickness of all entertainment. (109)

This “sickness” is the frustrated need for escape, for the liberation that leisure appears to offer is always “defraud[ed] in advance” (128). The cynicism of passages like these, which clearly
complement the historical narratives in leisure studies that trace the increasing commercialization of leisure, is echoed by the Gramscian strain of leisure studies, which, along with the new feminist analysis of leisure, made the 1980s and 1990s an era of demystification and critique that strongly contrasted with leisure studies' original optimistic, progressive views on leisure.

Because the arguments of “The Culture Industry” are quite well-known, I do not want to dwell on this argument for much longer, except to comment on the issue of identity, which as we have seen so far in this historical review of leisure studies has been a significant theme for scholarly analysis. Adorno and Horkheimer explain that whereas the commodities of the culture industry partake of an infinitely reproducible, seamless “anti-style,” a “great artwork does not consist in achieved harmony, in the questionable unity of form and content, inner and outer, individual and society, but in those traits in which discrepancy emerges, in the necessary failure of the passionate striving for identity” (103). This failure to find identity is crucial for both leisure studies and the present work, for both functionalist sociology and literary criticism that deals with leisure spaces in modernism highlight self-development, self-realization, and self-expression as a primary motive for which people engage in leisure, the ultimate reason why “freedom” in leisure matters at all. By contrast, I argue that in modernism, the failure of identity—impersonality or the interruption of selfhood—not only enacts this Adornian-Horkheimian mode of aesthetic critique but also provides the basis for an alternative experience of leisure constructed by the novels as desirable even though they are often still embedded in the structures of commercialized leisure. In my analysis of James' The Ambassadors, for example, I will show how the protagonist courts, delays, reenacts, and ultimately fetishizes the destruction of his
Americanness, actively creating his experience of leisure through a deliberate alternation between the loss of identity and its reassertion or reconstruction. By contrast, to insist that modern leisure activities and spaces are sites where identity is joyously, unproblematically rehabilitated would be to accept and reproduce the ideology of modern leisure. Just as Foucault argued that individuation multiplies the fields on which power can work, rather than passively reflecting the preexistence of inalienable and autonomous selfhood, Adorno and Horkheimer critique the ideological construction of leisure as a freely chosen mode of self-expression by cynically remarking, “Something is provided for everyone so that no one can escape…. The hierarchy of social qualities purveyed to the public serves only to quantify it more completely” (97).

While Adorno and Horkheimer based “The Culture Industry” on America during the 1940s, leisure theorists have interpreted it as relevant for the entire history of the commodification of leisure, generally regarded as beginning at the start of the 18th century for the upper and middle classes, intensifying for all classes (including the working-class), during the 19th century, and increasingly dominating all leisure opportunities during the 20th century. “The Culture Industry” can thus be seen as marking the turning point between modern and postmodern leisure, even while it is often used in leisure studies as a companion piece to modern works of leisure sociology, most notably Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), Siegfried Kracauer's “The Hotel Lobby” (1922), and Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-5, then translated into English in 1930 by Talcott Parsons, the functionalist sociologist mentioned above). Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption is typically adapted in leisure studies as the an engine of commercialized leisure because of the increasing tendency
of all socioeconomic classes to “use” leisure as an opportunity to purchase and display wealth—a function of the economy rather than the modern man's need to relax by escaping from economic constraints. Kracauer's “The Hotel Lobby,” which I will discuss further in Chapter Five, is often used to de-glamorize the image of the Grand Hotel lobby, seen by Kracauer as a sterile procession that epitomizes social anomie. Weber's Protestant ethic thesis, centered around the cultural association of economic success with grace, piety, and morality, as well as the reservation of surplus (surplus value and surplus labor) for reinvestment rather than “wasteful” expenditure, is cited as evidence that modern culture subordinates leisure to labor. His description of the processes of rationalization—the routinization and calculation of commercial speculation, the growth of bureaucracy, the disciplining of the workforce, and the integration of governmental and legal systems with capitalism—restates in terms of structural and organizational shifts (rather than in terms of commodification and consumption) this spread of capitalist logic to all areas of culture, including leisure. Overall, Weber, Veblen, Kracauer, Adorno, and Horkheimer appear in contemporary leisure studies as figures prophetically announcing the end of leisure as the commodification of leisure. Extrapolating from these theorists, the Gramscian strain of leisure studies argues that as leisure is industrialized, it loses its capacity to act as an escape from the constraints of capitalism or as an opportunity for self-renewal and self-expression, instead becoming yet another site where surplus value is extracted and bodies are made docile.

At the same time, new works of social leisure history showed that the transformation of leisure during the Industrial Revolution was not merely a matter of limiting leisure, but also of producing new types of leisure—mostly, of course, resolutely commodified leisure. As leisure
became a profitable industry dependent on the increasing availability of disposable income and free time for consumers of all socioeconomic classes, the diversity of leisure forms multiplied exponentially. Gary Cross argues, for example, that “the weekend” emerged as a dedicated time of leisure, as did the evening, summer vacation, childhood, and retirement, so that the traditional calendar of irregular but frequent holidays was replaced with a rationalized, dependable holiday schedule which was quantitatively reduced but perhaps as a result *qualitatively* intensified as dedicated blocks of time (75-7). Museums, zoos, parks, seaside resorts, thermal spas, coffee houses, theaters, music halls, and urban shopping districts provided new spaces for leisure from the 18th century onward for the aristocratic and bourgeois classes, as did the revival of the Grand Tour after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. During the Victorian era, many of these spaces were opened up to the middle and working classes as a part of the “Rational Recreation” movement, which pathologized and sought to restrict undesirable leisure activities, such as drinking, gambling, and blood-sports, which were seen as encouraging the working classes to be violent, unpatriotic, and undependable. Government allocations for public museums, galleries, and zoos began in the last quarter of the 19th century, and a range of seaside resorts—each one carefully modulated to attract a specific clientele—grew up during the 19th century, accessible to day-trippers and month-long vacationers alike due to the railway. While Gladstone Railways Act of 1844 encouraged railways to offer cheap third-class accommodations, moderately priced package vacations were available through agencies like Thomas Cook by 1870s for international and national travel.

Meanwhile, the rapid growth of interest in tourism within geography, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies departments during the 1990s identified another new form of
leisure that involved both spatial and temporal dislocation: heritage tourism, which turned history into a leisure experience by preserving and commercializing buildings, natural areas, and entire districts considered to have historical or literary significance. Dean MacCannell's *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1989) was an early contribution to this approach, followed by works like James Buzard's *The Beaten Track* (1993), John Urry and Chris Rojek's *Touring Cultures* (1997), David Crouch's *Leisure/Tourism Geographies* (1999), and culminating in the foundation of the journal *Tourism Geographies* (1999). Although these texts investigate tourism as the preeminent postmodern form of leisure, the preservation of historic spaces as sites of tourism began in the late Victorian period. For example, the foundation of the Society for Photographing Relics of Old London in 1875, one of the earliest acts of modern heritage tourism, was part of a larger social repackaging of space. Some spaces were isolated and characterized as sites of social value to preserve and visit by William Morris' Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (1877), the Ancient Monument Protection Act (1882), the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty (1895), and the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (1908 and expanded to include provision for the purchase of buildings in 1913). As these groups and acts began to represent the preservation of historic buildings and natural sites as a public good promoting education and health, a new genre of leisure activities emerged ("heritage tourism") that breathed new life into the Victorian belief that leisure should nourish self-improvement rather than provide pleasure alone. Meanwhile, specialized societies like the Georgian Group (1937) gave an air of aesthetic connoisseurship to these attempts to carve out tourist destinations from within England itself, and the spread of new breeds of suburbs, planned urban centers, and model towns (epitomized by the Ebenezer Howard-inspired Garden
City Association in 1899) adapted the language of preservation and built upon public awareness of the significance of historic and natural beauty. These planned environments, of course, were commercial ventures whose strict guidelines on the use of space echoed the increasing power of the government to regulate built spaces (epitomized by the Town and Country Planning Acts of 1932 and 1947). While I do not intend to deny or minimize the progressive or even utopian intentions behind many of these innovations, I wish to emphasize the complementary, reciprocal, and mutually reinforcing relationships between the creation of new types of leisure and the political and economic pressures limiting their potential to yield a “utopian” experience of leisure. My juxtaposition of urban planning (in the realm of work and “daily life”) and heritage tourism (in the realm of leisure) is meant to demonstrate how the application of particular leisure values—such as the viewing of historical or vernacular architectural styles—to non-leisure activities or sites, and the concomitant spread of non-leisure values into the realm of leisure, merely reproduces the logic of modern leisure itself rather than representing a departure from it.

Despite this cross-fertilization between leisure and non-leisure spaces, the discursive insistence on the differentiation between work and leisure space played a significant role in the construction of leisure during the era of modernism. The creation of specialized leisure communities like spa towns and seaside resorts seemed to confirm the distance between leisure and non-leisure spaces despite the continued existence of urban leisure spaces like hotels and music halls that increasingly integrated (in terms of spatial and architectural continuity) with urban architecture and dominated social calendars. By the end of the nineteenth century, then, an entirely new type of space had been invented, resulting from the radical physical separation of work from leisure. Just as Thompson, Cross, and many others argue that industrialization
regularized and isolated leisure time by creating discrete temporal blocks of leisure (such as the weekend and the summer vacation), I too argue that industrialism also regularized and isolated leisure space. Constellations of associated commercial leisure spaces—spas, hotels, restaurants, casinos, sports fields, race tracks, music halls, concert halls, beauty salons, and a variety of shops—created a new geography of leisure that both centralized leisure facilities and marginalized leisure by pushing it out from city or village centers to spatial margins like mountains, coasts, and lakes. This emphasis on the spatial is crucial for my project, which is organized around the modern leisure space because I argue that one of the most unique features of modern leisure is its literal territorialization: its increasing association with particular spaces, which emphasizes a vacationer’s relocation to a different environment over and above a vacationer’s participation in specific leisure activities (such as swimming or gambling). The arrival of new forms of commercialized leisure entailed, then, new times for leisure as well as new spaces for leisure. As capitalist ventures, these new spaces, I argue, along with Gramscian leisure theorists, cannot be understood as simply modern forms of Bakhtin's carnival; though leisure is physically marginalized by the creation of explicit spatial boundaries and these spaces give consent to a
different set of behavioral norms, this physical marginalization and moral exceptionalism are socially and historically constructed and are crisscrossed with relations of power.\(^21\)

My adaptation of the Foucauldian terms with which I have been narrating this shift—where the suppression of certain leisure forms simultaneously creates a new flowering of leisure—is my own, for the dominant Gramscian perspective on leisure regarded these historical shifts as the death of traditional leisure and the birth of an illegitimate commodified leisure that counts the pleasure felt by a tourist, moviegoer, or hotel guest as merely double consciousness. But at the end of the 1990s and in the 2000s, major challenges to this form of leisure analysis surfaced from many disciplines involved in leisure studies, most particularly within sociology and human geography. Although my arguments about leisure space modernism rely on an economically inflected portrait of leisure as becoming increasingly commercial and rationalized, I agree with those challengers who insist that the Gramscianism of the 1980s and 1990s put too fine a point on it by overestimating the power of capitalism to penetrate and transform, irrevocably and homogeneously, every aspect of leisure. Although these challenges by and large deal with contemporary leisure, I argue that the same argument holds true for the period of modernism. For

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\(^{21}\) Rob Shield's *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (1992) has analyzed this liminality from the context of natural feature tourism (for example, beaches, the uninhabited Canadian North, and Niagara Falls), or in other words, the “[m]arginal places, towns and regions which have been ‘left behind’ in the modern race for progress [and which] evoke both nostalgia and fascination” (3). While his work represents one of the only investigations of leisure spaces explicitly in terms of modernity, his work differs from mine for two reasons: first, he uses the perspective of a cultural historian alone (rather than that of a literary critic), and second, he turns to space theory rather than leisure studies for his framework. This emphasis on space theory, which I find duplicated in modernist literary criticism about space (most notably the work of Andrew Thacker and Peter Brooker), often results in an vague and unhistoricized concept of “liminality” whose relationship to postmodernity has not been adequately addressed. As a result, these works end up more or less where they begin—with an assertion about the special nature of certain spaces—without any further remarks about the cultural work done by these temporary carnivalesque of marginal spaces. For example, Shields' concluding “Synthesis” chapter unveils his concept of “social spatialization – a social construction of the spatial and its imposition and enactment in the real topography of the world” (255), which is illustrated most dramatically in the marginal spaces of leisure. Yet this thesis merely echoes the insights of space theory he reviewed in his Introduction, making his argument tautological, an exercise in illustrating space theory. I mean to avoid a similarly tautological adaptation of leisure theory by regarding modernist leisure space literature as a kind of leisure theory itself, which itself produces, contests, and revises many insights of leisure theory.
example, two works that influenced these challengers, Daniel Bell's *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* and Colin Campbell's *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*, rely on Weber's own recognition of the irrationality of rational culture and the dependence of capitalists on the (very profitable) leisure experiences rejected by the Protestant work ethic. In addition, I would like to emphasize that their arguments about contemporary leisure are all based on concepts of industrial capitalism and modernity just as much as they are based on theories about post-industrial economies and postmodernism. They conclude that the complete administration of leisure is impossible, for example, by affirming the presence in leisure of the contradictions of capitalism and paradoxes of modernity—yet leisure theorists do not explicitly acknowledge the central position of theories of modernity that implicitly circulate in their works. In fact, I argue that (aside from Chris Rojek, whom I will discuss below) contemporary leisure theory has underestimated its debt to constructions of modernity and therefore has been somewhat blind to the fact that the academic study of leisure was from the start, and largely still is, a *modern* discourse, even with the occasional adaptations of Baudrillard, Eco, Jameson, Foucault, and De Certeau. In fact, in this chapter, I wish to stress that leisure studies is a modern discourse; it is important to note now that the continuity that will become apparent between my discussions of leisure studies and my readings of modernist leisure fiction results not from my reading leisure studies “backwards” into modernism but rather from the continuities among the leisure discourse, both fiction and non-fiction, that flourish during the twentieth century (and even, I would argue, still flourish today, if only in the advertisements promulgated by the leisure industry).
During the past two decades, challenges to Gramscian leisure analysis have centered around the “agency” of leisure consumers, or in other words, the limitations barring the total control of leisure by capitalist structures. One of the earliest and (still today) most influential examples of such challenges is Anne Game's *Undoing the Social: Toward a Deconstructive Sociology* (1991), which introduced De Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* to leisure studies. Game's work spurred a series of adaptations of lay geography (in which “users” can actively produce space) for the analysis of leisure spaces in works of human geography. For example, the introduction to Gerald Crouch's edited collection *Leisure/Tourism Geographies* (1999) cites Game's work as a call to eschew “crude consumer” readings that “do not reveal much about spatial practice” (1). Instead, Crouch argues that the essays in *Leisure/Tourism Geographies* invalidate the producer/consumer distinction for leisure; although commercialized leisure may indeed set up a framework for leisure, leisure experiences more often than not exceed that framework. Because leisure is a process rather than a product, the consumers still “create their own play” (6), and knowingly create “imaginative, reflexive role[s]” that are “crowded with contexts” that exceed mere consumerism (12). This activity on the part of the consumer is not, of course, tantamount to the absolute freedom and absolute escape that characterized functionalist leisure sociology. In fact, we might say that Crouch and the other contributors to the collection trade the old notion of leisure as freedom and escape for leisure as Butlerian performance, which appears in leisure theory as an emphasis on the spectacular elements of leisure through which subjects consciously exhibit and refine their ability to adopt, question, and revise social roles through leisure experiences. Crouch identifies the socially
significant opportunity afforded by leisure as “less a distinct, temporal break than a chance to refigure, replay, remix other everyday spaces, representations, ideas, and lives” (12).

Like Crouch's collection, other new models of leisure during the past twenty years have used postmodern theory to strike a balance between the functionalist models of freedom and the Gramscian models of double consciousness. Cara Aitchison's *Leisure and Tourism Landscapes* (2000), for example, points to the influence of Foucauldian analysis like the gaze, the panopticon, and the heterotopia in works like John Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* (1990), Mike Davis' *City of Quartz* (1990), and Nicholas Fyfe's *Images of the Street* (1998). Works like Stephen Daniels and Denis Cosgroves' *The Iconography of Landscape* (1988), Rob Shields' *Places on the Margin* (1991), and David Bell and Gill Valentine's *Mapping Desire: The Geography of Sexuality* (1995), Aitchison explains, emphasize “cultural construction rather than material determinacy” (3), interrogate the signification systems that construct leisure, and adopt decentered models of power. As a result, Aitchison argues, leisure experience affords “space for resistance, contestation, disruption, and transgression of dominant discourses” (1). This language of resistance to commodified leisure, heavily influenced by cultural studies through works like Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) and Stuart Hall et. al's *Culture, Media, and Language* (1980), permeated leisure studies texts of the 1980s. While I consider the present project to be, at least in part, an exercise in cultural studies, I do want to note that the vision of performative subversion that many post-Gramscians adapted from cultural studies (and from Butlerian queer studies) unnecessarily tends to reduce the plane of action to a symbolic gesture. Therefore, while I will make use of the figure of leisure as performance when it helps to clarify the social significance of role-playing spectacles in leisure, performance alone cannot account
for the variety of leisure experiences or for the cultural weight given to them. In particular, modernist fiction, as I will show below, works to deconstruct the work-leisure binary that underpins the performance theory of leisure, which assumes that this subversion of social roles is strictly limited to the context of leisure alone.

**Chris Rojek as a Theorist of Modernism**

The deconstruction of the work/leisure binary is a prominent pattern in the leisure theory of the late 1990s and 2000s. The leader of this postmodern strain of leisure studies is, undoubtedly, the prolific British sociologist Chris Rojek, one of the first leisure sociologists to acknowledge the presence of power relations in leisure. “Contemporary leisure relations,” Rojek proclaimed in his first leisure work, *Capitalism and Leisure Theory* (1985), “are produced and reproduced in the context of a historically specific system of power,” although this power relationship is not at all one-sided because “leisure forms both reproduce and undermine these principles” (7). In offering a Foucauldian model of power, Rojek avoids the reductionism of the Gramscianism that dominated early critical leisure theory; he found this Gramscianism one-sided, fatalist, and unrealistic. Rather than regarding leisure as a mere tool of the repressive state entirely dominated by the needs of capitalists, Rojek argues that “the concept of free time has no intrinsic meaning. Rather, its meaning always depends on the social context in which it occurs” (13). Still, he accepts and helpfully revises the Gramscian insight that leisure could not be understood within the terms of early leisure studies (1950s-1970s), which associated leisure with freedom, choice, and self determination. Rojek explains, “leisure should not be described as free time or freedom, even in metaphorical terms....The word leisure derives from the Latin word *licere*, meaning to be lawful or to be allowed....leisure is not free time, but an effect of systems of
legitimation” (16). To elaborate on the historically situated nature of leisure, Rojek identifies four qualities that distinguish modern leisure: privatization, individualization, commercialization, and pacification. Leisure activities during modernity are increasingly structured as occurring within the domestic environment of the nuclear family, rather than within the community (privatization). In addition, the private individual becomes the social unit of leisure, so that modern leisure-seekers experience “alienated” leisure in the classic Marxian sense, with the result that leisure is more easily and effectively crisscrossed by relations of power in the Foucauldian sense. To elaborate on the “commercialization” of leisure, Rojek explains that leisure is increasingly administered by companies that “aim to produce and reproduce consumer demand for leisure goods and services,” thereby shifting the purpose of leisure to “the accumulation of profit rather than the satisfaction of social need” (21). By the “pacification” of leisure, Rojek refers to the discipline learned and exhibited by the individual during leisure experiences; the individual suppresses his or her emotions and is therefore “imprisoned in the garrison of the self” (22), in distinct contrast to the communal displays of intense emotion characterizing traditional or folk leisure activities. These concepts, of course, neatly support Gramscian arguments that leisure produces and reproduces power relations; Rojek even perhaps moves one step further when he implicitly compares his own critique of functionalist leisure sociology, with its belief in leisure as the domain of freedom, to “Marx's mordant view of the political economists of his own day when he summarily dismissed as the 'ideological representatives of the ruling class’” (104). Yet whereas Gramscian leisure theorists argue that modern leisure forms are universally perceived as natural and normal through the work of ideology, Rojek insists that the ideological control of leisure is never total. There are always gaps
in this control because these four trends in modern leisure developed discontinuously, incompletely, and non-linearly, so that leisure-seekers are to varying degrees aware of the constraints on leisure imposed by capitalism.

Chris Rojek's *Capitalism and Leisure* is, accordingly, an application of Foucault's account of power to find middle ground between the optimistic view of leisure as freedom found in the 1950s thought the 1970s and the pessimistic iron-cage perspective that dominated leisure studies during the 1980s. But it is also a conscious rewriting of the history of leisure sociology. Analyzing Mark, Durkheim, Weber, and Freud as early leisure theorists, Rojek claims to uncover a neglected discourse on leisure: Marx's early works (*The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, The German Ideology, and The Communist Manifesto*) outline the significance of leisure as he traces the ravages of the industrial workday, Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* describes how leisure provides an outlet for natural human “effervescence” and contributes to the creation of social solidarity and moral systems, Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* charts the subordination of leisure to labor during early modernity, which Freud psychologizes through the concepts of the pleasure principle, repression, and sublimation. He recontextualizes familiar arguments about leisure by Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and Habermas as following from and continuing these earlier arguments by Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and Freud. From the Frankfurt School, Rojek takes his thesis that “relations of leisure are also relations of power” (120), but rejects the theorists of the 1980s who combined these works of the Frankfurt School with those of Althusser and Gramsci to characterize leisure as a passive reflection of state and economic power. To this unrealistically bleak view of leisure, Rojek prefers the work of the Birmingham Center for Contemporary
Culture Studies because the texts coming out of the CCCS represent leisure as a field of relative freedom: “a simultaneous release from, and reproduction of, work discipline” in which the leisure-seeker is a “skilled, knowledgeable actor who engages in relations of negotiation and resistance with and against the output of the culture industry” (133). While Rojek adopts this view of the leisure consumer, he accuses the cultural studies of the CCCS and the scholars inspired by it of treating capitalist control of leisure “as a fait accompli” in which “the revolt is a revolt into style” limited to “cultural fashion and rituals” that at best lead to “desultory episodes of violence” rather than significant moments of cultural critique (134). This is why Rojek eventually lands on Foucauldian power as a better context for defining research questions for leisure studies. For the model of leisure used by functionalist and Gramscian leisure theory, dominated by issues of freedom or unfreedom, Rojek substitutes a Foucauldian model in which “the structure and development of leisure relations is an effect of legitimating rules of pleasure and unpleasure” (181). Although I find his concluding effort to define leisure through pleasure unpersuasive—and in fact one of my goals in the present work is to show how modernism succeeds where Rojek and other theorists do not, i.e., in demonstrating how leisure is produced through the dialectic of pleasure and unpleasure—what is more persuasive is his use of Foucauldian power as a framework through which research questions for leisure studies should be generated. Rojek wastes no time in proposing these questions:

What images of healthy and unhealthy leisure exist in society? How does the discourse on leisure relate to the practice of leisure? How does leisure conceal and reveal the operation of power in society? What techniques of individuation exist in leisure to differentiate and control separate bodies? (156)
My own understanding of leisure is influenced heavily by these Foucauldian research questions, but what is equally significant for the present project—and for modernists interested in leisure theory—is how Rojek's carefully drawn line of continuity in leisure theory from Marx to Foucault implicitly argues that leisure theory is a modern discourse. While other cultural theorists influencing leisure studies use modernity as an organizing concept (such as Dean MacCannell, Fredric Jameson, and John Urry) and therefore contribute to a sense that leisure is a modern institution, only Rojek consistently recognizes that the discourse around leisure is a specifically modern discourse.

This thesis was nascent and unrealized in *Capitalism and Leisure Theory*, but in his next book, *Ways of Escape: Modern Transformations in Leisure and Travel* (1994), Rojek makes this connection explicit. In the Preface, he explains,

> If *Capitalism and Leisure Theory* were to be rewritten today the focus would change. This time it would be on “Modernity” rather than capitalism. “Modernity” brings to mind the restless, contradictory, unfinished relations which, I think, characterize leisure relations most accurately. (xii)

He then identifies Simmel, Kracauer, and Benjamin as influences (all of whom are featured in the present work) and gives notice to David Frisby's *Fragments of Modernity* (1985) for introducing him to Baudelaire's definition of modernity in “The Painter of Modern Life”—the fleeting, the contingent, the ephemeral. This unusual nod to the culture of modernism, unprecedented within contemporary leisure studies, has not, before the present project, been acknowledged or reciprocated by literary critics. And yet, as I have been arguing, the disciplines of leisure and modernism have much to say to one another, and this is particularly so in the case of Chris Rojek's six books because he makes the connections explicit. By way of a brief
example, the troubling of identity in leisure space has been addressed by works of literary criticism on modernist hotel fiction, including work by Joanne Pready, Randi Saloman, and Bettina Metthias. All three critics assert that modernist literature represents hotels as spaces where identities merge, blur together, or disappear entirely. Rojek's relatively simple assertion that “[m]odernity identified leisure and travel experience with the business of 'self making'...in which self-realization could be pursued in a more authentic way than in work and family life” (6) gives a new context for literary critical investigations of identity and leisure space. Whereas these three critics have limited themselves to the concept of the hotel and from time to time borrow concepts from space theory, I look to leisure studies in order develop the broader (and therefore more powerful) concept of the modernist leisure space. In this particular example, what has been addressed before as the blurring or loss of identity in hotels becomes in my work an investigation of the constitutive role played by the leisure spaces of modernity in the bourgeois cultural work of creating, maintaining, and performing the “self.” In modernist leisure space fiction, this “self” is at least as much the efficiently individuated object of power relations as it is the “self” inherited from Romantic and decadent Aesthetic ideals (which is taken to be as autotelic as the artwork it is supposed to create). When modernists dramatize the dissolution of the self in leisure spaces, they pinpoint (if unwittingly) the spaces where the process of modernization is uneven and the moments when the ideological construction of leisure by capital and state power fails. Whereas previous criticism on modernist hotel fiction has represented these moments of self-dissolution as overwhelmingly negative, my reinscription of this loss of identity provides a clue to why such moments are represented in many modernist works as epiphanic, pleasurable, and aesthetically provocative.
While I will further explore this thesis in my analyses of Henry James' *The Ambassadors* and Katherine Mansfield's *In a German Pension*, for now I will return to elucidating the relevant points of Rojek's *Ways of Escape* for the study of modernist leisure literature. Rojek rewrites Enlightenment philosophy and classical political economy in terms of the management of pleasure, revealing leisure—not just the work ethic—as a prominent preoccupation in modern Western intellectual history. He also uncovers an entire body of forgotten texts on leisure during the era of modernism due to the proliferation of public leisure spaces meant to produce the ideal citizen, healthy, moral, educated, and patriotic:

The inevitable result of public provision was the growth of a series of specialized discourses around the question of leisure and leisure services. By the 1920s a profession ideology and self-image of leisure providers and managers had emerged. It drew heavily on received ideas inherited from the rational recreationists...[including] social engineering and rolling back crime and disease. (46-7)

This modern discourse on leisure proliferated in the 1920s and 1930s, including Edward Barker's “The Uses of Leisure” (1926), George Cutten's *The Threat of Leisure* (1926), Harris' *The Use of Leisure in Bethnal Green* (1927), Jacks' *Education through Recreation* (1932), Hull's *Time to Spare* (1933), Hammond's *The Growth of Time for Enjoyment* (1935), and Missen's *The Employment of Leisure* (1935). Rojek lists these partly to counter the convention in leisure studies that the organized study of leisure began after WWII, but because the bulk of leisure studies focuses on contemporary leisure, this body of work has yet to receive systematic study. To these sociological and philosophical texts, I would like to add to this list of early twentieth century conversations about leisure a myriad of newspaper and periodical articles about leisure, including evaluations of the movement for a shorter work week, socialist critiques of the rational recreation movement, proposals for the “best use” of leisure by women and the working class,
and debates about the worthiness of the “man of leisure.”\(^2\) While it is not within the scope of the present work to do so (although I will discuss non-fiction works on leisure by more familiar figures in modernism),\(^3\) I would like to note that such works indicate the existence of a publicly prominent and historically distinct stage in the discourse of leisure that should be regarded as a relevant context for the study of modernist fiction in general, but particularly for those set in leisure spaces. For the purposes of the present work, suffice it to say that my identification of a modernist preoccupation with leisure corresponds to a concomitant and demonstrable preoccupation in public discourse.

The remainder of *Ways of Escape* deals with the issue of postmodern leisure, which makes Rojek one of the handful of leisure theorists influenced by Baudrillard, Eco, Lyotard, and Jameson. Rojek's assertion that postmodern leisure does not represent an “apocalyptic, complete transformation” from modern leisure (171) is significant because it suggests that analyses of leisure in modernist fiction still have relevance for contemporary leisure. But the most interesting argument for modernists comes in the conclusion, which we can regard as leisure studies' coming to consciousness of the ways in which it—the academic study of leisure—is a modern discourse.

\(^2\) The *Times* is instructive here, as the frequency of the use of the word “leisure” rose exponentially around the time of the first World War—from the rate of once every four or five years during the nineteenth century to around once every two or three months. In 1914, for example, it ran for example, the editorial “Leisure or Business? The Wise Woman's Choice of a Husband” (which laments the end of the man of leisure and recommends that the single lady find a man who unifies the “man of business” and the “man of leisure” in one convenient body), “No Time: Leisure – A Lost Art” (which argued that the leisure of artists and of the rest cure were representatives of a sadly disappearing “cult of leisure”), “The Territorial's Leisure: Refreshment and Recreation Tents” (about the YMCA's erection of 350 recreation tents for troops' use since the outbreak for the war), and two accounts of university leisure life: “Mays' at Cambridge: The Cult of Graceful Leisure” and “The Leisure of the Long: End of the Summer Term at Oxford.” One is tempted to conclude that this mysterious acceleration in articles on leisure results from wartime placing a premium on leisure as means to combat wartime stress and privation. At the same time, the nostalgic tone of these articles, which each lament the end of leisure in some form or another, suggests that the perceived absence of leisure is precisely what creates it as a novel, discrete, and desirable object of discourse. Future work on leisure during the era of modernism might address such conundrums.

\(^3\) These works are Vernon Lee's “On Leisure” and “On Modern Travelling,” Ezra Pound's *The ABCs of Economics* (which I will argue is just as much about leisure as it is labor), Bertrand Russell's “In Praise of Idleness,” and Marion Milner's *An Experiment in Leisure*, which I investigate in Chapter Two.
In a nod to Baudelaire, Rojek concludes, “The ephemeral, the fugitive, and the contingent describe our experience of leisure just as they are at the heart of the phenomenology of Modernity” (216). For Rojek, as well as for the present project, both the processes of modernization and the principles of aesthetic modernism are at the heart of leisure—both modern and postmodern leisure. As I argue in Chapter Five about the modern hotel, leisure is less a total escape than a spectacularization of a modernity that is itself discontinuous, uneven, and open-ended. This spectacularization does, however, provide a slightly different mode of experiencing modernity, a simultaneously intense and detached mode infused with the spirit of play:

What then accounts for the obvious popularity of leisure and travel as ways of escape? The proposition I wish to put forward is that leisure and travel enable us to experience the rapid, hectic contrasts of Modernity in concentrated form.... [In presenting] a caricature of the fragmentary, jarring, rapidly-changing conditions which characterized Modernity...popular leisure activity seems to thrive on fragmentary, contrasting, and fleeting experience. Far from demonstrating a reaction to the routines of life as some commentators allege, leisure often involves the intensification and extension of these routines...Leisure, one might say, is not the antithesis of daily life but the continuation of it in dramatized or spectacular form. And whereas most of what happens to us in ordinary life is ambiguous and inconclusive, popular leisure forms typically provide us with a satisfying, reassuring sense of resolution. (212-3, my emphasis)

I would like to push Rojek's association of leisure with an intensified experience of modernity a little further to suggest that attempts to represent modern leisure create novel visions of modernity—making leisure a central figure through which modernity is perceived, theorized and understood. Leisure spaces do not “reflect” modernity so much as they make representations of modernity possible. This is significant for modernist criticism because instead of assuming that hotels or other leisure spaces are narratologically convenient spaces that reflect a “microcosm” of modernity that modernists have in hand, we should consider that leisure spaces machine
microcosmic visions. My adaptation of Rojek recalls Dean MacCannell's statement in *The Tourist* (1969) that “[t]he act of sightseeing is uniquely well-situated among leisure alternatives to draw the tourist into a relationship with the modern social totality,” so that “[a]s a tourist, the individual may step out into the universal drama of modernity” (7). Yet I do not find MacCannell's analyses particularly helpful for the study of literary modernism (nor, of course, did MacCannell, with his emphasis on post-World War II tourism, intend them to be). MacCannell's focus on tourism is an obstacle because the narrower concept of tourism, compared to leisure, has fewer connections to the larger philosophical problems of modernity addressed by modern leisure space fiction. Furthermore, I find his perspective on tourism as a “modern alternative...to everyday life” (15) less persuasive as a characterization of leisure spaces than Rojek's characterization of leisure as an *intensification* of modernization.

Of course, not all elements of Rojek's conclusion in *Ways of Escape* are persuasive for the modernist literary critic, either—mostly due to methodological differences between literary criticism and the social sciences. Where Rojek asserts that leisure experiences create a “satisfying, reassuring sense of resolution” that everyday life cannot generate (213), I argue that modernism often exposes, qualifies, rejects, or ridicules the sense of resolution that leisure spaces appear to offer. Rojek, of course, is not an apologist for the leisure industry and would not assume that this “reassurance” should be evaluated or appreciated as a positive or progressive element of leisure, yet I still believe that such discrepancies represent opportunities for modernist literature criticism to contribute to the academic study of leisure. In addition, the one argument that runs through Rojek's entire body of work—that we should abandon the commonsense notion that leisure is a domain of freedom—has entirely different consequences within the domain of
literary criticism; the belief that “leisure is freedom” is transformed from a falsifiable statement that social scientists must not continue to propagate into a facet of leisure ideology that should be studied as a significant object of cultural, historical, and literary study.

Many of Rojek's warnings are nonetheless worthy of consideration before I move on to synthesize the history of leisure studies as a means to introduce the main thesis of the present project. His central assertion in *Decentering Leisure* (1995) that “one cannot separate leisure from the rest of life and claim that it has unique ‘laws’, ‘propensities’ and rhythms” (1) reemphasizes the inadvisability of treating modern leisure spaces as spaces of exception where the laws of modernity no longer apply. While his denial of leisure's exceptionalism has been a career-long preoccupation, it is in *Decentering Leisure*, his most widely read and cited text, that he gives this argument the rhetorical force of a jeremiad. Here, he unflinchingly lists a myriad of barriers, contingencies, and contradictions that make leisure an almost impossible dream. Even the existence of a relationship between leisure and freedom is, Rojek notes, the sign of cultural construction, for “the modernist identification of escape, pleasure and relaxation with leisure was simply another kind of moral regulation, with the result that, under modernity, we were never sure if we were free enough or far enough from that which we wished to escape” (3). We must, of course, keep in mind that by “modernist,” he here refers less to, say, Bowen, Forster, or James than to philosophical, academic, political and industrial leaders who insisted that leisure was the realm of freedom (indeed, this project will show that the “modernists” I investigate were as aware as Rojek of the constraints of leisure). The regime of leisure—where one must visibly and consistently succeed in having fun, relaxing, renewing one's sense of self, developing culturally, and improving in physical and psychological health—can be just as exhausting as the regime of
work. This paradox, in which one must constantly work at leisure, Rojek explains as a result of a specific contradiction of modernity, which consists of tension between what he calls—in unwitting parallel to Matei Calinescu’s two modernisms in *The Five Faces of Modernity*—Modernity 1 (Enlightenment and capitalist rationality, accompanied by a prioritization of order) and Modernity 2 (which consists of the fragmentary, ephemeral, irrational, and stimulating). Accordingly, *Decentring Leisure* attempts to construct a theory of leisure and a theory of modernity by making liberal use of figures familiar to modernist literary critics. His application of Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian split, for example, sounds familiar: “Modernity 1 never achieved the finished, unchallenged order of things to which it so ardently aspired. Modernity 2 was always waiting in the wings behind every legislative movement and every moral edict to bluntly reveal the fundamental disorder of things” (45). While this characterization of modernity may not come as a surprise to scholars of modernism, two salient points emerge from it: first, the complementarity of modernism and leisure theory, and second, the contradictory nature of modernity, which manifests in the contradictory experiences of leisure in modernism and therefore explains why it is so tempting to regard leisure as an “escape” from modernity.

Aside from this theory of modernity, though, *Decentring Leisure* offers for the study of modernism an intellectual history of the concept of leisure during modernity by investigating figures like Simmel, Weber, Benjamin, and Kracauer to reveal leisure as a paradoxical construction distrusted for its moral ambiguity but applauded as a field for sociability, physical and psychological renewal, self-expression, and self-development. Leisure remains as a favorite object of desire and intellectual inquiry, he maintains, because such paradoxes ensure that “Western culture presents leisure as a realizable utopia” even though leisure is experienced as
“insubstantial, virtual...beyond our grasp even when we feel that we attain the necessary external conditions” (192). Intriguingly, Rojek concludes that this utopian element in leisure is, of course, illusory—yet even he falls into this very trap when he encourages leisure scholars to “emancipate leisure from the modernist burden of necessarily connoting freedom, choice, life-satisfaction and escape with leisure” (ibid). But how, one might ask him, can one become “emancipated” while still avoiding the illusions of “freedom?” Rojek's unconscious dependence on the very concepts he rejects suggests that the illusion of leisure as freedom is powerful enough to be investigated in its own right, rather than dismissed as a logical fallacy. And I argue that modernism is precisely the plane of inquiry that accepts the cultural identification of freedom with leisure as a phenomenon to be both critiqued and investigated—leaving any academic consideration of leisure history or theory incomplete insofar as it does not recognize nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature as a significant site where the cultural logic of leisure is produced, maintained, and reworked.

Rojek's most recent books, Leisure and Culture (2000) and The Labor of Leisure (2010), are of less interest to the study of modernism, as they focus on postmodern leisure and the future of leisure studies as a discipline. I should note briefly, though, a few shifts in his theories in these books. First, Leisure and Culture forges Rojek’s response to the increasingly common use of Butlerian performance theory in leisure studies leads directly to a new reading of Veblen's Theory of the Leisure Class (1899), which, among all the invocations of Veblen in leisure studies, I find to be the most persuasive reading to date. In contrast to other literary studies accounts of Veblen, Rojek does not dismiss Veblen as an irrelevant though brilliant progenitor, but as a theorist whose work identifies a performance aspect common to all modern leisure formations.
By working through Veblen, Rojek rejects the way performance leisure theory disregards the disciplinary and status-conscious aspects of leisure performance. Instead, he reiterates his career-long emphasis of the root of the word leisure in *licere*, “to be lawful,” which means that leisure is itself a product of social systems of legitimation rather than an escape from such systems. His adoption of performance is therefore centered on a theory of leisure as spectacle derived not from Butler, but from Veblen, who posited leisure as an “honorific” process of establishing and displaying socioeconomic status. Rojek explains,

> [C]ontemporary leisure is not about the consumption of free time, but about the use of time for the purpose of social display. It is status placing activity. We perform in our leisure, just as we do in our work. The opportunities of escape, dropping out or time off are nugatory even if the mythology supporting these goals is rich and abounding. (49)

Again, while I deny that for the study of modernism the “rich and abounding” “mythology” is not worthy of analysis, Rojek's turn to Veblen situates performative, spectacular leisure as a component of modern leisure and avoids becoming vulnerable to the accusations of optimism or political irrelevance that have dogged performance theory. In fact, rather than valorize performance, he advises that contemporary leisure-seekers refuse to enact “the mechanical rituals of performative culture” because performative leisure is yet another “feature of modernization to raise utopian hopes while delivering a dystopian lifeworld” (196). For modernism, then, the task remains to investigate moments when the spectacularization of leisure fails—when the performance breaks down into incoherence and the codes of spectacle dissolve.

Rojek's most recent book, *The Labor of Leisure* (2010), adapts contemporary sociologist Arlie Hochschild's concept of “emotional labor,” first elaborated in her monograph *The Managed*
Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling (1983). According to Rojek, the concept of emotional labor refers to the preparation and application of emotional attitudes and competencies that are commensurate with the requirements of organizations and civic culture. Integral to the concept is the notion of labor performance; that is, the display of positive emotions, the repression of negative emotions, spray-on sincerity and 'can do' face-work, even when the individual is feeling the opposite. The acquisition of emotional labor competence is...a matter of consistently displaying positive personal identification and competence. (22)

Finding and maintaining a job, friends, and a romantic partner all rest on this emotional labor, whose product is socially desirable “emotional intelligence.” Through emotional labor, Rojek adjusts his account of leisure performance in order to specify it as a type of labor that entails consequences outside the realm of leisure. This application of emotional labor gives shape to the leisure studies truism that long acknowledged, but until now rarely examined, paradoxical laboriousness of leisure (take, for example, the multitude of book and article titles presenting some variation of “hard at play”). Of course, an apt description of the labor of leisure had long been available in Veblen's characterization of women's leisure: the “vicarious leisure” that is neither relaxed nor self-willed but rather disciplined and socially encoded activity staged to symbolize her source of pecuniary support. Perhaps the neglect of this aspect of The Theory of the Leisure Class results from Veblen's exclusive emphasis on women as wives, which even at the time of its publication could have been interpreted as wilfully and anachronistically disregarding the reality of women's formal employment. Consequently, for the study of modernist literature and culture, we may adopt Hochschild's departure from Veblen, which finds both women and men engaging in emotional labor that, rather than passively reflect pre-existing,
external financial support, instead serves to secure one's own present and future social standing and earning power.

Interestingly, “emotional labor” radically reinterprets the functionalist assertion that the value of leisure resides in its encouragement of social solidarity; where functionalists would see the spread of social values, leisure scholars following Rojek and Hochschild would see leisure actors rehearsing and refining their skills in projecting their oneness with social values. As a result, actual social solidarity matters less than the ability to display it consistently and successfully. This emotional labor in leisure necessitates high levels of awareness and self-consciousness, which Rojek calls “reconnaissance” and “monitoring” (and which I find a constant feature in the fiction of modern leisure spaces from the time of Jane Austen's observations on Regency spas and seaside resorts). Reconnaissance is “the psychological checking of effective and innovative people skills in order to...[develop character] as a more attractive resource in the economic market and lifestyle relations,” while monitoring refers to “testing how people skills work in social settings and adjusting performance” (23). In reconnaissance and monitoring, literary critics investigating the history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century leisure fiction can see the capitalization of the motives, tensions, and emotional “scenes” featured in the novel of manners—but I would like to suggest simultaneously that leisure fiction always holds out the opportunity for such emotional labor to become inverted into Simmelian “sociability,” the play form of the serious processes of socialization that Rojek regards as at work in leisure. As a result, though the consequentiality of all emotional labor invalidates leisure performance as a realm of pure play, the emotional labor of leisure still retains a sense of provisionality or tentativeness that distinguishes it from the emotional labor of the
world of work. After all, to assert that leisure is not wholly divorced from the constraints and rhythms of everyday life is not to assert that the sphere of leisure entirely and mechanically reproduces the the realm of necessity and industrial capitalism; Rojek's version of this argument is that “[r]epression is not total” but rather “cantilevered” so “we experience a degree a freedom when we select leisure activities” (79). Modernist leisure fiction, I will show, thematizes the emotional labor of leisure by exposing leisure spaces as sites for the compulsory refinement and performance of emotional intelligence, thereby dramatizing leisure's function as a force of Marcusian “repressive desublimation.” But at the same time leisure fiction critiques this emotional labor as the capitalization of individual identity—the creation of the self as a marketable skill or commodity on display—it also locates opportunities for manipulating the gaps in the system to yield sensuous, aesthetic, and intellectual pleasures.

Within Rojek's work, the potential for such openings comes from the final aspect of Rojok’s leisure theory that I would like to discuss here: his adaptation of Norbert Elias' “figurational sociology,” which substitutes the “figuration” for the traditional sociological model that depends on the dialectical relationship between the individual and the group. Elias' figuration has had the most impact in leisure studies through Rojek's adaptation of the figuration in his sextet of leisure studies texts. In *Ways of Escape*, which features the clearest discussion of Elias, Rojek defines the figuration as “a structure of mutually oriented and dependent people” (160), such as a family, sports team, tour group, or village, whose relations unfold in both space and time. Their relations are historically and culturally specific, dynamic, and polyvalent—that is, charged with meaning through a variety of social ties, including political, economic, and emotional relations. These ties both enable and constrain action, resulting in a
conception of human agency that is neither deterministic nor voluntaristic. Individuals in a figuration are instead “enmeshed” in “recursive...social networks of power which shape their actions” (ibid). While individuals are always the immediate, subjectively intentioned source of their own behaviors, the social dynamics that develop within a figuration create a “two-way process which continually imprints role patterns on individuals, and therefore equips individuals with meaningful social capacities to interpret roles and transform conditions through social interaction” (162). As a result, figurations, despite being made up of a specific configuration of individuals (a “closed” social set) and despite being constrained by historical and cultural factors, are not a concrete or static group so much as they are an open-ended “process” whose outcomes cannot be predicted in advance.

What matters for leisure space modernism is this nuanced revision of the notion of the closed social set. It is tempting to regard a population residing in a hotel, cruise ship, spa, or resort as a closed and finite set (and therefore as a “microcosm”), but we must recognize that this set is always in flux, or to use Rojek's words, we must regard these “social relations as emerging and contingent processes” (160)—a statement whose resemblance to the sociology of Georg Simmel serves to underscore the continuities between contemporary leisure theory and the modernist texts that contemporary literary scholars consider to be canonical to modernism. The usefulness of the concept of the microcosm is also called into question, for it seems to imply the pre-existence a static vision of a social totality; while the concept is convenient for conveying the diversity and superficial representativeness of populations in the leisure spaces in modernism, three points must be kept in mind. First, this microcosm does not gain symbolic significance through its opposition to the “real world;” it is not separate from urban capitalist modernity but
rather a specialized variety of it that is ideologically constructed as different. The actions of leisure-seekers are therefore not insulated from “reality” but rather still partake in it, albeit often with a renewed sense of play or sociability. Second, the leisure spaces of modernism do not passively reflect a vision of social totality but rather enable and generate such visions. Third, these “visions” are fleeting, dynamic, and epiphanic, always subject to a process of revision. This is not merely because modernity itself is fleeting and chaotic, but also because microcosmic visions are continually generated and reinterpreted by social actors (for my purposes, the characters of modernist literature) as strategic models for determining meaningful social action. By stripping the microcosm of its static character, we can regard microcosmic visions of leisure figurations not as symbols of a social totality but as contingent and strategic models. In other words, for modernism, leisure spaces perform the kind of cultural work that Fredric Jameson referred to as cognitive mapping.

Apart from its theoretical manifestations, figurational sociology's empirical examination of sport offers another useful concept for modernism: that of mimetic leisure, which encodes a rare, socially sanctioned opportunity to generate, experience, and release intense emotions in a communal context. Unlike, say, Bakhtin's interpretation of carnival, these opportunities are not merely an opportunity to release tension but, to use Rojek's phrase, “a specific form of tension balance” (170). For example, figurational sociology—again recapitulating the modern sociology of George Simmel, this time by reproducing Simmel’s identification of sport as the play form of war—represents the history of sport as one of continually increasing in discipline: the transformation of sport from an informal and communal leisure activity to a for-profit, spectator-centered entertainment dominated by team owners, coaches, referees and regulations turned sport
into a profession (for the players) and into a passive spectacle (for the fans). Rather than being an
unfettered, dramatic, and cathartic release of bodily energy and anti-social impulses such as
violence and ruthless competition, and rather than being a mere act of passive absorption, sport
involves a careful management of such impulses, where they are both invoked and regulated.
Aggression and other negative emotions, normally kept quiescent and “inside” the individual, are
given a social context for expression, creating an effect of relative freedom even though such
displays are nonetheless kept within socially determined limits. In figurational sociology, then,
sport does not represent a total antithesis to discipline, yet neither it does merely replicate the
norms of the workplace, therefore creating an interpretation of leisure that avoids the optimism
of the functionalists and the pessimism of the Gramscians—one of the many “third term”
solutions developed in the 1990s and 2000s to transcend leisure studies’ long-standing division
between old-guard functionalism and the Marxist and feminist perspectives critiquing it.

**Modernism as Leisure Theory: Marx, Adorno, and the Dialectic of Work and Play**

Before concluding this history of leisure studies and synthesizing its insights to create a
perspective on leisure for literary modernism, I would like to share one final example of
contemporary leisure studies' refusal of a hard-and-fast division between labor and leisure. In the
1990s, Robert Stebbins codified a genre of leisure, “serious leisure,” that had been quietly
circulating in leisure studies for two decades. In serious leisure, the disciplines of the school and
workplace are voluntarily and, it appears, joyously adopted. Stebbins defines serious leisure as
“the systematic pursuit of an amateur, a hobbyist, or a volunteer activity sufficiently substantial
and interesting for the participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of a
combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience” (17). By a “career,” Stebbins refers to a long-term engagement in a hobby experienced by the enthusiast as a clear narrative trajectory moving from “beginning, development, establishment, maintenance and decline” (20). Through this alternative career, Stebbins argues that hobbyists, by voluntarily adopting disciplined behaviors—such as undergoing training and continuing to pursue the hobby despite setbacks or the hobby's less pleasant aspects—do in fact experience the feelings traditionally associated with leisure: enrichment, gratification, self-expression, and social solidarity. As an affirmation of leisure, Stebbins' theory is simple to critique; we could interpret it as just another example of how, to borrow from Adorno's late essay on hobbyism, “Free Time,” “Free time is tending toward its own opposite, and becoming a parody of itself...nothing more than a shadowy continuation of labor” (188, 194). Hobbyism, as “pseudo-activity” producing objects of no use or value, is not voluntary but rather a “compulsory” form of “organized freedom...shaped by the very same forces which they are seeking to escape” (190, 188). Echoing the protestations of Gramscian leisure theory, Adorno laments, “in an age of truly unparalleled social integration, it is hard to ascertain anything in human beings which is not functionally determined” (188). Yet even Adorno relents a little. He scales back his own pessimism and notes, “Society cannot have its way all the time” (196). He cites his own non-work engagement with music as an example of leisure that does not conform to the frivolity and discipline of hobbyism, but rather retains capacities for yielding both cultural critique and pleasure. Even hobbyists, Adorno admits, consciously recognize that their activities are not totally free, self-determined, or spontaneous. By contrast, Stebbins insists that hobbies are apolitical, not forms of critique or rebellion, and that the value of serious leisure resides in the genuineness and intensity of the positive emotions
and experiences generated through hobbyism. Though discipline and sacrifice are the necessary costs of engaging in serious leisure, what truly matters for Stebbins are the real pleasures found in hobbyism: enrichment, self-expression, and sociability. Stebbins here agrees (as do I) with the other post-Gramscian leisure theorists that the positive aspects of leisure are not necessarily made less pleasurable from the perspective of the leisure-seeker because leisure is not the total opposite of work.

Indeed, I believe that much of the pleasure in leisure comes specifically from the ways in which leisure dialectically interacts with work and other “negative” aspects of modernity that leisure-seekers are, supposedly, escaping from. Connecting Adorno and Stebbins via Freud's insights on involuntary repetition in Beyond the Pleasure Principle, I argue that modern leisure offers a platform from which to isolate, reconfigure, and master the demands of urban capitalist modernity. To put it another way, the modern experience of leisure is partly produced as an after-effect of the (conscious or unconscious) manipulation of the ideology of work, which involves both the rejection of alienated labor and the re-adoption of work in a form regarded as voluntarily chosen rather than coerced. Like the child Freud describes, who effectively (though perhaps not consciously) transforms the emotionally painful absence of his mother into a pleasurable opportunity for constructing his own play, modernists transform the painful disconnections and losses entailed in modernity into an opportunity for the “serious leisure” of aesthetic play—formal experimentation. In terms of the new leisure activities and spaces of modernity, leisure provides not an escape from work or modernity, but rather an opportunity to uncouple productive power from commercially profitable and externally imposed ends. Through leisure, the requirements of work—such as discipline, role-adoption, physical exertion, and the
production of new objects—can become pleasurable, thus exploding the foundation of classical political economy by rejecting the idea that work is inherently “irksome” and therefore always externally imposed. The dissolution of the work/leisure binary is not always a source of anxiety, exploitation, or double consciousness, but rather can provide a playful foundation for leisure.

As a consequence, Adorno's dismay about the hidden “work” content of leisure is paradoxical because it contradicts his own central insight that leisure is first and chiefly compromised through its reification as the opposite of work. I therefore wish, in order to uncover modern subjects’ own theorization of leisure, to reach back to Marx's assertion that the true victory of communism would be, in essence, the end of the work/leisure distinction. In the *German Ideology*, Marx and Engels characterize utopia not as labor-free, but rather as free from the division of labor and its concomitant spatial and chronological structures of labor:

> In a communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just I have mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic. (45)

Utopia, in other words, will undo the centralization, spatialization, and rationalization of work that leisure scholars mark as the source of the concept of modern leisure. It also uncouples identity from the division of labor (by refusing to “become” any one labor-identity like a “shepherd” or “critic”). Marx, of course, is known not for his theories of *homo ludens* but rather for his belief in *homo faber*—that what makes us human is our capacity to work, that is, to change the external world through labor and production. Yet Marx acknowledged the value of leisure as well in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* when he grimly details its subordination to the work ethic, even for the bourgeoisie:
To be sure, the industrial capitalist also takes his pleasures. He does not by any means return to the unnatural simplicity of need; pleasure is only a side issue – recreation – something subordinate to production; at the same time it is a calculated pleasure. For [the individual] debits it to his capital's expense account, and what is squandered on his pleasure must therefore amount to no more than will be replaced with profit through the reproduction of capital. Pleasure is therefore subsumed under capital and the pleasure-taking individual under the capital-accumulating individual, whilst formerly the contrary was the case. (1964:157, emphasis original)

Marx here depressingly details the alienation of leisure under capitalism—even referring to the capitalist's attempt at luxury and pleasure as a variety of “political economy which is still afflicted with romantic, anti-industrial memories” (ibid)—but decades later, the modernists who recognized the alienation of leisure through its commodification (particularly Henry James, E. M. Forster, and Elizabeth Bowen) would feature leisured subjects manipulating this alienation for the purposes of finding pleasure, freedom, and relaxation. In these texts, the contradictions of capital would indeed sow the seeds of utopian possibility: not the kind afforded by revolution or total escape, but in the form of leisure experience that enacts the negative utopia of critique so prized by Adorno and the ceaseless creation of the new and not-yet described by Astradur Eysteinnson in the conclusion of The Concept of Modernism.

Marx thus remains a significant figure for understanding leisure in modernism because his account of alienated leisure is both reproduced and challenged in modernist fiction. In addition, Marx's vision of unalienated labor and leisure closely parallels the desire I find in modernism to rework the world of labor through leisure. After all, due to the ideological construction of labor as the opposite of leisure, any comment on labor or leisure necessarily comments on the other domain as well. But even more than this, I will demonstrate that modernist works about leisure are themselves obsessed with labor, just like the popular detective fiction of the early twentieth century—I refer here to the work of Georges Simenon and Agatha
Christie in particular—in which every attempt of the detective to flee from labor by taking a holiday is inevitably frustrated by a crime that forces him or her to become a professional again and solve the case. The “subconscious” of leisure fiction, if I may term it so, is work, and modernist works on leisure are often just as much concerned with the right kind of labor, which, once achieved, disrupts the difference between work and leisure. Marx's oeuvre is, I argue, similarly structured in both ways: first, that his arguments about the world of work are shadowed by both implicit and explicit arguments about leisure, and second, that Marx's characterization of utopia similarly rests on the deconstruction of the labor/leisure binary. While I have already discussed this latter tendency through the quotation from The German Ideology, the former tendency can be seen in his pamphlet “Value, Price, and Profit” (1865), in which Marx defines leisure in terms of discretionary time to be used for human development that echoes the ethic of utility found in capitalist labor, though not its alienation:

Time is the room of human development. A man who has no free time to dispose of, whose whole lifetime apart from the mere physical interruption of sleep, meals and so forth, is absorbed by his labor for the capitalist, is less than a beast of burden. He is a mere machine for producing Foreign Wealth. (219)

We find in this pamphlet not only the conceptual dependence of labor and leisure, but also an example of what I have called the modernity of academic leisure studies in general, for the value Marx finds in leisure—human development—echoes functionalist beliefs about the value of leisure. In the third volume of Capital, Marx associates with leisure a second functionalist theme (which is foreshadowed by Marx's use of the word “machine” above):

The realm of freedom actually begins only where labor which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases...Beyond it begins the development of human energy
which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity on its basis. (820)

For Marx, then, the only difference between labor and human development is whether the motivation comes externally (as alienated labor) or internally (as the “free time” so valued in “Value, Price, and Profit”). What do we make of Marx's association of freedom and self-development with leisure, especially given that self-identified “Marxist” leisure theory typically denies these very attributes? We could hypothesize that Marx associates these values with “good” or non-commodified leisure, whereas modern commercialized leisure represents the disappearance of “real” leisure under capitalism. And indeed, I will show that modernists too attempt to distinguish between good and bad leisure—between, for example, the tourists who merely consume goods and services versus the travelers who attempt to engage with the Other (as in E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View* and Henry James' *The Ambassadors*), or between leisure consumption that voraciously and indiscriminately moves from one bodily sensation to another versus leisure consumption that contributes to a sensory and moral defamiliarization of modernity that will fuel aesthetic perception and production (as in Elizabeth Bowen’s *The Hotel* and Katherine Mansfield's *In a German Pension*).

But more fundamentally, the answer lies in the beleaguered relationship between labor and freedom. The heart of Marx's critique of capitalism is alienated labor, or in other words the perception of work as being externally motivated and asocial, the cure for which—if we cannot reach utopia—lay in the free time that allows what Marx termed above “the development of human energy which is an end in itself.” This is the essence of freedom for Marx not because it is the negation of labor or an escape from productive activity, but rather because people can freely choose an activity that holds intrinsic value (that is is pleasurable) and lets them develop
their productive capacity in ways they find congenial. Ideal leisure is not the absence of work, but rather unalienated labor. Under modernity, this sphere of non-coerced activity is *precisely* the sphere of leisure, and we seem to have come full circle back to functionalist leisure sociology—but with a difference, for we have already seen that modern leisure's association with freedom and development seems to be compromised at every turn by the presence of work. Ultimately, though, I argue that the spatialization, commodification, and disciplining of leisure wholly invalidate leisure only if the latter is narrowly conceived as the opposite of work, and only if the temporary psychological, physiological, and social benefits of leisure are deemed insignificant. I agree that any attempt to “escape” capitalist urban modernity through leisure would most certainly fail; this impossibility is noted in modernists texts like E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, where Adela Quested's impassioned plea to see “the real India” seems to find in Dr. Aziz's trip to the Marabar Caves a promise of unreified, uncommercialized contact with India, but instead leads to another sanitized, expensive, and carefully choreographed Anglo-Indian excursion. That this trip ends in total disaster, with Adela accusing Aziz of attempted rape—which not only widens the rift between the Europeans and Indians but also tragically and uncannily manifests the deepest fears underpinning the very xenophobia that Adela condemns—only further underlines modernist skepticism towards leisure as a means of escape. But Marx's desire to fold leisure into labor, to infuse the sphere of labor with the positive aspects of leisure and vice versa, is replicated in the modernist leisure fiction I analyze. Insofar as Marx locates utopia in the destruction of the work/leisure binary, leisure spaces are indeed utopian.

And indeed, I will show how modernist leisure fiction pinpoints positive leisure experiences as occurring in the very moments when labor and leisure crisscross and intertwine.
Or to put it another way, the cultural work done by leisure spaces in modernist fiction lies in the very rupture of leisure (the becoming-work of leisure) and its dialectical partner, the rupture of work (the becoming-leisure of work). The “knowledgeable actors” so central to post-Gramscian leisure theory are, in the context of modernism, the characters, narrators, and even the modernists themselves, who find pleasure by manipulating the becoming-leisure of work and the becoming-work of leisure and by balancing (or disrupting the balance of) the tensions that constitute modern leisure spaces: the tensions between freedom and constraint, between activity and relaxation, between private and public, and between fantasy and materiality. As a result, although these works modernist leisure fiction do exhibit desire for a realm of unmitigated freedom, escape, and relaxation that may not be accessible through the institutions of modern leisure, these tensions and impossibilities are therefore not contradictions that make leisure impossible, but rather comprise the mechanism through which modernism represents leisure.
Chapter 2
From The Leisure Class to Leisure Space: Early Modernism and the Case for Universal Leisure

In the preceding chapter, I discussed leisure studies, a specialization within sociology whose insights have, unfortunately, not been sufficiently considered by literary criticism, and not at all recognized by the few existing works of literary criticism on modernism and hotels or other leisure spaces of modernity. Yet I have argued that leisure studies itself is rooted in modernity; its concepts derive from the philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists of the modernist era, and the cultural institutions it studies are modern inventions. Even the contemporary concept of “leisure” is a product of modernity, as the era of modernism saw the development, both in fiction and in non-fiction, of a discourse on leisure that increasingly displaced the previously dominant public discourse on labor initiated by eighteenth-century political economy and continued by politicians, economists, and activists during the nineteenth century. To exemplify this displacement of labor by leisure, I will read (against the grain) Thorstein Veblen's The Theory of the Leisure Class (1899) and Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1904-5) as calls to end the discursive and socioeconomic dominance of labor. I will juxtapose these “farewells” with two introductions of leisure discourse: Ezra Pound's ABC of Economics (1933) and Bertrand Russell's In Praise of Idleness (1935). Then, I will move from these philosophic, sociological, and economic theories of labor to non-fiction on leisure by early modernist writers:
Oscar Wilde, Vernon Lee\textsuperscript{24} and Henry James. Doing so will not only provide another bridge between modernism and leisure studies (for the latter field as a rule analyzes non-literary texts), but also establish the cultural vocabulary around leisure that later modernists would respond to, critique, and rewrite. To do this, I will juxtapose Lee's *Limbo and Other Essays* (1898) with Henry James' New York Preface (1907) to *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881). More specifically, I will investigate Lee's theory of leisure in “About Leisure,” in which leisure is reached at the very moment it is indiscernible from labor, and contextualize this essay with other leisure non-fiction during the era of early modernism (particularly Oscar Wilde's “The Soul of Man Under Socialism”). At this point, I will briefly reflect on the significance of Lee and Wilde's formulations for leisure's relationship to the aesthetics of high modernism, using Marion Milner's *An Experiment in Leisure* (1937) to argue that modernist modes of aesthetic inquiry are conceptualized as leisure activities. My analysis of James' “Preface,” which reflects on the interweaving of authorial labor and aesthetic pleasure he experiences in an Italian hotel, will show that the leisurely mode of authorship Milner adopts is already at work as early as three decades earlier. Here, I will illuminate James' vacillation between two types of authorship: a leisurely mode of writing versus a laborious one. Ultimately, Lee, James, and Wilde endorse

\textsuperscript{24} For recent discussions of Vernon Lee as a modernist, see Mary Patricia Kane’s *Spurious Ghosts: The Fantastic Tales of Vernon Lee*, Catherine Maxwell and Patricia Pulham’s collection *Vernon Lee: Decadence, Ethics, Aesthetics*, and Christa Zorn’s *Vernon Lee: Aesthetics, History, and the Victorian Female Intellectual*. Zorn's introductory account of the resistance of both modernist authors and contemporary scholars of modernism to consider Lee as an early modernist is particularly useful and provocative. My reading of Lee’s work in the present chapter is intended to contribute to this discussion by countering the common argument that Lee was too preoccupied with specifically Victorian issues of ethics and public morality. More specifically, by interpreting Lee’s *Limbo and Other Essays* as an important milestone in the history of modernist discourse on hotels and leisure, I characterize Lee’s preoccupations as quite in line with concerns raised about leisure by more “canonical” modernists. While I have no specific interest in labeling Lee as a modernist—indeed, I only want to draw her out as an early modernist insofar as she participates in hotel discourse in the same way that James and Forster do—this thematic continuity invalidates arguments that characterize Lee as irrelevant for modernism. I point, for example, to Rene Wellek’s argument that it is Lee’s “long winded, earnest moralizing about dead public issues” that distances her irrevocably from modernism (qtd. in Zorn xvi). Instead, this “moralizing” sets her firmly within an identifiable strain of modernism that used the hotel and other modern leisure institutions as a field for exploring the ethical dimensions of modernity.
universal leisure: the spread of leisure rather than its accumulation in a leisure class. The last section will turn to fiction by arguing that *Daisy Miller* revises (but does not overturn) the Victorian association of the hotel with illicit sexuality by unmasking the emotional content of leisure—the romance, the thrill—as a temporary surface effect machined by continually referencing the discourse of leisure itself. As it dramatizes the birth of a popular discourse on leisure through the “leisure consciousness” of its flagrantly non-aristocratic protagonist, *Daisy Miller* anticipates the shift from leisure class to leisure space. *Daisy Miller* will thus prepare the foundation for Chapter Three, which will follow this shift to the first decade of the twentieth century.

**Modern Philosophies of Labor and Leisure: Veblen, Weber, Russell, Pound**

We can regard Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) as setting a precedent for the strain of leisure theory that, during the 1980s, insisted that leisure was not a separate realm clearly delineated from labor, but rather was permeated by the norms, values, and social hierarchies of capitalism. After all, Veblen's leisure is a subsidiary arm of labor insofar as leisure's social function is to act as a signifier of wealth and productivity: conspicuous leisure parades the surplus value that “purchased” a temporary or prolonged cessation from work, conspicuous consumption provides a stage for displaying surplus wealth, and the vicarious leisure of wives, children, and servants multiplies opportunities for displaying conspicuous leisure. Leisure here is “honorific,” that is, symbolic of the cultural status gained through the accumulation of wealth. Yet Veblen's careful, lengthy descriptions of modern leisure forms such as gambling and couture fashion actually argue the opposite—that modernity values leisure over
labor; profits are spent not through reinvestment but through elaborating an increasingly complex and ubiquitous cultural machinery for luxurious waste and unproductive activities. In other words, I argue that Veblen, while claiming to discover leisure as a timeless, universal element of all human cultures, presents an historically specific typology of modern leisure forms that maps out the proliferation and expansion of leisure afforded by the technological advances of the nineteenth century. While leisure theory often interprets Veblen as painting a sadly realistic portrait of capitalist values penetrating the “non-work” sphere of leisure, I point to Veblen's fascination with modern leisure forms (which includes his halting and befuddled chronicle of non-honorific forms of leisure) as evidence of the gap between what Veblen says he argues and what he does argue. What he actually shows is that labor itself is, as a dominant cultural value, in the process of being supplanted by leisure. As an industrial sociologist at the dawn of mass consumerism and mass leisure—his other works include *The Theory of Business Enterprise, The Instinct of Workmanship, andAbsentee Ownership and Business Enterprise in Recent Times*—Veblen is a liminal figure, poised between what I have called the labor theory of value and the leisure theory of value.

Traces of this shift frequently appear in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, but most importantly in the “trickle-down” theory and in his chapter, “Survivals of Non-Invidious Interest.” Veblen's well-known trickle-down theory posits that each socioeconomic class mimics the leisure style of the class above it, so that leisure practices “trickle down” from one class to the next. While Veblen assumes that the trickle-down principle applies to the pre-modern human cultures (the “savage,” “barbarian,” and “quasi-peaceful” cultures), his argument actually reflects the expansion of leisure that characterized Europe after around 1690. During the long eighteenth
century, aristocratic activities like sport, music, hunting, etiquette, academic pursuits, and fancy
needlework (albeit often in altered forms) became increasingly available to the middle class. By
the turn of the century, these leisure activities had spread to the working class as well, as a result
of the large increase in real income and non-work time that occurred after the mid-nineteenth
century. Underneath Veblen's “history of man,” which ends in terror at the prospect of the social
consequences of the trickle-down—an immense waste of capital and labor and the erosion of
labor values in the working class—what we find is the modern creation of mass leisure (which
Veblen forgets is an industry involving production and exchange) and the social decentralization
of the work ethic. In “Survivals of the Non-Invidious Interest,” Veblen identifies cultural
phenomena that defy his characterization of leisure as an honorific system—phenomena that
symbolize wealth and productivity and encourage capitalist competition. Two of these “non-
invidious interests” (that is, non-competitive and unproductive) are particularly relevant for the
present analysis: workmanship and the New Woman. Opposed to conspicuous waste and to the
maximization of profit, workmanship honors efficiency, multiplies the amount of effort devoted
to a single commodity, and elicits an “affection” for work rather than a belief in the inherent
irksomeness of all labor (93). While Veblen refers to workmanship as an “instinct,” we can easily
historicize his portrait of workmanship with reference to the Arts and Crafts movement as a
reaction against the kind of labor required by industrial capitalism. Craftsmanship is not a
timeless instinct but rather a social invention—a nostalgic reinvention of the guilds of medieval
European history—that not only played a central role in social movements against capitalist
production but also represents for the present project one of the many reevaluations of the
relationship between leisure and labor during the era of modernism. Veblen also interprets the
New Woman as rebelling against the role of “vicarious leisure” assigned to them as their economic “job;” instead, they want to labor for themselves, escape the gendered system of compulsory conspicuous consumption, and not be regarded as a passive reflection of the wealth of a male relative. While he says this New Woman is a “reversion to a more generic type of human character” (361), I find that his unique characterization of the New Woman movement as a form of economic rebellion suggestively situates feminism as a social movement intent on rethinking the relationship between labor and leisure.

Departing from the grim economic determinism implied in Veblen's work, Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-5) insists that economic values cannot be understood apart from the larger cultural whole they participate in, yet Weber nonetheless ends on a similar pessimistic note. Significantly, Weber characterizes the difference between traditional forms of labor and modern forms through an invocation of leisurely labor. Weber, like many other political economists and leisure theorists, imagines “traditional labor” as an ideal form whose “leisureliness was suddenly destroyed” (67) by the coming of modern capitalism. I quote the following famous passage at length in order to draw out Weber's emphasis on the leisurely character of pre-competition labor:

> Until about the middle of the past century the life of a putter-out was...what we should today consider very comfortable.... The peasants came with their cloth...made from raw material which the peasant himself had produced, to the town in which the putter-out lived, and after a careful...appraisal...received the customary price for it. The putter-out's customers...were middlemen, who also came to him...seeking traditional qualities, and bought from his warehouse.... The number of business hours was very moderate, perhaps five to six a day, sometimes considerably less; in the rush season, when there was one, more. Earnings were moderate; enough to lead a respectable life.... [R]elations among competitors were relatively good....A long daily visit to the tavern, with often plenty to drink, and a congenial circle of friends, made life comfortable and leisurely....The idyllic state collapsed under the pressure of a bitter competitive struggle.... The old leisurely and
comfortable attitude toward life gave way to a hard frugality.... [T]hey did not wish to consume but to earn, while others...were forced to curtail their consumption. (66-8)

Leisurely labor, like the “hermeneutic” analysis Weber uses in this text, is seamlessly integrated into a social whole. Workers and capitalists take part of the same communal life, capitalists regard each other as friends, and the hours of labor are not strictly divided from those of leisure activities like visiting a tavern for social intercourse. But in modern capitalist societies, the valorization of capital accumulation and of the vocational “calling” through the Protestant work ethic, according to Weber, expels the leisurely aspects of labor in favor of discipline, rational calculation, and utilitarian evaluations of human activities based on usefulness. “Not leisure and enjoyment, but only activity” will please God, so free time is interpreted as an unconscionable “waste of time” (157). If we continue to read leisure into Weber's text, leisure is parsimoniously reserved for the Hereafter—and even this blissful vacation is only a prospect (and not a guaranteed one) for those who have demonstrated grace through hard work. In secular terms, the work ethic isolates and expels leisurely forms of action, establishes an opposition between labor and leisure, and creates the modern concept of “leisure” as a scarce commodity to be purchased, both morally and literally, as a reward for labor.

Faced with “a renunciation, a departure from an age of full and beautiful humanity” (181), Weber's self-professed preference for hermeneutic, rather than deterministic, social analysis seems to break down in the final, “iron cage” section of The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. In his famous proclamation, “The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so” (181), Weber claims that modern capitalism developed voluntaristically, in concert with Protestantism, but this system
is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which
today determine the lives of all individuals who are born into this mechanism...with an
irresistible force. Perhaps it will so determine them until the last ton of fossilized coal is
burnt. In Baxter's view the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the
“saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment.” But fate decreed that
the cloak should become an iron cage. (181)

Once a religious doctrine meets an economic system, apparently, the coupling is so powerful that
it survives even the erosion of the spiritual content of the work ethic, which now “prowls about
in our lives like the ghost of dead religious beliefs” (182). In the final pages of the work, I would
argue, Weber's disenchantment is largely the result of the erosion of any system of belief that
values labor in and of itself, even if only as the means of survival; it is not the creation of the
“calling” that he condemns, but rather the subsequent decay of the dignity, meaning, and
pleasure of labor. “Where the fulfilment of the calling cannot directly be related to the highest
spiritual and cultural values,” he laments, “or when, on the other hand, it need not be felt simply
as an economic compulsion, the individual generally abandons the attempt to justify it at
all” (ibid). Hence his decrying of the “specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart” (ibid),
for both work and leisure are emptied of larger significance—emptied of, in fact, hermeneutic
significance: the relation of the economic sphere to a larger cultural whole. At the book's close,
Weber's refusal to speculate as to the future of the work ethic (as to whether a new idea or
“prophet” will arise and influence modern labor) diminishes, in my view, any truth value
attributable to the image of “the iron cage,” which is meant less as an objectively correct
diagnosis of the present and future of Western society than as an image he considers sufficiently
horrific to underscore his critique of the work ethic. Weber's book—especially when
contextualized with Veblen, Pound, and Russell, as I am seeking to do—is not a shoulder-
shrugging documentation of a hopeless situation but part of a larger, early twentieth century call
for something else, for a different organization of leisure and labor whose portrait is contained in Weber's imaginative “reconstruction” of the pre-modern lifestyle. In other words, where most works of leisure studies that consider Weber's analyses of capitalist labor would skip immediately to Adorno and Horkheimer's post-World War II condemnation of the culture industry, I wish to emphasize Weber's connection to a neglected pre-World War II discourse on leisure—a connection I make through emphasizing the emotional charge of, and the complexities and ambiguities in, Weber's text. Other than challenging the inaccurate overemphasis on the “iron cage” image, another analysis of the relationship between modernism and The ProtestantEthic and the Spirit of Capitalism might draw out the similarities between Weber's discussions of monastic life as an alternative labor style to movements in art and architecture familiar to modernist scholars, such as the Arts and Crafts and Bauhaus movements and the Omega Arts and Rebel Arts workshops.

For now, though, I wish to set Weber's text alongside two modernist calls for radical changes in the social distribution of labor and leisure: Ezra Pound's ABC of Economics and Bertrand Russell's In Praise of Idleness. Pound's ABC is, unsurprisingly, a non-traditional economic treatise—he sarcastically notes, “I spare the reader the history of barter, etc.” (16)—that shows more in common rhetorically with Pound's Imagist and Vorticist manifestoes and with “The Chinese written character as a medium for poetry” (the pamphlet Pound, during his 1912 stay at the Stone Cottage with Yeats, edited the notes of the Orientalist scholar Ernest Fenollosa) than with The Wealth of Nations or Capital. Pound's contribution to political economy, in other words, is an intervention through modernist style:
I am not proceeding according to Aristotelian logic but according to the ideogramic method of first heaping together the necessary components of thought. None of these ‘incoherent’ or contradictory facts can be omitted. A problem in the resolution of forces can only be solved when the forces are taken count of....The science of economics will not get very far until it grants the existence of will as a component; ie, will toward order, will toward “justice” or fairness, desire for civilization, amenities included. (27)

In his creative misreading of the Chinese written language, Pound wants use what he refers to as the “ideogramic method” as a mode for accomplishing for political economy what he tried to accomplish for poetry. In Fenollosa's pamphlet, Chinese ideograms, because they emphasize the transitive verb (which Fenollosa calls the “universal form of action in nature” (13)), involve a “transference of force” that “retains the primitive sap” and “retains the creative impulse and process, visible and at work” (12, 24, 25). Pound, following Fenollosa, regards Chinese ideograms more forceful, vibrant, and objective than Indo-European phonetic languages, so in the ABC of Economics, Pound adapts the ideogramic method to make a forceful, vibrant, and objective language more appropriate for debating economic theory than the traditional rhetorical norms of political economy. Pound also chooses this method in order to keep the interest of his readers, which (as in his ABC of Literature) he conceives as a broad, mass audience; on the subject of Karl Marx, Pound quotes “Mr. Griffith, the inventor of Sinn Fein” as saying, “Can't move 'em with a cold thing like economics”” (26). Pound's choice of “Mr. Griffith” is telling here; it suggests that Pound wants to critique Marx in two ways: first, by dismissing Marx's dry, analytical style, and second, by exposing him to the criticism of a “real” revolutionary figure.

For Pound regards Marx as missing a crucial element of human production—an element that makes sense of Pound's otherwise unaccountable references to “forces” and “will” in the excerpt above. According to Pound, Marx “knew, but forgot...the limits of his economics:” because “Marxian economics deals with goods for sale...the minute I cook my own dinner or nail
four boards together in a chair, I escape the whole cycle of Marxian economics” (26). While one might counter with a polite question as to where Pound will find a pot to cook in or a hammer to nail with, Pound wants to draw attention to a facet of human life that Marx himself had elaborated: the human “will” to production. Pound too believes in this will to labor:

Over a decade ago, Major Douglas admitted that I had made a contribution to the subject [of political economy] when I pointed out that my grandfather had built a railroad probably less from a desire to make money or an illusion that he could make more that way than some other, than from inherent activity, the artist's desire to MAKE something, the fun of constructing and the play of outwitting and overcoming obstruction. (27)

This delight in basic manufacture, common to the manual laborer and the artist alike, is the “will” that economic discourse must not forget. Within Pound's surprising appeal to human nature is an acute awareness of the global crises of the 1930s: he explains, “I go on writing because it appears to me that no thoughtful man can in our time avoid trying to arrange those things in his own mind in an orderly fashion...i e, as a man living perforce among another men, affected by their actions, and by his affecting them” (44). As a response to global crisis that he admits, despite this very humanistic motivation, nonetheless has an “autocratic” valence to it (45), the ABC of Economics is of interest for studying modernism's relationship to fascism, but in the present context, I wish to take Pound's humanistic goals at face value insofar as his account of ideal labor responds to the other “theorists” of leisure and labor featured in the present chapter (Veblen, Weber, Russell, Lee, Wilde, Milner, and James).

Pound's belief in the human will to labor works as a springboard into his scheme for economic stability in the modern West. To characterize his scheme briefly: Pound wishes to replace paper money with “tokens” corresponding to units of work achieved by the bearer; the disappearance of money would enable the abolition of capital accumulation (but not petty
property ownership in general), thereby removing the barriers to the fair distribution of commodities, labor, and leisure. As we will see below in texts by Vernon Lee and Oscar Wilde, Pound too finds the desirableness of labor to be the problem: “CURIOUSLY ENOUGH,” Pound sarcastically intones, “despite the long howls of those who used to complain about being oppressed and overworked, the last thing human beings appear to wish to share is WORK” (16). Just as Weber argued, Pound believes that the work ethic has been too successful, but even further than Weber, Pound attributes the hoarding of labor-time as the source of unemployment. Limiting the work day would therefore solve the unequal distribution of resources, which is merely a symptom of unfair labor distribution: “if no one were allowed to work (this year 1933) no more than five (5) hours a day, there would be hardly anyone out of a job and no family without paper tokens potent enough to permit them to eat” (16-7). In a different version of his solution, Pound suggests limiting careers to four hours a day for twenty years or to eight hours a day for ten years. Beyond this career, the remaining superabundance of desire to engage in goal-oriented productive activity should be spent in informal labor:

Let the man work four hours for pay, and if he still wants to work after that, let him work as any artist or poet works, let him embellish his home or garden, or stretch his legs in some form of exercise, or crook his back over a pool-table or sit on his rump and smoke. He would get a great deal more out of life, and, supposing him to have any rudiments of intelligence, he would be infinitely more likely to use it and let it grow, and in any case he would “get a great deal more for his money.” (29)

Like his contemporaries—the politicians, sociologists, and philosophers arguing that leisure is necessary for the happiness and personal development of modern citizens—Pound associates human productivity not with modern forms of labor, but rather with a reorganization of labor that would emphasize voluntary productive activity outside of formal jobs. Pound's vision of ideal
labor, then, resembles Marx's vision of ideal labor—of going from one to another type of purposive activity, according to whim, without becoming tied down to any specialization or any "job"—as well as Weber's idealized vision of traditional labor as informal, flexible, agreeable, and (in terms of the space of work) domestic or social.

Pound is a little clearer on this point when he says that "a man on that wage," that is, half the wages of the present day because his labor time would be halved, "once he had 'arranged his life' in accordance and organized his other four hours for private activity, could have a damn sight better life than he now gets" (30). A little later, he repeats, "a man with a lot of spare time can get a great deal more out of life with a very little money, than an overworked man with a great deal" (35) because Pound's economic scheme would guarantee leisure for all citizens. In this leisure, he specifies that people could better their lives through leisure by developing a high level skill in fields like woodworking, cuisine, fashion, and gardening—skills that would multiply the number of beautiful and useful objects around them. In Pound's words, the citizen at leisure "he can paint pictures on his wall, stuff his armchairs, breed fighting cocks, buy lottery tickets, or indulge in any form of frugality or wastefulness that suits his temperament" (52). Like the leisure theorists of today, who carefully delineate mere idleness from leisure, he explains, "Leisure is not gained by simply being out of work. Leisure is spare time free from anxiety. Any spare time not absolutely obsessed by worry can be made the means to a 'better life'" (35).

Interestingly, Pound here identifies leisure as a responsibility of the government; he stresses his belief that government regulation of the distribution of labor (which goes far beyond the principles of Keynesian intervention) is necessary for promoting human happiness through universal leisure. Contrary to the accounts of leisure history made within leisure studies, the
sociologists of the 1950s are not the first to insist that the progress made by industrialism should and will make leisure a guaranteed, universal human right. Pound grumbles, “It is…idiotic to expect members of a civilized twentieth-century community to go on working eight hours a day” (59), using for an example the “kitchen plumbing” that emancipates women from the daily fetching of water. Distancing himself from exclusionary or non-progressive theories of leisure, Pound thusly characterizes the *ABC of Economics*: “This is not a theory of the leisure class. It is in fact of leisure humanity (ie civilized human life)” (ibid).

Pound's dream of a “leisure humanity” is echoed in Bertrand Russell's 1935 group of essays *In Praise of Idleness*, which, in terms of the present project, is notable for its eponymous essay. Russell opens this essay by explicitly calling for a change in the social privileging of work: “Like most of my generation, I was brought up on the saying: 'Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do.'...But...I think that ...immense harm is caused by the belief that work is virtuous” (1). He performs an ideological critique of the work ethic by unmasking it as a way to “keep the poor contented” despite the forced production of surplus value (11), by identifying leisure rather than labor as “essential to civilization” (4) and “one of the ends of life” (11), and by claiming that “the real villain” is precisely that Calvinist man of God marked by grace: “the man who saves” (2). Like Pound, he insists that his solution for unemployment and poverty—the reduction of the work day to four hours a work—is eminently possible; Russell argues, “Modern technique has made it possible for leisure, within limits, to be not the prerogative of small privileged classes, but a right evenly distributed throughout the community” (4-5). Yet the persistence of the work ethic (often, he notes, in the form of “vicarious” asceticism, a prejudice on the part of the upper classes against working class leisure) has prevented the redistribution of
labor to reflect this technological progress. Addressing the fears of the upper class regarding their belief that the lower classes cannot fully appreciate leisure, he admits that “the wise use of leisure...is a product of civilization and education,” but adds that this should be reason for the increase in working class leisure rather than its irrelevance, for “without a considerable amount of leisure a man is cut off from many of the best things” (8). To break through these prejudices, he compares the ideological content of the work ethic to historical justifications for the suppression of women, as well as to a more obvious example, what he calls “the supreme virtue of hard work” in the U.S.S.R. (10). Addressing this ideology of labor, he calls attention to the contradictions of leisure industries like film, which, in the form of spectatorship, “serious-minded persons....are continually condemning” even though they regard “all the work that goes into producing a cinema” as “respectable” (11).

Happiness, says Russell, is derived from leisure activities, not from work, so work time should be limited to four hours a day, while active forms of leisure (dancing, for example, rather than watching a film, or playing football rather than watching it) should be encouraged. As we will find Wilde doing in a moment, Russell condemns the concentration of leisure into a small leisure class, which “might produce a Darwin” but also produced “tens of thousands of country gentlemen who never thought of anything more intelligent than fox-hunting and punishing poachers” (13). Instead, in a portrait that, again, recalls Marx's vision of a day's “work” in a communist society, “every person possessed of scientific curiosity will be able to indulge it, and every painter will be able to paint without starving,” while academics will truly enjoy intellectual freedom and medical research will have all the time and resources it needs to achieve its goals (14). In short, achieving universal leisure will achieve the goals of liberal-democratic society:
Above all, there will be happiness and joy of life, instead of frayed nerves, weariness, and dyspepsia. The work exacted will be enough to make leisure delightful, but not enough to produce exhaustion. Since men will not be tired in their spare time, they will not demand only such amusements as are passive and vapid....Ordinary men and women, having the opportunity of a happy life, will become more kindly and less persecuting and less inclined to view others with suspicion. The taste for war will die out... (14-5)

Russell's essay was, as one might expect, immediately critiqued as being utopian, but what it important here is that during the first part of the twentieth century, the cultural dominance of the work ethic was being challenged from a number of corners, not only from politicians and journalists, but also from arguments within philosophy (Russell), poetry (Pound), and sociology (Veblen and Weber). In the coming chapters and the remainder of the present chapters, I will show how these critiques took part in the rise of a modern discourse on leisure that did not only take place in non-fiction, but also permeates modernist fiction as well.

Leisure Enters Early Modernism: Vernon Lee and Oscar Wilde

I chose to address Veblen, Weber, Pound, and Russell to discuss first because they form a relatively coherent quartet of works focusing on leisure as a significant social, economic, and political problem of modernity. Having established leisure as a prominent object of public discourse during the era of modernism, I now wish to investigate the high value placed on leisure in terms of aesthetics and private life. Although Wilde and Lee both regard leisure as a cure to the ills of industrial capitalism, these early modernists both explore its curative potential in explicitly aesthetic terms and from the point of view of the individual consciousness. Vernon Lee's *Limbo and Other Essays* is a collection of travel writing based on Lee's experiences in Italy. Taken as a whole, the essays present an impassioned plea for specific kind of tourism—a no-holds-barred, itinerary- and guidebook-free style of directly experiencing foreign lands that
would please today's Anthony Bourdains and Frances Mayeses. In “On Modern Traveling,” for example, Lee elaborates on the advantages and disadvantages of these new, commercialized forms of mass tourism (for she does identify advantages), although I will wait to discuss this essay until my analysis A Room with a View in Chapter Three; for my immediate purposes, I turn to “About Leisure,” which inaugurates a modernist discourse on leisure that turns on its relation to a spiritually fulfilling form of labor.

Lee begins “About Leisure” with an epigraph: “Sancte Hieronyme, ora pro nobis” (135). This injunction, “Saint Jerome, pray for us,” corresponds not to his traditional identification as the patron saint of librarians and translators, but to Lee's “special devotion to St. Jerome as the Patron of Leisure” (ibid)—made necessary because of the modern man's inability to achieve or appreciate leisure. Jerome, Lee admits, was “a busy, even overworked Father of the Church” (135-6), but she points to the multitude of Renaissance representations of St. Jerome in his study in which “he was never writing, but always reading or looking over the edge of his book at the charming tables and chairs and curiosities, or at the sea and mountains through the window,” and in which, significantly, because of the lion always guarding his study, “he was never interrupted by anybody” (136, italics original).25 By enjoying ample space and time for private meditation, Jerome “is the only person who ever enjoyed perfect leisure, and, therefore, the natural patron and advocate of all the other person to whom even this imperfect leisure is refused” (136-7). Lee herself has mounted on her bedroom wall a photograph of Bellini’s St. Jerome in his Study so that she sees it immediately upon waking “as an aid to devotion.”

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25 A medieval folk tale held that when a lion approached St. Jerome’s monastery, the other occupants fled in terror while St. Jerome calmly welcomed the animal, who indicated to St. Jerome that it had been wounded. After St. Jerome removed the thorn from his paw, the lion was tamed and remained around the monastery. Allegorically, the thorn represents the crown of thorns, indicating that St. Jerome’s removal of it symbolizes baptism.
reminding her to cultivate leisure (135). Lee’s desire for leisure presages the tropes and rhetorical turns of contemporary leisure studies—or rather, Lee's essay is one of the texts that shows the extent to which the present-day discourse on leisure is a continuation of a modernist discourse of leisure. Like Chris Rojek who cheekily begins Decentering Leisure by admitting that leisure probably does not truly exist at all, her examples of non-leisure or illusory leisure (such as the tendency to see other people’s lives as full of leisure) seem at first to invalidate leisure entirely. Lee's “About Leisure” does, however, harbor an optimism not typically found in contemporary leisure studies. Reflecting on the elusiveness of leisure in a parenthetical aside, she notes

Having written this part of my definition, it strikes me that I have very nearly given away St. Jerome and St. Jerome's lion, since any one may say, that probably that famous leisure of his was just one of the delusions in question. But this is not the case. St. Jerome really had leisure, at least when he was painted; I know it to be a fact; and, for the purposes of literature, I require it to be one. So I close this parenthesis with the understanding that so much is absolutely settled. (139)

This passage’s nod to “the purposes of literature” reveals that the hopeful supplicant of leisure is a writer—showing the significance of Lee choosing a representation of St. Jerome surrounded by books as a talisman for leisure. Lee’s assumption that leisure is necessary for literary production prefigures Woolf's similar claim in A Room of One's Own. “About Leisure” is thus an early example of the modern shift in public values in which the predominance of work ethic described by Weber is challenged by a new discourse regarding leisure as an indispensable necessity for life and art—challenges to the work ethic that, I argue, would reach a critical mass just after World War I, become increasingly prominent in the works of public policy, philosophy, and literature, and culminate in the contemporary academic study of leisure.
What makes Lee's “About Leisure” unique among all these works is the explicit and unrelenting specificity with which she uses leisure to launch a critique of industrialism and the work ethic. She begins with a critique of means-ends rationality, lamenting that we are allowing ourselves to get into a state where nothing is valued, otherwise than as a means; where today is interesting only because it leads up to tomorrow; and the flower is valued only on account of the fruit, and the fruit, in turn, on account of the seed...Life has been allowed to arrange itself, if such can be called an arrangement, intro an unstable, jostling heap of interests, our and other folk's, serious and vacuous, trusted to settle themselves according to the line of least resistance (that is, of most breakage!) and the survival of the toughest, without our sympathy directing the choice. (145-6)

Her use of “interests” and “survival of the toughest” and her allusion to the invisible hand illuminate her rejection of classical political economy (particularly its naturalization of capitalist competition through social Darwinism), aligning “About Leisure” with Marx's rejection of political economy as reflecting an ideological formation rather than natural and necessitous property of human life. In ends-means rationality, Lee finds that “individual character” is endangered (146), for the structuring of work under capitalism impedes the expression of “the living harmony of the individual soul” through the “free choice” of activities that, in themselves, provide pleasure for the doer (150). Capitalism does “mischief” to this human need:

Now, trying to do work one is not fit for, implies the more or less unfitting oneself to do, or even to be, the something for which one had facilities. It means competing with those who are utterly different, competing in things which want a totally different kind of organism; it means, therefore, offering one's arms and legs, and feelings and thoughts to those blind, brutal forces of adaptation which, having to fit a human character into a given place, lengthen and shorten it, mangling it unconcernedly in the process. (144)

Again, Lee's imagery graphically recalls the Marxist critique, this time through an invocation of the entirely non-ergonomic industrial machines and spaces that shape and transform working
bodies (rather than vice versa). “About Leisure” is accordingly just as much about defining the right kind of work as it is about defining the right kind of leisure, both of which diverge from capitalist rationality and entail a *rewriting* of the work ethic rather than its wholesale abandonment. “Good work,” Lee explains, “is born of the love of the Power-to-do for the Job-to-be-done” (141) and is necessary for nurturing of individuality both during and after work.

In other words, like Marx, Lee posits an association between the impoverishment of human experience and the “honor” given to “the quick method, the rapid worker, the cheap object quickly replaced by a cheaper” (147). What is called leisure in modernity is merely another manifestation of the priority of “getting on,” in which gifted persons cultivate themselves, indeed, but as fruit and vegetables for the market, and with good luck and trouble, possible *primeurs:*26 concentrate every means, chemical manure and sunshine, and quick! each still hard pear or greenish cauliflower into the packing-case, the shavings and the sawdust, for export. It is with such well-endowed persons that originates the terrible mania (caught by their neighbors) of tangible work, something which can be put alongside of others’ tangible work, if possible with some visible social number attached to it....[N]obody looks at souls except those who use them for this market-gardening. (148)

Lee's understanding of leisure as a marker of social status corresponds to Veblen's account of honorific leisure in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), published one year after “On Leisure” (which underscores how Veblen's account of leisure took part of a larger cultural conversation). It also corresponds to Adorno's condemnation of hobbyism as a type of leisure replicating the discipline of labor and the values of capitalism in his late essay “Free Time,” which itself recalls his and Horkheimer's more famous portrait of modern leisure as a yet another industry. Lee similarly elaborates on “the wear and tear of so-called social amusements,” the

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26 Lee here refers to a kind of futures market in the wine industry: the common practice of purchasing young wines not yet bottled in order to secure rare wines at the best price.
irksome and laborious activities through which “w[e] kill time, and kill our better powers also” (141). Without cultural support for choosing work and leisure to reflect one's talents and interests, leisure is reduced to mere idleness or boredom. Lee argues that boredom is “the greatest enemy of leisure” because of the deadly combination of a work-obsessed culture and the absence of self-motivated, inherently pleasurable activities (ibid). To avoid the scandalous appearance of idleness, people turn to the classic leisure domains of art, literature and philanthropy, but with a difference: with *the need to produce* embedded in capitalist culture. “The fear of boredom, the fear of the moral going to bits which boredom involves,” Lee warns, “encumbers the world with rubbish, and exhibitions of pictures, publishers' announcements, lecture syllabuses, schemes of charitable societies” (142). A paranoia of production envelops the nominally non-productive arena of leisure, which is corrupted from an “expression....of men's and women's thoughts and feelings,” into a bulwark against “their dread of finding themselves without thoughts to think or feelings to feel” (ibid). She locates this obsession in the working world, too, which is itself a novel form of “restless idleness” because it enchains modern subjects to surplus labor. “Does he really require more money?” Lee asks; “Is he really more useful as a colonel than as a major?” (143). The world of intellectual and aesthetic production is similarly invaded by competitiveness, reducing scholarship into a question of what “the sage poet, artist, said, did, or made the particular thing before some other sage, hero, poet, artist” (149).

Ultimately, both work and leisure are suffused with the drive for unceasing, unnecessary production and competition that has no grounding in actual human need or inclination.

What has been lost, or at least neglected, is what Lee calls “charm,” which is the “shape, perfume, savor, and in the sense of herbals, their individual *virtue*” possessed by all individuals
and all philosophical and aesthetic works (150). For Vernon Lee, this is the heart of the matter: “this indifference to what folk are as distinguished from what they do” (147), which makes people “more hard and less flower-like” (151). Ideally, leisure should correct this increasing domination of human life by work: “Leisure suspends the pull and push, the rough-and-ready reciprocity of man and circumstance. 'Tis in leisure that the soul is free to grow by its own laws” (151). Lee's argument about leisure as correcting social ills marks her modernism, departing from the Victorian public discourse that addressed the ills capitalism by sanctifying bourgeois domestic space. Indeed, the following remarks identify her essay as a true contemporary to G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*, published four years after “On Leisure:”

'Tis, I would show, in leisure, while talking with the persons who are dear, while musing on the themes that are dearer even than they, that voices learn their harmonious modes, intonation, accent, pronunciation of single words; all somehow falling into characteristic pattern, and the features of the face learn to move with that centered meaning which oftentimes makes homeliness itself more radiant than beauty. Nay, may it not be in Leisure, during life's pauses, that we learn to live, what for and how?...For, when all is said and done, 'tis during work we spend, during leisure we amass those qualities which we barter for ever with other folk, and the act of barter is life. (151-153)

In this passage, we see the social interaction valued by coterie modernism featured in Lee's essay as the quintessential leisure experience that develops “the living harmony of the individual soul” (150) mentioned earlier. But whereas some modernist coteries have been critiqued for elitism or for a complacency in the face of social inequalities precluding some groups from enjoying leisurely social intercourse, Lee explicitly develops the theme of leisure as a universal right or need. According to Lee, all of the world's “useful inhabitants” require leisure “to revive the spiritual and physical hewers of wood and drawers of water” (144-5).
Yet this universal leisure is not to be understood in solely utilitarian terms; Lee has none of the skepticism (found in works by the Frankfurt School, for example) towards leisure as inevitably another force in the mere reproduction of the labor force. “The poor sons and daughters of men,” she continues, “require for sustenance, as well as food and fuel, and intellect and morals, the special mysterious commodity called charm” (145). Charm she defines as “an intrinsic and ultimate quality [that] makes our actions, persons, life, significant and desirable, apart from anything they may lead to or any use to which they can be put” (ibid)—exactly, in short, the opposite of ends-means rationality. Unsurprisingly, then, leisure represents for Lee the key for achieving exactly the kind of social justice denied by capitalist competition. In this goal, she echoes Oscar Wilde's desire in “The Soul of Man Under Socialism” (1891) for an era of “new Hellenism” in which all people will be artist-individualists instead of workers. Although “The Soul of Socialism” is often interpreted more as a manifesto for anarchy than socialism, Wilde is in fact early modernism's heir to Marx insofar as both regard the unfettered development of individuals as the highest goal of economic reform. Wilde argues that socialism, with its equal distribution of wealth, will “give Life its proper basis and its proper environment” so long as it is anti-authoritarian and thereby provides a stable foundation for the universal cultivation of individualism (128). Though capitalism allows a few Byrons, Shelleys, and Hugos, who achieve their own individualism, this is far too few for Wilde, who admits that even when it is achieved, individualism is compromised under capitalism, whereas under socialism, “Individualism will be far freer, far finer and far more intensified than it is now” (132). Under capitalism, Wilde explains, “the recognition of private property has really harmed Individualism...by confusing a man with what he possesses,” so that “man thought that the
important thing was to have, and did not know that the important thing is to be” (132).

Interestingly, Wilde's use of “to be” is replicated in Lee's work; both authors makes constant recourse to the least specific verb in the English language define what individuality means—a clever solution to the logical paradox inherent in all arguments attempting to persuade people to obey an injunction to be “free.” Like Lee, Wilde connects individualism and uncoerced work, that is, the right to choose one's work: “if there is [compulsion], his work will not be good for him, will not be good in itself, and will not be good for others” (132). And like Lee, Wilde depicts this individualism through a host of organic terms and horticultural metaphors that rhetorically oppose the “unnatural” and unhealthy development of human productive powers in capitalism. Once humans are free to choose their work in a social environment stripped of competition, “the true personality of man,” he explains, “will grow naturally and simply, flower-like, or as a tree grows” (134).

We see through these parallels that Wilde and Lee, writing a little less than a decade apart, share a decadent aesthetic that wishes to transform life into art through the untrammeled and self-determined development of the individual. So far, my definition hardly departs from the standard account of aestheticism. But what is significant in “About Leisure” and “The Soul of Man Under Socialism” is that Wilde and Lee identify leisure as a precondition for this transformation of life into art. More specifically, they both call for an overhaul of the social division of labor that will guarantee universal leisure. Wilde's wildly utopian version of universal leisure is total leisure; as a technological progressivist, he believes that, in the near future, machines will perform “anything that is tedious or depressing” (140), so that “Humanity will be amusing itself, or enjoying cultivated leisure—which, and not labour, is the aim of man—or
making beautiful things, or reading beautiful things, or simply contemplating the world with admiration and delight” (141). By contrast, Lee's vision for universal leisure does not require an end to labor, but rather the creation of an equal distribution of both leisure and labor, accompanied by an infusion of leisurely qualities (such as pleasure and self-determination) into the world of labor. Both Lee and Wilde argue that leisure should be considered as a human right and that it should replace the work ethic as the central motivational and organizational force behind a socioeconomic system, but Lee's dialectic of leisure and labor more closely follows the reciprocity between work and play that I will argue is found in works of early modernism I will analyze in the present chapter. The less utopian or revolutionary tone of her suggestions for remedying the problems of capitalist modernity also mimics the no-nonsense, public-policy orientation of non-fiction works on leisure during modernism. In a passage that closely resembles Ezra Pound's and Bertrand Russell's (separate but similar) plans for solving overproduction and unemployment through a universal four-hour workday in The ABC of Economics (1933) and “In Praise of Idleness” (1932) respectively, Lee argues that “if everyone insisted on a share of Leisure, everyone would also do a share of work. For as things stand, 'tis the superfluity of one man which makes the poverty of the other” (153). The working class would gain from the equal distribution of leisure because “working from morning to night is not in any sense living,” just as the leisured class would benefit from the equal distribution of labor, for “doing nothing all day, incidentally spoiling or consuming the work of others, is not living either” (153, 154). Truly living, Lee believes, requires both labor and leisure.

In their common quest to fix the ills of modernity through an equal distribution of labor and leisure, Pound, Lee, and Marx form an unlikely trio whose descriptions of ideal labor shade
indiscernibly into their descriptions of ideal leisure. Because both leisure and labor will experienced as unalienated and intrinsically desirable, because the benefits of each are only conferred in the presence of the other, and because they will be uncoupled from the hectic pace of production and work ethic that characterizes capitalism, the distinction between the two realms will collapse. Lee's return to the figure of St. Jerome to illustrate this complementarity of leisure and labor shows, however, that the mutual enfolding of labor and leisure also characterizes the already existing, non-utopian, capitalist world. Under a subheading entitled “Life's Pauses,” she admits that “[w]e think of Leisure in those terms, comparing it with the scramble, at best the bustle, of work. But this might be a delusion, like that of the moving shore and the motionless boat” (152). While “St. Jerome...is looking dreamily over the top of his desk,” he is not therefore “less alive than if his eyes were glued to the page,” particularly because it is the ruminations of leisure that provide him with the knowledge that propels his written work —work that could not be achieved “had [he] always been thinking and writing” (152). As a result, leisure, she insists, is not “a masked apology for idleness” (153); in other words, that idleness, the true “opposite” of productive human activity, is not what she means by leisure.

What, then, is Lee's definition of leisure? She begins by asserting that leisure is not what is normally meant by reference to leisure time: “We speak of leisure time, but what we really mean thereby is time in which we can feel at leisure” (139, emphasis original). The mere fact of having time at one's disposal is not enough for leisure: we possess extra, unentailed blocks of time at the waiting room of a lawyer's office or of train stations, but this time is not at one's disposal and is more likely to anger and upset a person than cause the peaceful feeling that Lee finds indispensable for true leisure. What emerges is a phenomenological definition of leisure: “it
is not so much a quality of time as a peculiar state of mind” (139). In this state of mind, rather than reproducing the “hurrying and jostling” that characterizes “our hurrying times” (145), instead “we feel free to do what we like, and that we have plenty of space to do it in”—a definition she acknowledges as “trite” but “merely because it is so wonderfully true” (140). Ultimately, this leisure matters for Lee because the concomitant feeling of freedom and lack of constraint, by allowing the leisure-seeker to pursue activities that are (for him or her specifically) inherently pleasurable, cultivates the individual. Lee's definition therefore places leisure at the center of modern arguments about labor, freedom, necessity, alienation, individuality, industrialism, and, as we have seen above, social justice. Just as Chris Rojek's *Ways of Escape* identifies leisure as a utopia within reach that nonetheless seems disappear before one can experience it, Lee's “About Leisure” ends with a bittersweet acknowledgement of the difficulty of achieving leisure:

> For Leisure (and the ignorance of this truth is at the bottom of much *ennui*)—Leisure implies a superabundance not only of time but of the energy needed to spend time pleasantly. And it takes the finest activity to be truly at Leisure. Since Being at Leisure is but a name for being active from an inner impulse instead of a necessity; moving like a dancer or skater for the sake of one's inner rhythm instead of moving, like a ploughman or an errand-boy, for the sake of the wages you get for it. Indeed, for this reason, the type of all Leisure is art. (154)

Lee here juxtaposes the externally imposed and irksome activities of labor with the internally determined and pleasurable activities of leisure. Her concluding statement, given for the sake of those whose work is a “treadmill” and for the hopes that work will be experienced as both joyful and useful (that is, both laborly and leisurely), is therefore a plea that circles back to her opening epigraph: “Give us spare time, Holy Jerome, and joyful energy to use it. Sancte Hieronyme, ora pro nobis!” (155). The image of Saint Jerome, eternally poised between labor and leisure, painted
as a concrete manifestation of the ephemeral moment when labor and leisure intertwine,
simultaneously embodies and spiritualizes a seductive alternative to the stark modern division
between labor and leisure, just as Lee's “About Leisure,” along with other modernist discourses
on leisure, sanctifies leisure as an unalienated and perfected form of human production and
expression.

**High Modernist Aesthetics as Leisure: A Short Introduction**

In the above excerpt, Lee intriguingly alludes to a connection between leisure and art
when she notes, “the type of all Leisure is art,” but she immediately lets the matter drop by
demurring, “this is an intricate question, and time, alas! presses” (154). The scarcity of Lee's own
time and space in which she can feel at leisure is ironically illustrated here: she does not have
enough leisure to discuss the ideal leisure. Wilde too seats art at the place of honor when “The
Soul of Man under Socialism” ends with an extended meditation on art as “the most intense
mode of Individualism the world has known” (142). Both “About Leisure” and “The Soul of
Man under Socialism,” then, appear to harbor underneath the explicit protestations about
freedom and self-determination a very different, and very specific, mission for leisure: expanding
the domain of art. Lee does address a danger threatening universal engagement in art—the
danger of succumbing to the ends-means rationality of labor. To epitomize the unleisurely style
that infects modern leisure, she describes “a painter's garret, where some half-daubed canvas,
eleven feet by five, hides the Jaconda on the wall, the Venus in the corner, and blocks the
charming tree-tops, gables, and distant meadows through the window” (142). Perhaps, then, for
Lee at least, it would be more accurate to say that universal leisure would expand the opportunity
for aesthetic experience, both in the specific form of producing art and in the less tangible form of the enjoyment of beauty in all its forms (in the example above, appreciating classic artworks and the natural landscape out the garret window). Wilde, however, was specifically referring to each person's ability to produce objects of beauty, whether lovely useful objects (in the vein of the Arts and Crafts movement and the Omega Workshop) or works of pure artwork. In this difference between Wilde and Lee I find a lasting tension in modernist works, both fiction and nonfiction, that depict an aesthetic leisure class—individuals who either engage in no formal work or have enough time off that formal work to make leisure a significant presence in their lives. This tension revolves around the question of whether leisure is tied to aestheticism in general or to art production. Leisure in modernism, in other words, is divided between two types of making one's life into art: that of the leisured individual seeking a life full of beauty, and that of the artist (which makes leisure the neglected subtext of the *Kunstlerroman*). We can see this tension between two of Joyce's major works, *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*. Stephen Dedalus in the former work seeks to capitalize on his own biography to create a work of art, which professionalizes (rather than aestheticizes) his entire life story, while in the latter work this proto-artist is decentered in favor of Bloom, a self-identified career man whose mind is nonetheless the novel's endlessly fertile and aesthetically active engine, almost fetishizing the middle-class white-collar worker as the one who lives the beautiful life. That Bloom works in advertising—which applies the principles of the visual and verbal arts to the world of business, thereby uncoupling the aesthetic from the realm of art proper—only underscores this tension. Alternatively, consider Katherine Mansfield's “Bliss,” which ridicules the artist characters' dogged attempts to use every detail and moment of a dinner party to fuel the
engines of their artistic production yet requests that the reader retain sympathy for Bertha, a non-
artist awakening to the perceptual and sensual beauties of her life. Modernism, in other words,
maintains a skepticism towards the professionalization of aesthetic perception through art
careerism, while continuing to hold out aesthetic experiences as a primary goal in life.

I am suggesting that modernism’s long-acknowledged interest in the artistic life, whether
as a Kunstlerroman or as a portrait of aesthetically charged modes of being, must be understood
within the context of the conversation on leisure that permeated public discourse and literature in
the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition, understanding modernists as a
specific variety of the leisure class would create a new conceptual framework for investigating
the “elitism” of modernism as a local manifestation of the eruption of a larger public discourse
on leisure. This public discourse, which connected artists, politicians, journalists, doctors,
psychologists, philosophers, sociologists, business owners, and labor unions, centered around the
universal expansion of leisure, which in the political realm was represented by movements for
the shorter work week, shorter work day, paid holidays, and legally guaranteed vacation time.
Consider Leonard Bast of E. M. Forster's Howards End through this public and artistic discourse
on leisure: the workmanlike, disciplined, and academic approach he takes towards experiencing
art, of which the Schlegel sisters greatly disapprove, compromises Bast’s ability to “only
connect” with the sisters—that is, to become one of G. E. Moore's ideal communities that bond
through sharing a social experience of art. Bast's use of his leisure time to pursue a rigorous and
learned model of leisure (which parallels Septimus Smith's pre-war leisure activities in Mrs.
Dalloway) represents for him a form of social capital—accumulated as a ticket for entry into a
different sphere that is as much an economic opportunity as it is an interpersonal one. This
practical, concrete, and capitalized approach to leisure (which explains why Bast finds it appropriate to "cash in" on his leisurely association with the Schlegels by applying to them for vocational aid) is the source of the vein of distaste that runs through the Schlegel's attitude towards him. In Bast's night-long tramp out of London, the Schlegels recognize his natural intuition for the kind of spontaneous and embodied leisure they approve of. But when Bast loses his job, his precarious hold on part-time leisure crumbles, and his unemployment, which superficially looks like a variety of perfect leisure, is actually an inverted and negated picture of leisure that illustrates the need for a balance between leisure and labor we have seen in Lee, Pound, and Russell. The Shlegels' frustrated and mutually unsatisfying interactions with Bast can be seen as a representation of the failure of the aesthetic leisure class to solve the social problem of leisure, as Helen Schlegel's affair with Bast delivers him into the hands of the aristocratic Wilcoxes. At the very least, Bast's notorious death—under the crushing weight of the Schlegels' bookshelf in the Wilcoxes' ancestral home—grotesquely concretizes the inadequacy of modern forms of leisure to compensate for or mitigate socioeconomic inequalities. But we can also interpret Bast's death as death by leisure, as evidence that modern forms of leisure can be wielded as weapons blocking social change rather than enacting it. Literary modernism, I am arguing through this brief reading, contributed greatly to the public discourse about who should have leisure, what kind of leisure it should be, and why leisure should or should not be a socially acknowledged value or a legally protected right.

Before I can connect this body of modernist non-fiction about leisure with fictional representations of modern leisure, I would like to dwell on leisure and authorship a little further through the next section's analysis of Henry James' New York preface to The Portrait of a Lady,
and the following brief introduction to Marion Milner (pseudonym Joanna Field), an industrial psychologist turned psychoanalyst active from around the period of late modernism until the 1980s. Considering James' Preface (1907) and Milner's *An Experiment in Leisure* (1937) together will generate a sense of leisure as a mode of reflective modernist authorship. Today, Milner is known as a pioneer of introspective journaling through her two reflective texts, *A Life of One's Own* (1934) and *An Experiment in Leisure*. This first work, favorably reviewed by W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, and others, was begun by Milner—still an industrial psychologist, not yet a follower of Freud—to cure her depression by using a mental state of “wide awareness” to chase her “butterfly thoughts” down their own (as it struck her) spontaneous paths. Spender prophetically labeled her a psychoanalyst (and indeed, by the end of *An Experiment in Leisure*, she had consciously recognized her experiment as evidence of the efficacy of the talking cure and the power of the unconscious), while Auden called the work as “exciting as a detective story” (115). Auden's characterization of the work is helpful for situating Milner as a modern figure:

She believed herself intelligent, rational, civilized, believing in intellectual progress, and the experiments revealed her to herself as timid, desperately anxious about the effect she was having on other people, full of sly equivocations and tricks, hysterically violent and irrational in her judgments...and at a deeper level terrified, terrified of the future and of the point of existence... She found that the first, hardest, and most essential task was to learn to...[that] academic knowledge, logical comprehension of ideas in books were quite useless, indeed, more often than not, a form of escape... [whereas] the expression of thought in words, becoming aware of it, was the beginning of a process of enrichment and development...[and] a source of creative wisdom. (114, 116)

Like modernist poets and fiction writers, Milner critiques the Enlightenment ideals of rationality, civilization, and progress and uses non-rational, non-utilitarian forms of thinking and writing to
reach beyond them, ultimately concluding that reaching her goals required becoming aware of and reconfiguring language itself.

Leisure is central for Milner because she realizes that non-leisurely forms of being were exacerbating her depression. “Although I thought myself free from my distracting anxiety or obsessive longing,” she writes, “my thoughts still made a chattering barrier between me and what I wanted to experience” (167). Like Freud's patients—experiencing their cures at seaside resorts—Milner finds that she achieves the right state of mind “not before, but after any excitement, particularly at night, or at the beginning of a holiday” (168), as she relaxes her body but not her imagination. Another leisure activity, listening to music, would help her achieve “wide awareness” because it would “carry away” her sense of self and awareness of the external world “until neither I nor anything else existed but sound,” though at the beginning of her journaling, she would fear this “self-annihilation” and “clutch wildly at some wandering thought to bring me back to the familiar world of self-consciousness” (190). This loss of self, which for Milner leads to a recognition of her bisexuality (which she theorizes by referencing Otto Weiniger and D. H. Lawrence), will come up again in my reading of Henry James. For now, I would like to move on to her second journal, *An Experiment in Leisure*, which—because she “came to feel less and less possessive” of what is “mine” (xix)—reconfigures her journaling exercise in terms of leisure, rather than her former goal of finding happiness by finding herself:

This book began with an attempt to solve certain aspects of the everyday problem of what to do with one’s spare time. Obviously, for a large number of people this is not a problem at all, it is not a problem for those people who are quite sure who and what they are, and who have definite clear-cut opinions about everything. But there are others who are less aware of other people's identity than their own, and for them I think the problem is real. For them, and very often they are women, it is so fatally easy to live parasitically upon
other people's happiness, to answer the question—'What shall we do today?' by—'We'll do whatever you like, my dear.' (xix)

Like the politicians and public policy theorists writing about leisure during the 1930s, and like the liminal and unemployed women in the fiction of Jean Rhys, Milner recognizes that modern leisure is a problem, rather than a solution—particularly so for women. “I once heard leisure being defined,” she notes, “as the process of looking into one's impulses and allowing them, [which] many of us have never discovered how to do so” (xxii). As a result, “our impulses are so immature that we cannot even admit them to ourselves, much less carry them out in action, so we are not capable of real leisure at all” (ibid). Her thought experiment is in this way, indeed, an experiment in leisure—that is, in achieving “true” leisure, whose definition is perpetually in question during modernism.

Her solution is to deploy her leisure time in the same activity that contemporary literary criticism identifies as a modernist activity: to provide an alternative to “the clear precision of science and rational exposition,” which is “slightly foreign...too clear to be true” (xx). This alternative consists of following “the spontaneous wanderings of [her] mind” as a method for “studying certain feelings” to determine “under what circumstances they were to be trusted, if at all” (xxi, xx). More important to her than questioning emotion, though, is the power of her thought experiment as a “method by which an ordinary person can become aware of some of the processes of life that are going on within himself” (xxiii). By “ordinary person,” she alludes to the uneven distribution of both disposable funds and time by critiquing the investment that formal psychoanalysis demands. Instead, she offers up her own journals and modernist literature as a less costly model to imitate: her two epigraphs from Dorothy Richardson and H. G. Wells. Her quote from Richardson pinpoints the modernist stream-of-consciousness style as a
way to avoid simple statements that are “brief poetic lies,” “a man's statement” that only skims
the “surface of life,” while the quote from Wells, as he lets his thoughts “play about” until “in a
manner quite inexplicable, some absurd or vivid little incident” would “come out of the
darkness...by an order logical indeed but other than our common sanity,” recalls Milner's
associative style. Suggestively, Milner's concluding chapter anticipates contemporary accounts of
fascism by linking it to the Enlightenment goals of rationality, but for the purposes of the present
project, what matters here is the intimate connection between literary modernism and Milner's
account of leisure. Taking Richardson and Wells as her guide, she consciously conceives of her
project as one driven by modernist experimentation rather than by psychoanalysis, however the
two may resemble each another. For Milner, modernist literary techniques—taken here as an
associative, non-rational, reflexive style of writing that increases one's awareness of the
spontaneous workings of the mind—solves the social problem of leisure articulated by the
politicians and non-fiction writers of her time. Modernism is, for Milner, the right kind of leisure.

**Leisurely Authorship: Henry James Writing *The Portrait of a Lady***

Henry James' 1907 preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, which illustrates this connection
between leisure and writing as occurring through the (problematic and uncontrollable) mediation
of leisure space. Critical attention to James’s writing process for *The Portrait of a Lady* is often
restricted to analyzing his justifications for tweaking the novel’s ending,\(^\text{27}\) making little or no
mention of Preface’s fascinating portrait of Venice in its opening paragraphs. While staying at

\(^{27}\) For example, refer to Tess Hadley’s coverage of *The Portrait of a Lady* in *Henry James and the Imagination of Pleasure*, 23-39.
Florence's Hôtel d'Arno, James began drafting *Portrait* but soon relocated to Venice, which his Preface represents as a *too* fertile source of images that threaten his productivity:

> [T]he waterside life, the wondrous lagoon spread before me, and the ceaseless human chatter of Venice came in at my windows, to which I seem to myself to have been constantly driven, in the fruitless fidget of composition, as to see whether, out in the blue channel, the ship of some right suggestion, of some better phrase, of the next happy twist of my subject, the next true touch for my canvas, mightn't come into sight. But I recall vividly enough that the response most elicited, in general, to these restless appeals was the rather grim admonition that these romantic and historic sites, such as the land of Italy abounds in, offer the artist a questionable aid to concentration when they themselves are not to be the subject of it. (3)

James sees aesthetic provocations everywhere—all but the particular one he solicited. James' depiction of Venice through the promotional language of the tourist brochure or travel guide (“these romantic and historic sites, such as the land of Italy abounds in”) corresponds to his desire for Venice to provide the inspiration that will allow him to maintain what James considers to be an acceptable rate of literary productivity; Venice is to provide a good vacation and aesthetic inspiration through its packaging as a visual spectacle. Yet James also represents writing as an unpredictable and spontaneous activity (note “the fruitless fidget of composition”) rather than a mechanically produced commodity, and Venice seems to evade his incorporation of it into an efficient and predictable mode of literary production. In James' disappointment, we find him struggling with two contrasting models of leisure—on one hand, the freedom, creativity, and spontaneity traditionally and ideologically associated with leisure, and on the other hand, the rationalized and productive leisure of the “Venice” produced by modern tourism, which James attempts to channel to increase his productivity. James is caught between his work ethic (his discomfort with his own disorderly artistic production) and the irresistible lure of an
uncontrollable Venice that seems to burst through sitting-room windows to disrupt the work ethic and the rationalization of leisure.

Of course, Venice “seems” to do so actively and aggressively because of James' own changing attitude towards the “romantic and historic sites of Italy,” which are too rich in their own life and too charged with their own meanings merely to help [the author] out with a lame phrase; they draw him away from his small question to their greater ones; so that, after a little, he feels, while thus yearning toward them in his difficulty, as if he were asking an army of glorious veterans to help him arrest a peddler who has given him the wrong change. (3)

James responds to Venice with nothing less than a wholesale rearrangement of his priorities by throwing The Portrait of a Lady—James' meditation on the impact of Europe on an American's independence— into humiliating relief as a “small question” filled with “lame phrases.” Just as Europe compromises Isabel Archer's search for independence, so does “rich,” meaning-charged Venice threaten the integrity of The Portrait of a Lady. At the same time, while faced with the absurdity and inappropriateness of looking to Venice to soothe his frustrated work ethic, James' desire (“yearning”) for Europe is intensified and felt anew. As his ability to work collapses and his faith in the products of his labor dissolves, his capacity for leisure reawakens; he returns again and again to the window to see the beautiful images that refuse to become fuel for his labor: this is the becoming-leisure of work. Simultaneously, a new poetic image emerges (the veterans and the beggar) that reestablishes James' creativity outside of the realm of efficiency and rationalization—an image that thematizes militaristic discipline (the arrest, the soldiers) rather than emerges through it.
Accordingly, James describes the conceptual “germ” that inspired *The Portrait of a Lady* through a similar account of logic and order being denied in favor of sudden and irresistible temptation issued by an imperious entity. This germ consisted not at all in any conceit of a 'plot,' nefarious name, in any flash, upon the fancy, of a set of relations...that, by a logic of their own, immediately fall, for the fabulist, into movement, into a march or a rush, a patter of quick steps; but altogether in the character and aspects of a particular engaging young woman, to which all the usual elements of a 'subject'...were to need to be superadded.... These are the fascinations of the fabulist's art, these lurking forces of expansion, these necessities of upspringing in the seed, to grow as tall as possible, to push into the light and the air and thickly flower there. (4-5)

“Plot” is nefarious because it is elusive: artistic creation does not have a “logic” that “immediately” falls into “a march”; *The Portrait of a Lady* does not develop as a logical constellation of relations unfolding through militaristic discipline. Nor does Isabel Archer constitute a “subject” by herself; she is incomplete according to James' habitual standards of narrative production. James's quotation marks around *plot* and *subject* mark them as formal properties of narrative he is accustomed to relying on (and which he uses in the other New York prefaces) but which have proven deceptive. In this vacuum of narrative discipline, “fascinations” not under James's conscious control arrive on the scene and appear to have a will and energy of their own. James regards this labor-free, natural unfolding of *The Portrait of a Lady* (in addition to the organic imagery above, he even uses the term “germinal” shortly after [6]) as a result of the agency of the novel itself—another moment of the becoming-leisure of work, where a rationalized and capitalized mode of labor breaks down. He complains of its willfulness when he observes, “I saw it as bent upon its fate—some fate or other” (9), just as he refers to Isabel as “presumptuous” (19), but the author does have his revenge on his disobedient subject. James responds, in other words, to the collapse of his work ethic with a fresh bout of disciplined labor.
The bulk of the preface therefore describes the intricate architecture he carefully constructs around it: “It took nothing less,” he complacently recalls, “than that technical rigor...to inspire me with the right confidence for erecting on such a plot of ground the neat and careful and proportioned pile of bricks over it and that was thus to form, constructionally speaking, a literary monument” (13). As James creates an orderly literary space (which elsewhere he refers to as “the large building of 'The Portrait of a Lady.'... a large and spacious house” [9]) to provide the orderly intensification of production that Venetian space did not, we see the opposite movement than we saw before: the becoming-work of leisure. After enjoying the organic, unsolicited growth of the “germ” Isabel Archer, he promptly gets back to work at a job he compares to that of a “wary dealer in precious odds and ends” who accepts a beautiful object from a “speculative amateur” but is “resigned not to 'realize,' resigned to keeping the precious object locked up indefinitely rather than commit it, at no matter what price, to vulgar hands” (ibid). Though James is careful not to reduce the precious object to its exchange value, the narrative “germ” is nonetheless treated as an aesthetic commodity to be sold—an object of the world of work.

At the same time, James recognizes that the labor of the modernist author secures the leisure of the reader. Early in *Roderick Hudson*, Rowland Mallet explains why he wishes to take a vacation in Europe by remarking, “True happiness, we are told, consists in getting out of one's self; but the point is not only to get out – you must stay out; and to stay out you must have some absorbing errand” (7). In a work of literary criticism written around the same time as *Roderick Hudson*, “Alphonse Daudet,” James makes it clear that it is the mission of art—not only that of leisurely travel—to provide that “absorbing errand:”
The effect of...any work of art—is to entertain...The success of a work of art, to my mind, may be measured by the degree to which it produces a certain illusion; that illusion makes it appear to us for the time that we have lived another life—that we have had a miraculous enlargement of experience. The greater the art the greater the miracle, and the more certain also the fact that we have been entertained—in the best meaning of that word. (506)

Literature, then, as a leisure activity of absorption enables a “miraculous enlargement of experience” through the illusion of leaving the boundaries of one's own self. While we have seen that James consciously limits his own leisure and the influx of leisure values or modes (like absorption and the passive appreciation of spectacle) into his work hours, James situates his own labor as the condition of the reader's leisure. Of course, in doing so James merely enunciates the obvious truth that leisure providers continually try to conceal or erase: that a space of leisure is always also a space of labor for the many employees of the leisure industry. But what is remarkable is how cheerfully and conspicuously James embraces his position as a leisure service provider. Even though his narrative goal is to thematize the very ego-centered state of mind that leisure provides an alternative for—James explains, “I said to myself, 'Place the center of the subject as the young woman's own consciousness.'....which will be so largely the scale of her relation to herself” (12)—he has other goals in mind regarding the reader's experience.

Preoccupied with “the anxiety of [his] provision for the reader's amusement,” he populates the narrative with “other lights, contending, conflicting lights, and of as many different colors, if possible, as the rockets, the Roman candles and Catherine-wheels of a 'pyrotechnic display’” (13). In this portrait of the artist as a fireworks master, James locates the entertainment value of his works in the proliferation of varied sensations, which both underlines leisure's function as a relief from the monotony or repetition of modern life and dovetails nicely with
literary critics’ quarter-century-long interest in James’s role as a master of publicity, talented in understanding and pleasing the mass audiences of modern leisure reading. Similarly, to the novel's characters, James while writing apparently made “an urgent appeal to make it as least as interesting as they could...like the group of attendants and entertainers who come down by train when people in the country give a party... for carrying the party on” (14). He approaches this goal of entertaining his readers with vigilance that “amounted to never forgetting, by any lapse, that he thing was under a special obligation to be amusing” and that required rendering his scenes of Isabel Archer meditating in solitude “as 'interesting' as the surprise of a caravan or the identification of a pirate” (17). Surprisingly, James sets as his narrative standard the popular sensational novels that we would identify as paradigmatic examples of leisure reading long before we would identify any James novel (even the early ones) as such.

In appealing to the entertainment needs of readers, James is not just being a shrewd publicist for his own novels. His comparisons between writing and other leisure industries reflect their common effect in the leisure-seeker: a hypnosis-like mental state that James refers to as casting a “spell.” The reader’s spellbound attention constitutes not only the reader’s leisure—for we have already seen that James argues that escaping into an alternative mental state is the primary pleasure of reading—but also the author’s pleasure as well. The author’s wage therefore consists only of

the benefit, whatever it may be, involved in his having cast a spell upon the simpler, the very simplest, forms of attention. This is all he is entitled to: he is entitled to nothing.... that can come to him, from the reader as a result on the latter's part of any act of reflection or discrimination.... Against reflection, against discrimination, in his interest,

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28 I am thinking in particular of Richard Salmon’s Henry James and the Culture of Publicity, Michael Anesko’s ‘Friction in the Market’: Henry James and the Profession of Authorship, and Jennifer Wicke’s analysis of The Ambassadors in her Advertising Fictions (102-12).
all earth and air conspire; wherefore is it that, as I say, he must...work for a 'living wage.' The living wage is the reader's grant of the least possible quantity of attention required for consciousness of a 'spell.' (14-15)

James here characterizes the reader's interaction with the text as leisurely absorption—a spell-bound fixation that suspends all critical faculties (such as “reflection” and “discrimination”) and markedly abandons the criteria of verisimilitude or realism that critics like Richard Poirier and Roslyn Jolly have regarded as *The Portrait of a Lady*'s overriding theme.29 He distances authorship from careerism in two ways: first, by minimizing the significance of literary criticism (whose attention supposedly marks the different between “serious” and leisure reading), and second, by identifying absorption as the only “payment” given to writers, which de-capitalizes the wages of aesthetic labor and transposes (and thereby gently mocks) contemporary political debates about the “living wage.” In spite of James' many efforts to make his fiction amusing and therefore support the reader's “spell,” a muted vein of resentment runs through James' recognition that the serious, rationalized, workmanlike, hyperconscious mode of experiencing fiction does not apply to the reader. “In wanton moods,” he sighs, his own “yearning mind” wishes for “extravagances.” “the artist may....dream of some Paradise (for art) where the direct appeal to the intelligence might be legalized” (15). The irony here, of course, is that one man's labor is another man's leisure; if leisure involves self-determination in a realm of unlimited choices, and if leisure involves the escape to a foreign land full of luxuries that fulfill the heart's

29 In particular, Jolly’s *Henry James: History, Narrative, Fiction* creates a history of James’s career and of contemporary Jamesian criticism through tracing the tension between the real (or historical) and the fictive (or imaginative) in James’s texts. While I do not wish to deny that his novels foreground such a tension, I do wish to highlight the moments in James’s non-fiction where he discusses writing as an operation whose success depends on producing leisure—a state of pleasurable release from *habitus* and from compelled labor—for the reader. Doing so transforms the real/unreal distinction from a question of fact and accuracy to a question of fantasy and pleasure.
every desire, James yearns for the paradisiacal extravagances of literary criticism—a Paradise
where everyone is a theorist of fiction.

But even James himself indulges from time to time in the spell of fiction reading.

Rereading *The Portrait of a Lady* is less a critical than an absorbing experience:

There are pages of the book which, in the reading over, have seemed to make me see
again the bristling curve of the wide Riva, the large color-spots of the balconied houses
and the repeated undulation of the little hunchbacked bridges, marked by the rise and
drop again, with the wave, of foreshortened clicking pedestrians. The Venetian footfall
and the Venetian cry—all talk there, wherever uttered, having the pitch of a call across
the water—come in once more at the window, renewing one's old impression of the
delighted senses and the divided, frustrated mind. How can places that speak *in general*
so to the imagination not give it, at the moment, the particular thing it wants? I recollect
again and again, in beautiful places, dropping into that wonderment. (3–4)

The hallucinatory experience of reading manifests (to use Vernon Lee's term) the *genius loci* of
Venice—James genuflects, “Venice doesn't borrow, she but all magnificently gives” (4)—

making his reading experience more like a conjuring trick or the “pyrotechnics display”

mentioned above than the paradisiacal experience of criticism. It is in fact the very impossibility
of critical modes of thought that reconstitutes this moment for James: the becoming-leisure of
frustrated labor, the distance between the pleasurable and leisurely experience of Venice versus
the productive use he had wanted to make from it. More accurately, though, James does find his
experience in Venice productive, but not in the way he had originally intended. Referring to
Venice's aesthetic self-sufficiency (and its resulting refusal to accept the “charities” of any
writer's fertile imagination), James explains,

> We profit by that enormously, but to do so we must either be quite off duty or be on it in
> her service alone. Such, and so rueful, are these reminiscences; though on the whole, no
doubt, one's book, and one's 'literary effort' at large, were to be the better for them.
Strangely fertilizing, in the long run, does a wasted effort of attention often prove. It all depends on how the attention has been cheated, has been squandered. There are high-handed insolent frauds, and there are insidious sneaking ones. And there is, I fear, even on the most designing artist's part, always witless enough good faith, always anxious enough desire, to fail to guard him against their deceits. (4)

James portrays authors as always, despite their critical vigilance and work ethic, vulnerable to the distractions of leisure, just as he was at the mercy of Venice's “genius of place.” Leisure here is portrayed as a surplus of attention—the “wasted effort of attention”—that “fertilizes” but does not directly produce literary commodities. Always suspicious that he has “squandered” his attention and has been “cheated” out of the right kind of attention, the author is a miser who hoards attention rather than gold. Yet James, surprised, reluctant, and full of “fear,” does acknowledge that the gratuitous and irrational indirections of leisurely modes of attention are not wasteful but rather contribute “in the long run” to the artist's development. James here enacts the bourgeoisie's and government committees' recognition during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that leisure is in the long term good for labor, but more importantly, he exemplifies in miniature the model of leisure at work in Daisy Miller and The Ambassadors, as well as in E. M Forster’s A Room with a View. The dialectic of labor and leisure, in which both simultaneously oppose and supplement one another, is deployed as an apparatus to produce, alternately, pleasure and shame, activity and passivity, consciousness and absorption, visions and dead ends.

Leisure and The Production of Eroticism in Daisy Miller

Henry James's American expatriate Mr. Winterbourne experiences holiday license as, ultimately, a patchwork of visions and dead ends in the 1878 novella Daisy Miller. The Geneva-based Winterbourne, who has crossed Lake Geneva to visit a sickly aunt stationed in the
salubrious resort town of Vevey, takes advantage of the socially relaxed atmosphere in the hotel and surrounding resort spaces to accelerate an acquaintance with a “bare-headed....strikingly, admirably pretty” young lady (5). Having left behind “the little metropolis of Calvinism” (3) for the “flitting hither and thither of 'stylish' young girls” at Vevey's historic grand hotel, the Hôtel des Trois Couronnes (1), Winterbourne carefully debates the propriety of striking up a conversation with the attractive stranger:

In Geneva, as he had been perfectly aware, a young man was not at liberty to speak of a young unmarried lady except under certain rarely occurring conditions; but here, at Vevey, what conditions could be better than these?—a pretty American girl coming and standing in front of you in a garden. (6)

He therefore decides to risk making an unobtrusive, generic statement in her general direction, but when she “simply glance[s] at him,” he quickly considers backtracking, nervously “wonder [ing] whether he had gone too far” (6). As this halting conversation stumbles onward, Winterbourne (despite the widely circulated rumors of his having a long-term mistress back in Geneva) cautiously, almost prudishly, calibrates his conversation by consistently choosing the more formal mode of speaking. He takes the trouble to use “a tone of great respect” and becomes “a little embarrassed” at the risks he takes (7)—the riskiest apparently being his banal “observation on the beauty of the view” (8). For Winterbourne, these careful contrivances not only soothe his social conscience, but also, through the very deferral of intimacy, prolong the conversation and therefore heighten his enjoyment. The apparent brevity of his questions (“'Are you—a—going over the Simplon?' said Winterbourne, embarrassed” [7]) slyly papers over his intent to provoke a long conversation, while the tone of uncertainty that his style telegraphs masks the boldness of his claim to the stranger's attention just as it temporally lengthens his
proclamation. As a result, the very stilted nature of his conversation puts his wide variety of conversational tools on display, for it proves that he can accurately gauge the precise amount of social license and limit demanded by this particular situation—an unaccompanied young lady, yes, but in a resort hotel, where the constant arrivals and departures of strangers encourages a more relaxed stance towards “introductions.” Most significantly, his halting conversational style allows him to perform an identity of decent respectability in spite the anonymity of the hotel space and in spite the non-appearance of his venerable aunt, who he claims could vouch for his reputation and act as a chaperone. While his artful machinations are, admittedly, a technique for gratifying his “great relish for feminine beauty” and “addict[ion] to observing and analysing it” (8), his enjoyment in managing the conversation also gratifies his need to display the subtle yet skilled athleticism of his social intelligence—a particularly Veblenian brand of etiquette that paradoxically denotes suavity through awkwardness, for the very complexity and esotericism of his social skills denote his membership in the leisure class.

Unfortunately for Winterbourne, these subtleties are lost on Daisy Miller; his painfully conscious maneuvering overshoots its mark. At the beginning of the conversation, her genuinely brief answers are sentence fragments that concisely answer his inquiries, leaving her young brother to supply the information that Winterbourne desires to know. Her responses are stark and blunt, unaccompanied by the stammers and hesitations that punctuate Winterbourne's faux-tortured speeches. She is not, it seems, playing the conversational game that Winterbourne uses to maximize his enjoyment of her youthful beauty. When he finally pauses to meditate over her reactions to him, he realizes, “There had not been the slightest alteration in her charming complexion; she was evidently neither offended nor fluttered” (8). He adjusts his approach, and
“before long it became obvious that she was much disposed towards conversation” (9). In speech, then she wants content rather than form—an exchange of information rather than the erotic game he wishes to play. The narrator, in fact, ironizes Daisy's banal, down-to-earth chatter as “chiefly of what metaphysicians term the objective cast” (35). Consequently, rather than simply rejoicing in the luck of finding a pretty face to gaze upon with impunity, he also feels a measure of disappointment—and even suspicion. Her face telegraphs none of the delicate maneuvering he exhibits; her glance is “perfectly direct and unshrinking,” her face is “not exactly expressive,” her gaze shows “no mockery, no irony,” and her overall attitude is “tranquil” (8, 9, 11). To Winterbourne, her complete lack of affect is a sign not of insipidness, but of insidiousness: “Certainly she was very charming; but how deucedly sociable!...was she also a designing, an audacious, an unscrupulous young person?” (13). In the game of hotel conversation, which calls for playful Simmelian sociability rather than the sociable interchange of ideas or the creation of serious social ties, Winterbourne's petty lies and insincere ejaculations strike the correct tone, while Daisy's plain facts and flat affect interfere with Winterbourne's flirtatious banter and seem, in the context of the resort hotel, to hide genuine dishonesty.

Winterbourne's ungenerous characterization of her comes not from any positive evidence, but rather from the very lack of it. Daisy does not project the rich complex of corporeal and verbal signs that Winterbourne himself performs: his semiotician's smorgasboard of conflicting social signs (approach, retreat, hope, regret, confidence, humility) designed both to provoke and to streamline an interlocuter's interpretation of his intentions. The vexingly blank space of her expression and deportment, devoid of blushing shyness and of lascivious glee even when she emphasizes the enormous quantity of gentlemen she associated with in New York,
causes him to “los[e] his instinct in this matter, and his reason could not help him” (13). The context of Vevey and the Hôtel des Trois Couronnes—which is ripe with opportunity for Winterbourne due to its permissiveness, its constantly revolving audience of new strangers to perform for, its wide availability of spaces at every degree of intimacy and of social formality—is completely lost on Daisy, with her “lightly monotonous smile” (13), who is “never embarrassed or annoyed by his own entrance” (66) and is “evidently neither offended nor fluttered” by his conversation (8). Nonetheless (or perhaps for that very reason), he continuously attempts to translate this unmarked canvas, trying to pierce its veil to figure out what lies beneath: either innocence or impurity. This question of Daisy's (lack of) interiority strikes him first as an irritant to be quashed. As she drones on about her experiences in Europe, he busily revises various theories until he finds an acceptable one—that she is “only a pretty American flirt.” Ironically, it is because she refuses to flirt with him in the manner appropriate for the hotel and resort town that he labels her a flirt. He projects his own erotic needs onto her, his itch for knowledge about Daisy has been scratched, and thus “Winterbourne was almost grateful for having found the formula” (14).

But this victory is short-lived: he spends the rest of the novella rehashing the same question of what sexual identity lies beneath her placid exterior, but always arriving at slightly different answers. That she is all surface is the one possible answer he does not entertain. As a source of pleasurable and unending stimulation, producing countless variations of erotically charged scenes and relationships, interacting with Daisy becomes his favorite leisure experience. He even uses his belief in her complexity to transform her very resistance to erotic play intro imaginative fuel for deeper sexual intrigue. In the lakeside resort town Vevey and in his “seaside
girl” Daisy, he seemed to have found the raw material for gratifying his desire to feel conscious of being the central consciousness dominating a romantic scene—a romantic scene that does not reject all moral and sexual social codes so much as it follows the alternative, but still externally dictated and somewhat rigidly encoded, social etiquette of modern leisure. Each moment when Daisy's bland objectivity consistently threatens to drain her interactions with Winterbourne of the romance he craves, he reignites his pleasurable hyperawareness of the erotic charge of the leisure space by producing alternative readings of Daisy’s actions and comments. For example, when he informs Daisy that she is, in fact, beyond the social pale because his tony Aunt Costello refuses to meet her, he immediately ferrets out the sexual opportunity created by this drama of rejection:

Winterbourne wondered whether she was seriously wounded, and for a moment almost wished that her sense of injury might be such as to make it becoming in him to attempt to reassure and comfort her. He had a pleasant sense that she would be very approachable for consolatory purposes. He felt then, for the instant, quite ready to sacrifice his aunt, conversationally....but before he had the time to commit himself to this perilous mixture of gallantry and impiety, the young lady, resuming her walk, gave an exclamation in quite another tone. “Well; here's mother! I guess she hasn't got Randolph to go to bed.” (25)

Social judgment, Winterbourne recognizes, creates yet another opportunity to bend the rules of propriety. By contemplating the possibility of feigning shock or fury at his aunt's refusal to meet her, he hardly means to dump his aunt in order to take up Daisy's flag and defend her muddied honor; rather, her realizes that superficially (“conversationally”) indicating horror at his aunt's decision would create a justifiable pretense for more corporeal display of his support for her. But all of his delicate maneuvers are lost on the unruffled Daisy, who merely resumes her walk and placidly notes the appearance of her mother. While he quickly adjusts his behavior to account for this parental figure, lamenting with nostalgic sorrow his lost chance to display “gallantry and impiety” simultaneously, she quickly divests him of any need to display social niceties with that
non-authority figure. Unlike the British Winterbourne (and the European nationals also staying in Vevey), the arch-American Daisy, rich but not encumbered by mannerisms reflecting a family history of social superiority or a national history structured chiefly by class difference, remains unaware of the class codes that give meaning to Winterbourne’s exaggeratedly complex and ceremonious actions. Daisy’s forthrightness is, of course, a fully fledged (and historicizable) mode of social etiquette in its own right, but Winterbourne exacts a maximum of erotic play and emotional intensity by reacting to her apparent refusal to indulge in the leisure activity of flirtation—and rewriting it as an inducement to even more rarified and convoluted forms of erotic play.

One of the climaxes in his relationship with her occurs during their scandalously unchaperoned trip to Vevey's Château de Chillon. From the first moment of this trip, he feels “as if there were something romantic going forward,” so much so that he “could have believed that he was going to elope with her” (34). The “as if” and “could have” are integral to Winterbourne's experience: the intensity of the erotic encounter is increased with his self-consciousness, or in other words, the *reflexivity* of his leisure experience. This semi-licit thrill is positioned just outside the very limit of what, at a resort, could be considered within a standard deviation of respectable behavior; his thoughts return constantly to the boldness of the activity, less than to the activity itself. In this way, the trip does hold enjoyment for him, as he admits, “I was never better pleased in my life” (35). Yet his pleasure is compromised even at the beginning, due to their different attitudes towards the novelty and riskiness of the journey:

To the young man himself their little excursion was so much of an escapade—an adventure—that, even allowing for her habitual sense of freedom, he had some expectation of seeing her regard it in the same way. But it must be confessed that, in this
particular, he was disappointed. Daisy Miller was extremely animated, she was in charming spirits; but she was apparently not at all excited; she was not fluttered; she avoided neither his eyes nor those of anyone else; she blushed neither when she looked at him nor when she saw that people were looking at her. (34)

For Winterbourne, the charm of the situation rests in its being an “adventure:” he relishes the fact that their trip pushes the limits of propriety even in the relaxed atmosphere of Vevey. He desires that onlookers, through network of furtive and bold glances, appear to be speculating inwardly on the nature and depth of his connection with Daisy. This lady, however, by refusing to adopt the facial style Winterbourne considers appropriate for a nineteenth-century European woman finding herself in an unusual and risqué situation—blushing, downcast glance—takes no part in this exercise in gendered social signification. She disappoints him by not outwardly registering an inward sense of embarrassment or (more importantly) an active consciousness of the social risks they have taken. A man desiring a simple affair might enjoy that her unfussy attitude would not entail any messy moral hesitations or emotional entanglements—and indeed, in his hometown he does enjoy such an unfussy affair—but while on holiday, Winterbourne prefers the more cerebral pleasures of being achingly conscious of the risk itself. Fortunately for his sense of romantic daring, towards the end of their tour of the castle, Daisy has a sudden, undisguised fit of sexual jealousy over a potential rival for his attention. This long-awaited self-consciousness on her part catapults their relationship far past any that Winterbourne had experienced: “no young lady,” he proudly reflects, “had as yet done him the honor to be so agitated by the announcement of his movements” (37). As an erotic spectacle, Daisy does more for him by displaying her jealousy to all the other visitors to the Chateau than she would have by simply, and in private, expressing a romantic interest in him. Doubly insulated by holiday laxity—not only occupying a resort area but also displaced further from the spaces of everyday propriety by their solitary
occupation of the castle located an hours' sail from Vevey—Winterbourne accepts her
demonstrations with his customary attitude of stiff, ceremonious affirmation, even promising to
visit Rome specifically in order to call upon her.

But upon arriving in Rome, Winterbourne does not rush to visit Daisy; the thick miasma
of gossip surrounding her presence there warns him that she has fraternizing with “a dozen
wonderful moustaches” instead of “looking out of an old Roman window and asking herself
urgently when Mr. Winterbourne would arrive” (41). One might suspect him of a purely jealous
hypocrisy in blaming her for the very same behavior that ingratiated her to him in Vevey—but, in
fact, his apparent change of heart constitutes a certain consistency, for it is the very uniformity of
her behavior in Vevey and in Rome that upsets him. It bothers him less that she has changed her
object of flirtation than that she interacts with young men in the same fashion in both Vevey and
Rome. In Vevey, the socially acceptable relaxation of mores that he felt so consciously allowed
him to approve and encourage her flirtation with him, but in Rome, Winterbourne's carefully
managed blend of awkward politeness and eager familiarity, which contains a desire for erotic
risk-taking, crystallizes into an impermeable and normative layer of social armor. In Vevey, he
relishes the reactions of the other vacationers to Daisy: their precise degree of shock keeps Daisy,
seen as freely libidinous but not lecherous, officially within the fold but arouses curious glances
wherever she goes. What counts as mildly salacious in Vevey, however, is seen in Rome as
decidely obscene, leading the expatriates there to (both metaphorically and literally) turn their
backs on her.

Yet the problem with Daisy is not about whether or not she has behaved with “actual or
potential inconduite” (13); no positive misconduct can be found around her. Winterbourne notes
that she and her mother would be “intellectually incapable” (69) of having Daisy seduce a
nobleman to gain a title for the family. Furthermore, when he asks her of actual love for the
Italian, that is the moment when she finally “blush[es] visibly” (64) and chides him for speaking
“such very disagreeable things” (65). Finally, her misconduct is not sexual, as he notes that she is
decidedly not “the object of one of those sentiments which are called by romancers 'lawless
passions’” (52). Neither love nor sex nor social ambition animates Daisy, technically leaving her
as free from any moral misstep as she is from these highly gendered scripts—at least in the
narrator's view. The narrator does not judge in the same way that, for example, Chad is judged
for his abandonment of Madame de Vionnet in The Ambassadors or that the parents and step-
parents are judged for tossing Maisie back and forth in What Maisie Knew. In this novella, after
all, even positively proven sexual *inconduite* does not automatically entail moral judgment;
Winterbourne, with his mistress in the Protestant atmosphere of Geneva, positively gloats to his
aunt, “My dear aunt, I am not so innocent,” while “smiling and curling his moustache” (21).
Having gloated about this in front of the aunt whom he has described as morally strict,
Winterbourne too has bracketed the question of morality from the field of eroticism as a play
form of sexuality. Rather, Daisy is judged by Winterbourne for declining to engage in coquetry,
which Georg Simmel defines as the play form of eroticism; Daisy refuses, in other words, to take
part in the gendered leisure scripts by which she could provide endless prompts for Winterbourne
to spin out subtle dramas of erotic play.

In Rome, Daisy Miller treats romance as a play form of social interaction—as sociability
—just as Winterbourne does in Vevey. But Winterbourne, of course, has the advantage of his
gender, and his long familiarity with European social mores has given him the ability to discern
between the Switzerland of resort towns and the Rome of tourists as leisure spaces with spatially specific social codes. *Nouveau riche* Daisy, despite the pointed advice of English expatriates in Rome, refuses to develop this kind of refined sociospatial consciousness; in her position as a highly modern tourist (a modern subject position I discuss further in the following chapter), all European spaces constitute a single spatial Other from which her Americanness departs. And as her refusal to register and emulate Winterbourne’s conversational and social gymnastics so pushes her out of “good society,” it also (not coincidentally) pushes her out of inner spaces, as *Daisy Miller* increasingly focuses on outdoor, public spaces rather than inner, private spaces. Both spatially and metaphorically pushed out of society, it is no wonder that Daisy remarks that Europe seems to her “nothing but hotels” and that she believes that “there isn't any society; or, if there is.... I haven't seen anything of it” (12). Daisy is, in the words of Donatella Izzo, “condemned...for transgressions she had not recognized as such” (144), and as a result, I stress, Daisy becomes a socio-geographical pariah, pushed to the spatial margins of hotels and public parks. While we will see Lambert Strether in *The Ambassadors* begin to penetrate European private spaces, Daisy Miller's experience of Europe is geographically shallow, moving her glibly along Europe's public “surface” and ejecting her from the private “interior.”

Although Daisy is still a magnificent puzzle to Winterbourne, all the others in Rome, including the shocked American expatriates and her favorite of the dozen moustaches—an Italian fortune hunter “with a good deal of manner and a wonderful moustache” (41)—profess to know her perfectly. To them, she is either a reckless flirt who must be abandoned or a jolly nice

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30 In the only critical analysis that self-consciously focuses on the travel and leisure themes in the novella, “What Daisy Knew: Reading Against Type in *Daisy Miller*,” Sarah Wadsworth (who curiously devotes most of her consideration of leisure on the travel writing of Louisa May Alcott and Alice Bartlett) claims that the entire Miller family does manage to “infiltrate...the higher ranks of expatriate society...spontaneously, effortlessly” (45), thereby neglecting Daisy’s increasing spatial marginalization.
girl to while away time with. Because she refuses to banter with Winterbourne about her own erotic adventures, he tirelessly seeks opportunities for talking about her with others. He confronts the other expatriates, leading to embarrassing, emotion-laden scenes that are quite gratuitous, as the expatriates constantly try to “rescue” him from Daisy and encourage him to stay silent about her. He even pursues the “wonderful moustache” to talk about Daisy, though doing so makes him, quite obviously, a third wheel attending another couple's dates. Abandoned by the expatriate ladies, she is still accessible to expatriate men, who are, even according to his tight-lipped Aunt Costello, “welcome to the privilege” (40). Yet, despite the cruel and apparently inflexible attitudes of the prim European women toward Daisy’s American freedom and openness, Donatella Izzo is quite right to assert in *Portraying the Lady: Technologies of Gender in the Short Stories of Henry James* that “the clash of cultures provides an opportunity to unveil the relativity of the would-be absolute codes that prescribe women’s behavior” even at the same time that “the modernizing and democratizing processes under way within American society are as yet unable to grant women the right to subjecthood” (153). I would like to add that this distance between the radical deconstructive charge contained in these culture clashes and the (less radical) social situations they reflect is itself a source of leisurely play and erotic pleasure for Winterbourne even as it spells Daisy’s tragic fate. For example, it is Aunt Costello’s dislike of the invariably blunt and cheerful Daisy that create for Winterbourne an apparently infinite number of scenes where he can openly exercise the pointedly masculine privilege of attending Daisy, no matter her declining social credit: in the garden of the Trois Couronnes, in its lobby, in the little steamer to the Château de Chillon, in the castle itself, in the Roman society matron Mrs. Walker's drawing room (once during an afternoon call and again during a dinner party), along the
Pincio, and finally, at the Colosseum. The novella itself is, therefore, nothing but a series of social confrontations, where Daisy's freewheeling American manner, by leading her to make countless social blunders, multiplies his opportunities for experiencing the thrill of applying pressure to his generous allowance of masculine holiday license. As she follows her whims, increasingly blind to the questioning glances around her, Winterbourne can occupy the interpretive center of each experience, acting not so much out of ardent love for Daisy (for he quite easily detaches himself from her when she moves on to Rome) but rather out of his enjoyment in feeling and analyzing the thrill of erotic risk-taking. Though she does not appreciate his social skills as a connoisseur—from the beginning he realizes that “both his audacity and his respect were lost on Miss Daisy Miller,” with her democratic impermeability to labyrinthine English and continental codes of socioeconomic status (15)—we have seen he responds to her apparent lack of social conscience with deepened his interest in her as a puzzle.

Quite remarkably, then, Winterbourne not only engages in socially risky chivalric behavior for a woman whom he does not respect and whom he knows does not love him, but also deliberately seeks opportunities to watch a more conventionally romantic rival win the day. In the game of eroticism, Winterbourne is the ideal player—not playing for consequences (for a marital partner or even a mistress), but rather for multiplying the number and intensity of erotic experiences. Winterbourne here, just as in the first excerpt about his erotic banter, which I analyzed above, plays the Wittgensteinian “language game” adapted by Jean-Francois Lyotard in his Postmodern Condition:

This does not necessarily mean that one plays in order to win. A move can be made for the sheer pleasure of its invention. What else is involved in that labor of language harassment undertaken by popular speech and by literature? Great joy is had in the
endless inventions of turns of phrase, or words and meanings, the process behind the level of *parole*. But undoubtedly, even this pleasure depends on a feeling of success, one at that the expense of an adversary:...the accepted language, or connotation. (10)

Winterbourne, then, extends the “accepted language” of eroticism to keep his game going as long as possible. Consequently, Winterbourne attributes each piece of evidence of her simplicity to an even deeper sphinx-like mystery; the more legible her surface becomes, the more complex her interiority must be. Hence, when she moves from the permissive atmosphere of the resort town Vevey to the formality of expatriate Americans' Rome yet does not alter her behavior to suit this new milieu, he clings to his belief in her complexity all the more, even as he loses faith in her moral innocence.

Both beliefs finally come crashing down at the place where his game must finally end—another leisure space, the Colosseum where Daisy, as a tourist, contracts the Roman fever that kills her. On a warm evening, Winterbourne, as “a lover of the picturesque” (76), strolls around the Colosseum to enjoy the beauty of the scene, injecting it with the poetic English tradition by quoting Byron (that other die-hard romantic) softly to himself—until he remembers the insalubriousness of the site on such a warm evening. On his way out of the “villainous miasma” of the ruins, he happens upon Daisy, seated comfortably and loudly speaking with her Italian dandy about the Christians and the lions. Seeing her there, next to “the great cross...covered in shadow,” he, with a mixture of “relief” and horror, “felt angry with himself that he had bothered so much about the right way of regarding Miss Daisy Miller” (77). Here, the mystery falls apart, and his interpretive quest is revealed as a fruitless endeavor; though she has always spoken clearly and loudly—having nothing to hide, she does not whisper—only now does he truly appreciate the simplicity of her social manner. Interestingly, his about-face is encoded through a
comparison between Daisy's interaction with this leisure space and his own: she is accompanied by her inamorato, while he appreciates his own calm solitude; she speaks quite loudly, while he was “murmuring;” he quotes Byron while she was discussing the gory details of the Colosseum's role in the production of mass culture—its role as *panem et circuses*; she has been lingering all evening at the place, while he appreciates the unhealthiness of the situation. She is, in short, a modern tourist deriving pleasure from visiting monuments with new “native” friends, but Winterbourne—who visits Rome and the Colosseum in particular to plumb their opportunities for drumming up romantic dramas—somewhat hypocritically represents Daisy as being deaf to the claims of morality, high culture, and medical science, all of which condition what he regards as the “proper” response to a given leisure space.

He forthwith dismisses her from his conscience, until she falls ill; at this point, her quarantine creating an air of mystery around her, she again becomes worthy of attention as a target of intelligence gathering. His effort is justified when he learns of the delirious Daisy's final wish—that Winterbourne should know she was never engaged to the Italian. He initially dismisses the significance of the statement, saying that the information “mattered very little” (81): while her statement proved her affection for him, his leisure experiences with her never were about her emotional attachment to him. What the statement tells him about her attitude towards his need to interpret her is more fundamental for the novella than it says about her feelings for Winterbourne. Previously, Daisy had widely advertised the ambiguity of her relationship with the Italian, using this mystery to tease Winterbourne and irritate the gossip-mongering expatriates in Rome. With her dying wish, she affirms his need to know, his need to cut through the illegibility of her exterior. In “Daisy Miller: Dynamics of an Enigma,” Kenneth
Graham gracefully characterizes Daisy's illegibility as a product of the narrator’s “anti-mimetic word spinning” that enables a “zone of epistemological sportiveness” while nonetheless “categorizing her as an object of judgment” (41). But ultimately, her dying words, her final message to him, is that she should not have been an object of judgment: the code was never coded, there was no mystery (that she was not secretly engaged), and the “riddle” of her identity (Daisy Miller 77) is that it is pure surface. While this knowledge gives Winterbourne a moment of satisfaction, it also ruins the game, and the novella gears down into a swift conclusion.

It is no coincidence that Daisy's acknowledgement of the value of accurate interpretation accompanies the only moment she appears to express deep emotion. But like the boy who cried wolf, Daisy's repeated, emphatic message is met with disbelief, both by the maid who initially refuses to give Winterbourne the message and by Winterbourne himself, who takes an entire year to understand the full meaning of her dying words—that she valued his esteem and connected that esteem with full disclosure of her intents and attachments. This deferred epiphany is represented as an anticlimax, accompanied by his assertion that his entire association with Daisy was a “mistake” and by the narrator's laconic last words, coolly informing the reader that Winterbourne has returned to his mistress in Geneva. Thus returning to the relationship intimated at the opening of the novella, the narrator implies that Winterbourne, returning back to his routine, has not been changed by his encounter with Daisy. Any restorative or revolutionary power in his holidays in Vevey and Rome—one a resort town, the other a tourist haven—has been qualified as Daisy moves towards death with a narrative swiftness that seems both arbitrary and inexorable, and as Winterbourne returns, after a momentary disruption, to his preferred mode of emotional detachment.
Focalized through Winterbourne's morally ambiguous gaze (notably, not through the censorious gaze of Mrs. Costello or Mrs. Walker), *Daisy Miller* concerns the sin of not being constantly aware of the precise amount of license afforded by holiday environments like Vevey—and denied by others like Rome. Even when technically acting within the allowed social and sexual possibilities of Vevey, Daisy is interpreted by vacationers like Mrs. Costello as vulgar because she does not visually telegraph her consciousness of taking that license. Yet she is only rejected altogether by the *meilleur monde* when she replicates this behavior in the very different context of Rome. The calculated awareness of taking risks is, therefore, a fundamental part of enjoying one's vacation abroad without going beyond the social pale, and without having to succumb to a mortal case of Roman fever at the end of it. As Winterbourne learns through his observation of Daisy, liminality becomes vulgarity when taken for granted. She is judged, in other words, for her lack of depth: that is, the lack of slippage between her holiday behavior and her “normal” moral standards, and her refusal to use facial and verbal expression to indicate a becoming sense of hesitation, embarrassment, and risk-taking. Holiday license, then, must be constantly recognized as such, in order to be legitimate and excusable. Daisy's behavior produces for Winterbourne an endless series of opportunities to feel, anew, his own consciousness of holiday license, paradoxically providing the fodder for Winterbourne's own social prestige even while it ruins hers. In an atmosphere of social and erotic play, Daisy's bland, earnest geniality paradoxically multiplies the scope and intensity of the play around her. She becomes a leisure apparatus—very much like James's account of the author in “Alphonse Daudet” the the Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, and very much like the ancient martyrs who died for the entertainment of others when they, too, entered the Colosseum in Rome.
Daisy Miller's Two Spaces of Leisure

In his essay “Henry James and Globalization,” John Carlos Rowe refers to Winterbourne and Daisy’s relationship as one of “star-crossed lovers” (285) taken as victims of Rome’s “unhealthy moral climate” (289), but this simplification of their relationship certainly ill-serves Rowe’s fascinating suggestion that Daisy Miller constitutes James’s warning that “future political causes...will involve more global consciousness,” thereby making James a “guiding spirit of a critical cosmopolitanism” (290). To understand the novella’s potential contributions to a theory of global or transnational modernism, we must, I argue, consider the mediation of romance in the novella by the modernization of travel into an transnational geography of leisure spaces. Among all James’s works, this awareness of modern leisure as intrinsically transnational (which I shall discuss further in Chapter Seven in relation to Vita Sackville-West and the cruise ship) is especially significant for Daisy Miller because, as Roxana Oltean has pointed out, even though this novella “is remembered as the consecration of the international theme,” when critics attempt to elaborate on the international theme in Daisy Miller, “it is surprisingly unclear about the nature of the two supposedly separate entities” (110). Oltean’s discussion of Rome as a “picturesque bodyscape” and Vevey’s leisure spaces as “a potential landscape which fails to be concretized as a landscape of love” (114) attempts to find a way out of this crux by speaking of the spaces of Daisy Miller symbolically, but I would like to argue that the recent theories of transnational modernism suggest a more productive way out of this crux by stressing the gradual and collective emergence of nation-states by way of global movement of people and commodities—thereby revising the question about the novella from, “What is American and what is European?” to, “How do Europeanness and Americanness emerge through a process of...
reciprocal flows and mutual conceptual and material dependence? Part of the larger project of this dissertation is to illuminate the central role played by leisure spaces in these flows and material and conceptual reciprocities, but to begin considering the role of leisure in the novel’s transnational politics, we must return to the fact that Daisy’s succès de scandale in Vevey becomes in Rome a very different beast. In both spaces, she is a foreign traveler on holiday, but Vevey—with its Grand Hotels (which work as tourist centers clearly and conveniently linked to an itinerary of sightseeing activities), its large, mobile, cosmopolitan population, its medico-leisure rhetoric of health and recuperation, and its centralization around anonymous flows of money and commodities—is a modernized leisure space. Kenneth Graham underscores the transnational dimension of these leisure space when he points out that the “determining details of the Trois Couronnes... evoke not so much its Swissness as its cosmopolitanness: its German, Russian, and Polish associations” (39). The hotel’s relations with other pensions and inns of Vevey, as well as its relation to the Castle of Chillon and the lake it perches on, are also established early in the novella, thus establishing Vevey as a modern commodified leisure space. Rome, however, is the space of The Theory of the Leisure Class, a spectacle-based system of honorific leisure that subordinates women as passive markers of masculine wealth. In Decadence in the Late Novels of Henry James, Anna Kventsel has categorized Daisy as, like Milly Theale and Maggie Verver, part of “James’s sorority of the frail vessel, his sacrificial Marian type” (134), but I would like to contextualize the “sacrifice” of Daisy as a casualty of modernizing leisure mores and institutions, which were—Daisy’s fate suggests—proliferating

31 For an introduction to transnational modernism, see Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz’s “The New Modernist Studies,” and for an interpretation of the co-emergence of nations states by global flows, see Laura Doyle’s “Transnational History at Our Backs.”
and changing more quickly than the average tourist could comfortably adapt to. In Daisy’s case, one significant corollary of this uncertainty and fast-paced modernization is the simultaneous existence of two potential modes of engagement in European culture: assimilating into continental (or “native”) culture, or joining British expatriate groups. As Sarah Wadsworth observes, this possibility holds danger for Daisy: “for Winterbourne and the other members of the American colony in Rome, aping Europeans is no longer the ultimate taboo for Americans abroad. The greater threat to their identity comes from the uncultured, newly rich upstarts aping the old guard American ‘aristocracy’” (45). Rome, by claiming the modern tourist Daisy as its victim, seems to be the more powerful model of leisure in comparison to the much more hospitable Vevey, but the nineteenth-century mode of travel—which we see in Rome in the handwritten introductions, in the obligatory “airings” of foreign visitors or expatriate residents in the daily stream of carriages parading along the Pincian Wall, and in the private hire of palaces and magnificent old townhouses for temporary residences—was already on the way out and yielding to the newer mode of tourism that, like Vevey, is modernized both spatially (built into larger, commercialized leisure zones) and socially (tolerant of Daisy’s undiscriminating sociability and of Winterbourne’s erotic play).

As I argued in the first part of this chapter, at the same time this new form of leisure replaces old models of travel, the labor theory of value was being supplanted by the leisure theory of value. In this chapter, I have focused primarily on the non-fiction leisure discourses of

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32 Henry James himself, in a letter to Eliza Lynn Linton, characterized Daisy’s end as a sacrifice. He writes, “The whole idea of the story is the little tragedy of a light, thin, natural, unsuspecting creature being sacrificed as it were to a social rumpus that went on quite over her head and to which she stood in no measurable relation” (Henry James Letters II, 304). Although his claim that Daisy stands in “no measurable relation” to the “social rumpus” seems to deflect further consideration of Daisy’s own particular behavior and identity (in favor of, for example, an analysis of the larger gender- and class-related tensions surrounding her), even James’s topographical metaphor here underscores the significance of Daisy’s interactions with the literal spaces around her.
literary figures like Lee, Wilde, James, and Pound, as well as non-literary figures, like Veblen, Weber, Russell, and Milner. These non-fiction works overturn the dichotomy that separates labor and leisure, either by folding leisure qualities into labor (and vice versa) or by regarding leisure, not national or individual wealth, as the ultimate “product” of labor. These early modernists take a holistic approach to human productivity that is incommensurable with previous economic, philosophical, or literary-critical arguments that focus on determining whether modernity is more centrally concerned with either “production” or “consumption.” Leisure is, I argue, a more relevant and flexible concept, not to mention one that was more current in the arguments made during the era of modernism. I will pursue this argument in the next chapter, which will focus on the fictional contributions to the modern discourse on leisure by analyzing two Edwardian leisure novels: Henry James' *The Ambassadors* and E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View*. Both works continue the cultural work begun in *Daisy Miller* to map the transnational geography of modern leisure. The former work will allow me to present a sustained example of the leisure techniques James employs in *Daisy Miller* (the prolongation of leisure through an exaggeration consciousness of the affordances of leisure spaces) and the Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* (the differential production of leisure through the manipulation of its relationship to labor), while the latter novel will allow me open up the reciprocal relationships between these leisure techniques and the modern spatialization (or territorialization) of leisure—a reciprocity that is, we will find, at the heart of modernist representations of leisure.
Chapter 3
“Honor the tourist:” Possibilities for Modern Leisure in Edwardian Travel Fiction

In the previous chapter, I explored the roots of modernist representations of leisure spaces in the political, philosophical, and aesthetic conversations about leisure that emerged around the turn of the century. In the present chapter, I will show how Edwardian fiction adopted but revised these early modernist discourses on modern leisure within the context of historical shifts in the leisure industry. The novels I discuss—Henry James' *The Ambassadors* (1903) and E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View* (1908)—themmatize the industrialization of travel and the territorialization of leisure, which were by the start of the new century creating a modern tourist industry. This shift included the spread of the railway, reliable roads, pensions and Grand Hotels; the creation of packaged tours and guidebooks; the professionalization of services designed for tourists; the fuller incorporation of tourist attractions into capitalism through intensified forms of advertising, entrepreneurship, and speculation; and finally, the consolidation of tourist sites into a cohesive network. I would like to stress in the present chapter that while this consolidation of a modern tourist industry was uneven and fragmentary, it nonetheless provoked the creation of a widespread public discourse about travel and leisure that not only informs *The Ambassadors* and *A Room with a View* but also pervades the works I discuss in the two following chapters about the hotel (which cover both Victorian travel narratives and modernist fiction). Although literary contributions to this conversation often explicitly condemn what they perceive as the intellectual
and cultural shallowness of commercialized travel, as I discussed in Chapter One, this
commercialization of leisure should not be regarded solely as a negative force. Instead of merely
precluding “authentic” forms of travel, the new or freshly commercialized spaces and
technologies of travel afford novel types of leisure that, I argue, implicitly enable and shape the
narratives of progress and personal growth present in *The Ambassadors*, *A Room with a View*,
and the other literary texts I discuss in the following two chapters.

Yet contemporary works of leisure theory often dwell on the negative aspects of modern
leisure. Whereas Ford Madox Ford’s famous portrait of a train ride in *The Good Soldier* suggests
that modern travel creates new types of perception, Wolfgang Schivelbush’s *Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* argues that the commodification of
transportation infrastructure homogenized travel, and his argument that the railway journey
“destroyed...the traditional traveling space,” which became “evanescent” (38, 55) and forced the
traveler into “losing control of one’s senses (54). Mark Rennella and Whitney Walton have
pointed out that James Buzard, Paul Fussell, Louis Turner, John Ash, and Daniel Boorstein
characterize modern tourism as “predictable, repetitive, uniform, and superficial” (366); even the
title of Buzard’s *The Beaten Track* suggests this conclusion. Even works more influential today,
like John Urry’s *The Tourist Gaze* and Dean MacCannell's *The Tourist*, are often only helpful in
exposing the hollowness of claims of authenticity and spontaneity made for tourism and
providing a gloss for the famous first line of Claude Levi-Strauss’s *Tristes Tropiques*: “I hate
traveling and explorers” (17). In “The Semiotics of Tourism,” Jonathan Culler, too, posits that
travel is motivated by one particular “characteristic...of modernity:” the “belief that authenticity
has somehow been lost, that it exists only in the past...or else in other regions of countries” (qtd.
in Fussell 154). In particular, these contemporary academic works deconstruct the classist distinction between tourism and travel and illuminate how discourses responding to the commercialization of travel retrospectively create “older” forms of travel, which are then held up as goals for modern traveling. But modernist works on leisure also explicitly problematize the interdependence of travel (along with the benefits it is supposed to confer) and the commercialization of leisure spaces and activities—while still not judging modern leisure and tourism as entirely bereft of personal benefit or aesthetic and intellectual interest. For example, Michael North’s *Reading 1922* discusses works by D. H. Lawrence and Hannah Hoch as creating modernist fragmented texts that disrupt what North characterizes as the trend of the popular press and photographers’ efforts to create a homogenized “world picture” from the rough material of the world tour. By contrast, I would like to suggest that the relative lack of interest in other cultures shown in the modernist texts I investigate is symptomatic of the possibilities modernists do locate in tourism: possibilities for reorganizing daily life, reflecting on one’s life and personal relationships, and becoming more aware of the constraints of the modern urban capitalist culture they have left behind. Nonetheless, whereas high and late modernist leisure works are formally structured by the matrix of leisure relations and tend to territorialize around a particular leisure space (such as Elizabeth Bowen's hotel and Evelyn Waugh's ocean liner), early modernist fiction, including *The Ambassadors* and *A Room with a View*, tends instead to retain the mobile spatial

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33 Recent work in the domain of history has been sketching a more nuanced portrait of tourism in the twentieth century. For example, in his introduction to *Histories of Leisure*, Rudy Koshar declares that modern leisure is "inassimilable to one broad theory" and leaves "room for individual initiative...subversive practice, or simply for a degree of pleasure and self-satisfaction that can still not be tapped by projects of social domination" (17).
footprint of Victorian travel writing, which traverses a constellation of tourist spaces centered around a fixed point like a hotel or pension. In these early works of leisure modernism, comparisons made between the seductive image of “traditional” travel and modern commercial tourism are not merely critical but productive. They help to forge a recurring set of modern leisure ideals that (not coincidentally, as I argue in the Conclusion) echo the social goals of leisure given by the contemporary discipline of leisure studies: rest, freedom, pleasure, sociability, and personal development. These associations are specifically modern; as I argue in the Introduction, at the same moment work became a distinct element of life characterized by discipline, spatial centralization, and temporal regularity, so too did leisure become visible as a separate sphere of human activity, defined in terms of what modern labor was not—free rather

34 One exception is Arnold Bennett's *The Grand Babylon Hotel* (1902). Yet even hotel-centered modernist fiction, such as Bennett's two hotel novels and Forster's *A Room with a View*, regard the hotel as part of a larger network including a variety of spaces: public or private, urban or rural, commercial or social. As I discuss in Chapter Five, hotels in the modernist period were less self-sufficient, closed environments but rather open, networked, and marked by various local, national, and global flows. I wish to distinguish this characterization of hotels from Jameson's influential account of the postmodern hotel as a total world and from the common characterization of hotels in literary criticism as "microcosms" of modernity. For example, Collin Meissner's reading of James's "A Round of Visits" describes the hotel as "a complete social scene in itself, on which types might figure and passion rage and plots thicken and dramas develop, without reference to any other sphere, or perhaps to anything at all outside" (274). Such a view of hotels is not only historically inaccurate, as I show in Chapters Four and Five, but also seems to reanimate the now-defeated but formerly widespread claim that modernism ignored political and social contexts.

35 In the past decade of modernist scholarship, such promises have been associated with the discourse of cosmopolitanism (including works by by Jessica Berman, Tom Lutz, Rebecca Walkowitz, Kobena Mercer, Camilla Fojas, Janet Lyon, Amanda Anderson, Bruce Robbins, Melba Cuddy-Keane, and others). While cosmopolitanism does suggest a third option between travel and tourism, I want to argue that many of the texts discussed as modernist meditations of cosmopolitanism can also be understood as works engaging explicitly with the institutions of modern leisure—cultural, material, and discursive phenomena that cannot be entirely subsumed under or explained by a model of cosmopolitanism. Theories and cultural histories of leisure can, however, lend historical and material specificity to the body of modernist scholarship that currently is spinning out the implications of cosmopolitanism through exploring concepts like transnationality, globality, and planetarity. Both cosmopolitan modernist scholarship and these new transformations of cosmopolitanism of late 2000s could find in leisure a set of spaces, practices, theories, and flows that explain how and through what forms “thinking beyond the nation” (to use Rebecca Walkowitz’s phrase) materially and institutionally took during the era of literary modernism. The hotels, spas, ocean liners, and tourism networks of modernity often take center stage in cosmopolitan modernist poetry and fiction, and recognizing this material basis for the global flows of modern subjects, commodities, and concepts could serve to anchor Jessica Berman’s 2001 *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community*, (with its highly abstract concept of the “community”), just as well as it could anchor the global and the planetary modernism of Susan Stanford Friedman’s 2010 “Planetarity: Musing Modernist Studies.”
than compulsory, pleasurable rather than irksome, natural rather than artificial, personal rather than alienated, relaxed rather than exhausting, sociable rather than competitive, and contributing to individual growth rather than capital accumulation. But in the case of travel, how could the growing industry of mass tourism have provided the “escape” from capitalist modernity that it seemed to promise? Forster and James accordingly unmask the ideology of leisure by critiquing modern tourism as a disguised form of business as usual. At the same time, they still value the freedom, pleasure, sociability, and other positive cultural associations with modern leisure, and find them in unexpected sources: first through the failures of travel that produce self-consciously “leisurely” experiences, and second, through a renewed consciousness of modernity, rather than an escape from it. The epiphanic moments of leisure in the texts serve to clarify (if not overturn) the ills of modernity and yield pleasures that should not be undervalued: because these moments are cast as aesthetically productive, they place leisure at the heart of modernism's representation of itself.

I will contextualize Forster’s and James’s works by analyzing Vernon Lee's essay “On Modern Traveling” (1898), which displays ambivalence toward the territorialization and commercialization of leisure during the late Victorian period. While she critiques the limitations of modern travel, she also celebrates new leisure opportunities created by its commercialization. By interpreting Lee's isolation of travel as a starting point for modernist meditations on the

36 David Gilbert and Fiona Henderson, in their joint essay “London and the Tourist Imagination,” explore a similar theme in relation to the guidebooks to London that proliferated from the time of the Great Exhibition (1851). Their investigation, like mine, takes to heart Dean MacCannell’s thesis that tourism spectacularizes modernity, although the particular tourist space they investigate (London) was more explicitly couched as a spectacle of modernity in the guidebooks and advertisements than the quasi-pastoral leisure spaces—the lakeside and mountaintop spas, for example—that comprise my object of inquiry. As a consequence, the relationship between modernization and the leisure spaces I foreground is more fraught and convoluted than the relationship Gilbert and Henderson explore between London and modernization.
The Territory Is Not the Baedeker: Vernon Lee's Truce with Mass Tourism

Before turning to the early modernist literature of tourism, I would like to contextualize Forster's and James' complex and not wholly condemnatory evaluation of modern tourism within a broader discourse on modern travel by tracing a resemblance between the two novels and an essay written a decade before Forster's novel, Vernon Lee's “On Modern Traveling” (1898), as all
three works characterize the innovations of industrialized travel as necessary preconditions for
the ideal leisure experiences praised by Lee. Perhaps predictably, she begins “On Modern
Traveling” by criticizing the tourism industry's commodification of aesthetic and cultural values.
By rendering beautiful, culturally valued foreign spaces readily available to the middle classes,
tourism disinvests these destinations of their otherness and prevents tourists from fulfilling the
desire motivating them. She asks, “Do I really envy those who see the wonderful places of the
earth before they have dreamed of them, the dreamland of other men revealed to them for the
first time in the solid reality of Cook and Gaze?” (90). In her allergy to packaged tours, one may
suspect snobbery (and in fact, theorists from Dean MacCannell to James Clifford note that while
the rich are said to “travel,” the masses supposedly engage in “tourism”), but Lee pleads,

I would not for the world be misunderstood. I have not the faintest prejudice against Gaze
or Cook. I fervently desire that these gentlemen may ever quicken trains and cheapen
hotels; I am ready to be jostled...by any number of vociferous tourists, for the sake of the
one schoolmistress, or clerk, or artisan, or curate, who may by this means have reached at
last...the St. Brendan's Isle of his or her longings. (90)

Vernon Lee is therefore not vulnerable to James Buzard’s attribution to class snobbery alone—
rather than a genuine desire for travel—for the constellation of “efforts” emerging by the late
Victorian era “to establish the purposes and behavior that make for ‘genuine’ European travel,
constructing the genuine on a foundation of denunciation, evasion, and putative transcendence of
merely ‘touristic’ purposes and behavior” (81). Though Lee does indeed rely on the distinction
between tourism and travel that Buzard associates with classism, Lee objects to the presence not
of the financially poor, but the imaginatively poor. For Lee, genuine travel requires considerable
aesthetic labor, an investment of imaginative work that creates and amplifies the desire for travel.
This desire is essential, is in fact the kernel of tourism because, as she admits, tourist experiences
are generally “dull work” and “never tall[y] with the fancy” due to the fact that the traveler's visions of the destination, “having no existence on any part of the earth's surface,” are based not in reality but on personal and cultural associations (92). She differentiates, for example, between the favored destinations of various nationalities, and when she admits her failure to travel beyond her beloved circle of Southern Europe, she shows an unflinching awareness of the gap between the dreams of travel and the solid realities of tourism.

Lee's semiotic analysis of the tourist destination (as a construction of the traveler's home culture rather than a legitimate experience of the “foreign”) anticipates the critique of the tourist industry made during the last quarter-century in leisure studies. She characterizes the process by which the spaces of the tourist industry curate a highly stylized experience of foreign places as a form of cultural violence: “The whole of Central Europe is thus reduced, for our feelings,” she accuses, “to an arrangement of buffets and custom-houses...checked off on our sensorium as so many jolts” (95). Cultural and geographical particularities are dismissed as irritations and made invisible by the modern leisure institutions that make tourism pleasant, convenient, and inexpensive. Her elaboration of this problem underscores the significance of leisure for our understanding of tourism in Edwardian fiction. For Lee, the convenience of modern travel, bought with the expansion of the railway, roads, restaurants, and hotels, empties travel of “one of the great charms of the old mode of traveling,” which was “a certain sense of wonder at distance overcome, a certain emotion of change of place...paid for no doubt by much impatience and wariness” (96). In place of this charm, which is intellectually and emotionally “paid for,” a new, violent form of leisure is produced by converting selfishness into an epistemology:
[I]t is not often that respectable people spend a couple of days, or even three, so utterly engrossed in themselves, so without intellectual relation or responsibility to their surroundings, living in a moral substratum not above ordinary life, but below it....it is this suspending of connection with all interests which makes such traveling restful to very busy persons, and agreeable to very foolish ones. But to decent, active, leisured folk it is, I maintain, humiliating... the vague sense of self-disgust attendant on days thus spent is a sample of the self-disgust we feel very slightly (and ought to feel very strongly) whenever our wretched little self is allowed to occupy the whole stage of our perceptions. (95-6)

Here, Lee rejects the pervasive definition of leisure that appeared in tandem with the modern work day: leisure as escape from the pressures of everyday life. While “leisured folk” refuse to reduce traveling to a personal drama, most modern tourists, Lee warns, travel to escape critical thought and social accountability. She regards this desire for escape as morbid, as a death drive:

There is only one circumstance when this vacuity, this suspension of all real life, is in its place; when one is hurrying to some dreadful goal, a death-bed or perhaps a fresh-made grave. The soul...precipitated forward to one object...cannot exist meanwhile; ruit not hora, but anima; emptiness suits passion and suffering, for they empty out the world. (97)

By asserting that tourists encounter “ruins” that are not “past” but “living,” Lee suggests that tourists witness (rather than the “ruins” of ancient Rome or India) the ruin of contemporary cultures, both their own and the one they visit. The host culture is rendered a ruin because of the tourist's narcissistic repression of any part of the host culture not included in packaged tours, and the tourists’ culture is rendered a ruin because tourists deliberately sever all links to it. By comparing tourism to a journey to a death-bed, Lee suggests that escaping from modern life is tantamount to the cessation of life itself. Her critique of leisure transcends a basic disbelief in the liberatory power of commercialized leisure; she critiques the underlying ideology of leisure as escape, which produces and fetishizes a death drive as much as it channels a desire for freedom.
Vernon Lee does not, however, declare the death of leisure itself. She shares the optimism of Forster and James, who insist on the continued possibility of leisure delivering some degree of freedom, relaxation, sociability, or personal growth, in spite of the sterility and laboriousness of modern tourist itineraries, which present a superficial yet exhausting round of more or less compulsory activities. All three authors, though, are careful to distinguish these possibilities from the commercial ideals of leisure that emerged with the modernization of the tourism; their texts leverage the laborious, commercial, or inauthentic elements into powerful—if not relaxing, authentic, personal, or permanent—leisure experiences. Lee's permutation of this modernist move valorizes the tourist's imaginative relationship to the visited place, which she, unlike many contemporary theorists of leisure, does not dismiss as mere ideology. The responsible tourist, instead of seeking a destination that is merely not his or her home culture, invests imaginatively in the foreign land before the actual visit. Her warning to travelers—“[B]efore visiting countries...in the body, we ought to have visited them in the spirit; otherwise I fear we might as well sit still at home” (92)—privileges, rather than dismisses or deconstructs, the imaginative component of tourist desire.

This imaginative component takes on an ethical dimension because it involves the loss of egoistic isolation through immersion in another culture by engaging with the natives:

It is this dieting with the natives which brings one fully into contact with a country's reality. At the tables of one's friends, while being strolled through the gardens...one learns about the life, thoughts, feelings of the people; the very gossip of the neighborhood becomes instructive...Tis the mode of traveling that constituted the delight and matured the genius of Stendhal, king of cosmopolitans and master of the psychologic novel. (100)

Through befriending a native informant, Lee argues, genuine experiences of foreign cultures can occur. Significantly, Lee's examples of encountering historical truths and cultural otherness are
all aestheticized, which explains her choice of Stendhal as the paragon of travel. Lee's vision of travel is, in fact, an explicitly literary experience: she calls it “poetical emotion.” Her allusions, to Romantic poetry and prose define this poetical emotion as a manifestation of the Romantic privileging of the imagination; travel, she argues, reliably provides a foundation for those epiphanic moments when the imaginative and creative faculties of the human mind triumph.

But what is specifically *modern* about her argument is that she credits tourist industries with multiplying, rather than disabling, the poetic emotion of travel. “Honor the tourist,” she advises, for “he walks in a halo of romance” (105), in spite of lacking the education and income enjoyed by “cosmopolitans” like Stendhal. This “halo of romance” surrounding the tourist's gaucherie trumps the suave know-how of the cosmopolitan: she wonders, “The cosmopolitan abroad desists from flannel shirts...[and] knows to a nicety hours and places which demand a high hat. But does that compensate?” (ibid). The flannel shirt, an Edwardian approximation of the Hawaiian shirt and khaki shorts, stands in for the new style of mass tourism that may be tactless but does not, for Lee, imply that its bearer is impervious to otherness. She emphasizes that epiphanic tourism is available *especially* to those who can only travel by way of the new institutions of mass tourism. Laughing at the “Cambridge man...[having] raptures in some boarding-house at Venice or Florence; raptures rapturous in proportion almost to his ignorance of the language and the people” (103), she deconstructs the emerging cultural difference between high-brow travel and middle-class tourism. While the traveler must attempt to experience other cultures as intimately and authentically as possible, this goal, Lee clarifies, can never be reached. Authenticity becomes, in many cases, the price paid for obtaining intense leisure experiences:
Even without being a poet you may profit...by travelling in a country where you know no one, provided you have in you that scrap of poetic fiber without which poets and poetry are caviare to you...[W]andering about in the haunts of the past undisturbed by the knowledge of the present is marvelously favorable to...poetical emotion. (102)

Though Lee condemns the moral turpitude of ignoring the sociopolitical realities of a foreign country, she continues to value the creative value of this naïve, less intellectual, yet more intense, mode of tourism.

She exemplifies this mode of tourism with the image of an Englishman who paints the Alps without ever having been there. “I often think of that man 'who never was abroad,’” she muses, “and of his representation of the Alps...that quaint work of art” (94). In this dubious artwork, Lee locates the poetic engagement she seeks in travel and in literature—that affordable form of modern leisure. This untraveled man “had read, then, about the Alps, read perhaps in Byron or some Radcliffian novel on a stall... [and] wondered till the vision had come, ready for pasteboard and toy trees and glue and broken mirror to embody it!” (94). She disdains this art but not the emotion behind it; this amateur recalls the mass tourist she begs us to honor. Because the imaginative core of leisure renders all travel objectively illusory, so no amount of financial or cultural capital can replace the rapture of materializing one's fantasies. She warns,

Do not let us smile, dear friends, who have lived in Rome till you are Romans, at the foreigner with his Baedeker, turning his back to the Colosseum in his anxiety to reach it, and ashamed as well as unable to ask his way. That Goth or Vandal, very likely, is in the act of possessing Rome, of making its wonder and glory his own, consubstantial to his soul; Rome is his for the moment. Is it ours? Alas! (103)

The markers of mass tourism (the Baedeker, the ignorance of the Italian language) run parallel to, rather than against, epiphanic tourism. By contrast, the expatriates she treats as her implied audience are guilty of real offenses: “What I object to,” Lee admonishes, “are the well-mannered,
well-dressed often well-informed persons who...mak[e] Egypt, the Holy Land, Japan, into succursales...of their own particularly dull portion of London and Paris and New York” (90). Through this portrait of continental lodgings that eerily presages Jean Rhys’s set of indistinguishable boarding-houses and cheap hotels in works like Quartet and Voyage in the Dark, Lee argues that even cosmopolitans play a part in the destruction of geographical specificity. This specificity should not be understood as a cloak for smuggling authenticity (“the real Italy”) back into tourism. Lee defends the imaginative creation of specificity, not the correspondence theory of truth. What matters is the desire for difference in leisure, not any verifiable cosmopolitan cultural content—a relative lack of interest that marks the distance between Lee's work (as well as Daisy Miller, The Ambassadors, and A Room with a View) and Victorian travel writing.

It is not tourism's access to authentic otherness that matters for early modernism; because they identify the shortcomings of the tourist industry and opportunities for overcoming them, Lee, Forster, and James show that leisure can be obtained by manipulating the bourgeois norms that penetrate the holiday spaces of tourism. As a form of negative critique, the unmasking of mass tourism for what it cannot do reveals more about the traveler's own culture than it does about the destination, but it can also provide pleasure. Consider the two following passages in “On Modern Traveling,” one on tourism's erasure of difference with another passage on the vulnerability of its homogenizing structures. The first passage derides

the mysterious class of dwellers in obscure pensions: envious beings who migrate without perceiving any change of landscape and people, but only change of fare, from one boarding-house in Dresden to the cheap boarding-houses in Florence, Prague, Seville, Rouen, or Bruges. It is a class whom one of nature's ingenious provisions...directs unconsciously, automatically to the great cities of the past...so that they sit in what were
once palaces, castles, princely pleasure-houses, discussing...the pleasures and drawbacks, the prices and fares, of other boarding houses in other parts of Europe. (91)

In housing the nameless members of this “mysterious class,” the architectural glories of Europe's past are reduced to their exchange value on an explicitly international market—a startlingly literal example of older systems of monarchical power being replaced by a global, anonymous circulation of capital. Just as the standardization of the various boarding-houses erases national and cultural differences in favor of a uniform set of comparable features and prices, so does tourism establish a global standard of amenities (express trains, restaurants, casinos, palace hotels, theatres) that emphasizes what cities have in common instead of what sets them apart.

Yet Lee emphasizes that chance and specificity are still at work at tourist destinations:

Nature, Fate, I know not...looks with benignity upon these poor ignorant, solitary tourists, and gives them what she denies to those who have more leisure and opportunity...namely, that it is always during our first sojourn in a place...when we are living prosaically at inns and boarding-houses, that something happens—a procession, a serenade, a street-fight, a fair—which shows the place in a particularly characteristic light, and which never occurs again. The very elements are desired to perform for the benefit of the stranger. (103-4)

Lee documents the return of the repressed: the appearance of culturally specific images and events running counter to the norms of tourism. However generic the pension or standard the itinerary, the tourist industry cannot, to paraphrase Alfred Korzybski, replace the territory with a Baedeker. While I could give more examples of this irruption of foreignness (which in its unexpectedness is an irruption of leisure) from Lee's other works, perhaps the most apt example—which involves both a street-fight and a pension—is *A Room with a View*, to which I now turn.
From Travel to Etiquette: The Discursive Production of Leisure in A Room with a View

Thirty years after Henry James' tragic Daisy Miller, E. M. Forster's A Room with a View (1908) organizes a more optimistic itinerary for a marriageable young woman touring Europe. Lucy Honeychurch is not, like Daisy, a nouveau riche social climber knocking at the doors of hierarchical nineteenth-century European “society,” but rather a middle-class tourist enjoying the sights through a constellation of networked sites linking commodified spectacles with new travel technologies. A sustained consciousness of leisure runs through Lucy and the other travelers, one that (like Winterbourne's) produces a sense of erotic risk-taking, but (unlike Winterbourne's) reflects the growth and standardization of the tourist industry dominating European travel by the turn of the century. These new technologies did not simply limit the tourist's experience by eliminating choice, authenticity, and spontaneity through the creation of a sightseeing “canon” and by instituting a set of behavioral norms suitable for travelers: A Room with a View features the possibility of producing the leisure-effects of rest, freedom, pleasure, plenitude, eroticism, and self-development by the creation of new leisure styles or identities. These leisure styles emerge through a constant and self-reflexive process of differentiation among possible responses to the industrialization of travel. As self-styled “adventurers” vociferously take exception to Cook's and the Baedeker, rival “conservatives” experience the gratification of condemnation and of vicarious leisure by expressing shock at the adventures they request to hear about. Still others are “radicals” who condemn the mean-spirited gossip of the latter style and the shallow romanticism of the former. While the narrator sympathetically records the radicals' attempts to uncover heterodox glimpses of an authentic or personal Italy, the pleasures they do attain are
produced by manipulating the tourist industry rather than by escaping from it. Moments of revolt are less about experiencing Italy than about questioning tourism and norms of the modern society that created it.

Like Vernon Lee, Forster's characters, the British tourists and expatriates in Florence, are aware of the bland, sanitized style of the residences available to tourists. Indeed the very title *A Room with a View*, refers to the disappointment of young Lucy Honeychurch and her chaperone, Miss Bartlett, of not being able to see the Arno (Lucy's personal signifier of Florence) from their pension bedrooms. The novel's opening pages document this loss and acknowledge other ways in which Italy's spatial specificity has been papered over by the infrastructure of modern tourism:

“The Signora had no business to do it,” said Miss Bartlett, “no business at all. She promised us south room with a view close together, instead of which here are north rooms, looking into a courtyard, and a long way apart. Oh, Lucy!”

“And a Cockney besides!” said Lucy, who had been further saddened by the Signora's unexpected accent. “It might be London.” She looked at the two rows of English people who were sitting at the table; at the row of white bottles of water and red bottles of wine that ran between the English people; at the portraits of the late Queen and the late Poet Laureate that hung behind the English people, heavily framed; at the notice of the English church (Rev. Cuthbert Eager, M.A. Oxon.), that was the only other decoration of the wall. “Charlotte, don't you feel, too, that we might be in London? I can hardly believe that all kinds of other things are just outside.” (3)

The courtyard view decried by Miss Bartlett rather literally forecasts how their travels will yield views only of the institutions of tourism: their rooms give out not on a particularly Florentine view, but on the Pension Bertolini itself. Her repetition of “business” reflects her awareness that tourism is an industry rendering “Italy” a desired commodity subject to a business contract and deliverable upon payment. Yet the pension, instead of delivering an authentic experience of Italy, instead provides a hyperreal spectacle of English hospitality. The long sentence, regulated by the
rhythmic punctuation of the three semicolons, cites no fewer than five systems of British legitimation and discipline at work in the dining room: political (the Queen), cultural (the Poet Laureate), religious (the Church of England notice), educational (M.A. Oxon.), and corporeal (the social order forming rows of people, water, and wine). One could argue that the pension's provision of a familiar haven for exhausted tourists in no way precludes “authentic” experiences outside the pension, but Lucy's exclamation—that she cannot believe in the existence of Italy outside such a dining room—shows that the hyperreal room makes a simulacrum out of Italy too. “[E]ven more curious,” Lucy reflects after dinner, “was the drawing-room which attempted to rival the solid comfort of a Bloomsbury boarding-house. Was this really Italy?” (7). Here, too, the tourist's need of familiarity is assumed and provided for: the elderly Miss Alans respond to Lucy's discomfort by assuring her, “Here you are as safe as in England. Signora Bertolini is so English” (10), and launching into a sanitized, neutral tourist discourse. This discourse is a meta-tourist discourse, limited to remarks about the tourist industry, including the comfort provided by water-bottles, the dangers presented by bed-bugs, the health benefits of the foreign climate, the necessity to bar windows against malarial air, and the daring required for deciding to travel at all. This meta-discourse is created partially to master the foreign landscape, to manage the otherness of travel through creating a standardized tourist system designed for comfort (not just for profit), yet it is not merely negative, but also productive. For the Miss Alans, tourism is a pretext for sociability, an engine providing an endless stream of chatter invested with a delicious sense of the domesticating the unfamiliar. In this British Italy, these two obscure old maids (later rejected for inclusion in the Lucy's English neighborhood by the normally polite Cecil Vyse) are transformed into experts. As such, Miss Alans feel licensed to approach anyone with their stock
of useful facts and strategies for removing whatever is unfamiliar, unexpected, or uncomfortable from traveling. They therefore succeed in one of the primary motivations for leisure—sociability—by creating a discursive canon around the institutions of modern tourism that deliberately erodes the “authentic.” Similarly, an expatriate in Florence maximizes her leisure by accelerating the tourist industry's suppression of foreign territory. Driving out with Lucy and the others, the aforementioned Rev. Cuthbert mentions Lady Helen Laverstock, whose villa they presently roll by but cannot see: “No,” he explains, “you can only see it if you stand—no, do not stand; you will fall. She is very proud of that thick hedge. Inside, perfect seclusion. One might have gone back six hundred years” (59). As a spectacle of the “real” Italy, Lady Laverstock refuses to be seen, proudly cultivating a “thick hedge” to seclude herself from modern Italy in order write a book on Fra Angelica and enjoy her private garden, which Cuthbert explains, according to “some critics...was the scene of The Decameron” (ibid). Lady Laverstock provides a perfect illustration of Vernon Lee's dictum that the intensity of tourist's imaginative experience of a foreign country has an inverse relationship to the tourist's knowledge of the country's present state. Through her seclusion, Lady Laverstock rejects the round of social visits that tourists expect of her, although her academic pursuits and her property's literary associations embody the Renaissance Italy marketed to modern tourists like Lucy. A silent, almost mythical figure, she represents both the implicit promise of tourism and its invisibility to tourists. As the Englishwoman who has become “Italy” but is unwilling or unable to perform it, she exemplifies the paradox of modern tourism, its impossibility, as the tourist only experiences what makes tourism possible: the tall hedges.

Unless, of course, the tourists “stand,” as the reverend warns Lucy not to (and perhaps for good reason, as we have already witnessed Daisy Miller’s tragic demise from disregarding the
etiquette for tourists in Italy). Lucy's hasty retraction—a ladylike return to her seat before glimpsing the hidden villa containing the only real Anglo-Italian—recalls Chris Rojek's argument in *Capitalism and Leisure Theory* that the disciplinary force of etiquette constrains both the experience and expression of intense emotions during leisure activities. Lucy is guilty of other breaches of this etiquette—including the opening scene, when she and Miss Bartlett complain about their rooms. Although the other diners, quietly “interchanging glances,” disapprove of this “peevish” outburst (4), Vernon Lee might find in their disappointment evidence that they did imaginatively visit Florence before traveling, and Rojek might applaud their rejection of the emotional boundaries imposed by modern leisure norms. And indeed this outburst is effective: it leads to the Emkers, a father-son duo also at the pension, to offer up their rooms with views. Inconsistently, Miss Bartlett interprets this offer as an unforgivable breach of etiquette—the narrator divulges, “She knew that the intruder was ill-bred, even before she glanced at him” (ibid)—and responds using a cold, impersonal tone. It is a moment engineered by the social environment of the pension; its motley assembly of tourists leaves the traveler vulnerable to consorting, unwittingly, with “one of the ill-bred people whom one does meet abroad,” and its effects ripple through the pension's dynamic social structure. Miss Bartlett's pointed disapproval of the Emkers immediately repairs the damage inflicted by her own breach, as “[t]he better class of tourist was shocked at this, and sympathized with the newcomers” (ibid). Here we see the differentiation process of tourist identity at work, sorting tourists according to their reactions to tourist etiquette, which is more powerful as a provocation to construct and announce one's tourist style than as a rigid set of rules to obey. Their acceptance into pension society is marked symbolically by the communal elaboration of the local tourist
infrastructure. “A perfect torrent of information burst on them,” the narrator explains: “what to see, when to see it, how to stop the electric trams, how to get rid of the beggars, how much to give for a vellum blotter, how much the place would grow upon them” (7). Tourist knowledge is traded as a social commodity, and when Lucy and Miss Bartlett are granted their proper share, a relationship among the tourists is established, based not on knowing Florence qua Florence but on their common awareness of the tourist industry and pension etiquette.

Yet, despite these codes, Miss Bartlett accepts the vulgar Emersons' rooms. Despite the apparent rigidity of tourist etiquette, the physical space of the pension proves to be unpredictable. Not only has the Signora failed to accommodate them according to the reservation, but also, with Lucy and Miss Bartlett securing both the Emersons' rooms and social credit, their physical accommodation in the pension begins to float free from the comedy of manners played out at the dinner table. It is, in fact, to this spatial porosity that one might attribute the proliferation of social codes at the pension, as rules of decorum are deployed locally and strategically to neutralize the disorganized, unstable social groupings inherent in all leisure spaces that house highly mobile strangers. While I will revisit this idea of spatial porosity, here I emphasize the play-like qualities of pension society revealing modern tourism to be an engine of sociability. Defined by Georg Simmel as “pure interaction free of any disturbing material accent,” sociability “distills out of the realities of social life the pure essence of association” (159, 158). Sociability, he continues, is “symbolic play, in whose aesthetic charm all the finest and most highly sublimated dynamics of social existence and its riches are gathered” (163). This impersonal, disinterested association is encouraged in leisure spaces, I argue, by the same exemption from the tourist's native and host cultures that Vernon Lee decries. The shifting social combinations of
the pension promote sociability through proliferating interactions while bracketing possible consequences or serious political or economic resonances. The shocked responses of Miss Bartlett and other pensioners to the Emkers (suspected to be Socialists) test the limits of this sociability, but nonetheless uphold it: Lucy may still interact with them, so long as she regards them as temporary players in the game of sociability. Furthermore, even Miss Bartlett’s apparently unrelenting stiffness is misleading, as she means to apply such standards for Lucy’s sake, rather than her own (explaining why Miss Bartlett allows herself the pleasures of pension gossip when Lucy is not within earshot). Interestingly, Lucy’s conservatism is exposed as artificial when Mr. Emerson points out to her, “You are pretending to be touchy; but you are not really” (21). Mr. Emerson suggests here that Lucy plays at conservatism—showing that leisure experiments with identity do not always entail radical play. Similarly, Reverend Beebe plays at conservatism, even when he remarks about Emerson, “We are friendly—as one is in pensions” (8). The Reverend's restrained dismissal works in the scene as a clerical refusal to gossip about the Emkers, and it is accompanied by Miss Bartlett's similarly elegant and frosty response: “Then I will say no more” (ibid). Yet once they establish this etiquette, they abandon it: “He pressed her very slightly, and she said more” (ibid), and so begins a prolonged session of gossip.

In other words, the very decorum of pension sociability multiplies affective and sensual intensities rather than limits them; an apparent deference to social law actually opens up the field of play. Consider Miss Bartlett and Beebe, who display the “conservative” tourist style, which produces its own identity differentially in response to the romantic and radical styles of tourism. At the same time that Miss Bartlett and Beebe defer publicly to the moral and social norms that
they follow in England, their condemnation of other tourists provides pleasurable opportunities for vicariously enjoying their exploits. Hence Beebe's interest in “the sudden friendship between women so apparently dissimilar as Miss Bartlett and Miss Lavish,” a self-proclaimed bohemian writer. This friendship him wonder, “Was Italy deflecting [Miss Bartlett] from the role of prim chaperon...?” (31), yet her conservative tourist style less rejects the heightened opportunities for the risqué pleasures associated with holidays than it enjoys them at a distance, vicariously, prolonging them by cultivating them as topics for gossip. Although Beebe contemplates Miss Bartlett's possible bad influence on Lucy, this power of amplification—the viral spread of gossip—is attributed to Italy itself. Reacting to the “cold blast” and “dull haze of yellow” that “entered the room” when the window is opened, Miss Alan cries, “Oh, dear Miss Honeychurch, you will catch a chill!” (32). Despite the protection from Italy afforded by the pension's hyperreal Englishness, the true dangers of vacation are catching: a communicable disease that comes from within the pension. “I could hear your beautiful playing, Miss Honeychurch,” admits Miss Alan, “though I was in my room with the door shut. Doors shut, indeed, most necessary. No one has the least idea of privacy in this country. And one catches it from another” (ibid). Her hyperbolic

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37 As a tourist of indeterminate type—who adopts a conservative posture when Miss Bartlett is around yet adopts a more radical attitude when he speaks to Lucy, George, or Mr. Emerson—the Reverend Beebe is somewhat more than even Nigel Rapport's generous interpretation of him as “omniscient” and “the conduit of almost all successful social interaction[s] and relationships[s]” in the novel (106). He is in fact Forster’s perfect tourist, able to inhabit multiple modes of traveling and therefore able to participate the most fully in the sociability of the Pension Bertolini and the expatriate groups dotting the Florentine countryside. I would even suggest that it is Mr. Beebe’s ability to adopt either the radical or the conservative tourist role that allows him to become such a conduit. Similarly, I find David Medalie’s reading of the Reverend’s mutability to be unconvincing. Medalie asserts, “the unexpected and unsettling reversals in the behavior of both Mr. Beebe and Miss Bartlett...hint at the inacalcubility of human motivation and...undermine the moral presumptions which the ending of the novel may seems at first to support” (122). While Medalie assumes that Lucy and George’s happy ending is somehow called into question by Miss Bartlett’s surprising support of their relationship (which I shall return to at the end of my reading of the novel) and the Reverend’s surprising refusal to enthuse over their engagement, I would argue that the mutability of human behavior is written into the novel as the primary condition that underwrites positive leisure experiences. The enriching personal transformations undergone by Lucy and George, in other words, go hand in hand with the supposedly negative changes undergone by the Reverend Beebe and Miss Bartlett. By ending the novel with Miss Bartlett and the Reverend’s discomfiture, Forster may avoid an overly sentimental or utopian conclusion, but he does not call into question the advisability of Lucy and George’s romance or their personal growth.
generalization is, however, directed at Beebe, who dares to recount how a maid walked in on his bath, and Mr. Emerson, who discusses stomach ailments. Once they leave, she complains, “what a tangle we were in...all on account of S. having been mentioned” (34), but because she prolongs their consideration of the men's anecdotes, her condemnation is also a sensationalization.

This discursive pattern, in which the loud disavowal of scandalous pleasures multiplies them, is elevated into a plot device driving Lucy's romance: after Miss Bartlett claims that as a “woman of the world” she is protecting Lucy, she gives the girl “the sense of larger and unexpected issues” that “meaningless at first...became menacing, obnoxious, portentous with evil” (13). Similarly, Miss Lavish, meant to chaperone the next morning, abandons Lucy right where the Emersons are touring, causing her to depend on them for directions. During a picnic when Miss Bartlett and Miss Lavish force Lucy to leave so they may indulge in salacious gossip, she lands literally in the arms of George and experiences the erotic pleasure they wanted to stop her from only hearing about. Such ironies underscore how the contradictions of tourism often enable, rather than prevent, leisure—and can even travel back to England, for there her fiancé Cecil Vyse unwittingly leads her to marry George. Believing in the bourgeois insularity of her neighborhood, Cecil concocts a practical joke: when Lucy wishes to fill a local vacancy with respectable spinsters, he blocks them in favor of strangers who will discomfit Lucy's community. He boasts, “I have won a great victory for the Comic Muse” (103), but his victory is greater than he intends, as his choice of the Emersons leads to the unmasking of his bourgeois hold on Lucy. This dramatic irony is doubled by his misinterpretation of her anger: thinking she is motivated by classism, he insists she will “soon agree...that the classes ought to mix” that “there ought to be
intermarriage” (144). There is no limit, in other words, to this Jacob's ladder of social critique, as the pleasures of differentiation can always be used as a basis for further differentiation.

This occurs when the conservative tourists are ridiculed by a fourth group of Englishmen in Italy, the liminal group of expatriates, neither tourists nor natives. Expatriate Reverend Eager, for example, shares his true opinion of the tourists he is taking out on a drive when he lectures,

If you will not think me rude, we residents sometimes pity you poor tourists not a little—handed about like a parcel of goods from Venice to Florence... living herded together in pensions and hotels, quite unconscious of anything that is outside Baedeker, their one anxiety to get 'done' or 'through' and go on somewhere else. You know the American girl in Punch who says: 'Say, poppa, what did we see in Rome?' And the father replies: 'Why, guess Rome was the place where we saw the yaller dog.' There's traveling for you. (59)

The Reverend here diagnoses the standardization and laboriousness of tourism, as well as the commodification of tourists as “a parcel of goods.” Yet in doing so he does not depart from the tourists' own self-definitions; he merely repeats what they have already said among themselves. The real effect of his speech is not to make an ideological critique of tourism, but rather to forge a communal sense of mastery through the bonding ritual of critique. The tourist Miss Lavish therefore bonds with Eager by agreeing that tourists are “nothing less than a menace” (ibid). Eager's strategic example of American tourists allows Miss Lavish to distinguish their own airing from the “electric tram squealing up the new road” carrying “loads of hot, dusty, unintelligent tourists who are going to 'do' Fiesole in an hour” (60). Miss Lavish superficially distinguishes mass tourism from romantic tourism by comparing tourist technologies and standardized itineraries with the “olde world” horse-drawn carriages traveling a less-traveled road. Yet romantic tourism aestheticizes the same sites visited by tourists, and these travelers spend more time dismissing the urbanization, technology, and mass culture of modernity than they do
speaking of Italy. This Adornian negative critique works not by revealing otherness, but by creating the possibility of critiquing modernization through the literally displaced figure of modern tourism.

“Unmerciful to the British tourist:” The Modernist Rhetoric of Anti-tourism

But during this carriage ride, Italian beauty does confront them: the driver and his lover, described by the narrator as “Phaethon....a youth all irresponsibility and fire” and his “Persephone, tall, slender and pale” (57). All but Lucy (who feels “a spasm of envy”) ignore the couple, who “were sporting with each other disgracefully...[and] were probably the only people enjoying the expedition.” (60). When they kiss, Eager stops the carriage and tears them apart, complaining, “He is treating us as if we were a party of Cook's tourists” (61). Miss Lavish, her “ardor visibly increasing,” cries out, “Surely no!” (ibid). This couple, depicted by the narrator as an appropriate object for rhapsodizing about the beauty of “real” Italian life, becomes in the metadiscourse of tourism another tool for differentiation (they are not Cook's tourists). The modern pleasures that supplant the traveler's appreciation of foreign landscapes and cultures is, in this scene, the pleasure of differentiation, another example of the oppositional creation of a personal tourist style. No character provides more examples of this differentiation operation than Miss Lavish, a writer of sensationalist fiction and femme d'un certain âge who imagines herself to cut a daring figure in pension society—although it is only after Lucy and Miss Bartlett have passed the inspection during their first night does she begin speaking to them, proclaiming, “I revel in shaking off the trammels of respectability” (7). The next day, taking Lucy to tour Santa Croce, she demonstrates what I have called romantic tourism by criticizing Lucy for bringing a
Baedeker. “Tut, tut! Miss Lucy!” she exclaims, “I hope we shall soon emancipate you from Baedeker. He does but touch the surface of things. As to the true Italy—he does not even dream of it” (15). As a romantic tourist, she defines her tourist style against the institutions of modern travel; alluding to her next novel, she proclaims, “let me give you all fair warning: I intend to be unmerciful to the British tourist” (47). Miss Bartlett, the conservative target of Miss Lavish's critique, escapes the hot seat by pointing to the Emersons: “Oh, you wicked woman... I am sure you are thinking of the Emersons” (47)—allowing her to relish both the thought of the Emersons' wickedness and Miss Lavish's answering “Machiavellian smile” (48).

Crucially, these mutually reciprocal relations among tourist styles do not refer to any objective relationship to the tourist destination; by calling the Emersons radical or Miss Bartlett conservative, I refer only to their self-representations, developed in comparison to other tourists. For example, Mr. Beebe's conservative style dissolves when he is around Lucy, at which times he becomes more like the radical Emersons, whose controversial style approaches Italy in a vein of aesthetic and intellectual appreciation that Matthew Arnold would praise. Meanwhile, Beebe's dislike of Miss Lavish is taken by the Miss Alans to be evidence of a “clerical narrowness” that liberalizes their own risqué tolerance of Miss Lavish—and yet their mantra, “Miss Lavish is so original,” is dismissed by the narrator as “a stock remark, the supreme achievement of the Pension Bertolini in the way of definition” (31). For Beebe, Miss Lavish enacts a low-minded version of the mind-opening libidinal play he wants Lucy to experience. After he watches her “do the thing she really liked”—the “intoxicated” rendition of Beethoven that lets her “come to her desire” (29)—Beebe responds, “If Miss Honeychurch ever takes to live as she plays, it will be very exciting” (30), emphasizing the link between art and the affordances of leisure so
common in modernist leisure discourse. The nasty weather that precludes Lucy's own proposed
tourist venture, causes Miss Alan to wonder, “Who would suppose this is Italy?” (32) and
renders Miss Bartlett “tired, hungry...with a ruined skirt, a pulpy Baedeker, and a tickling
cough” (30), gives Lucy access to one of the purported advantages of leisure: gratifying personal
desires. She achieves leisure, in other words, at the moment tourism is made impossible.38

Meanwhile, Miss Lavish, my example of romantic tourism, superficially appears to agree
with Vernon Lee's privileging of travel that pays attention to modern social conditions; she draws
attention to fishermen, tells Lucy that “One doesn't come to Italy for niceness...one comes for
life!” and asserts that she is a “real Radical,” serious about politics (16). But the narrator notes
that she is wrong about the fishing, acts “playful as a kitten,” and thinks it “true democracy” to
exclaim, “Look at that adorable wine-cart! How the driver stares at us, poor, simple
soul!” (ibid). When she interjects, “I detest conventional intercourse” (18), she has just
concluded a conversation with Lucy about properties and estates in England that makes “Italy
recede” (17). This banal conversation wholly absorbs the attention of the unconventional Miss
Lavish, the self-professed authority on the real Italy, so much that she gets herself and Lucy
hopelessly lost. The point is not, of course, to satirize Miss Lavish (the narrator succeeds on his
own to do so), but rather to point out that creating the leisure state of mind requires a sense of
play—one that has no law of non-contradiction, no call for consistency, and no fidelity to truths
external to the play itself. This sense of play is not automatically granted because one is on
holiday in another country, but must be generated. Vacation does give the leisure-seeker a

38 By contrast, Cecil Vyse—clean-cut, moralizing Cecil Vyse, critiqued by Lucy for his Victorian beliefs about
women—brags of having become “un diavolo incarnato” because of a “quiet winter in Rome with his mother;” a
claim the narrator satirizes by reporting that Cecil “affects a cosmopolitan naughtiness which he was far from
possessing” (95). Cecil's belief that he has adopted a specifically Italian air of mischief (“un diavolo incarnato”) is
trumped by Lucy's use of Italy to intensify the desires and aesthetic pleasures she already enjoys in England.
temporary license culturally constructed into the holiday: a structural legitimation of pseudo-illicit activity. As Rojek argues in Decentering Leisure, “the modernist identification of escape, pleasure and relaxation with leisure was simply another kind of moral regulation, with the result that, under modernity, we were never sure if we were free enough or far enough from that which we wished to escape” (9). This necessity to feel free, to capitalize on escape, carries the social weight of labor—the same compulsion for completion we saw in Eager's description of exhausted tourists. Pension Bertolini residents are not exceptions to this rule; though their leisure-work consists of defining and performing their own tourist identities, this type of leisure is no less laborious, no less shot through by social values. Consider, for example, the moment when Miss Lavish condemns Mr. Emerson for speaking of bodily functions around women: she asserts that the Emersons must be “commercial travelers” (34). In judging his lapse in tact (rather than approving it as indicative of holiday license), she shows how even on holiday, a romance novelist famous for smoking in the men's lounge, cannot wholly abandon the socioeconomic hierarchies of bourgeois England.

While this regulation does invalidate arguments that leisure activities like tourism represent an actual “escape” from modern life and its moral structures, we have already seen that regulation can become a source of pleasure. Leisure works not by exploding boundaries, but by a heightened awareness of those boundaries provided by the slight deviations allowed on holiday. Further, it is not the content of these deviations, but the raw fact of deviation that is appreciated by vacationers. In this leisure economy, any shocking action matters less in itself than as an incitement for discursive production: the gossip that will prolong the leisure act beyond its initial temporal limits and bring renewed awareness of holiday license. The vicarious nature of gossip
underscores leisure's playfulness—its bracketing of morals, its temporariness (Beebe reflects that “pension joys, pension sorrows, are flimsy things” [36])—and allows each group of tourists to enjoy the others' adventures. When Mr. Beebe reminds Miss Alan, for example, that she has benefited from the Emersons’ antics, that she is “bound to class him as nice...after that business of the violets,” she turns their attention to the leisure institution of gossip: “Violets? Oh, dear! Who told you about the violets? How do things get round?...I do not like the Emersons. They are not nice” (35). Despite her moral vocabulary, this moralism works as a tool for expanding the field of gossip, not as a binding system—explaining why she laments that “a pension is a sad place for gossip (ibid) even as she expertly commandeers this gossip session. Finishing a mildly salacious story about Miss Lavish by “apologiz[ing] for her toleration” of the bohemian, she murmurs, “I cannot help thinking that there is something to admire in every one, even if you do not approve of them” (33). Miss Alan's holiday license consists of “being charitable against her better judgment” (ibid), that is, of granting to scandal the ministrations of her own moralism, thereby enjoying the extension of her own moral boundaries at the same time she disseminates gossip. The moral relations of leisure, then, are flexible and productive, which is why later, Eager, trying to extract a juicy story, radiates “sympathetic reproof but at the same time indicated

39 My focus on leisure as a form of etiquette in Forster’s novel is meant to counter the critical commonplace that situates A Room with a View as a novel of manners without making distinctions among what I identify as the three discrete, spatially contingent systems of etiquette Lucy must traverse: the urban modernity of London (represented by Lucy’s stay in Mrs. Vyse’s flat), the changing institutions of modern travel (represented by Florence), and the modern bourgeois environment of English suburbia (represented by Lucy’s neighborhood, Windy Corner). Jeffrey Heath, for example, develops the narrator’s distinction between the real and the pretended—which only appears at the end of the novel—in order to proclaim that Lucy’s primary insight is that “there must be something wrong with ‘development’ in a code of behavior which must mistake delicacy for beauty ” (191). Heath’s reliance on a discourse of right and wrong (in which, for example, Lucy must learn that “[p]eople who see the world only from their own proper perspectives are bound to misunderstand one another” [203]) not only misses the humor and lack of essentialism in Forster’s presentation of multiple viewpoints, but also neglects the novel’s emphasis on the spatial contingency of social mores.
that a few harrowing details would not be unacceptable” (50). Moralizing not only fuels scandal, but also becomes itself a topic for meta-gossip, a new type of leisure entertainment.

_A Room with a View_ thus suggests that moral systems are not necessarily abandoned in leisure, but become imbued with a playfulness that rarely eclipses the vacationers' awareness of the social structures they must eventually return to. It is partly this awareness of “back home” that charges leisure with pleasure; we have seen this leisure effect in gossip, which, by morally condemning a scandalous event, intensifies it. But what makes this holiday license somewhat spontaneous, despite its being written into the cultural construction of tourism, is the pervasive sense that the precise location of moral boundaries is not set in advance. For example, when Eager condemns the couple referred to as Phaethon and Persephone, Miss Lavish agrees with him but, once Emerson wakes up, feels “bound to support the cause of Bohemianism” and cries out, “I have always flown in the face of the conventions all my life.” (61). In contrast to her prudish reaction to Emerson's mildly risqué anecdote, Miss Lavish extends the boundaries of her sense of propriety—but at this moment, the more radical provocation is directed toward Lucy: “Signorina!” said the man to Lucy...Why should he appeal to Lucy? 'Signorina!' echoed Persephone...She pointed to the other carriage. Why?” (61).

They appeal to Lucy as a fellow youth in love; they point to George. Only Mr. Emerson understands the appeal; his disregarded speech—“Do you suppose there's any difference between Spring in nature and Spring in man?... But there we go, praising the one and condemning the other” (62)—resonates with the narrator's choice of “Persephone,” an icon of the cyclical nature of life, by suggesting that the _real_ sight to be seen is young love. Whereas Miss Lavish strives in vain to have adventures, Lucy and George undergo an event in the sense
Badiou gives it: as a a game-changing moment whose truth depends upon whether those witnessing the event act in accordance to the truth revealed by that event. The carriage-outing is Lucy's first opportunity to show fidelity to the event—to the murder that brought Lucy and George together. Although Lucy refuses to speak up for the Italian couple and therefore fails to display fidelity, this challenge responds to her growing ambivalence to tourism. For example, on her first night in the pension, she tries to “commit...to memory the most important dates of Florentine History. For she was determined to enjoy herself,” yet she feels “a rebellious spirit in her which wondered whether the acceptance [of the Emersons' rooms] might not have been less delicate and more beautiful” (13). As she goes to sleep, Lucy connects the laborious, homogenous norms of tourism with Miss Bartlett's emotional and aesthetic obtuseness. Forster, begging individuals to “only connect” in *Howards End* and to “come, come” in *A Passage to India*, uses modern tourism in this earlier novel to investigate interpersonal relations in terms of feminism as the question of Lucy's marriage gradually takes on the weight of the Woman Question. Even the liberalism of Mr. Beebe breaks down in the face of her incipient feminism. As she leaves the pension alone to “go round to the town on the circular tram—on the platform by the driver” (36), using the infrastructure of tourism as a mode of female independence, Beebe remarks, “She really oughtn't to go at all...and she knows it. I put it down to too much Beethoven” (37). But later, he approves of Lucy's growth when it is cast in liberal humanist, rather than sexual, terms: he theorizes, “[t]he water-tight compartments in her will break down, and music and life will mingle. Then we shall have her heroically good, heroically bad—too heroic, perhaps, to be good or bad” (90).

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40 Indeed, the next day, after struggling to remember the various names of Italian artists, she gives up, at which time “the pernicious charm of Italy worked on her, and, instead of acquiring information, she began to be happy” (19).
Just as Beebe assigns her the task of going beyond good and evil, Mr. Emerson asks her to help George find Nietzschean affirmation by showing “that by the side of the everlasting Why there is a Yes—a transitory Yes if you like, but a Yes” (26). This “transitory Yes” aptly describes the positive modernist associations with leisure, distinct from leisure's ideological associations with escape and pleasure, which, like Lee, Emerson associates with mortality. He links bad leisure with death by remarking to Lucy, “[George] comes out for his holiday to Italy, and behaves...like the little child who ought have been playing, and who hurt himself upon the tombstone” (25). His caveat, “I don't require you to fall in love with my boy” (ibid), by prophesying what does happen, retains ideological associations of leisure with freedom and romance despite casting it in ethical terms. His excuse—“you have the time” (ibid)—isolates her as a bourgeois woman who by definition possesses free time, the raw atom of leisure, which for Forster is necessary for accepting the liberal humanism that underpins human happiness. Yet Lucy still depends on the modern leisure industry; in a “matronly” tone, she advises, “your son wants employment. Has he no particular hobby? Why, I myself have worries, but I can generally forget them at the piano; and collecting stamps did no end of good for my brother” (26). Lucy's prescription of leisure “employment” privileges the skill-driven and the standardized: the becoming-work of leisure. Mr. Emerson's cheer evaporates as she substitutes industrialized leisure for the passionate engagement in human life that he wants her and George to seek. For Mr. Emerson—who condemned Eager's dismissal of Phaethon by arguing, “‘We have tried to buy what cannot be bought with money. He has bargained to drive.... We have no rights over his soul’” (62)—such vocational leisure contributes to the incursion of capitalism into the soul.
Unknown to him, despite her “matronly” tone, Lucy has offered George passion in her own way by referring to the only passion she has ever experienced—her love for music. Like Emerson, she believes in the transformative powers of leisure, which for Forster is not the same as the temporary access to scandal that the other pensioners want from their vacation. Her music even expresses Nietzschean affirmation: Lucy chooses sonatas that “can triumph or despair as the player decides, and Lucy had decided that they should triumph” (29). Unfortunately, as her disastrous response to Emerson shows, although music is the way she “shoots to the empyrean,” she cannot yet “translate visions into human words” (28). Post-murder, though, she finds the words when she accuses Cecil, “you may understand beautiful things, but...don't know how to use them...you wrap yourself up in art and books and music, and would try to wrap up me” (168). Lucy’s fidelity to the event that brings her and George together comes in two stages; first, this feminist speech to Vyse, when she refuses to enact his vision of “Lucy as a Work of Art” (to borrow a chapter title), and second, her admission of love for George when she realizes that her rejection of George “sinned against passion and truth” (170). The narrator explains that Lucy “deliberately warped the brain” by rejecting love but heals by “remember[ing] her emotions in Florence: those had been sincere and passionate, and had suggested beauty” (187, 189). The tourist's Florence, as an event-machine, is used by Forster to win Lucy for liberal humanism, defined by Mr. Emerson as having faith “in those who make their fellow creatures happy” (20). Lucy's holiday converts her to this faith when her holiday makes her “reach...the stage where personal intercourse would alone satisfy her” (108), though she enfolds romantic feminism into liberal humanism by demanding “equality beside the man she loves” (ibid). By rejecting Cecil (the gentleman converting leisure into social capital by “knowing” art) for George
(the worker learning to act spontaneously and enjoy sensuous pleasure), she externalizes her desires and beliefs and cultivates fulfilling social relationships. Lucy's navigation of the spaces of modern tourism not only sparks romance, but also socializes her into liberal humanism.

**Pension Joys Are Not “Flimsy Things:” Forster's Spatialization of Leisure**

It is not novel to argue that Forster's works feature this liberal-humanist dilemma—in which characters are called to affirm truth, beauty, and love—but what I would like to uncover here is Forster's *spatialization* of these moments. Or more precisely, their de-spatialization. For example, *Howards End* erodes the sociospatial specificity of the manor-house by staging invasions of socially cordoned space, just as *A Passage to India* juxtaposes images of India-in-England with England-in-India, and constructs the anti-space of the Marabar Caves, whose emptiness forces characters to face their own abstract humanity. In *A Room with a View*, Lucy's transformation is inseparable from the leisure spaces she traverses, and these spaces, by being unstable and unreliable, force characters to acknowledge their human “grounding,” their mutual interdependence. The narrator literalizes this relationality during the Fiesole trip by observing, “The whole earth lay before them, not as a map, but as a chess-board, whereon they continually behold the changing pieces as well as the squares. Any one can find places, but the finding of people is a gift from God” (65). But the people only shift because the spaces of *A Room with a View* are porous—both figuratively, as they are incompletely controlled by the social and financial forces making them tourist sites, and literally, as a series of scenes depict the ground disappears, making the erosion of space literal, as if every territorialization of leisure through modern tourism entails an equal and opposite reaction: the deterritorialization of space itself.
It is Lucy's fainting spell, for example, that physically delivers her into the arms of George Emerson even as figuratively, the bourgeois social foundations of her life are crumbling beneath her—for at the moment of the murder, she was questioning the patriarchal system that rendered “most big things unladylike” (38). She laments, “The world is full of beautiful things, if only I could come across them'...Nothing ever happens to me” (ibid). But as she looks “nonchalantly” at the Piazza Signoria “now fairly familiar to her” (ibid), that sunset, “the hour of unreality” (40), awakens Lucy's desire as she “fixe[s] her eyes wistfully on the tower...which rose out of the lower darkness like a pillar of roughened gold” (ibid). Although the narrator remarks skeptically that this beauty results from “chance—unless we believe in a presiding genius of places,” his next remark, that “[h]ere, not only in the solitude of Nature, might a hero meet a goddess, or a heroine a god” (55), does suggest that it possesses the genius loci. Lucy too sees Florence as “a magic city where people thought and did the most extraordinary things” and wonders, “Was there more in her frank beauty than met the eye—the power, perhaps, to evoke passions, good and bad, and to bring them speedily to fulfillment?” (54). Lucy's question has already been answered by the narrator, who, announcing the murder, explains simply, “Then something did happen” (40)—suggesting that leisure spaces act as engines producing events, provocations for life-changing responses rather than just pleasure, relaxation, or self-expression.

In contrast to the style of Miss Lavish's sensational romance novels, Forster's narrator recounts the event with a minimum of fuss: “That was all,” the narrator observes, “She had complained of dullness, and lo! one man was stabbed, and another held her in his arms” (ibid). This is not to say the narrator denies the event's significance; he records that Lucy “had crossed some spiritual boundary” (41), has George proclaim, “something tremendous has happened; I
must face it...I shall want to live’’ (42-3), and notes that “they had come to a situation were character tells” (43). For Lucy, this change unmasks mass tourism; about the carriage outing, the narrator remarks, “A few days ago and Lucy would have felt [excited]. But the joys of life were grouping themselves anew” (49). A deeper process of change that takes months to sink in; she in fact nearly ruins the quiet romance of the moment by displaying terror at becoming fodder for pension gossip. Though Lucy remains quiet while the pensioners, wanting to “nibble after blood” (50), pump her for grisly details, she cannot contain the inevitable spinning out of the gossip machine. Even own silence allows her to revisit the scene in solitude and reawake her pleasure, so she realizes that only “George Emerson had kept the subject strangely pure” (ibid).

The Emersons’ refusal to gossip stands in stark contrast to Miss Lavish, who uses the stories as the basis of her novels—the quality of which may be inferred by the fact that Forster casts it into the ocean: her latest manuscript is the first victim of many moments when the ground literally crumbles underneath its occupants. Miss Alan reveals that Miss Lavish began smoking practically in despair, after her life’s work was carried away in a landslip.... It was a novel— and I am afraid, from what I can gather, not a nice novel...she left it almost finished in the Grotto of the Cavalry at the Capuccini Hotel at Amalfi while she went for a little ink.... But you know what Italians are, and meanwhile the Grotto fell roaring on to the beach, and the saddest thing of all is that she cannot remember what she was written. The poor thing was very ill after it, and so got tempted into cigarettes. (33)

In spite of the simplicity of Forster’s prose during this climactic scene, Zohreh Sullivan’s essay devoted strictly to this chapter considers a bevy of possible symbols and allusions Forster might have been inserting. Yet Sullivan’s need to supplement this reading with references to the novel’s two other “symbolic centers” underscores my argument that this pared-down scene is notable, I argue, less for the role played by Neptune and Venus than it is for its laying bare of the institution of tourism—the spectacle of the Other—that energizes the chapter. Without such a consideration of the novel’s considerable commentary on the modern leisure industry, it is perhaps unsurprising that Sullivan concludes, “A Room with a View is, of course, a far less effective novel than A Passage to India” (186).
In Lucy's holiday experiences, Miss Lavish finds a better substitute than cigarettes: she adapts the gossip swirling around Lucy beyond its initial context of vacation gossip and into the daily life of the larger public—the mass leisure of sensational novels. When Lucy becomes enraged at Miss Lavish's too true-to-life latest novel, she is furious because Miss Lavish has capitalized on Lucy's non-commodified leisure experience. While Lucy meets the murder with “the silence of life” (66) and refuses to draw parallels between herself and Persephone, Miss Lavish broadcasts the events in the form of a popular novel exploitatively trading on British stereotypes about Italians: “love, murder, abduction, revenge, was the plot” of the novel (47), in which “Leonora” and “Antonio” embrace in a “golden haze...afar off the towers of Florence” (155). While Miss Alan blames the unreliability of Italians for the loss of Miss Lavish's first manuscript, that spectacular accident establishes the novel's pattern of using spatial shifts to indicate the opinion of the narrator (who avoids Miss Lavish's sensationalism and Cecil's objectification of “Lucy as a Work of Art”). Consider the violets that aesthetically elevate Lucy's sexual awakening, contrasting the wind that later interrupts an ascetic song she sings: the gale, the narrator notes, “was gently criticizing the words it adorned” (183-4). George too emphasizes spatiality by saying that his presence in Lucy's neighborhood is due to fate (125), while his explanation for falling in love in Italy—“Italy is only a euphemism for Fate” (177)—argues that the collapse of geographical specificity can provide a basis for love even if it precludes authentic travel.

Lucy, too, referring to the carriage outing that leads her into George's arms, “look[s] on the expedition as the work of Fate” (58)—a moment that is, not coincidentally, the second of the three times in the novel when the ground disappears, tumbling characters toward unanticipated events. Having been sent away from Miss Lavish's and Miss Bartlett's salacious gossip session,
Lucy turns to “Phaethon” to ask where Mr. Beebe is. He instead leads her to George, hidden like Lady Laverstock: “at the same moment the ground gave way, and with a cry she fell out of the wood. Light and beauty enveloped her. She had fallen on to a little open terrace, which was covered in violets from end to end” (66). In the “well-head, the primal source whence beauty gushed out to water the earth,” stands George, who kisses her upon seeing “radiant joy in her face” (66). They are interrupted by Miss Bartlett, who furiously separates them yet demands a full report. Lucy explains dutifully, “he looked like some one in a book...heroes—gods” (70), but when Miss Bartlett asks what she is going to do about it, “[i]t had not occurred to her that she would have to do anything. A detailed exhibition of her emotions was all that she had counted on” (71). She does not expect to have to show fidelity to the event, but only to have to amplify the event through the linguistic prolongation of gossip; indeed, only back in England will she face the meaning of the murder. The third time the ground disappears is underneath George as he timidly refrains from bathing with Freddy, Lucy's cheerful brother. Just as Lucy first responds to Florence by memorizing historical facts, so does George temporize, sitting “where the ground was dry,” and asking, “‘Aren’t those masses of willow-herb splendid?... What's the name of this aromatic plant?’” (126). As Freddy, “prancing in,” proclaims that the “water's wonderful,” George ponders whether the pleasure would be “worth” the bother, when “[t]he bank broke away, and he fell into the pool before he had weighed the question properly” (ibid). Soon, George convinces Mr. Beebe to join in. Homosocial play, deferred by George's work schedule and existential doubt, is achieved by the machinations of space and the emergent social institution of the weekend. His acceptance of this bodily pleasure not only mirrors Lucy's acceptance of her sexual desires but also enacts Lucy and George's dyadic holiday transformation on the social plane of everyday life.
A Room with a View, like the Pension Bertolini, refuses to present the “views” it appears to promises. Instead it presents a world of porous earth, which, crumbling, forces Lucy and George to confront the pleasures they resist out of bourgeois prudery or nihilism. The last spatial disappearance act is the most radical: it is the disappearance of home—Lucy's. Her mother accuses, “‘You're tired of Windy Corner!” for good reason; as the narrator explains, “Lucy had hoped to return to Windy Corner when she escaped from Cecil, but she discovered that her home existed no longer. It might exist for Freddy, who still lived and thought straight, but not for one who had deliberately warped the brain” (188). This is not a total tragedy, however. Though Cecil accuses Lucy of “forgetting her Italy” (145), she actually brings Italy home with her. Looking at the view from her home, she observes, “[t]he hills stood out above its radiance, as Fiesole stands above the Tuscan Plain, and the South Downs, if one chose, were the mountains of Carrara. She might be forgetting her Italy, but she was noticing more things in her England” (151).

As Lucy aestheticizes her English view, she interprets it as Italy, rendering the disappearance of English space inseparable from her transformation into an open-minded, passionate Forsterian liberal humanist. Though Freddy complains about the turmoil her transformation brings home, sulking, “I do think Lucy might have got this off her chest in Italy” (72), it is precisely the way she brings home the problems presented by Italy that tests her personal growth and ensures her happiness.

And though Mr. Beebe asserted that “pension joys, pension sorrows, are flimsy things” (36), Lucy's behavior in England prompts him to observe, “It is odd how we of that

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42 Forster seems to suggest here that the British pastoral gains its beauty and intensity by being mediated through European landscape. Interestingly, Stuart Christie’s Worlding Forster: The Passage from the Pastoral makes no mention of A Room with a View, thereby missing a chance to analyze Lucy’s vision in this passage, which rewrites the Cotswolds—central to English self-representations as a specifically “British” landscape rivaling the beauties of the continent—as a nationalistic by-product of a cosmopolitan perspective derived from international travel.
pension, who seemed such a fortuitous collection, have been working into one another's lives...

We really must give the Signora a testimonial” (179). Similarly, while Lucy had reacted to the murder by putting it at arm's length, remarking, “How quickly these accidents do happen, and then one returns to the old life!” (42), by the end of the novel she aligns her life with the principles she learned in Florence. But in addition to accepting George, Lucy has to reinterpret Miss Bartlett's actions. Lucy at first resents that Miss Bartlett takes “diplomatic advantage” of her (76) and claims that George has used Lucy as an outlet for his lust. Crucially, Lucy rejects this interpretation of her holiday romance as a manifestation of instrumental social relations, as a fling made lasting and meaningful only in the pages of Miss Lavish’s sensational novel. But the novel ends not with another demonstration of her fidelity to her Italian holiday—but with a recognition of Miss Bartlett's role in the social and verbal production of their romance. George theorizes,

your cousin has always hoped...from the very first moment we met...she fought us on the surface, and yet...look how she kept me alive in you all the summer; how she gave you no peace... The sight of us haunted her—or she couldn't have described us as she did to her friend. There are details—it burnt. I read the book afterwards.... She is not frozen. (204)

Miss Bartlett displays the paradoxical nature of leisure, which works by contradictions, whose spaces change lives by disappearing. Her gossip is one of the leisure activities that enable Lucy and George's maturation into Forster's poster couple as they adapt industrialized leisure into inspiration for a liberal-humanist life that embraces the social ideals of leisure while critiquing its commercial manifestations. Despite the novel's anti-tourist rhetoric, its leisure spaces play Cinderella's godmother for Forster's modern fairy tale—so long as they crumble underfoot.
Leisure as Temporal and Moral Style in *The Ambassadors*

Like Lucy Honeychurch, Louis Lambert Strether, the protagonist of Henry James' late novel *The Ambassadors* (1903), finds his life transformed by a trip to Europe, but unlike Lucy, Strether travels not for a holiday, but with a serious task in mind. Sent to Paris by his wealthy friend Mrs. Newsome, Strether must retrieve her son, Chad, from his prolonged stay in Europe so Chad can take charge of the family business back in America. Unlike Lucy, whose marriage resulted from her successful immersion in Italy's leisure infrastructures, Strether knows that Mrs. Newsome's offer of her hand in marriage depends on whether he can secure Chad for the productive forces of America. While Mrs. Newsome's arrangement for Strether's work and pay is, perhaps, an unusual form of employment, *The Ambassadors* is nonetheless, I argue, a narrative about work, and in particular, the worker's (Strether's) attempts to wrest leisure from a situation structured by capitalist relations at its core—where the relation between mother and son is mediated by an ambassador working for the continuance of the family business and the relation between lovers is determined by the degree to which the unbusinesslike partner can further the fortunes of the family business. While Strether's errand of winning Chad from the embrace of the beautiful, seductive Paris to return to the moral, business-minded Woollett

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43 In a single conversation with Miss Gostrey, for example, Strether explains, “I don't touch the business” (100), protests, “I *never* made a good thing!” (101), and groans, “Ah don't talk about payment!” (107). Towards the novel's close, as he reflects on his own reaction to the knowledge that Chad and Madame de Vionnet's affair was consummated, he uses specifically vocational language, sighing, “So much of it was none of my business—as I saw my business. It isn't even now” (494). His refusal to tell Miss Gostrey which object the Newsomes manufacture is yet another aspect of Strether's resistance to “talking shop” like a businessman.
underscores the “international theme” many critics stress in James' oeuvre, and while this theme is expressed through a variety of cultural fields other than leisure, I argue that in The Ambassadors, these comparisons between Old and New World moral, sexual, and aesthetic norms are organized most powerfully through the binary of labor and leisure. Leisure, in other words, provides ground from which Strether stages the classic Jamesian dilemma in which he is, to borrow Peter Rawlings' phrase, “the (mainly French) world of art with its increasing devotion to form and technique, and the morally intense world of his American context…with those powerful residues of Puritanism” (2). To take one example, Dennis Foster's analysis of The Ambassadors in his Sublime Enjoyment: On the Perverse Motive in American Literature, an adroit reading that isolates American advertising as a producer of perverse pleasures solving the

44 The “international theme” is usually used in recent Jamesian scholarship as an uncontestable, primary critical move or assumption from which other themes may be discussed (such as style, sexuality, morality and pragmatism), rather than an opportunity for criticism on its own. Discussions about the international theme are typically, I find, a framing device to speak of something else; most of the exceptions are to be found in discussion of James's later travel writing. Regarding The Ambassadors, for example, Nicola Bradbury's Henry James: The Later Novels establishes the progressive teleology she uses to interpret the novel as tending towards the “still point” of perspective by asserting that Strether learns to abandon his habit of “interpret[ing] the behavior of those in Paris according to the patterns of New England custom” (40), Tessa Hadley's Henry James and the Imagination of Pleasure uses the binary of “New World earnestness and Old World elegance” (86) to explore the relationship between language and sex, and Julie Rivkin's “The Logic of Delegation in The Ambassadors” uses the supplementation of the “New England economy of experience” by a Parisian one as the central binary organizing the novel's overarching pattern of supplementation.

In my own work, I too employ the comparison James sets up in the novel between the American work ethic (living to produce) and European aesthetics (living to meditate on and perceive beauty) as a figure through which I can trace Strether's changing relationship to leisure. Though the flexibility of the international theme may at least partially result from James's stylistic reliance on national difference as an easily perceived placeholder for other differences, it does not necessarily mean we must agree with Robert Davidoff's or Charles Anderson's argument that Strether merely flees Woollett rather than engages in European culture or cosmopolitanism, or that (to quote from Anderson's Person, Place and Thing In Henry James's Novels) “above all, with Strether the emphasis is not on the international contrast as such, but on his initiation into an understanding of the richer life he has missed” (262). Rather, it means that discussions about the international theme are at once everywhere and nowhere in Jamesian scholarship, and perhaps the most fruitful recent criticism that regards this international theme as international flies under the banner of American studies' recent reconsideration of American fiction through the concept of globalization (see Oltean 10).

45 By “cultural fields,” I refer to a number of themes figuring prominently in recent Jamesian criticism, such as gender (Sara Blair, Alfred Habegger, Wendy Graham), sexuality (Leo Bersani, Kevin Ohi, Gert Buelens, Eric Savoy), psychoanalysis (Sigi Jottkandt, Donna Przybylewicz, Dennis Foster), power (Mark Seltzer, Victoria Coulson), history (John Carlos Rowe, Kenneth Warren), autobiography (Tamara Follini, Charles Fiedelson, Andrew Taylor), and consumerism (Collin Meissner, Peggy McCormack, Jean-Christophe Agnew).
“problem with what James’ characters want, particularly when they want neither love nor money” (68), ignores Strether and Chad's clear desire for leisure in order to claim that *The Ambassadors*’ cast of characters are deficient in objects or ideas to cathex into. Furthermore, I argue that James' renowned focus on thought processes, which Leo Bersani has called the “displacement of dramatic pressure from novelistic event to the verbal surfaces of narrative” (61) and which Sheila Teahan has more succinctly termed James' “drama of consciousness” (13), is in *The Ambassadors* as much a mode of exploring the nature of leisure as it is a mode of exploring the array of philosophical and theoretical constructions astutely addressed by Jamesian scholarship: modernity (Ross Posnock), morality (Robert Pippin, Robert Dawidoff), pragmatism (Richard Hocks, Lisi Schoenbach), and deconstruction (Jonathan Warren, Deborah Esch, Julie Rivkin, Mary Cross).

*The Ambassadors*’ opening scene displays, for example, not a brilliant explication of international difference through a lavish description of England or English social life, but rather shows Strether carefully negotiating the social and phenomenological dimensions of leisure spaces in order to produce a feeling of freedom from the errand that hangs over him:

Strether's first question, when he reached the hotel, was about his friend; yet on his
learning that Waymarsh was apparently not to arrive till evening.... [t]he same secret principle...that had prompted Strether not absolutely to desire Waymarsh's presence at the dock, that had led him thus to postpone for a few hours his enjoyment of it, now operated to make him feel he could still wait without disappointment. (55)

This triple delay of interpersonal interaction—missing Waymarsh at the dock and at the hotel and enjoying a dilatory jaunt around Liverpool—was presaged by his avoidance of the “people on the ship with whom he had easily consorted” (55) despite their repeated invitations to join them in Liverpool and London. Though Strether feels a twinge of guilt at his unsociability—the narrator
tells us that Strether “had stolen away from every one alike” (56) and that he “winced” as he considers Waymarsh’s loneliness—he plunges onward alone because the delay creates an empty pocket of time that creates his first taste of the freedom promised by modern leisure spaces. He luxuriates in “a consciousness of personal freedom as he hadn’t known for years....a deep taste of change and of having above all for the moment nobody and nothing to consider” (55). Like James’ “late style,” notorious for the indirection that prolongs narration by delaying, withholding, or obscuring information, Strether’s refusal to bring his arrival in Chester to its point (to recruit an old friend for help in his errand) produces empty time, allowing him to enjoy freedom from the duties of action and interaction—a freedom experienced as leisure despite its impermanence. From this early scene, we already know that the answer to Strether’s petulant query scenes later, “Was he to renounce all amusement for the sweet sake of authority?” (118), is clearly no. Strether’s habit of deferral is, after all, a refusal to work—a bid for leisure as he resists alienating his cognitive powers in order to persuade Chad to return. More generally, though, Strether successfully produces and manages his leisure through what I, adapting Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of “becoming-woman” from *A Thousand Plateaus*, refer to as the becoming-leisure of work, while Waymarsh (a perfect example of the modern tourist) represents the opposite movement, the becoming-work of leisure.

In *The Trial of Curiosity*, Ross Posnock accounts for Strether’s habit of deferring both his actions and the consequences of those actions—Strether, even in the novel’s final book, seeks “postponement in especial of the reckoning to come” (488)—by evoking Georg Simmel’s portrait of the miser as aesthete in *The Philosophy of Money*. Attempting to rescue Strether from the contemporary literary-critical “rhetoric of sterile negativity that portrays him as vicarious,
renunciatory, prissy, fearful, and ascetic” (222), Posnock asserts that Strether's “responsiveness converts loss into plenitude” (231) through deferral. Quoting from *The Philosophy of Money* to explain the paradox that Strether's asceticism produces aesthetic pleasure, Posnock explains, “Simmel defines the miser's power as essentially aesthetic. The miser's pleasure in deferral, speculation, and anticipation is a form of 'aesthetic contemplation' in the sense that he shares with the aesthete the 'feeling of liberation' from the limits of reality and the 'dull pressure of things’” (244). Posnock's comparison of Strether to Simmel's example of the perfect miser—the man who continually learns new skills yet never uses them, therefore developing “fully acquired potentialities without ever conceiving of their actualization” (*Philosophy* 328)—partakes of the qualities associated with leisure in the early twentieth century: its exceptionality (its distance from the “real world” and the necessity to “cash in”), and the leisure-seeker's inherent appreciation for and pleasure taken in an activity without consideration for its eventual use value or productive power. Yet while Posnock argues that Strether's miserly refusal to spend produces pleasure paradoxically through *ascetic* deferral, I would make a simpler claim: that Strether's pleasurable deferral is often a refusal to work—a bid for leisure as he resists alienating his cognitive powers in order to persuade Chad to return—not always a heroic refusal to engage in an inherently pleasurable activity. Furthermore, Strether does not always choose the miser's path; it is not only the aesthetically voluptuous triumph of “potentialities” over “actualities,” but also Strether's carefully managed oscillation *between* the potential and the actual, that produces pleasure through the becoming-work of leisure and the becoming-leisure of work (concepts I elucidate in the preceding chapter). If Strether, in other words, does not always act ascetically, neither does he provide an example of what Alasdair MacIntyre calls James' “rich aesthetes
whose interest is to fend off the kind of boredom that is so characteristic of modern leisure by contriving behavior in others that will be responsive to their wishes, that will feed their sated appetites” (24). While we might find models of both extremes in Portrait of a Lady, citing Gilbert Osmond as MacIntyre’s sated aesthete and Ralph Touchett as Posnock’s miser glorying in the potential rather than the actual, Strether successfully produces and manages his leisure by oscillating between the two, and I hope my reading of the novel will show that James's representations of leisure are not as cynical as MacIntyre asserts they are.

For example, while we have noted that Strether has defined freedom in the “miserly,” negative sense of deferral, a positive definition of freedom emerges when he decides to devote this unexpected pocket of time “to the immediate and the sensible” (56), an eruption of the actual from the potential. At first, his ability to oscillate between the two is relatively undeveloped and perceived as a liability, not a source of pleasure. The narrator explains, “He was burdened, poor Strether—it had better be confessed out the outset—with the oddity of a double consciousness. There was detachment in his zeal and curiosity in his indifference” (56). A hired gun with a divided class identity, Strether experiences “double consciousness” in his possession of two incompatible models of visiting Europe: he appears to be a leisured gentleman but is motivated by what is essentially a business contract. Strether's dilemma evokes James's assertion in “Americans Abroad” that Americans represent “the only great people that is exclusively commercial” (263) and his description in Notes of a Son and Brother as he recalls his childhood shame at his family's indifference to business. Whereas his fellow young Americans boasted of their family's business connections and planned to become businessmen, he notes that for his own family, “What we wanted to do instead was just to be something, something unconnected to
specific doing, something free and uncommitted” (267). Half proud, half ashamed, James' early ambivalence to business evokes Strether's own dilemma—a dilemma that, as we shall see in the next example, ensures that any reference to freedom is haunted by or structured by the language and efficient structures of capitalism. In an image that eerily echoes Simmel's miser, Strether compares his situation to “a man who, elatedly finding in his pocket more money than usual, handles it a while and idly and pleasantly chinks it before addressing himself to the business of spending” (*Ambassadors* 56). Because he delays his task to produce precious moments of leisure—which he defines as consciously possessing, in the form of the universal material commodity of money, an unentailed surplus of time—his enjoyment is haunted by the language of business and by guilt. As Maya Higashi Wakana argues, Strether “cannot experience the sense of liberation without somehow being reminded of what he is being liberated from” (26). But even more fundamentally, as the narrator's tonally anomalous interjection about confessions indicates above, Strether's consciousness is intimately connected with a *business* conscience, as the latter both constrains and enables the former. Paying attention “to the immediate and to the sensible” represents a betrayal of his job by shifting focus from the there and later (his errand in another city to retrieve Chad) to the here and now (his hotel in Chester on a beautiful March morning), implying that the shift from leisure to labor imposes phenomenological alienation—alienation from the conditions of *consciousness* production as well as from the labor power responsible for *material* production.

In *Henry James and the Culture of Publicity*, Richard Salmon (echoing Peter Nicholls' claim in *Modernisms* that modernist style taps into the increasingly global circulation of capital) accounts for this homology I have been tracing between Strether's labor and leisure through the
figure of advertising. Advertising is, I argue, significant in *The Ambassadors*, in at least two ways: as a meta-language of capitalism that contributes images to yet does not dismantle or overcode Strether's meta-language of conscious freedom and leisure, and as (in Chad's view) a novel, modern platform for the creation and distribution of aesthetic beauty despite (or perhaps

46 In fact, the opposite is true: Strether's (and James's) overcoding of the language of business by the language of leisure constitutes one of his most powerful rhetorical moves that linguistically performs the becoming-leisure of work. We might even argue that James, by using business as a *linguistic* system or site upon which he can form endless transformations, provides a striking example of what Deleuze and Guattari would refer to as taking capitalism to its limits—a utopian act insofar as it seeks to create a new world by working *through* capitalism, rather than around or against it. (I will return to this parallelism between Henry James's style and Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy in the conclusion of the present chapter.)

Henry James as a utopian thinker has been the subject of a recent strand of Jamesian criticism, with writers divided as to whether James constructs and gestures towards utopias or he unmasks pseudo-utopias or critiques utopianism. Room for such a debate has certainly been provided for by James, whose most explicit statements on utopia were made in a series of letters with H. G. Wells; James's most famous statement from these letters—“it is only by our each contributing Utopias...that anything will come” (*Henry James Letters* 4: 378)—provides a tantalizingly open-ended provocation for investigating the concept of utopia in James's works.

In his introduction to the *Cambridge Companion to Henry James*, Jonathan Freedman locates Henry James's “utopian project” in the way that the writer “projects the making of social value through and well beyond the nineteenth-century nuclear family” (6-7), while Victoria Coulson, finding James to be skeptical of utopias, analyzes *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Golden Bowl* to conclude that Henry James dramatizes how “[t]he haven, the refuge, the asylum confesses itself a true utopia, a nowhere, and stands revealed instead as the acceptable face of the prison” (175). Roxana Oltean's *Spaces of Utopia in the Novels of Henry James* argues that “a space of utopia subtend[s] Jamesian transatlantic itineraries” (8) because each transatlantic voyage James traces creates “hyperreal, conflicted, belated scenarios of discovery and colonization” (11). About *The Ambassadors*, Oltean argues that James presents, through Strether's return to Europe, “a failed utopia of unity and love...a simulacrum, revealing senseless repetitions and its inherent belatedness” (14). Oltean concludes that Strether's francophilia creates a “utopia of the desiring gaze” that ruthlessly enacts a “commodification of the value of Europe” (176, 170) and ensures that Europe is always “a postponed utopia” (190).

The concepts of leisure and utopia are similar insofar as both point to an outside—a being-otherwise—though one is routed through space (utopia) and the other primarily through practice (leisure). My project's focus on the spaces of leisure attempts to gesture to the political valences of leisure as a mode of critiquing (or even merely making *visible*) the status quo, but without going so far as to claim that leisure spaces are necessarily, or even frequently, utopian ones. Leisure spaces are, of course, often consciously framed as utopian by companies providing leisure infrastructure—a claim deconstructed by modernist authors like Henry James, whose *The Ambassadors* unflinchingly represents the gap between the leisure industries of Paris (patronized enthusiastically by the Pococks, for example) and Strether's perspective on Paris as an occasion to enjoy beauty, indulge in reflection, and reconstruct moral systems.

For modernism, then, the relationship between leisure and utopia is one of call and response, where leisure spaces are not in themselves utopias but rather provide an occasion for modernists to unmask pseudo-utopias, measure the possibilities for manufacturing positive personal experiences out of existing imperfect social and economic structures, and interrogate the possibility of utopian change in modernity. To return to the point this footnote begins with, James plumbs this latter possibility through his late style, or more specifically in the case of *The Ambassadors*, through presenting a possible model for socioeconomic change by presenting linguistic transformations that make use of existing capitalist structures to find opportunities for pleasure, romance, beauty, relaxation, self-redefinition, and positive interpersonal interactions.
because of) its alliance with capitalism. As a result, advertising provides a kind of test-case that will, by infiltrating the texture of Strether's interior discourse, test his moral and cognitive independence from capitalism (i.e., his resistance to being “squared” by the bribe offered by Mrs. Newsome), and will also plumb the question of the fate of beautiful images and texts in urban capitalist modernity. While William Greenslade's early account of advertising's role in the novel underestimates its role—he defines advertising as a matter of “simplifying formulas” that guide taste (106)—Richard Salmon's argument overestimates the danger it poses. He argues that in The Ambassadors, “the world of advertising is offered to consciousness as the horizon for a new social totality… [T]he form of the commodity spectacle is inscribed both within the projected world of James’ fiction and in the projection itself, saturating even the spaces from which it is signally excluded” (177). Similarly, Jean-Christophe Agnew, in “The Consuming Vision of Henry James,” draws a comparison between capitalism and Jamesian style, observing in the late novels a “complicity in the commodity vision.” Echoing Mark Seltzer's Henry James and the Art of Power, which claims that “art and power are…radically entangled” due to the “social regimes of mastery and control that traverse [James'] works” (13-4), Agnew argues that James uses market metaphors as raw materials that he then processes into the linguistic commodity of the sentence—ultimately capitalizing language itself, as the late style “transforms active verbs into passive participles and participles, in turn, into nouns” (77). Both Salmon's treatment of advertising as the medium through which capitalism produces a “social totality” and Agnew's analysis of Jamesian language as a process of capital investment interpret the structural continuities I have foregrounded as evidence that capitalism not only saturates James' imagery and themes but also provides the template for his style.
But Salmon and Agnew fail to take into account James' privileging of consciousness as a source of meaning, particularly through Strether's formidable powers of reflection and introspection. It is through conscious reflection, I argue, that Strether both recognizes his need of and manages to access leisure, which in *The Ambassadors* consists of finding pleasurable experiences beyond the material or linguistic structures of capitalist labor—even if doing so requires that one *go through* or transform those structures first. Therefore, I would qualify John Carlos Rowe's claim (which, Agnew and Seltzer excepted, is a relatively common one) that James “resisted the incipient commercialization of the aesthetic process” (“Henry James and Globalization” 298) by adding that he did not do so by trying to *ignore* capitalism. Strether's consciousness is, for example, shot through with capitalism—but this is not because he fails to recognize the ubiquity of capitalism or because he tries to but cannot escape capitalism from “invading” his own mind. Rather, his increasing *awareness* of the constraints that limit leisure allow him to experience leisure (if temporarily), and his pointedly playful and perverse use of the financial language to characterize his leisure heightens his sense of freedom and distance from the world of business. It is important to remember that *The Ambassadors'* negative judgment of capitalism's alienation of labor amounts less to a total condemnation of American business than an investigation of the potential to derive positive experiences by positioning oneself carefully in relation to business—whether in or out of it. To recognize that Strether extracts leisure by flirting with both play *and* work and that Chad finds aesthetic inspiration in advertising is to agree with Ross Posnock's assertion that James finds a “positive moment in commodity fetishism and conspicuous consumption” that is “inevitably tangled with human expressiveness, creativity, and happiness” (“Henry James, Veblen, and Adorno” 34) rather than diametrically opposed to it.
Of course, while capitalism can provide an opportunity for the free play of Strether's consciousness, with its attention to moral nuances and the perception of beauty, this open-ended opportunity for Strether to indulge in reflection neither guarantee nor constitutes the kind of total freedom that was associated with leisure in the early twentieth century. Though I believe his analysis underestimates the significance of leisure—for example, the pleasure Strether derives from people-watching at the Tuileries and from enjoying a leisurely brunch with Madame de Vionnet—Robert Pippin helpfully glosses, “[t]he freedom at issue does not involve the exercise of will, the absence of constraints, or the satisfactions of interests and desires…. Strether’s liberation involves an expanse of understanding, and so, finally in his life, a greater capacity both to take account of others better, and just thereby, to be himself” (175). Pippin's emphasis on Strether's understanding also highlights the importance of consciousness in James' fiction as a creative force and source of satisfaction, not just, as Agnew and Salmon seem to imply, a passive recipient of capitalist imperatives and language. The remaining two advantages Pippin lists as Strether's greatest achievement—a vast improvement in the quality of interpersonal interaction due to a heightened awareness of others' motives and emotions, and the ability to find and be oneself—are also, in modernist fiction as well as modern and contemporary non-fiction about leisure, two of the most frequent and long-standing advantages associated with leisure.\

Even Strether's “understanding” is, I argue, a specifically leisurely sort of comprehension, as Strether himself describes his mood as a rebellion from his labor (his errand for Mrs. Newsome) and as inhabiting a consciousness that is unentailed and inherently pleasurable: motivated not by long-term goals or external constraints or a need to control or persuade other people, but instead by a

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47 See the Introduction for a discussion of leisure in contemporary scholarship, and Chapter 1 for a more detailed account of leisure in modernism and modern philosophy.
desire for sociability, and by desires and preferences that are felt to be freely chosen and unique
to the individual. Pippin's qualifications still apply—that constraints still exist, even those which
constrain what Strether believes he freely chooses—but as I will show below, I argue that his
most significant “understanding” is how his ruminations help him recognize the situated nature
of leisure and therefore manipulate his relationship to these very constraints to produce Strether's
temporary, qualified, and situated, but nonetheless powerful experiences of free, sociable leisure
—what Victoria Coulson has happily termed “a temporary stay in the great good place” (182).
While I believe that analyzing The Ambassadors through the concept of leisure brings the
question of Strether's pleasure (what does he get out of it?) into clearer focus, Pippin's preference
of freedom for an organizing concept yields a definition of Jamesian freedom that could equally
apply to leisure: Pippin argues that James' fiction shows “that freedom cannot be achieved alone,
that the achievement of free subjectivity requires a certain sort of social relation among subjects,
and that this relation of mutuality and reciprocity is highly sensitive to social arrangements of
work and power and gender relations” (172-3). Significantly, Pippin recognizes that Strether's
mode of reaching freedom through his understanding does not require understanding truth, does
not require that his consciousness accurately reflects an external situation; it “does not matter”
that Strether finds his freedom by contemplating “a content that is actually false” by
misrecognizing the nature of Chad and Madame de Vionnet's relationship (175). One is reminded
of the moment in Strether's carpe diem speech to Little Bilham in Gloriani's garden when
Strether concludes, “Still, one has the illusion of freedom; therefore don’t be, like me, without
the memory of that illusion” (216), and of the final scene, when Miss Gostrey summarizes, “It
isn't so much your being 'right'—it's your horrible sharp eye for what makes you so’” (510). The
same, I argue, is true of leisure, and particularly of Strether's leisure: not only is he not a gentleman of leisure but dependent on hiring his labor power out for his survival. Moreover, Strether achieves leisure because he is constantly reminded of the errand that brings him to Paris. At times he reacts to this awareness by deferring his labor through finding and appreciating the beautiful or by indulging in relaxation, and at other times he transforms what he regards as abject labor—a task that is externally dictated and meant to be executed quickly, efficiently, and without any complex thought or independent judgment—into more congenial labor that allows him to exercise his mind and rely on his own judgment, thereby imbuing his experience of work with the cognitive habits he typically associates with leisure. Nonetheless, his experience of leisure is always temporary, always relative, and always intertwined with questions of work. Leisure may be all in Strether's mind, but for James, it is, above all, consciousness that matters. Strether's conflicted consciousness, in other words, may be caught between his errand and his desire for relaxation, but this conflict creates in him a new will to leisure: that is, to ignore work in favor of pleasure, thereby overcoming his “general failure... failure to enjoy” (64). In fact, as soon as he becomes conscious of enjoying solitude as a mode of freedom, it eludes him. Still grasping the telegram promising the prolongation of his freedom, Strether turns “to find himself, in the hall, facing a lady who met his eyes as with an intention suddenly determined, and whose features....came back to him as from a recent vision” (56). Despite having avoided further interaction with his ship-mates, he becomes ensnared as her presence visually superimposes the past upon the present, disrupting his focus on the here and now. He soon recalls Miss Gostrey from his Liverpool hotel the night before, and though “nothing had passed between them” (57), Strether's momentary glance of recognition secures his social responsibility. This
slender basis of recognition creates a compelling pretext for interaction; the sociability of leisure amplifies the intensity of even the most trivial of social connections, replacing overdetermined relations—his multiple connections to Mrs. Newsome through her love, her money, her son, and her literary magazine, which Strether edits—with a contingent, serendipitous relation to this friendly stranger. Buoyed by having seen him in Liverpool, she approaches him and reveals that she knows Waymarsh: another coincidence among the many that leisure space fiction manufactures in droves as an inevitable characteristic of open-ended social spaces (like hotels, spas, and ocean liners), which divorce strangers from their native familial, national, and vocational contexts and have them mill about in public spaces.

Rather than lament his loss of anonymity and solitude, Strether finds pleasure in this intimacy, flexibly inverting his mood of delay, disconnectedness, and freedom, into a mood of acceleration, connectivity, and entailment. Initially, he feels shocked at “how much there had been in him of a response” to Miss Gostry, who also wonders “if she might have advanced too far,” yet in the accelerated sociability of leisure, they feel “as if a good deal of talk had already passed” (57) and “accept... each other with an absence of preliminaries” (58). Both of them express an acute consciousness of what they perceive as the exceptional nature of their instant friendship—Strether with the added recognition of the “strange inconsequence” of “shirk[ing] the intimacies of the steamer and...of Waymarsh only to find himself forsaken, in this sudden case, both of avoidance and of caution” (58). The liminal space of the hotel, neither public nor private, neutralizes Strether's antisocial guard. The word “inconsequence” here is significant: it denotes a sense of temporal disconnection due to the dismantling of causality. Inconsequence is not tantamount to accident—Strether's new friendship comes “straight to him as a ball in a well-
played game” (59)—but rather indicates the temporal *rupture* created by leisure space sociability.

Leisure spaces thus offer exemption from bourgeois *habitus* through temporal release, an exemption from *cumulative* time. As the instrument that underpins the goal-oriented behavior of labor and investment and encourages a cohesive life-narrative full of repeated units rather than disruptive events, cumulative time is the temporal style of work and habit, not leisure and escape. The role of cumulative time in controlling behavior has, of course, been analyzed by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*, which explains how “[p]ower is articulated directly onto time” (160).

Through training, repeated behaviors are sutured to a narrative of personal evolution, making the appearance of “individuals” under disciplinary regimes less about fostering uniqueness than becoming visible within prescribed narratives of progress (such as education, health, and work):

The disciplinary methods reveal a linear time whose moments are integrated, one upon another, and which is orientated towards a terminal, stable point: in short, an 'evolutive' time....[T]he administrative and economic techniques of control reveal a social time of a serial, orientative, cumulative type... With new techniques of subjection, the 'dynamics' of continuous evolutions tends to replace the 'dynastics' of solemn events. In any case, the small temporal continuum of individuality-genesis seems to be, like the individuality-cell or the individuality-organism, an effect and an object of discipline. (160-1)

Just as discipline works through temporality, Strether's new leisure is interpreted temporally: he “at that moment launched in something...quite disconnected from the sense of his past and which was literally beginning there and then” (59). This sense of rupture is very different from the moments characterized by Tamara Follini as “episodes that dramatize the intensification of an individual’s grasp of his or her life history...occurring simultaneously with a heightened awareness of the passage of time” (212). Whereas Follini’s reading expresses the recent interest in Jamesian autobiography, what Strether feels here is escape from his personal history.

Burdened by his history of overwork and failure to accumulate the material and social signs of
evolutive time (family, fortune, reputation), Strether opens his access to novelty by exiting the disciplinary structure of cumulative time—not using temporal rupture to consolidate his identity.

Shocked by this temporal rupture, Strether initially resumes the temporal style of deferral, using ruses “to gain time,” like playing with his overcoat (59) and compulsively rereading Miss Gostrey’s visiting card (61). These delays mask a momentary moral struggle in which he visualizes Waymarsh, Mrs. Newsome, and even the hotel receptionist, perched in a panoptical “glass cage,” denouncing the sudden familiarity. Nonetheless, the initial temporal break generates a cascade of social ruptures, including a rupture of his limit, “transcended within thirty-six hours” (62), regarding attractive women. He recognizes the moral valence of this limit (he refers to “the plane of manners...of morals”) only to reject it: “If it was 'wrong'—why then he had better not have come out at all” (62). Strether here not only demonstrates his tendency to use various tactics to convert work into play by excusing his friendship with the stranger as part of his errand, but also links temporal styles with moral ones, connecting temporal rupture with transgression and continuity with American propriety. Similarly, Strether's desire to break with American morality repolarizes Miss Gostrey's appearance from an attack on his solitude into an exercise of his freedom from moralism. This opposition between socio-temporal styles is played out in European leisure spaces for three reasons. First, Strether's having “come out at all” means that spatial shifts presuppose or compel a reconsideration of morality. Second, Strether's immersion into leisure spaces (hotels, cafes, galleries, theatres, salons), culturally associated with transgression, open alternatives to American social practice and, as I argue below, leverage aesthetic beauty to overcome moral qualms. Third, Strether only addresses his divided consciousness when confronted with the possibility of leisure. While he frequently refers to
himself as a failure, it is only when he reflects on his inability to experience leisure that he explains his failure in terms of its cause (his double consciousness) rather than its signs (the visible proof of family, money, and prestige). When his conscientiousness yields to the “personal freedom” released by Waymarsh's failures to arrive, the narrative pattern of provoking reflection by juxtaposing work and leisure is established.

**Dog-Tired: Waymarsh's Therapeutic Tourism and Strether's Holiday Alibi**

When Waymarsh finally does appear, readers can fully appreciate the significance of his prior non-appearances. Readers first encounter “dear, dyspeptic Waymarsh” (60) as a source of Strether's bad conscience for good reason. When “joyless” Waymarsh is received by Strether as “his doom” (67), the novel's first chapter abruptly ends, signaling the end of his freedom. Their first conversation is characterized as a “confession,” a “detention,” “an impression of minor discipline” (68, 69). His freedom is crushed not only because he reminds Strether of his task, but also because of Waymarsh's own rupture and reason for traveling: he had “barely escaped, by a flight in time, a general nervous collapse” induced by “overwork” (71). Waymarsh is therefore prescribed a holiday: he holds the medical alibi for leisure that excuses an episode of hedonistic relaxation so long as the vacationer has suffered for it in advance through overwork and illness.

Waymarsh and Strether comically demonstrate this necessity to justify leisure when they bicker over who has been the most overworked and least psychologically stable. After a long silence, Waymarsh erupts, “I don't know as I quite see what you require it for. You don't appear to be sick to speak of” (72). Despite the pleasant afternoon Strether spent wandering around Chester to feel the richness of his leisure, he immediately, seamlessly adopts Waymarsh's
defensive posture: “‘Well,’ said Strether, who fell as much as possible into step, 'I guess I don't feel sick now that I've started. But I had pretty well run down before I did start!’” (72). Cynical Waymarsh seeks to supplement Strether's affirmation of the holiday alibi by searching his face for evidence of strain: “Waymarsh raised his melancholy look. 'Ain't you about up to your usual average?' It...seemed somehow a plea for the purest veracity, and it thereby affected our friend as the very voice of...the real tradition” (72). As this moral scrutiny “reduces him to temporary confusion” (73), Waymarsh, his “eyes yet fail[ing] to rest,” drives home the ideology of leisure by making Strether's body testify. Waymarsh remarks, “‘your appearance isn't as bad as I've seen it: it compares favorably with what it was when I last noticed it...You've filled out some since then,’” (73). His body, then, has not passed, and Waymarsh triumphs by appealing to the social rules of leisure. On the defensive, Strether apologizes for his health: “‘I'm afraid....[o]ne does fill out some with all one takes in, and I've taken in...more than I've natural room for. I was dog-tired when I sailed.' It had the oddest sound of cheerfulness,” (73). Through this sophistic reversal, Strether hyperbolically and playfully intensifies leisure ideology by judging the most depressed as the most fortunate, thereby earning for himself a holiday alibi. This transvaluation of values irritates Waymarsh, who childishly echoes Strether by insisting, “‘I was dog-tired when I arrived, and it's this wild hunt for rest that takes all the life out of me.... I haven't had the first sign of the lift that I was led to expect’” (73). By acting as if he has been let down by an expensive patent medicine, Waymarsh sets himself up as a leisure consumer and leisure itself as a commodity that should be delivered as promptly as a car or bolt of cloth. Yet he has too diligently followed the doctor's orders, converting passive recuperation into a fierce “hunt” reigniting the goal-directed
intensity that originally pitched him to the point of a nervous breakdown—making Waymarsh win this battle of iller-than-thou brinksmanship.

As their legitimation compulsion subsides, Strether makes peace. First, he retracts his own need for leisure by admitting that, far from having an excuse to relax, he has a task—that, too healthy for leisure, he is working. When Waymarsh repeats one final time, “‘Then where’s your prostration?’” (74), Strether confesses. Second, he admits the superiority of Waymarsh's exhaustion by treating him as an invalid: “with a kind coercive hand,” Strether forces him to bed, “lowering the lamp and seeing to a sufficiency of blanket,” and making sure that he is “tucked in as a patient in a hospital” (74). Leisure is not as scarce as they supposed, though, as Waymarsh's patient status grants leisure to Strether, who feels like “a nurse who had earned personal rest by having made everything straight” (75). Before they finally rest, though, Strether ensures that Waymarsh will accompany him to Paris. When he insists, “‘I've no use, Strether, for anything down there,’” Strether pleads, “‘You've got some use for me’” (76), insisting that he stay on vacation to help persuade Chad Newsome to abandon his. Turning leisure ideology against itself, Strether manipulates his friend's insistence on the use value of leisure by giving him work.

This scene reveals the dense strata of morality and responsibility pulsing underneath the surface of leisure. Waymarsh—with his need to defend the use value of leisure, and authenticate Strether's holiday alibi—is the perfect example of the presence of work in play and discipline in rest; more specifically, we can regard Waymarsh as the figure of the becoming-work of leisure, whereas Strether presents the figure of the becoming-leisure of work. Waymarsh, anticipating criticism of leisure during late capitalism by theorists like Eco and Baudrillard as well as by leisure scholars like MacCannell and Rojek, regards leisure as a job: a prescribed set of
compulsory activities oriented towards a fixed goal (recovery). As the steps for meeting this goal are elaborated and normalized, the focus of leisure shifts from health, pleasure, or self-discovery to the faithful performance of these steps. In *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer document this shift in their polemic against the culture industry's substitution of commodities for art, pleasure for negation, and repetition for critique. Waymarsh, dutifully performing leisure, grimacing all the while, literalizes their argument that, under modernity, “fun is medicinal bath,” an ends-directed project that infantalizes as it prepares the body for work (112). As Adorno and Horkheimer observe of Sade, Waymarsh desires not pleasure itself, but rather “the busy pursuit of pleasure...[in] the strict regime of the libertine society” (69). Like their vision of Odysseus defeating the Sirens by treating aesthetic pleasure as a deadly distraction, Waymarsh obeys his duty to “look ahead with alert concentration and ignore anything which lies to one side” (26). Pleasure disappears, they explain, under the cover of the process of pleasure because “pleasure has learned to hate itself...it remains mean and mutilated through self-contempt” (24). Waymarsh similarly regards vacation as an “ordeal” to be faced with psychological and physical rigidity (James 69). While Waymarsh “could have floated easily,” he chooses a “willfully uncomfortable” attitude resembling “a person established in a railway coach with a forward inclination” (69, 71)—a defensive position that echoes Adorno and Horkheimer's claim that modern pleasure is “in the grip of self-preservation” (24). Waymarsh hangs on to the bed for dear life, refusing to stray from his Baedeker.

48 The continuity between Waymarsh's position and the contemporary critique of late-capitalist leisure exists, as I argue in the Introduction and the Conclusion of the present work, because the jobification of leisure has its roots in modernity, rather than in postmodernity. The following reading of Adorno and Horkheimer is meant to uncover these modern roots of what is typically viewed in academia as a postmodern condition: the transformation of leisure.
Strether characterizes Waymarsh's rigidity as “the rigor, with which, on the edge of his bed, he hugged his posture of prolonged impermanence” (71). The phrase “prolonged impermanence” provides a helpful elucidation of leisure as temporal self-negation. In leisure, the passage of time takes on an exaggerated significance, but not as a cohesive unfolding in which meaning intrinsically accrues. Instead, leisure opens up space for unaccustomed behavior by providing a raw sense of time as unentailed possibility that simply continues to appear and demands to be spent rather than accumulated. That this raw time demands no particular activity is indicated by Strether's recognition that “Waymarsh could have floated easily had he only consented to float” (71). As “prolonged impermanence,” floating describes the leisure time of recuperation as a passage of time unmarked by responsibility or production (and therefore often narrated in novels as a gap or given barest of summaries) but rather defined only by its eventual end—its negation by wellness or death. Just as the health resorts at this time created elaborate schedules to fill in the objective emptiness of rehabilitation, Waymarsh too defeats the problem of leisure with an intense schedule of tourism. Puritanical, focused Waymarsh, “the personal type...of the American statesman...of an elder day” (70), adopts the position of the tourist (not the patient) to fill his time with visiting galleries, restaurants, and monuments. He therefore claims with good reason that he needs a break from the “wild hunt for rest” (73): his exhausting performance of tourism turns even vacation into another reason for vacation.

Waymarsh finds emotional release only in his periodic shopping sprees. These comically earnest episodes of financial waste, which Strether refers to as “the sacred rage” (84), represent Waymarsh's conscientious leisure style: he treats as a religious duty what other vacationers treat as a lark (an unexpected event, a break in cumulative time) or as a spontaneous desire demanding
instant gratification. Treating conspicuous consumption as a duty, Waymarsh dispatches it quickly, boldly, but with a studied sense of inconsequence, for he dashes into a jewelry shop to buy a mass of goods (“He may buy everything,” Strether warns [83]) that are never identified or seen again. This display of senseless waste is its own excuse. Waymarsh counters Strether's spontaneous, lingering, aesthetic style of leisure with a calculated effort to clock in the greatest amount of holiday luxury in one explosive burst. In the economy of tourism—one must consume frivolously—the effect of freedom is machined by applying the Taylorist principles of industrial production to leisure. Even Strether's heterodox leisure provokes Waymarsh to enact a drama of resistance, another freedom-effect. That he finds freedom in consumption reveals his acceptance of the integration of leisure and capitalism. As Adorno explains in his late essay “Free Time,”

> In the age of truly unparalleled social integration, it is hard to ascertain anything in human beings which is not functionally determined...for the question of free time...even where...people are at least subjectively convinced that they are acting of their own free will, this will itself is shaped by the very same forces which they are seeking to escape... 'free time' is tending towards its opposite, and is becoming a parody of itself. (188)

The workmanlike intensity that Waymarsh brings to his holiday illustrates Adorno's argument that under modernity, free time is becoming work time—though we can also highlight how Strether strives for the opposite: turning work time (converting an unemployed expatriate into a married businessman) into free time (basking in the “immediate and sensible” otherness of Europe). The inversion of free time described by Adorno, as it channels the vacationer back into the temporal, behavioral, and financial constraints of bourgeois capitalism, replicates modern associations with free time (freedom, escape, rejuvenation) even as it renders them impossible.
Miss Gostrey's Vacation Machine: Tourism and the Mechanization of Freedom

While Waymarsh shops at the jewelers', Strether and Miss Gostrey discuss the apparent freedom he finds in the act cynically, but not without an element of awe. When Strether explains, “He has struck for freedom,” Miss Gostrey replies, “What a price to pay! And I was preparing some for him so cheap (83), underscoring the manufactured nature of the holiday freedom as a product processed on the peculiar social factory line that readers know as Miss Gostrey. A self-professed “general guide—to 'Europe', don't you know?” (65), Miss Gostrey has indeed made plans for securing Waymarsh an intense but temporary sense of freedom. She explains, “I wait for people—I put them through. I pick them up—I set them down. I'm a sort of superior 'courier-maid'” (65). As the grammatical parallelism and syllabic balance of the first two sentences suggest, Miss Gostrey ensures the rhythmic regularity of the vacation factory, a conservative force in the sense of the Bakhtinian carnival that mechanistically presents possibilities of novel experiences and emotions, only to close them just as mechanistically. It is therefore through Miss Gostrey we most clearly see at work Peggy McCormack's thesis in The Rule of Money: Gender, Class, and Exchange Economies in the Fiction of Henry James that “all Jamesian fictions operate as exchange economies” in which “economic language [i]s the dominant code to fix the value of characters and ideas” (1). Yet leisure gives occasion to a subtler and displaced form of economically inflected language than, for example, Chad's advertising; though for-profit leisure institutions obviously put prices on leisure experiences and the cultural discourse of leisure restricts relaxation to those who have accomplished a certain degree of work, the novel's focalization through Strether, who does achieve positive leisure experiences, ensures that James's
deployment of the language of money is activated within a broader argument about the relative
moralities of labor and leisure. Accordingly, after ordering Waymarsh an enormous English
breakfast, Miss Gostrey explains that she is “an agent for repatriation” who serves tourists a
surfeit of European signs (the mass commodities of leisure) not only in order to maximize their
expenditures, but also, and more significantly, in order to make leisure less desirable and thereby
return them safely to America without any chance of them harboring a lingering desire for
Europe's alternative moral, aesthetic, and vocational norms (78). She therefore claims, “I bear on
my back the huge load of our national consciousness.... Of what is our nation composed but of
the men and women individually on my shoulders?” (66). Displaying pride in the Taylorist
efficiency of her vacation machine, she boasts, “What I attend to is that they come quickly and
return still more so....I've my way of putting them through. That's my little system.... I send you
back spent. So you stay back,” (78). Waymarsh, with his spending sprees and his “wild hunt to
rest,” epitomizes the tourist sent home physically, emotionally, and financially “spent.”

With this explanation of her system, Miss Gostrey has identified the default modern
tourist experience—a machine designed to extract money from leisure-seekers as efficiently as
possible, thereby echoing the structures of labor during leisure time—that many protagonists of
modern leisure fiction attempt to depart from. That Strether will do so is foreshadowed in the
shopping scene mentioned above. The shops in Chester, which the narrator describes as a “finely
lurid intimation of what one might find” in Europe, “were not as the shops of Woollett, fairly to
make him want things that he shouldn't know what to do with” and “make him want more
wants” (80). While Waymarsh's intense, athletic spending sprees are short-lived and focused,
Strether's shopping invokes empty, free-floating, self-increasing desire. Window-shopping
releases in him the desire to have more desire, which he regards as “the least admissible of laws demoralizing him now” (80). Mere desire for objects could be excusable, even for puritanical Waymarsh, who focuses on “the merely useful” and watches “ironmongers and saddlers,” but corrupted Strether, “shameless in the presence of tailors,” desires beauty even in useful objects such as “stamped letter-paper and smart neckties” (81) and looks forward to shopping in Paris. Waymarsh, meanwhile, underscores the moral and cultural implications of this episode by identifying these sartorial temptations as the “recruiting interests of the Catholic Church” (81), proof that even Protestant regions of Europe are “rank with feudalism” (82). Strether's delight in shopping is, in other words, structured by the Jamesian binary, echoed over and over again in Jamesian scholarship, delineating Americans (and thus with their Protestant work ethic and rigid set of sexual, familial, and religious morals) from Europeans (devoted to beauty and social relations).

Both Waymarsh and Strether manipulate the mechanization of leisure, though the one, forced to vacation, grimly tolerates the “prolonged impermanence” of his holiday, while the other, who actually has an errand to complete in Europe, desires this prolongation. Strether deploys various tactics of delay to this end—both passive (accepting the delays provided by the accidents of travel, such as the failure of the postal service to deliver Mrs. Newsome's letters quickly) and active: dawdling in Liverpool, Chester, and London, fussing with clothing and other props, and excusing his leisurely sampling Parisian life as preliminary research. Just as he delays seeing Waymarsh in Chester, Strether delays seeking out Chad when he reaches Paris. Though “his idea was to begin the business immediately,” he delays by considering his business: as he roams Paris, “he did little else till night but ask himself what he should do if he hadn't fortunately
had so much to do” (109). His alibi for aimless strolling demonstrates that Strether is haunted by Waymarsh's conscience to cover free-floating desire and non-teleological behavior with a work-centered moralism. Nothing if not imaginative, Strether incorporates this job-related moralism into his leisure by insisting that lolling about is, precisely, his job: “What carried him hither and yon was an admirable theory that nothing he could do wouldn't be in some manner related to what he fundamentally had on hand, or would be—should he happen to have a scruple—wasted for it” (109). Leisure is, of course, a form of waste: the undirected, the uncumulative, the remainder, a form of what Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* identify as antiproduction, the non-productive expenditure of capital that is nonetheless crucial to capitalism. Strether, who, as a hired gun, must not succumb to leisure's siren call of waste, demonstrates capitalism's paradoxical need for waste by actualizing his desire for leisure through the rhetoric of work.

Strether's belief that sampling Paris and unleashing his formidable ability to ruminate (second only to James' third-person narrator) will help him evaluate Chad's refusal to return home makes sense only in his personal definition of his task. While Mrs. Newsome attributes this unwillingness to some unknown but morally lax Frenchwoman, Strether is willing to entertain the possibility that the relationship's aesthetic beauty renders it morally justifiable. His boss back in Woollett has no desire for interpretation because she (and the whole town) have already drawn their conclusion, as “there was no doubt Woollett had insisted on his

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49 Interestingly, James' narrator frequently claims (to an astonished reader, no doubt) to use a perfunctory, elliptical style. During Strether's perambulations around Chester, the narrator notes, “All sorts of other pleasant small things—small things that were yet large for him—flowered in the air of the occasion; but the bearing of the occasion itself on matters still remote concerns us too closely to permit us to multiply our illustrations. Two or three, however, in truth, we should perhaps regret to lose” (64). Like Strether, the narrator feels a compulsion towards leisure; his sense of involuntary distraction from the main plot parallels Strether's attraction towards anything unrelated to his task. On another occasion, the narrator notes, “If we should go into all that occupied our friend in the watches of the night we should have to mend our pen; but an instance or two may mark for us the vividness with which he could remember” (156). The narrator is also tempted by distraction, registers guilt for feeling the temptation to become diverted from the task at hand, and yet finds some method to gratify (or at the very least, acknowledge) that temptation.
coarseness” (172). Chad's family regards Strether's mission as a matter of transportation, not hermeneutics. Mrs. Newsome, dangling the carrot of marriage in front of Strether, tests him with this errand, but, as the head of family business, cares less about his judgment than his reliability in physically moving Chad to America. While Strether maximizes his opportunities for ratiocination by regarding his task as moral, aesthetic, and intellectual employment, his task is nothing more than to become another Miss Gostrey: less a wise judge than a “sort of superior 'courier-maid'” charged with repatriation (65). Strether is sent to perform the manual labor of commodity capitalism—the material distribution of capital to achieve maximum profit, with humans filling the roles of both capital (Chad) and wage (Mrs. Newsome). But his intellectual curiosity and aesthetic susceptibility lead him to the abstract labor of morality, of producing, essentially, a new moral system tailor-made for Chad's situation, while at the same time reversing Strether's youthful error of rejecting the cultured but amoral call of beautiful Paris for the upright American dream of career and family, which too slipped out of his hands. Strether's fight to imbue his errand with the desire, openness, aesthetic richness, personal growth, and temporal expansiveness associated with leisure restages and reimagines his initial choice—and this time, his insistence to labor on his own terms echoes the arguments of theorists like Marx, Lee, Wilde, Russell, and Pound, who call to end poverty, unemployment, and alienation by collapsing the modern division between labor and leisure.

**Strether's Productive Conscience**

This disagreement about Strether's task creates many moments of bad conscience. He excuses his desire for leisure by insisting that his history of hard work paid in advance for fun:
There were moments when he himself felt shy of professing the full sweetness of the
taste of leisure... The smallest things so arrested and amused him that he repeatedly
apologized – brought up afresh in explanation his plea of a previous grind. He was aware
at the same time that his grind had been nothing as to Waymarsh's, and he repeatedly
confessed that, to cover his frivolity, he was doing his best for his previous virtue. (80)

He also argues that appreciating Paris' charm counts as research, yet in doing so he reenacts,
rather than analyzes, Chad's anti-Woollettian behavior, crossing the line beyond participant-
observation by going native and consorting with the enemy (both Paris in general and Chad's
paramour in particular).

It is, for example, to support his desire for leisure that Strether exercises his conscience
and verbal acuity. Combined, they are a productive engine that reanimates and intensifies
moments of leisure by creating endless reinterpretations of them—not by abandoning his
conscience, but by deploying it to linger over the sweetness of his illicit behavior by confessing
his guilt. Strether's first masterful performance of this conscience-leisure complex occurs when
he summarizes his first visit to Chad's Paris apartment. Chad, having escaped Strether by taking
a vacation-within-a-vacation to the South of France, leaves a friend to win Strether for Chad's
side. Because the plan succeeds, Strether prepares a “confession” of being “captured” by the
enemy (129). How has Strether been so shamefully captured? The narrator reveals, “his
confession was that he had—it would come out properly just there if Waymarsh would only take
it properly—agreed to breakfast out, at twelve literally, the next day” (130). “Twelve literally”
measures the decadent corruption of brunch—the leisurely lack of haste to begin the day—but
the confession pokes out absurdly from the text; the incongruous pairing of formal syntax and
sober diction with the trivial sin deflates the moral weight of the condemnation. Significantly,
this weight radiates from Strether himself. He has not succumbed to American morality but
learned to manipulate conscience as a rhetorical and narrative form organizing his protracted meditations and conversations to produce the leisure-effects of pleasure, free time, and free will.

Strether's confession thus takes the form of luscious details and qualifications. Even reflections on his bad conscience—what provoked it, at what time, according to whose scruples—stretch a simple anecdote into a protracted, celebratory and self-condemnatory peroration. This paradoxical coupling of celebration and condemnation is a powerful rhetorical tool that turns pleasure into work (he moralizes his leisure) and work into pleasure (he enjoys his confession). As Strether elaborates for the duration of the soup course on his sadness at having left Waymarsh behind, both men harvest pleasure: “Waymarsh looked gravely ardent... at this array of scruples; Strether hadn't yet got quite used to being so unprepared for the consequences of the impression he produced” (129). His “ardent” response to Strether's passionate display confirms that American morality can, in a foreign environment, serve as a basis for pleasure. He confidently continues: “'I've all sorts of things to tell you!'—and he put it in a way that was a virtual hint to Waymarsh to help him to enjoy the telling” (129). Just as he magnifies his pleasure by delaying his walk with Miss Gostrey, Strether declines to resume the story until the next course arrives, another round of wine is drunk and passing strangers are greeted. Luxuriating in these scenic, gustatory, and rhetorical amenities, he reflects, “Everything was there that he wanted, everything that could make the moment an occasion” (129). His magnification of the brunch invitation gives it the status of an event, enriching it and his recollection of it with complexity and intensity.

Even Waymarsh's moral resistance begins to contribute to Strether's drama and pleasure:

[Strether] was affected after a minute, face to face with his actual comrade, by the impulse to overcolor. There had already been things in respect to which he knew himself
tempted by this perversity. If Waymarsh thought them bad he should at least have his reason for his discomfort; so Strether showed them as worse. (130)

Strether's response to Waymarsh intensifies his enjoyment of the scene by making shame an event—which encourages Strether's emotional investment. His “impulse to overcolor” is treated as perverse, capitalizing on his autonomic bodily responses as another field for temptation. In short, Strether eagerly incorporates Waymarsh's disapproval as the constitutive negation that renders his immorality an affirmable positivity. This immorality is immediately given a specific name: Strether, who knocks at Chad's door despite being aware of his absence, claims he acted from “an uncontrollable, a really, if one would, depraved curiosity” (130). His ability to produce a powerful emotion out of nothing—here, out of Chad's absence—may parallel Wells' famous parody of James' style,50 but what is significant from the standpoint of leisure is that making something of nothing is an apt definition of a holiday: empty time is hollowed out, then filled.

 Appropriately, when Strether enters Chad's apartment, he indulges in pure idleness, the raw temporal atom from which leisure emerges and which Strether distinguishes from waiting:

though [Chad's] return begins to be looked for it can't be for some days. I might, you see, perfectly have waited a week; might have beaten a retreat as soon as I got this essential knowledge. But I beat no retreat; I did the opposite; I stayed, I dawdled, I trifled; above all I looked round. I saw, in fine, and—I don't know what to call it—I sniffed. It's a detail, but it's as if there were something—something very good—to sniff. (130-1)

Strether here associates knowledge with purposive activity and perception with non-purposive activity. His work is to “get” knowledge, intelligence to be sent across the ocean to his employer and used to ensure Chad's return to Woollett. Time that cannot be used for the campaign becomes

50 Wells claims that Jamesian fiction “is like a church lit but without a congregation to distract you, with every light and line focused on the high altar. And on the altar, very reverently placed, intensely there, is a dead kitten, an egg-shell, a bit of string” (qtd. in Edel and Ray 248).
“waiting,” a different sort of empty time than leisure because waiting is centered around a finite telos and considered utterly lost (permanently empty) because it, by definition, cannot be filled with purposive activity. Strether frees the useless time of waiting for leisure—no doubt a large part of his “double consciousness.” Temporally, Strether is a double agent, working for Mrs. Newsome on one temporal plane and having fun on another. He admits, “I might have waited a week...[but] I stayed, I dawdled, I trifled.” This dawdling consists of pleasurable perception untethered to intelligence gathering: he smells in search of a smell though he cannot even verify the existence of anything to smell. Strether substitutes leisure for waiting by perceiving in advance of anything to perceive—activity without purpose, perception without object—escaping the material logic of labor and the grammatical logic of commodity capitalism through intransitivity, which is nicely demonstrated by Strether's early interjection to Miss Gostrey, “I never made a good thing!” (101) and by his refusal to identify the “little nameless object” produced by the Newsomes (100).

In Chad's apartment, he sets up an important work-leisure pattern: Strether, reconnecting with the younger self who promised (in vain) that his life would replicate Continental aesthetic culture, finds in his errand a Deleuzo-Guattarian “cramped space” from which he can escape. His perceptions and reflections provide lines of flight, accompanied by feelings of rest, freedom, and self-affirmation. Because his errand requires accruing bits of objective knowledge, the free play of his perceptive, inductive, and moral faculties, irrespective of any particular goal, serves as his
access-point for leisure (and overcomes the alienation of his mental powers). On the other side of the table, Waymarsh demands a direct object: “Do you mean a smell? What of?” (131). A cascade failure of knowledge results as Strether responds to his interrogation with a simple refrain: “I don't know” (ibid). While Strether welcomes the emptiness at the core of leisure, Waymarsh wants Strether to mean. “Then what the devil do you know?” he demands, only to be met with joyous denial: “Well,’ said Strether almost gaily, 'I guess I don't know anything!’” (ibid). Not knowing, which Strether sees not as a void but as an “enlarging...air of amplitude” (ibid), plays a central role in his inversion of duty into leisure. But so does his decadent brunch. Shopping, meeting artists, attending parties, frequenting restaurants, flirting with beautiful women: these leisure activities are available to tourists like Waymarsh and the Pococks (the round of ambassadors sent to supplement Strether), but while they approach leisure as a set of slightly naughty activities they are supposed to do, Strether experiences them as freeing because he indulges in them specifically to avoid his task, and, more significantly, 

51 In Henry James: History, Narrative, Fiction, Roslyn Jolly categorizes Strether's penchant for mental gymnastics as an example of William James's philosophical methodology of “finding names,” which questions the value of specifically moral terms by exploring how they “work” in a specific situation to ensure (or not) justice and human happiness. Just as William James argues that in moral philosophy, “you must bring out of each word its practical cash-value, set it at work...It appears less as a solution, then, than as a program for more work” (qtd. 132), so too, Jolly asserts, does Strether respond to pieces of new information about Chad's situation as “a program for more work.” Jolly here defines cogitation as a form of work, perhaps because he is so skillful at thinking—yet Strether's penchant for rigorous thinking is not a legitimate facet of his errand, but instead a method for him to avoid work. Brought to Paris to bring Chad back to America, Strether chooses instead to defer this work and instead indulge in his favorite leisure activities, the foremost of which is reflection.

Jolly's rather loose use of the term “work,” meant perhaps to highlight the care and rigor that structure Strether's mental processes, obscures the degree to which reflection (including moral philosophizing) serves as playful, pleasurable, open-ended, and largely non-entrepreneurial leisure activity in the novel. This oversight certainly underserves Jolly's fascinating claim that “Europe', in Miss Gostrey's hands, becomes a playground for an endless game of analysis and interpretation...[a kind of ]impressionistic play which disrupts received ideas and...topples the distinction between business and pleasure on which his business to Europe has been predicated” (129). I argue a similar point in Chapter Two of the present work (where I present modernists as attempting to disrupt or collapse the capitalist separation of work and leisure), but Jolly quickly redirects this momentary attention on what I call leisure to question of fiction's relationship to morality, where play is seen as a potentially dangerous activity that writers and texts indulge in. By arguing that the novel offers “a possible harsher judgment of Strether's activity, both for its frivolity and for its possible issue in error” and ends in “fail [ure] to complete his mission at all” (137, 138), Jolly, I believe, too quickly conflates play and morality and therefore comes close to but misses an opportunity to investigate the role leisure plays in The Ambassadors.
because he does not reject the possibility that Chad's protracted European holiday, which the other Americans dismiss as corrupt and excessive, has permanently improved Chad's manners, appearance, and judgment—because Strether believes in the morality of leisure.

Though Strether's failure to be an efficient private investigator produces leisure, Waymarsh himself insists to Strether, “Quit this....Quit the whole job.... You're being used for a thing you ain't fit for. People don't take a fine-tooth comb to groom a horse” (133-4). To Waymarsh, the brutally simple, insultingly physical task of escorting Chad home does not adequately engage or necessitate Strether's sensitive perceptions and complex cogitations—another example of the recurring concern for the right kind of labor in texts that are ostensibly about leisure. More damning, Waymarsh believes Strether's moral stand—reserving his right to judge the ethics of Chad's situation—is already compromised by Mrs. Newsome's bribe of marriage. He accuses, “‘You're afraid of yourself being squared. But you're a humbug...all the same” (135). While Strether's construction of an elaborate moral superstructure to prove his romantic and pecuniary disinterestedness may not cover up a wish to marry her at all costs, it does cover up Strether's deliberate refusal to ignore the signs that Chad and Madame de Vionnet's romance has been consummated. Perceptively, Waymarsh recognizes that Strether’s deliberate neglect of the sexual aspect of Chad and Madame de Vionnet’s romance provides Strether a noble or morally justifiable reason to defer the delivery of Mrs. Newsome’s ultimatum to Chad—thereby allowing Strether to indulge in his own personal desire for leisure.

Strether, who arrives with an interpretation of Chad's situation—confidence in the immorality of Madame de Vionnet—that is entirely adequate for his task, chooses instead to carve out an empty field: he creates a vacuum of knowledge to be patiently filled in as he
maximizes his time abroad. Justifying it as a noble belief in the continued possibility of courtly love in modernity, Strether creates a profound mystery out of what had begun as statement of fact. As he entertains every romantic permutation possible except for the one that turns out to be correct, Chad and Madame de Vionnet's physical affair becomes the absent center that makes possible the endless production of sexual identities for Chad that swirl in Strether's mind.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Newsome desires to control Chad's sexuality to insure the family business; he must return to reproduce the conditions of the family's existence by marrying a suitable bride (instead of indulging in non-reproductive affairs) and heading the family business. By contrast, Strether's interest in Chad's sexuality involves the need to document, elaborate, and diagnose—to create a fertile ground for discourse. These approaches dramatize the historical shift Foucault theorizes in *A History of Sexuality*:

> the first [classical] phase corresponded to the need to form a 'labor force' (hence to avoid any useless 'expenditure'...so that all forces were reduced to labor capacity alone) and to ensure its reproduction (conjugality, the regulated fabrication of children). The second phase corresponded to that epoch of *Spätkapitalismus* in which the exploitation of wage labor relies instead on a multiple channeling into the controlled circuits of the economy... [W]hat is involved is the production of sexuality...we must shift our analysis away from the problem of 'labor capacity' and doubtless abandon the diffuse energetics that underlies the theme of a sexuality repressed for economic reasons. (114)

While the Newsomes do have a strong motive for circumscribing Chad's sexuality—indeed, we can attribute to it the other absent center: the unnamed commodity they produce—Strether's “repressive hypothesis” (that Chad and Madame de Vionnet are not having sex) reproduces the techniques of the late Victorian sexologist and taps into the flows of power and pleasure within the discourse of sexuality. His investigation of Chad's sexual conduct constitutes a power play; it works not by finding truth but by justifying Strether's immersion into leisure while “at work.”
Courting the “perpetual spirals of power and pleasure” (45) created by the discursive elaboration of sexuality, Strether produces the leisure that his labor as a hired gun appears to forestall.

**Strether Inside the Painting: Aesthetics as Leisure**

Strether’s techniques of producing leisure and forestalling work, at first couched as a matter of personal freedom, are increasingly associated with aesthetics; he chooses to devote the freedom of his leisure to aesthetic contemplation, or in other words, to “spend” the “coins” of free time by appreciating beauty. *The Ambassadors’* famous description of Paris as a bright jewel—one that invites unending visual contemplation as Strether, refusing “to renounce all amusement” merely because of his errand, glimpses depth in the jewel, which metamorphoses into mere glittering surface and back again (118)—provides a powerful indication that Strether perceives beauty by conflating commodities with spaces and exchange value with visual interest. Yet his appreciation of Miss Gostrey's jewelry as they attend dinner in London has already suggested that such conflations engineer or enable Strether's reevaluation of American morality:

> It would have been absurd of him to trace into ramifications the effect of the ribbon from which Miss Gostrey's trinket depended, had he not...been so given over to uncontrolled perceptions. What was it but an uncontrolled perception that his friend's velvet band somehow added...to the value of every other item...? What, certainly, had a man conscious of a man's work in the world to do with velvet bands?... yet he caught himself in the act—frivolous, no doubt, idiotic, and above all unexpected—of liking it. (90)

Clothing is thus for Strether an early indication of his love of formal beauty: in London, he learns the technique of aesthetic appreciation that he will later use in the galleries and salons of Paris by relating the parts (the necklace) to the whole (Miss Gostrey) as one would balance color, shape, and line in a painting—even if this balance is at the same time the result of Miss Gostrey's skill in consuming well (buying “trinkets”) and displaying her commodities advantageously. Already,
Strether has unexpectedly deployed his trained commercial eye for value in the service of “uncontrolled perceptions” that yield unmasculine, spontaneous pleasure. His exercise in aesthetic balance is not a classically trained academicism, but rather a hedonistic enjoyment of the senses: his consciousness has been let loose by the uniqueness of the event (for when “he had been to the theatre, even to the opera....with Mrs. Newsome...there had been no little confronted dinner, no pink lights, no whiff of vague sweetness, as a preliminary” (89)). This uniqueness is not, as I discussed earlier in relation to the negligible “truth value” of leisure, compromised by Strether's later awareness that the play was vulgar and second-rate. This moment of romantic aesthetic appreciation—a true moment of leisure—unleashes in the following paragraphs a powerful critique of Mrs. Newsome as a poor companion in comparison to the warm, more conventionally feminine hospitality of Miss Gostrey (and her hospitably low-necked dress), which displays how Strether's moments of aesthetic appreciation mute, neutralize, or even overturn the moral system Strether had, while in Woollett, previously agreed with and abided by. Accordingly, he strenuously resists this aesthetic effect of amorality by invoking the gender-based productivity standards: he asks himself why “a man conscious of a man's work in the world” should concern himself with a mere bauble. He tries to cover the terrain of consciousness with work, wresting it from his moment of aesthetic appreciation—which is a leisure activity in the sense that it is undirected, “uncontrolled,” unexpected, prolonged, and enjoyable, and in the sense that it provides an escape into an alternative value system.

This escape is always temporary; leisure, in the sense that it yields rest, never escapes the obstacle that defines it at both ends: work. Strether constantly learns this lesson; when he retreats into Notre Dame, only there can he feel “what he couldn't elsewhere, that he was a plain tired
man taking the holiday he had earned” (272). By needing a break from evaluating the moral
value of Chad's situation, Strether must acknowledge that his strategy of rendering his errand
acceptable to himself—of injecting into his work his favorite leisure activity, open-ended
cogitation—has rebounded back on himself, for he realizes it is now “from himself he was
trying to escape” (ibid). Just as he escapes the guilty weight of his unproductive personal history
in America by journeying to Paris, so too does he escape the ambivalence of his work-leisure
balance in Paris by retreating into Notre Dame. Yet his errand follows him into the church:
Strether soon realizes that an attractive, mysterious figure praying in a dark corner is none other
than Madame de Vionnet. Leisure spaces, like Strether's box at the opera, like Gloriani's garden
“in the heart of the Faubourg Saint-Germain” (198), and like the pavilion set inside Gloriani's
garden, are often nested—or, as suggested by Strether's pastoral flight to the French countryside,
which he feels leads him physically inside a Lambinet painting—framed by work spaces or by
other, failed or exhausted leisure spaces.

This succession of leisure spaces, in which leisure emerges as a differential effect of
receding into yet another space promising the possibility of leisure, continues until Strether
reaches the novel's final leisure space (his disastrous outing into the French countryside).
Strether, though painfully cognizant of the social construction of meaning through the refraction

52 While I identify this open-endedness as a property of Jamesian leisure (particularly because all Jamesian heroes
and heroines must eventually “close” their moral-mental adventuring, that is, return from their holiday, in order
to make a pivotal ethical choice), John Carlos Rowe, in his ground-breaking The Other Henry James, interprets
the open-endedness of Stretherian thought as a constitutive element of James’ “literary pragmatism,” which is
“distinguished by a consistent openness to ideas—one might say to an understanding of thinking itself as an open
system” (1). While Rowe's contextualization of open-endedness within a set of classic scholarly questions about
James's philosophical alliances certainly underscores the great significance James assigned to the linguistic
structures of interiority, my own focus on leisure is meant to illuminate James's awareness of the constitutive
roles played by the semiotic, cultural, and institutional structures of modernity in the construction and
representation of “open-ended” mental processes.
thoughts, emotions, and judgments into the minds of others, delays his recognition of the refractive process of leisure by differentiating his leisure practices from those offered by modern, commercial tourism. He compares, for example, the party at Gloriani's with the standard tourist fare first offered to him by Chad. Strether, who “could have wished...that Chad were less of a mere cicerone,” realizes that the young man is himself using the leisure institutions of modern Paris to escape his problems, or in Strether's words, “taking refuge from the realities of their intercourse in profusely dispensing...*panem et circensu*s” (197). Interpreting Chad's tour of Paris as a novel form of the ancient Roman bribe for public peace, Strether suspects that Chad exposes him to the pleasures of modern commercialized leisure, in which he “feel[s] rather smothered in flowers,” in order to dull Strether's powers of moral judgment. Yet at the same time, Strether tries to shed any “odious ascetic suspicion of any form of beauty,” for he believes that asceticism will keep him from “reach[ing] the truth of anything” (ibid). The success of Strether's mission, in other words, depends on his ability to shed his suspicion that recognizing beauty will necessarily compromise his judgment, which Strether achieves by making beauty the primary criterion of his moral judgment—by regarding the beautiful as, necessarily, the moral. While many critics have addressed the interdependence of morality and aesthetics in James's oeuvre, I argue that the leisure in *The Ambassadors* is a significant mediating figure through which Strether solves the problem of pleasure that threatens his attempt to reconcile ethics and aesthetics. As Strether learns how to resist the seductive (but repetitive and blandly excessive) beauty of modern leisure

53 In *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, Gilles Deleuze gives a pithy and accurate portrait of such refraction when he characterizes James's style as follows: “That which I am talking of and which you are thinking of too, do you agree to tell him about it, providing we know what can be expected from her in relation to it and we can also agree on which is he and which is she?” (qtd. in Badiou 64).

institutions, he begins to forge a personal leisure experience of Paris, which will allow him to understand Chad's experience without mechanistically repeating it (one might say, mass reproducing it) or consuming it as a valuable aesthetic object.

Strether achieves his own type of leisure—one that both recapitulates and produces his ethical system of interpersonal interaction—in two ways: first, by rejecting capitalist forms of modern leisure, and second, by his famous unwillingness to “get” anything out of the experience (which would thereby remove his leisure from the ethereal realm of thought and place it in the vulgar category of capitalistically “cashing in” on experience). Strether's first strategy is illuminated differentially by comparing himself with other tourists, most significantly, with Waymarsh (as we have already seen), and with the Pococks, the second round of ambassadors, whose willingness to accept modern leisure goes hand in hand with their unwillingness to reconsider their villainization of Madame de Vionnet. Comparing himself with Waymarsh, Strether notes how “unmistakably he [Waymarsh] had put on flesh” and how his friend is sorry that Strether's “frivolity had thus to be recorded” by the coming Pococks, whereas Strether himself “felt his own holiday so successfully large and free that he was full of allowances and charities in respect to those cabined and confined” (311). Waymarsh, who was earlier a resolute enemy of vacation, has embraced it with open arms and becomes the perfect vacationer in that he regains his physical and psychological health yet believes that the system for arriving at such health—frivolity—should be left in Paris, kept a secret from Strether's friends back in America. Though Strether recognizes that his own “emancipation [is] so purely comparative that it was like the advance of the door-mat on the scraper” (311), even such a small margin distances the two friends so much that they slacken their visits to each other. As a result, Strether “had in truth
at no moment of his stay been so free to go and come,” an “independence” that “blurred everything but the near...[making] a vast warm fragrant medium in which the elements floated together on the best of terms, in which rewards were immediate and reckonings postponed” (312). But Strether's comparative independence from Waymarsh provides a prelude for the bigger challenge to come: maintaining his leisure despite the looming arrival of the Pococks, which he anticipates will result in being subject to the “place of discipline” (that is, the Pococks' hotel drawing room) and thence “recommitted to Woollett as juvenile offenders are committed to reformatories” (314). What is the punishment he expects? Strether's identification of the coming punishment as “a sharp rupture with the actual...represented with supreme vividness by Madame de Vionnet” (ibid) recalls the “double consciousness” that characterized Strether's landing in Europe. Having temporarily bridged the gap between the immediate and the sensible (Strether's first definition of leisure) and phenomenological alienation from that here and now (labor) by injecting his leisurely habits of thought into the errand, Strether must now face this dilemma anew.

Until the Pococks' arrival, Miss Barrace, Little Bilham, and Miss Gostrey underline the significance of Strether's balance—his ability to reconcile leisure and labor, his ability to feel, on the one hand, that he is a good worker despite refusing to alienate his powers of judgement, and on the other, that he enjoys the relaxation, freedom, and aesthetic jouissance associated with leisure despite his increasing ambivalence to modern leisure institutions—by calling him wonderful, beautiful, and other aesthetically charged terms. The Pococks, on the other hand, with their imperialistic attitude towards Europe (consider Sarah's chilling claim, “[Y]ou know I've been to Paris. I know Paris” (336)), despatch both Mrs. Newsome's errand and the rounds of
leisure activity expected of visiting Americans with the same brutal efficiency. Being a good tourist means knowing which sights to see, and yet almost immediately after the Pococks arrive, Strether, certain that Chad is the real sight to see, “wonder[s] if they were really worthy of it, took it in and did it justice,” just as they would “some light pleasant perfect work of art” (327). If they could realize what they should truly “tour,” only then could they “might, as it were, have embraced and begun to work together” (327)—suggesting that, leaving aside the question of leisure's inherent worth for a moment, that any successful laboring process depends on agreeing on definitions of leisure, as well as definitions of value. Strether quickly learns that the Pococks do not share his definition of leisure; driving Jim Pocock from the train station to the hotel, Strether recoils when the former answers his tentative inquiries about his opinion on Chad's transformation by asking “what's new” at the Varieties, his inquiry charged with “a play of innuendo as vague as a nursery-rhyme, yet as aggressive as an elbow in his side” (333). Pocock's narrow focus on the erotic sites of Paris make him seem “extravagantly common” to Strether, who thinks, “If they were all going to see nothing!” (334). The next day, Sarah Pocock also makes her leisure preferences quite clear; when Madame de Vionnet offers to show Sarah the sights of Paris, Sarah responds that she already knows Paris, and when Madame de Vionnet doggedly follows up, “The great thing, Mr Strether will show you...is just to let one's self go,” Sarah remains silent (338-9). Letting oneself go, is, perhaps, the Ur-slogan of leisure companies today, but even in 1903, Strether and Madame de Vionnet's use of the phrase was meant to carry a more radical charge, so that Sarah's mode of enjoying Paris—buying the latest French fashions, flirting with Waymarsh, going to the flower market and the theatre—disappoints Strether, who admits, “Oh, even I've not let myself go far” (338). Referring to such leisure as “crowded empty
expensive day[s]” (367), Strether cannot help but respond to Sarah's announcement that Waymarsh is taking her to the circus by laughing “almost to extravagance” and calling all of those in the room “abysmal” “products” of Woollett and Milrose (368). Strether still strives to be civil with them and even admits to Miss Gostrey, “They're at least happy” (369), but he shrewdly analyzes Sarah and Waymarsh's flirtation as “a supreme innocence,” “the expensive kind” of “romance” produced by “the Parisian place, the feverish hour, the putting before her of a hundred francs' worth of food and drink, which they'll scarcely touch” (370). Sexual desire is superseded by mere superabundance, an explosive discharge of excess money that creates a spectacle of exchange value rather than erotic intimacy. Like contemporary essays on luxurious cruise ships by Frank Conroy, David Foster Wallace, and Anthony Bourdain, the Pococks’ activities epitomize capitalism (rather than provide the means to escape it). Bataillian spectacles of excess succeed in routing desire through exchange value, investing even the most ridiculous spectacles—imagine the imperious, pious Sarah at a circus; imagine the saturnine Waymarsh wearing a straw boater, his arms full of flowers—with desire through the reflected glory of exchange. The global circulation of value, the masses of paper money and gold being exchanged for goods and services, usually kept to a level of abstraction in American experience by the Protestant necessity to reinvest rather than “waste” money, becomes for the Pococks in Paris a sensuous experience and impressive spectacle. The Pococks, in other words, are tourists of their own wealth, using their leisure as a way to reimagine capitalism—but not, as Strether does, to reconfigure his own labor and own consciousness.

These reconfigured relationships between leisure and capitalism (both Strether's model and the Pococks' model) places Henry James squarely in the group of “new avant-gardes look
[ing] to the process of global modernization...for tropes” described by Peter Nicholls in *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (79). Nicholls continues to explain this “mystique of capital:”

It was not merely the spectacular advances in the technology of communications and transportation which produces new fantasies of mobility and dynamism, but a different sense of the economy itself as an awesome driving force.... [S]tructures of capital flow and circulation which suddenly seemed homologous with the drives of the newly liberated imagination... This helps to explain why so many fantasies of power and mobility during the period are emblematized by the adventures of consumerism, since to purchase is, in these terms, to 'liberate' oneself into the cycle of capital's reproduction. The space of modernity thus provides the occasion for a peculiar *disembodiment*, with the spectacle of endless consumer desire abolishing the 'merely human' limits of the ailing body in *Against Nature*. (79-80)

Nicholls, of course, specifically speaks of movements like Futurism and decadent aestheticism, but what is Waymarsh except an “ailing body” finding a higher health in the consumer's paradise of leisured Paris? Yet I want to suggest that James in *The Ambassadors*, unlike Nicholls' futurists, specifically thematizes and problematizes this solution of enervation by consumerism. Leisure, through its distance from the rhythms of everyday life under commodity capitalism, with its close intertwining of production and morality, offers a moment of reflection in which one may question one's relation to capitalism and to modern social norms; Strether's decision to take this moment to question his labor and reinvent his consciousness is one possibility offered by leisure—but another possibility leisure provides is this return to capital, made glamorous and aesthetically pleasing, the choice by Waymarsh and the Pococks. Nicholls' provocative claim that modernism's adaptation of the global circulation of capitalism is disembodied is borne out in this novel by the curiously bodiless romance between Waymarsh and Sarah, but this claim also seems anticipated the novel's central (and perhaps *only*) plot-driven question: Are Chad and Madame de Vionnet having sex?
Strether is famously prudish; after shedding so many American prejudices and moral qualms, Strether, in the culminating “river” scene towards the end of the book, must finally face his remaining squeamishness and abandon the fiction of courtly love he has constructed for the couple. His first deliberate attempt to escape his duties spatially, when he visits Notre Dame for a moment of peace, spiritualizes the affair as he regards Madame de Vionnet in the light of a Victor Hugo heroine or a pious Mary figure who “finishes” the composed work of art that is the church, but this second deliberate attempt, when he takes a vacation from his vacation by taking a train down to a pastoral village, gives all-too-solid “body” to the affair, despite (or perhaps because of) Strether's repeated urge to aestheticize the scene by regarding it as a Lambinet painting he desired but failed to acquire long ago. Strether's trip is both spontaneous and planned, both free and predetermined: he chooses the station “almost at random” and follows the “impulse” to visit rural France, but he does so “as securely as if to keep an appointment” and in order to experience what he has already seen and conceived of: “that French ruralism, with its cool special green, into which he had hitherto looked only through the little oblong window of a picture-frame” (451, 452). Having already seen French countryside through art, books, and his own active imagination, Strether risks rendering the quaint little village a mere simulacrum, yet when he physically enters the Lambinet painting as the “oblong gilt frame disposed its enclosing lines” (453), Strether experiences it as animated and open-ended because the predetermined elements of the pictures slowly come together in time to disclose a truth that he has always known but repressed.

The moral dilemma that confronts him—where he must face that aesthetic perfection, in the form of Chad and Madame de Vionnet's final appearance, underdressed, intimate and
beautiful, into the picture, with “not a breath...that wasn't somehow a syllable of the text” (458) —recalls Sigi Jottkandt's reading of The Portrait of a Lady in Acting Beautifully: Henry James and the Ethical Aesthetic, in which Isabel's decision at the end (whether or not to return to Osmond) is a “forced choice” where she merely reaffirms the decision she has already made (to trust in free causality and personal choice). The Ambassadors' river scene, I argue, also, like Jottkandt argues for Portrait, forces Strether to reaffirm, with full knowledge, his belief in the beauty, both moral and aesthetic, of Chad and Madame de Vionnet's affair. The scene, even though Strether “was freely walking around in” the painting (453), does not yield for Strether a total freedom; the formal composition of the painting predetermines or even requires the arrival of the lovers—so that Strether, who devotes much of his leisure to beauty, must face that his love of beautiful form conflicts with his need for freedom, and that, as always with leisure, this open-endedness must come to an end, at which time he must act.

Although the force of the scene comes from the sheer fact of sexual intercourse, what Strether must affirm is not, precisely, Madame de Vionnet's essential chastity, but rather Chad's transformation—its possibility, its beauty, and its value. At the beginning of the novel, when Strether (while enjoying a different piece of art, a play rather than a portrait) first sees Chad for the first time in years, Strether is in awe that such a transformation could happen at all. Though Strether decides that “he must approach Chad...deal with him, master him” (140), in this scene it is Chad who approaches and masters Strether in such a way that Strether's “perception of the young man's identity...had been quite one of the sensations that count in life” because it “was a phenomenon of change so complete” that even his incomparable imagination had not been ready (154). When Strether wonders, “what could be more remarkable than this sharp rupture of
identity?” (ibid), he faces the philosophical task Deleuze says is foremost for Spinoza and Nietzsche—to face the problem that “we do not even know what a body can do, we talk about consciousness and spirit and chatter on about it all, but we do not know what a body is capable of, what forces belong to it or what they are preparing for” (Nietzsche and Philosophy 36).

Strether's affirmation of Chad's change is, in other words, Strether's growing belief that humans, lives, and bodies can do other things, inhabit other narratives, than the ones that have ruled his own life thus far. Leisure provides one opportunity for Strether to affirm the existence of other ways of being or of other possible worlds, just as modernism itself, Astradur Eysteinsson argues, acts as “a revolt against the traditional relation of the subject to the outside world” (28) and provides a moment of “irruption [that] points toward the opening up of critical space and a liberation from the repressive forces of rationality” (238). Leisure's provocation to interrogate this Spinozan provocation that we do not know yet what a body is capable up can, of course, be answered in multiple ways, from the proof Chad provides that human transformation is possible, one that allows Chad, simply, to “know how to live” (427), to the Pococks' return to capital (as if saying, “We do not know yet of what our money is capable”), and finally, to Strether's own experiment: Can a body become a part of art?

Strether, by entering the painting, strikes back against his earlier expression of compunction that he has not let himself go enough. The modern leisure axiom—that one must let oneself go—contains two very different possibilities: first, to let one's inhibitions go, thereby maximize pleasure and minimizing the number of unfulfilled desires; and second, going outside of oneself in an act of ecstasy (ekstasis, of standing beside or above oneself), to be able to reflect upon oneself or reimagine being-in-the-world. In The Ambassadors, the first option is provided
by modern leisure institutions like the theatre, circus, and ateliers, while the second involves embracing beauty, cultivating a different state of consciousness, or (ideally) both at the same time. While it is crucial to recognize that the first option does successfully (though temporarily) create the leisure-effects of rest, freedom, romance, rejuvenation, and self-discovery, the novel’s climax features Strether actualizing this second method. Before this climax, he realizes that Chad and Madame de Vionnet make a “a queer concrete mystery” from the “youth of his own that he had long ago missed” (436), but in the climax, the concreteness becomes more literally embodied as Strether jumps into the painting and then discerns the two figures in the boat—forcing him to recognize that such change does not always circumvent some of the more pleasurable uses to which we already know a body can be put. Strether is offended both at himself and at the couple: at himself because his magnificent effort to repress the nature of the couple's erotic attachment seems to mock or even vilify his mental efforts; and at the couple because their sex meant that Strether “was mixed up in the typical tale of Paris” rather than the only observer of a singular, novel miracle of courtly love (472). Reflecting on this bitter truth, Strether mourns, “Verily, verily, his labor had been lost” (468).

Yet it is precisely Strether's loss of labor that renders his trip to Europe a miracle of leisure—and not merely because Strether faces a timeless portrait of pastoral leisure, a romance taking place outside of the Pocockian drama of capitalist reproduction of relations of production. Crucially, Strether's entrance into the painting pushes readers past what we know of human relations to art, defeating the observer model of aesthetics that keeps the human outside of art, and therefore making good leisure's (and modernism's) promise to provide space and time for rethinking one's position in the world. And when the scene prompts Strether into his final
indulgence in his favorite leisure pastime of meditation, he must affirm the reality of leisure: that leisure is by definition “labor lost,” even if he plays at work. Chad's attachment is not so virtuous as to help him resist the “kickable surface” of the enormous “bribe” Mrs. Newsome offers Chad (506). Though Chad proves bribable, Strether is not. Of course, he has had fun; when Chad says he is delighted to have provided Strether a chance to have “fun,” Strether says that he has had in Paris “enough [fun] to last me for the rest of my days” (294). But Strether's ultimate embrace of leisure comes when he accepts that his labor has been lost and that his actions must hold value for him apart from any consequences (any product) they might have entailed or produced. When he rejects Miss Gostrey's offer to stay in Europe with him at her side, he explains, “That, you see, is my only logic. Not, out of the whole affair, to have got anything for myself” (512). Though Chad's transformation in the leisure paradise of Paris ends by Chad's return as a better, more charismatic businessman, Strether chooses to keep his own leisure transformation separate from the domain of capitalist production and payment, and in doing so, he not only affirms the moral value of leisure, but also accepts the limitations of the holiday as a potentially pathbreaking experience that, nonetheless, must at some time end.
Chapter 4
The Hospitality Machine: The American Hotel Model and the Creation of a British Discourse, 1790-1900

“Charlie Chaplin—perversely, I thought—chose these sybaritic surroundings to tell me of his abiding interest in prisons.”
Willi Frischauer on the Grand Hotel, Vienna

To speak of a hotel is to speak of the known—or so, at least, is the temptation, particularly within the domain of literary critical work on modernism, where the familiar word “hotel” calls forth none of the historical dissonance evoked by naming quainter-sounding modern technologies like the omnibus, telegraph, pneumatic tire, or cinematograph. The routine of a contemporary hotel-guest is so well-known and, apparently, timeless: the elation upon entering a cool, clean lobby after hours in a car or airplane; the uncertainty of securing a comfortable yet affordable room from the uniformed, impersonal yet polite concierge; the uncanny sense of familiarity while navigating the lobby, elevator, and corridors; the relief of silent solitude after shutting and locking the door of a private room; the eventual boredom and curiosity leading to an investigation of the hotel bar, restaurant, pool, and gym. This dialectic of the hotel, this enfolding together of the private and the public, the secure and the uncertain, the familiar and the unknown, is neither timeless nor wholly a product of the space itself. Rather, the “modern hotel”—distinct from the traditional inns and taverns that they replaced, and distinct from the postmodern branded behemoths that would replace them—has a history and a discourse. The present chapter will attempt to trace both this history and this discourse as a necessary context for exploring, in
the following chapter, the function of the hotel as a dominant image within literary modernism. I will argue in that chapter that the institution of the hotel was both a product of, and active participant in, modernization—though this modernization was often slow, irregular, and incomplete, and though this central position occupied by hotels reflects its strategic position within a certain cultural discourse about modernity at least as much as it reflects a documented socioeconomic and spatial transformation.

It is in these two qualifications that my account of the hotel diverges from literary criticism that examines the connections between modernism and hotels, as well as from texts in space theory and the leisure of modernism that investigate the hotel as a modern institution. As I will discuss in greater detail below, most of this criticism regards the hotel as a paradigm, or even microcosm, of modernity; such arguments typically revolve around the insight that the demographic profile of a hotel replicates the urban, mobile, anonymized populations routinely taken as the preeminent figures of modernity. While I do not disagree with this basic assumption, my work draws from scholarship by architectural historians, sociologists of leisure, and theorists of space to argue that hotels provide a fascinating theatre for examining the process of modernization not because hotels were consummately modern during the era of modernism, but because the hotel industry at the time was *incompletely* modern. By, examining the modernization of the hospitality industry, my work departs from existing literary critical works on modernism and hotels, which typically fail to distinguish between hotels as historical artifact and as discursive object. For example, at the turn of the century, fully modernized “grand hotels” may have dominated English public discourse about hotels, yet grand hotels were outnumbered by extant “traditional” forms of hospitality, such as inns. This tension between the hotel as
sociospatial, historical construction and as a discursive object during the era of modernism, is, I argue, well worth investigation. Indeed, the following chapter of this dissertation will explore one example of this tension in particular: the modern hotel's often contradictory position as both a leisure destination—as the space of holiday, remote from the space of work and domesticity—and as a site of economic modernization. The present chapter, however, will recount the emergence of a British discourse about the modern hotel during the nineteenth century. This British discourse centered largely around American hotels, where the fully modernized hotel first emerged in the mid-nineteenth-century, long before such fully modernized hotels dotted the English and European landscape. This American hotel model became the occasion for a new British discourse around the emergence of a modern hospitality industry, a discourse that was established within Victorian travel writing and that modernists would inherit and adapt. This chapter will elaborate the cultural history of hotels to justify my claim that the “modern” hotels of England and Europe were belatedly and incompletely modernized. While Chapter Five will cover the transformation of the hospitality industry during the era of modernism, as well as discuss this model of the hotel with regard to works by modernists, this chapter will step back to

55 By “economic modernization,” I refer to a constellation of capitalist, industrial transformations that are helpfully condensed in geographer David Harvey's description of Keynesian-Fordist capitalism: the centralization of capital, the emergence of a distinct managerial class, the growth of bureaucracy, careful supervision of labor, spatial expansion, scientific rationalization, the mass production of homogeneous goods, mass consumption, and a highly specialized division of labor directed towards constant growth, intensifying exploitation, and ceaseless innovation (174-83)

56 My emphasis on the history of the hotel is meant to counter the quiet vein of essentialism running through much theoretical, philosophical, and literary critical work on the hotel, which appears to assume that the hotel as a social institution is timeless and universal, with little regard for their specific historical and cultural manifestations. Wayne Koestenbaum's Hotel Theory, for example, which acrobatically covers hotels from a variety of historical moments and geographical locations, relies on an unacknowledged phenomenological or existential foundation that assumes each guest of a hotel will experience spatial transience in the same basic way. Often, such texts are affectively charged by a blast of Bachelardian topophilia that, troublingly, replicates the commercial discourse around hotels as spaces of relaxation, rejuvenation, self-expression, and self-discovery. Even some of the most particularized accounts of specific hotels at specific historical moments, such as Meaghan Morris’ “At Henry Parkes Motel” and James Clifford's “Traveling Cultures,” periodically make use of tranhistorical generalizations about what it means to be away from home.
the nineteenth century to outline the cultural history of the hotel. Doing so will establish the specific “modernity” of hotels during modernism, reconstruct a broader and culturally prominent discourse on hotel modernization during the nineteenth-century, and recontextualize the hotels featured in modernism within the history of that discourse.

**Part One: The Limits of the Hotel as a Symbol or Microcosm of Modernity**

If, as Marshall Berman argued in *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, modernity is indeed a “maelstrom...that has been fed from many sources,” including “the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology, creates new human environments and destroys old ones,” “a set of immense demographic upheavals, severing millions of people from their ancestral habits, hurtling them halfway across the world into new lives,” and “rapid and often cataclysmic urban growth” (16), then the modernists' abiding interest in hotels should come as no surprise. As a spatial form designed to cater to transience and migration, and as a commercial venture revolutionized by the development of industrial capitalism, the hotel as a novel socioeconomic space played an active role in many of the hallmark shifts associated with modernity: among others, demographic movements including

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57 Indeed, the “hotel novel” has been acknowledged, though intermittently, within literary criticism as a genre operating both during and after the era of modernism, although nothing like a stable “canon” of hotel novels has been assembled. That said, the most well-known texts of this genre include Arnold Bennett's two hotel novels, the best-selling *The Grand Babylon Hotel* (1902) and one of his late novels, *Imperial Palace* (1930); Joseph Roth's *Hotel Savoy* (1924); Elizabeth Bowen's *The Hotel* (1927), which I will examine in Chapter Five; Vicki Baum's widely translated novel, *Menschen in Hotel* (*Grand Hotel*, 1929), which was quickly adapted to the stage by William Drake (1930), and made into an enormously successful Hollywood film (1932); Henry Green's *Party Going* (1939); Georges Simenon's murder mystery set in Paris, the *Hotel Majestic* (1942); Thomas Mann's late work, *Bekenntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull* (1954); D. M. Thomas' *The White Hotel* (1981); Anita Brookner's Booker Prize winner, *Hotel du Lac* (1984); and Ali Smith's *Hotel World* (2001). Typically, such novels feature the comic or tragic effects of a hotel environment bringing together a motley group of guests from a variety of social, economic, political, and (occasionally) ethnic backgrounds. To this list, I would add nearly the entire oeuvre of Jean Rhys, whose heroines almost universally reside in transient lodgings. As I see no reason not to include short stories as hotel fiction, I would also like to add Wyndham Lewis' “A Soldier of Humour” (1927) to the list, as well as a large portion of the output of Katherine Mansfield (her first book of stories, *In a German Pension* [1911], is particularly appropriate), which I will turn to in the Conclusion.
urbanization and increased personal mobility, technological advances in communications and transportation technologies, and the growth of industrial capitalism and mass consumerism (including the commodification of the leisure industry). The hotel, in other words, simultaneously a result and a cause of the increased mobility and sense of rootlessness characteristic of modernity, not only symbolically represents modernity, but also synecdochally produces it.

This interpretation of the hotel as an allegoric figure for modernity is, I argue, found as a more or less tacit assumption within literary modernism itself, most significantly for the present study including work by Henry James, E. M. Forster, Katherine Mansfield, Elizabeth Bowen, and Ford Madox Ford. My selection of these authors as representative of a certain strain of “hotel modernism,” diverges from the small body of literary critical work covering hotel fiction, particularly from the analyses of Vicki Baum's *Menschen in Hotel* dominating this small and not at all consolidated field. This choice of texts will enable the present work to isolate and examine the neglected discourse on hotels present within the texts of mainstream modernism. Such a strategy is necessary because even though academic texts on modernism often note in passing the significance of a hotel setting within a modernist work, such scholarship rarely considers the hotel as a specifically modern institution for which many modernists entertained a

58 The field is so small, in fact, that no sustained examination of hotels in British modernism has yet been published. Most of the texts that explicitly address the hotel as a literary trope are done within German literary criticism, such as Bettina Matthias' *The Hotel As Setting in Early Twentieth Century German and Austrian Literature* and Lynda King's “The Image of Fame: Vicki Baum in Weimar Germany.” Studies that cover the American urban hotels and literature include Elizabeth Klimasmit's, *At Home in the City – Urban Domesticity in American Literature and Culture 1850-1930*, Maureen Montgomery's *Displaying Women: Spectacles of Leisure in Edith Wharton's New York*, and Susan Koprince's “Edith Wharton's Hotels” in *Massachusetts Studies in English*. Frustratingly few sustained analyses of the hotel exist for British literature, although a few exceptions come to mind, such as Alicia Borinsky's “Jean Rhys: Poses of a Woman as Guest” and Jamie Wood's “The Siamese Demon: Wyndham Lewis and America,” which considers a few hotel-centric passages in a Lewis short story but does not make the hotel a central focus of her argument. works on hotels in modernist and postmodernist British literature by Joanna Pready, such as “The 'Holiday Incognito’: The Elusive Identity in Hotel Fiction of the Inter-War Period.”
sustained interest. In addition, my work on hotel modernism differs from other literary studies on hotel fiction because the present work seeks to contextualize individual modernist representations of hotels within the broader cultural history of hotels during modernity, as well as to apply principles from the sociology of leisure. By contrast, with the exception of current works by Bettina Matthias (on German literature) and Joanna Pready (on British literature), scholarship on the hotel novel eschews theorizing the relationship of the hotel and modernism in favor of focusing on a single modernist novel or single hotel. Yet even this ubiquity of these perfunctory references to hotels in modernism testifies to the hotel's explanatory or illustrative power not only as an image of or metaphor for modernity, but also as an engine of modernization filled by modern subjects.

Though this identification of the hotel as a consummate image of modernity—this assumption that to experience a hotel is to experience modernity—often remains implicit within literary modernism and the criticism on it, the assumption materializes in a more explicit form in non-fiction modern and contemporary texts on hotels by architects, philosophers, cultural historians, space theorists, and sociologists of leisure. Consider, for example, Wayne Koestenbaum's celebrated Hotel Theory. Because it is written as a typographically and stylistically experimental blend of fiction and philosophical treatise, Hotel Theory echoes modernist hotel fiction because his avant-garde text similarly performatively responds to the hotel as a site delivering an imperative toward verbal experimentation. Koestenbaum accounts

for the uniqueness of the hotel environment through its exemplary performance of modern
unhomeliness. As a result of unhomeliness, a tension arises, Koestenbaum theorizes, between
two correlative varieties of hotel experience: the psychological cost of anomie and the euphoria
of temporary (and often sexual) self-fashioning. He situates the guest's release from the routine
of the domestic environment within Heidegger's account of the fundamental modern condition of
not-being-at-home: “A hotel, intimate as a subway car, is an assembly of unrelated beings,
separated by walls, but gathered together in a nearness that lacks a homelike taking care” (20).
Koestenbaum thus contrasts on the one hand the domestic environment, with its binding and
routinized ties to familiar (and typically socially hegemonic) modes of socialization and
production, to “hotel existence,” which on the other hand, “uncannily suspends us above
groundedness. To be in hotel is to float, to tremble, like just-set custard” (7).

Despite this account of the decoupling of hotel experience from the norms of everyday
life, Koestenbaum recognizes that this flotation effect is, in many ways, as socially constructed
as the domestic environment. He wisely distances himself from any model of the hotel as
complete freedom, describing instead a different set of constraints that await the modern subject
in the hotel, where a “gridlike” system of rooms orders the social chaos of transience, producing
“a temporarily finite set—hence, a laboratory, a culture demanding dumb waiters and thieves,
bellhops and prostitutes, duchesses and switchboard operators” (12). This close proximity of
people from all walks of life (people from the demi-monde and the beau monde, laborers whose
work may be legitimized or not, routinized or not) is another common trope of hotel literature,
criticism, and theory, which locates the modernity of the hotel in its tendency to confront its
guests with otherness and difference (in contrast to everyday life, which is assumed to contain
built-in buffers that minimize such confrontations). Koestenbaum refers to the hotel's motley assemblage—its social sample—as a “temporarily finite set,” a phrase that neatly characterizes the inhabitants of a hotel as temporally unique community, an assemblage neither momentary nor permanent.

Though other theorists may not use this precise term, the basic idea of the temporarily finite set occurs in other works on hotels, such as historian Andrew Standoval-Strausz's characterization of the hotel as a temporally liminal form of social organization. Standoval-Strausz, like other commentators on the hotel institution, casts the hotel in a role typically recognized as a modernizing force when he characterizes the space of the hotel as a “constant state of coming and going, of constant contact between people unknown to one another” (142).

This observation forms the kernel of much hotel commentary, which often begins with the insight that, demographically, the hotel is a microcosm, a metropole in miniature: a Baudelarian street without adverse weather conditions, a Dublin with a corridor for a Liffey, a London with mealtime bells chiming in Big Ben's place. But Standoval-Strausz pushes his definition of the hotel beyond mere microcosm; he carefully distinguishes the hotel from the city in one way, making the hotel something more than another word to add to the bottom of a long list of modernizing influences. Such a perspective is necessary especially for the study of hotel fiction, I argue, because these texts typically do, more or less explicitly, present the hotel as a microcosm, thereby making literary critical arguments about the microcosm redundant; the more interesting question is not if the hotel is a microcosm, but rather why modernists should so frequently make use of this metaphor. I will return to this point in Chapter Five, but for the moment, I would like to return to Standoval-Strausz’s insightful analysis of why the hotel
environment was a unique space in the nineteenth century. Contact among guests of a hotel, Standoval-Strausz argues, differs both in degree and kind from the superficially similar forms of social contact experienced in typically “modern” spaces such as streets, shops, and theaters, especially insofar as they put transient individuals into contact for days rather than just minutes of hours, and because such contact often took place in domestic and even intimate spaces like parlors and bedrooms. Hotels thus required that people constantly establish, maintain, and renegotiate myriad contacts and relationships. (143)

This social barrage intensifies within the public spaces of a hotel—such as the lobbies, lounges, and dining spaces—whose insistent openness encourages frequent blasts of “spontaneous and unmediated interpersonal contact” (174). The hotel, for Standoval-Strausz, is a modern social form that intensifies contact among strangers to such a degree that it transcends the fleeting contact found in, say, Baudelaire's Parisian streets, and presents, repeatedly, an imperative to reimagine social relationships. Similarly, Rem Koolhas, on the topic of hotels as a movie plot in the 1930s, echoes Standoval-Strausz's characterization of the hotel as a social machine that engineers significant (because unexpected or even wanted) encounters:

A Hotel is a plot—a cybernetic universe with its own laws generating random but fortuitous collisions between human beings who would never have met elsewhere. It offers a fertile cross section through the population, a richly textured interface between social castes, a field for the comedy of clashing manners and a neutral background of routine operations to give every incident dramatic relief. (148)

Here, Koolhas helpfully describes the hotel's function as an unusual social plane in terms of narrative—that is, in terms of the richness it lends to plot development—thereby resisting (unlike
Stanoval-Strausz) the temptation to idealize such interactions. While retaining Koolhas' morally neutral sense of the hotel's social “fertility,” and while retaining Stanoval-Strausz's nuanced sense of the temporality of modern social contact within the hotel, I would, however, question both theorists' assumption concerning the absolute “spontaneity” of an environment that is in fact often regulated by rigid spatial divisions and inflexible schedules that more often than not corresponded to sociopolitical hierarchies. I would also bear in mind the mediation implied by the many human and non-human agents interposed between hotel guests—the concierges, maids, telephones, elevators, locked doors, letters of introduction, conventional systems of politeness, gendered divisions of spaces, veils (and even large hats). This lack of qualification in Stanoval-Strausz's account of the hotel as a unique social environment is telling: it does not merely replicate the common interpretation of the hotel as a uniquely privileged site from which to examine modernity. It also demonstrates a common pitfall of this interpretation, which funnels the discussion of the relationship between hotels and modernity into an ultimately unproductive binary, wherein the hotel figures either as the ultimate fulfillment of a certain vision of modernity (as pure technological progress, industrial standardization, and anomie), or as a privileged arena free from the worst excesses of modernization. Thus, while hotels often stand in as the figure of modernity, they can alternatively stand in as the possibility to escape modernity; consequently, in some non-fiction texts about the hotel, the hotel is frustratingly ambivalent because it simultaneously functions as a figure for modernity and escape from it.

60 Koolhas' use of the term “cybernetics” intriguingly characterizes the hotel as a cybernetic system, that is, as a site of information exchange—with the hotel guests operating as individual “messages” interfacing through the mechanism of hotel architecture. While I do not wish to delve into the intricacies of cybernetics as a narratological tool (most famously explored by W. R. Ashby in An Introduction to Cybernetics), further studies of the hotel as a narratological structure may explore the possibility of cybernetics as a productive hermeneutic.
Hotel criticism, in other words, tends to revolve around questions of what hotels, as exceptional spaces, can or cannot achieve for their guests—to what degree they can provide a respite from labor, the domestic environment, or urban capitalist modernity, or to what degree they can stimulate aesthetic perception or production, positive social or romantic interactions, personal moral or philosophical growth, or physical or psychological wellness. While theorists of the hotel may answer these questions quite differently from one another, they all presuppose the hotel-image's almost athletic ability, if not to contribute to these varied needs, then at least to highlight the modern subject's need for such aid, as well as to identify—and to label as specifically “modern”—the social changes that enable, necessitate, or forestall the fulfillment of these needs. It is this basic assumption that I agree with: that within literary modernism, the image of the hotel, opens up privileged discursive field in which the forces and problems of modernity are writ large, and that within cultural history, the transformation of the hospitality industry during modernity powerfully illustrates many forces of modernization. But this is not to agree with that the hotel wholly epitomizes modernity, for these arguments assume a reified concept of “modernity” inapplicable to the hotels of modernity or modernism. As I will demonstrate, the hotel industry during modernity was characterized less by full-throttle modernization than by gradual and disjointed change, and less by a consistent and coherent network of cultural associations and social uses than a chaotic and contradictory set of associations. On the other hand, interpreting the hotel as an escape from modernity, not only patently disregards the commercial aspects and social constraints associated with the hotel, but also encourages an evaluative mode of criticism that judges the hotel as a social resource, in which hotel's success or failure in providing escape for its guests within the pages of modernist
texts is recovered as a central question to occupy literary criticism on hotels. Again, my research question is less about whether the hotel is an escape from or epitomization of modernity, but about *why* the hotel should become such a ubiquitous figure attracting such apparently contradictory arguments—or to put it differently, a field through which questions about modernity both circulated and continue to circulate.

This propensity of fiction and non-fiction writers alike to evaluate the modern hotel as destructively modern or utopianesquely unmodern results partly from the hotel's relationship to other leisure institutions: it is an instrument of vacation, of the spatial and temporal escape from the everyday environments of home and work, and therefore a part of leisure discourse that generates endless promises of fun, relaxation, rejuvenation, and self-fashioning. Sociologist Chris Rojek's blistering *Decentering Leisure* (1995) passionately advises against our renewing this discourse of escape and instead argues that “one cannot separate leisure from the rest of life and claim that it has unique ‘laws’, ‘propensities’ and rhythms’” (2). The self-determination, choice, and freedom associated with leisure spaces are themselves socially determined; Rojek would point out that a character's indulgence of his or her desire to sleep in, eat more, engage in romantic flings, or ignore his or her family are just as demanded of them and just as constrained by networks of social or economic necessity as their behaviors at home or in the workplace. Following Rojek's assessment of the socially licensed experiences of freedom and escape available within leisure spaces, I would like to emphasize that any sense of escape or difference emerging from the discourse around hotels has been cultivated *within* the society that created these hotels. We cannot even take for granted that the emergence of this oddly specific desire for escape—in which a visit to a hotel will yield physical recovery, psychological equanimity, or
social fulfillment—would have existed apart from the historical transformation and commercialization of hospitality. It is equally possible, in other words, that the hotel as a cultural, commercial and architectural artifact created many of these desires, rather than the other way around. Yet within contemporary non-fiction works about hotels and criticism on modernist works foregrounded hotels, recognition of these constraints often come in the form of a somewhat predictable narrative of dismayed demystification: the hotel or other leisure space promises to provide an alternative to cruel modernity, and indeed for awhile it may seem to make good on that promise, but in the end, the hotel can no longer help its guests once they leave its premises, or, shockingly, the hotel has been quietly replicating the structures of urban industrial modernity all along. Rather than ricocheting between these to extremes—that hotels either epitomize or diverge from a certain vision of modernity as pure anomie, destruction, and industrialization—I argue that the hotel embodies the contradictions of modernity, and indeed that the history of hotel's emergence, both as a historical, cultural artifact and as a dominant image within literary modernism, may be read as a tableau of these contradictions.

One piece of criticism that also attempts to move beyond this tempting but ultimately unsatisfying critical trope that dramatically unmaskes hotels as failing to fulfill promises made to their guests, Bettina Matthias' *The Hotel As Setting in Early Twentieth Century German and Austrian Literature: Checking in to Tell a Story* (2006), is also the most sustained and fully theorized work of literary criticism on the subject of modernism and hotels. *The Hotel as Setting* exemplifies of this construction of the hotel as an epitomization of modernity. Analyzing works by Kafka, Mann, Krull, Roth, and Baum, Matthias concludes that modernist authors frequently select the hotel as a literary setting because a hotel provides a “micro-community,”
reproduction of the socius in miniature and under the pressure of modernization, thus making the hotel “a stage where modernity unfolds” (191). In contrast to Standoval-Strausz's resolutely optimistic evaluation of the hotel as social form, in which hotels mitigate the anonymity of travel by creating a “resolutely public culture” and “a sense of community” (174), Matthias persuasively argues that modernists critique the hotel as a space where possibilities for the amelioration of modernization's social costs are both opened up and foreclosed—particularly along the fault-lines of gender, class, and racial difference. Also in contrast to Standoval-Strausz's assertion that social interactions in hotels are spontaneous and unmediated, Matthias asserts that the hotel is a space “where the mediated and often enforced artificial nature of human relations in modernism is obvious” (191). Here, literary critic Matthias's divergence from historian Standoval-Strausz's evaluation of the hotel's potential as an open or democratic space underscores the significance of modernist literature, with its investigation of the economic and social constraints governing guests' experiences, as a salutary supplement to the positive images of the hotel found within mass-culture representations of the hotel and within commercial discourses around hotels.

Matthias' central argument about hotels is not, though, about the hotel as a cultural product but rather as a specifically literary tool. Her thesis thus regards the hotel from the point of view of the modernist author, who treats the hotel as a “laboratory:”

[Hotels] are perfect experimental settings. They offer ample material for those who wish to study the dynamics between the individual and society or a chosen sub-group thereof and the subject's struggle to find the right balance between feelings of estrangement and liberation. As isolated places away from the familiar context of everyday life, hotels represent social laboratories for writers to test the stability of traditional value systems, and they use the spatial limits of their setting to zoom in on a potential struggle that would be harder to detect or isolate in a less formal setting. (5)
While I will argue later that the hotel as a social institution was not, in fact, “closed” or controllable, I will acknowledge that this viewpoint allows Matthias to link the hotel to the familiar themes of modernism: freedom, alienation, cultural change, the unavailability of an untroubled experience with “home,” and the critique or reconfiguration of the subject's relationship to the social whole. Nonetheless, this image of the laboratory leaves more questions than it answers. She answers the obvious question that arises when considering the hotel as a space of experimentation—Who is running this experiment?—by ascribing to German modernist authors a Zolaesque scientific intentionality. But can modernists be said to plan and execute social experiments, then record the results in a work of fiction or poetry? If not the modernists, is it modernity itself running the experiment, or is it the characters, or perhaps the owners, architects, and employees of the hotel?

As I discuss later, this problem of intentionality arises partly due to an exaggeration of the extent to which the hospitality industry in England and Europe was, during the era of modernism, truly “modernized.” One of the major aims of the present chapter is, in fact, to recontextualize modern hotels within the economic and architectural history of that industry, which was in a state of unprecedented flux during the era of literary modernism. Indeed, a nuanced historical framing of the hotel will help to disperse the twin problems of intentionality and evaluation that trouble many literary critical readings on hotel and modernism. For now, though, temporarily leaving aside the question of historically existing hotels, I have isolated three useful concepts that commonly appear (sometimes implicitly, at other times more explicitly) in literary critical works focusing on the cultural work done by modernist texts featuring hotels—limitation, clarification, and intensification. I should begin by noting that
limitation, clarification, and intensification, are all, in my work, relative rather than absolute terms. Limitation is fragmentary and incomplete, clarification always a result of juxtaposition and contextualization, and intensification as much a result of narrative focus as it is from a set of assumptions concerning the nature of actually existing hotels. In identifying and adapting these terms from hotel criticism to my work, then, I mean to avoid any implication that the hotel form is either inherently a vehicle of freedom and creativity or exclusively an instrument of discipline, surveillance, and double consciousness.

The *limitation* of the hotel is both spatial and human; unlike modernist texts that famously skip among various spaces and create an effect of featuring apparently limitless number of characters (*Ulysses, Mrs. Dalloway*)—and creating encounters that can appear to be spontaneous or based on affinity and self-determination, outside of the realm of determinism—the hotel has well-defined spatial boundaries that limit both the terrain of social action and the number (and type) of guests or employees who can cross the threshold. Already, the lack of total freedom in the hotel environment is underscored by the limited footprint of the hotel building that canalizes or condenses the great energy of crowded, chaotic modern urban spaces, so often interpreted by modernists as liberatory. At the same time, I would like to stress that a certain effect of momentary escape or relief can be located in the hotel as long as it is relentlessly contextualized within this moment of exit from unfiltered modernity—a necessarily limited and temporary effect that, though it does not in itself productively *create* alternative or utopian social relationships or forms, is nevertheless perceived as valuable and as an end in itself. Ultimately, the hotel's characteristic of spatial and demographic limitation is ambivalent because the creation of an affectively positive situation (the escape from an often claustrophobic or confusing urban
chaos) relies upon a disciplinary mechanism (the a carefully delineated process of socioeconomic filtration). To put it differently, when feelings of relaxation or escape are engendered, they do indeed happen—the experience is no mere mirage or dupe—but such moments are not “free.”

This limitation is responsible for the other two characteristics I have isolated from previous works on hotels and modernism, clarification and intensification, because it drowning out the “noise” of the crowd—the other conversations a narrative could record, the other people it could follow, the other stories it could uncover—the fortuitous, suggestive links within many modernists texts. Clarification follows from this reduction of noise, isolating variables such as nationality, gender, economics, or war, making the hotel environment, indeed, mimic the isolation demanded from a controlled experiment. With more clearly delineated issues at stake in an environment limited in size and in its inhabitants, who by being in transit are not absorbed in domestic or work routines, intensification results: nothing distracts attention or significance from the social event or question at hand. The hotel is a cramped space where perspective is all but impossible and privacy is difficult, therefore accelerating the pace of social events (explaining the appeal the hotel environment has for providing modernist authors a backdrop for deaths, partings, proposals, introductions, confrontations, serious conversations, and other interpersonal spectacles). The hotel can thus act as a Foucauldian dispositif: a discourse through which specific actors (including, but not limited to, the modernists and their characters) rehearse or deploy strategies for various ends and with varying amounts of self-consciousness and of success. In this interpretation, agency or intention deployed within the hotel environment does exist—but that intention is always partial, distributed, not always fully conscious or successful, never directed...
from an “outside,” and always directed towards an image of or discourse around the hotel as much as it is directed towards a material and physical space.

To clarify what I mean by agency or intention, I will turn to the well-known concept of “thirdspace,” Edward Soja's term for Henri Lefebvre's “representational spaces.” In The Production of Space, Lefebvre describes representational spaces as distinct from “representations of space,” which are the official or ideological account space that largely control what the lived environment looks like, or in other words, the “conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers” (83). Lefebvre also distinguishes representational spaces from “spatial practice” (the dialectical interaction between the layman's understanding of space and the layman's actions that secrete space as a material and cultural presence). Representational space, or thirdspace, is space passively but imaginatively reappropriated, or in Lefebvre's words, “space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users,’ but also of some artists,” as well as writers and philosophers (39). Thus, the works of modernists on hotels are examples of thirdspace, in which the “hotel” they grapple with is a complex mixture of the real and the discursive, including actually existing spaces and architecture, human interactions with such spaces, discourses created around these spaces, and an array of political, economic, and social associations. The modernist hotel, then, is more properly referred to as a “hotel-image,” and their representations of characters negotiating the hotel environment can act as 1) commentary on existing spaces or the official representations of space, 2) illustrations of spatial practice in action, or 3) examples of laymen engaged in their own acts of thirdspace, that is, of reimagining or appropriating existing spaces. I prefer this Lefebvrian language because it accounts for the
sociopolitical struggles over space in a way that does not reduce these struggles to the plane of a
ing single, all-knowing author or character or to a binary of “success” or “failure” that will judge or
evaluate characters, authors, hotels, or “modernity” itself. Though Lefebvre did not specifically
address the space of the hotel, by extrapolating Lefebvre's tripartite division to hotels, this
chapter attempts to resituate the figure of the hotel within a broader account of modern space,
which echoes Chris Rojek's insistence not to overemphasize the exceptionality or uniqueness of
leisure spaces such as hotels. If literary criticism emphasizes the uniqueness of the hotel
environment while simultaneously affirming its significance as a prototypically modern
institutions, an embarrassing contradiction arises. Insisting that the hotel is exceptional in its
exemplariness would only intensify the contradiction.

My solution is not to deny the hotel's uniqueness, but to deny its absolute
representativeness. The hotel industry during modernism, I argue, was not at all monolithically
“modernized,” but rather a vivid example of incomplete development. Too often, work on hotels
assumes that hotels during modernism were, for all intents and purposes, the same as
contemporary hotels; this assumption reigns partially because the bulk of the work on hotels is
done by sociologists of leisure who focus on contemporary leisure spaces, and partially because
the contemporary hotel system as we know it did, within England and Europe, historically first
appear during the era of modernism. The hospitality industry lagged far behind American hotels,
and far behind other English and European industries, in terms of its modernization, that is, its
commitment to the emerging norms of late capitalism, including constant expansion, vertical and
horizontal integration, the homogenization of goods and services, the bureaucratization of
management, and the dominance of rules of scientific efficiency and economies of scale. The
hotel's deferred and fragmentary modernization is, I argue, what constitutes the hotel's exceptionality as a sociospatial complex during the era of literary modernism. I will show that the fully modernized hotel was a largely conceptual import from America that dominated much of the discourse about hotels and hospitality during modernism but far from dominated the reality of the hospitality industry at the time. During the first half of the twentieth century, the hospitality industry, far later than other industries (such as the retail, transportation, and manufacturing industries), witnessed unprecedented experimentation both parallel to and within the continued existence of traditional spaces of hospitality such as the tavern, inn, and pension—resulting in a wide variety of transient accommodations whose total subsumption under an idealized or simplified model of the “hotel” would be profoundly misleading. Even within the accommodations specifically referred to as hotels, the variety of spaces the word “hotel” designated then far exceeds the variety found today. Acknowledging the hotel industry's incomplete, disjointed, and belated development during the era of modernism helps us to exit the tempting but ultimately uninteresting hotel narrative—the hotel that promises to be either a perfected vision of progressive modernity or an escape from a villainized modernity, that then succeeds or fails to keep that promise—because the hotel is seen to occupy a different position (or rather, set of positions) toward modernity. Modernist texts reflect this diversity of accommodations and those accommodations' varying immersion into or distance from the hegemonic model of the hotel corresponding to the norms of capitalist modernity. The modern hotel, then, held both less and more promise for its occupants (and for the modernists) than that destructive narrative assigns to it: less, because the hotel is no longer regarded as either exclusively hypermodern or exclusively unmodern, and more, because this more nuanced view
of the hotel is not subject to a final unmasking as either too conservative or too modern. But before exploring what other attitudes towards hotel culture are developed within modernism, we must, in order to grasp the significance of this discourse surrounding the modernization of the hospitality industry for modernist texts, trace the source of this discourse in the radical changes in American hotels—and the British response to them—during the nineteenth century.

**Part Two: The Modernization of Transient Lodgings, 1790-1910**

While many of the British and European hotels featured in the fiction of British modernism are examples of extant traditional inns or pensions, even the larger and more modern hotels are belated or incomplete examples of architectural modernization. During the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, British and European hospitality slowly began adopting the commercial hotel model that had developed in the United States during the nineteenth century. Originally, England had been the innovator in hotel hospitality: the forerunners of hotels—large provincial inns with attached assembly rooms—developed organically during the eighteenth century, while the earliest establishments referred to as “hotels,” as distinct from traditional inns and taverns, began in the 1790s at English spa resorts like Bath and Tunbridge Wells to accommodate the greatly increasing number of tourists arriving to take advantage of the health benefits, picturesque scenery, and social life offered by these resorts. As an alternative to traditional forms of transient lodgings, these establishments billed themselves as more exclusive and elegant than taverns, boasted private sitting-rooms for hire, and offered their own Assembly Rooms inside the hotel itself—beginning the century-long process that transformed transient lodges to destinations in themselves, objects of tourism, rather
than merely stopovers for travelers. This expanded model soon appeared in American resort
towns, then in cities, settlement towns, and rail termini developing along with urbanization and
westward expansion.

These early hotels, both in England and America, marked the beginning of a new form of
lodging that differed from traditional inns and taverns in several ways. First, they were
significantly larger and could accommodate hundreds of guests. This expended size required a
considerable amount of capital and a large staff—creating a shift away from the previous model
of small, family owned and operated tavern inns. Second, these new hotels prioritized overnight
lodgings, whereas traditional inns catered to travelers only as a secondary feature; these
traditional inns focused on selling food and drink (not merely to travelers but, more significantly,
to local residents) and providing a point of access to transportation like coaches and fresh horses.
Third, the construction of these hotels featured an architecturally distinct design—usually a neo-
classical facade of impressive proportions—that set them apart visually not only from other
forms of lodging but also from large public buildings (such as courthouses and libraries). These
hotels were not an immediate financial success, particularly in England, where the novels of Jane
Austen reveal that the hotel form had not yet been enthusiastically accepted. For example, the
balls attended by characters in *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Emma* are
variously identified as occurring inside private homes, traditional inns, or annexes of a public
house, not merely hotel ballrooms. Meanwhile, the temporary residences in Bath preferred by her
characters were private homes on lease (much like a long-term vacation rental today), which
were perceived as more genteel than hotels. In *Persuasion*, such townhome leases were chosen in
preference to the new hotels by the aristocratic Kellynch family, desperate to perform their
aristocratic status in the face of their economic “retrenchment” to Bath, whereas in *Northanger Abbey*, the middle-class Allens, along with their niece Catherine Morland, not having the social connections or large income required to secure such a lease, must lodge at a hotel. Austen's choice of the hotel as lodgings appropriate for the novel's protagonist Catherine, cast as an unlikely and unromantic heroine within the parodic *Northanger Abbey*, quietly telegraphs the hotel's lack of socioeconomic repute or romantic glamour.

Austen's late unfinished novel, *Sanditon*, set in a coastal village trying to reinvent itself as “modern Sanditon” (22), a “young and rising bathing-place” (11), reveals other reasons why, for most of the eighteenth century, lodging at a modern hotel in England meant taking a risk. As the novel opens, protagonist Charlotte Heywood decides to accept the hospitality offered to her in Sanditon by two of its primary developers, partially as a result of ill-usage at a London hotel:

> She had gone to a hotel, living by her own account as prudently as possible to defy the reputed expensiveness of such a home, and at the end of three days calling for her bill that she might judge her state. Its amount was such as determined her on not staying another moment in the house, and she was preparing – in all the anger and perturbation of her belief in very gross imposition and her ignorance where to go for better usage – to leave the hotel at all hazards. (17-8)

As an unmarried young lady possessing neither parents nor wealth, Charlotte is vulnerable to the vagaries besetting this new form of lodging, and her sense of outrage and homelessness unfortunately typifies a common complaint nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women have of hotels (which, later on, is brought to a climax by Jean Rhys). Fleeing the hotel, she accepts an offer of hospitality in the private home of Lady Denhem, who, though a vigorous promoter of Sanditon as a resort, intends her hospitality not to be of the universal variety offered by hotels—even if acting otherwise would help to popularize the resort. One instance of this Austenian
distinction occurs when Lady Denham responds to the anticipated arrival of a West Indian heiress, felt by the Sanditon community to be a great boon for the resort's development (and to be a prospective wife for the penniless young Denhem). Lady Denhem responds, “If Miss Esther thinks to talk me into inviting them to come and stay at Sanditon House, she will find herself mistaken.... I have no fancy for having my house as full as an hotel.... If people want to be by the sea, why don't they take lodgings?” (43-4). Though single men and families of all income levels and social statuses begin to fill the Sanditon hotel to capacity during the winter season, Lady Denhem nonetheless continues to recommend private lodgings, rather than Sanditon's new hotel, to upper-class travelers. Charlotte's and Lady Denham's attitudes towards hotels reveal misgivings about the costs, risks, and public nature of the modern hotel during its early phases, and in keeping with this early ambivalence towards hotels, a diversity of lodging options faced the Regency and Victorian traveler; during these periods in England, unlike in the United States, the hotel did not by any means dominate the transient lodging landscape, even though the construction of hotels in England steadily increased over that period. (We will see later that in England, only an extensive commercial campaign to associate the hotel form with luxury and respectability, launched through text and images within newspapers, trade journals, and advertisements, could capture the public's trust in hotels.)

While both American and English hotels quickly multiplied in number during the first half of the nineteenth century, what set American hotels apart from those in England was not only their greater number and popularity, but also their participation in what Weber referred to as the rationalization of capitalism. English hotels, in the range of their amenities, topographical organization, and labor force, retained many features of the traditional inn, whereas American
hotel architecture and labor practices changed rapidly to maximize profit and increase efficiency during these decades. At this time, hotels in the United States grew quickly and diversified to accommodate different groups of travelers (luxury hotels, mid-priced family hotels, and low-priced commercial traveler hotels) and different sites (big-city hotels, railroad hotels, resort hotels, and settlement hotels designed to maintain a new settled community). By mid-century, hotels played a dominant role in the transportation network that accommodated the flood of pioneers, prospectors, and merchants moving across the continent.

As the hotel form developed during the first half of the nineteenth century, American hoteliers, in contrast to the series of “coach inns” and public houses found across the Atlantic, and in contrast to the “hotels” there as well, applied principles of industrial organization to process large quantities of guests, thereby transforming the hotel into, in the words of historian A. K. Standoval-Strausz, a “social technology [that] established the necessary infrastructure for a new age of commerce and human mobility” (43-4), or, more simply, a “sophisticated hospitality machine” (142). Concurrent with the increasing rationalization of labor in the factory setting at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, these hoteliers developed a complex division of labor, emphasized economies of scale, and required large up-front investments of capital, thus removing the hotel from its traditional sphere, that of the individual family who live and work on the same premises, to that of the corporation requiring investment capital, a managerial staff, and wage labor. Hotel owners became much like absentee landlords, hiring managers to oversee the increasingly complex hierarchy of employees—so complex, in fact, that many managers relied on the system developed in Tunis Campbell’s 1848
book *Hotel Keepers, Head Waiters, and Housekeeper's Guide*, more than half a century before Frederick Taylor's 1911 *Principles of Scientific Management*.

This alteration in the hotel labor force greatly changed the topography of transient housing. While traditional inns and taverns typically duplicated private home architecture—consisting of a lower floor where the guests shared the innkeeper's family spaces (kitchen, scullery, parlor, and bathing facilities, if any) and an upper floor where guest rooms opened upon one another (and thus guaranteed no privacy)—these new American-style lodgings resembled the hotels we know today. They maintained a strict spatial and social separation between guests and employees, often driving the employees to basement areas and, in many cases, creating a separate set of “service” staircases and hallways. In addition, the various functional areas of the hotel became strictly demarcated, creating specially designated rooms for drinking, dining, lounging, checking in, and settling the bill. Finally, hotel architects began to incorporate the new “double-loaded corridor” system, which featured two parallel rows of often identical rooms—sometimes stonily referred to as “the block plan”—and, significantly, was also becoming popular in the design of hospitals, schools, asylums, offices, and other public institutions. For the hotel owners, the double-loaded corridor system encouraged profit by simplifying design and construction, thereby reducing the cost of erecting and maintaining the buildings, as well as reducing the amount of time required by staff to acquaint guests with the building. The double-loaded corridor also maximized the number of rooms contained on a floor, while minimizing the size of public spaces necessary to navigate the building. For the guest, it added privacy by allocating each guest room its own door opening upon a public hallway.
One consequence of this arrangement was the hotel’s representation in American discourse as an example of democracy; Henry Ford, referring to the use of the double-loaded corridor “grid” system in hospitals, argued in his autobiography that “because there is no choice in rooms....every patient is on equal footing with every other patient” (216). Cultural geographers Karl Raitz and John Paul Jones agree with Ford’s assessment; in “The City Hotel as Landscape Artifact and Community Symbol,” they argue that the 19th century American hotel did in fact begin as a democratic social institution that reflected communal values, though the increasing commercialization of the hotel industry displaced those communal values with entrepreneurial values. Yet most contemporary architectural historians are quick to note that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, “standardization was stubbornly misunderstood by both Americans and foreigners as egalitarianism” (Wharton 527, my emphasis). Even when a visually “democratic” effect was apparently achieved, not all applauded this standardization of space as an achievement: European visitors during the 19th century complained about impersonality that posed as democracy in the hotel, considered by one visitor as “most leveling of all American ‘institutions’” (qtd. in Standoval-Strausz 184). Not only did this design feature seem to give a false promise of spatially guaranteed equality, but also the double-loaded corridor also greatly minimized or in some cases entirely blocked the corridor’s accessibility to natural light and fresh air. While the result appealed to hotel-owners as both economic and efficient, the mechanical repetition of identical floorplans on each level of guest rooms—which itself was reproduced in countless modern hotels—did not tend to add to the aesthetic value, architectural interest, of cozy charm of the hotel as a lived-in space, but rather resulted in what contemporary architectural theorist Christopher Alexander, in A Pattern Language, called “long, sterile corridors [that] set
the scene for everything bad about modern architecture” (663). While Alexander's comment is perhaps more a polemic provocation than an objective fact in the history of hotel architecture, his comment nonetheless voices a common disdain and horror many modernists held towards this brand of rationalized architecture, particularly in regard to the leisure architecture of hotels.

The career of the influential American hotelier E. M. Statler nicely epitomizes this industrialization of hospitality during the nineteenth century. While he was not the first hotelier to incorporate modern features like double-loaded corridors or to adopt industrial techniques like the division of labor, Statler was the Henry Ford of the hotel world: he was the first to self-consciously apply principles of industrial efficiency to combine all of these modern features together in a single standardized, mass produced commodity, referred to in advertisements as a collection of identical, repeated units: “the Hotels Statler.” His copious publications in business journals argued that his fully rationalized modern hotel system could and should be spread across the country; a contemporary journalist, reviewing Statler's 1917 essay “The Development of the Modern Hotel,” efficiently summarizes Statler's contribution to the field: “Running a hotel is a big business and needs to be run on big-business lines by a man free from the fixed notions of the average hotel man” (“Hotels” 346). Best known for his work on the thousand-room, seventeen-storied Waldorf-Astoria in New York City (1893), Statler began his rags-to-riches career as a bellhop, eventually becoming the architect chosen by Teddy Roosevelt to build hotels for the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York (1901), and for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904). Purposefully designed to be destroyed for scrap wood after the conclusion of these events, Statler's Exposition hotels exemplify modern capitalism as the imperative to novelty and the unceasing flow of construction and destruction (Schumpeter's “creative
destruction”). Though these particular buildings were short-lived, the concepts he developed for them were not, as he instantly became a star in the hotel-building industry. Like Ford and Frederick Taylor, Statler also developed in these hotels a minutely defined division of labor, offered his workers a paternalistic environment (which included health care and paid vacations), took advantage of economies of scale, and used standardized, interchangeable parts. For example, Statler made bulk purchases of fabrics, furniture, and decorative objects, sketched designs for massive lounges and dining rooms to accommodate hundreds of guests simultaneously, bought labor-saving machinery like mechanical dishwashers and silverware buffers, developed a complex rotating system of bellhops and clerks to maximize the numbers of guests they could process, and grouped elevators together in a single central location, which both reduced the cost of the machinery and simplified the architecture necessary to incorporate them.

Most significantly, his hotels epitomized the “grid system” of cellular, individual rooms that was also used at this time for factories, prisons, schools, and hospitals. This grid system was essentially a modular system, containing rows of bathrooms, sitting rooms, and bedrooms that could be combined in any way needed by the guest. Each bathroom, sitting room, or bedroom on a particular floor would have an identical size, shape, and amenities. To accommodate multiple price points, lower floors would contain larger and more elaborately furnished rooms, while upper floors would contain smaller and sparsely furnished rooms—a pattern established in pre-elevator days, when having a room close to the ground provided an obvious advantage and commanded higher prices. This way, virtually any guest's need could be accommodated, whether for a luxurious, spacious suite or an affordable, spartan arrangement.61 Aside from the difference

61 See David Kohrman for further accounts of Statler's technological innovations (21-66). For further biographical information about Statler, see Turkel.
in furnishings—which, whether expensive or cheap, were all bulk purchases and mass produced—standard, deluxe, and luxury rooms or suites (the most expensive of which could be more than five times more expensive than the cheapest) were all made of identical, interchangeable parts. Each type of room or suite could at any moment be converted into another merely by locking or unlocking communicating doors.

All of these innovations greatly reduced the cost of designing, erecting, and maintaining a hotel, and as a result, during the first decade of the twentieth century, Statler reproduced these patterns in nearly every major city in the country, thus standardizing hotel architecture after his massive profits (and the wide publication of his ideas in trade journals) convinced other hoteliers to follow suit—even those building “luxury” hotels. Facades too became standardized as Statler hotel design became the norm and as the design and erection of buildings requiring this amount of capital and technical expertise centralized hotel building into fewer and fewer firms—leading G. K. Chesterton to proclaim,

There is only one hotel in America. The pattern of it, which is a very rational pattern, is repeated in cities as remote from each other as capitals of European empires.... And before touching on this solid and simple pattern itself, I may remark that the same system of symmetry runs through all the details of the interior. As one hotel is like another hotel, so one hotel floor is like another floor.(19)

The production of hotels, in other words, no less than automobiles or Wedgwood china, involved tough competition and ceaseless innovation, always redesigning and improving the public spaces of the hotel, and adopting cutting-edge technologies and up-to-date managerial and labor practices. In the terms used by Statler's principal architect in 1923, the hotel could now be viewed and judged by its “usefulness as a social machine” (qtd. in Davidson 113). We might say that hospitality itself became the commodity, produced by a machine called the modern hotel.
New types of spaces were added to the hotel repertoire, such as reading rooms, bars, ladies’ lounges, post offices, salons, sample rooms for commercial travelers, and (in the 1920s) dance floors annexed to dining spaces, paralleling the increasing spatial division of labor in other capitalist industries. To stay competitive, hotel owners quickly adopted new technologies—most of them long before they became common in private households—such as plate-glass windows, artificial lighting, steam-powered laundry facilities, elevators, and indoor plumbing. These new technologies were just one effect of the immersion of the hotel industry into the structures of capital, which contributed to the hotel industry an impulse towards spatial rationalization, the careful management of profit, and the combination of guest-pleasing modern amenities with a set of cost-efficient practices to minimize their cost. These technologies and practices meant that hotels not only participated in capitalism but spatially symbolized it, as we have seen above, and as architectural historian Annabel Wharton argues in her analysis of one of these large modern hotels: the 1931 Waldorf-Astoria in New York. Wharton argues that this hotel both symbolizes and territorially enacts monopoly capitalism, for the hotel “both framed the space of monopoly capitalism and monumentally represented it in the spectacle of the city” (524). The Waldorf-Astoria, Wharton explains, materially imprinted the unprecedented wealth of the Astor family onto New York topography, created a new space for the performance of wealth and social status.

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62 The first appearances of gaslight in hotels occurred in the 1840s, and electricity followed in the most prestigious hotels by the 1880s. Steam-powered laundries first appeared in the 1840s, while elevators became common by the 1880s. Indoor plumbing was available in luxury hotels by the 1850s but was not a common amenity expected in each bedroom of a moderately priced hotel until after 1900. For more information about these hotel innovations, see Williamson (54-56), and Sandoval Stausz (142-185).
by other wealthy citizens, and, of course, helped to augment the Astors' wealth as a lucrative business in its own right.63

Raitz and Jones, the cultural geographers mentioned above, identified the 1931 opening of the Waldorf-Astoria—a symbol of monopoly capitalism resulting from a détente and collaboration between two competing Astor cousins, both hotel-owners—as a crucial point in the history of the American hotel demonstrating the turn from democratic values in favor of purely entrepreneurial ones. But I would like to posit that this tension between democracy and exclusivity (or between collectivity and capitalism) was a fundamental and recurring theme within discourse around the modern hotel, not merely in America, and not just as a linear narrative where one principle supplants another, but as a persistent tension in hotel discourse, not only during 19th and early 20th centuries, but also in contemporary scholarship. After all, the pecuniary motive itself can be “democratic” if it accepts money from all comers: in 1916, the tour guide Rider's New York dedicated a special section to lodgings for women—either alone or in pairs, unescorted by men—noteing that most institutions now “consider a woman's money as good as a man's” (13). Rider continues, “All of the large hotels in the vicinity of the Grand Central Terminal state that women arriving unescorted in the evening are received without parley. In general it may be stated that the old bugaboo of women being refused admittance to hotels on this score no longer obtains in large hotels in New York City” (ibid). The new gender-based rules of inclusion, in other words, were an outcropping of the rules of business: Rider's

63 Another study that comments on the hotel's allegorical representation of capitalist social structure is James Buzard's “Perpetual Revolution” (Modernism/modernity 8.4 (2001): 559-581). In the process of relaying the cultural history of the revolving door, Buzard analyzes the image of a hotel's revolving door in F. W. Murnau's film The Last Laugh (Der Letzte Mann, 1924) as an apt symbol of the capitalist system that viciously ejects an aging doorman—but which admits the doorman again when his fortunes change: as a millionaire guest. Interestingly, Buzard emphasizes the novelty of being able to penetrate a space created, literally, “inside the door” (570), so that the pedestrian is neither inside nor outside, which I argue parallels the ambiguity of the hotel space as simultaneously public and private.
Guide goes on to contrast the new hotels to New York’s “large cabarets, where profit comes largely from extravagant food and wine orders, [and which] frequently bar out women unaccompanied by men” (13-4). Women are putatively excluded from cabarets in deference to gender conventions, but in fact financial projections subtend those conventions: unaccompanied women, it seems, did not spend enough money. Rider's Guide thus observes, “Two women can go about New York City in the evening with exactly the same freedom as can a man and a woman, if,” among other points of etiquette, they “pay the usual tips” (14). The capitalist imperative of profit, then, appears to create a democracy of the wallet, creating an effect of democratic expansion even though it is not a principle of universalism that allows the ladies in, but rather a new system of exclusion based on the emerging science of niche marketing.

I do not intend to reject altogether the idea that hotels offered women a new public space; indeed, we might regard Becky Sharp's ability to “live on nothing a year” as her canny manipulation of this new spectacle of niche marketing by “passing” as a lucrative customer. That the modernization of hotels increased women's access to public and urban space is well documented. Caroline Brucken for example, describes how women have a public space of their own with the advent of luxury hotels, particularly the institution of the ladies' lounge (Brucken 204), and much has been made of Lady Diana Manners, a young society queen, referring to the London Ritz, completed in 1907, as the “first hotel to which young unmarried women were allowed to go unchaperoned” (Montgomery-Massingberd and Watkin 72). Long before the early twentieth century, modern hotels were represented as havens for women: in “A House Divided: The Culture of the American Luxury Hotel, 1825-1860,” Molly Berger describes the “technological luxury” that “helped to make the hotel a hospitable place for women even as it
subtly invoked the tensions of nineteenth-century manhood” despite its spatial concretization of the emerging ideology of separate spheres. Berger also argues that despite its clear role in a spectacle-based marriage market, the luxury of the hotel helped to secure the “hotel's representation as a progressive urban artifact” (61), larger because hotel architecture merged with commercial architecture in two principal ways. First, Berger explains, this new common architecture language spatially linked hotels and stores, thus simplifying the navigation of urban space; second, many signature details of modern hotel architecture, such as the women's lounge, and hotel décor, such as gilded mirrors and chandeliers, were adopted by department stores and boutiques—with the perhaps intended results that women's familiarity with hotel space would make them more comfortable in commercial spaces. Berger points to continuity between the opening of public space and commercialism to show that the new hotels—referred to in contemporary newspapers as “palaces of the public”—served as “stable icons of democracy, commerce, and progress, in ironic contrast to the turmoil of the antebellum years” and as “leading indicator[s] of cosmopolitanism and commercial success” (39). Though this discursive and spatial linking of hotels, commerce, and democracy would not survive the spread of the American hotel model across the Atlantic, it is important to remember for the present study that the modernized hotels of England and Europe would retain many spatial markers of this contiguity between commercial and hotel architecture—very often not with the effect of fostering egalitarianism, but rather of reinforcing class divisions.64

64 The most significant survival of this contiguity can be seen in Chapter Six and Seven’s analyses of floating hotels—cruise ships and ocean liners—as cultural icons. Because such vessels, when at sea, could not literally be contiguous with commercial spaces, these commercial spaces were engulfed within the spaces of the most luxurious ships in the form of a mall-like gallery of shops placed conveniently near first-class lounging and dining areas.
Though I reject Berger's implication that democracy and the capitalist imperative were easily reconciled on the level of public discourse about hotels, her analysis of the relative openness of hotels as public spaces for women does apply to the spread of modern hotels across the Atlantic. For Berger, the carefully planned inclusion of women and children in these spaces of “technological luxury” simultaneously increased women's participation in the public sphere and created new spaces where gender- and class-based inequalities of power could be displayed, questioned, and strengthened. She concludes that the new hotel “exemplified the ironic tensions of the modern gendered world whereby the pursuit of leisured gentility and consumption was made possible by its opposite: energetic capitalist development characterized by work, thrift, and production” (40). In analyses like Berger's, we find that the hotel's ability both to symbolize and enact capitalist modernity is less a kind of consistency or complementarity than a contradiction or tension. For example, in her investigation of the role of hotels in the creation of “New England” as a tourist destination in the nineteenth century, Dona Brown characters the luxury hotel as a paradoxical “rent-a-palace” that reveals how “[i]ndustrial capitalism has been able to encompass the buying and selling of experiences that seem to be outside it, or in direct conflict with it” (13). Rather than monolithically symbolizing the leisure class, the strength of capitalism, modern technological progress, democracy, or cosmopolitanism, the hotel as an object of cultural discourse seems available to all—and to none—of those interpretations. As public spaces, modern American hotels during the nineteenth century were, for example, famous for allowing citizens—non-paying guests—to walk into the grand lobbies right off the street and enjoy the comforts of the public lounges and smoking rooms, yet female paying guests (escorted or not) were still routed through an inconspicuous side-door and relegated to the ladies' lounge.
Such inconsistencies meant that the hotel's “inclusiveness” was always fraught and never complete—and never more patently so than in the relation to race (a point I return to in Chapter Five). Langston Hughes, reacting to the opening of the Waldorf-Astoria during the middle of the depression, opens his poem “Advertisement for the [new] Waldorf-Astoria,” published in the December 1931 issue of *New Masses*, with the heading “LISTEN HUNGRY ONES” (3). Summarizing the sumptuous fittings and trimmings in the hotel, he ironically inquires, “Won't that be charming when the last flop-house has turned you down this winter?” (7-8) and advises that you “choose the Waldorf-Astoria as a background for your rags” (16). In private letters, he also railed against the hotel's racial politics, as African-Americans were barred both from staying or working there. Hughes' critique of the class and racial boundaries of the Waldorf-Astoria's clientele underscores the limited and relative nature of the modern hotel's “democracy.” The uneven pace and incomplete saturation of hotel modernization made access to hotels not universal or guaranteed, but rather dependent on the specific hotel; Rider's guide first warns, “In some of the smaller ones the naïve supposition still lingers that a woman who comes to a hotel at night without a man can hardly be respectable,” and then advises that unaccompanied ladies “go to a big hotel and spare yourself the insult” and always bring luggage to avoid suspicion and avoid having to pre-pay for the entire stay (16). Standoval-Strausz theorizes that such elaborate systems of caution around accepting guests was a fall-out from the increase of personal mobility during modernity. He explains, as “transience became an everyday fact of life, with people coming into contact with unknown individuals as never before,” strangers were “outside the usual forms of community-based social control, and thus presented a constant threat of disobedience and disruption....requir[ing] considerable surveillance and discipline” (204). The
constant movement of a large number of people unmoored from their home communities made hotels ideal habitations for adulterers, prostitutes, thieves, grifters, pickpockets, suicides, murderers, and alcoholics—or so newspaper articles sensationalizing such incidents insisted. A panoply of precautions followed, including mandatory prepayment for guests without baggage mentioned above and continuous surveillance by hotel employees and by other guests, all of whom could refer suspicious behavior to the hotel manager or the police. The structural—and thus visual—openness of the public rooms, entrances, and stairways enabled such surveillance, as did the invention of guest register, which attached a name and handwriting to a face and that face to a specific room, and, occasionally, the use of a “hotel detective” specifically hired to control the crime, dissolution and sexual intrigue that, according to popular discourse about the hotel, inevitably occurred in the modern hotels.65 Hotels show, in other words, the limits of Kantian universal hospitality: while laws in England, for example, required hotelkeepers to accept any guest who could pay, such openness caused considerable tension, both in the United States and in England, and was reigned in by an increasingly elaborate system of recording, organizing, watching, and, in some cases, excluding guests. While Henry Ford could celebrate the new spatial innovations of the hotel as democratic and Rider's guide could condemn hotels that rejected unaccompanied women as patently absurd and outdated, this putative spirit of universal hospitality was accompanied by fears of the crime and dissolution made possible by

65 A. K. Standoval-Strausz summarizes in the following passage not merely the social reasons why hotels were legitimately a site of illicit behavior, but, perhaps more importantly for the present project, the creation of a public discourse that associated hotels with bad behavior: “The availability of private rooms with private beds offered an convenient realm of seclusion suited for trysting; and because these spaces were temporary, evidence of misbehavior was quickly removed by the cleaning staff. Meanwhile, hotel bars made it easy for guests to use strong drink to dissolve their inhibitions and embolden themselves for the escapades ahead. With these inducements added to the hotel status as a place of transience and anonymity, it is easy to see why the most common type of misconduct in hotels was sexual in nature....Most liaisons of this kind went undetected.... Still, many of them did, with legitimate newspapers and scandal sheets alike printing numerous accounts of hotel-based affairs every year” (204-5).
such anonymity, equality, and openness—fears that not only seemed to justify a horde of exclusionary and disciplinary mechanisms designed to modulate that inclusiveness, but also, as we shall see in Part Three, powerfully shaped the experiences of hotel guests.

Part Three: Strangers in the Lobby: Trollope, Dickens, Chesterton, and the Victorian Distrust of Hotels

Throughout his travelogue *North America* (1862), Anthony Trollope registers these anxieties over hotels and their connections to potential negative effects of major social, political, and philosophical shifts associated with modernity—personal mobility, industrial capitalism, and philosophical universalism—in an extended attack on the American hotel. He opens his discussion of American hotels by peremptorily (and rather condescendingly) proclaiming himself an expert in the topic:

> I find it impossible to resist the subject of inns... I have been much too frequently a sojourner at hotels. I think I know what a hotel should and should not be; and am inclined to believe...that I could myself fill the position of a landlord with some chance of social success, though probably with none of financial success. (277)

His expertise proven, he laments how hotels crop up in each new settlement for the sake of capitalist “speculation:”

> The first sign of an incipient civilization is a hotel five stories high, with an office, a bar, a cloak-room, three gentlemen's parlors, two ladies' parlors, and a ladies' entrance, and two hundred bed rooms.... The hotel itself will create a population. We are apt to suppose that travelers make roads, and guests create hotels; but cause and effect run exactly the opposite way. I am almost disposed to think that we should become cannibals if gentlemen's legs and ladies' arms were hung up for sale in purveyor's shops. (280-1)

Trollope's comparison of for-profit hospitality to cannibalism suggests that the hotel's central role in American expansion is perversely unnatural; he goes on to describe his shock at seeing
quantities of married young women living in hotels, which, he asserts, is a highly regrettable
trend resulting from the increasingly mobile and temporary nature of American employment.

After this digression, he returns to elaborating upon his offended sensibilities at the baldly for-
profit nature of modern American hotels. His view of lodgings as capital investment helps to
explain why he boasts that his own hotel-keeping would be a social, though certainly not a
financial, success. As if to illustrate, by contrast, the crass commercial motives of American
hotels, Trollope describes the English inn as “a small house of public entertainment” that serves
long-established villages and towns (288), and then recounts his own tense experience in Milan
when he had failed to reserve lodgings beforehand. Like Mary and Joseph, roaming for lodgings
in the middle of the night, he and his wife are turned out of full inn after full inn, until finally he
finds rooms after waking a German innkeeper, who “throwing his arms around me, in a transport
of compassion, swore that he would never leave me nor my wife till he had put us to bed” (An
Autobiography 113).

Trollope's naiveté about the capitalist underpinnings of the American hotels is perhaps
understandable, given these mid-nineteenth century differences from traditional European inns.
The English inn's long history as a site of myriad social functions that served residents as well as
travelers may be surmised by its legal definition not primarily as a lodging establishment, but
rather as “a public house of entertainment” that also provided alcoholic beverages and horses for
travelers, as well as overnight accommodation when necessary (Van Zile 315). By contrast, the
sheer size and functional flexibility of the modern American hotel required considerable
investments of capital. Seen in from the perspective of hospitality, the German innkeeper's
attitude echoes Kant's dictum of universal hospitality, as well as British innkeeper law, created in
1835, when the British court ruled in the precedent-setting case *Rex v. Ivens* that an “innkeeper is not to select his guests; he has no right to say to one you shall come to my inn, and to another you shall not, as every one coming and conducting himself in a proper manner has a right to be received” (qtd. Van Zile 343). So long as the inn is not demonstrably filled to capacity, and that the guest is not disorderly or “calculated to and will injure his business” (Sherry 144), British law specified that “any innkeeper who refuses to receive or provide for a guest, is liable to be indicted therefore” (qtd. in Story 449). British innkeeping law also specified that an inn-keeper had a legal responsibility to the guests to provide a safe environment for both the guests' personal safety and that of all belongings traveling with them, and that any servant of the inn guilty of offenses against guests was liable to arrest (Schouler 291). Given this legal and cultural climate, Trollope might well interpret the creation of expensive speculative lodgings to come dangerously near a quasi-legal price gouging because the prohibitive prices of such hotels flew in the face of the spirit of the universal hospitality underwritten in England by law.

Just as Trollope's assumptions about hospitality reflect his understanding of English national identity, Trollope's descriptions of the differences between the English and American lodging industry reveal his conception of American civic culture. Trollope, having not yet witnessed the boom of fully modernized hotels that modernists would take up in their novels and stories, argues that hotel life across the Atlantic carries a greater symbolic significance than in England:

> [I]n the States the hotels are so large an institution, having so much closer and wider a bearing on social life than they do in any other country, that I feel myself bound to treat them in a separate chapter as a great national arrangement in themselves. They are quite as much thought of in the nation as the legislature, or judicature, or literature of the
country; and any falling off in them, or any improvement in the accommodation given, would strike the community as forcibly as any change in the Constitution.... (277)

Though Trollope thus identifies the hotel as an American institution, his successive descriptions of the particularities of American commercial hospitality not only prefigure the changes of English and European hotel life during the last decades of the nineteenth century, but also identify in advance the dominant hotel motifs that will figure in modernist fiction and non-fiction. These motifs attend particularly to the relative quality of hotels and inns—their modernness or quaintness, for example—with the frequent result that the hotel becomes a conduit for treatments of cultural modernity.

Trollope's critique of the American hotel thus rehearses fifty years in advance many of the common tropes of modernist's critique of an industrial, urbanized, de-individualizing modernity characterized by discipline, surveillance, mass production, and a quantitative excess balanced by the atrophy of qualitative values. American hotels are, according to Trollope, "built on a plan which to a European seems unnecessary," though he does stop to admire the "commanding exterior" afforded by that large scale (234). Once inside, Trollope dreads the inevitable "moment of misery" as "loungers" in the main public floor creep slowly but surely up to him to watch him sign the guest register, while his wife languishes alone, banished to the ladies' parlor until he transacts his business with the clerk. The guest register had by 1862 become a highly standardized affair, an enormous bound book that left spaces for the guest's name, place of origin, date of arrival, room number, and length of stay—making the register a significant tool of surveillance, allowing the hotel (and anyone viewing the register) to attach the name to the room number and to track the origin of the guests. The "loungers" mentioned by Trollope were also a staple of American hotels at the time, as anyone, whether or not the person
was a paying guest, could enter the public lounges on the ground floors of the hotel. On these American hotel lobbies, which defy the assertion of some literary critics and historians that hotels were relatively closed environments, Chesterton would later remark, “They are used almost as public streets, or rather as public squares. My first impression was that I was in some sort of high-street or marketplace during a carnival or a revolution” (21). Waiting to register, Trollope “suffered in patience” at the hands of the impersonal, apathetic hotel clerk for not appearing to care about Trollope as an individual lodger, for exercising his bureaucratic prerogative of making Trollope wait an unduly long time for him to choose the former's rooms, and for “making you request for a room before a public audience” (235). In keeping with his critique of American hotels as too public, he reserves an expensive private sitting-room for his wife's use—paternalistically asserting that no English woman could possibly stand such public hotels without having access to a private place to entertain her own guests. Only in England, he laments, does the traveler “in hotel life [enjoy] the theory of solitary existence” (279).

Of course, the American hotel does have its positive points. He appreciatively notes the cheap and abundant food and the large number and diversity of the public spaces (such as reading rooms for the men and lounges reserved solely for women). Yet these ample provisions of food and space are too excessive for Thackeray's taste, for he grumbles that all the food “swims in grease” (292) and resents that in American hotels, “a beef-steak is not a beef-steak unless a quarter pound of butter be added to it” (238). One novel space in particular perplexes him: the American bar. In contrast to the floridly critical prose typically used in the text, his temporary adoption of a simple, unevaluative style here indicates the extent of his bafflement: “The bar is held in a separate room appropriated solely to drinking,” he tersely observes (234), as
if the immorality or peculiarity of the situation will, without a doubt, be patently obvious to the reader, who will thus need no positively condemnatory language to comprehend the perversity of this function. In contrast to the English and European hotel habit of drinking principally in the dining room—wine during supper and sherry directly before or after it—in the United States, wine was not typically consumed during dinner. Drinking was concentrated in the “American bar,” a separate space for drinking that evolved out of early bar rooms, which Alexis de Tocqueville, writing in 1840, judged in a manner less like Trollope's prudish disapproval than Henry Ford's celebration of the democratic arrangement of American spaces:

> We were directed towards the finest inn in Pontiac (for there are two) and were, as usual, led into what is called the bar room, which is where drink is served and where the simplest of workmen as well as the richest of local tradesmen come to smoke, drink, and talk politics on a footing of seemingly perfect equality. (890, italics original)

The fully developed “American bar,” common by the 1860s, was perhaps less democratic than the rooms de Tocqueville was familiar with. Featuring the signature long counter and an elegantly dressed head bartender (many of whom cultivated an air of celebrity), this “bar room” was devoted to guests drinking cocktails before dinner. Cocktails, which originated in American racing and gambling communities during the early nineteenth century, consisted traditionally of four ingredients: spirits, sugar, water and bitters. The last of these ingredients at the time was, of course, considered a medicine (which helps to explain why the cocktail was originally drunk in the morning as a hangover cure). The early disreputability of cocktails, associated as they were with fast-living gamblers, dissipated in the 1860s, when the public's growing disenchantment with patent medicine “cures” uncoupled bitters from its pharmaceutical associations, transforming bitters into a flavoring component and thereby legitimizing the cocktail as a pre-
dinner habit (Haigh 21). The cultural practice of cocktail drinking in America during the last half of the nineteenth century gravitated around the growing ranks of hotel bars, which created an enormous number of books and manuals devoted to the art of the cocktail—the first of which, Jerry Thomas' *How to Mix Drinks; or, The Bon-Vivant's Companion*, was published in 1862, the same year as Trollope's travelogue.

Trollope took exception to American-style bars because of the excessive drinking he felt was encouraged by the bartenders. He fastidiously whispers to the reader, “if all I hear be true, the gentlemen occasionally drop by the bar and 'liquor up’” (61), and notes “I have also 'liquored up,' but I cannot say I enjoy the process. I do not accuse Americans of drinking much; but I do maintain that when they do drink, they drink in the most uncomfortable manner devised”(48). The luxury of the rationalized modern hotel consists not of sociably enjoying a glass of wine as the accompaniment to a leisurely meal, but rather an event of its own, implicitly governed by the laws of capitalist production: stripped of its traditional social context, “drinking” amounts to men who, “liquoring up in a nasty bar,” quickly dispatch their drinks in near total silence (22, 66), a far cry from the European hotels that may not have as much food or liquor, but in which “conversation is at any rate possible” (283). The cocktail becomes another new commodity to be purchased and consumed more frequently and in larger quantities (that is, as efficiently as possible), another new commodity whose consumption disrupts traditional consumption patterns.

Trollope's description of the excessive alcohol consumption in American bars parallels his description of the enormous servings of food passed around in the dining room, where “food is pressured upon you *ad nauseum*” and attendants “fill your cup before it is empty” (47). He

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66 Though Trollope bucks against this new social practice emerging from the modern American hotel, he finds himself cowed by it nonetheless, apologetically admitting, “I confess, however, that I like my wine. It is very wicked, but it seems to me that my dinner goes down better with a glass of sherry than without it” (47).
observed two unfortunate corollaries of such feasts: first, guests focus so intently on food that dinner, although taken in public, is not an occasion for talking or socializing, and second, guests were forced to eat and drink these endless viands on the hotel's predetermined schedule (itself necessitated by the large scale of these establishments). In Europe and England, meal charges were kept separate from room charges, and food was ordered à la carte whenever the guest became hungry, but in American hotels, the cost of all meals came included with the room price, and a guest could not choose to “opt out” of such charges, thus encouraging the guest to take all meals at the hotel rather than seek food elsewhere. In addition, private dining rooms were scarce in American hotels; instead, meals were served to all guests simultaneously, and punctual attendance was not only expected, but required if the guest intended to partake of the meal. The toll of a gong or bell alerted the hotel guests to the precise time of the meals' serving; to miss the bell was to go hungry.

Trollope perceived this creation of a rigid set of dining mores as, to put it mildly, an undesirable effect of the commercialization of hotels. Regarding breakfast, Trollope explains, “the gong sounds early in the morning, breaking one's sweet slumbers; and then a second gong thirty minutes later, makes you understand you must proceed to breakfast whether dressed or no” (47). If the guest misses breakfast, “nobody scolds you....but the breakfast is, as they say in this country, 'through'” (ibid), and the guest must continue to fast until luncheon. After being shepherded into the dining area at precisely the correct time by the sound of the gong, another disciplined task awaits. The act of ordering the meal has transformed into a matter for “anxious study” and “elaborate reading,” a performance required to process the “incredibly and unnecessarily long” bill of fare. If one is to escape the disapproving eyes of the waiter, the diner
must decide quickly and enunciate the order with “clear articulation” (ibid). He observes, “they begrudge you no amount that you can eat or drink; but they begrudge you a single moment that you sit there neither eating nor drinking” (ibid). The slowly paced, communal dinners that Trollope had savored in England have transformed into a “disagreeable duty,” “a painful labor [resembling] a schoolboy’s lesson or the six hours' confinement of a clerk,” where the diner is “marshaled” by the attendants who try to process his meal as quickly as possible (ibid).

Trollope's desire for leisurely meals has been sacrificed to the efficiency of the modern hotel machine, whose economies of scale have rewarded the obedient diner with an all-you-can-eat feast—leaving him to conclude this meditation on meals by observing, “One is in a free country...and yet in an American inn one can never do as one likes” (61-2).

Other apparent luxuries of the modern hotel, such as steam-powered laundry, could be had at exorbitant prices and involved a parade of “very stringent order[s]” that forbade patrons from secretly washing their clothes behind their private bedroom door (237). Meanwhile, the American bar habit was gently encouraged by a price differential, where drinking English-style, by wine and sherry during dinner, could only be had at exorbitant prices—two dollars for a glass of sherry, compared to the exponentially cheaper ten-cent cocktail (ibid). What Trollope would prefer he makes quite clear in his nostalgic recollection of teatime at a traditional English inn:

The greatest luxury at an English inn is one's tea, one's fire, and one's book. Such an arrangement is not practicable at an American hotel. Tea, like breakfast, is a great meal, at which meat should be eaten, generally with the addition of much jelly, jam, and sweet preserve; but no person delays over his tea-cup. I love to have my tea-cup emptied and filled with gradual pauses, so that time for oblivion may accrue, and no exact record be taken. No such meal is known at American hotels. (63)
Again, while American hotels offer copious amounts of mostly enjoyable food, because the mass production of this bounty requires the same level efficiency and centralization seen in factories, they do not offer what for Trollope is the true luxury: leisurely consumption, together with the individual's choice as to what to consume, what quantity to consume, and where and when to consume it. Trollope's complaints about American hotels thus reflect his dissatisfaction with the transformation of hospitality into a capitalist commodity.

In the American hotel, Trollope (perhaps presciently) saw the demise of traditional English lodgings; writing right on the cusp of the importation of modern hotels to England and Europe, he observed nostalgically, “the old English wayside inn is gone. The railway hotel has taken its place” (279). The railway hotels of which he speaks, built in England during the 1850s and 1860s before the arrival of the “luxury” hotel, combined the inefficiency of traditional inns with the impersonality of modern hotels, but without the character of the inns or the dependability of the hotels. Railway hotels, Trollope explains, are spaces that travelers stay away from as long as possible, only daring to retreat to it for the hours necessary for sleep. Comparing the brusque detachment of railway hotel wage laborers to the cheerful and personalized greeting of the traditional innkeeping family, he complains, “the old welcome is wanted,” displacing inn sociability with the new English habit of “hotel life [as] the theory of solitary existence” (ibid), whose effect is “gloomy, desolate, comfortless, and almost suicidal” (ibid).

Trollope's association of the new hotel with death, suicide, and other unhappiness, interestingly, presages a common trope of modern hotel writing. Benjamin's suicide at the Hotel de Francia at the Spanish-French border is frequently mentioned in contemporary works on hotels, and many modernists, whose own poor health led them to hotels in sunny, dry climes,
produced hotel fiction featuring sick or dying guests. Hence the present chapter's epigraph, in which Willi Frischauer (known as the biographer of Hermann Goering and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis but, more importantly here, the author of a nostalgic history of hotels covering the 1920s-1960s) recalls Charlie Chaplin holding forth on his obsession with prisons as he and Frischauer lounge in Vienna's elegant, spacious, and well-appointed Grand Hotel. As Chaplin's macabre monologue suggests, this juxtaposition of luxury and abundance with the less savory aspects of life—which has been traced above as a feature of nineteenth-century hotels, incipient in the architectural features common to prisons and hotels alike and Trollope's disapproval of the many constraints of hotel life—will survive the Victorian era and become a feature in modernist hotel fiction, for example, in Jean Rhys's representation of hotels as prisons, as we shall see in the next chapter.

But before Rhys's and others' analysis of the fully modernized hotels beginning to appear in England and Europe around the turn of the century, Victorian writers like Trollope, commenting on the new hotels in America and transitional forms of English hospitality, established many of the tropes the modernists would later inherit. One Victorian cultural critic in particular needs to be addressed: Charles Dickens, whose comical condemnation of all modern hotels trumps Trollope's bilious review of the English railroad hotel. Dickens' travel writing in *Household Words* and *All the World Round* unsparingly—and in great detail—documented what we have just heard Trollope voicing: the plight of the English traveler during the 1850s and early 1860s, poised between the era of the traditional inn and the era of the fully industrialized hotel. In “An Unsettled Neighborhood,” Dickens, with the careful attention to detail of the

67 Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* and *Magic Mountain*, Katherine Mansfield's later stories, and Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier*. 
anthropologist (but not the anthropologist's detachment), documents the effects of the railroad on London neighborhoods. Concurrent with the appearance of a new train station, he grumbles, the number of would-be hotels explodes, as “three eight-roomed houses out of every four set themselves up as Private Hotels,” creating a flurry of activity, most significantly the fierce competition that encouraged flagrant misrepresentation of the accommodations the hotels offered (47). In “A Flight,” he describes the disturbing, inhospitable intensity of this competition by narrating, “All the rabid hotel population of Boulogne howl and shriek outside a distant barrier, frantic to get at us” (142). If one accepts a bid, these same hotel employees will take the traveler's luggage and, to Dickens' chagrin, “enjoy themselves in playing athletic games with it” (168). Once at the hotel, the conditions do not improve. Dickens represents these hotels as undependable: at best, hotel advertisements do not accurately depict the character or quality of the accommodations, and at worst, the ersatz hotel would turn out to be a tiny corner of a room in a private home.68

Even the best of these hotels, according to Dickens, are full of boors, lack a sense of community, feature rickety furniture that threaten at every moment to deliver their inhabitant onto the floor, employ rude and dirty personnel, and, as Sanditon's Charlotte discovered, invariably overcharge. In “An Unsettled Neighborhood” (1854), he laments the destructiveness of the new fad for hotels by describing one hotel in particular. In this neighborhood, long-term

68 Or, to take the worst case, described in 1851's “A Narrative of Extraordinary Suffering,” the listed hotel may have disappeared entirely. In this fictionalized account of hotel-hunting, Dickens follows the aptly named “Mr. Lost, of the Maze, Ware,” who embarks upon a business trip to London on behalf of his firm, “Lost & Lost,” which his son moved to Stratford-upon-Avon, where the younger Lost had met and married “Miss Shakespeare, supposed to be a lineal descendent of the immortal Bard” (123). Mrs. Lost, as familiar as Dickens with the complexities of modern urban space, insures his trip with the Railway Passengers' Assurance Company, though chaos, of course, ensues. Dickens' juxtaposition between England's bewildering network of urban railways and hotels and the rural Stratford-upon-Avon, with its literary living history in the form of the younger Mrs. Lost, suggests a tension between literary production and modern hotels, which is investigated in Chapter Five of the present work.
lodgings had long been available, but discreetly and with a minimum of advertisement or signage, and instead of the massive, carefully planned, and rationally designed hotels that already dotted the American landscape, this London neighborhood consisted of “crazily built houses — the largest, eight roomed — [which] were rarely shaken up by any conveyance heavier than the spring van that came to carry off the goods of a 'sold-off' tenant” (46). But the new railroad station, Dickens explains, “put the neighborhood off its head, and wrought it to the feverish pitch that it has ever since been unable to settle down to any one thing and will never settle down again” (47). The residential neighborhood becomes commercial as residents “who had not sufficient beds for themselves...immediately beg[a]n offering to let beds to the traveling public” by placing “coffee-pots, stale muffins, and egg-cups...into parlour-windows” and writing “Good Accommodations for Railway Travellers” (ibid). Dickens summarizes this transformation by complaining that greedy hotel-keepers had “knocked down rows of houses, [taking] the whole of Little Twig Street into one immense hotel” (47)—recalling Marx and Engels' description of the “constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation” that characterized modern capitalism (223). Echoing this language of disruption and unrest, Dickens contextualizes this influx of hotels as a moral menace: “What I am distressed at,” he opines, “is the state of mind — the moral condition — into which the neighborhood has got. It is unsettled, dissipated, wandering (I believe nomadic is the crack word at the moment), and don't know its own mind for an hour” (48). Dickens, in highlighting the hotel one of the most powerful images of the chaos of modernization, underlines the different functions and cultural associations of the hotel on each side of the Atlantic during the nineteenth century. In the United States, the large, rationally designed modern hotel played a
significant role, second only to the railroad itself, in the careful organization of territorial expansion, but in England, the slapdash railroad hotel was a transitional form of hospitality that displaced traditional spaces and that, for Dickens, both symbolized and aggravated the social disorganization accompanying the spread of the railway.

Though Dickens’ moral outrage at the flurry of activity around hotels might (and for good reason) seem irrelevant for the study of modernism, his portrayal of the transformation of hospitality in “An Unsettled Neighborhood” deserves close attention. Dickens here describes how J. Wigzell, a neighborhood publican running the local pub, Norwich Castle, becomes a very different kind of public figure when he knocks down two adjacent houses to convert and rename his public inn into the more modern “Railway Hotel,” even decorating the edifice by placing “an illuminated clock, and a vane at the top of a pole like a little golden Locomotive” (45). These two modernizing features—the clock that makes the regular disposal of time a visible feature of the local landscape and the locomotive that synergistically associates his updated establishment with another modern technology, the railroad—strike Dickens as absurd, yet another indication of the madness infecting the formerly sleepy and predictable neighborhood. In a characteristic move, Dickens then contemplates the effect of this clock on the young locals: “the smallest child in the neighborhood who can tell the clock, is now convinced that it doesn't have the time to say twenty minutes to twelve, but comes back and jerks out, like a little Bradshaw, ‘Eleven forty.’ Eleven-forty!” (46). The hotel's contribution to the chaos brought by the railway does not end here, though; Dickens immediately moves on to lambast the changes wrought in J. Wigzell himself, who formerly provided a reliable public spectacle, “constantly eating in the bar, and constantly coming out with his mouth full and his hat on, to stop his amiable daughter from
giving more credit” (45). Dickens lovingly recalls the angry but endearingly familiar neighborhood crank Wigzell used to be, then details the changes wrought in him as the neighborhood changes character:

He used to wear his shirt-sleeves and his stiff drab pantaloons, like any other publican; and if he went out twice a year, besides going to the Licensed Victuallers' Festival, it was as much as he did. What is the state of that man now? His pantaloons must be railway checks; his upper garment must be a cut-away coat, perfectly undermined by travelling pockets; he must keep a time-bill in his waistcoat...and he must habitually start off down the line at five minutes' notice. Now I know he has no business down the line; he has no more occasion to go there than a Chinese. (47)

Instead of playing the role of the publican—his true business, which though it had always been commercial appears traditional and akin to civil service by comparison—Wigzell “feels he has done his business” merely by riding up and down the line (ibid). However violent Wigzell used to be as the publican of Norwich Castle, it was preferable, for Dickens, because, in contrast to his position as the owner-operator of the Railway Hotel, he stayed in the neighborhood and contributed to a distinctive, reliable local culture.

Dickens further analyzes the erosion of traditional forms of hospitality in another Household Words essay, “Refreshments for Travelers” (1860). In this piece, Dickens, again focusing on these new railroad hotels, comically illustrates the guest's diminished experience of human connection with the employees, as well as the reduction in the employees' affective investment in their labor. When a chair in the dining room breaks—with a diner still perched in it—he and his fellow travelers summon help from the waiter, who merely shrugs and informs them that he will be quitting his job the next day and returning to his home in the country.69 As

69 Interestingly, Dickens' choice of this particular waiter as representative of hotel wage labor suggests that Victorians assumed that early hotel employees were part of the massive migrations from the country to urban centers during industrialization.
this anecdote suggests, Dickens argues that because the employees feel no intrinsic attachment to the work or to the hotel, the guests themselves are not met with true hospitality: “We all know the new people who have come to keep the new hotel,” Dickens warily recounts to a knowing British public, “and who wish they had never come, and who (inevitable result) wish we had never come” (192). Like Trollope, Dickens pines nostalgically for the cheerful, dedicated hospitality—hospitality for hospitality's sake—seen as characteristic of traditional inns, and neither the Enlightenment-backed promise of abstract hospitality nor the new legal guarantees that require a hotel-keeper to accept each traveler can compensate for this loss. In an echo of Trollope's horror at American hotels being created primarily as financial speculation, Dickens both links the depersonalization of hospitality to the profit-motive and rejects the increase in consumer goods and spatial amenities as a suitable substitute for the friendly, personalized attention of a traditional innkeeper. He writes that the railroad hotel is a place

where we can get anything we want, after its kind, for money; but where nobody is glad to see us, or sorry to see us, or minds (our bill paid) whether we come or go, or how, or why, or when anybody cares about us. We all know this hotel, where we have no individuality...the place is largely wholesale, and there is a lingering personal retail interest within us that asks to be satisfied. (192)

Using the first-person plural, Dickens indicates that his impatience with commercial hospitality is a national affliction, not merely a private obsession of himself alone, while his selection of the word “retail” to indicate personal attention implies that the problem is not necessarily the mere fact that hospitality involves a monetary exchange, but rather the mass production of commercial hospitality.

Perhaps as a result of this fundamental problem with modern hospitality, independent of any comfort or luxury the hotel might boast, Dickens, even when he finally finds a hotel room he
likes, fails to describe this wonderful experience in a luxurious Paris hotel. Making a rhetorical juxtaposition that recalls Chaplin's prison monologue in Vienna's Grand Hotel, Dickens immediately moves on, telling his readers, “Whenever I am at Paris, I am dragged by an invisible force to the Morgue” (196). Dickens, in other words, refuses to exchange superficial luxury for his ideal of the hospitable inn-keeper, which, to judge by The Pickwick Papers, consists of an abundance of good spirits (in both senses of the words). Later in the century, the opulence partially masking the rationalized efficiency of the modern hotels in America begins to appear in English hotels, epitomized by the erection of the London Ritz, but even then, one commenter, recalling Dickens' stark descriptions of unadorned railroad hotels, also shares Dickens' sensitivity to the modern hotel's efficient “mass production” of rooms, hallways, and public spaces: G. K. Chesterton, reacting to this mass-produced space coated with superficial elegance, in his 1922 travelogue What I Saw in America, comments on this topic less bitterly, but no less cuttingly, than Dickens. Of one famous hotel, he remarks, “It was called the Biltmore; and I wondered how many national humorists had made the obvious comment of wishing they had built less” (51). Chesterton's commentary on the hotels represents a later stage of hotel modernization, when Statler's model had become the norm in America and to a small degree had cropped up in England and Europe, but he nonetheless inherits from Dickens a distrust of spatially rationalized hotels and from Trollope a preference for traditional English inns. Like Trollope, Chesterton associates the large scale of accommodations with a lack of personal freedom, and like Chaplin, Rhys, Mann, and Dickens mentioned above, Chesterton finds that the discomforts and limitations of the modern hotel—the annoyance at waking up en masse by gong or a preference to linger over tea by firelight or the threat of sleeping one wall away from a thief or prostitute—seem to
undermine the guest's sense of basic safety and to provoke existential reflection about life and death.

Such associations are not the exclusive or timeless property of hotels, but rather always firmly connected to the specific historical, geographical, spatial, and discursive contexts of particular hotels or types of hotels. Turning again to Chesterton's travel writing on American hotels will illuminate this connection, as he traces the influential Statlerian model of the large, efficient, fully capitalized and technologically advanced hotel as the specific occasion for a nightmare scenario made possible only within urban capitalist modernity. The psychological terror he describes is invoked by the Statlerian hotel's exaggerated and larger-than-life use of interchangeable parts. Describing a New York hotel, he explains,

> If the passage outside your bedroom door, or hallway as it is called, contains, let us say, a small table with a green vase and a stuffed flamingo, or some trifle of the sort, you may be perfectly certain that there is exactly the same table, vase and flamingo on everyone of the thirty-two landings of that towering habitation. This is where it differs most, perhaps, from the crooked landings and unexpected levels of the old English inns, even when they call themselves hotels. (19)

While Chesterton here underlines the flexibility of the term “hotel,” the greater diversity of English hotels when compared to their American counterparts, as well as the English inn's spatial uniqueness and irregularities—which I shall describe in Chapter Five—what matters here most is that Chesterton identifies this rationalization of the lived environment as the cause of particularly *irrational* experiences: terror, crime, and confusion. He continues:

> To me there was something weird, like a magic multiplication, in the exquisite sameness of the suites. It seemed to suggest the still atmosphere of some eerie psychological story. I once myself entertained the notion of a story, in which a man was to be prevented from entering his house (the scene of a crime or some calamity) by people who painted and
furnished the next house to look exactly like it.... I came to America and found an hotel fitted and upholstered throughout for the enactment of my phantasmal fraud. I offer the skeleton of my story with all humility to some of the lady-writers of detective stories in America. (19-20)

Interestingly, Chesterton chooses not to dismiss the mass-produced modern hotel as devoid of imagination or affective value; instead, he demonstrates how the spatial “multiplication” derived from the industrial economy of scale is experienced, in the mind of a hotel guest, as “magic” and “exquisiteness” rather than as bland rationality and efficiency. Such a transformation has its price, though, as Chesterton taps into the decades-old discourse of the hotel environment as a site of risk-taking and crime; the hotel's magic and exquisiteness is at the same time lurid, negative, and often dangerous. What Chesterton adds to this staple of hotel discourse is the way he identifies industrialization as the ultimate source of this unstable atmosphere, arguing that the sameness engendered by mass production, through its obliteration of markers of difference or ownership (which one is the house belonging to the man in Chesterton's fantasy?), invites confusion and facilitates crime.

Chesterton's unsettling experience—his sense of having already imagined the modern hotel before actually encountering one in America—underlines the anomalous position of the hotel within any timeline of modernization. Writing in 1922, Chesterton has already imagined a living space (whether private home or hotel) that perfectly materializes the rules of mass-production, but he only encounters this vision of space as consummate commodity when he crosses the Atlantic. As I will emphasize in Chapter Five, many other modernists represented hotels as chronologically out of step, so that, as in Chesterton's piece, new and modernized hotels induced a sense of *déjà vu*, while extant traditional-style lodgings are seen as chronological refugees, as historical remnants that demonstrated the temptation of (and the impotence of)
nostalgia. For now, though, a different modernist parallel for Chesterton's “phantasmal fraud”—Freud's “The Uncanny” (1919)—provides a suggestive context for the modern hotel as already seen in advance. Chesterton's reference to an “eerie psychological story” recalls Freud's analysis of Hoffman's “The Sandman,” just as the feeling of “calamity” Chesterton refers to echoes Freud's characterization of the uncanny as “arous[ing] dread and creeping horror” (368). And Freud's protracted investigation of the roots of the term uncanny, of course, in their literal meaning of “un-homeliness,” suggests that the uncanny is the appropriate and perhaps tautologically unavoidable emotional response to the hotel merely because it is an alternative to the guest's own domestic space. Most fundamentally, though, Freud's definition the uncanny as “that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once familiar” (369-70) and as “an involuntary return to the same situation” (390) characterizes the experience of Chesterton, who chillingly witnesses the materialization of his commodified space fantasy. Additionally, Chesterton's hypothetical hotel guest, who sees “exactly the same table, vase and flamingo on everyone of the thirty-two landings” (32), replicates Freud's own experience: a passage detailing his humiliation and terror when, on vacation in a provincial Italian city, he unwittingly happens upon the town's red-light district not once, not twice, but three times.

What makes this Freud-Chesterton parallel truly productive in the context of the present chapter is how Chesterton revises or supplements Freud's theory of the uncanny by positing the rules of capitalist rationality as a kind of primal scene that is repressed and then re-encountered as uncanny. A guest who expects a hotel to provide a welcome sense of novelty because it is not the domestic environment will encounter the uncanny because the environment consists of
repeated units and structures common to all modernized hotels; a guest anticipating a sense of luxury because it is not a factory or work-space will experience the uncanny because the norms and economies of industrial capitalism are indeed at work in the hotel. While Chesterton, this return of the (industrial) repressed creates dramatic potential in the form of crime, Freud, as we might expect, interprets this confusion as a sign of suppressed desire and nascent neurosis. For example, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud describes a similar situation in which, during a dream, his patient, a young man

found himself at a hotel at a seasonal resort; it was night; he mistook the number of his room and entered a room in which an elderly lady and her two daughters were undressing to go to bed. He [the dreamer] continues: 'Then there are some gaps in the dream; something is missing; and at the end there was a man in the room who wanted to throw me out, and with whom I had to struggle.' (258)

Unsurprisingly, Freud interprets these gaps in the dream as an analogue of the female genitals that the dreamer unconsciously desired to view. As a series of repeated units, the hotel is now a narrative site or platform available for use within a variety of cultural networks, whether as a locus of psychological neurosis (for Freudd) or of crime (for Chesterton). What links both accounts is that the specifically modern aspects of the hotel make it a terrifying space, as the hotel's new, repetitive, rationalized, and technologically advanced structure stands in stark contrast visually, texturally, and spatially, but not psychologically, to the traditional Gothic terrifying space of crumbling walls, asymmetries, unexpected niches, locked doors, and hidden rooms.

For Chesterton, the hotel functions as a dystopian enclave, a space that allows him to dream up terrifying scenarios: a machine for dreaming up detective novel plots. Though it is the novel structural aspects of the hotel that make such machining possible, we have seen this
association of the hotel with all that is questionable—Koestenbaum memorably refers to the hotel as “a submoral zone” (98)—existing throughout nineteenth-century commentary on the hotel. Chesterton, channeling Dickens' and Trollope's distrust of everything American when it comes to hospitality, continues to improvise on this theme:

Surely it might be possible for the unsophisticated Nimrod K. Moose... [to] be entangled somehow in this net or repetitions or recurrences. Surely something tells me that his beautiful daughter, the Rose of Red Murder Gulch, might seek for him in vain amid the apparently unmistakeable surroundings of the thirty-second floor, while he was being quietly butchered by the floor-clerk on the thirty-third floor, an agent of the Green Claw (that formidable organization); and all because the two floors looked exactly alike to the virginal Western eye. (19-20)

Americans and small-town denizens, Chesterton here rather rudely implies, lack the tools to navigate new rationalized environments successfully—and with disastrous results. Coming from a small Western town, itself implicated in geographically entrenched violence (“Red Murder Gulch”) that they have so far escaped, Nimrod and Rose Moose finally meet inescapable violence in an urban hotel. As Chesterton substitutes the hotel for the wild West as the locus of violence and mob activity (the “Green Claw”), he relocates terror from the scene of a Western film—a rustic, legally under-regulated, sparsely populated, and remote pioneer town—to the technologically modern, established, densely established fully rationalized and capitalized environment of the large modern hotel. Paradoxically, the refuge for travelers, for Chesterton, becomes their very source of danger. The butchering of Nimrod K. Moose, rendered by Chesterton as both absurd and as terrifying, encapsulates and intensifies Austen's first tentative discussions of the early hotel as an unreliable, unprestigious, expensive, and lonely yet crowded accommodation, Trollope's angry denunciation of the modern hotel as a disciplinary apparatus, Dickens' wholesale condemnation of the railroad hotel, and contemporary newspaper accounts
that vacillate between expressing awe at the ingenuity and lavishness of the hotel and representing them as dens of iniquity. But the ironic tone of Chesterton's account as he smirks at Rose's plight (and at the women novelists who, he graciously suggests, may freely adapt his germ of a detective novel plot for the furtherance of their careers) departs from Victorian attitudes by adding a new sense of affective distance from the hotel and a literary self-consciousness about the hotel's power as a setting, which we will see in some, but not all, of modernist accounts of the hotel. As more and more American-style hotels are built in England and Europe during the modernist period, opportunities for cynical castigations of these hotels arise locally (rather than through travel writing on America by Dickens, Trollope, and Chesterton). The modernists inherit and adapt the Victorian discourse toward the modern hotel, but the continued existence of traditional or incompletely modernized inns and hotels complicates the relationship between the modernist representation of hotels and their evaluation or judgments of the forces of modernization relevant to the hotel (primarily increased mobility, communications technologies, and the growth of consumer capitalism). The modern hotel is a paradoxically transient abode—a prolonged state of spatial difference, neither permanent nor momentary, neither fully modernized nor fully traditional. Just as the hotel space differs both from the familiar routines of home or work and from the fleeting, anonymous contact of modern spaces like the urban street, so too do modernist hotel texts escape or avoid positing an easy differentiation between the traditional and the modern. These works also transcend an entrenchment of leisure spaces like hotels around an impossible ideal of total escape or distance from the forces of modernization. Spatially, temporally, and socially, the hotel is a site of deterriorization and reterritorialization alike; it is a liminal site just as unavailable for total
subsumption under a model of modernity that excludes all but the novel and momentary as it is for total subsumption under a model of leisure that excludes all but freeing and peaceful.
“A good hotel has virtue—a virtue hard to define. One must show it in action; which means, to tell the story.”
Elizabeth Bowen, *The Shelbourne Hotel*

Chapter Four sought to contextualize modernist representations of the hotel in two primary ways: first, by defining “the hotel” as a specifically modern spatial technology, and second, by identifying a British Victorian discourse about the hotel that modernists would respond to and adapt. The present chapter will continue in this first vein by undertaking for high modernism the kind of the cultural-historical work done for the Victorian period, while continuing to identify concept of leisure as a significant component of the British discourse on hotels—so significant, in fact, that I would argue that the dialectic of labor and leisure was a consistent, perhaps even dominant theme within modernist representations of hotels.

Accordingly, one of the aims of this chapter is to demonstrate how the grafting of leisure onto British hotel discourse was part and parcel of the economic, spatial, and social modernization of temporary lodgings. With the rise of the hotel as a technologically advanced and fully industrialized capitalist venture came the recasting of temporary lodgings as destinations in themselves (rather than as necessary evils for traveling elsewhere) and the proliferation of a professional discourse around hotels (including articles in popular newspapers about new hotels, essays about hotel structures in *Architectural Forum* and *The Illustrated Carpenter and Builder*, and, finally, the creation of industry-specific journals like *Hotel World*, *Hotel Monthly*, *Hotel*
The same innovations that made a modern hotel more profitable were touted as guest amenities, while the stark, efficient shapes of industrial architecture were disguised with layers of luxury in the form of gilt surfaces, plush carpets, and electric light fixtures. Meanwhile, as I discussed in Chapter Three, industrial geographers began to identify entire communities and ecosystems as ripe for development into a cohesive, multilayered, commercial leisure venture that linked these new hotels with railroad termini, restaurants, theaters, music halls, and natural features like beaches and mineral springs. In other words, as sociologist Siegfried Kracauer observes in “Travel and Dance,” modern leisure consists of “the very indulgence of spatial and temporal activity as such.” Travel, just like dance, “are no longer events that happen to unfold in space and time, but instead brand the transformation of space and time itself as an event” (67). Around the turn of the century, then, Trollope’s complaint that British hotels were “suicidal” and encouraged guests to flee elsewhere during daylight hours became obsolete, at least in reference to the new Grand Hotels that began to dot the British and European landscape. Of course, even by the end of the 1930s, the English hospitality industry, which had experienced “uninterrupted growth” during the twenties and thirties and accounted for more labor force than the shipbuilding, steel, or cotton industries, was still “dominated by localized, individual, and often family-run operations” and contained fewer hotel chain operations than the United States (Pope 660, 658). Nonetheless, the encroachment of the rationalized hotels profoundly altered consumer expectations about their lodgings and influenced many independent or family-run inns, pensions, and hotels to offer similar amenities, follow similar routines, and maintain similar standards of cleanliness and customer service.
The Grand Hotel, in other words, if it did not technically dominate the hospitality industry, did begin to dominate public discourse about travel, particularly British newspapers and advertisements portraying the hotel as an indispensable foundation for a successful holiday. Just as quickly, the present chapter will show, modernist writers not only used hotels as platforms for aesthetic production (the first major Surrealist publication, Andre Breton and Philipe Soupault’s automatic writing collaboration, “Les Champs Magnetiques” [1920], was written at the Hotel des Grands Hommes) but also began to expand and adapt this public discourse on hotels as leisure spaces, very often qualifying or critiquing that discourse. These works of modernism, I argue, substitute a leisure theory of value for the labor theory of value—a substitution focused through the lens of the fully modernized hotel. In the preceding chapter, I argued what the modern hotel should not be regarded as (the hotel is not, I concluded, an absolute, simple, or mimetic microcosm of modernity), but in the present chapter, I would like to begin exploring how literary scholars should understand the modern hotel. At the very least, modernism and modern hotels should be regarded as mutually enabling: when, for example, Christopher Isherwood wrote to E. M. Forster in 1934 that “some characters from A Passage to India” are milling about, in the flesh, at the Canary Islands hotel, and that a few months later, in a Russian hotel, “We had a very nice room, with the kind of stove that killed Zola. I returned with a few pages of a new book; very defeatest, because it is all about the twenties” (Letters Between 31, 62), Isherwood’s presentation of the hotel as a dreamlike, magical space uniting past and present writers and capable of materializing the notable characters of modernism underscores the extent to which the production of modernism and of the modern leisure space were in practice inseparable. More specifically, I argue that the hotel works as a hermeneutic figure for rendering modernization
visible—allowing modernists to write modernity as a spectacle by capturing and organizing the considerable economic, material, and demographic shifts and transactions that criss-crossed the space of the modern hotel. To put it differently, if modernity is the fleeting and contingent and the hotel—as a spatial paradox providing a dwelling for travelers—is a pause before and after experiencing space-time compression (to use David Harvey’s phrase), then the relationship between the two resembles the theory of quantum mechanics that, like the British modern hotel, was developing during the first third of the twentieth century: the hotel is the particle (the visible quantum) for the wave (full of energy, but difficult to measure) that is modernity.70

This chapter proceeds in three parts. I begin with a brief cultural history of the arrival of the American-style modern hotel in England during the early twentieth century, using the Ritz as a well-known example of the technologically advanced, spatially rationalized, luxurious, and profitable “grand hotel.” This section is intended not only to illuminate why the modern hotel became a figure of great interest to modernists, but also to begin considering the dialectic of luxury and efficiency that renders the modern hotel a very highly textured and curiously contradictory economic artifact; this combination of Fordist efficiency and Taylorist managerial style with spectacular waste and exaggerated expenditure is featured prominently in hotel modernism. Next, I map the modernist reactions and contributions to the discourses emerging around modern hotel by giving an overview of modernist responses to the modern hotel, creating a portrait of hotel modernism that includes Wyndham Lewis’s farcical The Wild Body, George Orwell’s muckraking Down and Out in Paris and London, and Jean Rhys’s bleak Good Morning,

70 Such comparisons have been made in the context of modernist criticism, but not for representations of the hotel. For example, in his review of William Everdell’s The First Moderns, Michael Saler also posits parallel between Baudelaire and quantum physics by noting, “Baudelaire's definition of 1859, touching on the absolute and the fragmentary aspects of modernism, had its own ‘correspondences’ with Bohr's principle of complementarity of 1926” (166).
Midnight. These works, I argue, are structured by a dialectic of freedom and discipline that they present as circulating in the hotel through the very spatial and material features of the modern leisure space. Here, I make use of Erving Goffman’s theory of the action space to describe hotel modernism’s uneasy awareness of the hotel as simultaneously a fount of possibility and space of discipline. Finally, I offer closer analyses of Arnold Bennett’s Imperial Palace and Katherine Mansfield’s In a German Pension. Mansfield generates novel techniques associated with modernist prose by attempting to visualize the modern leisure space, thus showing how modernism and the modern hotel emerged simultaneously through each other. I conclude that Mansfield, as well as the modernists mentioned above, represent the hotel guests’ opportunities to diverge from the social and affective norms of everyday habitus as indissoluble from the hotel’s function as a surveillance mechanism supporting ideological formations. Similarly, Bennett, while casting doubt on the hotel’s ability to fulfill the ideological burdens of leisure—freedom, pleasure, relaxation, self-definition, and sociability—simultaneously takes narrative advantage of the hotel as a compelling source of plot twists, exotic settings, interesting characters, and philosophically challenging and culturally resonant themes. Ultimately, I argue, modernist interest in the hotel is derived at least as much from the hotel’s function as a stimulant to aesthetic production as it does from the array of positive values attributed to them by leisure ideology; just as Henry James assigns a more positive role to his Venice hotel in his Preface to The Portrait of a Lady than he allows Isabel Archer to enjoy in the leisure spaces of Italy, so too do modernist writers find inspiration in the very spaces that fail to satisfy their characters.

As I will speak chiefly of the London Ritz before I move on to considering the significance of the modern hotel for modernist literature, I would like to end this introduction
with an anecdote that will foreshadow the arguments I make in the second and third portions of this chapter about the mutual dependence of modernism and modern leisure spaces as social and discursive phenomena. This anecdote involves Filippo Marinetti—a story told by his daughter:

From early on I understood that papà had a gift for transforming the difficulties of life into play.... We were staying at the famous Grand Hotel Baglioni, a place charged with historical associations, one that had traditionally hosted the most celebrated personalities of the time. In the morning when we ordered breakfast and as [the waiter] began to bring in the food he had difficulty balancing the two large trays brimming with cups, teapots, coffee, chocolate, brioches, and marmalade. Papà, observing his acrobatic maneuvers, whispered in my ear, "It looks like a Futurist dance!" But as the waiter approached our table his shoe got caught in an impertinent crease in the carpet and, doing a pirouette as he tried to save the trays and their contents, he fell to the floor: an explosion of tea, coffee, cups and glasses, chocolate, brioches...my father was soaked with all these tidbits. There was silence, and a panic-stricken expression on the face of the poor waiter, blushing with embarrassment. Then came an explosion of laughter from my father, who added: "Bravo! Good fellow, you've performed a perfect and very theatrical form of Futurist aviation!" Reassured, the hapless waiter left the room. (49)

**Modern Hospitality Crosses the Atlantic**

The literary texts I examine in this chapter represent the modernist fruits of a protracted cultural-historical process that gradually eroded the somewhat smug remove at which many Victorian British visitors to America viewed the modern hotel. I speak of the late nineteenth century decades during which American-style hotels—large-scale capitalist ventures boasting modern amenities, a rationalized and optimized architecture, and a labor-force as disciplined, specialized, and mobile as those in factories—began to spread across the Atlantic. While the hotels we know today are the descendants of these modern hotels, and while many hotels built during the modern era still successfully operate today, we should not and cannot assume that contemporary hotels occupy precisely the same cultural space that modern hotels occupied
The contemporary hospitality industry is dominated by chains and corporations, whereas such chains were the exception (albeit an important exception) during the era of literary modernism. I wish to emphasize this differentio avoid reproducing the quiet vein of essentialism and anti-historicism that often runs through critical and sociological theory about the hotel form. The ease and fluidity with which, for example, Kracauer's commentary appears to echo Jameson's account of the Bonaventure in Postmodernism or Foucault's account of heterotopias, is, I argue, potentially deceptive because it appears to create a common and timeless account of the hotel as a social space and as a platform for philosophical thought. For example, Wayne Koestenbaum's Hotel The exhaustively explores the repertoire of hotel literature from all parts of the globe during the past three hundred years, skipping swiftly from a discussion of Heidegger's argument that the fundamental human condition is not-being-at-home to an analysis of Stanley Kubrick's The Shining (1980) or the Marx Brothers' Room Service (1938), and not hesitating to jumble together hotel accounts from the United States, Germany, France, England, Austria, and Mexico. Of course, Koestenbaum's deliberate juxtapositions allow him to mine unexpected and fruitful resonances among them, but his acrobatic ability to weave together these diverse sources also indicates his implicit reliance on the hotel as a timeless and universal form with little regard for their specific historical and cultural manifestations. Though Hotel Theory is an impressive and provocative work, it nonetheless shares with many other critical and theoretical hotel texts an unacknowledged phenomenological or existential foundation that assumes each guest of a hotel will experience spatial transience in the same basic way. Hence, we find that hotel criticism allows endless variations on the "transcendental homelessness" theme inaugurated by Lukács in The Theory of the Novel (1920).

Even some of the most particularized accounts of specific hotels at specific historical moments indulge periodically in transhistorical generalizations about what it means to be away from home, often affectively charged by a blast of Bachelardian topophilia. The problem partly results from the fact that leisure theory, the branch of social sciences most well-equipped to analyze holiday spaces like hotels, largely focuses on leisure institutions of the present day. Because they focus on the "now" of leisure, the question of the transformation of leisure institutions over time is generally marginalized to a few sentences at the beginning or end of a piece, while the bulk of the research and writing is invested in creating a portrait of a leisure institution during a single moment in time. Of the leisure studies work that do not focus on a specific moment in time, many assume that the particular leisure institution or practices under their consideration has always existed within a single socio-symbolic matrix, such as Jean-Didier Urbain's acclaimed At the Beach, for example, which defines the beach as a tabula rasa—a space that resists any accretion of historical or social meaning other than its own unchanging emptiness. Similarly, the most active and influential geographers or thinkers of space (such as David Harvey, Edward Soja, Anthony Giddens, John Berger, Yi-Fu Tuan, and Fredric Jameson) devote their energies to present-day phenomena. Ironically, despite the near-universal rejection of the old truism that modernism obsesses over temporality alone while postmodernism holds the monopoly on space, many of these thinkers of postmodern space frame their theories around philosophical commentary on or historical developments that occurred during the modernist period. Frequent appearances in these works are made, for example, by Georg Simmel's urban modernist sociology, and by Martin Heidegger's distinction between space and place and the spatiality of Being. Interestingly, Soja uses Berman's All That Is Solid Melts into Air, to set up the terms he uses to define postmodernity (he even refers to Berman as one of the "pioneers of postmodern geography" [8]).

This is not to say that the theorists of postmodernism unwittingly allow modernism to "seep into" their definitions of postmodernism. All of them articulate a paradigm or rhetorical figure for temporally demarcating modernism from postmodernism (rejection, parody, intensification, detachment, reflexivity) that nonetheless provides for significant thematic overlap between the two. Nearly all of these thinkers rehearse arguments about the difficulty, impossibility, or inadvisability of fully distinguishing the two periods, but from the perspective of understanding the history and cultural significance of hotels and other leisure spaces, these provisions permit or even encourage a muddying of the terminological waters. They legitimize the use of tropes associated with modernization (and significant for the study of spatial modernization, leisure institutions, and hotels)—such as mobility, homogeneity, groundlessness, homelessness, fragmentation, and globalization—for fair use in analyzing situations, spaces, or texts located temporally hundreds of years apart, depending on when the "modern" period is said to begin. While I do not wish to take exception to Jameson's theory of a singular modernity in which "modernity is not a concept, philosophical or otherwise, but a narrative category" (40), I do want to emphasize that the widespread use of these tropes in discussions of hotels has contributed to the lack of precision and historicity I have alluded to.

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during modernism, so that the economic modernization of the hotel, as an industry dominated by independent hostelries, lagged behind, for example the vertical and horizontal integration of one particular urban leisure institution: the tea shop, exemplified by the Lyons and ABC chains. In addition, the aura of risk-taking, self-fashioning, and illicit behavior surrounding hotels during the modern era is, today, often attached to other cultural institutions, such as the Internet, although some specific iterations of the hotel (such as the motel) still carry sexual connotations today. Famously, Fredric Jameson, in his account of the Bonaventure in *Postmodernism*, characterizes this difference between the modern and postmodern hotel as reflecting the broader changes he identifies between modernist and postmodernist architecture; the modernist hotel partakes of utopian architectural ideals by visually “critiquing” the city it surrounds, while the postmodernist hotel seeks to replace or recapitulate the city as it absorbs the vernacular urban architecture. This argument, I believe, makes sense in the American context but does not transfer easily to the English context, where the hotels constructed during the era of literary modernism were more likely to share the architectural principles developed by Victorian hotel designers such as E. M. Statler; while the interiors of hotels were certainly designed for maximum efficiency and profitability, their interior design and their exteriors were pastiches of neo-classical, Gothic, and Palladian styles rather than sleek avant-garde structures of Le Corbusian simplicity.

For an example of why following Jameson’s influential account of the postmodern hotel is misleading in the context of modernism, I would like to point out Jamie Wood’s 2010 essay, “Siamese Demon: Wyndham Lewis in America,” which analyzes Wyndham Lewis’s “A Soldier of Humour,” a story drafted in 1910 and first published in 1917-8 (along with *Tarr*) but

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72 For an excellent article on the ABC tea shops, see Scott McCracken’s “Voyage by Teashop: An Urban Geography of Modernism,” in *Geographies of Modernism* (ed. Andrew Thacker and Peter Brooker), 86-98.
subsequently reworked and issued in his collection of short stories and essays, *The Wild Body* (1927). To preface my critique of Wood’s approach to the collection, I will take a moment to introduce this relatively obscure work. Many of the stories of the collection figure a single narrator, Kerr-Orr, traveling in Spain and France and reporting on the inns (and their guests) he patronizes; these stories include “A Soldier of Humor,” “Bestre,” “The Death of the Ankou,” and “Beau Sejour,” Lewis’s first published work. Kerr-Orr interestingly illuminates the relationship between aesthetic production and modern leisure spaces when he admits that during these journeys, “I was patting and prodding a subject of these stories....on my zigzag course across Western France...taking a human species, as an entomologist would take a Distoma or a Narbonne Lycosa, to study” because “it has seemed to me an amusing labor to gather some of these individuals in retrospect and group them under the function, to which all in some diverting way were attached” (79). The modernist writer Kerr-Orr uses inns and pensions as convenient mines for unearthing characters and topics for his stories, searching for illustrations for his theory of the wild body (which is explained in the final essay of *The Wild Body*). One remarkable story, “The Cornac and His Wife,” presents a circus as an opportunity for the audience to constitute, for a split second, a unified “Public” reacting as the contortionist (for “the comic is always strenuous and cruel, like the work” and turns “his children [into] performing dogs” [104]) aestheticizes and performs the suffering of the masses under capitalist regimes. As the cornac’s wife emerges multiple times to ask the audience members for more money for their performance, Kerr-Orr notes that “Public and Showman understood each other” through a “unanimity of brutal hatred” in which “producer and consumer both were bestially conscious of the passage of coppers from one pocket to another.” This hyperawareness of the working contract between
contortionist and public leads to a commodification of suffering, a distillation of modern labor into a spectacle of compulsion and unpleasure:

The public lay back and enjoyed itself hardly, closely and savagely. The showman contorted himself madly in response. His bilious eye surveyed its grinning face, his brow sweated for its money, his ill-kept body ached. He made a painful spectacle; he knew how to make it painful. He had the art of insisting on that effort...It was on purpose, as he saw it, that it took its recreation, which was coarse. It deliberately promoted his misery. (91)

This public is conservative in that their appreciation of the spectacle of the aging and ill contortionist’s obvious pain allows them to enjoy vicariously the position of the bourgeoisie:

Kerr-Orr observes, “the public paid...not for its proper amusement, but for the trouble, the inconvenience, and in sum for all the ills of the showman’s lot...their entertainment, when buying it with their own money, they support the same brow-beating and discipline as in their work” (101-2). At the same time, this public is, for a short time, also a revolutionary public.

Though Kerr-Orr claims that this provincial audience, unlike “the true social revolutionary” who is “in revolt,” “seldom gets close to reality at all, in the way, for instance that a philosophic intelligence, or an imaginative audience, does” (104), during this contortionist act, one young audience member experiences an “unaccountable awakening of the critical vein” and begins jeering at the contortionist, whose composure is ruined (106). As the contortionist periodically lunges at the boy, a critical vein appears to Kerr-Orr to infect the public’s attitude so that by the time the circus ends, Kerr-Orr realizes that “there had been two Publics” (106). In the context of his dissertation, “The Cornac and His Wife” features a leisure space that, if an unusual choice for a work of modernism, nonetheless fits well with the modernist works about hotels, cruise ships, and spas that I investigate because Lewis’s short story engages with the dialectic of labor and
leisure I have been tracing in these other works. A continuity can therefore be established between “The Cornac and His Wife” and the hotel stories of *The Wild Body*—a continuity that remains invisible if we focus on postmodern accounts of the hotel rather than on the discourse that developed around modern leisure and energizes many canonical works of modernism. Such a continuity is, I argue, best explored under the concept of the leisure space that I have been developing, for the category of leisure space is both general enough to encompass many works of modernism and relate to cultural histories and sociological accounts of the leisure industry but is specific enough to be considered an indigenous discourse arising organically within modernism. Yet the piece I mention above by Jamie Wood turns to Jameson’s famous piece on the Bonaventure rather than to other modern accounts of the leisure industry in England and Europe in order to interpret “A Soldier of Humor” and, more specifically, the role played by one of the story’s hotels, the *Fonda del Universo* (the Hotel Universe):

This is neither a piece of juvenilia nor an early modernist travel story. Rather it is a crucial document in the evolution of twentieth-century literature, distinctively and uniquely engaging with the rise of American politics and culture in the 1920s.... The hotels constitute a 'competitive universe,' cut off from a natural world....The ‘unsubstantial pretentiously new appearance’ of this Bayonne hotel soon starts to uncannily resemble a prototype of Frederic Jameson’s own ‘*Fonda del Universo,*’ the Bonaventura Hotel, a ‘total space, a complete world, a kind of miniature city.’ Both share a structure composed of mirrors and glass, an essential redefinition of internal space, and a confusion of entrance and exit...an inverted satire that struggles to control the horror implicit in both its content and form. (383-5)

Wood’s resistance to interpreting the story as an early work of “juvenilia” and “early modernist travel story” not only forestalls interesting comparisons to other modernist works—I think in particular of Austrian journalist Joseph Roth’s similarly madcap and absurd yet philosophically rich presentation of European hotels, the *Hotel Savoy* (1924)—but also unhelpfully obscures
Kerr-Orr’s epiphanies (one of which I have quoted above) that he has used the peripatetic life of an inveterate hotel-dweller—a distinct type of person “on never-ending holiday” (71) he defines in one of The Wild Body’s essays, “The Pole,” appended to Lewis’s first published story, “Beau Sejour”—as a method of training himself as a modernist author. Furthermore, his quotations from Jameson’s Postmodernism program essay perpetuate the characterization of hotel as microcosm or total environment that I have argued against in Chapter Four. Kerr-Orr’s inns, pensions, and hotels are criss-crossed with transnational currents, economic transactions, and relations with other leisure spaces that make the hotel something rather different than a “total city.” Wood’s misleadingly ahistorical importation of the postmodern hotel form into The Wild Body flattens these many currents into “the rise of American politics and culture in the 1920s,” an argument that is less untrue than it is incomplete. The topography of The Wild Body does not agree with this thesis, not only because the inns and pensions Kerr-Orr visits are usually traditional-style inns rather than American-style hotels, but also because the stories also feature other leisure spaces (such as the circus, the seashore, cafes, and restaurants) and the pains with which Kerr-Orr struggles to involve himself with the culture and national public life outside of the hotel (such as by studying local dialects and befriending those not inside hotels). This is not to say that Wyndham Lewis is disinterested in the hotel as a discrete and compelling spatial phenomenon or that The Wild Body is not a piece of hotel fiction, but rather to point out that writing about the modern hotels involves writing about the non-leisure spaces that surround, condition, influence, and are influenced by leisure spaces.

Though modernist scholars have been quick to apply the lessons of the Bonaventure to modernism, careful reading of Postmodern reveals that Jameson, who explicitly compares
postmodern and modern hotels, would likely not condone a reading of Wyndham Lewis along the lines of the Bonaventure. Yet, tellingly, the representative “modernist” building Jameson uses to compare with the Bonaventure is not a hotel at all, but rather Le Corbusier's *Unite d'habitation* in Marseilles, a residential complex. Part of the problem for modernist scholars reading contemporary theoretical works about hotels is may also arise from the fact that literary modernism slightly preceded architectural modernism, so that the terms “modern hotel” and “modernist hotel” are not interchangeable, even within the period of literary modernism. In my work, I use the term “the modern hotel” to refer to the hotel form that the modernists experienced in their lifetimes and through their writing helped to shape as a cultural institution. This “modern hotel” is architecturally very different from the “modernist hotel,” a term I will largely avoid to prevent confusion. Modernist hotels were beginning to be commissioned in England towards the end of literary modernism; for example, consider the Midland Hotel, a 1933 “Streamline Moderne” building by Oliver Hill, which—just like the hotels we saw Dickens critiquing in Chapter Four—was prompted by the growth of the railway, as the Midland was commissioned by the London, Midlands, and Scottish Railway. Yet as I have been emphasizing, during the era of literary modernism, hotel construction was still largely dominated by the Victorian “Grand Hotel” or “Palace Hotel” style,” which was used, to use London as an example, in the Savoy Hotel in 1889 and the Ritz Hotel in 1906, and the Waldorf Hilton in 1908. This style dominated new hotel construction during most of literary modernism, although from time to time up-to-date Art Deco or Art Nouveau details were added atop the neo-classical bones, as in the case of the Dorchester Hotel in Mayfair (1931).
By the turn of the century, the English and European hotel industry, including large companies like the Savoy Group and the Trust Houses, began to produce hotels of equal scale, efficiency, luxury, and engineering sophistication to those in America, making England's and Europe's commercialized, modern hotels a belated technology in terms of its lag-time behind American hotels. The Carlton, the Russell, the Cecil, the Hyde Park, and Claridge's Hotels were all fewer than ten years old by 1905, when construction was in progress for six new large luxury hotels, including the Ritz, the Piccadilly, and the Waldorf-Astoria (Standoval-Strausz 7). New hotel construction at the turn of the century was thus dominated by the American style, although these oversized, industrial hotels, even by the end of late modernism, were far from outnumbering the traditional inns still operating in England and Europe. Though the industry was certainly modernizing, it was doing so gradually and unevenly. Only during the 1930s, for example, did ensuite bathrooms, telephones, and central heating become standard for British accommodations (as did the increased tariffs for supporting them). Thus, although Freud 1899

*The Interpretation of Dreams* could posit hotel-snobbery as penetrating the unconscious—when one of his patients, in a dream, asks a cab driver to take him to an older style accommodation, and the cab driver responds, “How could one put up at such a place! This isn't a hotel at all; it's really nothing but a pub!” (230)—nonetheless, in 1944, on holiday to the Lakes, E. M. Forster wrote in a letter to Christopher Isherwood, “I am the only guest in a hotel which I first visited forty years ago, and it hasn't much altered, except to become more comfortable and to send a grandson to Rugby” (Forster and Isherwood 125-6). Later in the twentieth century, the continued architectural belatedness of the English and European hotel industry also delayed the arrival of International Style modernism to hotel architecture (Adams 43).
As a result, although the amenities, social and economic significance, and cultural value of the large-scale, fully modernized hotel form did occupy much of the discourse (both fiction and non-fiction) around hotels written in Britain at the time, the reality of British and European hospitality was in practice much more diverse and complicated than the narrative of hotel modernization can account for. While in America, the fully modernized hotel dominated the landscape by the turn of the century, for Europe and Britain, it was but one of the lodging options available. The era of late modernism (which, following Tyrus Miller’s *Late Modernism*, I date from the 1930s) was one of profound change for the hotel industry, where greatly increased profits for many groups of hotel investors, somewhat due to the growth of weekend automobile trips from within reach of London (particularly in the case of the Trust Hotels, whose net profits increased by nearly threefold between 1923 and 1938 [Pope 667]). Yet the uncertain profit of other hoteliers, both private and public, due to a significant decrease in alcohol and luxury goods consumption within hotels, the decreasing frequency of long-term vacations, and the global effects of the American Great Depression, meant that the British and European hotel industry witnessed a variety of successes, failures, and experimentation, and that the hotel industry in Europe and Britain during modernism was a period of transition and flexibility. In particular, many of the American innovations that did not require an immense amount of venture capital (such as the use of hotel registers and the double-loaded corridor) quickly spread to pensions and inns. As a result, the term “hotel” was more an an umbrella term for establishments that could appeal to many different types of traveler—the family, the salesman, the tourist, the patient needing a rest, the unsettled transient forever looking for cheaper, more comfortable lodging—
and serve many purposes. A single hotel during the early twentieth century was most certainly a mixed-use facility catering to many lodging needs.

Despite the wide variety of accommodations available in England, much of the discourse around transient lodgings at the time was dominated by the new hotel style from America, and when hotel architecture did migrate across the Atlantic, the result was often influential for the construction of all major public or commercial buildings in Europe and England. The London Ritz and other new buildings built in England at this era (including the Savoy Hotel in 1904 and the Morning Post building in 1907) brought new American construction techniques and machines to aid the process. The Ritz itself, for example, inaugurated the use of new methods of foundation construction and soundproofing, and it was the first example of sustained collaboration between an architect and structural engineer in Britain—an indication of the increasing reliance of building design, from the very first stages of conceiving the general size, shape, and appearance of the project, on materials technology and engineering prowess. The result was touted by the structural engineer, Sven Bylander, as “the first steel-frame building of importance in London” in a trade journal, although such buildings were common in the United States by then (qtd. in Binney 73). Perhaps more significant than the bare fact that the London Ritz provides an especially pointed example of hotels’ significance as inaugural sites of architectural and industrial modernization, these Ritz innovations, first, created a rationalized space that was nonetheless touted by architects and journalists alike to be an aesthetic success, and second, created a space of publicity, spectacle, and surveillance that, with the importation of American hotel design, was slowly becoming the norm for hotel design in England and Europe. Towards the end of the twentieth century, the exclusivity and privacy that the early hotels in
English spa hotels had striven for was in the process of being supplanted by modern values of inclusiveness, publicity, and scale; César Ritz, for example, celebrated by the grand opening of the Ritz in May of 1906 with a press dinner for journalists from all around the globe.

From the ground up, the Ritz had been constructed as a spectacle—as an ideal stage for people-watching—not only for the guests themselves, but also for the London public strolling in to enjoy lunch in the Grill, take tea in the Winter Garden, or read newspapers in one of the lounges. After all, the royalty, wealthy businessmen, society ladies, and celebrities who patronized these hotels were increasingly mobilized in press campaigns as a major part of the appeal of a grand hotel: spectacle was a part of the hotel's capital. As Willi Frischauer, historian biographer of Himmler, Goering, and Aristotle Onassis—and a self-proclaimed “Europe commuter” and connoisseur of hotels from the 1910s to the 1960s—wrote in his part-memoir, part-social history *The Grand Hotels of Europe*, “Much of a grand hotel's appeal lies in its clientele. Social snobbery is the inevitable concomitant of luxury living” (20). The well-turned out woman in a hotel, he continues, is therefore the “star performer in the compelling show that is included in the price of an apartment” (18). The Ritz's effectiveness as a spectacle machine to gratify the “social snobbery” expected in such environments began with the very skeleton of the structure: the innovative cage construction, adapted from America, which used rolled steel beams that allowed more floorspace, fewer (and thinner) interior walls, and bigger windows. This system relieved the walls from their customary responsibility of load-bearing, although Ritz added a thin skin of expensive Norwegian granite and Portland stone so as to appear traditionally luxurious rather than what it truly was: modern, cost-efficient, and expertly engineered. We will see this visual trick as a common motif repeated throughout the structure, but for now, I will give
one example: the Ritz’s built-in cupboards, which replaced the traditional free-standing wardrobes, were publicized as a novel amenity characterizing the luxury modern hotel, but, from the company’s standpoint, their inclusion was motivated by a desire to save on labor costs, as these built-ins reduced dust buildup and the possibility of breakage. Similarly, when a system of arcades along one side of the hotel were designed to add architectural interest and subtlety to a massive and largely featureless edifice, this feature was chosen not out of pure design reasons, but rather to add visual interest without sacrificing the number of rooms in the floors above (Binney 28). And like many of the Ritz’s adoptions of American hotel architecture, this feature also created large open spaces and vantage points perfectly designed for people-watching.

Of course, the degree of openness in various hotel spaces were modulated according to a utilitarian model that dedicated the most resources to the rooms that would be seen by all: he public rooms boasted the highest ceilings, while the bedroom floors were smaller and the very lowest ceilings were reserved for employees' quarters on the top floor. The double-height floor of public rooms, made visible to the first three floors of guest-rooms by large balconies, made room for the dramatic, oversized, curving double staircase that César Ritz insisted upon in many of his hotels—in this case, a superfluity, for the Ritz had many elevators—specifically to create a dramatic vista that, by lengthening the duration of approach, by leading the lady to display a series of different angles and postures, and by allowing their image to be reflected in the mirrors abounding in the space, would to aid women in showing off their gowns, jewels, and coiffures to best advantage. With such theatrical details like this one being installed in all of the public rooms, in addition to the dramatic framing of these rooms and the visual openness of these spaces (unencumbered by supporting pillars), it will come as no surprise why The Bystander's
“London Nights” columnist warned her reader, “If you're a woman, don't go there unless you've got the greatest confidence in your clothes” (qtd. in Binney 116). Men were not immune to such sartorial surveillance: Willi Frischauer recalls two humilitating moments caused by improper clothing: first, having been mistaken as a waiter by the Prince of Wales at the Carlsbad Imperial Hotel (14), and second, having been judged by a valet because of an unfortunate incident:

Hotels have given me nothing but joy—except perhaps, for London's Mayfair Hotel, where I met my Waterloo in the early thirties when a grave-miened valet, after rummaging through my suitcase, shook his head in sad bewilderment because he could not find my pajamas and gave me a very old-fashioned look when I confessed that I had not brought any, indeed, that I was not in the habit of wearing pajamas.

After this setback it took me years to regard my self-confidence and to improve my valet rating, which is to a hotel guest what the Gallup Poll is to a politicians. My status eventually restored, I even came to be told of the fabulous poirboires they received from some of their regulars—which again inhibited my relations with the stern masters of the hotel bedchamber.(15)

Frischauer's fearful respect of the valets reveals that not only the guests themselves provided a source of intense disciplinary pressure, while his embarrassing interaction with the Prince of Wales recalls both Kracauer’s theses regarding the hotel lobby (which I discuss below) and Veblen's account of how modernization, which brings strangers into contact with one another frequently, results in an intensified drive towards conspicuous consumption as spectacle:

In the modern community there is also a more frequent attendance at large gatherings of people to whom one's everyday life is unknown; in such places as churches, theaters, ballrooms, hotels, parks, shops, and the like. In order to impress these transient observers, and to retain one's self-complacency under their observation, the signature of one's pecuniary strength should be written in characters which he who runs may read... [As a result, conspicuous consumption dominates] where the human contact of the individual is widest and the mobility of the population is greatest.(87)
A hotel, of course, was one of these pressure points where mobile modern subjects converged. Like Frischauer and Veblen, Andrew Standoval-Strausz comments on the significance of modern mobility for hotels when he argues that during modernity, “transience became an everyday fact of life, with people coming into contact with unknown individuals as never before,” and in the case of hotels, because strangers are “outside the usual forms of community-based social control, and thus presented a constant threat of disobedience and disruption,” it was assumed by hoteliers that ensuring safe socializing among strangers in the space of the hotel “required considerable surveillance and discipline” (204). Just as many other modern hotels employed hotel detectives, in the case of the London Ritz, Cesar Ritz employed ex-Guardsmen footmen and ensured that guest room floors were constantly patrolled by employees (Binney 95). Of course, the surveillance aspect of the modern hotel cut both ways: the open plans, identical arrangement of guest floors, and wide vistas of the grand hotel ensured simultaneously that the hotel space could be policed and could provide an incomparable spectacle of visually compelling architecture and well-dressed patrons. Willi Frischauer, for example, recalls the fun he had watching Joe Scialom, the “star” bartender of London’s Waldorf Astoria. Joe never touched a bottle or a glass with his own manicured hands. I could hardly tear myself away from this spectacle, which for excitement rivaled the performance of a Toscanini or a Klemperer, a most visually harmonious concert with a great conductor wielding the baton. The result was, in every way, intoxicating. Only a famous hotel, I am sure, could afford me such an experience. (15)

The London Ritz elevated such dynamics to a design principle, including Mewes and Davis’s famous Winter Garden, where tea was held. Framed by a set of stairs and massive decorative columns (so massive, in fact, that they had to use faux marble because no real piece of marble of sufficient size could be located), the room turned each guest into an actor entering the stage
through a proscenium arch. These decorated columns not only played a part in the theatricality of large hotels during the modernist period, but also served to distract from the imperfect geometric shape of the room and from the off-center positioning of the main entrance.

The entire hotel, in fact, was an exercise in the Renaissance and Enlightenment skill of perspective, for the architects and interior designers spent much effort trying to minimize and disguise the uneven and awkward shape of the hotel's lot—the Green Park frontage runs to 87 feet, while the opposite size, the Arlington street facade, is 115 feet long, for example (Montgomery-Massingberd and Watkin 43)—which forced the hotel into an irregular trapezoid containing no parallel walls. The hotel's neoclassical expanse of arcades, for example, allowed the outer walls of the hotel to open up flush to the line of the streets outside, while the design of the public spaces as a series of variously sized rooms all opening in on one another without corridors created clever vistas and vantage points to distract the eye from the non-ninety degree angles of the interior walls. Doing so recalls the set of disguising strategies listed in Elizabeth Bowen’s account of the 1866 redesign of the facade of Dublin’s Shelbourne Hotel. To a stark cube of brick, the architects added bay windows, stucco decorations, statues, and intricately shaped parapets. Bowen describes,

It was necessary that the Shelbourne's enormous face should wear some expression: he gave it one. Unadorned, the building would have been barrack-like—or might have resembled one of those greet abandoned mills which, all over Ireland, gauntly stare down the river valleys. The new hotel evoked neither harsh nor fretting associations.... The architect grasped hotel psychology, or, should one say, the psychology of hotel patrons? (110-111)

Just as the Shelbourne’s builders attempt to paper over any “harsh” or “fretting” indication that the modern hotel might share key design elements with factories, so do the builders of the Ritz
attempt to distract from the industrial efficiency and scale of the modern hotel half a decade later in the majestic lobby and main-floor public rooms. The extravagant Louis Seize design scheme for these rooms also distracted the eye by reflecting gilt and crystal off the mirrors filling the room, confusing the eye to make it impossible for the casual glance to spy out the imperfections of the room shapes. As a clever combination of neoclassical rational architecture and the gorgeous excesses of French royal spaces, and as a system that carefully separated the rococo brilliance of the public rooms from the private bedrooms and suites designed according to the grid structure of the double-loaded corridor, the Ritz could mask the cost-cutting procedures adopted from the American commercial hotel with a veneer of pure luxury. (Even the Ritz's famous specially designed French silverware and china set bears a history of penny-pinching, as Ritz, long after the commissioned pieces had been created, haggled the price of the piece down over 25% before handing over any payment to the firm, Christofle & Compagnie.)

One result of the Ritz's brilliant whitewashing of the profit imperative with a smear of elegance was a hybrid hotel public culture that combined modern surveillance culture with the glamour of celebrity and extravagance—washing one's disciplinary medicine down with a dose of old-fashioned luxury (old-fashioned because it nostalgically invoked pre-revolutionary France). For example, the impressively grand expanse of the main dining room, while being one of the Ritz spaces most celebrated by interior designers as a beautiful bauble of marble and crystal, was created the creative incorporation of railroad trusses in to the walls. This massive, pillar-free dining room that gave each diner a full view of the other diners—which was considerably helped by the North wall being covered by floor-to-ceiling mirrors (although if one wished for privacy and could pay for it, the smaller private dining room had a hidden entrance),
which were used to “square,” visually, the irregular and tapering shape of the room. The beloved murals and sculptures in the room are also strategically dispersed to create an effect of symmetry and spatial regularity. Another restaurant innovation new to English hotels—the “grill”—similarly encouraged the spectacular nature of the hotel visit. In the Ritz grill, the food was cooked in full view of the patrons, turning cooking itself into a spectacle. The simple wicker furnishings and lightweight removable carpeting allowed it to morph into the popular 1930s and 1940s nightclub, La Popote. Visually, this space departed radically from the formality of the rest of the hotel in order to attract a younger and different set of customers than the formal atmosphere of the main dining room or private dining room—demonstrating that Ritz's designers cared less about heavy Louis Seize decorations than about attracting a variety of clients to the hotel. Opening on the ground floor, unlike the majority of the public rooms, the Grill accommodated non-guest Londoners in addition to guests. While Trollope in America had been cowed by the public performance of ordering in front of the entire hotel population (including a knowing and judgmental waiter), the young and fashionable patrons of the Ritz grill were attracted by the greater participation that such establishments encouraged, as well as by the rapid-fire pacing of the meal. Noel Coward's “Children of the Ritz,” a song from his 1932 revue *Words and Music*, captures some of this gourmande glamour in the lyrics, “Children of the Ritz/Sleek and civilized / Frightfully surprised / We know just how we want our quails done / And then we go and have our nails done” (qtd in Montgomery-Massingberd 87). For Coward, the knowing and fashionable clientele of the Ritz grill relished chances to perform their culinary knowledge and mastery of the London commercial landscape—the latter of which the diners were perhaps even closer to than they imagined. After all, their access to the spectacular creation
of their meal, a kind of culinary acrobatics foreshadowing the popular Japanese grills now located in towns all across America, required that this fashionable space was located in the basement, normally the domain of the employees alone, and thus only one door away from the internal workings of the hotel, which were normally kept as far away as possible from the guests. In contrast to the cocoon-like space of luxury and order implied in Core Porter’s wartime jingle, “Tomorrow, [we ]will put war on the fritz / Tomorrow, and move into the Ritz / Cause there ain’t gonna be any sorrow, tomorrow” (15), the Ritz’s grill was popular because it put the chaotic, profit-minded, and often violent “downstairs” atmosphere of the hotel’s staff spaces on display.

Not only did the glamorous dining rooms and lounges of the Ritz, perhaps ironically, owe their glamour to the rationalizing imperatives of capital, but also the impressive façade and grand scale of the blueprints embodied the capitalist tendency towards standardization and globalization. The design and construction of large modern hotels in England and Europe was from the beginning a profoundly international affair. (To consider the standardization of hotel design, I leave aside, for the moment, the question of the positive cosmopolitan value of the international clientele of large hotels.) For example, the London Ritz's own César Ritz was born to Swiss parents, learned the trade in France, collaborated regularly with French and English architects and interior designers, brought the famous French chef Escoffier into the world of English cuisine, constructed hotels in France, Italy, Austria, and England, and contributed designs for the German Hamburg-Amerika ocean liners. On the Ritz, his collaboration with the French-English design firm Mewès and Davis, his use of German-made steel structures and American derricks, and his hiring of Swedish engineer Sven Bylander and a Chicago fireproofing company typify the nature of hotel building as international collaboration, as the
responsibility for each modern British or European hotel was chosen from a shallow pool of
same set of architects, builders, and interior designers. In addition, the very success of the Ritz
compounded the standardizing effect, not only because the Ritz's popularity gave architects
Mewès and Davis a streams of contracts to create clubs, private homes, commercial buildings,
cruise ship interiors (Montgomery-Massingberd and Watkin 57-9) and other hotels in the same
style, but also because other architects reproduced the style in hopes of duplicating the French-
English team's success.

As Mewès and Davis’ success illustrates, during the Edwardian period in Britain and
Europe, the increasing predominance of this architectural style led opened these modernized
hotels up to criticism as examples of a monolithic capitalism that erased regional differences in
favor of a universal hotel style, thus creating a wide gulf between the large, corporation-based
luxury hotels and the many traditional inns still operating during the modernist period. The
perceived cultural value of these hotels was therefore ambiguous; while they popularly denoted
up-to-date elegance, other cultural critics blasted the sameness of these hotels for trading
individuality and regional specificity for luxury. I would like to turn briefly to Elizabeth Bowen’s
non-fiction history—*The Shelbourne Hotel*, which is replete with examples of this tension and
other controversies generated by the modernization of hotels—as an example of the modernist
response to grand hotels like the Ritz, and in particular to these hotels’ rationalization of space,
commercialization of hospitality, and unflagging commitment to the new. The Shelbourne
Hotel’s original owner, Martin Burke, created the hotel by connecting three separate townhouses
only after a protracted legal battle with the townhouses’ original (aristocratic) owners. These
latter insisted that in return for “suffer[ing]” Burke’s “offensive” and “noisy trade,” Burke must
maintain the building’s original, residential facade by preserving the three original front doors and not using a large sign to join the townhouses into visual unity (30). The modernization of the Shelbourne in the mid-nineteenth century, including its adoption of gas lighting, was protested by Thackeray, who alleged that the proprietor, contrary to “the honest comfortable English fashion” of traditional innkeeping, “gave on airs” and “majestically conducted” his business because he had a “private mansion hard by where his name may be read inscribed on a brass plate, like that of any other private gentleman” (qtd in Bowen 37). Bowen, clearly a fan of Burke’s modern daring, teases, “Should Burke have once rushed out, rubbing his hands?” and, intriguingly, defends the rights of hoteliers as creative artists when she explains to her readers,

It was a hotel, not the Olde Worlde coaching inn Thackeray may have thought to find. Burke in the role of “mine host” would have been as much out of place as black oak beams, flitches hung from the ceiling, or copper warming-pans. Thackeray’s passing sneer at his landlord's pretension to be a gentleman do not do him credit. He, as a man of the pen, should have recognized a fellow originator. There is more than one kind of authorship. (38)

Bowen here celebrates the hotelier as a modern artist, the “fellow originator” whose modernization of the Dublin hospitality scene reveals Thackeray as hopelessly nostalgic in his wish to limit the production of the new to “real” artists and in his refusal to acknowledge the hotelier as a modern creator worthy of attention. I will return to this point about the emergence of the hotelier as hero in my discussion of Bennett, but now, I would like to emphasize that, for Bowen, Burke’s insistence on modernizing the Shelbourne is what renders the hotel such a unique environment: “a self-contained unit,” a self-sufficient world (120). Burke was quick to adopt gas, electricity, and running hot and cold water, bathrooms, and was among the first to
include an in-hour salon, telegram office, post office (complete with the Shelbourne’s own particular postmark), and tramway service right up to the door. private homes.

Despite the nationalistic pride with which Bowen lists these accomplishments, her narration of the hotel’s first major redesign reveals a very different attitude. After being bought out from the Burke family, the Shelbourne came into the hands of a new owner—with the contractual stipulation that they could “improve and modernize the outside of the premises.” Bowen adopts the perspective of the building’s original owners, the family who objected to the noisy trade of hospitality, as she narrates,

the houses built by his honored father had been impiously torn town, leveled to the ground. In their place, on the ground-site owned by him, an unheard of flashy great monstrous brute of a new hotel was, without so much as a by-your-leave, in the act of rising.... The entire row had, without distinction, been reduced to thin air—which the new Shelbourne, story by story mounting, began to fill. (110, 115)

Despite ridiculing Thackeray’s nostalgia, Bowen sympathetically expresses the horror of modernity progress’s propensity to destroy as it creates. It appears that Bowen’s approval of the hotel as a modern object suitable for basing literary models upon (recall her claim that creating hotels is a kind of authorship) is contingent on the presence of Thackeray’s snobbish complaints—a constitutive Victorian force similar, I would argue, to Astradur Eysteinsson’s thesis in The Concept of Modernism about the relationship between realism and modernism. Just as Eysteinsson claims “that the dialectical relationship of modernism and realism is of utmost significance for an understanding of our present literary culture” (182), and just as he supports “dismantl[ing] the dualistic opposition of realism and modernism” (190), I would like to suggest that the modern hotel similarly is always in a dialectical relationship to the still-extant traditional forms of hospitality that bring the modern hotel’s advantages and newness into focus. And just as
“the emergence of a modernist paradigm could...be judged in terms of a break in the historical attitude toward language and communication as evinced in literary texts” (49), so too is the emergence of the modern hotel, particularly in regard to Bowen’s account of the Shelbourne Hotel, conceptualized as a radical break in attitudes towards hospitality and socialization among strangers. Bowen, like the cultural critics (including Lukacs) whom Eysteinsson describes as “judg[ing] modernism as an anarchic force attacking and even severely undermining our social order and our habitual way of perceiving and communicating reality” (26), appears uncertain of the moral value of the modern hotel industry’s reliance on non-stop creative destruction. In doing so, she characterizes the hotel industry in such a way that recalls Eysteinsson’s ultimate definition of modernism as “an avant-garde strategy” that consists more of “disruption” and “emancipatory potential” that “blow[s] open received structures” rather than any specific political gesture or lasting aesthetic strategy (235). I do not wish to overstrain or overstate these parallels between the creation of modern hotels and of modernist art. My purpose in drawing out this comparison is not to make an historical assertion that the creation of hotels and are were “truly” alike, but rather, as my next section demonstrates, to explore the discursive linkages between hotels and aesthetic production that run through hotel fiction. In modernist hotel fiction, the hotel becomes a figure for exploring the relationship between modernist art and the simultaneously destructive and creative processes of modernization.

The Hotel as Capitalist Creation Myth: *English Hours* and *The Grand Babylon Hotel*

Before showing specific examples of this tension at work in modernism by embarking on my close reading of *In a German Pension*, I would like to connect the transformation in the
hospitality industry I have traced above with the general rise of “hotel fiction” during the era of literary modernism.73 Apart from the popular or mainstream writers who wrote much of hotel fiction (including Arnold Bennett, Vicki Baum, and Georges Simenon), one might expect that canonical modernists might have leveled strongly-worded critiques blasting the depersonalization and standardization of hospitality. And indeed, even the low expectations of Wyndham Lewis’s habitually cynical Kerr-Orr, surveying a group of Bayonne hotels, complains that because “they all looked the same,” forcing him to choose “the second, not the first” merely so he may “keep up a show of discrimination.” Compared to the “vivid spanish stars” above, the hotels suggest “the blazonry of cheap ice-cream wells under a striped umbrella” (8) and make a parody of the hotels’ grand names—Fonda del Universo (Universal Inn), Fonda del Mundo (World Inn). The modern hotel does draw the ire of a critic less famously combative than Lewis; in *English Hours*, an earlier example of modernism reacting to the arrival of the modern hotel to England and Europe, Henry James blasts a new hotel in Piccadilly for being “an impersonal black hole in the huge general blackness” (18) and cherishes “the unextended (as it was), the unimproved, the unblushingly local Adelphi” (14). James’s preference for the old-fashioned hotel, set in pitch-perfect pastoral grounds, is apparent as he describes “the little Castle Hotel at Lynton...a spot so consecrated to supreme repose—to sitting with a book in the terrace-garden, among blooming plants of aristocratic magnitude and rarity, and watching the finest piece of color in all nature, the glowing red and green of the great cliffs beyond the little harbor-mouth.”

As a unique hotel suited to its specific location, the “little” Castle Hotel is, James implies, in

73 I have given a definition of the hundred-year-old (and still thriving) genre of hotel fiction in the preceding chapter, where I also give an account of contemporary hotel-centered space theory and critical theory, as well as of contemporary literary scholarship on hotel fiction (particularly works by Joanne Pready and Bettina Matthias). In this chapter, I focus chiefly on the hotel fiction and non-fiction of canonical modernists. I will address the topic of popular hotel fiction and contemporary representations of leisure spaces in the conclusion to the dissertation.
need of conservation, of protection against the modernization of hotels and the growth of mass tourism; realizing his complicity as a travel writer, he admits, “I feel as if in helping it to publicity I were doing it rather a disfavor than a service. It is in fact a very deep and sure retreat, and I have never known one where purchased hospitality wore a more disinterested smile” (90). James’s desire that hospitality avoid any overt references to its profitability or to modern capitalism is also evident in his description of a hotel in Richmond, Virginia. James’s tone is one of giving the devil his due as he writes, “The great modern hotel, superfluously vast, was excellent; but it enjoyed as a feature, as a ‘value,’ an uncontested priority. It was a huge well-pitched tent, the latest thing in tents, proclaiming in the desert the name of a new industry” (658). What James seems to object to most is the blatant commodification of hospitality, which boasts not of providing comfort for travelers but of being a large-scale, wholly modern and profitable business; such an attitude allies him with the Victorian complaints of Dickens and Trollope that I describe in Chapter Four, yet this Victorian travel writing lack James’s awareness, fifty years after Dickens’s and Trollope’s narratives, of the gradual process by which British hotels are being corporatized. As a result, when James claims, “The present is more and more the day of the hotel” (440), he witnesses a later moment in the history of hotels in Britain and shows greater sensitivity to the hotel’s transformation into a financial instrument, a marriage of finance capital and the commodification of space. Choosing between Brighton’s old Swan Inn and a new grand hotel, James critiques the grand hotel for being already—even before ever steps into it—a known quantity, a mere manifestation of corporate policy, as he muses,

It was probable that the Royal would be crude. I could claim a certain acquaintance with 'royal' hotels—I knew just how they were constituted. I foresaw the superior young woman sitting at a ledger, in a kind of glass cage, at the bottom of the stairs, and
expressing by refined intonations her contempt for a gentleman who would decline to 'require' a sitting-room.... Large hotels here are almost always owned and carried on by companies, and the company is represented by a well-shaped female figure belonging to the class...known as 'persons.' The chamber maid is a young woman, and the female tourist is a lady; but the occupant of the glass cage, who hands you your key and assigns you your apartment, is designated in the manner I have mentioned. The 'person' has various methods for revenging herself for her shadowy position in the social scale. (227)

In James’s allergy to the receptionist in her “glass cage” (as a “person” employed by the modern hotel, her type would certainly be the “partner” of today’s corporate hotels), we find an echo of Strether’s fear of having his innocent flirtation with Miss Gostrey watched by the receptionist at his Chester hotel in The Ambassadors. By equating the “crude” with the corporate and by resenting the receptionist’s pushy salesmanship (as she attempts to leverage the publicity of the “glass cage” reception area into a threat of public shaming if he does not book an expensive suite rather than an affordable single room), James castigates the novel modern trend of treating a hotel as a financial instrument—a theme taken up also by Arnold Bennett’s two hotel novels.

Bennett’s first best-seller, The Grand Babylon Hotel, begins when an American millionaire, Theodore Racksole, despite having no previous business connection to the hotel before, despite never having seen the hotel until that day, decides on a whim to purchase the Grand Babylon as his next investment; significantly, he does so only because the head waiter, Jules, refuses, in the name of the Grand Babylon’s fierce adherence to English tradition, to serve the millionaire an “Angel Kiss,” an American-style cocktail—in other words, because the Grand Babylon has not sufficiently modernized along the lines of the American hotel model. As “the voice of Jules fell icily distinct” and acquired “a shade of august disapproval,” Jules curtly informs the millionaire, “If it’s an American drink, I fear we don’t keep it, sir” (13). When Racksole persists, Jules finally
explains, “This isn’t an American hotel, sir” (15). Racksole’s demands send shockwaves throughout the hotel staff, and all feel

indignation at the spectacle of any person whatsoever, millionaire or Emperor, presuming to demand an ‘Angel Kiss’, that unrespectable concoction of maraschino and cream, within the precincts of the Grand Babylon.... If there were one thing more than another that annoyed the Grand Babylon—put up its back, so to speak—it was to be compared with, or mistaken for, an American hotel. The Grand Babylon was resolutely opposed to American methods of eating, drinking, and lodging—but especially American methods of drinking. (15, 17)

Yet Bennett addresses the Americanization of English hotels head-on when Racksole decides to purchase the hotel. Racksole paradoxically insists, after buying the hotel, “I am now holiday-making in London with my daughter in order to get rid of [my anxieties] for a time” (25); he explains this paradox to the former owner, Felix Babylon, by deciding, “I shall run it—as an amusement” (27) and as a “beautiful new toy” (85), just as his daughter too exclaims, “I fancy I shall make an excellent hotel clerk” even though her father somewhat hypocritically responds, “We shall have the whole of London talking about this thing—the greatest of all American heiresses a hotel clerk! And I came here for quiet and rest!” (43). Like her father, who continues to insist, “I’m being seriously idle” (19), Nella Racksole takes up labor as a leisure activity, a pleasurable lark that provides her with the one opportunity that her position as the richest heiress in American cannot give her: as she explains to Prince Aribert, who declares to her, “I envy you...your freedom and responsibilities,” she quietly responds, “I have no responsibilities” (49). This difficulty that Nella and her father have in enjoying leisure is a common occurrence in the texts I examine in this dissertation; not only does leisure ideology hold out ideals that are perhaps impossible to realize, but also leisured subjects themselves are not always convinced of the desirability of leisure, with its relaxation and its apparent inconsequentiality. For example, in the
most famous example of hotel fiction, Vicki Baum’s *Grand Hotel*, aging ballerina Grusinskaya begins, unwillingly, to spend more and more time in hotels as her career slowly degenerates. Narrating her fall from popularity, she recalls her grueling years of training in the Imperial School of Ballet:

Duty made a machine of me. There was nothing but work, work, work. No rest, no leisure, never a pause.... Work is hateful, you curse it. But you can’t exist without it. Three days’ rest, and at once you are in a panic.... You have to dance. It’s an obsession. No drug, no morphine or cocaine, and no vice in the world gets such a hold as work.... Besides, it’s important. If I give up dancing, believe me there will not be a single person left in the world who can really dance at all. All the rest are *dilettanti*. But this hectic and hideously practical world of yours cannot go on without someone who can dance and who knows what dancing means. (134-5)

Grusinskaya perceives herself as the only dancer left who follows a labor theory of value rather than a leisure theory of value; her dancing, paradoxically, can only give true leisure to her audience as long as her work is painful, selfless, unmitigated labor. Though Nella Racksole’s desire to experience labor does smack of the dilettantism Grusinskaya refers to, the latter’s speech gives a more poignant picture of the exaggerated work ethic criticized, as we saw in Chapter Two, as one of capitalism’s worse spiritual and philosophical crimes by Vernon Lee, Oscar Wilde, Ezra Pound, Bertrand Russell, and other cultural figures of the time, including Max Weber and Paul Lafargue. Just as the Grand Babylon’s original owner begs Racksole at the conclusion of the novel, “I can’t bear idleness. Will you sell?” (135), so too do the other modern subjects find leisure itself to be a problem. When presented with the perfect leisure (the original owner, for example, had attempted to retire, with tens of millions of dollars, to his beloved hometown), these characters find themselves desiring the perfect labor instead. In more overly earnest works of modernist literature than this frothy sensation story—for example,
Elizabeth Bowen’s *The Hotel*—the search for perfect labor is also frustrated, but in Bennett’s comedy, his characters do find the perfect labor inside the grand hotel.

I will discuss this ideal mixture of labor and leisure experienced in *The Grand Babylon Hotel* in the conclusion of this dissertation (in relation to Agatha Christie’s *At Bertram’s Hotel*), but for the moment, I return to the subject of the hotel’s dramatization of the changes in the global economy, particularly through the growth of finance capital, a novelty and an abstraction whose visualization, I argue, is made possible by modernists through the figure of the modern hotel, both by making modern finance capital a spectacle and by illuminating the necessary limits or boundary beyond which no definite knowledge about the complex modern economy can be known. For example, as Racksole takes a leisurely stroll through his domain and inspects his guests, he reflects, “Probably only a very small percentage of them had the least idea that this tall space man...was the sole proprietor of the Grand Babylon and possibly the richest man in Europe” (156). Fittingly, such opacity is not a barrier to the hotel’s profitability, but rather essential to it. The narrator explains,

It was not good form to mention prices at the Grand Babylon; the prices were enormous, but you never mentioned them. At the conclusion of your stay a bill was presented, brief and void of dry details, and you paid it without a word.... The place was like a palace incognito. There was no gold sign over the roof, not even an explanatory word at the entrance. The Grand Babylon was far above such maneuvers; it defied competition by ignoring it; and consequently it was always full during the season. (17)

Bennett here presents the modern hotel, impervious to competition, the mechanism of Adam Smith’s invisible hand, as beyond classical political economy; the modern hotel is a new entity already beyond the laws of industrial production. Instead, it works more like finance capital; Nella, trying to explain to a penurious and old-fashioned prince how her very modern father
made his money, relays to him what her father said to her—that “when a man had made ten millions no power on earth could stop those ten millions from growing into twenty. And so it continues. I spend what I can, but I can’t come near coping with it” (48-9). The Grand Babylon Hotel, too, works best by being left alone, by being treatin as an automaton. Felix Babylon may drily argue, “I have heard of hotels that run themselves. If they do, you may sure that they obey the laws of gravity and run downwards” (39), but when two of the hotel’s three supposedly irreplaceable workers (the desk clerk and the head waiter) quit, Racksole gloats to Felix that the hotel has indeed continued to work impeccably: “And no one to take their places. And yet the hotel continues its way!” (43). Even the departure of the famous French chef does not injure the Grand Babylon’s account books, suggesting that the hotel, as an automaton that requires labor power but not specific laborers, as both a gloriously capacious commodity and an object of abstract speculation, captures an Arrighian moment in the modernization of a particular industry when the industrial capital of machines, always being perfected, makes a qualitative shift into finance capital. To put it differently, the hotel, though itself a confusingly labyrinthine environment, is nonetheless more easily visualized than the finance capital that makes such hotels (and modern capitalism) possible. By buying the Grand Babylon for a few weeks, for example, Racksole materializes—just for a moment—the liquid millions of his railroad stocks. Just as I have argued in Chapter Three that the Pococks in Henry James’s *The Ambassadors* do not tour Paris so much as they tour their own abstract and alienated wealth, so too is Racksole able to “enter...upon a personally-conducted tour of what was quite the most interesting part of his own property” (166). The many secret rooms, doors, trap-doors, and peepholes of the Grand Babylon suggest that, had he kept the hotel, Racksole could, *ad infinitum*, discover his wealth
over and over again in an uncharacteristically material form. The learning curve experienced by newcomers to modern grand hotels—including Racksole, whose fuss about the Angel Kiss was belied by his person, as “he had all the look of that expert, the traveled Englishman, who can differentiate between one hotel and another by instinct, and who knows at once where he may make a fuss with propriety, and where it is advisable to behave exactly as at the club” (14)—is thus significant not only narratologically because it gives a reason for the long and lushly descriptive passages when the newcomer tours the hotel, but also economically because what I like to call “learning the hotel” stands in for the largely impossible task of learning modern economics. At the novel’s climax, for example, as a stockbroker in command of hundreds of millions of finance capital enters the drawing room of the Grand Babylon Hotel’s best royal suite (in order to refuse to extend a loan to the impecunious prince), the narrator observes,

It was a scene characteristic of the end of the nineteenth century—an overfed, commonplace, pursy little man who had been born in a Brixton semi-detached villa, and whose highest idea of pleasure was a Sunday up the river in an expensive electric launch, confronting and utterly routing, in a hotel belonging to an American millionaire, the representative of a race of men who had fingered every page of European history for centuries. (152)

The narrator’s palpable outrage at these economic shifts is undercut by his inconsistent (and rather ethically alarming) acceptance of the nouveau riche Racksole but not of the also nouveau riche broker. This inconsistency is explicable in the light of the awe with which Felix Babylon responds to Racksole’s claim that he has not had “anything to do with hotels before” by marveling, “Then you have missed your vocation...Mr Racksole, why have you never run an hotel?” (33). Racksole’s innate genius for running the Grand Babylon is what makes him, in Bennett’s novel, a thoroughly modern hero; his millions upon millions alone are not enough to
place him at the center of this sensational narrative, but the very moment his talents are lavished on a hotel, they become spectacularized to such an extent that they are, as Bennett wished, enough of a buoy to launch his first best-seller. Finance capital is not only made visible through the modern hotel, but also made fun, glamorous, and adventurous.

Likewise, Bennett’s Imperial Palace, published two decades later, details the exploits of the most successful hotelier in England, the dashing hero Evelyn Orcham. Imperial Palace follows as he simultaneously falls in love and spearheads a merger that transforms his singular victory—the Imperial Palace, which Orcham’s primary investor, the multimillionaire financier Sir Henry, claims is “the most characteristic of all modern creations. It stands for the age, just as much as the Pyramids did for Egypt... It’s marvelous, and there never was anything like it before” (164)—into a vast European chain of Orcham-branded modern hotels. Even though Evelyn Orcham is initially put off by the idea of a merger as being a “mania” that would “mean the the destroying of individuality,” he recognizes the wisdom of Sir Henry’s pronouncement that “[n]othing can stop mergers. They’ve come, everywhere, in everything. They’re still coming,” just as Evelyn agrees with Sir Henry that creation a chain of hotels would give his “individuality a scope” because “a merger always means increased power and influence for the top-dog” (165).

Sir Henry’s explicit adaptation of evolutionary rhetoric—he argues, “I’m not scientist, and I couldn’t make a very clear story of evolution. But...what I say, is, the merger is evolution....It may be a bit rough on people, but what are you going to do about it?”—overcomes Orcham’s initial hesitation by interpreting the latter’s positive reaction to the adventurousness of the merger as “conscientious,” reflecting “a sense of duty” by “pushing evolution forward” (166). Recalling Marshall Berman’s discussion of Faustus as the preeminent figure of modernity’s mantra of
creative destruction in *All That is Solid Melts Into Air*, Sir Henry argues, “Perfection’s another name for death, isn’t it?” (167), thus sealing Orcham’s agreement to head the merger at the same time that Bennett mobilizes the hotel as a rhetorical figure to bring the contradictions of capital to a dramatic crisis-point. Sir Henry responds to “continually hearing about the soul-destroying monotony of organized labor these days”—or in other words, he responds to what he perceives as the practical inefficacy of protracted conversations about the costs of capitalism—by forcing Evelyn to take action, creating the cramped rhetorical space from which Evelyn’s agreement to the merger is supposed to emerge. His callous arguments (he announces, “Well, somebody has to suffer”) and baiting questions (“Do you want to go to the old methods?”), are all in the service his claim that property owners can overcome the difficulties of capitalism by intensifying it (he claims that “you must go forward. More mass-production! And—more machinery!” [167]). Yet Bennett seems uninterested in establishing the moral value of these decisions. As the book ends, Evelyn muses about the relationship between his love of work and the novel’s main plot point (which woman will he marry?):

> Was it for these ecstasies that he had climbed to his particular pinnacle? Was Violet, or the perfecting of luxury hotels throughout Europe, his life-work? If both, which was the more important? Where luxury hotels sociologically justified? He didn’t know. He couldn’t decide. He knew merely that he was going straight on. He said to himself: ‘There’s a lot of things in this world you’ll never get the hang of. And only idiots try to.’ (670)

Like Vicki Baum’s *Grand Hotel*, the ethical questions raised about hotels—and about the justice of treating hotels as a form of leisurely entertainment—are left suspended. Despite the inconclusiveness of the novel’s judgment of Sir Henry’s claims, Bennett at least leaves one point
clear: that it is at the modern hotel where ethical hand-wringing and apparently endless debates over the negative effects of modernization can come to a head.

Despite James’s horror at the spread of the modern hotel in England, Bennett’s hotel fiction shows that the modern hotel’s role as a force of capitalist creative destruction is interpreted and differently interpreted and valued by various modernists. While some modernists regard the hotel as a harsh executive arm of capitalist standardization through its capacity to engulf and organize vast numbers of people, others approve the creation of the new embodied by the volatile and rapidly modernizing hospitality industry. Even Henry James, in his famous description of New York’s Waldorf-Astoria as a revelation of the true American spirit, with its “native conception of the hotel” (444), succumbs to the allure of the modern hotel when he images the hotel beckoning him from across the busy street, “You must make a dash for it, but you’ll see I’m worth it” (440).

The amazing hotel-world quickly closes round him; with the process of transition reduced to its minimum he is transported to the conditions of extraordinary complexity and brilliancy, operating—and with proportionate perfection—by laws of their own and expressing after their fashion a complete scheme of life. The air swarms, to intensity, with the characteristic, the characteristic condensed and accumulated as he rarely elsewhere has had the luck to find it....you are in presence of a revelation of the possibilities of the hotel—for which the American spirit has found so unprecedented a use and value; leading it on to express so a social, indeed positively an aesthetic ideal, and making it so, at this supreme pitch, a synonym for civilization. (440)

By speaking of the hotel-world as having “laws of their own” and a “complete scheme of life,” James uses the language of the microcosm, yet he does so in order to position the Grand Hotel not as a hermetically sealed alternative to modern life, but rather as a synecdoche for the “American hotel spirit,” a resolutely public way of life that is spreading beyond American’s
borders as “Europe is following ‘the American example’...trying...to unlearn as many of their old
social canons, and in especial their old discrimination in favor of a private life” (440-1). Perhaps
is should come as no surprise that, James, known for his “international theme,” should keenly
observe the spread of the American hotel model across the Atlantic, but more surprisingly, both
his begrudging adoration for the Waldorf-Astoria and his skepticism toward the modernization of
hospitality are reproduced in works considered to be more canonically modernist than James’s
travel writing.

(Not Quite) Universal Hospitality

In the following passage from his essay on Naples, for example, Walter Benjamin uses
the figure of the hotel as a spatial exercise in the fleeting and ephemeral:

As porous as this stone is the architecture.... In everything they preserve the scope to
become a theatre of new, unforeseen constellations. The stamp of the definitive is
avoided. No situation appears intended forever, no figure asserts its 'thus and not
otherwise.' This is how architecture, the most binding part of the communal rhythm,
comes into being here: civilized, private, and ordered only in the great hotel and
warehouse buildings on the quays; anarchical, embroiled, villagelike in the center, into
which large networks of streets were only hacked years ago. (Reflections 165-6)

For Benjamin, the hotel is a key feature of modern space, a physical manifestation of
Baudelaire’s definition of the modern in “The Painter of Modern Life” as the fugitive and the
contingent. Yet the “hospitality machine”—the (very protracted) growth of the efficient,
profitable chain hotel, with its bland repetition of rooms and furniture and its cost-cutting
maneuvers—does not always appear as a positive force, as a Baudelarian spur to new aesthetic
production or as a Paterian provocation to find beauty in the fleeting and the unique. Rather, the
hotel often stands in for the social poverty of modernity and its destruction of individuality or
aesthetically rarified states of being. The most extreme example of hotels as a negative force can perhaps be found in postcolonial theory and other scholarly arguments about the role of race in the leisure industry. Sara Blair has argued in "Local Modernity, Global Modernism: Bloomsbury and the Places of the Literary" that the inexpensive hotels and boarding houses near Bloomsbury encouraged meaningful and authentic cross-cultural interaction between the English inhabitants of Bloomsbury (including the members of the literary circle) and foreign immigrants, Blair, I argue, underemphasizes the degree to which race, class, gender, and sexuality could quality and constrain such cosmopolitan interaction. Louise Pratt has famously argued against what she calls “the travel myth,” pointing out that even the “most bourgeois, scientific, economic, and intercultural global relations moved within highly determined circuits,” including travel (107). Pratt argues (in the words of James Clifford) that although the privileged traveler may move “with security and privilege” and thus “in relatively unconstrained ways,” other travelers “move about under strong cultural, political, and economic compulsions,” so that while “certain travelers are materially privileged, others [are] oppressed” (108). More specifically, in the context of the hotel, Andrew Sandoval-Strausz argues that not only does the hotel play a crucial role in empire because staying at a hotel often obscures the harsh inequalities and unsavory aspects of imperialism, but also that hotel staff, working as liaisons between guests and the tourist industry, serve as as “gatekeepers” between guests and locals, therefore minimizing unstaged or spontaneous intercultural encounters (122, 177). And James Clifford’s “Traveling Cultures” also warns us to remain skeptical of claims like Blair’s, not only asking that scholars attempt to access non-Europeans’ accounts of traveling (letters, diaries, oral histories) before making pronouncements about the cross-cultural affordances of the modern institutions of
travel, but also noting that using vague terms like “traveler” to describe their experiences risks...downplaying the extent to which the mobility is coerced, organized within regimes of dependent, highly disciplined labor” (107). Although Clifford, in using the word “labor,” certainly means to highlight the necessary yet often unpaid, unpleasant, or compulsory work of native guides, translators, and hospitality providers, I would also like to follow Chris Rojek’s warning in his sociology of leisure sextet (including his recent *The Labor of Leisure*) that even the most privileged travelers are subject to the constrained, commodified, standardized, and often laborious regime of modern leisure. I think here of Rachel Vinrace’s sheltered hotel in Virginia Woolf’s *The Voyage Out*, which she manages to escape, only to succumb to tropical disease, and E. M. Forster’s account of staying at an Italian pension, in which he protests (anticipating Lucy Honeychurch’s disappointment in *A Room with a View*), “But oh what a viewpoint is the English

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74 To that end, Sara Blair’s argument can be read productively against Ben Conisbee Baer’s “Shit Writing: Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable*, the Image of Gandhi, and the Progressive Writers’ Association,” which opens by considering the signature line of Anand’s 1935 novel—“Simla—S.S. Viceroy of India—Bloomsbury. September—October 1933.” In his decentered investigation of Bloomsbury as “a milieu to which Anand was, more or less ambivalently, attached” (575), largely through his founding of the Bloomsbury-based All-India Progressive Writers’ Association. By interpreting the novel as “mark[ing] the desire to carry the periphery to the metropolis so as to inscribe and make visible the unknown, excremental abjection of the colonial margin in the aesthetic heart of the center” (577), Baer tentatively affirms Blair’s thesis, but with two key differences: that a non-white Bloomsbury writer must independently and consciously determine his or her uneasy relation to the white authors whose work they are inspired by but certainly do not reproduce, and that the cosmopolitan encounters Anand actively sought were from the beginning interwoven with particular and concrete political goals (in his case, negotiating India’s independence).

75 June Jordan’s recent “Report for the Bahamas” nicely demonstrates the ambiguities of “privilege” when leisure spaces are concerned. As a black feminist vacationing at the Sheraton British Colonial Hotel in the Bahamas, she feels compromised as a feminist (because she chooses this ritzy, expensive hotel to ensure her physical protection while vacationing alone) and as an African-American (because the mostly white clientele of the hotel are being served by the mostly black employees). It is precisely that she is economically privileged that she feels compromised as a black feminist—prompting her to reflect on the uneasy intersections of race, class, and gender in resort spaces, and the uncertain and ambiguous lines that fail to distinguish clearly between the privileged and the unprivileged. Meaghan Morris captures this complexity in “At Henry Parkes Motel,” in which she attempts to reconcile space theory’s assumption that the hotel “can never be a true place” in works by Daniel Boorstin, Jean Baudrillard, and Paul Virilio (245) with the motel’s ambivalent relationship to imperial history (in which Henry Parkes Motel performs “disappearance of history in myth” [249]) and with the motel’s potential as a vehicle for women to escape the constraints of everyday life (due to the “peculiar function as an escape yet a home-away-from-home,” in which “the motel can be rewritten as a transit-place for women able to use it” [242]).
hotel or Pension! Our life is where we sleep and eat, and the glimpses of Italy that I get are only accidents” (qtd. in Stallybrass 9). Even daily interactions with Others that undoubtedly occurred in modern hotel environments did not always result in the enlightened realization of common humanity or an epiphany of interpersonal exchange; as first and foremost places of lodging, the hotel was perhaps a force of Ulrich Beck’s “actually existing cosmopolitanization” (133), but as the scene of banal or trivial cosmopolitanism. Writing to E. M. Forster in 1936, Christopher Isherwood recalls such an encounter: “A Scottish lady, speaking French with a Scottish accent, argued with a young Persian student, speaking French with a Persian accent, throughout supper about why Persia (pardon, Iran) had a French superscription [on] its stamps and not an English one” (62). He then recounts how the middle of the night, he hears the Scottish lady relieving herself without any regard for them hearing her, attributing it to a cultural difference that Isherwood finds to be disruptive, distasteful, and only worthy of recording as the punchline in a letter to those back home.

Of course, we could point to Isherwood’s *Goodbye to Berlin* and *Mr. Norris Changes Trains* as slightly more optimistic portraits of the potential for cosmopolitan experience in the modern leisure institutions of Europe—even more remarkably positive in that Isherwood seeks a milieu more tolerant of homosexuality—but modernist scholars have addressed this issue eloquently, and one sub-genre of hotel fiction should perhaps be addressed before considering the more productive elements of the diverse hotel milieu of modernity. The continued publication of hotel novels today that center on the Jewish experience of World War II and the Holocaust—for example, Aharon Appelfeld’s *Badenheim 1939* and D. M. Thomas’s *The White Hotel*—

76 I am thinking here of Melba Cuddy-Keane “Modernism, Geopolitics, Globalization” and Andrzej Gasiorek’s “Inside and Outside the Whale.”
stresses the continued relevance of such hotel experiences for understanding the wider racial, national, and cultural background of twentieth century European history. The modernist literature of Mary Butts, Djuna Barnes, Wyndham Lewis, and Joseph Roth could be set among these contemporary novels as representations of the Jewish experiences of the modern leisure industry and leisure spaces. And indeed, modernist scholarship on Jewish literature has broached the topic of hotels—including, recently, Uri Cowen’s “Agnon's Modernity: Death and Modernism in S. Y. Agnon's A Guest for the Night” and John Toews’s “Refashioning the Masculine Subject in Early Modernism: Narratives of Self-Dissolution and Self-Construction in Psychoanalysis and Literature, 1900-1914.” But I want to stress that such scholarly inquiries could benefit from considering hotels and other spaces of the modern leisure industry as a spatial, material, economic, and historical phenomenon, particularly because even though Appelfield and Thomas’s contemporary novels may stress the symbolic value of the hotel, the modernist authors I have mentioned did not typically do so. Yet Cowen and Toews approach the modernist representations of hotels under their purview through the lens of symbolism; Cowen claims that in order to investigate Agnon’s “representation of space as a literary space of death,” it is “necessary to examine the mode of discourse and representation of the novel through a figurative inquiry...[in which] figurative language can be seen as the point where the political and literary spheres meet to form the main theatre of cultural dynamics” (658-9). Meanwhile, Toews analysis of in Arthur Schnitzler’s The Road into the Open (1908) might speak of the “temporal discontinuity and cultural exile [that] envelops the whole society in which the Jews are situated” as a “social unease and cultural alienation which make participation in the Jewish social circles, exile, or a ‘hotel and wandering life’ seem almost natural for them as well” (50), but Toews’s use
of Freud’s psychoanalytic texts as the primary context for Schnitzler’s novel leads him to interpret the “hotel and wandering life” as a signifier for conflicting constructions of Jewish masculinity. In the context of African-American experiences of the hotel, contemporary scholars have, I think, dealt with the topic of race and the modern leisure industry more directly and with more fascinating results. Nancy Cunard’s articles decrying the segregation built into modern hotels (“Black Man and White Ladyship” and “Harlem Reviewed”) have been considered by modernist scholarship, including Laura Winkiel’s “Nancy Cunard’s Negro and the Transnational Politics of Race” and Emily Bernard’s “Unlike Many Others: Exceptional White Characters in Harlem Renaissance Fiction,” both of which address the daily fact of segregation in American hotels and in some English hotels. Bernard’s article covers an incident of racism in Nella Larsen’s Passing, while Winkiel’s covers Nancy Cunard’s letters and other non-fiction. Having visited Harlem to gather research for a book answering the question, Cunard wrote in the New York Daily Mirror, “Why are you Americans so uneasy of the Negro race? This question is the epitome of the whole color question as it strikes a plain English person such as myself” (qtd. Winkiel 511). Back in England, when Cunard’s “black friend” was denied a room at the hotel she was staying at, she recalls that “some detectives called, the police looked in, the telephone rang incessantly at our hotel. The patron (so he said) received a mysterious message that he himself would be imprisoned, and that ‘undt de other vil be kilt’” (182). That same year (1931), Langston Hughes published his poem “Advertisement for the [new] Waldorf-Astoria” in New Masses, as a protest against its refusal to hire black workers or admit black guests (as well as against the creation of a new luxury hotel in the middle of a depression), while in England two years earlier (1929), the Savoy Hotel’s sudden refusal to admit Paul Robeson to their Grill room led to a
media fiasco—Robeson told the Prime Minister of the refusal and wrote a damning editorial in the *Manchester Guardian*—and to a demonstration in front of the hotel by black Londoners.77

**Patriot Games: Bowen and Lewis**

By contrast, whereas we might interpret the segregation of some early modern hotels as indications that some modern subjects wanted the hotel to be an enclave or escape from persons or events they thought they did not wish to encounter, I wish to interpret Bowen’s *The Shelbourne Hotel* as evidence that the hotel’s essential porosity—its participation in and vulnerability to, not its exclusion from, the major events or crises, cultural shifts, migrations, and systemic inequalities of modernity—could be regarded in a positive light by some disenfranchised modern subjects. As the history traces over a century of the hotel’s participation in imperialism, capitalism, and, most significantly for Bowen, Irish nationalism. When she cryptically remarks, “The Shelbourne never looks anything but opaque” (6), her ostensible reason for saying so is a description of the hotel’s facade, yet her rhetorical objective is clearly to look beyond this superficial opacity. For example, she remarks, not without a hint of national pride, “Everybody knows what the Shelbourne is, where it is, and (more or less) why it is,” but then immediately following up this statement with a clarification, “I doubt if the average Dubliner, asked point-blank, could tell you whether the Shelbourne’s name is written on it, and if so where.... Like other sights of monuments of a city, it is significant and important, and at the same time seldom looked at twice” (9). While her use of italics suggests a certain overt sense of ownership and civic pride on the part of Dubliners, it also carries shares the commitment to moving beyond common sense, beyond the already-known of leisure spaces, that galvanizes the

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77 For more information about Nancy Cunard’s and Paul Robeson’s experiences, see Maroula Joannou’s “Nancy Cunard’s English Journey” and Dorothy Butler Gilliam’s *Paul Robeson: All American*. 
rise of critical leisure studies just thirty years after Bowen publishes *The Shelbourne Hotel*. In place of the Marxist critique that energized those leisure scholars of the 1980s, Bowen appears to be motivated by a wish to do for the Irish what she did for her own family in *Bowen’s Court* a decade before. After lamenting, “The nineteenth century in Dublin is, so far, an age without a name. There would seem to exist no all-round study of the social and civic life of the capital during those hundred years,” Bowen continues by forging a method for creating one. “It is necessary,” she explains, “to compose a sort of mosaic patchwork or scrap-screen out of diverse and fragmentary little pictures. Their effect, it is to be hoped, may convey something” (41). Bowen here mobilizes modernist narrative techniques as both the necessary and appropriate method for writing the heretofore unwritten social history of Dublin. The patriotic impetus behind such a project is also evident in the following passage, whose balance of romance and gritty realism offers a challenge to stereotypes about the work ethic and dreaminess of the Irish (including, for example, Matthew Arnold’s infamous “On the Study of Celtic Literature,” which builds upon the “melancholy and unprogressiveness” of the Celt [165]):

Since the day when Burke first opened his doors, the hotel’s continuity has been unbroken. Virtually unbroken, one ought to say—one year (1865-6) had to be given over to rebuilding, under new ownership; later there were some weeks of paralysis due to strike. For a century and a quarter the Shelbourne has been in being—with all that that implies. It has welcomed the world and blazed out lights of gaiety; equally, it has been girt by battle and withstood siege. It is now an institution: what went to make it was a blent of genius and realism, flair and devoted routine work. Thanks to many—some whose names shall be written, some whose names are lost—it has gone on. It has gone on, accumulating character, forging its own tradition, writing its page of history, gathering a whole host of associations around its name. The Shelbourne.... (8)

Three gaps interrupt the passage’s superficially fulsome nostalgia: the years of strike and rebuilding, which highlight the hotel’s history as a workplace and as a financial instrument; the
unnamed workers “whose names are lost,” which again underscores the hotel as a space of labor; and the terminal ellipses, which suggest that she despairs of ever collecting or enumerating every single “association around its name.” The Shelbourne’s history is dispersed and communal, a never-ending project that humbles the powers of any single author.

Bowen’s attitude of resigned but determined authorship, which pairs an overriding tone of pride with occasional moments of irony, detachment, or gentle teasing, does something slightly different, I argue, than the tone Ellen Wollf has identified in Bowen’s “The Big House” and Bowen’s Court. Wollf writes that in these latter works, "frank criticism of Anglo-Ireland plays with frank defense; cool judgments of Anglo Ireland's moral blunders transform themselves into apparently unself-conscious enactments of them; statements of ambivalence toward Anglo-Ireland and its Others, Ireland and England, jostle professions of love and near hate" (90). As I will discuss further in relation to Bowen’s The Hotel, scholars of Bowen’s oeuvre, Irish literature, or the “Big House” novel tend to de-emphasize or even wholly ignore The Shelbourne Hotel, yet I argue that this latter work, written a decade after Bowen’s Court and “The Big House,” reflects at certain moments in the text a very different relationship to Ireland’s history as a colony struggling for independence. The hotel’s guests—particularly visiting English soldiers and statesmen, and the families thereof—might desire to use the hotel as an escape from political and economic troubles, but Bowen gently ridicules this desire: discussing Daniel’ O’Connell’s release from jail and later funeral, she follows up dramatic descriptions of public demonstrations with the “tense, ghostly, genteel quiet” of “Burke’s most apprehensive guests [who] could remain indoors, hurriedly draw their curtains, and close their eyes, only faintly hearing the distant uproar” (70). Again, when discussing the first rejection of Parnell’s proposals
for Home Rule, she notes that “the hotel, with its rubicund face and impassive routine, became a
heartening fortress; once inside it, everything seemed less bad,” yet the Anglo-Irish gentry “had
demons of worry crouched on their Shelbourne bedposts, waiting to leer at them in the small
hours” (154-5). Notably, Bowen’s descriptions suggest that only for the Anglo-Irish and the
English does the modern hotel’s dialectical oscillation between private and public, exclusive
preserve and plaything of history, become truly problematic. While Bowen recounts with relish
many political events in the Shelbourne’s history that are coincidental and at times superfluously
lurid—she, for example, “has heard it said” that Hitler’s brother was a chef de commis for the
Shelbourne (176)—she argues explicitly that the “national struggle in its succeeding phases”
must be taken into consideration in order to understand the hotel’s history. “To attempt to write
about Dublin—even, indeed, about a hotel in Dublin—and ignore all that,” she observes, in an
implicit critique of the “apprehensive guests” who try to use the Shelbourne as a fortress, “would
be amount to rendering Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark” (41). Bowen’s attitude this
necessity to speak of politics is at first ambivalent and seems to follow Wolff’s thesis to the
letter: the chapter in which she refreshes her readers’ knowledge of the history of Irish
independence is called “The Background,” suggesting a rather old-historicist model of political
history as a semi-detached “context” for reading a cultural object or text, and she reminds her
readers that “shelves and shelves of books deal, already, with Ireland’s emergence as a nation.
My own subject is on a less grand scale” (41-2).

But as her history accumulates micro-histories of political events that occur inside and at
the doors of the Shelbourne—labor troubles, World Wars I and II (during which times it acted as
a hospital and communications center), the fight for independence, the Irish Civil War (during
which it was besieged), the drafting and ratification of the Irish Constitution—the “grand scale” of her hotel history becomes apparent, despite Bowen’s modest and not entirely ingenuous proviso. Ironically (and thus even more fittingly), it is during the 1916 Easter Rising, when British troops occupied Shelbourne’s roof in order to get within shooting range of Countess Markievicz’s troops in St. Stephen’s Green, that Bowen describes the only time in its history that, not only “locked and bolted” but also “barricaded,” “the Shelbourne was now cut off... The place is to be regarded as sealed up” (195). That the Shelbourne should “cut off” its guests “in a sort of ghostly shipboard existence” (196), that the hotel should literally be an enclosed space at one of the very moments it most closely influences the shape of Irish history, that the only object smuggled into the hotel at the time was the machine gun that convinced Markievicz and the rebels to retreat from St. Stephen’s Green—all of these points belie the conservatism and nostalgia with which Bowen ends the history. After having given example after example of the hotel’s significance for Irish history (and right before she boasts that “Yeats here sat reading his poems aloud” [238]), Bowen writes, “The hotel is in its functioning a self-contained unit, a world revolving upon itself,” containing “a comprehensive organic life” (236). Bowen’s invocation of this very hardy leisure space trope, I argue, works rhetorically along the same lines as the “genteel” and worried English guests of the Shelbourne whose need for a self-contained hotel she has ridiculed; the ability of the figure of the hotel-as-world to fulfill the need for symbolic and material proofs of safety, of certainty, and of national pride and political power has been transferred from easing the anxieties of colonial officers and Anglo-Irish gentry to those of the divergent populations comprising the modern Irish nation-state.
Though Bowen begins *The Shelbourne Hotel* with deprecation concerning her ability (or desire) to tell the history of Irish nationalism, she ends it with a quintessentially modernist description of the Dublin cityscape and the Shelbourne’s place in it. Where the machine gun stood in 1916, Bowen narrates herself standing in order to describe

Dublin spread[ing] its humming plan, shading off into the empty horizons. This vast, melting, and shining view has something timeless about it, yet with every moment changes color and light. In the heart of this stands the Shelbourne, four-square, stout and surviving, a scene of so many destinies which might seem to be transitory, yet become immortal when one considers how they have left their mark. Nothing goes for nothing. (239)

It is difficult to think of a more literal illustration of Bowen’s implicit thesis that the Shelbourne provides a perspective on Ireland, but an ambiguity arises: this marriage of Baudelaire’s two halves of the beautiful—the fleeting and the eternal—is replicated both between Dublin and the hotel (with the material spatial mass hotel providing the eternal element) and within the hotel itself (with its complex temporality, as a synecdoche for both the “transitory” and “immortal”). Furthermore, this passage’s insistence on the Shelbourne’s situation in a larger urban space, whose meaning it both mediates and is mediated by, contradicts Bowen’s proclamation, just paragraphs before, that the hotel is a self-sufficient world. A few sentences later, the closing lines of the book double back on the self-conscious modernism of this passage yet heighten the passage’s ambiguity in an entirely different way by beginning an open-ended narrative. Shifting into the narrative tone of fiction, Bowen writes, “A car detaches itself, slows down, pulls up in front of the glass porch. The porter comes out—somebody is arriving. It is any hour you like of a Shelbourne day....” (240). By ending with ellipses and using the present tense, she supports her earlier claim that “the book ends, but not the story” (239) and emphasizes the essential openness.
of the modern hotel. At the same time, she regards her act of writing history as closing that openness; by claiming that the “Shelbourne cannot be completed until it is read” (11), she attributes a power to text that she does not afford the actual space. Furthermore, a certain commercialism, a slick packaging and commodification of the spatial, temporal, and political openness of the hotel, hangs over the history’s conclusion, which could be seamlessly pasted on a twentieth-century advertisement for a hotel, resort, or other leisure space. By wanting to have it both ways, by representing the hotel as both fluid and fixed, political and insulated, dynamic and timeless, by treating the hotel as both national treasure and luxurious resort, Bowen revives the politically ambivalent tone Ellen Wollf describes in “The Big House” and Bowen’s Court; she simultaneously celebrates Irish independence as an event that allows the Shelbourne to accumulate prestige and significance and preserves a kind of Protestant Ascension in the hotel by claiming that the hotel is “haunted” by “the handsome, the hearty, the happy, and the polite” guests of the “Gay Days” from the 1880s to the outbreak of World War I (128). In doing so, Bowen may look like yet another person in the long line of colonizers seeking to wield power by redefining Ireland—the kind of activity described by Seamus Deane in “The Production of Cultural Space in Irish Writing.”

The physical landscape of Ireland is regularly redefined throughout the nineteenth century—administratively, cartographically, politically, culturally, economically, constitutionally—by competing groups, all of which seek to make it conform to a paradigm in terms of which it can be successfully represented as a specific place, indeed, but also as a locus for various forms of ideological investment. (119)

The zest and passion that animate Bowen’s prose, as well as the range of materials she quotes from, suggest that Bowen did too use the Shelbourne as such a “locus” for “ideological investment”—but for what purpose? It would be very difficult to argue from this text that Bowen
is either an unabashed patriot or postcolonial apologist. Bowen’s ambiguity is chiefly of interest for this dissertation because it results from the text’s participation in the discursive overdetermination of modern hotels. If this overdetermination makes it difficult to pin down what a modern hotel really is, then the purpose of this chapter (and indeed, the dissertation as a whole) is not to force a definition but to stress the significance of the sheer fact that, during the era of literary modernism, hotels are made to “mean” in so many contexts.

And if Bowen’s political views are, ultimately, inaccessible in this text, *The Shelbourne Hotel* nonetheless creates a relatively inclusive cultural history of Ireland’s colonial and postcolonial struggles through the overdetermined figure of the modern hotel. So too does Austrian author Joseph Roth’s *The Hotel Savoy* appreciate the hotel’s universal hospitality—its commitment to taking all displaced by the war (Gabriel Dan, former German soldier and prisoner of war, witnesses “the returning soldiers...whole hordes of them” flooding out of Russia [117]), regardless of whether they would ultimately pay. Gabriel celebrates his arrival at the Hotel Savoy as his return to modernity, “a man resurrected” through his return to the amenities of a modern hotel, which he lingers over: “water, soap, English lavatories, a lift, chambermaids in white caps...electric lamps blooming in shades of green and rose, like flowers from their calyx; bells which ring at the push of a button” (9). Though he “treasur[es] every second” of his first day at the hotel,” once acclimated to the hotel, he realizes that of the other guests of the hotel’s affordable top-floor rooms, “I saw that none of them lived at the Hotel Savoy of his own free will. Each of them was gripped by some misfortune, and the Hotel Savoy was the misfortune and they were no longer capable of choosing between this and that” (108). This universal hospitality is simultaneously nightmare (Gabriel is haunted by another hotel guest’s warning, “No one
escaped the Hotel Savoy” [73]) and refuge (Gabriel’s love-interest Stasia explains, “it is only possible—I mean for people like us—to live in hotels, and the Savoy is the best I know” [25]). The hotel is also a pause, or at least a kind of power vacuum reminiscent of Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* as the guests wait for, but never see, two almost mythical figures: the manager and “unseen man” Kaleguropulos, and and the rich financier Bloomfield, a local boy turned successful American immigrant. When Gabriel, alerted that the manager will visit (“It rang like a wave through the house: Kaleguropulos is coming!” [30]), decides to wait outside a door that the manager positively must come through, and nonetheless no Kaleguropulos materializes, he complains, “the mystery of Kaleguropulos gave me no rest” (70). Likewise, both hotel guests and residents of the surrounding town wait for Bloomfield—for “if he were to come over once a year everything would sort itself out” (83). As weeks pass by, “[p]eople waited for Bloomfield, and not only in the Hotel Savoy. In the whole town they waited for Bloomfield.... The whole world is waiting for Bloomfield” (82-3). But just as the guests of the Shelbourne Hotel must admit the tumultuous political events of the early twentieth century, the Hotel Savoy cannot maintain this state of pause. Having set the readers up for an anti-climax, Roth instead writes, “All of the sudden Bloomfield was there” (84). Unlikelier still, just as the Shelbourne Hotel too played many roles in Irish nationalism, the Hotel Savoy becomes the locus for revolutionary uprising when Gabriel’s friend, the agitator Zwonimir, gives a particularly rousing version of the hotel-as-microcosm trope. Referencing two of the hotel’s prominent figures—Neuner, a factory owner who regularly patronizes the hotel bar, and Ignatz, the elevator operator—Zwonimir announces, “The Hotel Savoy is a rich palace and a prison. Down below live the wealthy people, Neuner’s friends, the factory owners, in fine wide rooms, and up above live the poor devils who
cannot pay for their rooms, whose luggage is in pawn to Ignatz. The proprietor of the hotel is a Greek. No one knows him, not even we know him and we’re shrewd fellows” (116). In this speech, Zwonimir mobilizing the hotel-as-microcosm trope as means to rouse class-consciousness, and indeed, it works, first sparking protests outside the hotel and then leading the unemployed workmen to hunt down local factory owners and, eventually, burn down the Hotel Savoy itself. These scenes are written in the detached tone of a farce; for example, Gabriel discovers, while trying to save Kaleguropulos from the fire and from the wrath of the protestors, that he is actually Ignatz, and Bloomfield, afforded such power by the guests of the Hotel Savoy, quietly slips out of the fray with all of his expensive luggage and luxury cars intact. While Kerr-Orr of Lewis’s “A Soldier of Humor” creates for himself “a most diverting game” (19) by manipulating the cross-cultural tensions of the hotel space to create a subtle yet powerful verbal attack against another hotel guest (like Bloomfield, a European emigrant turned American financier who returns to Europe in all the glory of his new wealth), the sense of inconsequentiality and idle risk-taking that structures Roth’s characters’ cosmopolitan exchanges are felt as forced, unsatisfying, and wholly unpleasant, not (as for Kerr-Orr) a leisure activity that one consciously and freely chooses to take up. But if Kerr-Orr freely chooses to force an argument with the American stranger, his actions do constitute, in the hotel-world he and the stranger both inhabit, a kind of binding social contract or ethically significant event, or, in Kerr-Orr’s words, “a tightening of the machinery of Fate” (26). Though I do not wish to discuss “A Soldier of Humor” at length, it is instructive to note that the residuum of Kerr-Orr’s vacation is spent trying to get back into the good graces of the American stranger, who, it turns out, is a also a hotelier who owns the hotels that Kerr-Orr, as if by chance, chooses to patronize. Not sensitive
to the oblique economics of the modern hotel, in which a French-born American immigrant (penniless perhaps just a decade or two ago) may own a chain of hotels in Spain, Kerr-Orr becomes vulnerable to the hotelier’s machinations and endures an agonizing series of terrible hotel rooms until he can prove (by showing the hotelier, in the flesh, his American friends) that he did not truly mean the anti-American and anti-French jeers he made in the Bayonne hotel. The nightmarish quality of Kerr-Orr’s antagonist, the shadowy American, results, I argue, from his undefined, and therefore unsettling, relation to the leisures spaces Kerr-Orr inhabits: he is a hotel-owner, for example, but appears to be a guest, and while we have seen that the modern hotel owner’s anonymity gratifies Theodore Racksole in *The Grand Babylon Hotel*, in “A Soldier of Humor,” it leads to the torture of Kerr-Orr, vulnerable to the invisible politics of the modern hotel because he is unable to visualize the abstract economics of the modern hotel. Kerr-Orr’s misidentification of the hotel owner not only resembles Gabriel Dan’s own—perhaps a trivial resemblance, yet it calls attention to the almost incomprehensible novelty of the hotel as a complex social, material, and economic phenomenon, as well as to the international currents that gave shape to the hotel as a modern institution uniquely situated to scholarly discussions about cosmopolitanism and transnationalism (a point I return to in Chapter Seven).

Though Kerr-Orr might have dismissed any suggestion that his struggle was anything more than a battle of two masculine wills, I have been suggesting that Roth’s novel and Bowen’s history, emphasize the mutual interdependence of the modern hotel and popular political movements. Both *The Shelbourne Hotel* and *Hotel Savoy* are studies of the affordances and limitations of universal hospitality in an era of political and demographic upheaval. For Gabriel Dan, the idea that “this Hotel Savoy was like the world” is not a source of joy, but rather the
reason why “the hotel no longer appealed to [him].” He explains this loss of appeal by explaining that amid all the “splendor glitter[ing] from seven stories...poverty made its home in its high places, and those who lived on high were...buried in airy graves;” as a result, he decides to “leave the Hotel Savoy without delay” (33), but he finds he cannot leave—and does not until the protesters burn the hotel down to the ground. For Gabriel, merely acknowledging a similarity between the world and the hotel is not enough to effect change, either for himself, the other returning soldiers, or the workmen and families living outside the hotel; only the violence of the striking workmen prods him to action (in the form of booking passage to the United States). Both Bowen and Roth, then, argue that the modern hotel is not an escape or refuge from modernity but a particularly illustrative and spectacular presentation of modernity. Both Roth and Bowen suggest that the idea that the hotel is a microcosm for the modern world is something other than an accurate representation of the hotel; Roth presents the trope as a useful spur to encouraging class consciousness and collective action, while Bowen’s history—not unproblematically—draws on this trope as a unique vantage point from which to tell the cultural and civic history of Anglo-Irish colonialism and Irish nationalism (just like Wyndham Lewis’s Kerr-Orr, who explains his choice of representing his adventures in various “obscene little hotels” by saying, “So I will show you myself in action, maneuvering in the heart of the reality” [9, 8]).

**A Feminist Argument Against the Paying Guest: Rhys and Mansfield**

While the structural inequalities of hotel life are graphically illustrated, we have seen, in terms of race and colonialism, gender constructions too acted as a powerful constraint to positive hotel experiences. Jean Rhys’s heroines (in *Quartet, Leaving Mr. Mackenzie*, and *Good Morning,
Midnight in particular, as well as in her stories), for example, are often unwillingly pushed into hotel spaces that are anything but hospitable. The inability of Rhys’s heroines to overcome in hotel rooms their feelings of alienation and homelessness is well-documented in modernist scholarship; the title of Mary Lou Emery’s Jean Rhys at ‘World’s End’: Novels of Colonial and Sexual Exile suggests the limitations of the hotel space, while Alicia Borinsky’s “Jean Rhys: Poses of a Woman as Guest” argues that Rhys’s “petites femmes” stay in hotel rooms that are “suitable frames for their lack of personal history” and boast only “the assurance that whoever stays them completely will never own them completely but will be a guest” (240). Laura Doyle has argued that in Good Morning, Midnight, inveterate hotel guest Sasha Jensen’s “straying, queerly sensuous self” is finally “ruin[ed] at the hands of her anonymous hotel neighbor” (39)—a reminder that experiences of the modern hotel were always conditioned by gender and sexuality (in addition to race and class). By contrast, Maurice and Alec of Forster’s Maurice do find a temporary space for romance in a “strange hotel, a casual refuge [that] protected them from their enemies;” when Alec is about to emigrate for Argentina, he persuades Maurice, “Sleep the night with me. I know a place,” and indeed, at this hotel, “happiness overwhelmed Maurice” and Alec can repeat, “Don't You Worry. You're With Me. Don't Worry,” (227-229). Yet the hotel, though a temporary haven, can overcome neither their class difference nor the culture of homophobia surrounding them; when Maurice reflects, “Love had failed. Love was an emotion through which you occasionally enjoyed yourself. It could not do things” (233), he defines love as leisure, or at least as the skeptical critique of leisure as merely a temporally bounded entity, a carnivalesque anomaly that by definition must end. Even worse, Rhys’s heroines are often denied this temporary erotic or romantic utopia: for example, Quartet’s Marya, unhappily and
precariously ensconced in a disreputable hotel by her lover Heidler, feels, as a direct result of the hotel’s “unlimited hospitality,” the invisible presence of the “succession of petites femmes who had extended themselves on [the bed], clad in carefully thought out pink or mauve chemises” and notes that even the “wallpaper was vaguely erotic” (111). In Rhys’s short stories, particularly those of *The Left Bank* (1927), this hint that hotels could provide the necessary spatial and institutional grounds for the instrumental use of vulnerable women is borne out. “The Blue Bird,” “Vienne,” “Hunger,” and “In the Rue de l’Arrive” all emphasize that a vulnerable woman’s fortunes are inextricably connected to the kinds of hotel spaces she can or cannot inhabit, while in “La Grosse Fifi,” the narrator hears constant reminders of the hotel’s “vile reputation” as a space where “someone got stabbed or something” (79) and advice that she “oughtn’t to stay here” (90), but even though she agrees (“I must leave this hotel” [92]), she does not have enough money to relocate to a better hotel.

Rhys was painfully aware, in other words, that the modern hotel was a very different place for men and women, and for rich and poor women. While Lady Diana Manners, a young society queen, recalls the London Ritz, the “first hotel to which young unmarried women were allowed to go unchaperoned,” as a space of freedom and self-determination (Montgomery-Massingberd and Watkin 72), Rhys’s Sasha Jensen warns that, despite having access to “a beautiful room with bath...a room with bath...a nice room,” she must “never tell the truth about this business of rooms, because it would bust the roof off everything and undermine the whole social systems. All rooms are the same” (38). Elaborating on the endless repetition of the same hotels and same hotel rooms available to her (“All rooms have four walls, a door, a window or two, a bed, a chair and perhaps a bidet.... Why should I worry about changing my room?” [ibid]),
she recounts her daily routine—a standardization of time as well as space: “Walking in at night. Back to the hotel. Always the same hotel. You press the button. The door opens. You go up the stairs. Always the same stairs, always the same room” (32). While a confident Victorian (male) traveler like G. K. Chesterton could make light of the rule of repetition dominating the American hotel style and imagine someone else—an American lady detective-writer—following up on the soulless character of industrial hotel rooms, Jean Rhys' vulnerable female victims of modernity must live the consequences of this architectural repetition, not, like Joyce’s Bloom, who could participate in the supportive and leisurely masculine public life of hotel restaurants and bars, or like Eliot’s Prufrock, a mere passer-by reflecting on “one-night cheap hotels,” but rather one of its permanent inmates. The “eerie psychological story” he imagines could in fact act as a description (though perhaps an inadequate one) of Rhys' tales of hotel dwellers; ensconced in “the Hotel Without-a-Name in the Street Without-a-name” where the “clients have no names, no faces” Sasha ascends “always the same stairs” to “always the same room” (145) and reflects, “I am empty of everything but...the thin, frail ghosts in my room” (56).

This ghastly or morbid interpretation of hotels is replicated in other modernist works, such as Walter Benjamin’s Arcades Project, which creates a parallel between hotels and the dead by claiming that “dwelling has diminished for the living, through hotel rooms; for the dead, through crematoriums” (14, 4). Benjamin’s association of hotels and death is perhaps compounded by the fact that he committed suicide at the Hotel de Francia in Portbou at Spanish-French border, but, in contrast to his assertion that the hotel is merely a “shell” providing no true hospitality whatsoever, Good Morning, Midnight’s Sasha does not underestimate the power and draw of modern creature comforts. Sasha, trying to escape the darkness and rain of Paris, is
checking into a provincial hotel, listening to the receptionist “persuasively” listing the attributes (“two windows”) of sunny room 219, when

Suddenly I feel that I must have number 219, with bath—number 219, with rose-colored curtains, carpet, and bath. I shall exist on a different plane at once if I can get this room, if only for a couple of nights. It will be an omen. Who says you can’t escape from your fate? I'll escape from mine, into room number 219. Just try me, just give me a chance. (37)

Sasha’s belief that she can escape her growing sense of dread by selecting the correct hotel room. is made more poignant by the desperation patently behind her desire for room 219, as well as by her awareness—signaled by her silent plea, “Just give me a chance,” which echoes not only Trollope’s plea to the only innkeeper in Milan with open rooms, but also the fear he experienced in the hotel offices in the American West—that she is at the mercy of the receptionist, whose license to judge potential guests certainly extends to deciding which room they may occupy. Sasha’s recognition of the receptionist’s power and her belief that the amenities of a specific room will help her “escape” her “fate” should not be dismissed as exaggeration; nor should the relationship posited between the hotel room and personal happiness and security be underestimated or seen as symbolic of “other” gendered, economic, and sociopolitical forces “outside” of the hotel. Indeed, it is a goal of this chapter to illuminate the cultural and political role of the hotel as a modern technology of organizing bodies—of dealing with the migratory movements and homelessness characteristic of modernity—and therefore as, in fact, an early example of biopower.

Under this interpretation of the hotel, details about accommodations that populate modernist fiction and the letters and journals of modernists are hardly trivial and certainly not incidental or coincidental, but rather vivid examples of the materiality of modernization. For
example, in the final three years of her life, Katherine Mansfield, moving from place to place constantly in search of a better climate and newer kinds of therapy, obsessively wrote to friends about the details of each hotel room she stayed in. Her letters of 1920-23 oscillate between thankfulness about modern amenities—in the middle of radiation treatments in Paris, she wrote, “I wallowed in a bath on arrival put on clean clothes and am lying down again. Its like a dream not being out of breath & to be alone with ones own sponge again” (Collected Letters 5.32), and in Montana sur Sierre, she noted her two rooms with unlimited hot running water and a working lift (“a most sumptuous bathroom and ones own little hall door” [81]) and gushed, “Its strange how nice it is here. One could scarcely be more free. The hotel servants are just a little bit impudent and thats nice too. There is no servility” (5.76)—and resentment at the difficulty of writing at hotels: she protests, “its hard to write in a hotel. I can only do short things and think out long stories” (81) and “Its almost impossible to write anything long in a hotel. I can't. One feels so conscious of people round one” (131). Yet Mansfield also credited the Chapel du Sapins at Montana sur Sierre with her final burst of aesthetic productivity, explaining, “I can never be grateful enough...I cant work in cities....Im too old for cafes” (163-4). Mansfield’s letters, in other words, are important documents of hotel history that constantly reflect on the relationship between aesthetic production and the modernization of hotels, as well as on the spatial contingency of the social affordances of the hotel, down to small details about the placement of doors, the quantity and temperature of running water, the soundproofing (or lack thereof) between rooms, the methods of laundering, the availability and quality of room service, and a whole host of problems and advantages peculiar to each hotel. As a writer of short stories, Mansfield analyzed the shortcomings of hotel life, including “The Young Girl,” a story of sexual
awakening set in a casino and a hotel tearoom that documents the creation of a certain leisured “type”—the adolescent girl, a new type of individuation—that emerges through the administration of modern leisure spaces; “The Governess,” a bitter and tragic tale about the seduction of an inexperienced young woman who loses her post when she is cast out of the protection of her hotel by its judgmental receptionists and footmen; “A Truthful Adventure,” which satirizes the provincial hotel’s inability to provide a secure platform from which an unaccompanied young woman could enjoy a safe, pleasurable, and entirely self-determined vacation; and, of course, the stories of In a German Pension, which I discuss below.

The Philosophic Critique: Woolf and Lukacs

Although Rhys and Mansfield both identify hotels as spaces where women have unsatisfying or even violent sexual experiences, Mary Butts and Virginia Woolf find the modern hotel guilty of less violent, but perhaps equally upsetting, crimes. Butts, for example, opens her short story “Widdershins” with the eponymous hero residing “in the middle of London, in a dull hotel,” paralyzed there, unable to depart from the hotel to find a more fascinating facet of London to explore because “he did not understand that what he wanted was magic” (192). Just as Butts associates hotels with urban modernity’s suppression of magic, in “Modern Fiction,” Virginia Woolf, in a passage reference to the hotel, uses this modern form of hospitality as an example of the empty and superficial variety of progress offered by modernity and by modern authors. To illustrate what she finds as the aesthetic limitations of the Georgian authors, Bennett, Galsworthy, and Wells, particularly in their inability to create three-dimensional, compelling, and individualistic characters:
What do they [Arnold Bennett's characters] live for? More and more they seem to us, deserting even the well-built villa in the Five Towns, to spend their time in some softly padded first-class railway carriage, pressing bells and buttons innumerable; and the density to which they travel so luxuriously becomes more and more unquestionably an eternity of bliss spent in the very best hotel in Brighton. (148)

For Woolf, the same psychological and narrative poverty infects both the pages of the Edwardian writers and the modern luxury hotel, which she associates with a Fordist standardized vision of subjectivity fulfilled by superficially satisfactory relationships with modern commodities rather than energized by a George Moore-approved diet of aesthetic appreciation and good friends. For Woolf, “the very best hotel in Brighton” holds no interest for the writer of modern fiction, and those who desire “an eternity of bliss” in such hotels are not fully rounded literary characters. Certainly, my interpretation of this passage puts perhaps more pressure on the hotel imagery than Woolf may have intended, but the rhetorical weight given to “the very best hotel in Brighton”—as the final phrase in a long sentence and as a phrase whose immediate precedent, “eternity of bliss,” sets the reader up for a humorous deflation—suggests that for Woolf, naming the modern hotel is universally understood shorthand for the aesthetic and personal impoverishment. In doing so, Woolf becomes unexpected company for Georg Lukacs, whose 1962 preface to his 1920 The Theory of the Novel describes the “Grand Hotel Abyss” in order to critique Theodor Adorno, Ernst Bloch, Thomas Munzer, and other leftist intellectuals for their “outdated” coupling of a leftist ethic and right epistemology:

A considerable part of the leading German intelligentsia, including Adorno, have taken up residence in the ‘Grand Hotel Abyss’ which I described in connection with my critique of Schopenhauer as ‘a beautiful hotel, equipped with every comfort, on the edge of an abyss, of nothingness, of absurdity. And the daily contemplation of the abyss between excellent meals or artistic entertainments, can only heighten the enjoyment of the subtle comforts offered.’ (22)
Judging by the use of the hotel imagery, Lukacs’s famous critique against his fellow leftists is as much a comment on their comfortable abodes in California as it is against the elitism of their scholarship. The parallel Lukacs forges between the enjoyment of the considerable material comforts offered by the modern hotel and the Frankfurt School’s apparent refusal to care about the mechanics of revolution and the day-to-day welfare of the working classes works especially well because of the ideological positioning of leisure spaces as exempt from the tensions of everyday life under capitalism, but with the result that Lukacs’s metaphor relies on the faulty assumptions that leisure spaces do represent a genuine alternative to “reality” and are not themselves sites of labor. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of this passage is Lukacs’s placement of the hotel—similar to hotels overlooking public parks, lakes, or features like the Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls—a detail that implies that the problems of modernity are spectacularized by the hotel and in fact become part of the hotel’s list of luxurious modern amenities. Lukacs nonetheless seems unaware or uninterested in this implication that the Grand Hotel Abyss is a necessary epistemological and material basis for cultural critique by providing the literal and figurative perspective necessary for visualizing modernity.

Similarly, in her 1937 BBC broadcast “Craftsmanship,” Woolf uses the figure of the hotel to critique her philosophical rivals while simultaneously neglecting, deprecating, or minimizing the role of the hotel in conceptualizing the modern world. Commenting on new philosophical attempts for a more scientific language (and in particular, the analytical proposals of Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein), Woolf ironizes,

There is one great living master of this language to whom we are all indebted, that anonymous writer—whether man, woman, or disembodied spirit, nobody knows—who describes hotels in the Michelin Guide. He wants to tell us that one hotel is moderate,
another good, and a third the best in the place. How does he do it? Not with words . . . He sticks to signs; one gable, two gables, three gables. That is all he says and all he needs to say. (qtd. in Collected Essays I.246)

For Woolf, this novel linguistic technique created as a response to the modern hotel holds little or no aesthetic significance or power. At worst, this passage implies that the writer of the hotel space is hardly a person at all ("whether man, woman, or disembodied spirit, nobody knows"), just as she has argued that the hotel-loving characters of Bennett are hardly characters at all. At best, she implies that such semiotic inventions are limited to the practical usefulness of selecting a hotel or navigating the Tube and should be distinguished from literary language, whose linguistic units are "irreclaimable vagabonds" (251), "many-sided, flashing this way, then that...the wildest, freest, most irresponsible, most unteachable of all things" (245). At worst, these two passages suggest that Woolf blames hotels for eroding the basis of the individualist humanism that novels like Jacob’s Room, Mrs. Dalloway, and To the Lighthouse both celebrate and give verbal form to (via Woolf’s use of stream-of-consciousness and presentation of physical space and objects as representatives or extensions of noteworthy and interesting individuals).

Again, although it may appear that I am applying too much pressure to what may be a passing image (Megan M. Quigley, for example, treats the hotel imagery as a merely an example of symbolic language in her 2007 consideration of this BBC broadcast in “Modern Novels and Vagueness”), Woolf’s condescending dismissal of the modern guidebook tellingly contrasts with Forster’s treatment of the Baedeker in A Room with a View, whose narrator maintains sympathy for Lucy Honeychurch’s innocent and eminently practical trust in the guidebook but openly mocks the shallow romanticism that impels sensational novelette writer Eleanor Lavish to throw away Lucy’s Baedeker. And Arnold Bennett’s very modern heroine of Imperial Palace, the
daring and chic Gracie, finds some redemption and leisure in flouting the anti-touristic rhetoric in modernist novels like Woolf’s *The Voyage Out*. Gracie, though a published novelist of modern books herself, asks the hotelier Evelyn Orcham, “Don’t you love being a tourist sometimes? I get so tired of being superior I simply must have a change. Sometimes I feel like going into a shop in the rue de Rivoli and buying a Baedeker to carry about with me. Don’t you understand what I mean” (414). Gracie uses her knowledge of tourist norms not to continue a critique of mass tourism that she already finds tired and outdated, but rather to derive pleasure from the institutions of mass leisure by finding new ways to relate to it; whether ironic or sincere, Gracie takes pleasure in consciously engaging in the normative touristic activities that her chic bohemian friends would look down on. Perhaps Woolf’s harsh assessment of hotels reveals her disappointment at what hotels *could* but do not, in practice, make possible; upon closer inspection, the two passages are united by an implicit demand that hotels should not be so domestic (making Brighton seem like a truly novel destination) or so ordinary (rated in terms of luxury and cost instead of the new spaces and populations hotels open up for guests to encounter). Though we have seen modernists protesting against the political limitations of the modern hotel, other modernists did not have trouble perceiving the modern hotel as an ideal object for aesthetic representation, and many characters, not only Gracie but also the characters of works like Elizabeth Bowen’s *The Hotel*, even derived leisure by becoming conscious of and manipulating leisure norms.
The Rhetorical Fertility of the Modern Hotel: Orwell, Simenon, and “Fancy Milling”

Just as Elizabeth Bowen uses a hotel to structure her first novel, *The Hotel*, so too do Katherine Mansfield, Wyndham Lewis, and Joseph Roth do the same for their early works: Lewis’s first published story in 1909, Mansfield’s first collection in 1911, and finally, the *Hotel Savoy*, the second novel of Joseph Roth, a prominent Jewish journalist who lived in Berlin and Paris and is most famous for *The Radetzky March* (1932). George Orwell’s first full-length book, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), features Wells’s stint as a dish-washer (*plongeur*) in a Parisian grand hotel and his search for much less well-respected temporary digs in various English hostleries for the homeless. Among the impoverished hotel employees of Paris, Orwell unexpectedly finds a cross-cultural group of friends, including the French as well as emigrants from England, Italy, Turkey, Italy, Germany, the Middle East, and the United States. He recollects that after their labors, “Half the hotel used to meet in the *bistro* in the evening. I wish I could find a pub in London a quarter as cheery” (10). Despite being a lowly *plongeur*, he finds comradeship even among those placed higher in the “elaborate caste system” in which “prestige [was] graded as accurately as that of soldiers” (70); during work hours, “[i]ndoors we were their slaves” and “different jobs were done by different races,” he explains, “but it is an etiquette in hotel life that between hours everyone is equal” (64, 71). It is suggestive that George Orwell, then penniless and constantly in search of manual labor, can seem to find the cosmopolitan camaraderie that escapes the leisure modernists mentioned above; as I argue in Chapter One, successful modernist experiences in modern leisure spaces are often due not to rather than simple indulgence in luxurious idleness that often passes for leisure in leisure industry advertisements of
the time, but rather to enjoying a sense of control over one’s labor and being able to reflect on
and revise the relationship between leisure and labor. When Orwell claims that “hotel employees
take a genuine pride in their work, beastly and silly as it is,” he explains that it arises from a
sense of accomplishment at having done the impossible: having worked as a team to keep up
with the challenging labor. Working as a team for hotel staff means an unusual equilibrium
created by the constant, earnest, but good-natured fights always breaking out; Orwell explains
that the workers enjoy the constant “quarrels,” which are “indeed...a necessary part of the
process, for the pace would not be kept up if everyone did not accuse everyone else of
idling” (75). As a space of labor, the modern hotel, with its grand scale and vast array of
amenities, does hold a sense of adventure and purpose for its workers, even if it may not for its
guests. Some particular posts, Orwell elaborates, even allow the worker to indulge in vicarious
leisure, particularly the waiter, who “has the pleasure of spending money by proxy...He will take
pains to take a meal in style, because he feels that he is participating in the meal himself” (77).
But even for the workers lower on the hierarchy, it is, paradoxically, the impossible challenges
presented by the hotel to the worker that makes the labor so fulfilling; Orwell locates the source
of the “genuine pride” I have mentioned above by explaining, “Debrouillard is what every
plongeur wants to be called. A debrouillard is a man who, even when he is told to do the
impossible, will se debrouiller—will get it done somehow.... This is the good side of hotel work.
In a hotel a huge and complicated machine is kept running by an inadequate staff, because every
man has a well-defined job and does it scrupulously” (79). This portrait of hotel workers nicely

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78 James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, which features a number of hotels (such as the Ormond Hotel in “Sirens,” where Bloom
watches barmaids) suggests, as does Orwell’s portrait of the hotel waiter, the existence of not inconsiderable
compensations for hotel labor—the ability to find outlets to cathect leisurely pleasures even while technically at
work. In “Lestrygonians,” for example, Bloom considers, “Wouldn't mind being a waiter in a swell hotel. Tips,
evening dress, halfnaked ladies. May I tempt you to a little more filleted lemon sole, miss Dubedat? Yes, do
bedad. And she did bedad. Huguenot name I expect that” (129).
complements contemporary sociology of leisure in a number of ways, including the satisfaction the workers derive from their atypical right to express extreme emotions while on duty (Norbert Elias’s sociology of sport, which I cover in Chapter One, cites this freedom as typically being associated with leisure). By showing the ambiguity surrounding the boundary between work and play in *Down and Out in Paris and London*, I do not wish to romanticize the situation of the hotel workers in Orwell’s text, which is quite different from, for example, Elizabeth Bowen’s history, *The Shelbourne Hotel*, which refers to both guests and employees in Bowen’s “impression” that the hotel is “one huge family party, with its own humor, passwords, unwritten laws” (138). Rather, I wish to illuminate the degree to which Orwell and leisure studies perform the same kinds of cultural and intellectual labor in their respective texts. For another example, I turn to Orwell’s representation of the the austerity of the hotel worker’s daily life: “his Paris has shrunk to the hotel, the Metro, a few bistros, and bed” (91). Orwell here presents an elegant, spatially contingent representation of contemporary sociology of leisure’s typical division of human life into labor, leisure, and sleep. Just like many contemporary sociologists of leisure, Orwell’s social-scientistic writing style, in other words, is intended not only to create an accurate portrait of modern relations between labor and leisure, but also to make visible a previously invisible social group.

Orwell makes it quite clear that his project of writing about the hotel worker contains a progressive or politicized social agenda that, Orwell suggests, organically and necessarily arises simultaneously with his portrait of the modern hotel. Orwell argues, “I think one should start by saying that a plongeur is one of the slaves of the modern world...better off than many manual workers, but still...not freer than if he were bought and sold,” and, what is most relevant for the
present project, “his only holiday is the sack” and the only reason they have not “formed a union and gone on strike” long ago is “because they do not have leisure for it” (116). What is truly noteworthy of the hotel sections of *Down and Out in Paris and London* is how Orwell’s tenure at “Hotel X” in Paris makes visible to him many of the contradictions of capitalism, as well as some of the lesser-seen marvels of the modern leisure space. Trying to convey the action and atmosphere of the dinner hour—in which perhaps two hundred people would order five to six courses each—Orwell sighs, “I wish I could be Zola for a little while, just to describe that dinner hour...[that] grand turmoil of the day” (65). This aside, a reflection on the difficulty of representing the modern leisure space, is perhaps a little disingenuous, as Orwell’s colorful descriptions are at least as effective as the voluminous contemporary publications documenting the “grand hotel” or “classic hotels of yesterday.” I reproduce some of these passages at some length in order to illuminate the connection between Orwell’s attempts to convey the atmosphere of “Hotel X” and the social critique of capitalism in Orwell’s other works of journalism:

Hotel X...a vast, grandiose place with a classical facade, and at one side a little, dark doorway like a rat-hole, which was the service entrance...reminded one queerly of the lower decks of the liner; there were the same heat and cramped space and warm reek of food, and a humming, whirring noise (it came from the kitchen furnaces) just like the whir of engines...It is something so different from the steady work in a shop or a factory that it looks at sight like mere bad management...Hotel work is not particularly hard, but by its nature it comes in rushes and cannot be economized....It was amusing to look round the filthy little scullery and think that only a double door was between us and the dining-room. There sat all the customers in all their splendor—spotless table-clothes, bowls of flowers, mirrors and gilt cornices and painted cherubim; and here, just a few feet away, we in our disgusting filth.... The customer pays, as he sees it, for good service; the employee is paid, as he sees is, for the *boulot*—meaning, as a rule, an imitation of good service...[so that there is] a secret vein of dirt running through the great garish hotel like the intestines through a man's body. (55-6, 67-8, 79-81)
Orwell in this passage portrays the hotel as a series of contradictions: a “grandiose” space with “a little dark...rat-hole;” the civilized leisure of the six-course meal with the hasty *debrouillage* by the workers; the “splendor” of the dining room with the “disgusting filth” of the kitchen; and, perhaps most unexpectedly, the regularity of factory work with the irregular rhythms of hotel labor. These passages, set against the above passage in which Orwell speaks of the hotel as a “huge and complicated machine” thus invokes Taylorist management, only to pronounce it impossible, while nonetheless retaining the critical edge of Marx’s “contradictions of capital” by making a spectacle out of Marx’s abstraction. Thus, in *Down and Out*, even as it maintains elements of classical Marxist critique, we move away from the Victorian sympathies of Charles Dickens’s *Hard Times*, Friedrich Engels’s *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, or (in a slightly different context) Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*; Orwell cannot rely on the tried-and-true discourse of Victorian critique, but instead describes the hotel kitchen as a novel—very modern—work space that does not create a commodity to sell so much as it, like the postmodern leisure industry that comes of age in the 1960s and 1970s, sells an illusion. Though Orwell explains that the plongeur indeed works “by the sweat of his brow” (thus appearing to continue the Victorian critique of capitalism), he cautions his readers that “we have made a sort of fetish of manual work” and even if the plongeur is a manual laborer, “it does not follow that he is doing anything useful; he may be only supplying a luxury which, very often, is not a luxury” (117). Georges Simenon’s *The Hotel Majestic*, which similarly observes a sharp superficial demarcation between guest and employee spaces (the inspector observes a “sudden end to all the gilt, potted plants, and elegant bustle” as he enters the kitchens [12]), also casts the hectic pace of the hotel kitchen as an unreal spectacle when he notes that “between one and three
o’clock, the pace was at its most hectic, everything happening so fast that it was like seeing a film run off in fast motion” (19). According to Orwell, this fiction of luxury is the true principle of the Grand Hotel: “They are supposed to provide luxury, but in reality they only provide a cheap, shoddy imitation of it. Nearly everyone hates hotels.... Essentially, a 'smart' hotel is a place where a hundred people toil like devils in order that two hundred may pay through the nose for thing they do not really want” (118). In this aside (“nearly everyone hates hotels”), Orwell suggests that both employee and guest are well aware that hotel labor is essentially a spectacle, demanding a show of work for work’s sake in the strictest sense, as this labor—however difficult the job may be, however busy the plongeurs, waiters, cooks, runners, and supervisors may be—does not provide, and does not intend to provide, an objectively verifiable product.

A visit to the kitchens is one of the tropes of hotel modernism. As in Down and Out in Paris and London, many of these kitchen episodes are meditations on the hotel’s relationship to or presentation of truth, secrecy, and spectacle. Elizabeth Bowen’s The Shelbourne Hotel, which similarly notes that the employees are under “a recognized hierarchy” that is a “quite independent world,” presents a very different vision of the grand hotel kitchen as “a gleaming world of white tiling and soundless rubber floors, of concentrated lighting, conditioned air, of chromium and enamel” (228). Bowen’s awed description of the cleanliness of the kitchens offsets her description of their labyrinthine shape and their discreet placement in the bowels of the hotel; she retains the sense of multiple, adjacent worlds that Orwell also develops, while attempting to minimize the negative connotations of such a split between employee and guest “worlds.” Unlike Bowen, Wyndham Lewis’s Kerr-Orr suspects even such spotless kitchen appointments, complains that the hotel’s showy cleanliness “symbolized honesty on the one
hand, and *newness* on the other. There was nothing that you could not *see*, and scrutinize, only
too well. Everything within sight was totally unconscious of its cheapness or of any limitation at
all. Inspect me! Inspect me!...I am the goods!” (11). Lewis’s cynical interpretation of the hotel’s
clean dining rooms and kitchens emphasizes, like Orwell’s *Down and Out*, that such spaces do
not (as Bowen believes) make the “honest labor” of the hotel visible so much as they
ostentatiously carry the spectacular burdens of a truth-function. All three works, however, share a
dependence on worlding the hotel—populating the hotel with various interior worlds—for the
rhetorical power of their texts. As we will also see below in my brief analysis of Arnold
Bennett’s *Imperial Palace*, which presents many such interior worlds—the hotel laundry, the
stores, the printer, the executive suite, et cetera—for modernist authors, the hotel is less a
“microcosm” or consummate symbol for modernity than itself a progenitor of micro-worlds, a
proliferation of mutually dependent yet nominally separate ecosystems, each with its own
organization of guests, employees, commodities, and economic exchanges. Though *The
Shelbourne Hotel*, like a well-mannered hotel guest, does not choose to follow up on the
epistemological, economic, or social implications of these divisions, *Down and Out in Paris and
London* and “A Soldier of Humor” do plumb this divide, as does the detective fiction of Arnold
Bennett, Agatha Christie, and Georges Simenon (in *The Grand Babylon Hotel*, *At Bertram’s
Hotel* and *The Hotel Majestic*, respectively). Christie’s work, as I discuss further in this
dissertation’s conclusion, is structured around the spread of Orwell’s spectacularization of
irrational labor from the kitchens to the entire hotel space, but *The Grand Babylon Hotel* and *The
Hotel Majestic* both pinpoint the hotel kitchen as the perfect environment to conduct and hide
criminal activity.
Simenon’s Inspector Maigret, trying to solve the murder of a hotel guest in the kitchens while nonetheless finding some “way of hushing it up” by keeping it a secret from the press (10), is at first stifled in his search because of this apparent division between the “worlds” of guest and employee; he reflects, frustrated in his search, “They are all in their proper places. Some behind the scenes and the others in the lounges and foyer... The guests on the side and the staff on the other.... Everyone, round him, was in his allotted place” (96). The only person out of place, it seems, is the Inspector himself—for “if anyone had asked Maigret what he was doing there, what would he have answered?” (97)—but his eventual recognition of the hidden connections between workers and guests allows him to solve the case. It is in fact these hidden connections that enable the crime; his prime suspect explains that although “names don’t exist for us, down in the basement,” and although “we in the basement know nothing about what’s going on above our heads” (75), he “discovered by chance” that he was in fact acquainted with a hotel guest above (73)—which leads to the guest’s murder. Solving the case, is, in other words, a matter of understanding the hotel’s hidden geography, including understanding its sociospatial divisions and its failures to divide, and of taking seriously not only the narrator’s aside, “Looking at [Maigret], you would have thought he was making an amateurish study of how a grand hotel functions” (21), but also the detective’s inability to solve the case so long as he continues to respond to the maze of the hotel “as if he were in a daze, although he was conscious of what was happening round him, without attaching any importance to it, without making any effort to place people or things in time and space” (99). This difficulty of comprehending the hotel also energizes Wyndham Lewis’s “A Soldier of Humor,” whose Kerr-Orr finds his Bayonne hotel “an indifferent enigmatical universe, to which yet I had no clue” (10), feels terror upon realizing that
the staff “all hav[e] some bearing on my fate” (11). Just as the suspect’s involvement in the murder relies on his access to and comprehension of the minute details of breakfast orders—he tells the inspector that “it may seem odd to you to attach so much importance to these details...

But don’t forget that in the basement that’s about all we see of what people are doing” (76)—so too does solving the case becomes a matter of overcoming one’s first chaotic and incomplete impression of a grand hotel (which consists of finding it “difficult for us to go where we want” [73]), of recognizing the employee entrance as a “door which passers-by never noticed” (3), of the bar as having “a sort of hatch in the wall” placed there for an unknown purpose (93), of the cloakroom as accessible by a door “no one would have known” because it is “covered by a large mirror” (6), of the staff staircase as “like one of those mysterious staircases in the wings of a theater which led to the most unexpected places” (5), including unnumbered doors whose purpose “none of the guests would ever guess” (13), and of “the great basement with its twisting corridors, innumerable doors and grey-painted calls like those of a ship’s gangway” with “glass partitions everywhere” demarcating the kitchen’s various subspaces (4)—pastry kitchen, servants’ hall, senior staff room, bookkeeper’s office, cloakroom. These glass partitions, similar to the “shining cut-glass door” that allows Kerr-Orr of “A Soldier of Humor” to see the hotel’s patronne in all her “sleepy, leaden intensity” (10), make traversing the basement of The Hotel Majestic like “glancing...from one aquarium to another” (141) and make the detective feel “rather as if he were inspecting an aquarium” (19) and regard his prime suspect, behind one such partition, as “like a large goldfish in its bowl” (20).

The surveillance-friendly construction of the Majestic’s basement is not lost on the hotel manager, who responds to the detective’s questions about the suspect’s possible criminal past
with a complacent explanation: “As you can imagine, we get all sorts in a hotel like this” (141).

But in spite of the aquarium imagery, which suggests that the hotel employees alone are enclosed in their own sealed environment, both the gambling den and police headquarters readers encounter toward the middle of the story are described in strikingly similar terms. As Maigret escorts a witness to the police headquarters, the narrator describes “the dark porch, then the great staircase, with a dim light at infrequent intervals, and finally the long corridor with its many doors,” which leads to a “waiting room, which was glassed in on one side, to allow the police to come and watch their visitors.” Like the Statlerian hotel that strikes fear into the heart of G. K. Chesterton (who abhors its “nine hundred and ninety nine identical bedrooms” [19] and creates a phantasmagoric horror story by reacting to the same “green vase” and “stuffed flamingo” that adorn each and every floor’s landing [21]), this waiting room is full of identical commodities, including a “Louis-Philippe clock on the mantlepiece—exactly like the one in Maigret’s office and in no better working order” (158). Similarly, in a “gambling den,” Maigret “was amazed to discover three exits into three different streets, one of them leading via the basement into another building” (65-6). The repetition of hotel geography in the police headquarters and gambling den is not coincidental, for all three spaces rely on the spatial encoding of secrecy and efficiency, showing that the grand hotel has (to borrow the vocabulary of Deleuze and Guattari) at least as many contiguities with the “outside world” as it has segmentations separating the hotel from it. Maigret’s antagonist, a local magistrate who arrests their prime suspect against Maigret’s explicit instructions, does try to justify his actions by alluding to the superficial segmentation of the hotel: the significant glance the magistrate gives Maigret “was tantamount to saying: ‘That is not your world... You don’t understand it... Leave it to me...’” (100). Yet as Maigret learns how to
navigate the complex geography of the grand hotel, he finds it less and less a distinct world than a slightly more arresting and visually striking iteration of typically “modern” spatial arrangements of labor and leisure. Maigret’s criminal investigation brings into focus the extent to which other modern institutions—including the leisure space of the gambling den and the disciplinary apparatus of the police headquarters—share the spatial qualities of the hotel.

In patching together the backstory that makes sense of the murder, Maigret learns about the hidden connection between the apparently separate worlds of guests and staff—a past love-affair between the still-room chef and a hotel guest—and about this guest’s fairy-tale rise from ne’er-do-well French chorus girl to pampered wife of Oswald J. Clark an American millionaire. Mrs. Clark’s meteoric social rise and fall are equally, I argue, products of the leisure space’s function as what sociologist Erving Goffman in Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior calls an “action space.” Goffman's essay defining the action space traces the irruption of the phrase “action” into American discourse: where the action is, watching the action, getting a piece of the action. While he traces its origin to gambling spaces—casinos, race tracks—he notes that the phrase soon referred to more than actual gambling, though it retained a sense of playing a game, playing the odds, and making a bet for the potential payoff at the end. Fantasy and activity merge in action spaces such as bars, pool halls, hotel lobbies, and ballrooms, where individuals, Goffman argues, suspend the course of their normal lives, hide under the cloak of anonymity to fashion a new (though usually temporary) identity, and engage in patterns of conspicuous consumption and interpersonal interaction normally unavailable to them. Action spaces allow “commercialized vicarious experience,” Goffman explains, which present “a method of obtaining some of the moral benefits of heroic conduct without taking quite all of the
chance of loss that opportunity for heroism would ordinarily involve....the appearance of
fatefulness is generated in a controlled fashion in an area of life calculated to insulated its
consequences from the rest of living” (262). These spaces, through providing games of “chance”
whereby one may exhibit “skill, knowledge, daring, perseverance, and so forth” (153), therefore
allow “a brief penetration into high living” (198). Typically, events that occur in an action space
“may have no bearing at all on the rest of the individual's life,” being merely “killed
moments...inconsequential...bounded and insulated,” not likely “to spill over into the rest of life
and have an effect there.” (163). Yet a chance exists to make such action more than temporary;
Goffman refers to “the gamble's consequentiality, namely, the capacity of a payoff to flow
beyond the bounds of the occasion in which it is delivered and to influence objectively the later
life of the bettor” (159-60), and explains that the “chance” for doing so “lies in the attitude of the
individual himself—his creative capacity to redefine the world around him into its decisional
potentialities” (201). Goffman explains that the “fateful events” and “interpersonal action” (207)
are made possible in the action spaces of “parties, bars, dances, resorts, parks, classrooms,
public events, association meetings, office coffee-breaks, church gatherings, and public streets of
ill-repute” through their support of “flirtatious exchanges” (210). Interestingly, Mrs. Carter, a
chorus girl, one of the laborers working to create the action space of the gentleman’s club or
fashionable bar (Goffman notes that bar hostesses and bartenders are crucial for others to enjoy
action spaces [210]) is able to enjoy the action space in her own right (rather than as the
vicarious enable of others’ “action”). Though technically on duty, Mrs. Carter can enjoy her
workplace as a leisure space insofar as she may advantage of the chances presented by the action
space. She can do so through by participating in a particular form of interpersonal interaction, or in Goffman’s words,

a type of commercialized action involving direct participation, which I will call 'fancy milling.' Adults in our society can obtain a taste of social mobility by consuming valued products, by enjoying costly and modish entertainment, by spending time in luxurious settings, and by mingling with prestigeful persons—all the more if these occur at the same time and in the presence of many witnesses...[due to] the uncertainty of not quite knowing what might happen next, the possibility of flirtation, which can themselves lead to relationship formation, and the lively experience of being an elbow away from someone who does manage to find real action in the crowd. (197-8)

Unfortunately for Mrs. Carter, the action space of the modern leisure space is all too fluid and open: though she leverages her employment as a chorus-girl into upward mobility by flirting with the right rich American patronizing her club, the same publicity and social laxity that makes her marriage possible also makes her grand entrance into the Hotel Majestic all too public. Once seen by her ex-fiance, an employee in the hotel who discovers at the same time that “Mr. Carter’s son” shares his own shock of bright red hair, her fate is sealed; within days, she is a victim of blackmail, then murdered. The coincidences of the hotel environment—as a space where strangers constantly check in and out, “fancy milling” during their whole stay and subject to surveillance by other hotel guests and employees alike—may result from chance, but their consequences can still be binding, as Mrs. Carter finds out.

**The German Critique: Baum and Kracauer**

If a hotel is, to use Goffman’s phrase, “where the action is,” it should not be surprising that they provide the setting for quite a few best-selling authors of modernity, including Vicki Baum, whose fame was launched by her *Grand Hotel (Menschen im Hotel*, 1930), and Arnold Bennett, who also rose to fame with the publication of *The Grand Babylon Hotel* (1902). The
recurring image of the revolving door in Baum’s work, as well as its portrait of the aging ballerina, Grusinskaya, nicely reinforces *The Hotel Majestic*’s tale of the rise and fall of Mrs. Carter in the leisure spaces of modernity. For Grusinskaya, the hotel does not afford her aesthetic rejuvenation: her unlikely but passionate affair with the young and dashing Baron Gaigern not only saves her from suicide, but also gives her an idea for a very modern ballet that will transform her sense of failure into a perspective on women’s experiences of suffering in modernity. As she plans the ballet, thinking of its scenery and the “crazy young painter in Paris who could paint it,” she is rewarded with an absorbing vision of “a hundred true and living figures,” who all represent “impersonations she had never danced and still might dance” (136). But even though the hotel afford her one final passionate affair, she realizes in the morning that “dances such as I imagined last night cannot be danced.... The Viennese would hiss me off the stage if I appeared in dances like that” (153); she may believe that her audience can experience leisure while watching her dance, yet, as the laborer making such leisure possible, she is only too aware of the necessity to maintain the commercial appeal that keeps her ballet company in business. Appropriately, Baum’s novel ends in the same way it begins, with the war veteran Dr. Otternschlag lounging in the lobby and contemplating his own loneliness as “the revolving door turns and turns—and swings...and swings...and swings” (309). Though the novel ends by disavowing the hotel’s ability to effect any real change, one change has been made—-that in Dr. Otternschlag, who, initially inured to the daily newspaper’s saturation of events, silently complains, “A typhoon, an earthquake, some petty war between blacks and whites. Arson, murder, political strife. Nothing, Too little.... No, nothing happens, nothing at all” (8). The arrival of the pathetic Kringelein, a petty clerk searching for action when his doctor pronounces his
death sentence, does drum up his interest, and Dr. Otternschlag makes sincere efforts to help Kringelein become a leisured and knowledgeable man of the world, particularly by insisting on the advisability of accepting the costs of modernization with its pleasures (for example, the doctor warns Kringelein, “He who does not move with the times is a dead man” [48]). What is therefore at stake at the novel’s conclusion is less the extent to which the lives of the novel’s many characters have been improved—the symbolism of the revolving door is too intrusive to admit of any other conclusion—79—but whether readers, no less than Dr. Otternschlag, can continue to view the hotel as a fount of interest despite such a lack of permanent change. Although critics like Bettina Matthias have claimed that the hotel’s inability to effect change accounts for the novel’s stoic or even dour conclusion, I would like to stress that the bitterness permeating the final pages arises at least in part from its metafictive resonances in the lingering question of the hotel’s entertainment value as a modern machine that produces ensemble acts. Are the narrative events of Baum’s novel, in other words, more interesting than the newspaper that Dr. Otternschlag rejects at the novel’s opening? Are readers in danger of replicating the doctor’s jaded and instrumental rejection of the tragic events of modernity as simply not interesting enough? Does the novel’s systematic overturning of all the changes effected in the hotel represent a sudden refusal to engage in this instrumental leisure economy of sensational drama?

The philosophical gravity behind these questions raised implicitly in Baum’s work is reproduced in what is perhaps the most notorious non-fiction account of the hotel written during

79 A perceptible yet subtle increase in the frequency of the revolving door’s appearances in the novel—on pages 5, 35-6, 92, 219, 244-5, 251, 288, 299, 305, 309—enhances the novel’s concluding atmosphere of doom, or at the very least, of foreclosure. In The Hotel as Setting, Bettina Matthias also interprets the symbol of the revolving door as largely negative, as does James Buzard (in the context of modern film) in his “Perpetual Revolution.”
the era of modernism, German sociologist Siegfried Kracauer's "The Hotel Lobby." Kracauer launches into his caustic evaluation of the hotel's social and moral effects occasion in order to ground the piece’s broader purpose, a philosophical critique of philosophical modernity. Because it denounces the hotel lobby as the example of empty modern universalism just as passionately as it embraces the lobby as a form of escape from that same universalism, “The Hotel Lobby” epitomizes modernism’s ambivalence toward hotels. Kracauer’s self-conscious and polemical presentation of this ambivalence was first published in 1922 as a chapter in Kracauer’s first monograph, *The Detective Novel*. The essay is structured as a set of comparisons in which the hotel lobby features as “the inverted image” of the church. The primary philosophical problem of modernity, he argues, is that the modern subject’s “consciousness of existence and of the authentic conditions dwindles away...and clouded sense becomes lost in the labyrinth of distorted events whose distortion it no longer perceives” (173). For Kracauer, urban capitalist modernity is fundamentally unreal because it prevents modern subjects from experiencing the duality that defines fully realized human existence. This dual awareness, in which the bare immediacy of physical and psychological experience is augmented by an awareness of being-otherwise, provides the “elevation above the everyday [that] prevents the everyday self from going under” (184). To reach this awareness of the “submerged self,” one can either enter a church or other exceptional space or encounter a successful work of art. By

80 Kracauer's work is popular even with those who wish to affirm the positive potential of the hotel environment. After the 1995 publication of Thomas Levin's new translation of Kracauer's Weimer essays (only four of which had previously been translated into English), Kracauer's works were enthusiastically rediscovered by American sociologists and literary critics. The resulting flurry of scholarship (for a summary of such works, see Koss 80-4), resulted not only from Kracauer's personal and philosophical ties with Benjamin and Simmel at a time of heightened interest in German sociology and cultural theory, but also from the striking contemporaneity of his account of the relationship between space and society, which harmonized nicely with the critical vogue that Edward Soja referred to as the reassertion of space in social theory during the 1980s and 1990s. Kracauer had anticipated these network theories of social space, proclaiming, "Every typical space is created by typical social relations which are expressed in such a space without the disturbing intervention of consciousness. Everything that consciousness ignores...is involved in the construction of such spaces" (qtd. in Katz 135).
“successful,” Kracauer refers to “a unity of the aesthetic construct” that, facing a “disintegrated world,” “puts its pieces back in place in such a way that these, which were lying strewn about, become organized in a meaningful way” (173, 175); ultimately, the artwork or significant space “enables one to see it [reality] afresh” (174). The modern hotel lobby does not provide such a service because it “does not refer beyond itself” (177). Instead, the lobby is one of the “privileged sites” that “civilized society at the height of its development still maintains...[to] testify to its own nonexistence” (175). Kracauer’s insistence on the hotel lobby’s need to provide means for transcending the everyday makes this undoubtedly a key document in the history of leisure ideology, although his chief example of a space that encourages such a being-otherwise is the church, where the modern subject confronts his or her mortality. The intensity of this experience not only, Kracauer explains, enriches the subject’s access to the dual nature of reality, but also creates a sense of community, because the “absent God” they seek in a church but cannot ultimately find reaffirms their need for and commitment to social solidarity. Despite the existence of a similarly frustrating absent God in the hotel—“the impersonal nothing represented by the hotel manager” (176)—the anonymity of modern subjects in this space, unlike the church, ensures that “togetherness in the hotel lobby has no meaning” (ibid). In the lobby, “conventions take the upper hand...so worn out that the activity taking place in their name is at the same time an activity of dissimulation—an activity that serves as a protection for legal life just as much for illegal life, because as the empty form of all possible societies it is not oriented towards any particular thing but remains content with itself in its insignificance” (185). The inhabitants of a lobby maintain a “strict silence” despite their physical proximity, refusing to share either their names or their progressions with one another, and when they do speak, their “trivial
conversation...is only the obverse of prayer” (181). Consequently the sense of peace that they may experience in a lobby merely a “monological fantasy” in which they “use the person facing them as a toy” (183) and “suspend the undetermined special being...by devolving into tuxedos” (181). Having ceded this “special being,” he argues, they cannot meaningfully interact, stimulate one another to move beyond the narrow confines of personal experience, or help one another to discover the “submerged life” drowned out by modern, rationalized environments like the hotel lobby. “Instead of guiding people beyond themselves,” the hotel lobby allows the individual to retreat into the limited world of the here-and-now, and as a result, “the mystery slips between the masks; instead of penetrating the shells of the human, it is the veil that surrounds everything human” (184), forcing its occupants “downward into the equality of the encounter with the nothing” (181).

Distinct from this philosophical and existential critique of the hotel, Kracauer also rejects the hotel on the basis of commonly cited benefits of the hotel environment: the relaxation built into its material and social organization, and its potential for providing a relatively open field that enables escapism and self-fashioning. For example, when Kracauer complains, “Remnants of individuals slip into the nirvana of relaxation, faces disappear behind newspapers, and the artificial continuous light illuminates nothing but mannequins” (183), he denounces even the modern leisure spaces that successfully deliver leisure effects, thereby calling into question leisure itself. Yet if he mocks the modern subject’s craving for relaxation, he does not mock their apparent desire for escaping modernity. Kracauer explicitly denies the lobby's potential for

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81 This common trope, which I discuss at length in Chapter One, was certainly a cliche by the time of Kracauer’s piece; for example, the trope is phrased well in 1822 in William Hazlitt’s “On Going a Journey,” which professes a love for the opportunity to escape his habitual sense of self in a hotel. “The incognito of an inn,” he concludes, “is one of its striking privileges” (249).
providing the pleasures and utility of sociability described by Simmel (his former teacher), and
argues that the hotel lobby fails to offer a substantial or lasting alternative to the frustrations or
monotony of everyday life. Instead, it “merely displaces people from the unreality of the daily
hustle and bustle to a place where they would encounter the void only if they were more than just
reference point” (176). This treatment of individuals as “reference points” alludes to the larger
critique of philosophical modernity embedded in Kracauer's argument about the hotel lobby. The
Cartesian cogito, he argues, entails “extreme reductions of the real” (181) by limiting the
definition of consciousness to rational thought, while Kant's account of the transcendental
subject reduces humans to “the formal singularity of the figures, an equivalence that signifies not
fulfillment but evacuation” (179). As a result, the much-lauded equality of man posited by
modern philosophy—and celebrated as a spatial feature of environments like hotels, hospitals,
and schools, as we have seen in Chapter Four—reduces humanity to its lowest common
denominator, the mere “liberated residue of the totality of human being” (181), for its “equality
is based...on a relation to the nothing” (179). The philosophical limitations of a lobby-lounger
also provide an opportunity for Kracauer to critique Kant’s account of the sublime. When
Kracauer explains, “The person sitting around idly is overcome by a disinterested satisfaction in
the contemplation of a world creating itself, whose purposiveness is felt without being associated
with any representation of a purpose,” he invokes the Kantian sublime, only to dismiss beauty
for beauty’s sake as an “empty shell” in which the world is “presented without any regard for
those upward striving intensions” (177). By claiming that beauty only “rises above a meaningless
formal harmony only when it is in the service of something” (178), Kracauer accuses Kantian
aesthetics of “rob[bing] the ungraspable given of its possible content” (180). Rather than provide
a true alternative to modernity, the lobby intensifies philosophical modernity’s effects of anonymizing individuals, fragmenting communities, and undersigning “extreme reductions of the real;” as a result, “visitors in the hotel lobby, who allow the individual to disappear behind the peripheral equality of social masks, correspond to the exhausted terms that coerce differences out of the uniformity of the zero” (181). In short, for Kracauer, lobbies are where “in tasteful lounge chairs a civilization intent on rationalization comes to an end” (178).

Despite this pessimistic portrait of the hotel lobby, he stresses that because the lobby, as “a negative church,” can “be transformed into a church so long as one observes the conditions that govern the different spheres” (175). In “Travel and Dance,” Kracauer clarifies how that might happen when he argues, “The real person who has not capitulated to being a tool of mechanized industry, resists being dissolved into space and time. He certainly exists in this space here, yet is not utterly dispersed in it or overwhelmed by it” (67). Though the hotel lobby might present a nihilistic vision of anomie, the traveling made possible by the leisure structures of modernity may encourage modern subjects to discover or forge “a relationship with the eternal...a substitute for the sphere to which they have been denied access” (70):

Going to an exotic place is their sole remaining means of showing that they have outgrown the regions of Here that enslave them.... Through their travel (and for the time being it doesn't matter where they are headed) the shackles are burst, and they imagine that infinity is spreading out before them. In trains they are already on the other side, and the world in which they land is a new world for them.... We are like children when we travel, playfully excited about the new velocity, the relaxed roaming about, the overviews of geographic regions that previously could not be seen with such scope. We have fallen for the ability to have all these spaces at our disposal. (71-3)

Although “The Hotel Lobby” attacks the hotel as a means to address larger philosophical problems, “Travel and Dance” thus provides one of the earliest explicit definitions of leisure
ideology. Insofar as modern leisure (by saying “leisure” instead of “travel,” I take seriously the implications of Kracauer’s aside that “for the time being it doesn’t matter where they are headed”) enacts the bare minimum attributed to the leisure space by the modern ideology of leisure—“people become detached from everyday life” (176)—it provides a necessary reminder that one could live and be otherwise, even if it cannot give an opportunity to transcend, truly, the epistemological and ethical constraints of everyday life. By celebrating the opportunities created by the modernization of hospitality and consolidation of a mass leisure industry, Kracauer’s two essays, I argue, dramatize a modern dialectic outlined by Matei Calinescu in *The Five Faces of Modernity*. Calinescu posits “two distinct and bitterly conflicting modernities” the “irreversible split...between modernity as a stage in Western civilization—a product of scientific and technological progress, of the industrial revolution, of the sweeping economic and social changes brought about by capitalism—and modernity as an aesthetic concept.” Unwittingly, Kracauer in “Travel and Dance” does display a faith in bourgeois modernity, which Calinescu characterized as faith in progress, technology, abstract humanism, and “the cult of action and success” (42), even while “The Hotel Lobby” participates more fully Calinescu’s other modernity: the “radical antibourgeois attitudes” (42) rooted in the Romantic movement. Kracauer’s embodiment of Calinescu’s modern dialectic typifies, I argue, the modernist response to the hotel: a commitment to affirming the possibilities couched in such modern leisure spaces, paired with a suspicion of the economic and philosophic system that makes the spaces themselves materially possible. These apparently contradictory attitudes combine to create a keen awareness that these institutions are better at opening up these possibilities than fulfilling them, and better as a spur to philosophical critique and aesthetic production than for enabling permanent or wholly positive
transformations in modern individuals, social groups, and public space. In such a vein, Kracauer concludes “The Hotel Lobby” with the consolation that “if a sojourn in a hotel offers neither a perspective on nor an escape from the everyday, it does provide a groundless distance from it which can be exploited, if at all, aesthetically” (177). What modern subjects may not accomplish in their lives, modernist authors may still mine as an aesthetically productive site.

The Hotelier as Modernist: *Imperial Palace*

Arnold Bennett’s 1903 work of criticism, *The Truth About an Author*, bears out Kracauer’s claim as he reflects on the writing of *The Grand Babylon Hotel*:

I imagined a serial decked with the profuse ornament of an Eastern princess, a serial at once grandiose and witty, at once modern and transcendental, a serial of which the interest should gradually close on the reader like a vice until it became intolerable. I saw the whole of London preoccupied with this serial instead of with cricket and politics....There is no material splendor of modern life I left out. (155-157)

The violence of the passage, which likens the draw of a good narrative to a “gradually” closing “vice” that makes reading “intolerable,” recalls the difficult questions that I argue are brought up by the ending of Baum’s *Grand Hotel*. But whereas Baum’s ending seems to question the ethics of manipulating the social institution of the hotel into a best-selling novel, Bennett shows no such contrition or doubt. He concludes with regret at the difficulty at duplicating the aesthetic fecundity of *The Grand Babylon Hotel*; he sighs, “Subsequently I wrote other serials, but never again with the same verve” (160). But a quarter century after the publication of that serial, and just a year after the voluminous *Grand Hotel*’s publication in German, the release of Bennett’s similarly voluminous *Imperial Palace* (1930) flies in the face of the sense of disappointment he shares in 1903. The hotel, it seems, is again productive of that same “verve” pulsing through *The*
Grand Babylon Hotel. Imperial Palace’s two heroines perhaps betray Bennett’s concern: Violet, the industrious and humble housekeeper who resists wearing makeup, a foil to Gracie, the heiress, “idle, luxurious rich, but a masterpiece...[m]aintained in splendor by the highly skilled and expensive labor of others, materially useless to society...yet justified...by her mere appearance” (86-7). Though Evelyn Orcham with difficulty must decide between the two marriageable ladies, the Imperial Palace, which he fondly refers to as “strange, exotic, romantic” (72), is this workaholic’s true partner, a heady combination of Violet’s artless usefulness and Gracie’s useless artfulness. Although his interactions with Gracie emphasize the power and influence that the hotel exudes, as well as nurture his more avant-garde plans for the hotel, his interactions with Violet tend to humanize the hotel. Violet remains sensitive to any elements that “seemed to humanize the formidable, frightening, inhuman organism of the Imperial Palace” (209) and believes that when a person leaves a hotel room, “the melancholy of an abandoned home, a semi-spiritual death....pervaded the rooms deprived of their individuality” (206). Most astonishingly, she seems to become the hotel in a passage when Bennett narrates, “She was absorbing, as through the pores of her skin, the atoms of the Imperial Palace atmosphere” (209). As Orcham develops ever-deepening relationships with both women, the becoming-human of the hotel and the sheer, sometimes brutal economic power of the hotel become inseparable for Orcham, whose verbal tic of using “organization” and “imagination” always in conjunction provide a key for the heroines’ significance for Bennett’s positioning of Orcham as an eminently modern hero.82 For example, as Orcham faces the sudden departure of three long-term and efficient employees, the narrator explains, “Problems were his meat and

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82 I have already analyzed Sir Henry’s claim that the Palace is “the most characteristic of modern creations” (164), but Orcham also inaugurates the Palace’s first cabaret because “Evelyn had realized that the Time-Spirit was irresistible” (89).
drink. He knew that he would return to the Palace with detailed solutions whose ingenuity would impress everybody” (54). The modern hotel is therefore the only proper stage for a modern hero; it provides problems with the grandeur and complexity necessary for such a hero. Bennett does, despite the novel’s apparent hero-worship, broach the destructive side of the modern “visionary project” Marshall Berman describes in relation to Faustus (180); for example, he dismisses Sir Henry’s plans for the merger as “not sufficiently grandiose,” in part because they would not maximize hotel bookings beyond the normal constraints of the social season, yet Orchar promptly finds a way to one-up industry figures like Sir Henry, whose “imagination...lacked breadth and sweep,” by reflecting that, with a little help from his publicist, “the season ought to be lengthened, could be lengthened” (177). Despite this unsettlingly dictatorial attitude, Bennett is careful to show that Evelyn cares for “the ‘welfare’ side” of the hotel industry (77) by dramatizing Orchar’s recognition that the rigid hierarchy he has created in order to modernize and improve the hotel entails major risks. For example, having pioneered a brand-new laundry “on modern lines” (57), he visits his laundry-manager, only to find himself chagrined at the latter’s high-handed and disciplinary relationship to the workers (for example, he fires a worker for failing to follow his orders to visit a dentist). For the “disciplinary Mr. Perkin,” Orchar reflects, “the humanity” of the fired worker, Rose, “had had no existence” (66). Ultimately, with his concern for his workers invests his “true Napoleonic grandeur of conception” (163) with ethical weight, making him a hero, not only for the hotel industry—as “the head-god of the greatest hotel-combine that ever was” (169), a merger that with “one more touch...would magically appear, visible, concrete, complete, the wonder of the world” (295)—but also for the workers who, like Violet, “needed a hero, had never had one” (219).
If the modern hotel makes Orcham a hero, it also makes him happy. He tells Sir Henry, “I’m happy here. I’m content. I don’t want anything else,” he explains (170), suggesting that just as his hotel is to provide ideal leisure for his guests, so too does the modern hotel, in its alternative but simultaneous function as a space of labor, can also provide pleasure and satisfaction. Yet just as the modernist characters I have examined in this dissertation often begin to doubt the utility of perfect leisure the moment they manage to achieve it, so too does Sir Henry doubt value of the hotel’s power to gratify the pleasure principle. Invoking instead the work ethic, he argues, “When I’m happy and content I shall be so near to being dead that you wouldn’t notice the difference. Why man, if you’re happy and content you might as well say you haven’t got anything else to live for?...You’ve made this place once, complete....You can’t go making it...your genius is going to waste!” (170). Readers, aware of Orcham’s grueling work schedule, know that he is vulnerable to invocations of the work ethic, and unsurprisingly, Orcham is converted to Sir Henry’s side by the latter’s implication that Orcham’s work ethic enacts the fruitless repetition of the death drive. Orcham, just as Edward Comentale argues in the context of modernist authorship in his introduction to *Modernism, Cultural Production, and the British Avant-Garde*, is driven to “make it new” that interpellates Orcham as simultaneously a modernist author and capitalist producer. Although critics may not immediately see the relevance of Arnold Bennett for Comentale’s characterization of “High Modernist works” as “support[ing] a ceaseless activity of interpretation or production of meaning” and the “violent dialectic” whereby “the romantic artist evokes a creative struggle of work and world” (5), Orcham’s drive to further his career certainly brings *The Imperial Palace* into focus as an example of Comentale’s argument about modernism’s uneasy relationship to capitalism. Comentale writes,
The hope of progress, the demand for newness—these urges, particularly in relation to
the technological precisionism of modernity seemed empty, or, worse, treacherous. For
British thinkers and artists, these years mark the beginning of a great disillusionment, an
increasing suspicion that cultural modernity was somehow complicit with the horrors of
economic modernity. (6)

Explicitly represented in countless moments in the novel as an artist, Orcham is an ideally
situated figure for investigating the reciprocity Comentale establishes between modernist
aesthetics and commodity capitalism.

Yet, in spite of Bennett’s conscientious exploration of the human costs of Orcham routing
his drive to labor through a hypothetically endless production of chain hotels, the most
significant contribution of the novel to these scholarly discussions is the book’s own narrative
logic of production. This narrative logic uses the hotel setting as an occasion for creating
numerous and spectacular visions of modernization that, as I have argued in connection to
Bowen’s *The Shelbourne Hotel*, suggest that the “meaning” of hotels for capitalist modernity is
overdetermined. It is this overdetermination, less than any particular argument implied in one of
the novel’s visions, that I wish to draw attention to. Much of the time, this vision is abstract; for
example, Orcham’s initial attraction to Gracie is her ability to create such holistic visions herself,
out of the fragments of hotel life accessible at any one moment; after a long explanation of the
immensely complex politics of waiting, she responds, “It’s perfectly thrilling,” leading him to
reflect, approvingly, “She understands. She has imagination” (88). By contrast, the hotel’s
stockholders, though they, unlike Gracie, are directly connected to the hotel as a financial
instrument, are maligned in Orcham’s silent running commentary on his annual speech to the
shareholders—a speech that also provides a comprehensive account of the economic stresses
suffered by the hotel industry in the 1930s (138-140). This silent commentary begins when he
stumbles over the phrase “Ladies and gentlemen, your hotel...”

_Your_ hotels? Good God! They aren’t your hotels. You couldn’t have started them. You
couldn’t run them. You don’t understand them. You’ve no idea what wonderful, romantic
things they are. You know nothing about them, except a few arithmetical symbols which I
choose to offer you and which are beyond your comprehension. You didn’t buy shares
because you are interested in hotels; only because you believed you could squeeze a bit
of money out of them. Whereas “your” hotels are my creation. I live for them. I have a
passion for them. (139)

Evelyn’s concept of ownership involves requires both practical knowledge of its owned object
and an imaginative understanding of it, which he silently accuses the shareholders of not
possessing. The irony of the passage is double-fold: first, he at that moment is in the process of
leveraging this very physical hotel as an abstract value to provide both credit and collateral to
fund his venture of chain hotels; second, his “passion,” though he casts it as a variety of
rebellious romantic sacrifice, is not opposed to the shareholders’ interests but rather is the true
commodity that has proven so profitable for the Imperial Hotel’s shareholders. The hotel’s
physical and ideological capaciousness allows it to provide a “home” not only for guests, but
also for theories like Evelyn. But what Evelyn seems unaware of is that the universal hospitality
of the hotel, obligated (in England, by law) to accept all comers, is just as amenable and gracious
to the stockholders’ anti-Orchamesque viewpoints as it is to their checkbooks.

This universal hospitality, the ability of the hotel to support divergent ideas and diverse
people, also makes the hotel a producer of events; as Evelyn puts it, “You know, you never do
know what will happen next in a hotel” (384), and as the hotel detective claims, “I don’t know of
any big hotel where there hasn’t been melodrama” (535). In the novel, such drama appears
cumulative, with each event becoming more outrageous, improbable, and spectacular than the
previous crisis. When a confrontation erupts between Violet (the head-housekeeper) and one of the floor-housekeepers, for example, the narrator exclaim that “there had never been a conflict so acute as this one” (314). The scene’s superficial appearance of triviality lends a sarcastic air to this statement, but the seriousness of the situation is underscored by Violet’s newly awakened sense of the negative implications of the hotel’s universal hospitality. The narrator explains, “In her experience she had imagined that in the sublime and august Imperial Palace, synonym of Paradise, the horrors of warfare were impossible, inconceivable. Innocent! She now comprehended that there was as much human nature in the Imperial Palace as anywhere else” (315). Although Violet appears to dislike this inclusiveness for its admittance of the violent and highly unpleasant events, she quickly acclimates to this environment of drama. In one scene, she is mysteriously summoned for what she anticipates will be the wrath of Evelyn falling down upon her as revenge for her interference in an earlier crisis. When the summons turns out to be for a trivial reason, “the ambitious, adventurous heroine in her regretted that no fresh adventure awaited her” (618), just as the men for whose needs she was summoned “fell into an anti-climax of contented exhaustion” that similarly attests to the habit-forming effects of hotel drama (625). Unlike the shrinking Violet, who must adapt to the hotel’s sensationalism, Gracie, a race-car driver, immediately takes to the hotel environment. Touring the hotel with Evelyn, she is confronted by the grand spectacle of the hotel when she enters the kitchens, “hidden like a guilty secret from all the dining-tables.” Through Gracie’s perspective, a good reason for the hotel’s apparent talent for producing drama emerges as the hotel space unfolds like a Russian nesting doll, containing worlds within worlds. This is particularly true with the kitchens, which comprise
a world of frenzied industry, whose denizens had leisure and inclination neither for the measured eloquence not the discreet and deferential murmuring...of the priests and acolytes of the restaurant. A world of racket.... A world without end, a vista of kitchens one behind the other, beyond the range of visit.... The shock of the introduction into the Dantesque Latin microcosm, of the transition from indolent luxury to feverish labor, was shown in Gracie’s features. (99)

In this passage, the modern hotel is less a microcosm or world in itself than it is a kind of body without organs from which many worlds emerge, disappear, and then reform. The kitchens are at one moment a single world distinct from the diners, and at another its own universe containing worlds that, no matter how long Gracie’s tour lasts, are “beyond the range of visit.” Apparent contradictions are revealed as illusory in such as space: Gracie struggles “to recognize that a restaurant, and perhaps many floors of a hotel, might conceivably be existing somewhere beyond the frontier of the kitchens” (101), just as she marvels at the “bizarre” mixture of old and new of the kitchens, with “a modern machine for whipping cream” adjacent to workers “ice-making by hand” and its “two loud-speakers suspended from a table” unaccountably hidden “in the very hinterland of the kitchens” (102). Initially left speechless by the shock of entering this world of what she had taken to be mutually exclusive worlds, she adjusts by humanizing the environment. Looking “over a dishful of uncooked cutlets,” for example, she murmurs, “They have not yet acquired their individualities” (101)—a comment that not only endears her to the irascible French chef but also awakens in Gracie, a pampered heiress, a latent desire to labor. This tour of Orcham’s kitchens, initially intended just as a lark, a kind of hotel slumming, has managed to force Grace, presented in the novel as one of the most famous, intriguing, and beautiful women in England, to bend in awe of the glamor of the hotel. “I must work!” she exclaims, repeating, “I must work! This place makes me ashamed.... Why can’t I work? I must begin my life over again” (103). Gracie’s critical eye has turned its gaze from the kitchens to Gracie herself, a
mediation of identity through the hotel that parallels Marx’s arguments about the nobility of labor and its significance for individual happiness and development.

I will return to the topic of Gracie’s personal revolution below, where I consider in particular the significance of her resolution’s final effect of making her a published author. For now I want to stress the narrative logic that asserts that traversing the space of the hotel produces dramatic scenes of transformation, or in other word, creates events. The first moment I want to examine—an outbreak of fire—reveals at least as much about Evelyn as the preceding scene does about Gracie, even though the narrator dismisses this sensational scene as “a trifling event” (280). For example, as Evelyn paces the “mile of carpet” on a guest floor, something “happened such as can happen only in the multiple existence of the large hotel.” Reminiscent of the scene in *Grand Hotel* when Kringelein happens upon a naked typist hysterically pacing the hallway, a “young, dark woman” bursts into the hallway with “a white bath-towel...hung precariously on her, reminding him of the tantalizing cover-designs of certain...illustrated weeklies in which the pose of a woman in an entirely inadequate garment has been caught at the very instant when the flimsy attire is giving way under strain.” As Evelyn passes “instantly....from out of the vast, vague anonymity of the hotel into an inhabited circumscribed home,” he exits the quiet, ordered perfection of the hotel’s public spaces into the fiery chaos of a burning room. Later, at the hotel’s legendary New Year’s Eve celebration, Evelyn will distance himself from the guests, deprecating the men “relaxed, released into a careless and quasi-shameless jollity” and the women with their “frocks somewhat disarranged,” “ill-controlled mouths,” and “loud tongues,” harshly judges the party as showing “humanity in the mass, odorous, multitudinous, flippant, saucy, brazen, free of social discipline” (385). But after
casually putting out the fire, Evelyn, still thinking of the possibility that at any moment “the last poor remnant of decency would be gone,” he publicly berates the girl, “cowering in the lobby as if to hide her bodily shame,” taking a grim satisfaction in what is (by far) not the only erotically charged, sado-masochistic scene playing off the hotel-manager’s characteristically proud yet intimate air of exercising authority over his employees and guests (280-1).

A similar balance is effected when Evelyn, in Paris to assess the current state of one of his newly acquired hotels, visits a hip club with Gracie. In the club, Evelyn inspects its “storied walls,” a series of “barbaric scenes—aphrodisiac, orgiastic, murderous—from the short but merry life of the Roman emperor nicknamed Caligula, the man-god who had dared everything in license, and whose audacity the painter had successfully emulated” (422). The teetotaler Evelyn greets these scenes with moralizing doubts about “the growing prevalence of mergers and the rationalization of dubious delights,” and simultaneously looks at them while imagining how “in some office, tomorrow, clerks would be checking the nightly returns of ten resorts of carousal...preparing statistics for Orcham of the great pleasure-merger” (425), Evelyn again inhabits the hero role Bennett has prepared for him through his imaginative power to see double: to see the modern leisure space as both pleasure and financial instrument. At the same time, it is at the club, as a result of enjoying the murals with Gracie, that “he was happier than he had ever been. Life itself, the essence of life, throbbed serenely in his veins.... Hotels, a victorious career, had no significance for him” (427). Like the modernists I trace in this chapter, Evelyn himself, despite his shrewd and incisive visions of the leisure space’s relationship to capitalist modernity, falls victim to the charms of leisure ideology. Only outside of his hotel is he forced to disavow his labor in order to enjoy the the leisure space’s capacity to produce happiness; though Gracie
explains that she chose to take him to the club “because it shows what people really are” (429),
the hotel is always sufficient for Evelyn as the leisure space to produce such visions, whether the
vision allows him to visualize the role of the hotel in the complicated and abstract networks of
finance capitalism or—like in the Paris club scene, the New Year’s Even scene, and the fire scene
—to enjoy, guilt-free, the erotic spectacles of leisure spaces as a function of his role as the
world’s most successful hotelier.

Ultimately, if Evelyn Orcham is presented in Imperial Palace as a Faust—a man who
single-handedly creates modernity (or at least creates the preeminently modern institution of the
luxury hotel)—he is equally presented as a Caligula, the “man-god who dared everything in
license” painted on the walls of an avant-garde nightclub (422). As we have seen above, he is
unable and unwilling to affirm the morality of the luxury hotel; nonetheless, because Bennett’s
novel both produces such moments yet declines to help the reader decide the wisdom of the
various decisions Evelyn is forced to make, the narrative logic of the novel mirrors the
impassive, amoral, and non-discriminating equality of the hotel and of capitalism itself, which,
as Georg Simmel argues in “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” allows money to become a
“frightful leveler:”

For money expresses all qualitative differences of things in terms of "how much?"
Money, with all its colorlessness and indifference, becomes the common denominator of
all values; irreparably it hollows out the core of things, their individuality, their specific
value, and their incomparability. All things float with equal specific gravity in the
constantly moving stream of money. All things lie on the same level and differ from one
another only in the size of the area which they cover. (414)

Like Simmel’s analysis of money, Bennett’s novel, mediated by the universal commercialized
hospitality of the hotel, largely disregards the moral values of the scenes in the novel—which,
considering the book’s 670 pages, is very much in the favor of the “how much” of the serial writer. Instead of the “blase attitude” Simmel finds characteristic of modern subjects, the narrator of Imperial Palace values the modern businessman not only as one of capitalism’s sole surviving individuals (an example of what Simmel calls “the most extreme individualism” [417]), but also as an artist (a few such moments include the narrator declaring Sir Henry a “poet” for his commitment to the merger [297], defining Orcham as “the creative artist surveying and displaying his creation—the hotel” [33], and endowing Orcham with “all the impulsiveness of a creative artist” [650]). The “constantly moving stream of money” can be, the novel demonstrates, astonishingly productive in terms of artistic inspiration and output. Returning to the figure of the nightclub mural, I want to suggest that the narrator is the painter for Orcham’s Caligula, “whose audacity the painter had successfully emulated” (422). Models for such hotel-writing flood the novel, including the day hall-porter, Mowlem, “understood to be writing, with expert assistance, a book of reminiscences of the Imperial Palace entrance hall, for a comfortable sum of money” (123), and the book that Gracie, inspired by the complex inner workings of the hotel, writes in her “morocco manuscript-book,” which she had kept “virginal” (44) until the hotel tour that makes her reflect, “I might write down my impressions of all that” (30). For Gracie, the result of her writing is nothing less than a wholesale transformation of her life; as the narrator explains, “The concentration of her mind was positively awful; that is to say, it awed her. The new life had opened for her” (46). For her readers, the book, “a slim volume in a green and yellow jacket cubistically designed, with the title: Sensations and Ideas” (626), is a challenging modernist account of the relationship between perception and identity. Neither the hotel bookstall seller nor Gracie’s father like the book; the bookseller tells Evelyn, “It’s rather queer.
Some people won’t quite like it. I have to be very careful in recommending it” (627), and Sir Henry reacts to the unexpected amount of publicity generated by the challenging volume with a dismissive aside, “[N]ow she’s married and going to have a baby I suppose it doesn’t matter how modern the book is” (668). Yet Evelyn is so absorbed by the volume that he stays up all night rereading it, and Violet judges, “I don’t think I’ve read anything as wonderful. It’s all so new” (635); their mutual admiration of the book not only marks them as discriminating and intelligent readers (unlike the bookseller, whom Evelyn calls “an unlettered idiot” [629]), but also helps to trigger Evelyn and Violet’s budding romance.

Unlike the Green Parrot—the Imperial Palace’s recently redecorated lounge, whose “Joseph’s-coat walls decorated in rhomboidal shapes,” which “bar-frequenters described as cubistic or futuristic or both”—are chiefly valued by Evelyn as “a bit of useful publicity” (81), Gracie’s book completes the circle that began when her tour of the hotel spurred her into an uncharacteristic bout of aesthetic production. That early tour inaugurates Gracie not only into the mysteries of the modern hotel but also into Evelyn’s affections, a pattern that is neatly reversed when the publication of her book not only helps Evelyn and Violet become officially engaged, but also forces Evelyn into the train of thought that ends in his inconclusive inquiry into the ethics of the modern grand hotel. At the center of this chiasmus is, fittingly, a modernist text. As Woolf suggests in “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” in the case of Imperial Palace, Evelyn and Violet are indeed rewarded with “an eternity of bliss spent in the very best hotel in Brighton” (148), but with a few key differences. Rather than, as Woolf implies, languishing in a state of leisure made meaningless through surfeit and superficiality, Evelyn and Violet (both of whom refuse to reduce the intensity of their work-loads after their marriage) secure their happy
ending by finding in the grand hotel a source of both leisure and labor, combining organization with imagination, pleasure with conscientious effort, and romance with finance capital. And in Imperial Palace, the high modernist text does not stay aloof from the grand hotel, but rather is produced organically through the mediation of the spaces of modern leisure. The modernist text may be composed in the pages of an exaggeratedly precious morocco notebook, virginally pure, but it emerges into the public sphere as a commodity, wrapped in a cubistic jacket, stamped with a price tag, standing out colorfully from the bookstall of the Imperial Palace Hotel.

The Hotel Apprenticeship: In a German Pension

Katherine Mansfield’s “The Advanced Lady,” the critical heart of her collection of linked stories about a provincial spa town, In a German Pension (1911), features a novel within a novel. While taking a restorative walk in the countryside—one of the many doctor-recommended therapeutic activities available for spa guests taking the cure—the narrator listens as the Frau Professor, one of her fellow pensioners and the titular “Advanced Lady,” shares a synopsis of her latest project, a “mysterious and almost prophetic...symbol of a true advanced woman” (87-88).

“My brain has been a hive for years,” the Advanced Lady relates, “and about three months ago the pent-up waters burst over my soul and since then I am writing all day until late into the night, still ever finding fresh inspirations and thoughts which beat impatient wings about my heart” (87). The narrator, already established as dry and unsentimental in the preceding ten stories, characteristically interrupts the Frau Professor’s majestic climax, a thesis statement that begins, “Love is...the lamp carried in the bosom touching with serene rays all the heights and depths of —” and is cut off as the narrator finishes, “Darkest Africa’” (88). In creating a parallel between imperialism and romance, the narrator’s interruption suggests not only that romance is a
violent and imperialist interpersonal act, but also that both imperialism and romance
unreflectively work by way of a common set of cliched rhetorical maneuvers. After the
Advanced Lady elaborates on her ideal new woman, conspicuously feminine and devoted to
husband and family, the narrator doubles back on the irony of the Advanced Lady’s dependence
on a recycled and morally compromised set of tropes to cast “advanced” theses by telling her,
“[T]hat theory of yours about women and Love—it’s as old as the hills—oh, older!” (91).

Readers are spared more of the Advanced Lady’s theses by a timely circular movement in
which an argument begun at the beginning of the walk (a nit-picking argument between Herr
Erhardt and a guest of another pension about whether the walk from Mindelbau to Schlingen is
eight or seven-and-a-half kilometers) rekindles, serving as a satisfactorily rhythmic and lightly
humorous conclusion. The story’s end is punctuated by the narrator’s apparent discursive victory
over the Advanced Lady; repeating Herr Erhardt’s justification of his own silly argument, the
narrator tells the Advanced Lady, “Ignorance must not go uncontradicted!” (92). But the light
and self-deprecating tone of the conclusion is belied by an earlier moment in the story, when the
narrator appears to drop her cattiness for a moment. When Frau Kellerman, another cure guest
taking the walk to Schlingen, breathlessly asks the Frau Professor what she is writing, the
narrator answers instead, explaining, “Of course it is a novel...nothing but a novel could produce
an effect like that” (88). The narrator’s customary terseness been breached, and so—as she
represents herself as a fellow author, a colleague of the Frau Professor, willing to speak of the
emotional life of authorship—has narrator’s unwillingness to view herself as a member of the
“kur” community. Her comment does resonate with unmistakable hints of exasperation and
aggression (and in fact the Frau Professor responds to the comment by pleading, “Ach, don’t
quarrel” [87]), yet this flash of genuine anger constitutes a noteworthy failure of narrator’s usual mode of detached, impersonal politeness and, intriguingly, marks one of the very few moments when the cynicism and frustration that marks the text (the narration) actually punctures the story itself (becoming legible to the other pension guests). The narrator is simultaneously unmasked as a fellow kur guest vulnerable to the social politics of the pension—and as a writer.

While it is well-known that the stories of In a German Pension are autobiographical, I argue that this moment, as the narrator passionately speaks of the conditions of aesthetic production, is the crux in the collection that most tellingly resonates with Mansfield’s own authorial challenges. Known as a writer of short stories, Mansfield always wanted to write a novel, but never could, as her poor health required her to be on the move perpetually, moving from one leisure space to another in search of the perfect climate and the perfect hotel room. Yet unlike her other books of short stories, it is In a German Pension, I argue, not her abortive novel project, The Aloe, that stands as Mansfield’s true novel. Mansfield scholarship focuses on her other, later collections—usually around the titular stories of The Garden Party and Other Stories and Bliss and Other Stories—and the few works that do reference In a German Pension, such as Angela Smith’s “Katherine Mansfield and ‘Rhythm,’” Jeffrey Meyers’s “Murry’s Cult of Mansfield,” and Patrick Morrow’s Katherine Mansfield’s Fiction, typically treat Mansfield’s first collection as an aberration (the latter, for example, calls it a “volume of juvenalia” full of “exercises in a genre” [114]). The more appreciative scholarship concerns two major themes: gender (including Delia De Sousa Correa’s “The Stories of Katherine Mansfield,” Mary Ann Gillies and Aurelea Mahood’s Modernist Literature: An Introduction, Deborah Martinson’s In the Presence of Audience: The Self in Diaries and Fiction), food/orality (including Patricia
Moran’s “Unholy Meanings: Maternity, Creativity, and Orality in Katherine Mansfield” and Michael Hollington’s “Food, Modernity, Modernism”) or both (in C. A. Hankin’s Katherine Mansfield and Her Confessional Stories and Patricia Moran’s longer work, Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf). In the most recent Cambridge Introduction to the Modernist Novel, Peter Brooker quietly dismisses In a German Pension by saying that its stories “present an instructive comparison with Mansfield’s later work and with contemporary literature” (43), and even the most detailed and generous of scholarly analysis of the collection, the second chapter of Saralyn Daly’s Katherine Mansfield, concludes that the value of the collection is as a forerunner in which Mansfield “has found but perhaps not recognized the form” of later stories and “bluntly begi[ns]” analyzing the themes and “already introduced most of [the] characters” that run through her later fiction in a more “mature” form (28). Of course, Mansfield herself dismissed the collection, telling John Middleton Murry, "I cannot have The German Pension reprinted under any circumstances.... I can't go foisting that kind of stuff on the public. Its not good enough” (qtd. in Meyers 27). Yet Mansfield and her critics miss or undervalue the unusually focused portrait of modern leisure space given in In a German Pension. C. A. Hankin does bring up the topic of travel, but does so in order to give a biographical reading of the collection, arguing that, because “no matter where she lived, it seems, some other place was always preferable...for Katherine travel was a kind of drug, providing an escape from reality not dissimilar to that afforded by fantasy” (61). Hankin eclipses his nascent awareness of the position of leisure spaces in modernism by claiming that in writing In a German Pension, Mansfield “made little attempt to disguise her private obsessions” and “poured her own emotional reactions to the sad affair with Garnett Trowell, to her hasty marriage, and to
the trauma of pregnancy and miscarriage” (63). Hankin’s biographical and psychoanalytic approach to the collection, similar to the other works of Mansfield scholarship mentioned above, immediately attributes the interesting images, turns of phrase, or critical cultural observations Mansfield makes in relation to the pension and surrounding spa town to her feminist critique. Though most Mansfield scholars create more nuanced links between Mansfield’s life and In a German Pension, Hankin shares these scholars’ assumption that the collection’s explorations of gender, sexuality, trauma, and the body have nothing to do with the setting of the stories in modern leisure spaces. Doing so neglects the constitutive role played in the collection by the modern leisure space, devaluing In a German Pension by turning critical attention away from what makes the collection unique, remarkable, and something more than juvenalia: the underlying structure linking all of the stories, which is nothing less than the leisure space itself.

Critics have not recognized or acknowledge that, like Joyce’s Ulysses and Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway after it, the thirteen stories of In a German Pension may not all be structured by continuous focalization through a single character, but they are linked through spatial contiguity. Although critics have taken for granted the apparent cleavage between the stories told in the first person and those told in the third person, I argue that in Mansfield’s text, the modern leisure space of the spa town unites the thirteen stories, seven of which feature our frustrated narrator-author navigating the Pension Müller and the surrounding hydrotherapy facilities of Mindelbau. The remaining six each feature a different set of characters in apparently different settings, yet all are German characters or English characters on a continental holiday in a town that is either explicitly identified as the same town (Mindelbau) as the Pension Müller or is at least also a German provincial town of about the same size, wealth, and geography as Mindelbau. “At
Lehmann’s,” for example, is explicitly identified as taking place in a Mindelbau cafe during the off-season, and “A Blaze” takes place in Bad Waldsee, part of the larger spa region in southern Bavaria of Bad Worishofen, where Mansfield stayed (and suffered a miscarriage) in 1909, and which includes Mindelau, the town on which Mansfield based Mindelbau. Although the seven Pension Müller stories ironize the privileged leisure experiences of an upper-class, unmarried Englishwoman in the kur spaces of a German provincial spa town, most of the remaining stories explore the leisure of less privileged groups in the non-holiday spaces of Bad Worishofen, Mindelbau, and the surrounding countryside. “Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding” traces an exhausted hausfrau’s unwonted holiday, a rare opportunity to leave her children and domestic duties aside to dress up, eat well, gossip, and dance. “At Lehmann’s” explores the titular leisure space—the setting is a cafe, Lehmann’s, during the winter, off-season months, being patronized by the town’s full-time residents—from the perspective of a young waitress uncertain about returning the sexual advances of a customer while she can hear the cafe owner’s wife struggling with childbirth in the bedroom above the cafe. Just as “At Lehmann’s” shows a waitress is overloaded by extra work as the other cafe workers drift upstairs (the story begins with the lines, “Certainly Sabina did not find life slow. She was on the trot from early morning until late at night” [46]), so too do “The-Child-Who-Was-Tired” and “The Swing of the Pendulum” explore the intersections among gender, leisure, and labor (in both senses of the word) in order to reveal the mediation of leisure and labor by gender and sexuality. “The-Child-Who-Was-Tired” features a miserable young girl whose adopted mother, in a continuous state of pregnancy, keeps the young girl in thrall as an unwilling babysitter. The girl kills the infant in her charge as a response to her overwork—a violent solution that parallels “The Swing of the Pendulum,” whose
protagonist Viola, a would-be writer and Rhysian heroine enduring the enforced, inelegant, and unstable leisure of an upper-class woman engaged to an impecunious man (whose support she had only wanted until her “work began to sell” [97]), becomes eerily boastful of her ability to use violence to prevent being sexual assaulted in her boarding house. “A Birthday,” like “At Lehmann’s,” also investigates birth as an uneasy holiday for all but the mother, requiring enforced leisure for some and more labor for others; the father, for example, whose ambivalence toward leisure emerges when he explains his irritation during his wife’s labor as “partly the effect of Sunday. I loathe a Sunday” (62), when he envies the milkman having “nothing to do but loaf about all day” (63), and when he assigns so many extra tasks for his servant that the doctor remarks, “Don’t be hard on the girl. She’s got twice the work to do today” (67). These five stories shed reflective light on the seven Pension Müller stories, whose protagonist’s tirades against marriage and pregnancy are brought into sharp relief by these five stories emphasizing the preclusion of women’s leisure by a gender-based division of labor. By alternating the Pension Müller stories with these stories of women’s frustrated leisure, Mansfield makes quite clear that the primary condition of the narrator’s leisure is her childlessness.

By contrast, the final story in the collection, “A Blaze,” emphasizes that the possession of leisure time and the disposable income to enjoy it with does not guarantee exemption from these gendered life narratives. After a day of skiing, the young and athletic Max comes “stamping up the stairs” to the private sitting room (“a woman’s room—full of flowers and photographs”) of his best friend’s wife. Elsa is a vision of luxurious feminine leisure “in a white velvet tea-gown...curled upon the sofa—a book of fashions on her lap, a box of creams besides her,” and when Max tries to rekindle their recent flirtation, she declines, saying, “Don’t do that, Max, you
get on my nerves. And I’ve a headache today” (108). Max’s response—a litany of romantic cliches—characterizes her leisure activities as a “game...on the cat-and-cream principle” (110). When Elsa unexpectedly agrees with him, saying “I can’t help it. I can’t help seeking admiration any more than a cat can help going to people to be stroked” (111), Mansfield situates female leisure as flirtation in the sense Georg Simmel elaborated—a play form of eroticism—which contrasts with the other stories’ foregrounding of the literal labor of reproduction as women’s work. Elsa, as a woman of leisure, ultimately is presented as a “beautiful, loving child” (111) rather than the women of “labor” elsewhere in In a German Pension. From the perspective of Max and her husband, Victor, she is, like Daisy Miller, a provocation for eroticism and its many passionate demonstrations, not for sex—she firmly states, “I would never let a man kiss me” (111). Victor reacts to the spectacle of Elsa’s feminine repose with a passionate access of drama and being-otherwise: by begging, “just a minute let me stay here—just a moment in a whole life,” he experiences that acute nowness considered central to modernism; by proclaiming, “I feel like a savage... I kill myself when I see you—I’m sick of my own strength that turns upon itself, and dies, and rises new-born like a phoenix,” he achieves the rebirth, the call to self-reflexivity and individual transformation associated with leisure spaces; and by insisting, “you can’t understand how a man feels” (110) and elaborating on his individual state of mind as a lover in crisis, he performs the so-called inward turn of the modernist novel of consciousness, using the spectacle of Elsa’s leisure as a pretext for discovering and experiencing his own selfhood with a new intensity. The cliches through which he forges his newfound sense of unique individuality may show that even the most insistently institutional, commodified, and standardized manifestations of leisure can still provoke powerful subjective leisure effects. But
the thinness of the plot and dialogue also points to the apparent thinness of leisure, its inability to provide alternative modes of being not only for women who are poor, sick, older, have children, or all four, but also for rich, childless, and healthy young women. Elsa, waiting supine in her warm, bright room for the men to return from their winter sports, certainly appears to enjoy her scenes of technically chaste eroticism, but “A Blaze” falls flat, an insipid and derivative slip of a scene that, considered in its context as the final story of In a German Pension, takes on through accumulating narrative velocity the characteristics of a touchstone, a test of leisure, or more specifically, a reflection on modernity’s capacity for leisure.

By ending In a German Pension with “A Blaze,” Mansfield crystallizes the stories as an extended exploration of the institutional, gendered, and rhetorical structures of modern leisure. These diverse stories, I contend, can be viewed as contiguous with each other and with the other seven Pension Müller stories because, taken together, the entire collection maps a single complete German spa, as well as a united constellation of diverse modern leisure and leisure space experiences. The first four stories—Pension Müller stories that characterize the life of the pension inhabited by Germans on holiday and by patients from many different countries in Bad Worishofen taking the cure—set the tone, mapping the social politics of a particular pension. The next few stories alternate back and forth between showing the daily routines of Pension Müller guests traversing Mindelbau and its hydrotherapy facilities (“The Luft Bad,” “The Modern Soul,” “The Advanced Lady”) and showing the town’s full-time residents under the tensions and joys of major life milestones or crises (“Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding,” “At Lehmann’s,” “A Birthday,” “The-Child-Who-Was-Tired,” “The Swing of the Pendulum”). In this latter group, Mansfield reveals what makes the modern spa possible: the spa town as working town rather than leisure space, structured not by the exceptional norms, temporalities, and
possibilities promised by the vacation—particularly for the ill visitors desiring to regain health—but by the mundane routines, limitations, and tragedies of modern life. In a German Pension first creates, then transcends the limited viewpoint of a patient “taking the waters” by mapping both the leisure space and the spaces, people, and situations that make hydrotherapy possible. Structurally too, Mansfield uses the Pension Müller as a spatial basis from which to explore the complex social and literal geography of the modern spa town, making In a German Pension less a collection of stories, some of which are related and others of which are not, than it is a fragmented experimental novel linked by a project of mapping modern space, much like Joyce’s Ulysses and Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway.

Of course, Mansfield’s slim collection lacks the magisterial allusiveness and capacious scope of Ulysses and fails to evoke either the texture of everyday consciousness or the temporal complexities of personal and national history as richly as Mrs. Dalloway. Yet just as those two modernist masterworks are appreciated by scholars and readers through their characteristically modernist adaptation of the urban environment for aesthetic production—what Raymond Williams has called “metropolitan perception”—so too have I been arguing in this dissertation that modern leisure similarly occasioned a new mode of aesthetic production for modernists. Although future works on leisure modernity might focus on the figure of the flaneur as a double figure energized both by the modern metropolis and modern leisure, I would like to return briefly to “The Advanced Lady,” which will conclude my argument that Katherine Mansfield’s In a German Pension, as well as the texts, tropes, and images I have explored in this dissertation, are energized by what we might call a “leisure perception.” Like the visual rhetoric of the Queen Mary, Mansfield’s leisure perception is highly reflexive, suggesting that the production and proliferation of modern leisure spaces was met with an equally new and noteworthy set of leisure
discourses—some critical, some promotional, but all (to varying degrees of explicitness) carrying theories about leisure sociability. Mansfield’s narrator, for example, disinterestedly examines the leisure space as a site of actually existing cosmopolitanism when she records a meeting with a fellow pension guest:

Herr Erchardt and I had not met before that day, so, in accordance with strict pension custom, we asked each other how long we had slept during the night, had we dreamed agreeably, what time we had got up, was the coffee fresh when we had appeared at breakfast, and how had we passed the morning. Having toiled up these stairs of almost national politeness we landed, triumphant and smiling, and paused to recover a breath. (82)

Although the narrator acknowledges the superficiality of such interactions, the mere fact that the narrator is both willing to perform and proficient at executing the preordained steps of this delicate dance of international etiquette serves to ingratiate her to him enough that Herr Erchardt decides to introduce her to the Frau Professor. This introduction may appear to be only a quantitative rather than qualitative improvement in the narrator’s interpersonal interactions, but the narrator’s interactions with the other pension guests in “The Advanced Lady” represents a marked improvement to the openly hostile confrontations pitting the English against the Germans that filled the first four stories of In a German Pension. Furthermore, the narrator’s introduction to the Frau Professor is, for the latter woman is the sole pension guest who succeeds in breaking through the narrator’s chilly reserve.

Yet the ultimate payoff of “The Advanced Lady” is not the production of an intimate friendship or the revelations regarding the three-dimensional depths of the narrator’s identity. The narrator’s possession of an interesting “personality” is hinted only in the momentary lapse in which she empathizes with the Advanced Lady’s romanticized description of the writing process;
Mansfield’s narrator is a superficial phenomenon in the text, a roughly sketched function subordinated to the critical examination of the social and ideological codes of modern leisure. For example, the narrator juxtaposes the sentimental and primitivist attitudes the pensioners harbor for their “nature walk” from the pension in Mindelbau to the next town over, Schlingen, with the dry realities of rural life. While the Advanced Lady proclaims, “In a wood my hair already seems to stir and remember something of its savage origin,” Frau Kellerman deflates this romantic sentiment by calling attention to the walk’s relation to a different discourse—the health discourse of the kur—with her rejoinder, “But speaking literally, there is really nothing better than the air of pine trees for the scalp” (86). In turn, this health discourse, which prompts envy in the patients staying at other pensions—as they “march en masse along the station road,” they meet “continuous parties of ‘cure guests’, who were giving their digestions a quiet airing in the pension gardens, called after us, asked if we were going for a walk, and cried ‘Herr Gott - happy journey’ with immense ill-concealed relish when we mentioned Schlingen” (84)—is recognized as a thoroughly modern and novel, rather than authentically pastoral, activity when the landlady of the Inn of the Golden Stag (where they stop for a rustic meal of sour milk, fresh cream, and bread) curtly explains, “I never walk...when I go to Mindelbau my man drives me—I’ve more important things to do with my legs than walk them through the dust” (89). The landlady’s palpable resentment, in addition to the narrator’s wry observations about the walking party’s gluttony, thus provides a counterpoint to the walking party’s exclamations about the beauty of the rural area, the quality of the fresh food, and, as Herr Erchardt explains, “the simple surroundings of the open air [in which] one shares the same joys—one feels friendship” (90).
The narrator makes much of the walking party’s decision to hire a cart to take them back to Mindelbau, but her observations about modern leisure codes is not limited to unmasking the shallow pastoralism of Frau Kellerman, Herr Erchardt, and the Frau Professor. Though her fellow pensioner Herr Langen, “a tired, pale youth, who was recovering from a nervous breakdown due to much philosophy and little nourishment” (83), also rejects this production of leisure through the positing of a timeless human connection to the earth (he tells the narrator apropos the inn’s landlady and landlord, “I like these people...because they live close to the earth, and therefore despise it” [89-90]), the narrator similarly rejects the critique of “Mother Nature” Herr Langen propounds by endowing nature with the unsavory characteristics of modern capitalism. Herr Langen condemns nature because “she eats that she may spew up and she spews up that she may eat. That is why we, who are forced to eke out an existence at her trampling feet, consider the world mad, and realize the deadly vulgarity of production,” but the narrator dismisses this analysis as a corollary of his being “over-philosophised and underfed” (86)—the conditions, in other words, of his presence there as a kur patient, which makes Herr Langen less a potential confidante for the narrator than another example of the conditions of modern leisure. His decision to relocate from the pension to the Inn of the Golden Stag is functionally identical to the romantic pastoralism he deconstructs, and furthermore, escaping the “deadly vulgarity of production” and “considering the world mad” were certainly by 1911 familiar components in the modern ideology of leisure iterated in advertisements, journalism, and mainstream and highbrow literature. Even his Nietzschean critique of modernity is already enfolded into the cultural logic of modern leisure, already a cliche analogous to Herr Erchardt’s pastoralism and the Frau Professor’s theory of the modern woman.
As a literary device, the leisure space setting works to spectacularize and set into motion a diverse set of attitudes towards work and play, sickness and health, hatred and love, and the affordances and preclusions of modernization. In “The Advanced Lady,” as in Evelyn Waugh’s *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, the spaces of modern leisure repackage the ordinary events of the modern life-cycle into a series of dramatic events—conferred unusual glamor by being temporarily bracketed from the consequential, consecutive narrative logic of *habitus*. For example, Frau Kellerman anticipates that during their walk, “For us there will be a double joy. We shall be able to watch the happiness of these two dear children, Elsa and Fritz.... It is a very strange thing, but whenever I am in the company of newly engaged couples, I blossom” (82). Set in the spa town, a space of modern leisure, Elsa and Fritz’s love becomes a spectacle, another source of pleasure and emotional intensity that becomes visible by taking part in a network of leisure spaces and activities. A critical edge is lent to the narrator’s descriptions of Elsa and Fritz’s romance through its decentering; the narrator positions their relationship as one element among others denoting “leisure” in the eyes of the pension dwellers. Mansfield’s narrator may dismiss the Frau Professor’s novel, with its theory that the modern woman should be devoted to love, as an idea “as old as the hills,” but Mansfield’s own collection of stories is created through isolating and dramatizing the historically novel spatial, social, and temporal rhythms of the *kur*. By juxtaposing, for example, Elsa and Fritz’s meaningless argument as to who loves the other more with Herr Erchardt’s identically structured meaningless argument as to the precise distance between Mindelbau and Schlingen, and by contextualizing these arguments among a series of interrelated representations of the leisure culture that simultaneously shapes and is shaped by the modern spa town, Mansfield not only approaches the aesthetic labor of the novel form that
eluded her during her brief career, but also uncovers the work of leisure—the various discursive, dramatic, and emotional labors that produce subjective leisure-effects and support the material and financial institutions of leisure. *In a German Pension*, like the other works I analyze in this dissertation, creates a novel and culturally influential map of the very leisure spaces that make modernism possible. Unequivocally, the position of modernist literature is that no modern leisure space is outside of fields of power or immune to the forces of modernization that leisure, by its very definition, claims to evade—yet the circulation of explicit and self-reflexive theories of leisure both inside and outside of modernist fiction made the spaces of modern leisure an especially fertile vantage point from which modernists could visualize and critique modernity.
Chapter 6
The Perils of Seagoing Comfort: Joseph Conrad, Evelyn Waugh, and the Metaliner Sublime

The Tonnage of Modernity

“I don’t despair of humanity,” Joseph Conrad proclaims rather dramatically in his editorial in The English Review, “Certain Aspects of the Admirable Inquiry into the Loss of the Titanic” (235). Written hastily in the summer following the White Star liner’s April 1912 sinking, Conrad’s comment seems to offer spiritual uplift for a European and American community left devastated by the sinking of the unsinkable “floating palace”—a term first used, in fact, to describe the Titanic’s sister ship, the 1911 Olympic. Yet Conrad’s attitude is anything but sympathetic or consolatory. Icily blaming the White Star line for the tragedy, he bluntly states, “I refuse to be awed by the size of a tank bigger than any other tank that went afloat to its doom” (234). In demoting the “floating palace” to a “tank,” he sets his editorial apart not only from the reams of elegiac, often melodramatic journalism covering the disaster (Conrad refers to it as “the false, written-up, Drury Lane aspects of that event” [248], whose “white spaces and...big lettering of the headlines have an incongruously festive air to my eyes” [213]) but also from the reverential public discourse surrounding ocean liners during the Edwardian period. This discourse, a visual and linguistic rhetoric, fetishized the sheer mass of the new ships, which grew in size due to technological improvements (such as innovative hull design and increased boiler efficiency) developed by marine engineers in response to intensified competition among both the
shipping companies and the nations subsidizing newbuilding, the creation of new ships, in order to ensure the availability of merchant marine fleets as battleships or troopships in the event of war. Conrad, referring to a specific example of such discourse—the White Star line’s confident boasts regarding the Titanic’s safety before the fourteenth of April, and to their placing full blame on Captain Smith and his officers after the sinking—characterizes the Ismay family and their engineers as “priests of an Oracle which has failed.” Critiquing the Titanic itself, Conrad condemns her as “servant of commercialism,” not the “servant of progress” that the press and White Star publicists made her out to be; furthermore, he dismisses the ship’s exaggerated tonnage as “mere size,” not a praiseworthy technological feat but instead an unhealthy and unnecessary obsession that he compares to elephantiasis (234).

Not only is the White Star line on trial for Conrad, though, for he identifies the Olympic-class ships as a manifestation of what he calls “seaside hotel luxury,” a modern phenomenon characterizing many commercialized modern spaces, not just hotels and liners (234). What is on trial, I argue, is the proliferation and networking of increasingly homogenized leisure spaces whose history and discursive phenomena I have been tracing in this dissertation. During modernity, leisure enters a multitude of private and public spaces in countless territorialized and commercialized manifestation, whether through importation of luxurious or technologically advanced leisure commodities, the inculcation of leisure values and behaviors into specific activities through textual or visual prompts, or the partitioning of space into an intricate network of subspaces catering to specific leisure activities and allocated to specific socioeconomic groups. Leisure thus becomes a spatial fixture and behavioral norm, an expected dimension of human life, whether in the microleisure of fine dining or night-clubbing, or in the macroleisure
of a world tour or weeks spent at a resort. As he protests the conversion of transatlantic crossings from sobering and dangerous encounters with an unpredictable sea to what he calls the “banal luxury” of high-tonnage liners like Cunard’s *Mauretania*, the Compagnie Generale Transatlantique’s *France*, and Hamburg-Amerika’s *Imperator*, Conrad pushes back against this new normal of ubiquitous leisure. Claiming that novel luxurious touches on these new ships were “pushed on to ‘the public’ in the usual course of trade competition,” Conrad suggests that “the public” so often invoked in liner publicity and journalism is not so much accurately portrayed by such discourse as it is formulated or indeed *created* by this discourse.

To judge by the ephemera and journalism that survives today, we can conclude that “the public” is easily bored, difficult to please, and impressed by statistics and “firsts,” like the Atlantic’s first salon, cinema, Turkish bath, American-style bar, or Ritz-Carlton grill room. Conrad’s evident anger at shipping companies scrambling to reproduce the array of modern conveniences found in hotels and city centers should not be dismissed as simple nostalgia for his own seafaring past. When he cries out, “It is inconceivable to think that there are people who can’t spend five days of their life without a suite of apartments, cafes, bands and such-like refined delights” (234-5), he does not accuse first- and second-class passengers of being spoiled and demanding, but rather affirms that modern subjects can live without modern amenities and even suggests that they in fact *should* spend the five- to seven-day crossing in a non-modern, or at least non-capitalist, environment. According to Conrad, taking this short break from modernity is necessary for nothing less than reconnecting to one’s own essential humanity. To explain his announcement, “I don’t despair of mankind,” despite the superfluous and dangerous luxury of the Atlantic liners, he explains why by predicting that “even if by some catastrophic miracle all
ships of every kind were to disappear off the face of the waters, there would be found, before the end of the week, men (millionaires, perhaps) cheerfully putting out to sea in bath-tubs for a fresh start” (235). Conrad implicitly compares this imagined catastrophe to the real one that forms his editorial’s rhetorical occasion, suggesting that the loss of the Titanic should prompt the public to question, loudly and explicitly, the distinctly modern complex linking capitalism, technology, and luxury—a complex, I have argued, most visible in discussions concerning modern leisure spaces.

In another article written around the same time, “Some Reflections on the Loss of the Titanic,” Conrad associates this complex with the over-confident materialism described by Adorno and Horkheimer in their Dialectic of Enlightenment. This confidence, Conrad argues, represents the passengers’ share in the disaster; referring to those who failed to heed the crew’s initial calls to enter the lifeboats, he condemns “people who to the last moment put their trust in mere bigness, in the reckless affirmations of commercial men and mere technicians and in the irresponsible paragraphs of the newspapers booming these ships!” (214). A liner should not be considered a floating hotel—Conrad phrases it “a sort of marine Ritz”—because doing so results in a “false sense of security” for passengers and “false sense of achievement” for the company’s leaders and engineers (223). Ultimately, such confidence invites trouble by boarding not skilled crewmen and cautious passengers, but rather a “casual population...without enough boats, without enough seamen (but with a Parisian cafe and four hundred of poor devils of waiters)” (227). Though he begins his editorials on the Titanic by localizing the tragedy (as he points to White Star line’s irresponsible publicity for their Olympic-class vessels), Conrad expands his critique to the entire modern phenomenon of passenger steamships, particularly due
to what I will describe in this chapter as the shipping industry’s relentless drive to self-mythologize, to create a compelling narrative around the quantitative advances made in shipbuilding. In the following passage, Conrad diagnoses the intense media attention to the luxuries of first-class cabins and public spaces as evidence of modernity’s materialism:

You build a 45,000 ton hotel of thin steel plates to secure the patronage of, say, a couple of thousand rich people (for if it had been for the emigrant trade alone, there would have been no such exaggeration of mere size), you decorate it in the style of the Pharaohs or in the Louis Quinze style—I don’t know which—and to please the aforesaid fatuous handful of individuals, who have more money than they know what to do with, and to the applause of two continents, you launch that mass with 2,000 people on board at twenty-one knots across the sea—a perfect exhibition of the modern blind trust in mere material and appliances. And then this happens. General uproar. The blind trust in material and appliances has received a terrible shock. (218)

Careful not to reproduce the histrionics of contemporary accounts of the tragedy, which he calls “a feverish exploitation of a sensational God-send” (213), Conrad, drily assessing the public’s panic with the simple and deliberately affectless phrase “general uproar,” suggests that the Enlightenment faith in science and engineering, to the exclusion of what Conrad regards as a healthy fear of the sea, meets its ultimate test with tragedies like the Titanic.

Such a test is meant by Conrad not only to avoid another massive transatlantic loss of life; the markedly detached tone of his writing refuses to capitalize rhetorically on the quantitative fact that thousands have died—which would, ironically, reterritorialize around the respect for “mere size” that he regards as responsible for the dangerously casual attitude of the ship’s crew and passengers. Instead, Conrad’s editorials during the summer of 1912 leverage the tragedy as an opportunity to recover what he regards as humanity’s essential optimism, indomitability, and love of adventure, however dangerous or uncomfortable. In his
aforementioned anecdote concerning intrepid millionaires in bath-tubs striking out into the Atlantic, he continues, “We are all like that. This sort of spirit lives in mankind still uncorrupted by so-called refinements, the ingenuity of tradesmen, who look always for something new to sell” (235). Paradoxically, Conrad does indulge in the dramatic rhetoric of liner publicity and journalism by assuming that lessons about humanity under modernity can be learned by investigating the cultural institution of the ocean liner. The present chapter undertakes such a challenge as well, though I read these liners less as a touchstone for a transcendental theory of humanity than as a locus for hypotheses about humanity under modernity. At the same time that the ocean liner, defined here as a transatlantic express passenger steamship, matured as both a material object and cultural construction—from its inception the 1840s as a mail carrier to the ocean liner’s near-extinction in the 1960s in favor of its slightly younger dialectical partner, the cruise ship—became, in a variety of visual and textual sites, a method or shorthand for envisioning or conceiving modernity. Even more than hotels or spas, ocean liners and cruise ships, particularly from the final twenty years of the nineteenth century to the outbreak of World War II, attracted a great amount of attention from politicians, journalists, cartoonists, architects, economists, artists, and writers, creating a vast archive that has received attention from historians, not only including well-known sea historians from the last fifty years (such as Walter Lord and John Maxtone-Graham), but also including a surge in attention in the past decade from social historians such as Lorraine Cons, Douglas Hart, Mark Rennella, Daniel Rodgers, Alexander Verias, and Whitney Walton, and from architectural and design historians such as Philip Dawson, Peter Quartermaine, Bruce Peter, and Anne Wealleans. Considerably fewer scholarly works exist in the fields of art history, cultural studies, and literary criticism; Lara
Feigel and Alexandra Harris’s edited collection, *Modernism on Sea* (2009), for example, focuses on the British seaside, while Cesare Casarino’s *Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis* (2002) depends on historical and economic analyses of naval marine vessels (and in particular on traditional sailing vessels) rather than the technologically advanced and consumer-driven liners and cruisers of the merchant marine.

Such a silence seems unwarranted when one considers the incredible cultural currency enjoyed by liners and cruisers in modernity. In the American context, for example, works about or set on such ships span the century from Mark Twain’s Quaker cruisers in *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) and William Dean Howells’s *The Lady of the Aroostook* (1879) to Anita Loos’s best-selling *Gentleman Prefer Blondes* (1925) and Katherine Anne Porter’s meditation on fascism, her 1962 novel *Ship of Fools*, whose composition spanned nearly three decades. The same thirty years were inundated by apparently endless streams of feature films set on ocean liners and cruise ships, such as *Melody Cruise* (1933), *Mystery Liner* (1934), *Between Two Worlds* (1944), *Luxury Liner* (1948), *Romance on the High Seas* (1948), *Dangerous Crossing* (1953), *The French Line* (1954), *A Night to Remember* (1958), and two paired documentaries, *The Ship That Died* (1938) and *The Ship That Would Not Die* (1945). In England, from the very start of regularly scheduled transatlantic steamship service (established during the 1840s by the British Cunard Line and the American Collins Line), writers played a central role in determining the public face of crossing and cruising, from Charles Dickens’ infamous (and infamously unsympathetic) 1842 portrait of the first Cunarder, the crowded and dirty but reliable paddle-steamer *Britannia* and W. M. Thackeray’s flattering portrait of one of the first British cruises to the East, a Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company cruise that he—in return for free passage
—immortalized in Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Cairo (1846). Significantly, his journey is often cited as the first true cruise specifically because of Thackeray’s presence there, as the P&O Company gently suggested that he organize social life onboard, thereby making Thackeray the world’s first cruise director. Bram Stoker, a fan of Cunard’s Etruria, contributed to journalism covering White Star line’s favored shipbuilder, Belfast’s Harland & Wolff, around the time he was drafting two popular novels that featured ocean liners, The Man (1905) and Lady Athlyne (1908). Canonical modernists place heavy plot burdens on the liners, mentioning them and other modern vessels in association with death and illicit romance, from Virginia Woolf’s doomed Rachel Vinrace, whose troubles and, ultimately, death in The Voyage Out (1915) begin with Richard Dalloway’s unwelcome kiss on a transatlantic crossing, to Ford Madox Ford’s The Good Soldier (1914), which features not only Edward Ashburnham’s shipboard romance with Maisie Maidan, but also places Nancy Rufford on a liner when she sends the fatal telegram to Edward and when she loses her mind, just as E. M. Forster’s A Passage to India (1924), in addition to the metaphorical burden implied by the title, depicts Mrs. Moore’s death as a result of the stress of crossing from India to Europe. In addition, two of Agatha Christie’s Poirot stories—“The Million Dollar Bond” (1924) and Death on the Nile (1937)—represent popular versions of these negative sets of modernist associations with liners, just as Gerard Manley Hopkins’ “The Wreck of the Deutschland” (an early example of his innovative sprung rhythm) uses the liner as a poetic occasion to reflect on death and losing faith, and just as Vita Sackville-West’s final work, No Signposts in the Sea (1961), features the death of its protagonist at sea. Similarly, two modernist texts work through the conceit that all liner passengers are, indeed, dead and the ships themselves are purgatory: Rudyard Kipling’s dialogue “The Pleasure Cruise,” a plea in 1933, the
fifteenth anniversary of Armistice Day, for Britain to rearm, and Sutton Vane’s well-received play *Outward Bound* (1923), twice made into a successful film (in 1930 and in 1944). A significant percentage of Evelyn Waugh’s fiction and non-fiction works also feature liners and cruisers (and not always in tandem with death or crime), particularly his travel narrative *Labels* (written in return for which, like Thackeray, he was given free passage) and his novels *A Handful of Dust* (1934), *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), and *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957).

Though his representations of ships never reached the high praise given to the *Queen Mary* in the work of poet laureate John Masefield, Waugh’s more nuanced assessment of modern steamships places him in good company with modernist painters and architects contributing to or commenting on liners and cruisers. Le Corbusier, as I discuss below, took inspiration from the clean lines of the *Aquitania*, although Transat (French line) ships largely did not follow British shipbuilding style but rather played central roles in popularizing various modern avant-garde aesthetics, such as Art Nouveau (the *France*, 1910), minimalism (the *Ile de France*, 1926), and Art Deco (the *Normandie*, 1932). In England, both Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, for example, in addition to numerous Royal Academicians, contributed art for the *Queen Mary*, and Vorticist Edward Wadsworth supervised the painting of cubist “dazzle-ships” camouflage adopted in World War I to confuse submarine operators as to the size, speed, direction, and location of battle- and troopships. while Polish Bauhaus student Julian Krupa (perhaps inspired by his 1938 voyage to the United States fleeing an increasingly inhospitable Germany) designed a technofuturist liner for the science fiction magazine *Amazing Stories* in February 1939 (Fig. 1). Krupa, a popular illustrator for the magazine, regularly contributing features such as “Cities of Tomorrow” or illustrations of hypothetical human civilizations on Mars or the Moon, was not
alone in adapting methods of illustrating ocean liners for the purposes of techno-futurism; a few months later, in the same magazine, the three-dimensional “cutaway” style (which I will show Fig 1. Back cover of *Amazing Stories* (February 1939). Illustration by Julian Krupa anticipates the design of jumbo jets even as it borrows from a century of ocean liner diagrams and still addresses fears associated with the *Titanic* disaster of 1912 (“unsinkable”). “Completely independent of outside conditions,” the future ocean liner’s attempt to neutralize the force of the sea and make it invisible to passengers not only picks up on a common trope in ocean liner publicity and journalism, but also serves as a template for Krupa’s later illustrations of human settlements in space. For all its fanciful creativity, many of the features of this “future” liner were already in place by 1939.

developed decades before in illustrated newspapers and in promotional materials to convey the unprecedented scale of ocean liners) was used to depict future airplanes, space stations, and even underwater societies. Yet when Krupa predicts in “The Future Ocean Liner” that “the giant ship will be a complete world in all as it skims the ocean,” his statement, despite its claim to prophesy, echoes a quite common sentiment promulgated by the major lines and in mass newspapers and high-brow journals alike since the turn of the century. What is remarkable, then,
about this “science fiction” account of the ocean liner is that for all its futurity, the illustration reproduces the rhetoric and amenities of contemporaneous ships—suggesting that part of the ocean liner’s public appeal was its ability, like modernist aesthetics itself, to materialize “the new” in the present, or to borrow a common image from descriptions of steamship silhouettes, to appear to be in movement, making forward progress, even while floating at anchor.\(^{83}\)

I invoke Krupa here to anticipate my claim in this chapter that the ocean liner not only represented the height of novelty, technical progress, and even futurity in the present, but also to show that during the era of high modernism, the design of ocean liners, both exteriors and interiors, was, in short, an intensely public matter of both aesthetics and engineering. In the ocean liner’s defiance of shipbuilding tradition, Conrad finds a dangerous refusal to face the (abiding) realities of the harsh Atlantic, while Krupa finds a source of optimism in making it new; in the public’s obsession with the scale and design of the ships, Conrad sees a worrisome modern materialism responsible for transatlantic tragedies, Krupa sees direct inspiration for future civilizations. The tension between Conrad and Krupa’s responses to the ocean liners should not be regarded as a dual tension characterizing the horizon of public and literary discourse about the liners in the era of modernism. Rather, the fact that ocean liners should appeal to divergent arguments about progress, as well as contribute to and recapitulate the history of modern visual art, is representative of the central, or even overdetermined, significance of the ocean liner in public discourse in the century before World War II. Just as Hester Blum opens her recent “The Prospect of Oceanic Studies” with the cautionary lesson, “The sea is not a

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\(^{83}\) Such descriptions are used in particular for iconic ocean liners like the Normandie and Queen Mary, whose three funnels apiece sported a jaunty “rake,” or angle moving upward from stern to bow (as if the funnels were leaning backward, thrust backward by the ship’s speed), and whose hull, high above the waterline, featured a white line similarly angled upwards as it met the prow.
metaphor” (770), so does my argument wish to avoid indulging in the early twentieth-century tendency to use conceits when speaking of these ships. Rather, I ask how and why such a metaphorics existed; further, through which cultural media did such relations circulate; and finally, how does this circulation relate to modernist art and literature. Often, mainstream histories of the liners (such as those by Walter Lord, Bill Miller, and John Maxtone-Graham) take this discourse for granted; while admirably conveying the passionate or obsessive interest that such liners and cruisers evoked, they do not relate this public interest to larger questions of social and cultural history, and while many give a comprehensive account of the literary works that feature the steamships, they do not ask what role the liners play in the text. (I have similarly argued in Chapters Four and Five that literary scholarship about hotel fiction often positions the hotel-as-microcosm trope as the product of a critical and interpretive move made by contemporary scholars, while I maintain that this trope’s ubiquity during the era of literary modernism deserves to be studied as an interesting discursive phenomenon in itself.) While works by art, architectural, and social historians vividly recreate the social and material environment of the ship, I wish to contribute to such accounts not only by contextualizing these environments within a larger social history of modernity, but also by considering the works of literature that illuminate the uses to which liners were put in modernity. In terms of literary criticism, the following chapter will (in addition to demonstrating the role that ocean liner publicity and journalism played in creating a popular visual representation of capitalist modernity) offer a reading of Vita Sackville-West’s *No Signposts in the Sea* to argue that the recent critical interest in “transnational modernism” will remain incomplete without
consideration of the literal means through which the transnational existed: the ships that enabled and conditioned the cosmopolitan demographic and aesthetic flows so central to modernism.

But in the present chapter, before considering the significance of these ships for the future of modernist criticism, I will establish the broader cultural weight afforded to the liners in public discourse in the century before World War II. As a snapshot glance into these meanings, I analyze the visual and textual literature around one specific ship—Cunard’s most visually ambitious liner, the *Queen Mary* (1936). While the verbal rhetoric treats the ship as a laboratory for or referendum on innovative socio-spatial arrangements later common in other modern public and private spaces, the large number of artworks commissioned for the ship, drawing from astonishing array of artistic themes, styles, and media, gives the ship’s interior the self-reflexivity that scholars typically associate with postmodern space. Much of this self-reflexive imagery emphasizes the *Queen Mary*’s position in global maritime history (a pedigree providing a comforting counterpoint to the aggressive rhetoric of modernity and novelty that characterizes descriptions of the ship’s design). In addition, as technological innovations and deliberate design decisions tended to insulate passengers from the sea, the visual rhetoric of the ship’s interior compensated by creating what I refer to as the “metaliner sublime,” a relentlessly self-mythologizing nostalgia that attempted to restore the affective intensity of, but not the danger of, an adventurous sea-voyage. In the next section, I consider Evelyn Waugh’s career-long interest in cruise ships as evidence of the many literary and rhetorical uses to which a steamship could be put in modernity. While I start by glancing at his early works, which stage the tension between the cruise ship’s reputation for open-ended romance and relaxation and the ships’ participation in capitalist regimes of rationalization, cross-promotion, and mass production, I examine his late
autobiographical novel *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957), which identifies the shipboard environment as, literally, an incitement to insanity in the way that it arranges (yet ultimately fails to control) the new technologies of communication and mass media. Finally, I end by with an extended reading of *Brideshead Revisited* (1944), a novel that comically and unsentimentally unpacks the complex spatial politics of snobbery and romance aboard the luxury ocean liner. By satirizing the spatial determinism that encourages and enables Charles Ryder’s pathetic yet cliched romance with Julia Mottram aboard the *Queen Mary*, Waugh reveals that the ocean liner was above all a highly scripted or *narrativized* space, as much a product of discursive patterns, affordances, and constraints as it is a product of marine engineering.

**The Queen Mary’s Metaliner Sublime**

In contrast to contemporary historical works about ocean liners, which are often expansive and minutely detailed, I would like to offer a brief history of the liner—a brevity that makes visible a certain disappearance of the maritime. The term “liner,” for example, refers to the regular schedule such ships maintained rather than to choosing ports of call and sailing dates according to local weather conditions, cargo availability, and the like; the term emphasizes that such vessels were above all efficient means to reach a destination. When regular transatlantic steamship travel was established in the 1840s (first introduced with the *Britannic*, when Canadian Samuel Cunard moved to Liverpool to land the British mail contract), its discomfort was legendary, its “express” label was dubious (taking, on an easy crossing, about two weeks), and its reliability never taken for granted. With fierce competition coming from the American Collins Line and German Hamburg-Amerika Line in the 1840s, and then from North-Germany Lloyd in the 1850s, and the French Compagnie General Transatlantic in the 1860s, and the Holland America Line in the 1870s, the first fifty years of steamship travel were characterized by
massive leaps in technology that improved the speed, size, and comfort of ocean liners. In terms of design, these changes meant an increase in the size, number, and luxury of public rooms, which blossomed from a single “saloon” serving for social and dining purposes alike, to an astonishing array of specialized spaces by the turn of the century: dining rooms, lounges, smoking rooms, music rooms, reading and writing rooms, ladies’ lounges, American bars, glassed-in promenade decks that served as all-weather inside/outside lounging space, and verandas or cafes left partially open to the sea (depending on weather on the notoriously chilly and misty North Atlantic). With such specialization came the phrase “floating hotel,” which indicated that the luxury of the large liners is intimately connected to what I will refer to as the “turning-inward” of ship spaces: a repression of the sea through the marginalization of the working areas of the ship (including those devoted to cargo such as mail); the disguising of machinery and ventilation shafts, the increase of non-sailing ship employees (stewards, waiters, cooks, bartenders, librarians, and others); the replacement of major deck “arteries” for navigating the ship with a network of interior hallways, including the creation of two- or three-story “grand staircases” meant to provide an interior hub for passenger movement but also providing its own unique social space as well; the creation of multi-storied lounge and dining rooms (complete with glass domes) meant to reproduce an effect of being in the open air or in a large hotel on land; and—of course—the strict segregation of passenger classes, which (by necessitating separate sets of staircases and hallways) fragmented the ship as spatial, social, and economic whole, obscuring the liner’s functional multiplicity. Cruising, a novelty in the 1840s when Thackeray voyaged to the Near East, had become more familiar by the turn of the century, when shipping magnates realized they could continue to sell passage during the winter months when the North Atlantic was considered dangerously impassable. As the size of the ships increased,
governments (especially Germany, France, and England) during the Edwardian era began subsidizing the ships, and during the Great Depression, drastically decreased passenger traffic put some lines out of business (such as the Red Star Line) and forced rival companies to merge (like Cunard and White Star in 1933 and multiple Italian companies to make the Italian Line in 1932). Technological advances, like oil-burning furnaces, advanced turbines and propulsion systems, and better stabilizing equipment, further minimized or eliminated the material signs of the ship’s identity as both boat and machine, while the growing availability of shipboard amenities—deck games, Turkish baths and spas, lectures, bars and cafes, barbershops and salons, and even shopping malls (beginning with the Queen Mary in 1936)—strove to turn the passenger experience into a leisure event or vacation unto itself. In the 1960s, when airplanes surpassed liners as the most popular transatlantic transportation, more lines went bankrupt or merged (Hamburg-Amerika and North German Lloyd in the 1970s, for example), while others survived by transitioning to cruise-only service. Crossing, a practical means of transportation acknowledging the harsh realities of the sea as an obstacle in the way of a Grand Tour, a business meeting, or emigration, was replaced by cruising, a total escape into luxury, exoticism, and leisure that renders the sea into an aesthetic object that passengers, according to whim, may ignore or admire. Even today, Cunard, despite its unprofitability, insists on maintaining regular transatlantic service on one of its ships, the Queen Mary 2. But even Cunard by the 1950s relied heavily on its motto “Getting There Is Half the Fun,” and with the near-total replacement of crossing by cruising—my brief history of the “turning inward” of ship is complete.

It is not novel or controversial to acknowledge this effective disappearance of the sea as maritime technology improved and as crossing was replaced by cruising, and consequently, my account both draws on and harmonizes with recent works by naval, social, and architectural
historians. Yet I do believe, first, that my grouping of both social and spatial tendencies to suppress the sea is a novel strategy that emphasizes that the turning-inward was a social phenomenon rather than merely a product of naval architecture alone, and second, that the brevity of my account allows this suppression of the maritime to come into sharper focus than that afforded by the longer histories. My historicization of the crossing to cruising transformation allows me to read, as the following analysis of the interiors of the Queen Mary is meant to demonstrate, the “golden age” of ocean liners (typically seen as between 1900-1940) as a transitional phase between cruising and crossing in which liner decoration and shipboard ephemera explicitly thematized and performed the liner’s inward turn. Furthermore, many of the existing liner histories, I argue, overemphasize the role of particular naval architects, company managers, or technological advances, often to the detriment of considering the social, discursive, and experiential dimensions of these changes. Although the following chapter (“The Uses to Which a Ship Is Put”) addresses the wider public discourse of the liners, the following consideration of the Queen Mary is meant to illuminate the self-mythologizing visual rhetoric that passengers would have encountered while onboard ship.

The first image I would like to investigate from the Queen Mary is perhaps one of the most often reproduced (though never, to my knowledge, analyzed or discussed as a cultural or symbolic object) images from the golden age of ocean liners—the massive map that served as the focal point of the main dining room (Fig 2.).

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84 This basic historical shift from crossing to cruising is well-documented in books like John Maxtone-Graham’s Crossing and Cruising and Lorraine Coons and Alexander Varias’s Tourist Third Class: Steamship Travel in the Interwar Years. Discussions of this shift specifically in terms of passenger accommodations and public spaces can be found in a few recent works of architectural history, such as Anne Wealleans’ Designing Liners: A History of Interior Design Afloat, Peter Quartermaine and Bruce Peter’s Cruise: Identity, Design, and Culture, and Philip Dawson’s The Liner: Retrospective and Renaissance.
Fig. 2. Diners were graphically assured of their location and time in the placeless cavern of the *Queen Mary*’s windowless dining room by a clock and by a crystal model of the ship, connected to the bridge above, that moved along the map to indicate where the ship was. (Courtesy: National Maritime Museum, UK)

The map superimposes, with a confusing multiplicity of references to scale and dimensionality, a variety of methods of telling one’s position at sea: a clock, lines of latitude and longitude, a traditional map of political boundaries, a raised-relief map, a city-scape, and a star chart. The ambiguity of simultaneous moon- and sunrises is unsuccessfully clarified by the twelve-hour clock, made irrelevant by the ship’s movement (its hands were artificially slowed on the twenty-five hour days of westbound crossings and sped up on the twenty-three hour days of eastbound crossings). With its moving, electrically lit, three-dimensional crystal miniature of the *Queen Mary* moving through a hybrid medium (is it sky? is it sea?) and cleverly leaving the two-dimensional painted airplanes in the dust, the map claims to provide information yet only achieves aestheticizing the map form itself. The *Queen Mary* map’s incorporation of conflicting
map styles draws a fantasy space—an impossible vision—combining a stylistic minimalism (by simplifying the features of each map component) with a phenomenological maximalism (by creating a cumulative aesthetic effect). In doing so, this map resembles the topological map of the London Tube, for example, which also stylizes geographical features and reduces the amount of information to a minimum. As David L. Pike has argued in regard to Harry Beck’s famous map of the Tube, such representations of novel modern spaces “codified a particularly modernist conception of space” because it is “visually pleasing” yet “bear[s] little or no relation to the experiential or the physical metropolis of London” (101), or, in our case, of the ship’s position in the Atlantic. Just as Beck’s map of the Tube works not by positioning passengers in relation to the physical landscape outside the Tube, so too does the Queen Mary map creates an inward-looking, self-referential representation. But while the Tube map ultimately creates a rationalized and practical vision of the Underground, the dining room map is an undisguisedly dreamlike and romantic image designed not to move bodies efficiently across space; although the movement of the crystal model (driven, like the liner itself, from the bridge) testifies to the accuracy of the map, the model itself glides across an imaginary, romantic space. Ultimately, although the map appears to make claims for veracity with its many methods of measuring time and space (clock, latitude, longitude, sun and moon), this accuracy refers less to the “outside” world than to the imagined and highly symbolic landscape of the map itself—another example of the turning-inward of the modern ocean liner. The world depicted on the map may invoke traditional modes of seafaring—of ascertaining one’s position at sea, determining which direction to take, and keeping track of the time—but it treats them as aesthetic objects rather than as necessary and

functional tools. Indeed, with its invocation of medieval map-making conventions (including the lack of consistent perspective, the textural appearance of the waves, and the combination of two- and three-dimensional figures), the map historicizes or dates these old methods of seafaring. In this dining room, then, maritime history becomes a mythology, and “placing” oneself becomes a matter of positioning oneself among the symbols of this mythology—rearranged, of course, to position the Queen Mary at its center.

While the Queen Mary dining room map may seem to resist passengers’ attempts to locate themselves temporally and geographically (except in terms of their position within the ship itself), other works of art in the other first-class dining hall, the Restaurant, position the ship in a history of human transportation. Anodized aluminum friezes by Maurice Lambert, for example, position the ship within a human history of transportation, suggesting that by actualizing the power of the centaur and pegasus in the modern creations of airplane, train, and liner, modern British liners fulfill the promises of ancient Greek mythology (Fig. 3), just as a colorful Cunard menu cover from this period, with its assemblage of famous ship’s figureheads from global maritime history, recaptures the excitement of seafaring (Fig. 4). The dragons, Roman centurions, mounted British calvary officers, lions, cherubs, and mermaids featured on the menu cover, carefully labelled (in self-consciously “olde” calligraphy) with the ship’s name and year of construction, conjure the violence, mystery, and romance of seafaring that the merchant marine had, in the name of passenger safety and reliability, spent so much time and attention in eradicating. What such images show, I argue, that how the dangers of crossing return, reified, as an aesthetic trope on board the safest and most technically advanced of steamships. By alluding to maritime years past, the artworks in the Queen Mary counter the suppression of the sea that I have discussed above, not only to establish Cunard’s place in a proud history of human
maritime achievement but also to recapture the affective intensities of maritime adventure. This nostalgia, the uncanny return of the repressed Atlantic, is also seen in carvings by Bainbridge Copnall, including an ambiguous portrait of what might be an episode of European maritime warfare or a shipyard scene depicting the fitting-out of a new ship (Fig. 5). In Copnall’s highly stylized carving, a gentleman and lady leisurely watching the battle (or fitting-out) serve as doubles for the leisured passengers themselves, looking upon this warfare (or ship-building) scene as an ornament for the ship’s famous, costly, and much-publicized veneer panelling.
Fig. 4. A menu cover whose image was reproduced widely in Cunard publicity, including the company magazine.
The ambiguity of the scene interestingly conflates the creation of ships with the violence of maritime warfare—and with the imperialist and colonial ventures that depended on naval and marine technology. It is also significant that the medium of this artwork (the wood veneers) makes use of the ship’s impressive variety of woods used (over a hundred, in fact), many of which were extracted from Britain’s colonial domains. At the same time that this triumphalist colonialism appears as an element of the past—a vaguely fifteenth- or sixteenth-century scene (rather than, for example, an image from the British Raj in the 1930s)—the very medium of the artwork attests quietly to the contemporaneity of imperialism. The serene style of the carving, with its creamy monochrome coloring, rows of parallel curved lines, and repetitive shapes (note, for example, the identical workmen below the larger ship and the pile of cannonballs), visually tames the violent scene, making it another example of the neutralization and aestheticization of maritime history, that positions the ocean liner as the dialectical partner through which it is simultaneously negated, transcended, and preserved.
Fig. 6. This striking menu departs from the genteel paintings of countrysides, gardens, and English tourist sites normally commissioned by Cunard for use on its menus. (Courtesy Cunard Archives, University of Liverpool.)
However ambiguous Copnall’s carving might be, another Cunard menu from the era (Fig. 6) is much less so: the head of a sneering pirate floating free on a plain cream background. The bold primary colors of the pirate’s bandanna, highlighted by his unexpectedly rosy cheeks, coordinate with Cunard White Star logo at the bottom of the menu, does do the flashes of gold in his earring and hat. Faced at luncheon with the eerie apparition of an shifty-looking pirate, the passenger is not meant to feel fear, but rather, in the comfort and safety of a Cunarder, to enjoy the Kantian sublime in response to the striking portrait of a pirate they would never encounter. The chiseled lines of the pirate’s wrinkled face finish the austerity and simplicity of the total design—unlike another menu cover from the same period, “An Old Sussex Garden” (Fig. 7), with its cozily indeterminate lines and its pastel shades of a flowers and thatched roof blending soothingly with the colors of the surrounding trees and bowers. Unlike many other images and artworks to be found in the Queen Mary, the vista of the painting is rambling rather than direct, drawing the eye inward and inside the hut, giving the effect of an arrival rather than a departure, or at least an invitation to ramble along the paths of the private garden. This inward-looking vista is a clue, I argue, to the image’s relationship to the transatlantic voyage. Rather than merely constituting a nostalgic look into a pastoral British past, “An Old Sussex Garden” speaks to the Americans on eastbound crossings who pack “tourist” class (Cunard’s replacement for “steerage” or “third class”). As a subtle suggestion to tour the English countryside, the menu plays a role in the increasingly homogenous and interdependent network of leisure spaces in the creation of the modern tourist industry (a process I describe in Chapter Three). Consequently, even though the menu appears to be a simple exercise in crowd-pleasing prettiness and uncritical nostalgia, this appearance is only a superficial impression: this territorialization of nostalgia as a local attribute
of British spaces, delivered to a captive audience of passengers largely restricted to the efficient, hygienic, and modernized interior spaces of the liner, should be regarded as a sophisticated and very modern marketing technique. Other menu covers, for example, similarly featured popular British tourist destinations, including Shakespeare’s birthplace and Spaniards Inn, the Hampstead pub made famous by Charles Dickens’s *The Pickwick Papers*. These suggestions would often be reiterated in other company-produced materials made available to passengers, including luggage tags, brochures for future cruises, and limited-edition guidebooks to various destinations—mostly tourist sites in the British Isles but increasingly including “exotic” non-Western locales. Such cross-promotion was particularly evident in the Tourist public rooms, such as the Main Lounge, decorated with Japonism-inflected murals and paintings by Margot Gilbert (Fig. 8).
First-class spaces (called “cabin class” on the Queen Mary, much to the chagrin of other lines who disliked the confusion it created among passengers) were similarly decorated with images from the modern leisure industry. A Kenneth Shoesmith painting in the Cabin drawing room, for example, depicts an idyllic morning in Egypt, with the sails of traditional _dahabiyyas_ casting an unexpectedly modern, Art Deco-style background for European visitors relaxing in the shade in attractive but culturally appropriate resort wear as Egyptians labor around them, selling flowers and carrying oranges (Fig. 9). The scene is not one that the _Queen Mary_, a consummate liner, could enable; built for the cold, rough North Atlantic, she left cruising to Cunard’s smaller,
brighter ships, structured around maximizing exposure to the sun and fresh breezes. Like the menu covers, then, this Kenneth Shoesmith painting double as both decoration and publicity material. Combining the soft coloring of “An Old Sussex Garden,” with the delicate veining of the ship’s veneer panelling, while eschewing the confrontational dynamics of the pirate menu by denying viewers the faces of the (presumably non-white) non-tourists in the tableau, this painting, like Copnall’s carving, adapts the imagery of imperialism but attempts to neutralize its

![Image of Kenneth Shoesmith painting](image_url)

Fig. 9. This Kenneth Shoesmith painting was placed above the fireplace in the Queen Mary’s Cabin Drawing Room. Though the painting depicts Europeans on a holiday to North Africa, Cunard would have dedicated their smaller ships to cruising, only using the flagship for “sun cruises” during the coldest months of winter.
Shoesmith and Gilbert were not alone among the three dozen artists creating works for the ship in thematizing tourism. Interspersed with images of tourist destinations of a great number of countries on all continents, the walls of the Queen Mary, in addition the decorated ephemera slid each morning underneath cabin doors and the guidebooks available for purchase at shipboard bookstalls, recall the steamship diaries popular by the turn of the century, whose blank pages for passenger entries are interspersed with valuable information about steamship companies, voyage etiquette, currency exchange, hotels in major port cities, transportation for foreigners, tourist destinations in the countries served by the lines (galleries, famous writers’ homes, quaint villages, cathedrals, natural landmarks, and the like). The ship’s self-mythologizing, in other words, refers not only to the history of seamanship but also to the spaces of modern leisure—a process thematized by Laura Knight (Fig. 10) and Vanessa Bell (Fig. 11). Knight’s behind-the-scenes glimpse of circus performers, like Shoesmith with his two Egyptians, depicts the labor of leisure, although unlike Shoesmith, Knight positions the painting’s audience as another in the ranks of circus performers. Because Knight’s painting was hung in a private dining room adjacent to the hustle and noise of the large restaurant, this positioning of the viewers as behind the stage at a circus is particularly apt. Hung on a wall shared with the dining room, the painting could be in fact a window leading to the next room, which heightens the private diner’s sense of exclusivity as it characterizes the restaurant’s activity as, literally, a circus. Yet the painting also suggests that the viewer may be another circus performer waiting in the wings—a playfulness also present in the pirate-themed menu, as the menu’s presence in the dining room, by reproducing hundreds of pirate heads among the elegant linens and silver,
provides a glimpse of tongue-in-cheek maritime humor. While enjoying the ship’s best food, china, wine, and waiters in the midst of an ultra-exclusive enclave—a private nook providing a refuge from the first class spaces (which themselves create an enclave protecting these passengers from second- and tourist-class passengers)—these diners are presented, perversely, with an image of mainstream mass leisure, complete with dirt, garish colors, and images of labor. And insofar as the perspective interpellates the diners as circus performers, the painting tells an unsavory truth: that the creme de la creme parading in their finery in the hallways, staircases, cabins, decks, and public spaces of Cunard’s luxurious flagship play an integral role in creating and performing the liner’s glamorous image. Still, Knight’s painting suggests that private-room

![Fig. 10. Painting by Laura Knight in a private dining room. (Courtesy: National Maritime Museum, UK).](image-url)
diners—certainly among the most wealthy, attractive, and fashionable passengers—may enjoy a period of rest from the circus, even if only for the duration of their meal.

Similarly, Bell’s painting, with its margin of brown curtain, sets up a play on spatial boundaries that presents an implicit question to the viewer: would you like to stay in or go out? The viewer of Bell’s painting—also hung in a private dining room adjacent to the large restaurant—is also positioned at the boundary between the hush of private space and the action and light of public space. In addition, her curious use of a domestic interior as a foreground for a depiction of a public park unexpectedly combines the idiom of a formal still-life with that of an informal Impressionist “slice of life” in a sunny public leisure space. This effect is at its height

Fig. 11. The painting Vanessa Bell contributed to the Queen Mary, used for a private dining room.
where the vase of exotic flowers inside is foregrounded against the trees outside, providing a
contrast that is not, perhaps, enough of a contrast, as the vista of beautifully manicured trees
“outside” is just as much a polished product of human cultivation and arrangement as the vase of
flowers. Both Knight’s and Bell’s paintings, with their vistas (unlike “An Old Sussex Garden”)
pointed directly towards the large restaurant its viewers are shunning, present alternative portraits
of leisure that complement the viewer’s leisure experience of private fine dining. Just as the
passengers enjoy the rare foods and wines brought in by their waiters, so too, with special access
to paintings by artists known in the public press to be avant-garde, do they enjoy rare art, too. In
doing so, the two paintings not only provide an unusual meditation on the spatial logic of leisure,
but also provide meta-commentary on the ship’s sociospatial organization, therefore playing a
key role in the Queen Mary’s self-mythologizing visual rhetoric.

Though Bell and Knight’s paintings were visible only to the most wealthy or well-
connected passengers in first class, the Queen Mary’s aesthetics of leisure was not entirely
confined to first class spaces. The tourist class (third class) passengers enjoyed lovely marquetry
work depicting garden vistas as well (Fig. 12), as well as a pool filled with unusual back-lit green
glass engravings of fish swimming among deep-sea flora—another moment of the aesthetic
uncanny, another return of the repressed sea in that passengers (barring disaster), though floating
on the Atlantic, only had access to fish in these artificial manifestations. Nonetheless, the most
prestigious works of art, as well as the ones considered to be more challenging or avant-garde,
were, without doubt, reserved for first-class spaces. Despite the range and number of artists
contributing works for the ship, I would hesitate to make claims for the art of the Queen Mary
that would rival modernist scholarship’s assessment of the futurist and other modernist artworks
of the London Underground. Michael Saler, for example, somewhat grandly claims that “the London Underground was consciously designed to be a Wagnerian Gesamtkunstwerk, a union of the arts that would consolidate a public divided by industrialism and materialism, and provide a new source of spirituality in an increasingly secular age” (113), and I cannot quite create an ocean liner equivalent for David Ashford’s exhausting and impressive list of canonical modernist works about the Tube. After all, Cunard’s close control over the art commissioned for their ships certainly limited the range of works found aboard; Duncan Grant, in fact, was commissioned to create murals, carpets, textiles, and curtains for the Queen Mary, but, as biographer Frances Spalding recounts, the ship architect explained that Cunard’s directors “felt that too high a
proportion of the murals would appeal to a limited coterie interested in the development of modern painting, and that this condition must be changed to provide these pictures with wider general appeal” (qtd. in *Duncan Grant* 337). Vanessa Bell, too, encountered difficulties with her own *Queen Mary* commissions because, as Spalding explains, “the Roman Catholic authorities had found her designs offensive” (*Vanessa Bell* 275).

Cunard was not, it must be admitted, interested in becoming a patron of modernism or creating a nourishing environment for artistic experimentation, but rather in capitalizing off Bell’s and Duncan’s high public visibility at the time (1935)—assuming, oddly, that the public would be pleased with seeing high modernist names on press releases but not high modernist works in the *Queen Mary*.

So much, it seems, for the avant-garde on the cruise ship. Yet, taken as a whole, the network of images on the ocean liner both spectacularize and effect a fascinating and powerful cultural transformation that reworks European maritime history, modern leisure institutions, and shipboard spatial idiosyncrasies into the interweaving elements of a *meta-liner*, a self-mythologizing, endlessly self-referential leisure environment. The “inward turn” of the ocean liner and cruise ship, a physical and visual suppression of the sea purchased through technological innovations and the fracturing and individuation of shipboard space, is marked by its other: a distinctive aesthetic style consisting of a playful and self-reflexive—but also highly profitable—mythology that compensates for the ship’s paradoxical lack of maritime flavor. In terms of aesthetic production, this ubiquitous visual rhetoric performs a kind of cultural work very similar to the value David Ashford finds in futurist art in the London Tube. Ashford argues that these underground artworks display a

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86 Frances Spalding gives a longer account of Grant’s involvement with the *Queen Mary* in her biography (336-344). For more about Vanessa Bell’s own difficulties in dealing with the “artistic differences” between her taste and the taste of Cunard’s directors, see Spalding’s biography of her (271-276).
commitment to refashioning the non-places of modernity on a pattern, like that of their continental counterparts, that would impose order on the modern age, but which would preserve that spirit of euphoric reverie that is missing from the schemes of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe....transforming this transport system into...an optical instrument for observing the capital that serves to heighten, rather than marginalize, our imaginative and emotional engagement with the space; realizing that experience of the city that the Vorticists had sought to capture and refine in their art. (737, 762)

My next chapter will address the extent to which the visual rhetoric of the liner could “impose order on the modern age,” and it will also broach the question of the liner’s relation to the modern architecture of Le Corbusier. For now, I conclude my discussion of the Queen Mary’s interior with a look at its stunning Art Deco bar (Fig. 13). Built around a series of concentric semi-circles, the room’s pivot is the bartender, the point of the imaginary circle the room circumscribes, its outer limit is a ring of windows giving out on a forward view of the Atlantic (seen in Fig. 14), and in between are many interior rings: the bar (subdivided into a thicker ring of marble and thinner ring of aluminum); a ring of circular barstools; a ring of circular tables (with circular designs carved into them); an interior perimeter lined with massive pillar lamps designed to look like the ship’s three funnels; another ring of circular tables (with perfectly circular lamps); and finally, a ring of cocktail tables with barstools boasting the ocean view. This outer circumference traces exactly the perimeter of the Queen Mary’s superstructure, making the bar the same size and shape of the bridge and ensuring that one of the Queen Mary’s most distinguishing marks—the shape of the superstructure—is in fact the very principle of design that structures the bar. This system of rings draws the eyes outward to the sea, but a system of divots in the concentric circles woven in to the carpet (seen in Fig. 13) brings the eye back toward the bartender, behind whose shoulders are drawn the paired murals of ocean liners.
labeled “Frolic” and “Foam,” which generate a pattern of foam reminiscent of champagne. The
eyes are here

drawn, finally, upward, where they meet a mural of revelers—revelers whose clothes and
demeanor match those of middle-class clerks and aging wives in addition to glamorous sailors,
flappers, and swanks. Another self-mythologizing series of artworks, these murals contribute to
the Observation Bar’s playful atmosphere. The bar is hall of mirrors—made of highly reflective
art deco materials, meta-liner murals, and circular patterns of furniture reflecting the visual
patterns made by the interplay of ship, bartenders, and passengers—that not only epitomizes the
Queen Mary’s self-reflexive visual rhetoric, but also creates another novel and aesthetically compelling leisure space in doing so.

Fig. 14. Second view of the bar, with its outer ring of sea-facing windows visible.

Evelyn Waugh and the Stella Polaris

Evelyn Waugh, an inveterate cruiser, provides another example of the cruise ship's central cultural and discursive position during the interwar and post-WWII years. Like Thackeray and Twain before him and like Frank Conroy and David Foster Wallace after him, he was given a free cruise in return for favorable publicity for the Norwegian vessel Stella Polaris, which he accomplished through his book of travel writing, Labels: A Mediterranean Journey, complete with illustrations by Waugh himself. Published in 1930, its frontispiece is a pastiche of the Queen Mary’s first class dining room map, a geographically nonsensical rendering of a stormy England lying directly north of an east-west strait connecting the Pyramids with Algiers, through which a
tiny Stella Polaris (drawn to appear more like the Queen Mary) steams. In the foreground, a narrow sliver of an open promenade deck is drawn, and beside a round cork lifesaver (lettered with the ship’s name and used as a popular background for souvenir photographs), passengers on one side of the railing defend themselves from particularly ambitious souvenir-sellers who have, apparently, swum up to the ship. This frontispiece is an ingenious superimposition of two popular images promulgated by the merchant marine—the proud optimism of the Queen Mary map, with its public display of the ship’s precise location and its care to contextualize the new liners in a history of European maritime traditions, and the jarring view of the cruise ship that juxtaposes the iconography of one universal cruise souvenir (the photograph, physical proof of having been on the ship) with another (aggressive vendors). With Waugh’s pointedly inaccurate map and the looks of terror in the passengers’ eyes, the drawing adapts the visual tradition of shipping companies while cleverly deflating the ideological claims made through such images. Waugh’s text is less obviously ironic, despite its cynical opening passage, which, perhaps in an attempt to shrug off his debt to the Stella Polaris’s board of directors, explains in detail how much rather he would have gone to Russia. By way of excusing himself for Labels, he explains, “My hope was that, when someone saw in the gossip page that I was going to Russia, she would say what a very interesting young man, and, I must get his life of Dante Gabriel Rossetti out of the circulating library.” He sets his lack of literary success against Virginia Woolf’s success, a success so extreme, in fact, that he claims that the best-selling release of Orlando in 1929 cause “Nature” to set out “to win some celestial Hawthornden Prize by imitation of that celebrated description of that Great Frost” (8). Miserable with the weather and his lack of literary and financial success, he explains, he decides to travel and use the publicity from the work of travel non-fiction to boost is career—another example of the presence of labor in leisure and the
interrelation of leisure industries, not only in the “low” culture industries which link sales of cruises with the popular recreational reading of travel narratives but also in the “high” modernism into whose ranks Waugh wishes to enter.

In contrast to his reproduction of publicity tropes (poor English weather; a stuffy London season) at the beginning of Labels, in When the Going Was Good, written about this same 1929 cruise on the Stella Polaris, Waugh displays a slightly more cynical assessment of such tropes:

I read the advertisements of steamship companies and travel bureaux and find there just that assembly of phrases—half poetic, just perceptibly aphrodisiac—which can produce at will in the unsophisticated a state of mild unreality and glamour. 'Mystery, History, Leisure, Pleasure' one of them begins. There is no directly defined sexual appeal. That rosy sequence of association, desert moon, pyramids, palms, sphinx, camels, oasis, priest in high minaret chanting the evening prayer...all delicately point the way to sheik, rape, and harem—but the happily dilatory mind does not follow them to this forbidding conclusion; it sees the direction and admires the view from afar. (20-1)

Speaking of the bored, excitement-seeking middle-aged widows making up (he claims) the majority of the passengers, Waugh, unflinchingly thinking through the consequences of associating erotic adventures with the othered environment of the cruise ship, suggests that sexual violence and stereotyping silently underwrite the romantic associations of the cruise ship and ocean liner. Waugh’s 1933 story “Cruise: Letters from a Young Lady of Leisure,” however, casts this social issue in a less grave light. In the story, the young lady of leisure condemns but still indulges in the romantic atmosphere of the S. S. Glory of Greece. Scandalized by the behavior of a fellow passenger, but robbed of the moral high-ground by Waugh’s singular transcription of her “diary,” she writes, “Miss P is lousy she wears a yachting cap and is a bitch. She makes up toe [sic] the second officer.... He hates her but its part of the rules that all the sailors have to pretend to fancy the passengers” (Complete Short Stories 114). The indomitable Miss P., taking advantage of the carnival-like atmosphere that encouraged Le Corbusier to wear
blackface, then appears “at the fancy dress ball she had a ballet dress from the Russian ballet which couldn't have been more unsuitable...the purser says there's always someone like her on board” (115). Despite this apparent prudery, the young lady of leisure later acts out the prophecy of the cynical purser, who “said people always get engaged and have quarrels on the Egyptian trip every cruise” (117) by becoming engaged to an Arthur, “the one I thought was a pansy,” then breaks it off with him, becomes engaged to a Robert, then breaks up with Robert, and then goes off to kiss Arthur, stopping her journal with another judgment of Miss P, who ignores her brother's plaintive cry to Miss P, who “walked away pretending not to hear. Goodness what a bitch” (118). This slight but evocative story presents little but an unmasking of the very unspontaneous romancing going on aboard a cruise ship as a universal and repetitive performance, ensuring that even though (as we shall see below) he regards the cruise as an escape from the exhausting mass tourism territorialized around the navigation of land (the labor of the leisure-seeker) rather than sea (the labor of the crew), even the relaxing and erotically charged pleasures of the cruise ship can be experienced as a de-individualized set of shipboard axioms.

Despite his sensitivity to the politics of escape at work in steamship publicity and in the behavior of passengers, he reproduces this advertising discourse about the *Stella Polaris*: “She exhibited a Nordic and almost glacial cleanliness,” furnished him with a “suite of great luxury, with a satinwood panelled sitting-room and their own bath-room,” and was staffed by stewards who “maintained a Jeeves-like standard of courtesy and efficiency” (*Labels* 30). This pride converts into patriotic rivalry when he compares his ship to a German liner following a similar itinerary, “Everyone in the Stella felt great contempt for this vulgar ship” (45). Waugh’s comment not only reflects the intense English-German competition that invariably characterized the discourse surrounding steamships from about the mid-nineteenth century until the outbreak
of WWII, but also reflects the uniqueness of the _Stella Polaris_ as the first “miniship,” and indeed as one of the first purpose-built cruisers, in contradistinction to liners that were converted each season to cruisers (see Fig. 2). Responding to growing criticism over the increasing size of ocean liners, the Company that created this ship built it as a smaller, less pretentious yet no less luxurious alternative to the behemoths created by Cunard, The White Star Line, Holland America, Hamburg-Amerika, North German Lloyd, Compagnie Generale Transatlantic (Transat), Italia Societa di Navigazione, and other lines. Carrying just a fraction of the passengers that would crowd a transatlantic liner, the _Stella Polaris_, built for cruising, boasted yacht-like fittings and a silhouette that resembled sailing ships just as much as modern liners (Fig. 15). Attentive to
such differences, he observes about the *Stella Polaris*, “how admirably it fitted into place and
filled a need in modern life,” yet he concludes of all modern steamships, “even the worst kind of
ship has some advantages over the best kind of hotel” (37). Waugh maintains this claim by both
reproducing and challenging that troubled distinction between tourism and traveler (which I will
address at greater length in my analysis of *No Signposts in the Sea*). “Every Englishman abroad,
until it is proved to the contrary, likes to consider himself a traveler and not a tourist. As I
watched my luggage being lifted onto the *Stella* I knew that it was no use keeping up the
pretense any longer. My fellow passengers and I were tourists, without any compromise or
extenuation.” Yet in the same breath, he reclaims this British exceptionalism by adding, “but we
were tourists...of a new kind” (37), less because of a greater sophistication accorded to himself
and his passengers on this trip, but rather because of the institution of cruising itself.

Conventional tourism, he argues, is “pitiless,” “inescapable,” and “laboriously” exhausts seekers
of leisure, who dutifully ensure that “each monument on the schedule is ticked off as seen.”

From the prow of the *Stella Polaris*, he uses tourism as a synechdoche for modernity itself by
concluding, “one sheds not wholly derisive tears for these poor scraps of humanity thus trapped
and mangled in the machinery of uplift” (38). But to recall “Cruise: Letters from a Young Lady
of Leisure,” written three years after the publication of *Labels*, is to realize the swift pace by
which the freedoms afforded by a new leisure institution can be reterritorialized from the
accumulating weight of advertising, of textual and visual public discourses, and of nascent
systems of social etiquette rushing into the ideological vacuum of a new leisure institution.
Old Empire, New Media: Hallucinating Past and Future on the Wauvian Ship

We might dismiss “Cruise” as a frothy, relatively insignificant work compared to *Labels*, yet three of his novels return to this social reterritorialization of the cruise ship: *A Handful of Dust*, *Brideshead Revisited*, and *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*. In *A Handful of Dust*, a luxurious liner takes on Tony Last, a cuckolded husband needing a break from his wife. The ship interlude of the novel is placed at the beginning of the novel’s fifth (of seven) parts, “In Search of a City,” in which Tony, a self-styled explorer, wishes to find in South America a replacement for his beloved ancestral home, Hetton, which is being threatened by the twin weapons of modern, non-conservationist interior design and a proposed divorce settlement that would require selling the home. Waugh’s shrewd eye for cruise tropes leads him to begin the ship interlude with a stranger using a time-honored pretext to bypass social introductions and become intimate friends with Tony. When Tony rebuffs his banal enquiry, “Any idea how many times round the deck make a mile?” he responds with another shipboard cliche by asking, “Travel with this line often?” and, after another rebuff, “Going far?” Ironically, Tony manages to ward off the insistent stranger by offering an intimate disclosure, “to tell you the truth I am looking for a city,” which the stranger finds *too* truthful, individual, and intimate to continue speaking with Tony (211). This latter, however, does indulge in a familiar ocean liner narrative by wooing the young Therese de Vitre, returning to her native Trinidad from education at a French convent, until she realizes that he is already married and cuts him—taking the temporary romance of *Brideshead Revisited* and cynically cutting it down to the smallest atom possible: one meal, one walk, one kiss. In the end, this romance is not a turning point in their lives or a major narrative event but rather a pointedly unsentimental anti-climax; its most significant result was due to its obliging creation of a leisure
spectacle contributing to “the great satisfaction of the other passengers who had little to interest them on board except the flowering of this romance” (228). This sense of romantic contingency—or rather, this attentiveness to the collective romantic agency of ship, weather, and passengers—pervades the work, most dramatically through a curious literary artifact, an alternative ending for the novel, used in the serialized version but not for its publication as a single volume. Instead of going to South America, Tony does decide to take a genuine cruise, a long and aimless voyage. Relaxed by his cruise, his anger at his cheating wife disappears, and their marriage survives:

It had been an uneventful excursion. Not for Tony were the ardors of serious travel, desert or jungle, mountain or pampas; he had no inclination to kill big game or survey unmapped tributaries. He had left England because, in the circumstances, it seemed the correct procedure, a convention hallowed in fiction and history by generations of disillusioned husbands. He had put himself in the hands of a travel agency and for lazy months had pottered from island to island in the West Indies, lunching at Government Houses, drinking swizzles on club verandahs, achieving an easy popularity at Captains' tables; he had played deck quoits... Now he was home again.... He woke, too, to find that the question that neither he nor Brenda had asked, was unanswered. This should have been a crisis; his destinies had been at his control...And he had fallen asleep. (147-8, 150)

Taking a cruise, Waugh argues, is already “correct procedure,” one facet of a single social text, and tends to reproduce the status quo, for the laziness that pervades the cruise also informs his attitude towards resolving the breach with his wife. A cruise is a nap, essentially, a refusal to take into hand the “destinies...at his control,” replacement for the “question” of how to respond to the event of Brenda’s unfaithfulness (and its ensuing threat to his ancestral property). Interestingly, Tony’s loss of a “crisis” that should have been acts as metacommentary for the alternative ending’s excision. This alternative ending omits chapters of highly unusual content, including an unsettlingly memorable set of scenes in which Tony, rather than have the benefit of a quick death
or second marriage with Therese, is kidnapped by an illiterate hermit who forces Tony to read aloud Dickens novels. The cruise, in other words, seems to incur a mournful loss of plot, whereas the ocean liner, which Tony takes in the novel’s longer version, like the liner in Brideshead Revisited, is seen as productive of otherwise-unlikely events.

In the longer version, Tony originally inclines to take a cruise but abruptly changes his mind as a result of a serendipitous meeting at his club. Enjoined by Doctor Messinger, a stranger who comments on Tony’s stack of cruise brochures, to join his next foray into South America, Tony fancies himself as the last explorer, an adventurer going out into the wilds, therefore transforming his simple need for a vacation into an imperial conquest of the New World, although the utopian visions he daydreams while crossing the Atlantic bring him not to a new world, but rather straight back to Hetton Abbey, a tasteless simulacrum of an Elizabethan mansion made during the Victorian era. The lost city, “a tradition since the first explorers of the sixteenth century” (219), is a hodge-podge of European and South American legends, a fertile palimpsest that Tony, motivated not by evidence but by his own desire, contributes to with visions of “carpet and canopy, tapestry and velvet, portcullis and bastion, water fowl on the moat and kingcups along its margin, peacocks trailing their finery across the lawns” (223). As a provocation for fantasy, the city serves Tony as a productive site of leisure:

For some days now Tony had been thoughtless about the events of the immediate past. His thoughts were occupied with the City, the Shining, the Many Watered, the Bright Feathered, the Aromatic Jam. He had a clear picture of it in his mind. It was Gothic in character, all vanes and pinnacles, gargoyles, battlements, groining and tracery, pavilions and terraces, a transfigured Hetton, pennons and banners floating on the sweet breeze, everything luminous and translucent, a tapestry landscape filled with heraldric and fabulous animals and symmetrical, disproportionate blossom. (221-22)
While the hallucinatory quality of this passage anticipates *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, what I wish to focus on here is the constricted scope of Tony’s utopian vision. Tony’s fantasy privileges the reproduction of the known (the traveler’s home) in the unknown (the spaces of foreign countries), a markedly conservative attitude not found, for example, in E. M. Forster’s young traveler Lucy Honeychurch, disappointed by finding “the solid comfort of a Bloomsbury boarding-house” in her Florentine boarding-house (7). An explorer wishing to “discover” a copy (“a transfigured Hetton”) of a copy (Hetton is itself a Victorian copy of an Gothic castle) that itself resembles another copy (“a tapestry landscape”), Tony is less a late incarnation of the early Spanish and English explorers he fantasizes about than an early incarnation of Walt Disney, a Baudrillardian leisure impresario. As a result, his ultimate fate at the hands of his Dickens-loving kidnapper—reading and rereading Dickens’s canon for a man who has neither seen England nor been educated in Victorian history or literature—forces him to live out, with cruel accuracy, his fantasies of reproducing what is already inauthentic and, through his endless repetition of the texts, underscores the aimless fertility of such postmodern leisure spectacles. and as he dreams about this new yet old city, he perceives the Atlantic ocean as “olive, field-blue and khaki like the uniforms of the battlefield.” Tony, then, has transfigured the utopian dreams of the perfect city into copy of what was already itself a copy, simultaneously emptying the Atlantic of its own cultural associations with freedom by perceiving it as a battlefield—and in both of the World Wars, of course, it was.

In his 1957 *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, Waugh considers more explicitly the cruise ship's double identity as pleasure vessel and battleship, but also, in Gilbert Pinfold’s ambivalent relationship with technology of mass media, shows how cruise ship acted as a field through which the growth of mass culture, and especially mass leisure, could be visualized and critiqued.
The novel is an autobiographical account of his own struggle with poor physical and mental health in early 1954, when, while on a cruise to East Asia, he experienced extreme paranoia accompanied by a series of hallucinations—an event he referred to in a letter to Nancy Mitford by the simple statement, “I lost my reason on the way to Ceylon” (*Letters* 424). Beset by insomnia, rheumatism, sciatica, and memory loss, Waugh engaged a cruise on the *Staffordshire* to escape the miserable winter weather in England in an attempt to overcome his insomnia and his writer's block—exacerbated by a mounting career crisis as he began to believe that his creative powers were waning.\(^{87}\) The ailing Waugh wrote his daughter Margaret in January 1954, “I am jumping on to the first available ship. She goes to Ceylon. I shan't come back until I have finished my book but I hope I shall do that on the voyage” (417). In spite of these high hopes, he became convinced on the voyage that he was being stalked and behaved erratically (stumbling, talking into a toast-rack, knocking furniture down, and asking after passengers who were not on the ship). Though uplifted by the cessation of his rheumatism in balmy Southeast Asia, the veteran luxury cruiser Waugh complains in a letter to his wife that the ship not only is the ship “not luxurious” and has “meagre” rations for the passengers, but also that

> The chief trouble is the noise of the cabin. All the pipes and air shafts in the ship seem to run through them. Too add to my balminess there are intermittent bits of 3rd Programme talks played in private cabin and two mentioned me very faintly and my p.m. [persecution mania] took it for other passengers whispering about me. If a regular rural life doesn’t work the trick I’ll see an alienist. (418)

Waugh’s self-consciousness appears to bode well for his mental state—he jocosely writes, “My nut is clearing but feeble”—but it turns out these noises were aural hallucinations that repeated

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\(^{87}\) James J. Lynch tells the story of Waugh’s career crisis during the mid-1950s in “Evelyn Waugh During the *PINFOLD* Years,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 32.4 (1986): 542-560.
recent humiliations Waugh had received at the hands of a press corps disparaging the aging Waugh in the years leading up to the cruise (in particular, a vicious interview with Stephen Black in August of 1953 for the BBC’s *Frankly Speaking*), leading him to complain, “They tried to make a fool of me” [qtd. in Patey 323]). In his next letter to Laura Waugh, five days later, he admits that he can no longer “attempt any work” but must focus in this “difficult time” on placing his “natural health first.” He has already begun to suspect the chloral that did in fact cause his hallucinations (because of bromide poisoning), but then succumbs to paranoia again, claiming, “Then when I was beginning to rally I found myself the victim of an experiment in telepathy which had made me think I was really going crazy. I will tell you all about it when I get home” (*Letters* 418). This last phrase suggests Waugh to have mastered these hallucinations, but in the same letter, he asserts that “the malevolent telepathy [has been] broken for the first time.... I know it sounds like acute p.m. but it is real & true. A trick the existentialists invented - half mesmerism - which is most alarming” (419). Four days later, having disembarked at Colombo at the request of the alarmed captain, he writes, “It is rather difficult to write to you because everything I say or read is read aloud by the group of psychologists whom I met on the ship....the artful creatures can communicate from many hundreds of miles away. Please don’t think this is balmy... All it means is that this trip has been a complete failure as far as settling down to work as we hoped” (419-20). Laura Waugh, disturbed by the letters, decided to meet him in London and arranged meetings with his spiritual advisor and his psychoanalyst, but the latter diagnosed

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88 The bromide poisoning was exacerbated by Waugh’s heavy drinking. *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* comically summarizes the problem: “Dr. Drake again advocated a warm climate and prescribed some pills which he said were ‘something new and pretty powerful’. They were large and drab, reminding Mr Pinfold of the pellets of blotting-paper which used to be rolled at his private school. Mr. Pinfold added them to his bromide and chloral and creme de menthe, his wine and gin and brandy, and to a new sleeping-draught which his doctor, ignorant of the existence of his other bottle, also supplied” (26). It should be noted that this image of blotting-paper will reappear in *Brideshead Revisited* as means to characterize the interior of a large luxury liner—suggesting that the luxury liner is, in itself, a drug lulling modern insomniacs to sleep.
bromide poisoning, and Waugh called off the exorcism he had suggested that his spiritual advisor prepare. Back home at Piers Court, he joyously shouted to his friends after mass, “I've been absolutely mad! Clean off my onion!” (qtd. in Patey 326)—an early indication that he would not only not cover up his episode, but also base a novel off the experience and inform the public of its autobiographical nature by placing a notice on the book jacket. While Waugh may not have written his newest novel on his 1954 journey to Ceylon as planned, he did find fertile inspiration for a novel in his journey, and (to close the circle) Waugh did in fact begin to draft The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold while on a cruise in 1955, the very next winter, on a Cunarder headed to Jamaica.

The novel transfers Waugh’s 1954 experience to Gilbert Pinfold, a frustrated writer and World War II victim who, beset by a myriad of old-age afflictions and an inability to proceed on his newest novel, boards a cruise ship in hopes of improved health and productivity, but becomes convinced that the BBC has hired psychoanalysts to invade his consciousness by manipulating the radio equipment left in the ship from its wartime service. The novel's opening chapter, “The Portrait of the Artist in Middle Age,” sets up the work not so much as a late modernist novel than a novel about late modernism: about its aging, its chances at surviving for posterity, and its vulnerability after World War II; about the self-destruction possible when modernism's attention to internal states goes too far. The novel opens with a meditation on the state of writing after World War II: “It may happen in the next hundred years that the English novelists of the present day will come to be valued as we now value the artists and craftsmen of the late eighteenth century,” the narrator hypothesizes, then laments that in the place of the “exuberant” modernists “now extinct,” there presently “subsists and modestly flourishes a generation notable for...so

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much will and so much ability to please” (9). As an aging modernist retired from the London scene and keeping only “tenuous touch with” the friends “whom in the nineteen-twenties and thirties he had seen constantly” (13), he suffers from idleness. The narrator primly repeats, “Mr. Pinfold’s idleness has been remarked,” and specifies, “he was disinclined to effort...as though the characters he had quickened had fallen into a light doze and he left them benevolently to themselves” (22). Pinfold has two options to combat his deteriorating physical health and productivity and to recover from the disastrous BBC interview (based on Waugh’s experience with Stephen Black): using the “Box,” a device belonging to a neighbor, purported to “exercise diagnostic and therapeutic powers [when] some part of a sick man or animal...was brought to The Box” (12), or following the advice of his doctor, who says, “The only cure really is a change” (23) or, as Pinfold glosses, “I must go somewhere sunny and finish my book” (25). Long past the time “in youth [when] in his long periods of leisure had been devoted to amusement” (22), Pinfold, explaining, “I can always work at sea. I shall have the book finished before I get home” (27), books his leisurely cruise for the sake of his labor. Unlike the younger postmodern writers, with their apparent native will to please, the aging Pinfold, like Henry James (while writing The Portrait of a Lady), T. S. Eliot (while drafting The Waste Land), and Katherine Mansfield (in search of the perfect hotel room so she may find peace sufficient to begin, finally, her novel, rather than another short story), seeks refuge in the spaces of leisure to stimulate his aesthetic labors.

Necessary for Pinfold’s goal of writing is avoiding publicity, particularly by resisting the cruising cliché about the easy intimacy to be found on board. In a fit of anti-sociability, he even rejects the highest honor a cruise ship could offer by searching for a method by which “without
offense he could escape from the Captain's table to sit and eat alone, silent and untroubled” (56).

Pinfold’s unease at his uncivil behavior is evident, I would argue, in his hallucinations, as they dramatize the ignored passengers taking their revenge on his refusal of intimacy by gaining the power first, to speak to him at any moment, from any vantage point, and second, to read his mind directly, rather than have to go through the motions of shipboard etiquette to discover such information. When Pinfold begins to hear concerts and parties in his own cabin, he finds a solution to this curiosity by recalling, “During the war he had travelled in troopships which were fitted with amplifiers on every deck. Unintelligible alarms and orders had issued from these devices and at certain hours popular music. The Caliban, plainly, was equipped in this way” (41).

Pinfold again interprets this private torture as a legacy of World War II when he recalls, “in London just after the war, when everything was worn out, telephones used sometimes to behave in this erratic way” (52). But paranoia overcomes this logical explanation; in his next hallucination, a set of BBC broadcasters turn his luxurious outside cabin into a “prison cell” by directing a series of cacophanous records, including one described has having a “three-eight rhythm” that “the Gestapo discovered...independently...to drive the prisoners mad” (46).

Familiar with the electronic apparatus from the BBC interview, he nonetheless fails to understand this new technology of mass communication, even to the extent of confusing shipboard and post-office telegraphy (123). Believing the “rose-shaded electric lamp” on his dining room table to be a transmitter as well, he inspects it to find the hidden speaker—but breaks it in the process (78). Alone in his cabin, he meditates silently over his problem, finally deciding to turn to the lovely young Margaret Black, the one person on the ship he believes to be his friend, for information about the technology works. Before Gilbert can even vocalize this
desire, Margaret immediately answers. Still unsure of the technology, he wonders, “How could
Margaret have heard his soundless words?” prompting the absent Margaret to respond, “Not
wires, darling. Wireless...” (108).

The majority of the scenes are based on Pinfold's wartime memories—an interesting
dramatization of the repetition complex found in Freud's Beyond the Pleasure Principle.
Believing his cabin to have served as the executive quarters for officers during the war, he hears
a Master-at-Arms dressing down soldiers. Physically, the ship is still caught in the midst of war
because “through some trick or fault or wartime survival everything spoken in the executive
quarters of the ship was transmitted to him” (48). At first, Pinfold wonders how he can use the
system himself to prove that he is “a good officer” (81), but as he begins to believe that the
“electrical freaks” (120) are not due to faulty wiring but to a conspiracy against him, he writes to
his wife, “The Germans at the end of the war were developing this Box for the examination of
prisoners,” positioning himself as a still an active victim of war (136). Pinfold’s desire to rewrite
his wartime experience becomes more complex and morally ambiguous when he hallucinates
Margaret’s invitation for sex as an invitation to “come on parade looking like a soldier” (115),
and when a hallucination of a steward being murdered by the captain prompts one old officer to
say that it “makes one proud of the British service” (51). Pinfold’s eagerness to indulge in
wartime heroism comes to a head when he hallucinates an “international incident” at Gibraltar
when an unidentified “foreign aggression” threatens the ship’s safe passage (87). To rescue the
ship, Pinfold elaborates a complex drama casting him as “Captain Pinfold,” a British secret agent
who will martyr himself for the good of the ship.
When he decides to continue to play the hero and go along with the fake plot, the irony here is that this persecution restores his health, cheers him up, and makes him feel more sociable towards the passengers. And after listening to a horrific scene where a steward rapes a passenger and then is murdered with “undisguised erotic enjoyment” by the captain (59), the shock restores his health and sanity: “He was cured....whether the shock he had just endured might not have succeeded where the grey pills had failed; whether he had not been healed by the steward’s agony” (60). In another example, beset by a group of “hooligans” attempting to exacerbate his insomnia by partying outside his cabin door, the lethargic, timid Pinfold bestirs himself: grabbing his hawthorne cane, “Mr Pinfold decided on action” and strikes out in search of his tormentors (68). Ironically, where pure leisure fails, torment succeeds; the cruise ship, with its faulty electrical system, acts as a machine for events, transforming the everyday operations of the ship into a ceaseless flow of violent drama that gives him the stimulation to complete his novel. By reenacting his war memories, he finds a new opportunity to establish himself as a hero, and by projecting his own lack of sociability as the passengers’ universal penchant for violence, he begins to join the ship’s social life and overcomes his fears that they dislike him (45, 74).

Participating in the life of the ship, he then begins to transform the mundane gossip of the cruise ship into concerted plots against him, which he gives names like “Operation Storm” (rumors of an upcoming storm) and Operation Stock Exchange (rumors of instability in the stock market). Gilbert thereby elevates trivial events of the day as evil signifiers that excite him despite reminding him of “the kind of pseudo-American thriller he most abhorred” and their acting is “grossly overplayed” (58). It is at this point that Pinfold interprets his problems as a BBC plot: “Mr Pinfold felt as though he had come to the end of an ingenious, old-
fashioned detective novel which he had read rather inattentively. He knew the villain now and began turning back the pages to observe the clues he had missed” (127). Though the ship’s itinerary is objectively one of the most boring (the other cruisers admit to Gilbert that this particular cruise to Rangoon has always been a quiet one), Pinfold's hallucinations elevate the mundane to the status of a thriller—the becoming-conspiracy of everyday life, which allows him (like Miss Marple, as I discuss in this dissertation’s conclusion) to extract leisure values by creating a challenging and unusual type of labor out of leisure activities. He lingers over the BBC spies' transmissions: “Gilbert has sat down at his table... He's reading the menu... He's ordering wine... He's ordered a cold plate of ham” (128). Although Gilbert's goal for the cruise was to finish his book, he is cured of his innumerable small maladies instead; it was not the relaxation and sun that he had sought, but rather the excitement and mystery furnished by his hallucinations was enough to cure him. He also strikes back against the tormentors broadcasting violent dramas into his room by unmasking them not as truth, but as merely American crime films “grossly overplayed” (66). Horrified that, “lying in his spruce cabin in this British ship,” he is nonetheless captive to a “pseudo-American thriller” (58), he cries out, “Don't call me 'Gilbert' and don't talk like a film gangster,” trying simultaneously to reestablish both British social formality and cultural capital against the encroachment of Americanisms (151). Whereas he earlier tries to fight the voices by becoming a war hero, a martyr, and a fighter of hooligans, he finally stops the voices by using his verbal skills as a writer as weapons against the BBC broadcasters’ advanced communication technologies and the Americanization of non-American spaces. Calling his experience “the most exciting thing that ever happened to me,” he believes himself finally to be a real “warrior” (154), a real “victor,” which gives him the confidence
necessary so—ultimately—he can “do some writing” (157). Like Agatha Christie’s Poirot, whose vacations always turn out to yield a murder mystery he must solve, Gilbert Pinfold, going on a cruise, finds an unexpected adventure, true leisure, that nonetheless allows him to perform work.

And he does complete his novel. The concluding sentences of the novel observe Pinfold sitting at his desk and beginning to write “The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold: A Conversation Piece. Chapter One: The Portrait of the Artist in Middle Age.” Just as the ordeal on the cruise ship becomes fodder for Pinfold's next book, so too does Waugh himself. In a letter to Nancy Mitford, he complained, “It it indeed hard to think of novel plots for novels. You see nothing that happens to one after the age of 40 makes any impression. My life ceased after the war” (Letters 432), but the eventful cruise, with its detective-novel adventure and vicarious war-play, gives the aging modernist a topic to write about. The autobiographical element of the novel has, I think, obscured this lesson about leisure in the novel, made even more relevant by the fact that Waugh, with his 1954 cruise failing to provide him with good health and productivity, embarked the very next winter on a Cunarder and, onboard, successfully worked on *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, a peculiarly fruitful repetition compulsion mimicking Gilbert’s rewriting of his wartime past. Martin Stannard, for example, characterizes *Pinfold* as “an ingenious and deceptive autobiographical document, a further stage in the creation of a public image” that “crushed the accusations back into his unconscious, pretending to his family, his public, and himself that they had no relevance to his life, that they were merely the product of malice” (348). Douglas Patey not only establishes the novel’s reception history as one focused on autobiography, but also elevates the autobiographical element so much that he asserts *Pinfold* is “not really a novel like Waugh’s others at all, but a kind of mock-novel: a sly invitation to a game” Waugh gives to the
“prying and hostile press” (339). But as James J. Lynch argues, “the paramount importance of
the episode in Waugh's life is that he fictionalizes it as an artistic crisis—a thorough shaking of
confidence in his imaginative powers. Pinfold emerges victorious from his ordeal...by
establishing control over his imagination through writing his own Ordeal of Gilbert
Pinfold” (539). Indeed, I would like to add that by ending the novel with a vision of Pinfold
writing that very novel, The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold, Waugh establishes a recursive act that
comments not only on his fears for his writing career, but also on the uneasy relationship
between leisure and authorial production, in which leisure can provide the material for a book
and the correct frame of mind for writing, but only indirectly (just as Henry James explains in the
New York Preface to The Portrait of a Lady). Yet, paradoxically, it is Pinfold-the-author who
becomes the real BBC, the real “Box,” the real psychoanalytic invader remorselessly mining the
inner workings of the mind as the material for mass culture.

“Behaving Like a Film Star:” The Narrativity of Liner
Space

In Brideshead Revisited, painter Charles Ryder makes a transatlantic voyage to return to
England after a protracted stay in the jungles of South America to sketch its sights. This section
of the novel—in which Charles temporarily escapes his loveless marriage of convenience and
vicariously enacts his unrequited affection for the Oxford undergraduate Sebastian Flyte by
taking up with Flyte’s sister Julia—accounts for a slim proportion of the novel’s total page-count
but caused a disproportionate amount of trouble for Waugh, who recorded in a letter that he
“painfully picked up the threads of a very difficult chapter about love-making on a liner” (qtd. in
Patey 212). The chapter bears few if any scars of authorial hesitation; from its start, readers
encounter a sophisticated account of cruise ship culture as a unique social economy very
different from the unremarkable “zone[s] of trade and tourism” he encountered in South America
and the shallow familiarity of North American trains, in which “facts about themselves which
fellow travelers distribute so freely” pass quickly, “leaving no mark” (Brideshead 228). Yet this
oceanic interlude is not remarked upon in scholarship on modernism on Brideshead Revisited,
which often circulates around the figures of Catholicism,90 queerness/homosexuality,91 and
sometimes both.92 One representative work, John J. Su’s recent article on Brideshead Revisited,
precedent to the estate home by describing the novel as “a process of retrospection that casts
change as ‘restoration’” by making Ryder “the spiritual heir of the estate” (559). Su’s focus on
Brideshead aligns with Ryder’s attitude toward the estate—one of eternal return—while in
contrast, The Modernist Novel and the Decline of Empire, John Marx’s reading of Brideshead
Revisited participates in the current trend in literary criticism to regard modern space as global
space. Focusing on Brideshead’s participation in a broader imperial geography, Marx uses the
novel as an example of how modernism both "brought provincialism to the metropole” and
“reciprocated by bringing the city to the country” (169). A third work on Waugh and space, Ruth
Breeze’s “Places of the Mind: Locating Brideshead Revisited,” characterizes the novel as a set of
spatial counterpoints, based around Brideshead, which she regards as a correction to a scholarly

90 For examples, see Donat Gallagher’s “The Humanizing Factor: Evelyn Waugh’s ‘Very Personal View of
Providence.’” Robert R. Garnett’s From Grimes to Brideshead: The Early Novels of Evelyn Waugh. Long, J. V.
Saves: Brideshead Revisited as Counter-Portrait of the Artist” and Patrick Query’s “Catholicism and Form from
Hopkins to Waugh.”

91 Refer, for example, to Paul Deslandes’ Oxbridge Men: British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience
and Roberto A. Valdeon Garcia’s “The Spoken and the Unspoken: The Homosexual Theme in E. M. Forster and
Evelyn Waugh.”

92 I am thinking here in particular of David Hilliard’s “Unenglish and Unmanly: Anglo-Catholicism and
Homosexuality,” though most of the works so far mentioned, to varying degrees, interpret these two major
themes in terms of one another.
overemphasis on the work as an “Oxford novel.” But by focusing on London as the novel’s most well-developed counterpoint to the manorial estate, Breeze misses what I consider the novel’s most animated and memorable spatial representation: that of the ocean liner. In *Brideshead Revisited*, I argue, Waugh’s early interest in crossing and cruising matures into a compelling, if brief, meditation on the steamship as a unique social environment with its own peculiar set of material and social affordances and limitations.

Entering his cabin for the first time, Charles notes, “our cabin on the day of departure was full of cellophane packages—flowers, fruit, sweets, books, toys for the children,” a detail that not only reflects existing social capital but also confers more of it because stewards, “like sisters in a nursing home, used to judge their passengers’ importance by the number and value of these trophies; we therefore started the voyage in high esteem” (234). Charles’s wife, Celia, it turns out, though she will not play out a drama of shipboard romance with him, does confer symbolic capital on him through her mastery of the basic strategies of shipboard economics:

> We had been given, without paying more for it, a large suite of rooms, one so large, in fact, that it was seldom booked except by directors of the line, and on most voyages, the chief purser admitted, was given to those he wished to honor. (My wife was adept in achieving such small advantages, first impressing the impressionable with her chic and my celebrity and, superiority once established, changing quickly to a pose of almost flirtatious affability.) In token of her appreciation the chief purser had been asked to our party and he, in token of his appreciation, had sent before him the life-size effigy of a swan, molded in ice and filled with caviar. This chilly piece of magnificence now dominated the room, standing on a table in the center, thawing gently, dripping at the beak into its silver dish. The flowers of the morning delivery hid as much as possible of the panelling (for this room was a miniature of the monstrous hall above). (240)

Celia, a more sophisticated version of the hated Miss P. in “Cruise,” with her “flirtatious affability” uses the traditional erotic license of the modern steamship not for falling in love but instead for manipulating the material resources of the ship to her social advantage and to
Charles’s professional advantage. At the same time Celia’s case demonstrates the lesson of recent travel scholarship—that vacationers are not passive consumers, but instead self-reflexive, knowledgeable actors who can effect change in leisure environments—the aura of mass-production around her victories suggests that even savvy tourists do not forge their successes outside of the capitalist infrastructures of travel. The only passenger who questions her social success on the basis of its reliance on mass-produced objects is, in fact, Charles, with his hatred for the ubiquitous paneling that, by rendering his private reception room a “miniature” of a public room above, makes a mockery of the vaunted luxury and individuality of his impressive private suite. Even the ice swan, despite the place of honor it is afforded and despite the awed reactions of their guests, is one of a hundred other identical examples stored in the bowels of the ship—an indication of the fundamental efficiency and standardization of the cruise ship despite its veneer of luxury. When Charles delivers his verdict on the swan—watching “a steward already inextricably trapped in the corner behind an improvised bar, and another steward, tray in hand, in comparative freedom,” he calls the swan “a cinema actor's dream” (241)—he suggests that the concept of luxury works through standardization: the imitative mode of becoming-

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93 This paneling is one of the pieces of evidence (as are the bronze gates Charles mentions below) that leads me to believe that Waugh based this ship on the *Queen Mary*, whose acres of costly and exotic veneers were widely imitated in later ships and received unanimous praise from the international press.
celebrity. Furthermore, his absorption in the steward’s fate (hopelessly trapped behind the “improvised” bar) as his guests wait for his opinion on the swan suggests that even the most carefully planned and luxurious leisure spaces can never adequately respond to the spontaneity and diversity of human needs (here, the need to publicize Charles’s next book of paintings); no matter how costly the space is, it can never transcend the structures of mass production, and it can never guarantee the freedom and comfort of all its occupants.

Whereas Celia, whose extraordinarily expensive “modern jewelry...was made at great expense to give the impression, at a distance, of having been mass-produced” (234), cheerfully and masterfully uses the ship’s mass-produced commodities and spaces as instruments for social success, Charles critiques the ship’s industrial efficiencies as an unlovely, soulless aesthetics of scale. Debating the advisability of the large scale of ocean liners a theme not unknown in

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94 That Charles refers to the swan as the “dream” of a film star is suggestive. Charles, who does not want to become a film star (he declines to pursue the fruits of his wife’s aggressive networking to land him a film deal for his painting), seems to object that it is not his own desire, but rather the imagined desire of someone he is supposed to want to emulate. In his romance with Julia Mottram, he does begin to “behave like a film star” by ordering copious gifts and taking advantage of concierge and butler services, but the emotional payoff of these activities seems to be less their inherent pleasurability (for Julia does not want his flowers and Charles retreats to these activities out of boredom) and more the epistemological novelty of becoming- celebrity—the awareness that one’s desires are apparently aligned with those of another identity group. This mediation of desire, I argue, also informs the design of first-class spaces of the luxury liner. Because merchant marine profits came mostly from steerage or third-class fares, and because consistently intensifying competition among the major lines led them to focus on how to attract masses of European emigrants (and, after the U.S. restriction of emigration in 1920, students and middle-class American tourists), first-class amenities and public spaces were designed to maximize the efficiency of publicity materials and newspaper accounts that would draw the attention of the most lucrative group, potential third-class passengers who, it was assumed, would book the ship whose publicity materials they were most impressed by. Naval architects and interior designers, in other words, had an incentive to design according to their conception of what third-class passengers would think first-class passengers would expect and enjoy.
modernism, but, in a climate of near-unanimous public respect for the liners (so respectful, in fact, that even on the eves of the two world wars, English press would still praise new German liners, and English crowds would cheer on a German ship on its first appearance at Southampton), what makes *Brideshead Revisited* in this respect is Charles’s insistent refusal to admire, or at least feel momentarily awed by, the beauty of the liner’s interiors on account of their elevation of the economy of scale into an aesthetic principle. This ship’s interior design, which follows the streamlined style first exemplified by Transat’s very modern interiors of the *Ile de France* in 1927, is more in keeping with Le Corbusier’s modern “machine for living” than was the overstuffed, chaotic pastiche *Aquitania*, whose elegant but strong silhouette and uncluttered promenade decks Le Corbusier praised. Yet while Le Corbusier and H. G. Wells (judging by the latter’s praise for massive liners in “The Outline of History”) might have praised the ship Waugh dreams up for *Brideshead Revisited*, and while Waugh’s descriptions are permeated by the rhetoric promulgated in liner publicity and extended in mass newspapers and magazines like *The Illustrated London News* and *Popular Mechanics*, Charles Ryder’s scathing allusions to the streamlined interior design buttress the modernist critique of the ideology of scale (exemplified by Joseph Conrad’s post-*Titanic* editorials). Charles recalls his frustration:

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95 Consider, for example, Joseph Conrad’s chastisement of the White Star Line in his “Some Reflections on the Loss of the Titanic.” Conrad critiques the tendency to create “45,000 ton hotel of thin steel plates” as a safety hazard because “[y]ou can’t...make a ship of such dimensions as strong proportionately as much as a smaller one” [217-8]). H. G. Wells, however, in his 1919 “The Outline of History,” disagrees with both Charles Ryder and Joseph Conrad. Wells enthuses, “Before the nineteenth century there were no ships in the world much over 2,000 tons burthen; now there is nothing wonderful about a 50,000-ton liner. There are people who sneer at this kind of progress as being a progress in “mere size” but that sort of sneering merely marks the intellectual limitations of those who indulge in it. The great ship or the steel-frame building is not, as they imagine, a magnified version of the small ship or building of the past; it is a thing different in kind, more lightly and strongly built, of finer and stronger materials; instead of being a thing of precedent and rule-of-thumb, it is a thing of subtle and intricate calculation” (360).

96 See the account of the maiden voyage of the German ship, HAPAG’s *Imperator*, in John Maxtone-Graham’s *The Only Way to Cross* (105-9), or, in the same text, the American reception of Transat’s new *Normandie* (284-6).
I turned into some of the halls of the ship, which were huge without any splendor, passed through vast bronze gates whose ornament was like the trade mark of a cake of soap which had been used once or twice; I trod carpets the color of blotting paper; the walls were like blotting paper, too: kindergarten work; and between the walls were yards and yards of biscuit-colored wood which no carpenter’s tool had ever touched, all over the blotting-paper carpet were strewn tables designed perhaps by a sanitary engineer, upholstered, it seemed, in blotting paper also; the light of the hall was suffused from scores of hollows, giving an even glow, casting no shadows — the whole place hummed from its hundred ventilators and vibrated with the turn of the great engines below. (236-7)

Charles deflates the aura of majesty around this Queen Mary clone (the passage takes inspiration not only from famous ship’s paneling and sophisticated lighting systems but also reproduces bronze-work on its doors to the extra-tariff restaurant) by suggesting that for all the impressive array of mechanical technology (the engines and ventilators) and advances in hygiene (the sanitary engineers), the interior design principles used for the ship render true craftsmanship obsolete and actually elevates banal, cheap, ephemeral, mass-produced commodities (the biscuits, the blotting paper) into aesthetic principles in their own right. Such design is so aesthetically unappealing, Charles claims, that it visually neutralizes the human achievement encoded in the ship’s immense scale. Furthermore, when considered from the perspective of a passenger navigating the spaces, it ironically forces the first-class passenger to take a prolonged tour of a modern waste land—a landscape of used and discarded commodities.97

Charles harshly concludes, “Here I am, I thought, back from the jungle, back from the ruins. Here, where wealth is no longer gorgeous and power has no dignity” (237). His comparison suggests to me that the upshot of his trip to the jungle, the publication of his Ryder’s

97 Intriguingly, Waugh here prophesies the work of Joe Farcus, Carnival Cruise Lines’s chief interior designer, known for his Andy Warhol-inspired pastiches, which John Maxtone-Graham calls “total-immersion escapism” that risks being “a disposable, instantly biodegradeable conceit” (Crossing and Cruising 44, 51). In particular, Cats, a bar on the Carnival Fantasy (1990), is furnished entirely by enlarged replicas of famous food packaging and everyday commodities—Ronzoni spaghetti boxes, Ritz cracker boxes, Coca-Cola bottle-caps—and is decorated by giant Tide boxes, Campbell tomato soup cans, and (behind the actual bar) a massive Goodyear tire. Farcus’s tongue-in-cheek commodity fantasy-land, which one may compare to drinking in a very clean, large, and colorful trashcan, consciously celebrates what Waugh condemns as the Queen Mary’s tacit and subdued commodity aesthetic.
Latin America, with its intricate paintings of Native American monuments, would have been meant as a stinging (if nostalgic) counterpoint to the paintings and sketches of liners and cruisers that I discuss above and in the next chapter. More than nostalgia, though, Charles’s critique of the ship’s maritime manifestations of wealth and power in this scene offers an interesting insight into the intricate social economy constructed in response to (and one might say in opposition to) the shipping companies’ bland but efficient investment in the economy of scale as their primary principle of design. Take, for example, the Americanization of drinks on board virtually every major shipping line after the turn of the center; no matter what country their ship is registered in or what countries they travel to, shipping lines established American-style bars and provided ice for each drink. This latter innovation was initially an expensive luxury detail, an exotic selling point meant to lure American middle-class passengers, but made cheaper through an economy of scale that made it simpler, paradoxically, to serve iced (rather than un-iced) drinks. When Charles requests, “A whiskey and soda, not iced,” the steward replies, “I'm sorry, sir, all the soda is iced.” When the predictable answer to his next question, “Is the water iced too?” is given by the steward—“Oh yes, sir”—he gives up, sighing, “Well, it doesn't matter” (237). This passage highlights the irrationality of shipping lines’s treatment of ice, a paradoxical luxury one is compelled to accept, a desirable “extra” that the passenger cannot not enjoy. The iced drink’s transition from a luxury option into a mass-produced axiomatic underscores the ironic limitations of grandeur, which “makes” everyone “behave like a film star” (251). But this rigid structure of mandatory indulgence, dictated by liners’ boards of directors, executed promulgated by carefully conceived publicity shots, and materialized in countless adjustments to the physical structure of the ship, is nonetheless permeable, as Charles discovers when his steward returns “with whiskey and two jugs, one of iced water, the other of boiling water” for Charles to mix to the perfect
temperature. When the steward officiously assures him, “I'll remember that's how you take it, sir,” Charles cynically reflects, “Most passengers had fads; he was paid to fortify their self-esteem” (238) The default universalization of shipboard drinks gives Charles a momentary inconvenience, but this difficulty, by placing a premium on individualization, provides an ideal opportunity for a steward to earn extra tips by showing off his ingenuity and attention to specific passengers. The de-individualization of the ocean liner, in effect, bolsters a sub-economy of spontaneous tips (distinct from the normal tips given traditionally at the end of the voyage) based on ceremonies of re-individualization. In this case, not only is Charles re-individualized as an aficionado of British whiskies (which, unlike American whiskies, are not meant to be drunk with ice), but also the steward (whose exaggerated attention while watching Charles mix the two waters is more a display of showmanship than efficiency) is re-individualized, if as only a more attentive and flamboyantly professional steward than others aboard the ship.

Though the ship, a liminal space mediating Charles’s return to England from the jungle, tortures him with its modern architecture and design, it does temporarily allow the disillusioned Charles Ryder to experience love again with Julia Mottram, the sister of Sebastian Flyte, his first love. Looking again at the blotting-paper squares as he contemplates the irrational necessity of accepting ice, he suddenly recognizes Julia sitting in one, made invisible by the color scheme. He explains that he and Julia had fallen apart, as one could in England and only there, into separate worlds, little spinning planets of personal relationship; there is probably a perfect metaphor for the process to be found in physics.... [W]e could live in the same street in London, see...the same rural horizon, could have a liking for the other, a mild curiosity about the other's fortunes, a regret, even that we should be separated, and the knowledge that either of us had only to pick up the telephone...yet be restrained from doing so by the centripetal force of our own worlds, and the cold, interstellar space between them. (235-6)
Though she ship’s modern interior initially hides Julia from his vision (just as the ice axiomatic, the modern compulsion to have ice in all drinks, initially positions Charles in the steward’s point of view as no passenger in particular), the ship is a necessary condition for them meeting again, for overcoming that social “centripetal force” he finds as constricting and inviolable as a scientific law. Charles reflects that his social life in England, run by Celia in such a way to maximize his professional reputation, prevents him from seeing Julia because the latter is “not connected in any way with painting or the arts or with anything except herself” (239). Despite profit-minded restrictions we have seen predetermining the allocation of the ocean liner’s material resources, modern ocean liners and cruise ships had a reputation for facilitating, hastening, inverting, and intensifying social relations that by the publication of Brideshead Revisited, this facility was regarded as so self-evident as to approach platitude. Reflecting on Celia’s party, for example, Charles invokes scientific law to convey this impression of inevitability:

Another woman said: 'Isn't it heaven saying goodbye and knowing we shall meet again in half an hour and go meeting every half hour for days?' Our guests began to go, and each on leaving informed me of something my wife had promised to bring me in the near future; it was the theme of the evening that we should all be seeing a lot of each other, that we had formed of of those molecular systems that physicists can illustrate. (244)

Charles’s theory that social mores are as inflexible as scientific laws reflects his own sense of loss, his nostalgic wish to return to comprehensible social worlds, but the actual events on the ship suggest the continued presence of serendipitous or inconsequential social interactions that

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upsets any perceived rigidity or predetermination in the ship’s social organization. For instance, the swan, despite being one of hundreds, despite playing a fixed role in the socioeconomic system linking Celia with her personal steward, attracts unexpected drama, not only nearly causing Celia and Charles to have a public fight (“I believe you've taken against my bird,” she accuses him [234]) but also drawing an uninvited guest (attracted by the caviar in its wings), about whose identity they speculate copiously the next night at dinner—until that speculation itself causes an amusing spectacle (in which an American senator is led to believe that Charles and Celia are, at the very least, deranged). They only partially discover the identity of this mysterious stranger when, disembarking at Southampton, they see him being arrested, though it is unclear whether it is because he was a stowaway or had committed another crime before stowing away to avoid apprehension. This image of the gangway arrest also appears in Agatha Christie’s *Death on the Nile*, although in Waugh’s novel, this arrest is superfluously dramatic, another curious but irrelevant detail (similar to Celia’s introduction of Charles to two famous Hollywood producers, brought up once and then forgotten) that presents the space of the ocean liner as so endlessly productive of dramatic occurrences that they exceed the narrative capacity of a single novel. At the same time Charles’s life is forever changed by falling in love with Julia, a constellation of tangential details, minor characters, and unexpected events appear with the same ease and frequency that they disappear.

The prodigious narrative and social productivity of the ocean liner is compounded by the force of the sick day—what I identify as a recurring trope in leisure fiction, the one obligatory stormy day that forces all but a hardy, special few flee to their rooms or cabins. In fiction about cruise ships or ocean liners, turbulence from wind and wave causes the ship to roll (from side to
side) and pitch (up and down) and most of its passengers to experience sea-sickness and attempt recovering by fasting and resting in bed. All passengers, of course, except the “good sailors,” still free to mill about with the few lucky others. In fiction about seaside or mountain-top resorts, storms or excessive heat or cold cause leisure-seekers to congregate around fires or fans inside of hotels and around bars or restaurants providing cold or hot drinks, except for those who have reason to seek the near-privacy of the deserted public outdoor facilities for sport or relaxation. The sick day is a (literally) heaven-sent reorganization of characters, often ideologically presented as separating the weak from the strong, and often working as a particularly convenient plot device for engineering unlikely but intimate encounters. Examples include Virginia Woolf’s *The Voyage Out*, in which a storm provides the privacy for Richard Dalloway’s disastrous kiss; E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India*, in which excessive heat drives Mrs. Moore from the Marabar Caves, leaving Adela alone with Aziz; and D. H. Lawrence’s *Women in Love*, where the bitter cold allows Gudrun and Gerald to face off in near-solitude. An interesting variation of this trope is worthy of mention here. In Mark Twain’s travelogue *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), the sick day is, in fact, the first day of the cruise, a comical inversion of the more typical narrative pattern whereby the sick day occurs only once characters have been established. Consequently, the first illustration readers encounter of the *Quaker City* is not a typical “glamor shot” showing a sparkling clean ship dominating a serene ocean, with majestic clouds of smoke emanating from funnels, but instead a dismaying shot of a vessel in the middle of a vicious thunderstorm, pitching backwards so that it looks in the midst of sinking, stern-first, with a pitifully truncated

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99 Waugh counted himself among the number of lucky ones. In a letter to his daughters on a cruise to Bermuda in 1955, he wrote, “The weather has been awfully bad at sea too but we have not been starved—caviar every night. It has been so rough that most of the passengers have lain in the cabins groaning. Not so your old sturdy papa, who has sauntered about blowing cigar smoke in everyone’s face and eating a lot... There is a poor old journalist named Beverley Nichols on board who has...come on to this ship purely in the hope of sun-bathing and acquiring a sun-tan. It has been far too stormy for him to venture out on deck and he is in tears of disappointment” (*Letters* 437). Incidentally, it is this cruise that Waugh is able to experience as “an effective health resort” (439).
wisp of smoke over the single funnel. Impervious to seasickness, Twain notes that “to have his stomach behave itself” was “peculiarly and insufferably self-conceited” of him (18) but does meet his fellow passengers, who, one by one, crawl up to main deck to retch overboard. When one after another stranger pitches into his arms while stumbling out from the boathouse, Twain, ignoring the intimacy thus established, formally introduces himself to each stranger (Fig. 16). Twain’s text and accompanying illustration not only drives home Douglas Hart’s argument (which I discuss further in the next chapter) that the remarkably informal social relations on ocean liners were originally developed in response to the danger and discomfort that historically characterized transatlantic crossings, but also suggests that the intensified or exceptional social license that typically accompanies a “sick day” or “storm day” is similarly rooted in its appeal to

Fig. 16. Mark Twain insisting on a formal handshake from a sick passenger. (Source: http://etext.virginia.edu/)

a more simple, fundamental human camaraderie in the face of an uncertain sea.
But as *Brideshead Revisited* demonstrates, another, at least equally likely result of the sick day is not enhanced sociability, but, at least for those who are seasick, a retrenchment around re-individualization in the cell of the individual berth—a situation subtly suggested by Charles’s ominous observation that during the first night of a particularly prolonged storm, “The band played but no one danced” (248). This re-individualization is perhaps more dramatically exemplified by the sick-day behavior of Charles’s wife Celia. Charles recalls that bringing a supplementary delivery of flowers brought into her room perfected

the atmosphere of a maternity ward which she had managed to create in the cabin; the stewardess had the air of a midwife, standing by the bed, a pillar of starched linen and composure. My wife turned her head on the pillow and smiled wanly; she stretched out a bare arm and caressed with the tips of her fingers the cellophane and silk ribbons of the largest bouquet. “How sweet people are,” she said faintly, as thought the gale were a private misfortune of her own which the world in its love was condoling. (251)

For Celia, the dramatic possibilities afforded by the sick day are not social but individual, although to do so, she must develop a relationship with the stewardess akin to that of a private lady’s maid (for example, by complimenting her by name to Charles). Making the storm “a private misfortune of her own which the world in its love was condoling,” Celia not only redefines her relationship with the stewardess in a way that makes her feel special, but also finds an entity that will give her the intense emotional attachment refused to her by her husband. In the case of the good sailors, however, the sick day’s effect is essentially social, as the few hardy survivors are all “bound together by a camaraderie of reciprocal esteem” (252). When Charles and Julia (also a good sailor) happen across another passenger in good health, the latter, “our new friend,” quickly introduces himself, then philosophizes,
Nothing like a bit of rough weather for bringing people together. This is my tenth crossing, and I've never seen anything like it...When you get a storm like this you find out what people are really made of...what I mean is, it makes for getting together....Take us for example. But for this we might never have met. I've had some very romantic encounters at sea in my time. If the lady will excuse me, I'd like to tell you about a little adventure I had in the Gulf of Lyons when I was younger than I am now.... (253-4)

“Our new friend,” perhaps trying to earn more credibility as a veteran sailor, uses the storm as a pretext for telling yarns, revealing that if Charles’s recollection of the transatlantic crossing gathers previously unknown threads of tangential plots, the storm to be an even more fertile provocation for production of narratives. The ideology of the good sailor—that the healthy passengers are the better passengers—gives universal, unimpeachable social credit to those thrown precipitously together by the storm. When the stranger remarks that “but for this we might never have met,” it explains the necessity of having a good sailor ideology to create a connection among strangers whose only link is the storm itself. And in fact, once the weather improves, the stranger is never seen again.

With Julia Mottram and Charles Ryder, however, whose acquaintance significantly predates the crossing, readers might expect the heightened sociability of the ocean liner to reignite their friendship, but it actually takes a “sick day” to help him shed Celia and thereby bring him together with Julia. By manipulating the public features of the ship—knowing, for example, where her cabin is, and knowing which particular elevator she would have to take, and at what time, to reach the regularly scheduled midday meal—Charles finds her as soon as he knows Celia to be confined to her cabin. Their entrance into the restaurant is dangerous because of the hated bronze soap discs. “The great bronze doors of the lounge had torn away from their hooks,” he recalls, “and were swinging free with the roll of the ship and, it seems, irresistibly, first open, then the other, opened and shut” (252). This moment, first and foremost, illustrates
why such doors are impractical for seagoing vessels; these bronze doors constitute another of the
decorative elements of the *Queen Mary*, which I have discussed above, that hold only a mediated
or reified relation to the sea. With its superfluous weight, this collection of bronze trellis-work
and plaques bearing representations by Walter and Donald Gilbert of both real and mythological
sea-creatures, disregards (or even flies in the face of) the very forces, the wind, water, rain, that
the sea-creatures are depicted fighting (Fig. 17). The ship thematizes but fails to protect against
the forces of the sea, rendering Waugh’s terrifying scene (in which a slow passenger may be
“caught by [a] swift, final blow”) an ironic commentary on the *Queen Mary*’s self-mythologizing
that dovetails nicely with the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*-like criticism levied by Joseph Conrad
of the impracticality of the Edwardian floating hotels. But this danger—created by Cunard’s
Fig. 17. The Queen Mary’s bronze doors by Walter and Donald Gilbert. (Courtesy National Maritime Museum, UK)
disbelief that such storms could rock the giantess Queen Mary and buoyed by the increasing
tendency to repress the nautical facts of crossing—paradoxically delivers during storms a test for
good sailors, with its “great weight of uncontrolled metal, flapping to and fro, which might have
made a timid man flinch.” With Julia’s impermeability (and Celia’s vulnerability) to seasickness
to thank for delivering her into his company, it is little wonder that he remarks as they pass the
gates (which are no longer merely decorative, but truly functioning gates delineating a
formidable and effective physical boundary between the weak and the strong), “I rejoiced to feel
Julia's hand perfectly steady on my arm and know...she was wholly undismayed” (252).

The storm continues to bring the two together. Awe-struck, Charles explains, “I had
shaken off some of the dust and grit of ten dry years...I still stood on the extreme verge of love,”
the drama of their near-solitude on the massive ship compensating for the “half sentences, single
words, stock phrases of contemporary jargon” they use for conversation (253). At times, in fact,
it seems as though the ship and storm actively collude in their affair:

As we made our halting, laborious way forward, away from the flying smuts of the
smokestack, we were alternately jostled together, then strained, nearly sundered, arms
and fingers interlocked as I held the rail and Julia clung to me, thrust together again,
drawn apart; then, in a plunge deeper than the rest, I found myself flung across her,
pressing her against the rail, warding myself off her with the arms that held her prisoner
on their side, and as the ship paused at the end of its drop as though gathering strength for
the ascent, we stood thus embraced, in the open, cheek against cheek.... (260)

With the pitching and rolling of the ship forcing them passively into the rhythm of sexual
intercourse and a dramatic pantomime of masculine protection, it hardly surprising that Julia
turns to him at that moment and says, simply, “Yes, now.” When they arrive at her cabin, he feels
spiritually gratified that “now, while the waves still broken and thundered on the prow, the act of
possession was a symbol, a rite of ancient origin and solemn meaning,” while Julia, similarly
drawing attention to the spatial conditions of their affair, asks, “Oh, dear...where can we hide in fair weather, we orphans of the storm?” (ibid). Both of them draw on images from the ship and storm to invest their spatially contingent affair with a sense of profound meaning and predestination; meanwhile, what appears to be missing from these descriptions are many of the values associated with modern leisure—pleasure, spontaneity, and singularity—despite the pains Waugh takes to contextualize their relationship in the particulars of the luxury liner. In another conversation that also attempts to overwrite or recode this leisure dimension to their relationship, Julia (also unhappily married, with one aborted attempt at an affair on her conscience) theorizes, “I’ve been punished a little for marrying Rex. You see, I can’t get all that sort of thing out of my mind—Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, Nanny Hawkins, and the Catechism. It becomes a part of oneself.... Now I suppose I shall be punished for what I’ve just done. Perhaps that is why you and I are here together like this...part of a plan” (259). Julia’s nascent return to Catholicism is clearly foreshadowed in this speech, with her religion working in terms of a narrative logic of cause-and-effect morality contrasting with the leisure logic of contingency and pleasure.

The symbolism of Julia’s self-flagellation works by invoking the tragedy of the Savior, casting their shipboard romance as the sacrificial lamb paying for the sins of Julia’s first attempt at an extramarital affair. Similarly, Charles attempts to recode their affair in weighty terms of tragic destiny; trying to account for the solitude of the ocean liner sick day, he explains, “[W]e were alone as though the place had been cleared for us, as though tact on a Titanic scale had sent everyone tiptoeing out to leave us to one another” (255). Charles’s unexpected invocation of the Titanic (not unlike the Queen Mary 2’s own tribute) sets up an uneasy parallel between his shipboard romance and the harsh statistics of the maritime tragedy (1,517 dead; 706 survivors), particularly because the Titanic’s final moments above sea were characterized by indecision,
confusion, and belated action rather than “tact” and “tiptoeing.” Charles’s comment might constitute another of the examples I gave above of the modern steamship’s mediated and repressed relation to sailing, but alternatively, the comparison could mean that he and Julia are like doomed crewmen or third-class passengers rather than the first- and second-class passengers heading for the inadequate number of lifeboats. This suggestion is supported by the novel’s subsequent line, about “two seaman” trying to fix the bronze doors and in the process being “injured and removed to the sick-bay.” We might also identify Charles’s rationale for this egregiously exaggerated comparison by interpreting it as somewhat ponderous symbol for the outbreak of World War II (“The gale which, unheard, unseen, unfelt, in our enclosed and insulated world, had for an hour been mounting over us” [247]). Even so, the Titanic allusion works best rhetorically as crystallization or preservation of their fleeting affair by fixing it to a more famous tragedy. In doing so, Charles has adopted both Celia’s habit of egocentric interpretation and Julia’s tragic symbolism of sacrifice. More specifically, Charles reproduces in dyadic form Celia’s attitude that the storm is a “private misfortune” giving the world a chance to show its love for her—another moment when the characters of Brideshead Revisited (similar to those of The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold, which I discuss below) prefer to suffer a meaningful tragedy than enjoy an apparently meaningless comedy. This inflated sense of the individual or dyad organizes the ship’s material and human resources as a series of dramas of personhood.

This tendency is no more apparent than in the scene from which my subheading (“behaving like a film star”) is taken. Charles and Julia speak often of the ship’s luxuries, which both abhor but yield to during this stormy time that allows Charles to escape his wife and take up

100 For an account of the Titanic and the “aura of surrealistic calm” (67) surrounding the moments before its sinking, see Maxtome-Graham, The Only Way to Cross (62-77).
with Julia. They explicitly characterize their unwonted use of the ship’s amenities as a curious personal transformation. When Charles regifts to her flowers, dozens of red roses “with no smell at all,” that have been sent for Celia, Julia calls him to chastise him, “What a deplorable thing to do, Charles! How unlike you!” (250), and later calls them “embarrassing” (251) and “a shock” to receive (253). Yet, in spite of this modesty, when he asks her when they will next meet, she answers, “Before lunch. I’m busy with a masseuse.... Yes, isn't it peculiar. I've never had one before, except once when I hurt my shoulder hunting. What is is about being on a boat that makes everyone behave like a film star?” (251). As the only lady aboard the ship who is well enough to leave her cabin during the storm (“You’re the first lady I’ve seen,” a stranger remarks [252]), Julia begins to attract the type of reception that film stars were, at this period, accustomed to receiving on an ocean liner. Hours later, when asked if they would like champagne at ten o’clock in the morning, Julia responds, “D'you know, the awful thing is I would like champagne very much? What a life of pleasure—roses, half an hour with a female pugilist, and now champagne,” and Charles confides in her, “I shaved in bed” (253). As I have indicated above, the simultaneity of their romance and their temptation to give into the luxury of the ship is no coincidence at all; both represent the licensed bending of social conduct deemed appropriate on a cruise ship and doubly appropriate on a sick day, whose clarion call to enjoy leisurely luxuries (which they have earned by joining the ranks of the few “good sailors”) is too tempting for them to ignore. By rigorously disavowing any implication that they are acting like film stars, they actively strive to separate the material, spatial, and temporal conditions of of their behavior from their sense of fixed personal identity. In alienating the very leisure they continue to enjoy, they paradoxically alienate the conditions of their own romance. Thus, in spite their willingness to lard the relationship with the preservative of tragic allusions (Julia to Jesus Christ, Evelyn to the
Titanic, and Waugh to World War II), their relationship lasts precisely as long as they enjoy this unaccustomed leisure. They disembark intending to marry, but their romance dissipates.

**Brideshead, Literary Theory, and the Ship as Hybrid Actor**

Julia, of course, regards her decision to leave Charles as a necessary corollary of her return to Catholicism after her father’s deathbed conversion, while Charles regards it in within the larger context of his long and varied history with the Brideshead estate. Patrick Denman Flanery outlines several hypotheses regarding her ejection from the novel, including non-narrative reasons (such as the squeamishness of British censors and Waugh’s misogyny) and narrative reasons (to establish Ryder’s unreliability and to maintain the aesthetic balance required by the plot trajectory), ultimately couching the issue as a function of Waugh’s difficult navigation of sex scenes. Modernist scholarship on space—in particular, scholarship inspired by Andrew Thacker’s *Moving through Modernity* and the essays of Peter Brooker and Thacker’s *Geographies of Modernism*—might suggest that *Brideshead Revisited’s* liner constitutes a unique space whose qualities both symbolize and enact the forces of modernization. And indeed, this thesis would account for much of the phenomena I discuss above, although when we consider that the romance fails when Julia and Charles return to solid ground, this implication of a powerful spatial causality is certainly not very persuasive, as spatial causality seems to lack a capacity to effect permanent change. Part of this ambiguity, I argue, is due to a lack of clarity concerning what, exactly, counts as the space of the “ship.” Does this only include the shape of its hull, superstructure, and decks, as well as the material arrangement of art, furniture, nooks, and windows in cabins or public rooms? Are we also referring to its capacity to sail and circulate, with its attendant feeling of being in stateless, liminal nowhere? And to the set of natural forces

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101 “Brideshead Re-positioned: Re-ma(r)king Text and Tone in Film Adaptation,” 202.
conditioning the ship’s movement, including the ozone, salty sea breezes, and North Atlantic storms associated with the crossing? The distinctive temporal rhythm of passengers’ daily life onboard, with its difference underlined by the presence of captain, crew, purser, chef, stewards, bartenders, masseuses, engineers, and other employees?

Because it fails to address such questions, the space theory from which Andrew Thacker, Peter Brooker, and other modernist scholars draw from is not sufficient, I argue, to account for the phenomenon of the ocean liner or for its narrative uses for modernist artists and writers. Although Henri Lefebvre’s theory of the social production of space certainly hinges around incorporating layers of material, discursive, behavioral, and ideological aspects of space, the literary criticism inspired by The Production of Space does not seriously consider the complex definition of space that emerges from such layering. To theorize the “sick day” behavior of Celia, Julia, and Charles during a transatlantic crossing, we need a more supple (and perhaps fresher) account of space that speaks to the phenomenon I have been tracing in the novel—the mediation of individuation through the spatially inflected system of steamship etiquette. To continue teasing out the implications and significance of the growing consensus in modernism that (to use Franco Moretti’s thesis in The Atlas of the European Novel) “geography is not an inert container, but an active force...that pervades the literary field and shapes it in depth” (3), I suggest connecting the insights of space theory (Bachelard, Harvey, Soja, et al) to the current academic conversation inspired by Bruno Latour’s actor-network theory. This conversation includes not only the growth of ANT (actor-network theory) itself,102 but also the nascent philosophical school of “object oriented ontology” elaborated in the work of Greg Harman, including Tool-Being, which

102 For a lengthier accounts of ANT, refer to John Law and John Hassard’s Actor Network Theory and After and for an account of ANT’s larger context in academia and philosophy, see Steven C. Ward’s Reconfiguring Truth: Postmodernism, Science Studies, and the Search for a New Model of Knowledge.
leverages his reading of Being and Time into an argument that “the liberation of objects from the philosophical ghetto to which they have been confined for far too long” (11), as well as his book on Latour (Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics, 2009).

In the immediate context of modernist literary criticism, as early as 1997, Lisa Tickner briefly alludes to actor-network theory to analyze Wyndham Lewis and avant-garde visual culture, and in 2002, Mark Morrisson advised modernist scholars to investigate works of science studies and science-studies influenced social science texts, including those covering actor-network theory, in order to illuminate “the complex cultural weave of science during the dizzying scientific paradigm shifts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (679). As recent as MSA11 conference (2009), Rita Felski brought Latour to modernist scholars’ attention in her paper “Context Stinks: Rethinking Temporality” (in the "Trans-Temporality" panel with Claire Colebrook and Wai-Chee Dimock), although these tentative explorations have not so far been followed up by others. Perhaps the most prominent analysis of modernist literary criticism that shares the reevaluation of subject-object relations in Latour’s work is in the object-centered criticism of Douglas Mao’s Solid Objects: Modernism and the Test of Production and Bill Brown’s thing theory, including his wonderful essay “The Secret Life of Things (Virginia Woolf and the Matter of Modernism).” Brown’s attempt to escape the metaphysics of subject-object duality in favor of the thing, or in other words, his goal “to liberate material objects” (1)—suggestively recalls Latour’s thesis in “On Technical Mediation” that subjectivity and objectivity are not opposed, they grow together, and they grow irreversibly together. The challenge to our philosophy, social theory, and morality is to invent political institutions that can absorb this much history, this huge spiraling movement, this destiny, this fate.... At the

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very least, I hope to have convinced you that, if our challenge is to be met, it will not be met by considering artifacts as things. They deserve better. They deserve to be housed in our intellectual culture as full-fledged social actors. (64)

While this colorful rhetoric (shared by Brown and Latour) risks fetishizing the object—treating objects almost like a oppressed group whose civil rights and fair representation academics must fight to reestablish—it does share some intellectual ground with space theory’s own attempt to decentralize the subject or the human. The work that I think comes closest to overcoming subject-object dualism by creating a truly alternative account of agency (and simultaneously suggesting a new way to approach the idea of space) is Latour’s essay “A Collective of Humans and Nonhumans” (found in his collection *Pandora’s Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*). Rather than privileging subject or object, he theorizes, “Action is simply not a property of humans but of *an association of actants*” (182). In this dispersed model of agency, action results from a collective of humans and nonhumans, a “entangled” collective whose effectiveness relies on mutually reciprocal, but generally temporary and processual, relationships among actants (175). Asking, “who, with a knife in her hand, has not wanted to stab something?,” Latour argues that subjects change as they interact with objects by reacting to “scripts” encoded in the objects that thereby “take hold of passersby and force them to play roles in its stories” (177). Using a gun for another example, he concludes, “You are different with a gun in your hand; the gun is different with you holding it. You are another subject because you hold the gun; the gun is another object because it has entered into a relationship with you” (179). But even more fundamentally, Latour argues, it makes little sense, in terms of agency, to speak as if the gun and the shooter preexist the action; before the trigger is pulled, the gun and shooter are both *propositions* (rather than subject and object) because “an agent results from the fusion of the two,” a hybrid actor created from two propositions (178). As a result, “responsibility for action
must be shared among the various actants” because each one is “allowed, authorized, enabled, afforded by the others” (180, 182). For space theorists and literary critics whose work is informed by space theory, Latour’s most relevant example is his description of a speed bump, which he develops in order to explain his concept of delegation, a specific interaction of actants in which “meaning...[is] translated into another kind of expression” (187). In the following passage, he addresses a theme of central interest to space theorists—how spaces influence the people moving within them—by describing the dispersion of human will in matter by delegation and the “swerve” or detour human behavior makes in response to specific distributions of matter, including spatial features:

The engineers’ program is delegated in concrete.... We have not abandoned meaningful human relations and abruptly entered a world of brute material relations—although this might be the impression of drivers.... This shift is not from discourse to matter because, for the engineers, the speed bump is one meaningful articulation within a gamut of propositions from which they are not free to choose.... The speed bump is ultimately not made of matter; it is full of engineers and chancellors and lawmakers, commingling their wills and their story lines with those of gravel, concrete, paint, and standard calculations. (190)

It is fairly easy to translate this passage into the space of the ocean liner, with its multiplicity of materially encoded actants, including people, objects, techniques, and discourses, with its particular spaces that act as propositions or “story lines” affecting the future even while they express the choices and wills of past actants. Latour ends his speed bump anecdote by concluding that it rejects the *Homo faber* story of Hegel and Marx, in which man is produced by his ability to exert his will on inert matter, in favor of “a zone where some, though not all of the characteristics of pavement become policemen, and some, though not all, of the characteristics of policemen become speed bumps” (190). To say that the combination of a ship-actant and a North Atlantic storm-actant encodes tropes that work on Celia, Julia, and Charles, then, is to express
Latour’s thesis on the plane of the ocean liner. To push this idea only a little further, I argue that the narrative logic of *Brideshead Revisited* presents the modern steamship as a single agent, one of these “collectives of human and non-human actants” through which narrative events can occur. Under this perspective, both Celia’s hyper-individualist hypothesis that the storm was a “private misfortune” and Charles’s equally extreme dyadic absorption (his comment that all of the ship’s passengers sickened so that he might romance Julia in solitude) are simultaneously absurd and accurate—absurd, because the hybrid agency of the collective admits of no unique humanist individual, and even the heroism of being a good sailor is a partially scripted role; accurate, because the conceits reflect the dramatic singularity of the collective (the narrative trope of the sick day “delegated” in terms of this specific couple on this specific crossing) as contingent upon millions of tangible and intangible actants. Little wonder, then, that Julia and Charles fall apart when they exit the ship; back on land, as Julia’s father dies, Brideshead—a mansion, a park, a position relative to London, Oxford, and South America, a set of servants and inhabitants, a labyrinth of arterial hallways and node-like rooms, a collection of objects and memories, a set of invisible provocations and interdictions—constitutes its own collective with new affordances and vastly different narrative possibilities. During the transatlantic crossing, the liner forms an indispensable actant for catalyzing Julia and Charles’s romance, and similarly, for the ship, Julia and Charles were also were an indispensable actant, like, in fact, a pair of film stars, whose luxurious treatment at the hands of the ship is less a mark of their profundity or individuality than it is another part of the script.

104 Interestingly, *Cognition in the Wild*, by cognitive scientist Edwin Hutchins, argues that the role of the bridge is a single actant comprised of multiple agents acting out diverse sailor scripts.
Chapter 7
The Uses to Which a Ship is Put: Le Corbusier, Vita Sackville-West, and Transnational Modernism

For this—the promise to sate the part of me that always and only WANTS—is the central fantasy [Celebrity Cruise’s] brochure is selling. The thing to notice is that the real fantasy here isn’t that this promise will be kept but that such a promise is keepable at all. This is a big one, this lie. And of course I want to believe it; I want to believe that maybe this ultimate fantasy vacation will be enough pampering, that this time the luxury and pleasure will be so completely and faultlessly administered that my infantile part will be sated at last.

My epigraph comes from the titular story of David Foster Wallace’s essay collection *A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again* (1997), originally named “Shipping Out: On the (Nearly Lethal) Comforts of a Luxury Cruise” written on commission for *Harper’s Magazine* in 1996. Based on a Celebrity cruise of the Caribbean (for which *Harper’s*, like the P&O for Thackeray and the Bergen Line for Waugh, paid handsomely), Wallace’s essay attempts to theorize the two apparently unrelated cultural associations with cruising: luxury and death. His account of the cruise’s nonstop pampering, even as it critiques such pampering as so infantilizing that it prepares voyagers for death, is, I argue, nonetheless structured by the same maximalism also present in Celebrity brochures and advertisements. What Wallace faces on the cruise is in fact the affective limit of capital: in a closed environment of pure luxury and abundance, the passengers actually experience the elusive dream of wealth promised by capitalism. The more luxuries Wallace encounters, the more details he conscientiously records in his notebook, the more his thoughts turn to shipboard suicides, accidental deaths, and cruise epidemics and viruses. The promises of capital, when fulfilled, the logic of Wallace’s essay hints, leave nothing left to...
the ex-worker but death, whose only way out is in fact writing, narrativizing the experience.

Only the knowledge that he is “on assignment” rather than truly on vacation, with its attendant ability to externalize the experience, to distance himself from the cruise—including his deadpan confession, “I have (very briefly) joined a conga line” (256)—keeps Wallace’s sanity intact.

We have already seen in the preceding chapter that in The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold, both Evelyn Waugh and his alter-ego Gilbert Pinfold reached this conclusion fifty years before Wallace’s Celebrity cruise. But whereas Waugh gave very personal reasons for his morbid thoughts onboard, Wallace’s attempt to generalize, to seek abstractions that will make sense of his own reaction to cruising as a universal experience, and indeed as a veritable existential position, looks to the logic of late capital to explain the unexpected juxtaposition cruising creates between plenitude and death. Although the central literary work I consider in this chapter, No Signposts in the Sea, similarly taps into a deep cultural association of cruising and death, my chief task in the present chapter is to connect the steamship (both liner and cruiser) as a cultural institution to the philosophical, economic, and political structures of modernity. In section one, I will consider Le Corbusier’s experiences with the ocean liner, both professional and personal, as an entry point into the astonishing multiplicity of cultural meanings that liners and cruisers accrued during modernity. Doing so is intended to help measure the distance (if any) between the institutional constraints put on modern leisure, particularly through its subordination to capitalist imperatives and codes of rational architecture, and the perceptions and experiences of modern subjects of leisure. Section two will consider the visual rhetoric of the ocean liner as a technology developing ways to visualize modernity. In it, I analyze various representations of liners circulating in mass media outlets to show that, long before Fredric Jameson called for
cognitive mapping to help postmodern subjects imagine the complex geography of late capitalism, the creation of a massive body of images and texts centered around increasing public knowledge of the unprecedented scale of ocean liners acted as a novel and influential method for imagining or visualizing modernity. This is particularly true for comprehending (or even merely giving an approximation of) the scale of modernity’s economic and demographic flows, including the growth and increasing homogenization of the leisure industry. Finally, in the last section, I read Vita Sackville-West’s last novel, *No Signposts in the Sea*, as an ideal text for the consideration of transnational modernism because protagonist Edmund Carr identifies the cruise ship as a force that converts transnational flows of political views and economic value into aesthetic experiences that command high exchange values. Ultimately, I argue this novel uses the cruise as a stage for watching the fate of empire during the transition between modern and postmodern culture. At the same time that the economic backbone of global flows shifts from the empire-based production and distribution of resources and commodities to the flexible consumption of non-territorialized experiences, leisure (and in particular, the cosmopolitan or transnational leisure of travel) completes its long journey to the center of global economic and demographic flows. Both Waugh and Sackville-West, like Julian Krupa before them, find in the modern steamship a glimpse of the future—making the study of ocean liners and cruise ships relevant, I argue, not only for our modern past, but also for our postmodern present.

**The Supposedly Fun Thing He Did Do Again**

Though David Forster Wallace, judging from his experience on the the Celebrity Zenith, may not have been impressed by ocean liners and cruise ships, the same cannot be said of Le Corbusier, who, despite his buttoned-up, intensely earnest and professional public did enjoy his
voyages on luxury liners. Le Corbusier in fact divulged in a letter to William Ritter on April 7, 1922, “at school, when I was twenty years old, they nicknamed me 'ocean liner.' That hasn't changed.”\textsuperscript{105} The cover of \textit{Towards a New Architecture}, published in 1923 and translated by Frederick Etchells in 1927, reproduces a promotional photograph of the \textit{Aquitania}'s promenade (Fig. 1), a space he glosses as a “satisfying and interesting volume; unity in materials; a fine grouping of the constructional elements, sanely exhibited and rationally assembled” (98). Unlike

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{ Vers une architecture cover.jpg}
\caption{Original cover of Le Corbusier’s \textit{Vers une architecture} (1923), looking down the vista of an Edwardian ocean liner promenade (featuring the Cunarder \textit{Aquitania}, launched 1913). (Image Source: http://exhibits.slpl.org/)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{105} Corbusier writes, “Vous y verrez mes idées sur l’architecture en vous souvenant qu’a l’école a 20 ans on m’avait surnommé ‘Paquebot.’ Ca na pas change” (qtd. in Cohen 14).
Thackeray before him and Waugh and Wallace after him, Le Corbusier was not paid to praise cruising; his lifelong love of ocean liners, as well as his utopian dreams for a sane, rational architecture inspired by them, were rooted in the ships' profit-minded efficiencies. He used the design of ocean liners as inspiration for his machines for living. In *Vers un architecture*, he bases Part 1 of the section “Eyes Which Do Not See” to the ocean liner, illustrated with images of Transat’s *Flandre, Lamoriciere*, and *France*, Canadian Pacific’s *Empress of France* and *Empress of Asia*, as well as further illustrations of the Aquitania’s decks and Verandah Cafe, to illustrate that “the aesthetic which is disengaging itself from the creations of modern industry” is reflected first and foremost in liners, which are “real works of art, for they are based on ‘number,’ that is to say, ‘order’” and therefore signs that “A GREAT EPOCH IS BEGINNING” (89). On a single page, a comparative illustration (Fig. 2), created as a promotional image by the Cunard company, of the *Aquitania*’s silhouette superimposed against images of famous European buildings (such as the Notre Dame and the Arc de Triomphe) is juxtaposed with his proclamation, “Architects move within the narrow limits of academic requirements and in ignorance of new ways of building.... But our daring and masterly constructors of steamships produce palaces in comparison with which cathedrals are tiny things, and they throw them on to the sea!” (92). He champions the ships' formal spareness for being determined by physics and economics, yet this determinism (which he calls “respect for the forces of nature”), he believes is a kind of freedom: “A seriously minded architect,” he advises “will find in a steamship his freedom from an age-long but contemptible enslavement to the past” (103). For example, a picture of the *Empress of France*’s promenade is captioned, “An architecture pure, neat, clear, clean and healthy. Contrast with this our carpets, cushions, canopies, wall-papers, carved and gilt furniture, faded or ‘arty’
colors” (100). The payoff for humanity is immense, he argues; by using “calculation and invention,” along with concrete, steel, and “a sufficiently perfected body of tools,” then mankind can achieve “genuine liberation from the constraints we have till now been subjected to” (286). Yet modern man, despite the spectacular examples of the ocean liners in front of their “eyes which do not see,” still “finds himself living in an old, hostile environment, hindering him from following in his leisure that he pursues in his work, from following in his leisure this organic development of his existence, which is to create a family and...to live an organized family life” (288). Like Pound, Wilde, Lee, and Russell, Le Corbusier wishes to achieve utopian results by bridging the gap between labor and leisure, but the architect’s method of doing so by modeling leisure and domestic life on the modern factory and industrial design, through which “[m]achines will lead to a new order both of work and of leisure” (101), is somewhat different. So too, is the tenor of his conclusion, which warns that because of the gap between domestic and public architecture on the one hand and factory architecture and industrial design on the other,
“Society is filled with a violent desire for something which it may obtain or may not. Everything lies in that...on the attention paid to these alarming symptoms. Architecture or Revolution. Revolution can be avoided” (288). For Corbusier, creating social order through the utopian spread of industrial architecture is not only a source of truly modern beauty but also a human *right*. Around the figure of the ocean liner, then, a cleavage between Le Corbusier and modernist theorists of leisure develops; we see his concern for the marginal populations of modernity—“Do not park your servants under the roof,” he chastises—yet his egalitarian utopianism is no longer tied to the humanist rhetoric of individuation and choice associated with prior modernist projects about leisure. In place of the individualism Lee, Wilde, and Pound asserted would be universally accessible with the advent of a leisure society, Le Corbusier substitutes “the mass production spirit,” which he argues is natural and desirable because “all men have the same organism, the same functions, the same needs” (136). Contemporary academic work on Le Corbusier has not ignored the suggestion in such statements of what Alan Colquhoun has called a “fixation on the *objet type* fulfilling a specialized and often insidiously authoritarian social function” (102). While I do not have the time to review or scholarly background to weigh in on the heated academic debates about Le Corbusier’s utopian or dystopian architectural legacy—Colquhoun nicely reviews this debate within architectural history in his “The Le Corbusier

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106 Interestingly, for his two Depression-era philanthropic projects for the Salvation Army, Le Corbusier directly borrowed from maritime architecture: the first literally, a barge converted into safe, clean housing for transients (which he called a “floating asylum”); the second, the *Cite de Refuge* (often called a “beached ocean liner”) copied the stacked style of ship superstructures and the glass-curtain construction of sheltered promenades to create housing for the urban poor. In doing so, he gives material support for the causal relationship he sets up between social progress and the clean industrial design whose apotheosis, in Le Corbusier’s view, is the ocean liner. For more information about these projects, see Peter Fitting, “Urban Planning/Utopian Dreaming: Le Corbusier’s Chandigarh Today,” Peter Serenyi, “Le Corbusier, Fourier, and the Monastery of Ema,” and Brian Bruce Taylor, *The City of Refuge: Paris, 1929-1933*.

107 For more about this modernist relationship between political progressivism and leisure, see Chapter Two of the present work.
Century,” as does (more recently) Malcolm Miles’s generous and sober assessment of the parallels between Corbusier’s work and fascism in *Urban Avant-Gardes*—to judge by the frequent apparitions of the architect in *Modernism/Modernity*, the issue is of some interest to new modernist studies. Jeffrey Schnapp, for example, links Le Corbusier’s elevation of the engineer with totalitarianism’s imposition of a will from above (“Between Fascism and Democracy”) and Peter Fritzsch locates Le Corbusier’s “regulating line” to be at the heart of Weimar culture (“Nazi Modern”). But perhaps what the controversial architect truly provides for modernist scholarship is an entry point for exploring the relationship between aesthetic production or creativity and the central tension in modern philosophy between the individual and the whole. Take, for instance, this sentence from Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman’s *Modernity and Identity*:

> The paramount figure in modernism is that of the static and abstract model separated from the dynamic ebb and flow of reality. This figure is that of the Cartesian 'I,' of the abstract natural rights of the French Revolution, of Kantian reason, of the unsuccessful blueprints of the worst of orthodox Marxism, of city grids, of Corbusier's *machine à habiter*, of Habermas's ideal speech situation. (1)

Lash and Friedman thus situate Corbusier’s architectural theory as a somewhat circumscribed, clearly articulated and conveniently well-known example of a philosophical facet of modern culture that modernist writers and artists would respond to—certainly a more interesting and useful argument than fixing blame on him. In the spirit of this usage of Le Corbusier, in my

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109 This relationship is found to be central or constitutive in many of the groundbreaking works of new modernist studies, including Marshall Berman’s *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*, Malcolm Bradbury and James MacFarlane’s *Modernisms* collection, Matei Calinescu’s *The Five Faces of Modernism*, Astradur Eysteinsson’s *The Concept of Modernism*, Rita Felski’s *The Gender of Modernity*, and Robert Pippin’s *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem*. 
comparison of his praise of the ocean liner with the leisure theory of Pound, Lee, Russell, and Wilde, I situated as an anomalous variant of a widespread modernist discourse on leisure. Furthermore, what follows below attempts to illuminate Le Corbusier’s own shipboard experience with the “dynamic ebb and flow of reality” Lash and Friedman discuss, distinct from the “static and abstract model” that fills Vers un architecture.

To begin tracing this gap between dynamism and abstraction, model and modern reality, the case Le Corbusier presents in that text for the adequacy of standardized domestic and public spaces is belied by his favorite example of actually existing progressive architecture, the Aquitania, which reproduced the social organization of the early twentieth century. With business owners in first class, white-collar workers and their families in second class, and the dispossessed (emigrants) in steerage, the ship may have looked progressive in Corbusier’s perspective from its exterior views, the ship’s interiors presented a quite different situation. Though Corbusier refuses to park servants in attics, the large liners did crowd both crew and steerage in its dark, damp, and noisy hull. Only after fierce competition for steerage passengers in the first decade of the twentieth century (competition that substituted private but austere cabins for the gender-segregated mass dormitories of steerage) and after the United States restricted immigration in 1921 (which prompted steerage’s conversion into the more genteel “tourist third cabin”)110 would Corbusier’s call for universal spatial dignity be followed. Cunard, trying to emulate White Star Line’s recent success creating an eminently comfortable ship with the Olympic, boasted that the Aquitania featured this new “third class,” but even the spaces of this third class, Le Corbusier’s dream for a sleek new architecture was not at all in evidence (and

110 For more information about this conversion, refer to the first two chapters of John Maxtone-Graham’s Liners to the Sun and to Lorraine Coons and Alexander Varias’s Tourist Third Cabin: Steamship Travel in the Interwar Years.
indeed, as John Maxtone-Graham points out in *Crossing and Cruising*, the *Aquitania*’s promenade deck was in fact asymmetrical [79]). The interiors were created by Arthur Davis, the English partner of the French Charles Mewes, whose successful career of collaboration is best remembered today for their Beaux-Arts Palm Court in the London Ritz.\footnote{I discuss the Ritz’s interiors further in Chapter Five.} Inside, the ship presented a mish-mash of luxurious, rococo, and highly decorated styles, such as the Palladian Lounge and the Carolean Smoking Room. Its most famous room, the lush Restaurant Louis XVI, its walls painted with Italianate cherubs and angels rather than soberly and efficiently paneled (as was the maritime custom), boasted thick blue carpets, marble columns, and bronze Louis XVI ornamentation, with painted-on faux balconies and faux windows. Even this majestic room could not even serve the entire first class—a mistake corrected by dedicating Tudor-style Grill Room to overflow dining, which necessitated Cunard to publish advertisements to correct confused passengers who created chaos in the dining room because they thought Grill was (as its name suggested) an extra-tariff restaurant. In addition, in the post-*Titanic* rush to ensure a sufficiency of lifeboats, last-minute changes in the blueprints necessitated a cascade of adjustments to the cabins, the end result of which was a creation of a class of rooms that were, oddly, neither outside nor inside, having non-working “windows” located at the very tops of the cabin walls. These rooms, constructed as a compromise formation making the best of a bad situation, were unexpectedly popular with guests and commanded an impressive premium.\footnote{For more about the design of the *Aquitania*, see Coons and Varias’s *Tourist Third Cabin* (151-266), Maxtone-Graham’s *Crossing and Cruising* (65-107), and Weallean’s *Designing Liners: A History of Interior Design Afloat* (35-72).} All of this is to say that even Le Corbusier’s pet example, the *Aquitania*, exceeded the boundaries of his architectural theory. Just as post-Gramscian leisure sociology (described in Chris Rojek’s *Decentring Leisure*...
and covered in Chapter One of the present work) points out that leisure experiences always have the capacity to exceed the profit-minded structures of specific modern leisure institutions, the theoretical uses to which Le Corbusier put the ship should not be seen as the horizon of shipboard architecture and experiences.

Or even of his own shipboard experiences. On the Italian liner Giulio Cesare, Corbusier, in spite of “the purposefulness that enchanted him on the Giulio Cesare” (Weber 206) enjoyed the most luxurious suite the ship had to offer. He wrote to his family: “My salon is huge in the purest fake Faubourg St Antoine-Louis XVI. Louis XVI! They cut his head off but he takes his revenge with a resurrection which seems to last forever!” (304). Aboard that same ship moving from Buenos Aires to Sao Paulo in November 1929 was Josephine Baker, and as each came to regard the other as an hardworking, artistic genius unspoiled by fame, a shipboard romance blossomed. At Rio de Janeiro later that month, he watched her perform, and in December, they headed together to Bordeaux on the French ship Lutétia. Was his romance with Baker an anomaly akin to the modern Giulio Cesare’s Louis XVI folly? He claimed that Baker’s performances manifested the rhythm, power, honesty, and anti-traditionalism he sought in architecture, but in addition to this serious estimate of her singing and dancing, their affair took on a decidedly playful valence. One sketch he made on the voyage shows a dapper Corbusier dressed in tropical whites, touring Africa with Josephine smiling at his side. At a shipboard masquerade ball, Baker recalled, “there were two Josephine Bakers, me and...him. He put on blackface with a feather boa” (312). Just as leisure companies argue today that one can become a different person by entering a leisure space, Corbusier too escapes the limitations of his own identity and playfully assumes that of someone whose ethnicity, race, gender, and occupation are
not his own. Baker's son characterized what he had heard of this experience as a political act. With two contiguous but apparently unrelated remarks, he argues, “A boat is a private island, a floating paradise,” which echoes modern cultural associations of cruising (such as luxury and escapism) made by corporations, journalists, and private citizens alike, then unexpectedly theorizes that by his blackface, Corbusier “was almost mocking the treatment of black people in America” (313)—treatment Baker had escaped by emigrating.

But while the international waters of a crossing, as a stateless domain, do provide the literal means (mobility) for Baker to escape the sociopolitical limitations of the nation-state of her birth, the ship also provides a stage from which she and Corbusier can playfully embody the plasticity of racial and national identity that such masquerading suggests. Le Corbusier’s indulgence in shipboard masquerade provides an alternative steamship-based aesthetics than the design theory he abstracts from the austere lines of the *Aquitania*, presenting a pointed example of what Urmila Seshagiri calls modernism’s tendency to regard “race as shifting rather than set, disordered rather than hierarchical” and to use this attitude as “a central organizing aesthetic category instead of merely a social problem” (6). Although Corbusier (unlike European painters influenced by African masks) cannot be said to have taken direct inspiration from the racially inflected categories or visual markers that Seshagiri isolates in *Race and the Modernist Imagination*, by characterizing his growing respect for jazz and for Baker’s dancing during this South American trip as evidence of the common goals and aesthetic principles shared by African-American art and his own architectural design, his leisure activities on the *Giulio Cesare* and *Lutetia* did explicitly invoke the “self-willed break” that Seshagiri argues is shared by modernist aesthetics and the racial discourse of modernism built around “disruptions in the continuity of
racial identity” (8). For example, for a costume ball thrown as the *Lutètia* crossed the Equator (a classic moment for carnival), he designed their costumes with care: Baker, in whiteface, appeared as a clown, while Corbusier, in blackface, appeared as a deserter from the Indian Army turned pirate, his costume created out of a bathing suit and a generous dose of body paint, with a bandanna round his neck and his hair brushed down messily on his forehead (Fig. 3). Josephine's clown and Corbusier's pirate represent two different ends of a specifically disorderly riff on the relation between their respective labors and capitalism. Joseph’s clown costume her of the Bauhaus modernism he attributes to her art—removing all of the laboriously serious and aesthetically innovative levels of her performance with only the playful essence entertainment remaining. Corbusier's pirate strips capitalism of all its order and economic law to reveal what Marx and Weber both thought was at the heart of capitalism: the primitive accumulation of pure
costume party. Corbusier affects the worse-for-wear Indian army uniform of an escapee and pirate, while Josephine Baker poses as a clown in whiteface. (Source: the private collection of Jean-Pierre and Naima Jornod.)

theft. It recalls Foucault's last line in “On Heterotopias:” “The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates” (27). Biographer Nicholas Fox Weber theorizes,

That the earnest, hardworking architect, normally clad in his dark suit and white shirt, wanted, in his fantasy life, to be a pirate—a cad, a thief, or a con artist—is no surprise. This was just one more mask; he was used to wearing public faces. But a large part of this pleasure had nothing to do with disguise. The woman at his side had brought him unprecedented happiness. (311)

Where Weber interprets this interlude through the lens of Corbusier’s emotions and happiness, I would like to stress the significance of the fact that Corbusier’s shipboard activities—including disguise and irrational (absurd, playful, fun) leisure rituals—condition, enable, or mediate his romance and his pleasure. Corbusier's ability to use liners as inspiration for both an orderly new architecture and a playful, race-bending, economics-bending romance cannot be understood outside the context of the commercialization and territorialization of leisure that occurred over the 19th century and reached a critical mass during modernism. Embarking on an ocean liner or cruise ship calls not for pure liberation and unadulterated romance, but for leisure produced through the means of performance and self-reflexivity. That Corbusier should dress up as a pirate in blackface is, in other words, not necessarily an inversion of or an escape from his earnest, hardworking identity outside of the leisure space, but rather an appropriate corollary or analogue for his subject positions in the realm of work and daily life.

By not giving into the temptation of interpreting Corbusier’s cruises as an episode of paradisiacal escape, I mean to follow Chris Rojek’s reminder in Decentring Leisure that “the
modernist identification of escape, pleasure and relaxation with leisure was simply another kind of moral regulation, with the result that, under modernity, we were never sure if we were free enough or far enough from that which we wished to escape” (2). The regime of leisure—where one must visibly, consistently succeed in having fun, relaxing, restoring one’s sense of self, developing culturally, and improving in physical and mental health—can be just as exhausting, conventional, and binding as the regime of work. This is not to deny that Corbusier and Baker enjoyed the masquerade or felt it to be liberating to escape their roles as serious, hardworking artists, but just to say that leisure spaces like the cruise ship did not provide an escape from modernity so much as they offered an amplified opportunity to put the pulse on modernity, to perform it or invert it it—nonetheless within a context of limited material resources and preordained codes of social etiquette—and in doing so could provide a critique or novel understanding of modernity but not necessarily overturn it. For Baker, then, her time on the Lutetia allowed her perhaps to dramatize—through pleasurable means—the racial politics that necessitated her emigration, just as Le Corbusier’s playfulness, while superficially an “escape” from his austere public persona with almost allegorical aptness and precision, may have been more of a rerouting of his identity through the images of exoticism, discipline, and escape.

The distance between this playful interlude and the uses to which Vers un architecture puts modern ocean liners reveals Le Corbusier relationship to modern steamships to be uneven and contradictory, as he paradoxically represents them as both disciplined and austere on the one hand, and, on the other hand, does not hesitate to experience the ship as a space of play and romance. Juxtaposing his view of the Aquitania and his transoceanic experience with Josephine Baker provides a compelling example—within a single person—of the distance between what Lefebvre called spatial practice (space as lived, a dialectical process by which a social group
conditions spatial practice and that practice shapes that social group) and representational space (“conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers” [38], which presupposes a philosophical perspective that “makes a tabula rasa of whatever stands in their way, of whatever threatens them – in short, of differences…space performing the function of a plane, a bulldozer, or a tank” [285]). While Lefebvre certainly represents the latter in strong terms, the former is not fully determined by the latter, even though political and economic unevenness and tensions are spread throughout the latter. As an influential theoretician, Le Corbusier may have influenced the size, shape, materials, and other physical aspects of built environments, but (as De Certeau has famously argued) his theories cannot dictate the uses to which the spaces will be put or prevent (in the case of a cruise passenger, for example) a person from adapting, abusing, or otherwise “misusing” the spaces that confront him or her—or even Corbusier himself.

Scaling Modernity: Visualizing the Ocean Liner

The publicity cycle Cunard put into motion in 1906 with the laying down, launching, and debuting of the Mauretania and Lusitania marks, I argue, a new era in the visual rhetoric of the ocean liner. While their earlier Scotia (1862), with its impressive and comfortable passenger accommodations, had entered the transatlantic service with considerably more fanfare than her predecessors, the “Mary” and “Lucy, as their crewman called them—products of a 1903 agreement with the British government to subsidize their building in return for the promise that they could easily be converted into battle- and troopships—were launched alongside a remarkable set of images designed to convey the enormous scale of the new sister ships (Fig. 4). This diagram sets the Mary and Lucy into a history of progress in terms of materials (the hull
being made of steel rather than wood or iron), propulsion (the conversion from paddle into
screw, then from single to twin to triple and finally into quadruple screw), size (with the
impressive length of 790 feet and a tonnage three times in excess of the first Cunarder), and
speed (from the Britannia’s power of 740 horses to the Mary and Lucy’s 70,000). The decreasing
amount of white space as the eye moves to the right, eventually forcing the final ship to be
labeled on its

Fig. 4. Cunard’s fleet presented as a history of continuous technological progress. (Courtesy: Cunard Archives, University of Liverpool)

inside rather than outside of the ship’s silhouette, visually suggests that these ships are so large
that their size leaves no room for anything else—and yet so big that they can contain everything
else inside of them. Like this diagram, much of the new ships’ publicity emphasized the technical
statistics attesting to the prowess of their engineers, the largesse of the British government, and
the pride of a British public eager (Cunard assumed) to recover the Blue Riband for fastest
transatlantic crossing from Germany, whose Kaiser Wilhelm de Grosse had taken from Cunard’s
Campania and Lucania in 1897. But, I argue, with the publication in 1907 of Lusitania and
Mauretania — Some Interesting Comparisons, colloquially known as the Book of Comparisons,
a new visual rhetoric of the ocean liner emerged, and with it, a new visual rhetoric of the modern.
As we have already seen, Le Corbusier reproduces such drawings; glossing the picture
juxtaposing the Aquitania with major European landmarks, he advises that modern subjects
should appreciate the work of engineers and mechanics “unknown to the world at large” because
“[w]e land-lubbers lack the power of appreciation and it would be a good thing if, to teach us to
raise our hats to the works of ‘regeneration,’ we had to do the miles of walking that walking the
tour of the steamship entails” (91, 92). By including the comparative image of the Aquitania, Le
Corbusier implies that such graphics provide an (almost) adequate substitute for physically
experiencing the enormity of the ships and for learning to appreciate the unknown engineers and
mechanics employed by modern shipbuilders.

The power of these images, in other words, rests in their ability to make the scale of
modernity visible and knowable, including the orchestration of labor power these modern icons
require. The significance of ocean liner graphics for creating a visual representation of modernity
has not been give adequate attention in accounts of modern ocean liners given by marine, social,
and architectural historians. While such accounts certainly reproduce these images, they often do
so uncritically—as a straightforward and literal presentation of the “facts” of the ships’ size. In
doing so, these accounts encourage contemporary readers to receive these images as quantitative
indicators rendering information about the ships instead of qualitative indicators about the
images’ broader role in modern culture. Cunard was not merely hyping new technologies in a bid for passenger revenue, but rather, I would argue, as it did so, it created a new technique for visualizing modernity. These impossible images—drawings of scenes that never did and could not happen—carry a dramatic weight analogous to the spectacular CGI animations featured in contemporary disaster films (Independence Day, 2012, The Day after Tomorrow) that depict the Statue of Liberty floating into the Empire State building or the Washington Monument impaling the White House. But while these films encourage viewers to conceive of the end of modernity, Cunard’s Book of Comparisons’ juxtaposition of ocean liners with world monuments has the effect of conveying the space-time compression (to use David Harvey’s phrase in Postmodernity) that characterizes modernization.

At the same time these images associate Cunard in particular with the modern shrinking of geographical and chronological barriers, they also deploy the forces of modernization as a potent marketing force. The juxtaposition of world monuments with Cunarders, such as the Great Pyramids (Fig. 5), reinforces viewers’ association of glamorous and exotic tourist destinations with a passenger ticket on the Mauretania or Lusitania. This impossible pose is simultaneously an experiment in cross-promotion (given the tourist rhetoric of the caption) and a subtle indication that the Cunarder, not only longer than but also in a position to crush a Great Pyramid, is the more impressive human construction. The Cunarder is, the image claims, a modern Wonder of the World that renders the Great Pyramids a mere tourist attraction—just as, incidentally, these modern liners serve as tourist attractions in the postmodern world, like the Queen Mary in Long Beach, California, the Oriana in Shanghai, China, and the Stella Polaris in
Shizuoka, Japan. The *Book of Comparisons* not only situates the liner within a history of monuments to human ingenuity and manpower, but also within a network of other modern achievements in construction and civil planning that simultaneously serve as practical, working sites and as tourist attractions. For example, one image (Fig. 6) compares the new ships with the “largest hotel in the world,” a visual pun on the ocean liner’s identity as a “floating hotel” that recalls Le Corbusier’s awed observation (already discussed above) that “our daring and masterly constructors of steamships produce palaces in comparison with which cathedrals are tiny things, and they throw them on to the sea!” (92). Corbusier’s boast, which verbally recapitulates the
visual logic of Cunard’s comparisons, would work well as a caption to the graphic of the new ship against Chicago’s Auditorium Hotel, which may have a great number of floors than the ship

Fig. 6. This image from the *Book of Comparisons* invites British citizens having traveled to Chicago for the 1893 Exposition to imagine ocean liners through its grand hotel. (Courtesy: Cunard Archives, University of Liverpool)

has decks for passenger accommodation but cannot replicate the dual versatility of a ship that can both transport and accommodate. Another image (Fig. 7), whose audacity, playfulness, and misleading verisimilitude anticipates the Photoshop “miracles” of the present day, replicates the visual pun of placing grand hotel and floating hotel side by side. But as its glowing white propellers dwarf the carriages beside them and force the statues and shops into the background, the ship’s entry into Trafalgar Square, suggests that the liner is, more impressively, a “floating city” as well. As the size of ocean liners grew, so did the pretension of the analogies used to encompass the liner’s state-of-the-art technology and the of-the-moment (if not positively avant-garde or futuristic) social, spatial, and aesthetic arrangements. The “floating hotel” analogy was
used to describe ocean liners by at least 1856 (Hart 211), while “floating palace” became current with the launching of White Star Lines’s Olympic-class vessels in the early 1910s (Only Way to Cross 47). During the 1920s, the more popular phrase to describe ocean liners was the even more grand “floating city,” although I have seen it being used as early as 1900.\footnote{In 1900, Ainslee’s Magazine published a feature by Robert Earl that argued, “The ocean steamship has frequently been compared to a great hotel, but in reality it is more like a floating city in the variety of its interests and occupations. For example, the problem before the commissary department is not merely that of feeding so many hundred people each day. The human freight of a great steamer is divided into many classes and families, and for each of these separate provisions must be made” (“The Growth of the Ocean Flyer” [468]).} We have already discussed Julian Krupa’s 1939 prophecy of an ocean liner so advanced it would constitute a “complete world in itself,” although that phrase too had been used during the Edwardian...
period. References to the next logical step—the “floating universe”—occur sporadically, including in an 1891 travelogue and a 1909 treatise on economics, and during the 1980s Danish naval architect Tage Wandborg used it to describe his concept ship, the 5,000 passenger Phoenix, a cruise ship that needs no ports at all, thereby completing the ocean liner’s gradual conversion in the twentieth century from a liminal space and transportation tool to total self-contained world.

Although the mid-1850s use of “floating hotel,” considering along with the 1920s popularity of the “floating city” and the 1980s relevance of the “floating universe” suggests a certain teleology in which liners were portrayed as progressively larger and more inclusive, it is more accurate to characterize the idiomatic history of the liner as one of constant linguistic experimentation. Most of these phrases were current, for example, during the Edwardian era, so that the range of analogical phrases (positing that the liner is like a hotel, palace, city, world, or universe) available to evoke the immensity and sophistication of the ships kept up with the visual experimentation I have been tracing in this section. This linguistic experimentation was not merely a marketing tool to sell the ships as glamorous and luxurious, but also was part of the modern effort to think the ocean liner, to locate a mode of representation appropriate for the array of novel spaces (including, but not limited to, the leisure spaces of the hotel, spa, and cruise ship) that emerged during periods of modernization. Consider, for example, a passage from the economic treatise mentioned above, Economic Heresies: being an unorthodox attempt to

114 For example, in Arthur Train’s light novel CQ, or, In the Wireless House, (1912), set on a fictional liner, the Cunard-sounding Pavonia, the hero retires to the liner’s Marconi room to smoke a pipe and “ponder on the new complications in his little floating world” (175).

115 See the Reverend Joseph Cross’s Days of My Years (219) and Nathaniel Nathan’s Economic Heresies (111).

116 The Phoenix, whether for good or ill we may never know, was never built. For more information on the abandoned Phoenix project, see John Maxtone-Graham, Crossing and Cruising (454-460).
appreciate the economic problems presented by 'things as they are', by a colonial judge in Trinidad, Sir Nathaniel Nathan:

A ship is a floating universe of contrivances subordinated to the purpose of transportation. It would be interesting, if it were possible, to analyze quantitatively the processes that have to concur before a commodity such as the latest development of the Transatlantic liner...can be brought into being as an object fit for its purpose.... But an examination of the immense concurrence of industrial processes concerned would be rather by the way of being a rhetorical exercise of the imagination than a contribution to economic thought. In truth, it would be the history of a machine raised, as it were, to a high power, complicating itself as a contrivance for combining contrivances. (111)

This passage continues to elaborate on the liner as an “interesting” method of “appreciating” economic problems in an “unorthodox” manner—another use to which a ship can be put, as a challenge to traditional economic wisdom—even though Nathan coyly reminds his audience that such an operation is not yet possible (“if it were possible”) and believes the liner to be more fit for “a rhetorical exercise of the imagination.” As Nathan’s passage shows, the liner is a both a provocation for novel thought, making the impossible possible within the space of a few lines in a single economic treatise, and a mode of thinking the modern, a way to conceive of “the immense concurrence of industrial processes” that uniquely characterize modernity. For Nathan, such thinking is tantamount to heresy and heterodoxy (as the title of his treatise suggests), but a heresy necessary for modern economic progress. Nathan thus positions himself, though hesitantly, as an analogue in the field of economics to Le Corbusier in the field of architecture, for the latter, as we have seen above, also uses the modern ocean liner as an example of and stimulus for iconoclasm. Provoking Nathan to write a “history of a machine raised...to a high power,” the ocean liner allows one to exercise the imagination (to reproduce Nathan’s phrasing)
and provides a powerful perspective on the complex financial, material, and human networks of modernization.

The *Book of Comparisons* shares Nathan’s uncertainty. Its introductory passage laments that it is “almost impossible to realize” the size of the *Mauretania* and *Lusitania* and hedges the images’ implicit promises by saying, “The exact meaning of these dimensions will perhaps be more clearly realized by the illustrations” (1). This hesitation is less a critique of the illustrators than praise of the ship as an inimitable singularity; presumably, it is intended to increase demand for the ship by leaving room for the ship to surpass the majesty of the illustrations. Appropriately, the illustrations not only strive to convey the scale of the ship’s hull and superstructure, but also the scale of its operations while crossing the Atlantic, including a rendering of the entire crew complement aboard (Fig. 8) and the number of animals consumed on a typical voyage (Fig. 9).

These pictures attempt a to create a holistic vision of a space that is, essentially, fragmented. In the first, the members of the crew queue up into organized groups outside of the ship (as if they were passengers), an impossible vision because no one person could ever witness all of the ship’s workers at once, and the workers would never simultaneously be leave the ship. The second photo ingeniously creates a Cunard farm—complete with farmhouse—despite the diverse reaches of England, Ireland, and European countries from which their stuffs would be ordered, and despite the fact that all of these animals could never be raised in a single part of England. As a material phenomenon, the ocean liner is essentially Cubist phenomenon, in other words, a discontinuous or non-conjunctive series of incommensurable fragments that can only be aggregated as a unit by disregarding Enlightenment views of perspective and unity. This effect is heightened by the fact that each group of passengers or workers would encounter a very different
ship; although certain individuals may have a broad right to roam—the captain, ship’s doctor, or company representative, for example—the non-communicating worlds of first, second, and third class on the other hand, with further subdivisions according to age and gender, and on the other, the world of the crew, even more fragmented and rigidly separated. Vorticist Edward
Fig. 8. The human complement of the *Mauretania* (Courtesy: Cunard Archives, University of Liverpool)
Wadsworth’s 1917 painting of the cubist-inspired “dazzle ships” camouflage of World War I (Fig. 10), designed to disrupt the ship’s visual unity to hide its size, speed, and direction from the enemy, then, is less anomalous than it initially appears. The entire silhouette of the ship was hardly ever visible, even during construction, when held in dry-dock, or during embarkation at ports, when only flashes of the ship would be visible. Each image in the Book of Comparisons, merely by projecting a complete vision of the ship, therefore remains a fantasy.

A popular mode of envisioning a ship that did become a true vision of a ship—when, since the 1970s, it became possible to “stretch” an existing ship by cutting it in half, adding a new section, then welding the ship back together—was the cutaway, a technique used in illustrated mass newspapers as well as in company-created documents. The earliest version I have found
Fig. 10. Edward Wadsworth’s *Dazzle-ships in Drydock at Liverpool* (1919).

depicts the 1905 Cunarder *Caronia* (Fig. 11), although the most finely detailed and often reproduced cutaway view features the *Lusitania* (Fig. 12). While the *Caronia* view depicts tiny passengers and crewmen traversing the space, as well as cargo bays and a healthy plume of smoke, while the *Lusitania* cutaway has an unusually detailed view of the boiler rooms and stokeholds and reminds its viewers of the elevators and lifts that cannot be seen from that particular position. Both views strive to convey the ship as a self-enclosed world with spaces for a wide range of people and serving a diverse number of functions, but both views also choose a transverse cut that displays the (comfortably amidships) first-class public spaces instead of the less opulent and spacious second- and third-class amenities located closer to bow and stern. This choice to exclude the second- and third-class public spaces reflects not only a savvy desire to show only the best parts of the ship, but also the *Book of Comparison*’s larger project of forging a
Fig. 11. Cutaway view of the Caronia (Courtesy: National Maritime Museum, UK)
Fig. 12. The more finely detailed *Lusitania* cutaway. (Courtesy: National Maritime Museum, UK)
unified, coherent “whole” for a ship that experientially was decidedly fragmented and uneven. A comparison of these divergent spaces—a third-class dining room (Fig. 13) and a first-class bar (Fig. 14)—does reveal, however, one interesting continuity. While unequal in opulence, both rooms are designed on a minimalist pattern of regular geometric repetition. Just as, in the first room, the parallel lines of the tables are repeated on the lines of the ceiling and then harmoniously contrasted with the horizontal lines of the chair backs, so too, in the second room, are the circular shapes of the bar, counter, and lines of tables and chairs are repeated in the shape of the tables and lamps and pattern on the carpet. In spite of the luxurious details of the bar and spare austerity of the dining room, the aesthetic effects of both rooms are quite similar: a clean and simple exercise in proportion and repetition afforded by ocean liners’ large scale—both in

Fig. 13. A White Star third-class dining room in the Edwardian era (Courtesy National Maritime Museum, UK).
terms of their large sizes and the shipping companies’ liberal use of economies of scale. By contrast, publicity about public rooms not intended for gatherings of an entire class (such as writing rooms or smoking rooms) often boasted of “nooks” and “cozy corners” (Fig. 15 and 16). The _Ascania_ (active from 1926 to 1956) featured a writing room into which was nested another, smaller writing room, whose arrangement of chairs further heightened a feeling of privacy by being oriented towards three different walls (rather than towards one another), and the earlier _Campania_ (active from 1893 to 1918) featured an even cozier set of recesses, featuring curtains that could be fully drawn for an intimate _tete a tete_. Two opposing techniques, then, were employed as a design response to the necessarily large scale of modern liners’ public rooms: first, accentuating or dramatizing the grand size of the rooms by drawing the eyes upward and out, thus elevating scale into an aesthetic principle; and second, minimizing the rooms’ size by
Fig. 15 and 16. Top, a nook in the writing room of the *Ascania*. Bottom, recesses in the drawing room of the *Campania*. Both rooms spatially encode temporary escape from the publicity of the large liners’ public spaces.
carving out smaller rooms-within-rooms that simultaneously provided intimate recesses and broke up the large space into a collection of smaller, irregular, and therefore cozier spaces. Just as the *Book of Comparisons* attests to the difficulty of conceptualizing the steamship as a whole, so do these interiors reflect the nagging uncertainty regarding the modern steamship’s ruthless progress of size—seen in the first image in this chapter, the diagram recapitulating seventy years of Cunard history, characterized by ceaseless growth. In the 1928 Christmas edition of their in-house magazine (aimed at investors, employees, builders, and suppliers), Cunard engages in a light-hearted moment of self-critique in a cartoon depicting the *Megalomania*, a hypothetical vessel pictured steaming into Southampton and dwarfing the fleet of Cunarders that serve it as tugboats (Fig. 17). A positively monstrous liner with six anchors and at least five funnels, it apparently clocks in around two million tons.

But if Cunard’s competitive spirit is also pictured as monstrous, so too is the passenger. In another cartoon of the same issue of Cunard’s magazine (Fig. 18), an “irate passenger” in a luxurious suite jumps upon the bed in fury at the paltry *one* magnum of champagne placed in his stocking overnight. Company and passenger are brought together in the magazine by their bad behavior, mutually indicted by charges of greed, egotism, and presumption that are as well-aimed as they are good-humored—if one trusts the cartoons’ atmosphere of tongue-in-cheek whimsy. This Christmas edition’s tension between passenger and company is replicated in the two final images I share in this section. Both are cartoons lampooning the poor etiquette of passengers—of all classes—unaccustomed to transatlantic voyages. One cartoon (Fig. 19), which imagines a new passenger “class” of accommodations and amenities would be appropriate for working class Londoners, appears at first glance to be a withering consideration of what the lower classes might think of the luxuries aboard modern ocean liners. Yet it also speaks to the post-1920 shift
Fig 17. Cunard engages here in good-natured self-critique. (Courtesy: National Maritime Museum, UK)
Fig. 18. An enraged passenger expects more "Christmas spirit." (Courtesy: National Maritime Museum, UK).
in passenger demographics in the wake of changing American immigrations laws—addressed in books like Kenneth L. Roberts’s *Why Europe Leaves Home* (1922)—which replaced the traditional steerage population of Eastern European (and Irish) emigrants for middle-class Americans and Western Europeans—passengers of “simpler taste” who yet must not be treated as pre-1905 steerage passengers. In the other cartoon (Fig. 20), a first-class passenger, an unaccompanied elderly lady, approaches a purser to ask when the sea chanteys would begin—a double error that shows this upper-class passenger to be, in the context of the sophisticated modern liner, not an authoritative or fashionable social leader, but rather, from the perspective of the urbane, well-dressed purser, offensively ignorant of the intricacies of shipboard life. These cartoons show that Victorian shipboard etiquette tracts (found, for example, in chapters dedicated to life onboard in Eliza Leslie’s 1853 *Miss Leslie’s Behavior Book* and Florence Hartley’s 1860 *The Ladies’ Book of Etiquette and Manual of Manners*) were still in need in 1928—a need also indicated by Basil Woon’s popular 1927 manual, *The Frantic Atlantic*, giving information about how to choose a ship, how to dress, how to overcome seasickness, how to locate celebrities onboard, how to avoid cardsharps and husband-hunters, and other hints essential to a successful voyage. The ocean liner, as these cartoons and the *Book of Comparisons* show, and as I have argued in relation to the modern hotel in Chapter Five, is something to be learned, a novel and modern organism so sophisticated that it is barely knowable and requires a full contingent of visual and rhetorical innovations to be understood. Yet at the same time, ocean liners and cruise ships, as the most complex of modern constructions, could yield glimpses of the shape and logic of modernity itself—as I show in my analysis of *No Signposts in the Sea*. 
Fig. 19. Are shipboard amenities, including the vast improvements made in third-class accommodations, outpacing the growth of the British economy? (Courtesy National Maritime Museum, UK)
Fig. 20. A first-class passenger is unfamiliar with the details of shipboard life, particularly the crew hierarchy that places the purser well above the social class of a chantey-singing sailor. (Courtesy National Maritime Museum, UK)
In Vita Sackville-West’s final published work, a novel about a world cruise, *No Signposts in the Sea* (1961), Laura Drysdale, the object of protagonist Edmund Carr’s unrequited love, entertains the ship’s contingent of bored children with origin stories about her charm bracelet. One story begins, “You see, Robert, once upon a time”—a survival of one of the most traditional leisure pastimes (the fairy tale) into one of its most modern forms (the cruise ship). Laura continues, “once upon a time this little elephant was a real big live elephant, and he worked so hard in the jungle carrying tree-trunks in his own trunk...that some nice kind magician said he deserved a rest, so he turned him into a tiny elephant for me to wear on my bracelet.” Pointing to another charm, she explains, “Well, that’s a little porpoise. He got tired of living in the sea, so he asked his own magician if he could come on a ship instead and get carried to countries he had never seen” (92). Laura’s two origin stories present allegories of leisure: both the elephant and the dolphin depending from her wrist are given reasons for their passage on a world cruise, one justified through hard work (the holiday alibi of Strether and Waymarsh in Henry James’s *The Ambassadors*) and the other through a perhaps less sympathetic desire for diversion. The dolphin’s tale recapitulates the ideological position of leisure in modernity; the modern upper- or middle-class cruiser, supported by the “magician” that is the leisure industry, is granted an intriguing change of scene that appeals to the modern wish always to make it new. The elephant’s tale is more complex; it contains resonances of colonialism, with the uncomfortable suggestion of a hard-working native (or perhaps a working-class Briton or European) being recompensed by being awarded an expensive vacation, but only through the ambiguously just means of becoming a commodity. At the same time, the elephant’s tale also evokes the story of Edmund Carr
himself, an influential and earnest political journalist so inured to unceasing labor that he only
books passage on the cruise because, being told by his doctor (the “kind magician,” perhaps) that
his death is imminent, he wishes to spend his last weeks alive with Laura. As Edmund and other
potential suitors begin to circulate around the likable young widow, Edmund becomes the
elephant, her constant companion, a pretty charm for her wrist.

Yet apart from the protagonist’s personal tragedy, both elephant and dolphin, I argue,
illustrate a larger historical shift in the relationship between the steamship and global economic
flows. Cesar Casarino’s account of the changing role of ships in the global economy during the
nineteenth century—the historical underpinning of his literary and cultural arguments in
Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis—can be regarded as a prehistory to the
twentieth-century shift I wish to illustrate here. Casarino’s definition of the sea narrative (1)
replicates the problematic “laboratory” language I critiqued in my chapter on hotel theory and
criticism, and though his adaptation of the Foucauldian heterotopias is liable to the same
criticism of heterotopias by David Harvey that I have mentioned above in relation to hotels. Yet I
find Casarino’s account of the nineteenth-century sea narrative’s homologous textual rehearsal of
“the emergence of the distinctly new mode of production of industrial capitalism from the
cocoon of the older mode of production of mercantile capitalism” (3) to be both persuasive on its
own and relevant for my argument about modernism and the development of the cruise ship as a
cultural institution. Just as Casarino argues that this historical shift rendered the sea “an
increasingly turbulent, contradictory, and contested terrain” (4), so too do I argue that during the
twentieth century, the steamship, in shifting from liner to cruiser, becomes a contested terrain
whose depictions in text and image perform and condition a major historical shift in the
production of wealth. Unlike the nineteenth century context that Casarino explores, in which the shift from mercantile to industrial capitalism causes the ship to suffer “relative displacement within a more decentralized system” (5), the twentieth-century shift that Sackville-West’s novel explores—a change in the geographic relations of global production from hierarchically organized imperial commodity production to flexible accumulation and the dominance of finance capital—shows the steamship, as a cruise vessel, to enjoy renewed attention due to the increasing economic significance of leisure. Edmund and Laura’s vessel is a curious one, a ship in stereo, simultaneously evocative of two very different types of transport: as the ship deposits various Europeans to multiple points East (Colombo, Manila, Macao, and Singapore, among others), it functions politically and economically as an ocean liner by depositing emigrants, functionaries of empire, and businessmen to exploit the natural resources of non-European territories. Not only tasked with supporting the power structures of empire, this ship, considered as an ocean liner, also supports capitalist industry by transporting both the people and cargo necessary for commodity production. Its second identity is as a cruise ship; by circulating Laura and Edmund around the world for no other purpose but relaxation and diversion, it produces, if anything, leisure itself.

What circulates here is not a commodity, political figure, or laborer being delivered strategically to a specific space for the production of commodities; in the cruise ship, it is the Europeans who circulate, generating value not by producing anything or landing at any particular port, but rather through the sheer velocity of circulation. Paying for their passages, buying trivial objects, consuming luxury commodities on board, tipping the leisure employees both on the ship and in the ports of call—all of these activities form the ship’s second economy,
its second mode of participation in global flows. That many of the trivial objects they buy in ports of call are (like Edmund himself) eventually thrown into the sea, never to reach another port, underscores the significance of circulation in this second economy as productive of value in and of itself. In light of this second, “cruise ship economy,” the elephant on Laura’s charm bracelet, which achieves leisure only by being commodified, tells Laura and Edmund’s own tale: Europeans at the end of empire producing value through non-productive leisure, a paradoxical reversal through which “natives” in each port and the “others” employed on the ship exploit them, the Europeans, for profit. The ship’s dual identity as both an ocean liner, a vessel of empire and industrial production, and a cruise ship, a vessel of leisure circulating passengers in a more abbreviated but equally profitable economic system, intriguingly recapitulates Giovanni Arrighi’s interpretation of Marx’s formulas for capital accumulation in *The Long Twentieth Century*, in which two complementary trends or moves constitute a full cycle of capitalist accumulation. Arrighi’s thesis is worth quoting at length:

Marx's general formula of capital (MCM') can therefore be interpreted as depicting not just the logic of individual capitalist investments, but also a recurrent pattern of historical capitalism as world system. The central aspect of this pattern is the alternation of epochs of material expansion (MC phases of capital accumulation) with phases of financial rebirth and expansion (CM' phases). In phases of material expansion money capital "sets in motion" an increasing mass of commodities (including commoditized labor-power and gifts of nature); and in phases of financial expansion an increasing mass of money capital "sets itself free" from its commodity form, and accumulation proceeds through financial deals (as in Marx's abridged formula MM'). Together, the two epochs or phases constitute a full systemic cycle of accumulation (MCM'). (6)

Sackville-West’s ship sails in a transition period between Arrighi’s two phases: with its load of colonial officials and businessmen, it harkens back to the empire-based system of commodity production associated with modernity (MCM'), which Arrighi specifies as the British cycle of
accumulation, with its concomitant “dialectic of capitalism and territorialism” (174). But as a pleasure vessel for Laura and Edmund, it looks forward to postmodern leisure, which I argue in the novel acts as a form of Arrighian financial expansion insofar as the leisure circulation of the cruise makes money from money (MM') without the intervening period of commodity production for whose organization the ocean liner was historically and institutionally necessary. It is this stereoscopic vision of the ship as both liner and cruiser that makes the novel significant for the cultural and literary history of leisure traced in this dissertation: though Edmund experiences the cruise as disorienting—in the phrase from which the title is taken, he observes, “Geographically I do not care and scarcely know where I am. There are no signposts in the sea” (61)—Sackville-West, not at all “disoriented,” prophetically thematizes this historical shift through her anomalous cruising liner.

By interpreting Edmund and Laura’s ship through economic histories like those of Casarino and Arrighi, I mean to correct the scholarly tendency to minimize the significance of the cultural institution of the cruise in No Signposts in the Sea in favor of the novel’s representations of love and marriage. Victoria Glendinning has argued that No Signposts in the Sea is based on Sackville-West’s personal experience of facing the prospect of death during her third world cruise, a roundtrip from Marseilles to Yokohama on the Cambodge in 1959, during which time her husband Harold Nicolson also began writing a book based on the cruise, his Journey to Java (v). This cruise, her third of six total world cruises she took annually during the six final years of her life, Glendinning argues, inspired Sackville-West to reevaluate the

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117 Interestingly, the novel’s oil-rich Texan—a brash man who likes to boast that he could “buy” the potentates of the various ports they stop at—reminds one of Arrighi’s observation that by midcentury, around the time that Vita Sackville-West is writing, also corresponds to another macroeconomic shift: the end of the British system of accumulation and concomitant rise of the American cycle of accumulation (see Arrighi 58-73, 269-299).
significance of monogamous, sexually passionate love “in a way she would not and could not
have done earlier” (ix), as well as to anticipate Edmund Carr’s reaction to his pleasure cruise by
“rethinking all his values” (viii). Glendinning’s considerable attention to Edmund’s
uncharacteristically figurative reflection, “I am at sea in more ways than one” (147), is telling;
she assumes not only that Sackville-West’s relation to the novel is biographical, a relation of
metaphorical representation, but also that the novel is best analyzed by reproducing and
elaborating on the protagonist’s mental preoccupation. Though this approach to the novel
certainly illuminates its significance in the context of Sackville-West’s final years, we can, by
investigating the representations of the ship (as a spatial entity) and cruising (as a mode of
leisure), shed light on the novel’s relation to the end of modernism and of the modern economic
relations of leisure. Similarly, Mary Ann Caws’s brief look at the novel in her Vita Sackville-
West: Selected Writings, focuses on the theme of reevaluating the nature of love in the face of
death, just as Mandy Merck’s Perversions: Deviant Readings briefly reads the novel as a
reflection on Sackville-West and Nicholson’s marriage. David Cannadine’s abrupt conclusion
that she used the novel to “inveigh...against the ugliness and vulgarity of the modern
world” (236) is perhaps less generous than Andrew Kingsley Weatherhead’s reflection on the
novel in his Upstairs: Writers and Residences, which investigates the theme of death through the
figure of spatial and material dispossession, only devotes a page to No Signposts in the Sea (87).
As this all-too-brief list suggests, the most instructive vein of modernist scholarship lies
elsewhere, not in direct analyses about this specific novel, but instead in one of the most robust
veins of recent criticism: the appearance of the “transnational” as an approach to the global
dynamics of literature.\textsuperscript{118} Ocean liners and cruise ships, after all, provide a material basis for the supranational flows under consideration by transnational scholars; I argue therefore that transnational modernism is incomplete without a consideration of these ships, in both a highly literal sense (that we must understand the history of steamships before we can understand the transnational) and a more literary sense (that representations of these ships by modernist artists should be given special attention). Just as Ian Baucom’s \textit{Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History} closely examines the ships and business documents that governed seventeenth and eighteenth century Atlantic flows of slavery, so too does the present project strive to link the spatial, material, and textual traces of nineteenth and twentieth century steamship traffic with the modernist transnational consciousness. I do not wish to overstrain the comparison—the mass emigration of the European poor to North America by steamship, however undoubtedly uncomfortable and unsanitary it was before 1905,\textsuperscript{119} did not cause the wholesale destruction of lives and cultures that characterized the transatlantic slave trade—but the steamships of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did continue the economic and demographic shifts that began with the use of seventeenth and eighteenth century emigrant sailing ships and slave ships. Any consideration of ocean liners and cruise ships, then, constitutes a contribution to Paul Gilroy’s mission in \textit{The Black Atlantic} for history and literary criticism “to take the Atlantic as one single, complex unit of analysis” (15), although what I wish to stress is that paying attention to the role of steamships in modernist art and modern culture will contribute

\textsuperscript{118} For an account of this recent trend, see Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, “The New Modernist Studies,” \textit{PMLA} 123.3 (2008): 737–48.

\textsuperscript{119} After 1905, intense competition for steerage passengers resulted in the amelioration of steerage conditions. As “old steerage” was transformed into “third class,” four-berth cabins replaced mass (but gender segregated) dormitories, better ventilation and more food was provided, third-class public spaces appeared (including open deck space for promenading), and third-class passengers were given a steward to attend to their needs. For more information about this trend, see
to the goals of transnational modernist scholarship, particularly insofar as the big liners of the modernist era are connected to past vessels in their role of distributing colonizers and laborers across the globe, and connected to our present in their gradual evolution into the cruise ships that continue to contribute to a global or transnational culture.

Laura Doyle’s “Transnational History at Our Backs” eloquently speaks to the purpose of raising such an awareness in the context of modernist texts; Doyle writes, “the Atlantic dimension of their work may allow us to do fuller justice to the historical consciousness of modernist writers…their fiction asks us to think more historically about transnationalism, especially in relation to its liberatory possibilities for social identity” (532). One of the strengths of Doyle’s article is that she presents the Atlantic in modernism as a dual influence; the “liberatory possibilities” she identifies for European women who enjoy “freer movement within transnational Atlantic circuits” (534) are always held up against the trauma of Atlantic history, so that modernist texts that cover the Atlantic (here, she points to Nella Larsen and Virginia Woolf) engage in “a centuries-long dialectic, casting and recasting the violent "crossing" of Atlantic coloniality/modernity” (535). Yet what is most useful for my present purpose is her definition of the transnational as “matrixial and generative” rather than just “territorial.” Defining the transnational as constitutive of nations, rather than a successive byproduct of pre-existing, self-defining units, Doyle argues that nations themselves are byproducts of transnational flows:

[H]istorically and economically over the past four centuries, many nations have taken shape exactly by way of such centrifugal migrations, even if, ideologically, nationalist discourses have simultaneously spoken past or against them. On the Atlantic, transnational dispersions (at first, transatlantic proto-national dispersions) created the new circuits of wealth that built the Anglo-European nations, fostered a sense of bold, free movement for those who were not slaves or bondpersons, and at the same time bred fervent, distended, and nostalgiac ties to something that came to be called nationality. (533)
Such an understanding of nationalism and transnationality, I argue, implicitly privileges the literal, spatial movements that underpin these “centrifugal migrations” and requires investigating the mutually reciprocal links between the material institutions of migration and their literary and visual representations. Vita Sackville-West’s *No Signposts in the Sea*, coming (in 1961) quite late to such migrations, presents a fascinating example of the “historical consciousness” Doyle claims modernists maintain in relation to the Atlantic, for these transoceanic movements are—in the cruise—both economically profitable and regarded as meaningful and enjoyable in and of themselves. As such, the cruise transposes earlier, historically necessary migrations into the relatively “free” plane of leisure, thus elevating the principle of geographical relativism underpinning the transnational production of discrete “nations” into a desirable experience. Cruises, in other words, recode the emigrant experience as leisure, presenting a parade of nationalities as a leisure spectacle while endlessly deferring the adoption of a single national identity (and the attendant new prospects for labor) in favor of suspending such identities, suspending such work—opportunities that *No Signposts in the Sea* presents as equally productive of liberatory energies and manifestations of the death drive.

This dual register, in which Edmund and Laura’s ship is seen simultaneously as freeing and stagnant, is given a specific social context when the dying Edmund, having sought one final romantic experience by boarding the ship he knows Laura to be on, begins to reflect on the cruise ship as a space with its own set of social mores. Describing the ship as an anomalous social organization, as the “strange life that one lives at sea,” Edmund notes that the ship groups together “a community of some fifty passengers, linked only by small occurrences and daily happenings...knowing nothing of one another, in most cases not even our names, nothing of our backgrounds nor of the complications of our lives” (8). The social remove Edmund attributes to
the cruise ship recalls Georg Simmel’s description of the city in “The Metropolis and Mental Life” insofar as Edmund’s account of moving from London to the ship parallels Simmel’s account of the rustic moving to the city. Embarking on a cruise ship therefore replicates the modern subject’s release from the claustrophobic intimacy of pastoral communities, yet whereas in the city, the individual never recovers such a community, in the ship, the intimate community of village life is reassembled and recreated. Historian Douglas Hart (whose suggestive and understated account of Lady Isabella Bird’s miserable voyage in the Canada, plagued by misbehaving men, as evidence of how "enforced sociability of the saloon created tensions” [193] recalls Edmund’s horror at being “the indicated prey” of a “lonely questing Englishwoman whom I instantly recognized as a menace” [Signposts 8, 9]) accounts for shipboard intimacy in three basic ways. First, Hart argues, social mores were relaxed due to the passengers’ shared uncertainty during early sea voyages, which were universally regarded as dangerous and giving no firm guarantee whatsoever of landing safely at one’s destination, and by the time transatlantic voyages were considered safe, the informality of shipboard spaces had irreversibly been established (204). Hart also, quoting from nineteenth-century books of etiquette, argues that the length of early steamship voyages (sometimes more than two weeks) made snobbery impractical. Finally, unlike hotels and spas, which were often open to the public and to urban streets, the ship was a more closed environment, so that the “social exclusivity of the first class reduced the challenges of social regulation within the temporary community of passengers and thus sustained a unique shipboard sociability” (205).

Mark Renella and Whitney Walton, though their emphatically optimistic account of the social life of steamship passengers counters the neutrality of Hart’s work, also provide tentative
answers to Edmund’s query “What strange aberration is it that seizes people the minute they come within sniffing range of salt water?” (Signposts 52). Criticizing histories of modern travel by James Buzard, Paul Fussell, and Harvey Levenstein that unfairly read the history of travel as a “decline” into supposedly "predictable, repetitive, uniform, and superficial" tourism, Renella and Walton argue, "we find that the transatlantic ocean voyage presented new imaginative and creative possibilities, and led to a broader appreciation of nationalism and internationalism even before travelers reached their European destinations." It is through "constructive questioning and self-examination of previously unquestioned beliefs and habits," they explain, that time spent on a liner or cruise ship can "liberate the human imagination" (366). To support the grandeur of such claims, Renella and Walton command an impressive archive of steamship travel, from nineteenth century commentary on travel (including the fiction of Mark Twain and William Dean Howells and the journals and philosophy of George Santayana, Henry Adams, and William James) to twentieth century journals of study abroad students and the works of Thomas Wolfe, and even to contemporary works by Rudy Koshar and Melvin Maddocks—the latter of whom intriguingly characterizes the liminality of these ships when he claims that by “[s]peeding between two worlds, the great liner became a third world in itself” (qtd. Renella and Walton 367). Renella and Walton conclude that “generations” of steamship travelers from 1850 to 1950 experienced the transatlantic voyage as an initiation or transition into another world, both imaginative and physical. Their accounts challenge historiography that posits a rigid demarcation between precapitalist or preindustrial travel, and commercialized, commodified tourism. For they suggest continuity in the experience of travel over a critical period of modernization in terms of discovery, wonder, and perplexity. (377)

Although the authors certainly risk overcorrecting the negativity of travel scholarship during the 1980s and 1990s, this optimism is shared by many persuasive works of leisure sociology of the
2000s (which I discuss in Chapter One), and the rhetorical vigilance with which they contextualize their theses as reflecting the perceived experience of travelers, makes it impossible to overturn Renella and Walton’s claims by alluding to some less liberatory, more commercial objective “truth” of such voyages. The literary readings I have given over the previous chapters—for example, of Bowen’s *The Hotel*, James’s *The Ambassadors* and *Daisy Miller*, and Forster’s *A Room with a View*—similarly attest to the experiential power of leisure, whose potential for opening up or disrupting social narratives and ideological discourses cannot, in spite of the increasing commercialization of leisure activities and spaces, be entirely overwritten or negated by an economics-based social critique of modernity. Just as social historians and cultural geographers during the 2000s argue that subjects of capital, particularly travelers, can transcend the passivity that commercialized leisure seems to expect, so too does *No Signposts in the Sea*’s heroine, for example, transform her personal cabin through the means of personal effects and a “home-making instinct” into something different than “a replica of [Edmund’s] own” or “strange little impersonal boxes...left stripped for another occupant,” therefore making an individualized home for herself on the cruise ship (114-5). Yet Vita Sackville-West offers, beyond evidence for the subjective power of leisure spaces, a subtle revision of or addition to Renella and Walton’s portrait of the liberatory power of the modern steamship. Similar to Arnold Bennett’s *Imperial Palace*, whose power to entertain is derived from the spatial spectacles that intertwine the apparently parallel currents of the private and the economic (as I argue in the previous chapter), *No Signposts in the Sea* offers a theory of leisure that transcends this thirty-year-old debate in travel scholarship, which essentially regards leisure and economics as mutually exclusive.

Sackville-West’s novel, I argue, presents two complementary movements—the becoming-leisure
of economics (as the ship transforms global capitalist flows into an aesthetically pleasing spectacle) and the becoming-economics of leisure (as each leisure experience is revealed to be the product of global flows).

**Romance on the High Seas**

Before I can analyze these unusual textual “moves” that reveal leisure and economics to be mutually constitutive (rather than opposed), I wish to establish the spatial and social qualities that constitute the cruise ship’s identity as a provider of leisure. Edmund’s reason for booking the cruise—his belief that he can finally obtain the intimacy with Laura that he has long been craving—suggests that for Edmund, the most significant leisure experience the ship can offer is its alternate codes of sociability, which I have already partially established through my discussion of Douglas Hart’s work and my discussion of the ship’s partial resemblance to the anti-pastoral city of Georg Simmel’s “The Metropolis and Mental Life.” In 1912, George Santayana’s essay “The Philosophy of Travel” more specifically broaches the topic of the ocean liner. Despite being “enticed by romantic monuments and depth of historical interest” during his many travels abroad, he nonetheless asks, “what charm is equal to that of ports and ships?” He explains his preference of the ship itself to tourism by explaining that on the ship,

The most prosaic objects, the most common people and incidents, seen as a panorama of ordered motions, of perpetual journeys by nights and day, through a hundred storms, over a thousand bridges and tunnels, take on an epic grandeur, and the mechanism moves so nimbly that it seems to live. It has the fascination, to me at least inexhaustible, of prows cleaving the water, wheels turning, planets ascending and descending the skies: things not alive in themselves but friendly to live, promising us security in motion, power in art, novelty in necessity. (15)
The ship stands, for Santayana, as a beacon and a source of existential comfort in the chaos of modernity because it is the only constant in the “panorama” that is ocean travel. While I will discuss below a reason for Santayana’s personification of the ship, for now this passage speaks to the perceived atmosphere of drama and on glamour a modern steamship, which affords one possible reason for the heightened intimacy among passengers aboard. Though Edmund appears to prefer the simple dyad of his romance with Laura to the reassembly of earlier social forms seen in Simmel or the enjoyment of the ship itself detailed by Santayana, the daily rhythms of the ship ensure that his dyad constantly breaks down, and therefore constantly stages the creation of non-dyadic but still intimate groups, thus making the cruise an ideal stage for Simmelian sociability—a playful, highly self-conscious and self-reflexive exercise in socializing. “Little groups inevitably coalesce,” Edmund explains (8), in a somewhat regular rhythm beginning over again each time new passengers embark at a port of call. This rhythm not only makes him hyperconscious of the mechanics of socializing, but also gives him an excuse to pursue his dyadic romance; in one of their many conversations about ship intimacy, he asks Laura, “it is not difficult to strike up an acquaintance on board ship, but how do their revelations so quickly attain so personal a note?” Laura finds this intimacy to be a desirable form of recreation: discovering within an hour of meeting strangers “that their husbands beat them, for instance, or that their son is in prison for forging a check” is, she asserts, “like watching fish in an aquarium, such diversity, you know” (10). By the first port of call, Edmund begins to adopt her attitude. As the newly embarked passengers submit to the lifeboat drill, he notes, “we the old-timers lie back in our deck-chairs to watch them, much as we used in our school-days to watch the new boys at the beginning of term” (21). The social environment of the ship, in other words, hastens intimacy
whether one wills it so or no and almost automatically machines the passengers’ self-reflections. For example, Edmund’s complaint about the inevitability of a certain Colonel Dalrymple ruining their intimacy (he grumbles to Laura, “although you may not like him you can’t get away from him” [108]) is less about his jealousy of Dalrymple (at least in the first half of the book) than it is about how Dalrymple’s behavior around Laura makes his own more visible to himself. Although such self-knowledge may superficially seem of less moral value than Renella and Walton’s characterization of shipboard reflection as a cosmopolitan questioning of one’s own national prejudices or narrowness, Edmund interprets his increasing self-knowledge as evidence that he has escaped his former philosophically and emotionally impoverished land-based identity. For instance, when he complains, “My life hitherto has been too predictable,” he credits the ship with his escape from his restriction by dreamily reflecting, “I sometimes feel that this ship is wayward, having no settled course but wandering where the fancy takes her, a theory which fits in exactly with my mood” (112-3). The constant reminders of the modern association of steamships with love matches (while I have already pointed to Evelyn Waugh’s cynical portrait of the aphrodisiac qualities of a cruise ship, in No Signposts in the Sea, we find Miss Corcoran, for example, recounting how one couple met “on the old *Rajputana* going out to Bombay” [109]) might make Edmund feel temporarily ashamed of his motive for climbing aboard, but it does not deflate the adventurousness of his shipboard romance.

What does, however, deflate his adventure is his recognition of his modern, safe, amenity-filled, and technologically advanced cruise ship’s position in a long history of Western shipbuilding. In a reflection recapitulating the nostalgia of the *Queen Mary*’s compensatory aesthetic, Edward writes in the diary Laura gave him, “How safe we seem, on this ship equipped
with charts, wireless, radar, and even an apparatus which draws with a pen a continuous picture of the sea-floor beneath us” (44). Quoting from a 1579 letter by Thomas Stevens (an early explorer of India whose accounts were reprinted in Richard Hakluyt’s *The Principle Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation*), Edward lingers over the gory physical details of Elizabethan exploration—the “flukes,” the “agues,” the swelling of legs and gums caused by prolonged dehydration—and finds his own cruise lacking as a result. His regret that his “journey cannot be described as adventurous, except perhaps as an adventure of the spirit” (45) alludes to the technological progress and cultural transformations of the unreliable sailing ship into the relatively safe ocean liner and thence into the pleasure cruise, where all “adventure” is reduced to the psychological or philosophical plane. Speaking to Laura, he continues to contextualize his cruise in terms of the ship’s modern history: “‘What I pity,’ I said to Laura, that we should live on such a well-mapped planet. Don’t you envy the early explorers who never knew what might be round the next corner? Fancy coming suddenly on the Grand Canyon when you had no idea of its existence” (45). With this comment, as a self-described, life-long “hard-boiled materialist” (61) trying to hide from Laura his new-found appreciation for philosophy and affective experience—and his new-found love for her—Edward risks blowing his cover. When she calls attention to his mistake by saying, “I should never have taken you for a romantic,” he attributes his sudden subtlety and penchant for reflection to the cruise itself, explaining, “I am taking a holiday, you see, when I find a lot of queer fish rising to the surface from the bottom of one’s mind. One has leisure to make up for lost time.” In the leisure space of the cruise ship, then, Edmund (not unlike Aschenbach’s last seaside romance in Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice*) reacts to his death sentence in two ways: first, by simultaneously warding off
and aestheticizing death through relating the modern cruise to images of early exploration, and
second, by his rebirth as a romantic man who no longer “concentrate[s] too greatly on the
mundane side of life” (45). This connection is underscored by Edmund’s “queer fish,” which
explicitly characterize his consciousness as itself a kind of cruise ship, moving around in the
“sea” of his mind to catch glimpses of exotic flora and fauna, just as the novel’s larger structure,
a succession of very short sections separated by asterisks, mimics the fragmented geographic
rhythm of the cruise, with its short bursts of sailing punctuated by ports of call.

Edmund’s retreat from the “mundane side of life” manifests itself primarily through his
shipboard romance. Fully aware of the tradition of cultural associations linking cruises and erotic
adventures—he calls attention to a “German couple who despite their middle-age seem unable to
keep their hands off each other” (9)—Edmund nonetheless ignores or represses the signs that
Laura returns his affection. This deferral, which I have argued in reference to Henry James’s
*Daisy Miller* and *The Ambassadors* is a mode for producing leisure, not only lengthens
Edmund’s opportunity to indulge in rituals of unrequited love (such as a colorful scarf he buys
for her but never gives to her) but also seems to lengthen his hold on life, for the moment he
recognizes her love for him is, in fact, the moment of his death. Before this moment, however, he
fills his journal with a series of daydreams about the alternative life he could have led as Laura’s
husband, suggesting that the persistent connection between love and modern leisure spaces arises
out of the opportunity a leisure romance gives for imagining other life-narratives. But when
Edmund explains his daydreaming through the simple statement, “I lost myself” (81), he
suggests that leisure’s power to give access to alternative ways of being is less about loving
another person than it is about escaping oneself. In fact, Sackville-West’s repetition of phrases
and images showing Edmund losing his former identity on the cruise ship suggests that losing himself in love, one of the most frequent tropes of leisure literature, acts as a rehearsal for his imminent loss of self: his death. For example, when Laura becomes ill, he writes, “I am beside myself with anxiety...I write a phrase that would once have meant nothing to me, but now it means that I really stand outside and beside myself in an agony of worry” (64). His love for Laura makes him solicitous, and as he projects his own mortal illness onto her (for all on the ship know she is only mildly ill), he experiences the ekstasis associated with death and leisure. As Edmund, known for his prodigious work ethic, comes to enjoy his leisure activities onboard, he begins to desire this loss of self. After conscientiously philosophizing, “how can I know what sort of a person I really am? Who does know? Who ever knows about himself?” (124), he rejects this very modernist compulsion to know thyself, to plumb into the depths of interiority, consciousness, and subjectivity, and instead luxuriates in the fact that Laura does not ask him to do so, to complete this labor of selfhood. Relieved, he recalls, “[t]he other women always attempted to ‘understand’ me, and I hate being ‘understood’” (124).

Edmund experiences this loss of self not only through romance, but also through religious experience as well. Explaining one of his favorite daily cruise rituals, he recalls, “I creep up again to the deserted deck and slip into the swimming pool and float” in the middle of the night—an example of the creative abuses of leisure space (which I discuss at length in conjunction with Elizabeth Bowen’s The Hotel) by which a leisure-seeker resists the plethora of rules and exceptions governing the use of public amenities. Edmund’s own spatial improvisation allows him to escape the social identity he has constructed for himself on the ship, to be “no longer what people believe me to be, a middle-aged journalist taking a holiday on an ocean-going liner,” but
rather “a liberated being, bathed in mythological waters, an Endymion young and strong...All weight is lifted from my limbs; I am one with the night; I understand the meaning of pantheism” (29). The spiritual balance he enjoys in the pool, unfortunately, does not last, and he increasingly spends his free time asking questions like, “When did matter become life? When did life, as differentiated from matter, become mind?” Deciding that the problem is a “detective story,” a “supreme Who-done-it” (68), he never answers the questions; more significantly than finding an answer for Edmund is his reflection, “I never used to think about such things” (69), or in other words, that he has freed himself from his former self. When he finally verbalizes his transformation to Laura, describing it as “comparable to the religious experience of the mystic”, he expresses his profound discomfort with his changing of roles (for he tells her to “blame yourself, and perhaps blame this enchanted ship, if I let myself go as I never would have done...at London dinner parties”) she bluntly disconcerts him from his defensive posturing by telling him to “drop that stunt, out here where we are God knows where and God knows where we are going to...do you really mind letting yourself go?” (61).

The “Schizophrenic Rift:” Labor and Economics on a World Cruise

Edmund’s loss of self is thus enabled by the physical displacement of self in the unstable geography of a sailing ship going “God knows where.” This loss of self is not only spiritual but economic: when he diagnoses the imbalances of his former self, his self-critique is consciously anti-capitalist. Only his death-sentence is a strong enough reason for him to question his own strong work ethic, having worked “over ten years since the war with scarcely a break” (40). Leaving his doctor’s office, he considers, “Should I resign from the paper or carry on with my
work to the end? It was then I discovered as in a moment of inspiration the desire to be done with all that and to plunge into the luxury of exploring the opposite aspect of the world” (38). Not only does his office resist his sudden need for leisure (they in fact insist on continuing to keep him on the payroll during the cruise), but also his fellow cruisers attempt to draw professional opinions out of him. Ironically inquiring into his opinion of euthanasia during a conversation they think is hypothetical (and therefore a leisurely conversation), they jokingly ask, “Come on, Carr, what’s your attitude? Supposing you knew yourself to be smitten by a mortal disease? You might write us an article one day to brighten up the Silly Season” (39). Edmund’s own labor here is given as the condition of the reading public’s leisure—a serious topic converted into a fun distraction from what is itself a distraction, the social season—and he unsurprisingly attempts to flee their company to find true leisure for himself. For these passengers, most of them expatriates returning from the Christmas holidays spent back in England, he realizes, “[t]his is still a holiday, a prolongation of the more perfect holiday at home,” yet even this recognition does not make him more merciful toward them as he criticizes them for (as he believes) universally overindulging in games, drink, and sex—even the priests playing ping-pong and the nuns strutting about the promenade deck.

Significantly, for Edmund it is leisure that universalizes, that makes the modern philosophical leap possible to regard humans as similar to one another, that can make even priests and nuns look the same as the women whose “evening dresses seem even lower than they were the night before.” Laura’s disapproval of his attitude is instructive, as it places individuality and uniqueness back into the realm of labor: “I had not right, she said,” Edmund recalls, “to dismiss people in a lump. I must learn to discriminate. Many of these men were highly efficient
and intelligent in their profession. Some of them were genuinely keen, glad to be going back to their jobs” (51). Little wonder, then, that it is during Edmund’s unwonted break from labor that he believes he loses his individual identity. Floating in the deserted pool at midnight, trying to carve for himself some private leisure from the very public leisure spaces of the cruise ship, he believes himself now “incapable of envy, ambition, malice, the desire to score off my neighbor” (29). Edmund’s ungenerous account of the priests and nuns suggests that his transformation is a work in progress, but what remains constant despite his changing attitude towards his fellow cruisers is the anti-capitalist vein in his leisurely reflections. Still floating in the pool, he regretfully recalls that before embarking on the ship, “Protests about damage to ‘natural beauty’ froze me with contempt, for I believed in progress and could spare no regrets for a lake dammed into hydraulic use for the benefit of an industrial city in the Midlands” (27). Each port of call leaves him more firm in his disgust at competition and the destruction of nature in the name of industry: landing “on an island where industry is unknown and Nature so kindly that the inhabitants are satisfied to live on the fruits of the earth and the fish of the sea, rather than exert themselves in clangorous factories or in the competition of prosperity,” he realizes that his “sense of values has indeed undergone a reversal” (12). This reversal is not merely moral, a rejection of greed, but also an aesthetic judgment. While his reflections on his new self, “gloriously and adolescently silly,” and focused on “loving what I have despised, and suffering from calf-love into the bargain,” is ambivalent, his clarion call to leisure, “I want my fill of beauty before I go,” is not (28). And while his assessment of native islanders—“Civilization had not grimed the golden skin of these young men, and as for the women in their soft many-colored draperies they were like flowers walking. Man and women alike, in every poise, every gesture, moved like
trained dancers”—may lack originality and suggest that his epiphany is merely a shallow primitivism, the critique of capitalism that it provokes in him (as he shudders thinking of “hordes in soiled raincoats” with “strained faces...pushing to get into the Underground” [13]) is not.

Midway through his cruise, he has convinced himself that he has always “deprecated... meanness, petty suspicion... the desire to score off others;” despite this delusion (whose growth in the text corresponds to him debarking on impoverished ports of call), he shrewdly recognizes that while he “seen enough of” all of those negative qualities in his “profession” of political journalism, during which he “had tried to suppose that it all made up the fascination of human nature—so small and vile on the one hand, so capable of nobility and charity on the other” (99). Edmund’s reflection suggests that capitalism engenders (or at least supplies images for the representation of) peculiarly literary characters, the dynamic, three-dimensional businessmen dear to the nineteenth-century novel; I am thinking here of mill-owner and love-interest John Thorpe in Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South* (1855), Anthony Trollope’s simultaneously evil and fascinating businessmen-villains, particularly Augustus Melmotte in *The Way We Live Now* (1875), and of course the reformable Scrooge of Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* (1843). As Edmund begins to reconcile himself with the thought of death by self-fashioning, by staging a rebirth (not coincidentally at sea), he does so by passionately speaking out against the assumptions of industrial commodity capitalism. When he expresses his regret to Laura that his

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121 For an historical account of the connotations of the sea and water as rebirth, see Alev Lytle Croutier’s *Taking the Waters* (New York: Abbeville, 1992). For an analysis of the fate of character after the Victorian novel, see Michael Levenson’s *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality: Character and Novelistic Form from Conrad to Woolf* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1991).
prolific writing supported the “mundane” side of life rather than the philosophic or affective life, she theorizes that his “descendants” will find “that some sort of order has been settled out of confusion.” Laura’s comment echoes what Astradur Eysteinsson called modernism’s “rage for order,” a “modernist paradigm” that he abstracts from analyzing T. S. Eliot’s “Ulysses, Order, and Myth” (9). As Eliot praises Joyce for fulfilling “the need for something stricter” than the baggy monster of Victorian fiction, which has not way “of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history” (Selected Prose 177), so does Laura argue that Edmund’s journalism has given significant form to the chaotic plane of modern politics.

Edmund is not pleased with her verdict, and his response betrays his need to find a mode of living somewhere between the “noble savage” and the “big business man.” When Laura tartly observes, “I don’t fancy you would like him [the noble savage] very much, at close quarters,” he unleashes the longest speech he makes in the entire three-month voyage, interrupted only by Laura accusing him of inconsistency because he appreciates “the achievements of man:”

I don’t like that big business man, either—the one you call the Merchant of Alexandria—with his triple chins and his cigar, or the Texan oil king who boasts that he could buy out the Sultan of Kuwait if he were so minded. I don’t like the exploitation of Nature—shafts sunk in search of valuable minerals in splendid mountains, hideous cities loading the earth, cranes and derricks disfiguring the coast, power stations where the nightingale should be singing beside a waterfall....Perhaps I am inconsistent—such a luxury sometimes, to allow oneself a riot of inconsistency. I came on this trip for that express purpose. I am discovering that one of our many problems is the almost schizophrenic rift between our desire for civilization and our desire for what Miss Corcoran would recall the Return to Nature. There is a desert-islander in all of us, mostly unavowed. (46)

With this invocation of Keats’s nightingale and this universalization of Edmund’s individual desire, Edmund’s tacit claim that it is not he, but rather Miss Corcoran (a fellow passenger), who
is naively romantic is not entirely successful. Nor is he entirely free of the “schizophrenic rift” he diagnoses as modern civilization’s chief philosophical flaw. And finally, he does not recognize that this rift is itself a persuasive selling point for modern leisure, as the discursive production of such a modern tension not only underpins the early twentieth century vogue for conservation tourism and heritage tourism (amplified from the early Romantic aesthetic preference for ruins and pastoral) but also provides a powerful narrative charged with aesthetic, economic, and philosophical reasons for taking an exotic world cruise such as his and Laura’s. But what is original and persuasive about Edmund’s speech—and also about Sackville-West’s narrative rendering of the world cruise—is that he not only relates his internal “riot of inconsistency” with inconsistencies he sees in the cruise ship’s relation to global commerce, but also converts this relationship from a nascent political argument (which draws from his old skills as an editorialist) into a mode of aesthetic appreciation. The “desert-islander in all of us” is therefore less Edmund’s new alter-ego than it is the “big business” man’s necessary dialectical partner, so the radical charge carried by his statement concerns less the substance of his critique of capitalism than its style. To escape the Enlightenment rational doctrine of non-contradiction, he converts it into an aesthetic category, finding beauty in the contradictions of capital made visible to him and his companions on the ship as they witness a panorama of commercial transactions that exceed any one consistent economic system yet somehow contribute to the single flow of value and commodities moving them across the globe.

This spectacle of global capital is, I argue, the cruise ship’s true spectacle, its true “destination” or port of call. Watching a stream of (white) “idle crowd of sight-seers” and (non-
“emigrants lugging their poor bundles...like panic-stricken cattle” embarking at their first port of call (based, it appears, on Aden), in concert with bales of cargo lifted off the land and into the hull by gigantic cranes, Edmund remarks, “It seems like a microcosm of everything that is happening all over the world” (22). In my earlier chapters on hotels, I have eschewed the vocabulary of the microcosm because of the term’s implications that such an environment would be closed off and perfectly replicate a particular view of modernity (rather than the presumably messy reality), but Edmund’s use of “microcosm” is telling because he invokes the term as something “happening”; he witnesses the flow of people and goods, a set of movements crossing a plane (here, humans crossing the gangway and cargo passing beneath the waterline), an activity, in short, rather than a discrete spatial unit. In this scene, some of the images are perhaps clumsy—such as the “Buddhist priest with shaven head and saffron robe [who] falls flat as he stumbles over a rope,” a miniature allegory of the Other who fails some test of modernity (22) —the power of the scene rests in Sackville-West’s representation of the cranes. Edmund, the cruising passenger choosing to spend his leisure watching others work, writes that

the great sheds of the warehouses are disgorging their bales and packing-cases, to be picked up by giant hooks dangling from the cranes, lifted, and soaring up to be deposited into the gaping pit of the ship’s hold. I never cease to marvel at the nice precision of those machines, such delicacy combined with such power, and all controlled by a tiny man aloft in a tiny cabin. These are moments when one has to salute the ingenuity of the human brain. These obedient giant toys, that can equally scoop up a five-ton weight of a motorcar and sling it through the air as though it were made of tin, when it looks as foolish as any object deprived of its rightful means of progression.

Machines. Down on the quay writhe black-jointed pythons feeding oil into the ship, and again I think of the vast oil combines netting the world and of the residue of countless primeval fish turned to this strange service by the inventiveness of man. (22-3)
The play of scale that animates this passage, wherein the movement of cargo renders both man and crane simultaneously “tiny” and “obedient giant toys,” recalls the impossible juxtapositions in Cunard Line’s *Book of Comparisons* and reroutes Le Corbusier’s professional absorption in such diagrams as a leisure spectacle whose fascination is derived as much from amusement—the “foolish” objects superimposed on the sky—as from technical achievement. Edmund’s respect for “the inventiveness of man” and for the “ingenuity of the human brain” is belied by the style of the passage, whose dramatic weight, distributed at the end paragraph break and centered on the chapter’s single one-word sentence, is given to the machines, not the “tiny man” running them. From his deck-chair, he accesses a singular spectacle whose components kaleidoscopically transform: the crane into a fishing pole, the main deck into a “gaping pit,” the “giant toys” into a tiny man upon a tiny machine, all sizes and shapes of cargo into tin trinkets, hoses into pythons, fish into oil. Edmund’s personal transformation, dwarfed by the immense power flowing around, into, and out of the ship, is thus itself put into the context of the larger system of transformations that create the dynamic microcosm of the ship.

The ship’s contribution to this exchange is aesthetically disconcerting—she “pollutes and dishonors the sea” with garbage, Edmund sighs (23)—yet the ultimate effect is one of beauty, a unique, dynamic aesthetics of scale created when the ship’s secondary flow, a carefully planned exchange of commodities, crosses with its primary flow, the aimless (but still profitable) flow of cruising passengers. This crossing is historically unique, a result of the slow transformation of the steamship from a “working” liner (associated with the serious labor of emigration, national mail contracts, and large-scale distribution of raw materials and commodities) into the cruise ship whose destinations are chosen for pleasure rather than business. Of course, pleasure cruising
is nonetheless a business, and therefore still plays a large role in global capitalism, but the
difference lies in the discursive production generated around cruise ships, in which labor and
monetary exchanges are minimized. Even in Edmund’s ship, a hybrid liner-cruiser, the tendency
to minimize references to capitalist modernity is constantly, though often ineffectually, at work.
Sackville-West stages opportunities for the dramatic deflation of passengers’ utopian beliefs
about the cruise and its workers—including Laura’s initial outrage over the working conditions
suffered by her steward (she angrily reports, “In the five years he has been on this ship he has
never once had time to go ashore” [11]), a rage whose intensity slowly shifts downward in the
cruise until she begins to fetishize the workers as objects of beauty. This beauty not only gives
her erotic pleasure (her steward, she points out, is a “dangerous man to have about” with his
“attractive” smile and “pointed ear like a faun” [101]) but also converts the very labor conditions
she decried into a source of visual pleasure (she praises a dock-hand at work for being “so
straight and erect” and advises, “Look, Edmund, what a magnificent torso, what shoulders, what
muscles! polished like metal, pure sculpture” [102]). In contrast to cruise ship publicity, which
often attempts to eliminate all evidence of labor whatsoever, Laura imaginatively consumes the
evidence of the ship’s involvement in capitalism as an object of aesthetic beauty—similar to
Edmund’s loving description of the loading of cargo on the ship. Yet Edmund is not entirely
aware of the process by which he has converted labor into aesthetic leisure; in the service of
convincing himself that the cruise has indeed changed him irrevocably, he writes, “I observe with
amusement how totally the concerns of the world, which once absorbed me to the exclusion of
all else...have lost interest for me even to the extent of a bored distaste” (25). Much of Edmund’s
“amusement” or leisure, like that of Strether in James’s *The Ambassadors*, does indeed come in
the form of pleasurable, self-reflective meditation, but he nonetheless remains unaware that his leisurely reflection does not represent not an “total” escape from “the concerns of the world” but instead Edmund’s own aesthetic recoding of those worldly concerns. Accustomed to thinking about politics and economics through the labor of journalism, he now considers politics and economics through the leisure of aesthetic appreciation. This transformation is productive; it in fact produces (as readers may have already guessed) Edmund’s leisure.

In other words, Edmund’s leisure is produced as the cruise ship makes visible, or perhaps *spectacularizes*, the global economic flows that, in London, were represented by the abstract discourses of politics and journalism. When he refuses to tour ports of call, he often indulges in the cruise ship rhetoric that represses labor. Typical remarks include his announcement, “Now the indolence of southern latitudes has captured me. I like to see dusky men sitting about doing nothing...it is seldom that I go ashore” (35) and his admiration of “a boy perched, singing to himself a little song, wistful and sad; he seemed to have no connection with the launch and no reason why he should be there; it was as though a bird had alighted for a rest” (71-2). But when he does venture ashore, he witnesses various scenes of labor that contribute to the global exchange of commodities and, in the process of recalling such scenes, converts them into aesthetically pleasing visions that align with his newfound disgust of industrial capitalism. For example, watching “brown bodies naked safe for a loincloth...working on tortoiseshell, cutting, scraping, and filing against the hardened ball of their foot, with the dexterity of a lifetime,” he moralizes on their labor by calling it “an ancient craft which could never be replaced by machinery and which involved the seemliness of all manual skill” (15). What saves the scene from sheer primitivism is Laura’s awareness of this labor’s modernity; she exclaims, “To think of
those cigarette boxes, those dressing-table objects, those paper-cutters, ending up in Asprey’s front window in Bond Street!” A ship’s officer further deflates Edward’s aestheticization of these laborers by glossing, “They prise the shell off the living tortoise and then throw the creature back, raw, into the sea, in the hopes that it will survive to grow another shell for their benefit.” Edmund’s angry response—“Must one always be struck down, after a moment of elation?” (16)—strikes back against the realism of Laura and the ship’s officer, allowing him to indulge in reverie again when witnessing another scene of “native” labor. Trying to ignore signs that each exotic locale is already connected in multiple ways with the Western modernized world—such as the “native merchants raucously crying their wares” to the tourists (63) and the fact that Laura “likes the booths hung with pots and baskets and flattering stuffs (made in Manchester)” (103)—he instead tries to appreciate “the humble workers going about their tasks” and enthuses, “they pass in a flash of grace, while for them life goes on day after day in unconsciousness and monotony. Should we return a year hence, we should find them still poised as though time had not moved an hour” (29).

Yet, paradoxically, in another moment, Edmund recognizes that this timeless monotony or sameness he attributes to the natives he sees in ports of call is actually a result of empire, of the spread of modernity across the globe. Looking at the colonials filling the ship, he imagines that their various returns home will all be the same:

The same bungalow, the same work for the men, the same housekeeping for the women, the same investigation of the new neighbors, the same parties, the same factions, the same surreptitious back-biting. There will be a club-house, with a tennis-court, and ice chinking in a gin-and-tonic in the sunset. (50)
This passage recalls Edmund’s description of cargo being loaded, as both involve a new sense of scale, an ability to envision not only the role the cruise ship plays in the global flows of capitalism, empire, and tourism, but also the shape of the modern world itself due to material infrastructures like steamships. The space of the cruise ship gives Edmund access to a vision he has never had, a vision of empire as a collection of individual lives, and though the present passage is not aesthetically pleasing, it is just as powerful as the portraits of the *Aquitania* leaning against a pyramid or being cross-sectioned to show the organization of the crowds within. In setting native labor against modern capitalist labor, and in viewing native labor as an aesthetic or historical spectacle, Edmund plays the role of the postmodern tourist in Dean MacCannell’s *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. MacCannell’s classic work describes the “staged authenticity” of contemporary tourism, in which “a museumization of work and work relations,” which he defines as a specific mode of cultural production he categorizes under the name “work display.” Whether it is a demonstration of whaling or cowboys, a trip to a bank or construction site, it works by presenting tourists, alienated modern subjects who are “inarticulate when asked to explain the place and meaning of work,” with “the universality of work relations—not as this is represented through their own work (from which they are alienated), but as it is revealed to them at their leisure through the displayed work of others” (36). This vicarious leisure of watching others work, MacCannell argues, is a way of “breaking up the ‘leisure class,’ capturing its fragments and distributing them to everyone” in a way that neutralizes or defuses overt class warfare in favor of a tourism that “forces” the modern subject “to forge his own synthesis between his work and his culture” (37). Edmund, too, uses his leisure to theorize what he has never done before: his work and its relation to the other
spectacles of work unfolding around him on the world cruise. His early effusions, in which he indicates that at these foreign ports, insist that the natives are the possessors of perfect leisure, but quickly, effusions such as, “industry is unknown and Nature so kindly that the inhabitants are satisfied to live on the fruits of the earth and the fish of the sea” (12), are supplanted by a series of work tableaux, leading him to exclaim, “What pleasure we derive from the humble workers going about their tasks: a string of brown naked fisherman dragging their nets ashore, a man ploughing with oxen, a woman walking with a pitcher on her head. Her arm in its upward curve provides the handle of the pitcher” (28-9). Even his awe at this “humble” work scene, whose underlying logic is that work can indeed be simple and can display its relation to human life simply, is supplanted by another epiphany, one that strips away the naivete of the previous statement. As he enters a market that is supposed to be closed off to Europeans,

An enormous negress, incongruously swathed in pale pink muslin, entered into some argument with a group of men; lost her temper; struck one of them in the nose with a fist the size of a boxing-glove; blood poured; partisans, both men and women, joined in; I saw the flash of knives, heard yells as though some ancient feud were being avenged. (105)

Edmund’s experience in this market, a working market serving a community, not designed as a simulacrum to attract tourist cash, shows that the world of The Tourist is not yet complete. The violent scene presents an alternative narrative of labor and exchange, one hearkening back to capitalism before the birth of the modern nation-state, before the establishment of the rule of law. Nonetheless, we are already given a glimpse of the need Fredric Jameson identifies in the program essay of Postmodernism: or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism—the need for “an aesthetic of cognitive mapping—a pedagogical political culture which seeks to endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system,” which
requires “radically new forms in order to do…justice” to the “enormously complex representational dialectic” that characterizes postmodernism. Whereas Jameson looks to these new techniques to help postmodern subjects “regain a capacity to act and struggle,” Edmund wishes merely to die having reconciled himself with death, but Jameson and Sackville-West both struggle towards Jameson’s goal of “achiev[ing] a breakthrough to some as yet unimaginable mode of representing” the world emerging at the end of literary modernism, or in other words “the world space of multinational capital” (54). In representing the world cruise, Sackville-West confronts and situates the birth of this new “world space,” or perhaps writes a pre-history of postmodernism as Edmund not only tours labor, but in fact tours a panorama that should be historically impossible, an array of temporally and culturally specific modes of interacting (or not) with the global flow of value.

**Touring the Empire: Rewriting *Heart of Darkness***

It will take a moment to unpack the parallel I wish to draw here, particularly because Sackville-West’s “enormous negress” remains to be addressed. It is a somewhat thin and cliched image (and most certainly a racist one), but her attribution of violence to the native woman is not the novel’s only echo of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. The fragmented, impressionist, and undoubtedly modernist style of the scene marks the 1961 novel as a matching bookend for Conrad’s early modernist classic, just as Edmund’s voyage works, like Marlow’s, to rouse him into a consideration of empire and its local, human effects in colonies or dependencies. For Marlow, the grab for Africa, the height of Europe’s conquest of the globe, plays out as a series of barely imaginable violence calling for new styles of narrative to comprehend this new and
particularly ruthless phase of empire, but for Vita Sackville-West, writing as the last African colonies began to achieve independence, the modernist style that Conrad helped to forge serves as a powerful method for conveying the multiple forms of labor and economic exchange that, I argue, the itinerary of the world cruise made uniquely visible. Each of the novel’s labor scenes possess a different relation to global capital, but all eventually come into the purview of the cruise passenger, and in fact it is Edmund’s linguistic struggle to represent these scenes in the single flat plane of his diary—and specifically, to represent them as a coherent narrative, with all moments equally playing a part of his “progress” towards a perfect death—that marks the novel as a late modernist novel. No Signposts in the Sea inherits and adapts the style of literary modernism while facing the dawn of the postmodern culture and economics of flexible accumulation as a global and dynamic phenomenon—unlike the late modernist “autoethnographies” of the inward-facing “anthropological turn” documented by Jed Esty in A Shrinking Island. Sackville-West’s novel therefore represents a significant counter-note to Esty’s “anti-diasporic” history of modernism at the end of empire, or, to use Esty’s phrasing, “the question of late modernism and imperial contraction between 1930 and 1960” (4). To turn back to the question of impressionistic style, No Signposts in the Sea, similar to Jameson’s analysis of Heart of Darkness’s impressionism as filled with “objective discontinuities” so pronounced that

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123 I think here of the body of scholarship presenting the novel as a struggle to create a style to represent empire adequately. For example, Patrick Brantlinger’s discussion of Heart of Darkness, which responds to the apparent disconnect between Conrad’s sophisticated style and unsophisticated portrayal of Africans by saying, “That may, however, be part of the Conrad’s point” (290). Brantlinger continues to explain that Conrad’s style reflects the difficulty of creating “a voice of the abyss” (294), particularly insofar as doing so risks becoming “the sort of lying idealism that can rationalize any behavior...a complete separation of words and behavior” (297). In Reading for the Plot, Peter Brooks, too, claims that “what we need...is an unreadable report,” for the narrative continues “trying out” these ways to mean, despite the fact that this “repeated ‘trying out’ of orders, all of which distort what they claim to organize, all of which may indeed cover up the very lack of possibility of order” (242). Finally, Allan Simmons’ “The Language of Atrocity” asserts that Conrad’s modernist experimentation was meant to “create the context and the conditions for believing the tales of atrocity coming out of the Congo precisely because the scale of the ‘horror’ to which is alludes cannot be adequately conveyed through facts anyway” (98).
they “projected a bewildering variety of competing and incommensurable readings” (208), presents a series of inconsistent fragments about native labor and the condition of the globe at the end of European empires, which I argue are not an ahistorical “will to style” that Jameson found Conrad guilty of (196), but rather represents the struggle to visualize a specific historical moment, which itself is conditioned by and marked by traces of residual and emergent cultures and modes of production from all around the globe. As Sackville-West sprinkles the ship itself with these traces, including the circulation of rumors that animates the ship, as well as depicting such traces “within” the passengers themselves—particularly the “Chinese woman improbably called Mme. Merveille” (24) and Edmund himself, who, despite having never physically gone abroad, admits to being nevertheless a proud product of global flows when he explains, “I liked being Edmund Carr with a European reputation, and across the Atlantic too” (27). Just as Laura Doyle argues that a true transnational modernism requires understanding the nation as emerging through and simultaneously with such global exchange, so too does Sackville-West portray the late modernist subject as constituted by these flows.

The novel’s most successful portraits of global flows are, however, focused around the geography of the cruise and its relation to the philosophical underpinnings of capitalism. Towards the end of empire, Sackville-West suggests, the capitalist energies formerly devoted to resource acquisition and market expansion are transferred into tourism. Just after Edmund describes the crane loading cargo, he turns his eye to the “massive mountain” that provides a “back-cloth” for the dramatic spectacle he has just enjoyed. “Stupid and brainless,” he begins his description of the mountain, his utterance a confident exercise in the dialectic of enlightenment in which the huge natural feature is minimized or even ridiculed against the machine-centered
play of scale he has witnessed. Whereas the mountain before until now had “defeated the encroachment of man’s city,” it now, with the growth of tourism, has been conquered: “Yet even here has man vulgarly conquered: a cable railway transmits tourists in little cages to the summit, where they may buy panoramic postcards and drink Coca-Cola” (23). Edmund’s all-too-easy critique of tourism in the age of late capital in turn ridicules the dialectic of enlightenment itself and calls into question the moral, aesthetic, and human value of “conquering,” that is, of empire itself, which may have begun by the processes of violence and enslavement depicted in *Heart of Darkness* but now peters out by placing white tourists in “little cages” in order to spur the sale of tourist commodities. The human effort of civilizing nature through capital, it seems, anticlimactically reaches the dubious “summit” of commercial tourism.

But Edmund’s sightseeing over the course of the world cruise raises in him an awareness of more than just the birth of the kind of hyperreal postmodern leisure described so vividly by Umberto Eco and Jean Baudrillard. As Dean MacCannell argues, “as a tourist, the individual may step out into the universal drama of modernity...[and] attempt to grasp the division of labor as a phenomenon *sui generis* and become a moral witness of its masterpieces of virtue and viciousness” (7). My analysis strives to expand MacCannell’s thesis by including the spectacle of empire among the encountered elements of modernity that he simply calls the “division of labor.” Thus, when Edmund and Laura accept the hospitality of an expatriate shipping magnate, who promises to show them “out-of-the-way-places” that one cannot see by “traveling round on a liner” (69), the result is not a predictable unmasking of all tourism, however exclusive or expensive, as superficial, but rather a baffling encounter with the spatial, social, and linguistic

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124 MacCannell, of course, has a certain amount of irony invested in his use of “universal drama” and “*sui generis*;” he implies that capitalist structures set modernity up as universal, rather than that such universality is unproblematically guaranteed or that capitalist structures are, in fact, established in and of themselves.
effects of imperial expansion. Cynical Edmund notes, “I anticipated a luxurious villa with a
cocktail bar in the drawing-room and carved wooden figures of Negroes holding electric
lights” (72)—a caricature of expatriate housing that implies that all expatriate luxury is already a
caricature, with bland, mass-reproduced spaces and features designed irrespective of the villa’s
location, furnished with the same American bar and the same African figures, no longer invested
with the power to provoke shock or aesthetic pleasure, but rather converted into useful
appliances (electric lamps). Instead, the villa is an enigma, what Edmund calls “the landscape of
a fairy story,” made beautiful by a “haze spreading a veil over reality” (71). In an unabashedly
romantic interlude, they alight alone onto the shipping magnate’s yacht to visit his private villa,
located in an unnamed island that Victoria Glendinning hypothesizes is Macao (based on the
successful journey Vita and Harold took there in 1959). Yet the details Sackville-West includes
do not appear to indicate Macao, with its proximity to China and its heritage of Portuguese rule.
The villa is “not what [Edmund] had expected....simple to the point of austerity, with white-
washed walls, red-tiled floors...and plain serviceable furniture of a peasant type,” thereby mixing
the luxurious with the plain and causing him to exclaim, “Laura...where on earth are we?” The
ensuing description does little to help clear up the mystery, either for Edmund or for the readers.
His diary continues, “From the entrance hall and up the staircase drifted the scent of burning
joss-sticks, and that was the Orient, but in the same hall a door stood open on to a purely Spanish
patio with pots of camellias” (72). While the houseboy, whose name is “something like Tuong”
speaks English and Spanish, his wife wears “the ankle-length coat, rose-red, and split on either
side...revealing the long white silk trousers” typical of Vietnamese dress (73, 72). Edmund’s
disorientation as he desperately tries to localize both the villa (when the houseboy sets a late time
for dinner, he thinks, “Spain again! and we some twelve thousand miles away from Europe!”)—and the island itself. After noting the island’s pines, frangipani, and isolated promontories, he finds tamarinds, causing him to interject, “And this was the Orient too,” although his certainty is immediately rescinded as he spies “crumbling palaces of Spain” located hard by, just “on the other side of the road, behind the trees...[having] nothing to do with the Orient at all” (73). Such details perhaps suggest Macao, but then why would the houseboy speak Spanish? Other details (like the Buddhist temple they spot while taking a stroll) suggest Manila, yet the houseboy’s wife is certainly not a native of the Philippines. When Edmund’s protests, “We could not behave as tourists in this place” (75), his appreciation for the placeless beauty of the island resonates suggestively with Jameson’s “Periodizing the 60s,” which describes the “‘liberation’ of new forces in the Third World” during the period of decolonization, which “historically went hand in hand with neocolonialism....the end of one kind of domination but evidently also the invention and construction of a new kind” (184). Sackville-West writes at the moment that postmodern tourism begins to supply an answer to the question of what this “new kind” of domination will look like. Edmund’s resistance to becoming this new kind of tourist on the unnamed island, provoked by his inability to understand, literally, where he is, is rooted in the unique vision that his world cruise gives him. The cultural overdetermination of the island, its dizzying multiplicity of conflicting cultural signifiers, performs the island’s colonial past and neocolonial future in a series of hallucinatory passages in which Edmund finally achieves the romance with Laura that he has been craving during the entire voyage. Another example of nested leisure—where an “exhausted” leisure space no longer capable of providing leisure to a modern subject yields to another, more “successful” leisure space—this interlude suggests that attempts to visualize the
economic and demographic exchanges, however incoherent or temporary such a vision might be, provide a necessary or at least appropriate context for ideal leisure, including romantic companionship.

Paradoxically, then, Edmund most accurately captures the position of the modern subject in global economic flows when he is least aware of his geographical position. While the tourist environment of the cruise ship itinerary does not in this particular example create this sense of not being *unplaced* (it is rather an unplanned excursion suggested by the shipping magnate whom they serendipitously meet on their ship), the leisure space of the ship is nonetheless depicted as a mode of experiencing the placelessness of the sea. Not only does the ship fail in itself to provide a “home” in the sea (Edmund, calling the ship a “monster,” complains that when “our wake closes up...we might never have been” [33]), but also fails to provide a grave, for Edmund dramatically observes, “there are no tombstones in the sea” (48). Edmund and Laura have two very different responses to the placelessness of their ship, which, as a cruising vessel rather than a liner, has “no settled course” (113). Whereas Edmund admits to Laura that after sixty days aboard, “I no longer know which is East and which is West,” Laura confesses that “only” on the shipping magnate’s villa did she have “a curious feeling of coming home” (130, 131). For Edmund, this placelessness allow him to escape his former identity, and for Laura, it allows her to shift the signifier of home, Ironically, to the villa, a space that possesses less fixity and national identity than even the ship itself. The infrastructure of empire has been successfully converted into a leisure space, into a place where one tours not an exotic locale per se—a practice roundly criticized by the tourism scholarship of the past thirty years—but rather the history of empire itself. Lulled into romance by the breathtaking sight of the unnamed island,
Edmund and Laura find leisure (what Edmund calls “an empty existence...long purposeless days in which I shed all I have ever been” [36]) through aestheticizing the erosion of geographical specificity and isolation at the heart of colonialism.

As one final example from the novel will show, Laura and Edmund constantly face evidence that the lovely sights just off the promenade deck are not merely objects of beauty but also play crucial roles in the global flows of which they, the passengers themselves, also play a key role. The last in a long chain of value-producing commodities being circulated in the seven seas, Edmund creates a kind of allegory or origin story for the dawn of the English empire when he observes that “from time to time”

an island appears on the horizon, nameless to us and full of mystery, the peak of a submarine mountain range, lonely, unblemished, remote. Does one like islands because one unconsciously appropriates them, a small manageable domain in a large unmanageable world? I cannot tell why it should give me such a queer sensation to reflect that the island has always been there....and will be there still, should I return to find it waiting for me. It is the same sensation as I have experienced in looking at a photograph of, say, some river valley of innermost China, and see a boulder, and thought that if I could find myself transported to that spot I could touch the reality of that particular piece of rock....It is there. For me. I could sit on that very boulder. (33-4)

Concluding this thought by admitting, “I explain myself badly,” Edmund, like Jameson’s postmodern subject and MacCannell’s ideal tourist, uses his journal to conceive of the history of modernity and place himself concretely within that history. Furthermore, though he cannot successfully reflect on the islands’ mystique for him, his imaginative response to the islands recalls Fernand Braudel’s account in The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II of the role played by islands in Western political thought. Proclaiming that “[t]he events of history often lead to the islands,” Braudel explains how islands are ignored by
civilizations until their heartlands and hinterlands are settled, at which time the islands take on a role whose importance “far exceeds what might be expected from such poor territories” (154). Contact with such islands, each with its “own irreducible character, its own violently regional flavor,” stimulate the imagination is “like electric charges, violent and without continuity” (161). Edmund’s response to the lone islands he cruises by resonates well with Braudel’s analysis, as does Jameson’s gloss of Braudel in Archaeologies of the Future as a “a Utopian archipelago” of “autonomous and non-communicating Utopias” (221). But Edward, while he connects to this utopian current in Western thought about islands when he fantasizes about a young couple leading a solitary, perfect life on the island, is also (like Marlow) drawn to the islands as a potential colony—territory to possess—showing that the imaginative life of the island cannot, by the time of Edmund’s cruise, cannot be separated, however subconsciously, from the European history of colonialism.

His imaginative colonization of the boulder, is not only an intellectual attempt to “appropriate” part of the “large unmanageable world” created by empire and late capitalism, but also a nostalgic wish for the “unblemished” and whatever is still “full of mystery” in the face of a natural world increasingly understood through science. While Edmund has respect for such science—in fact, his despair at never knowing Laura has less to do with his antisocial tendencies than his belief in the social significance of modern physics’ thesis that a table is not “a solidity” but rather “a conglomeration of holes actuated by perpetual movement” (14)—this passage above belies his putative belief in modern physics by insisting on a physics of solidity that underwrites the solidity of his own identity. This passage, then, finds Edmund temporarily caught in the dialectic linking the leisure of placelessness (along with the flexible identity he cultivates as a morally
significant response to being unplaced) and the concrete geography of empire (along with the comfortably stable, socially significant, and wealthy identity it appears to provide, marked by Edmund’s uncharacteristic use of italics to write “for me”).

Despite all the personal changes he undergoes on the journey, the above passage closely follows a later recollection: “as a boy I used to be fascinated by the big globe in our classroom,” Edmund recalls, and “used to creep back when the others were out in the playground, and put my finger on the remotest spot I could find...and whisper to myself ‘I should like to be there’” (113). As a child, too, leaving the playground both to visualize the globe and to place himself within it, Edmund’s preferred leisure was a vicarious imperialism, and his attempts to see himself in the context of global flows again recalls Heart of Darkness’s own voyager, Marlow, who “as a chap...had a passion for maps” and would “lose [himself] in all the glories of exploration” (7-8). Like the boy Edmund fingering the classroom globe, Marlow too recounts, “I would put my finger on it and say: When I grow up I will go there,” although the main difference is that the “many blank spaces on the earth” Marlow noticed as a child were not, for Edmund, blank, but rather already scarred by a history of empire (7-8). As he gazes on the solitary islands from his perch on the cruise ship, however, Edward wills the islands, “nameless to us and full of mystery,” to reprise the role Africa played in Marlow’s youth, as a stimulant for the imagination. But instead of using them as inspiration for playing a direct role in colonial production, Edmund uses them for leisure: “I divert myself,” he explains, “by inventing life upon them, and am amused to find my imaginings always turning towards the idyllic” (33). Not only are his reflections in themselves “diverting,” then, but even his reflections upon those reflections leave him “amused,” both leisure and a meta-leisure that makes the “new Edmund Carr” visible to him “with a
vengeance” (34). Crucially, though, his increasingly elaborate fantasy, involving a young “golden-brown” couple who have “nothing but health and love” enjoying the labor-free fruits of the earth and sea, is ruined when a ship’s officer, “off duty,” joins him and Laura at the railing. Edmund, nostalgically reflecting that the islands, “so peaceful and secret; so self contained” are “never to be seen of again,” is given a rude awakening when the officer informs them, “One of them is a leper colony and the other a penal settlement” (34). Edmund’s mood, made glorious by his indulgence in a vicarious pastoral life, a projection of his wishes concerning the lady by his side, is ruined. Instead of being home to a native couple untouched by empire, unaware of Europe or modernity or industrial production, these islands are filled with the human by-products of modernity—the ill and the rejected, exiled in an attempt to seal them off from the global movements and economy they are seen as threatening. Edmund faces the fact that these islands are not the sole exception to global flows, the one space left free from modernity and empire, but rather are the product of such flows. He and Laura are rudely awakened to the reality that the islands’ isolation reflects not the existence of an alternative social system, but instead the end of uncharted territory, the end of exceptions to or spaces outside modernity, and the decreased availability of spaces that can stimulate imaginative reverie, despite the multiplication of leisure spaces that claim to do so. Although Foucault’s “heterotopia par excellence” is the ship, for Vita Sackville-West, the penal and leper colonies seem to represent the true spaces where otherness thrives. David Harvey’s blunt assessment of the Foucauldian heterotopia’s relevance for postmodern culture is instructive here:

Ultimately, the whole essay on heterotopia reduces itself to the theme of escape. "The ship is the heterotopia par excellence... In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure and police take the place of pirates." I keep
expecting these words to appear on commercials for a Caribbean cruise. But here the banality of the idea of heterotopia becomes all too plain because the commercialised cruise ship is indeed a heterotopic site if ever there was one; and what is the critical, liberatory, and emancipatory point of (538)

Poised on the cusp of postmodernity, Edmund successfully develops a capacity for experiencing romance and self-rejuvenation on the cruise, but his success is conditioned by his awareness of imminent death and a few fortunate unplanned divergences from the cruise ship itinerary. And his diary’s best contribution to the postmodern leisure subject is certainly not his method to secure leisure itself, but rather the method through which he uses the unique geography of the cruise ship to visualize the end of modernity and locate his place in postmodernity.
Conclusion
Modern Leisure, Postmodern Spectacle

At first glance, Vita Sackville-West’s sensitive meditation on death in *No Signposts in the Sea* contrasts greatly with Agatha Christie’s portrait of the modern hotel in *At Bertram’s Hotel* (1965) less than a decade later. Yet the opening pages of this popular novel—a whodunnit page-turner centered around Miss Marple and Scotland Yard investigating the murder of the hotel’s doorman, Michael Gorman—share with Sackville-West’s novel an awareness of the social, spatial, and economic shifts transforming the modern leisure space. While Sackville-West foregrounds the protracted decay of the British empire, Christie presents World War II as an epoch-making event that intensified the gradual transformations already working on the modern leisure space. This intensification is portrayed as a kind of modernization; the narrator explains, “There had, of course, been many other hotels on the model of Bertram’s. Some still existed, but nearly all had felt the wind of change. They had had necessarily to modernize themselves, to cater for a different clientele” (1). Nonetheless, the modernization of the other hotels is (in the context of this dissertation) better characterized as postmodernization, for *At Bertram’s Hotel* opens by explaining that “if this was the first time you had visited Bertram’s, you felt, almost with alarm, that you had entered a vanished world. Time had gone back. You were in Edwardian England once more,” with “exactly the right-sized lumps of coal” in the fireplace, “a smoking room (by some hidden influence reserved for gentleman only),” and a “traditional afternoon tea...quite like the old days” (2-3). A recent arrival to the hotel, Colonel Luscombe, agrees with
the narrator’s assessment when he marvels, “Takes me back a long way, coming in here. Nothing seems to have changed” (6).

The effect the hotel has on Luscombe, and indeed, on all its guests, is profoundly misleading. Characterizing the modern hotel as “traditional” obscures the dynamic process of modernization. I have already described this controversial and not always smooth process in Chapters Four and Five of the present work, although the dynamism of the Edwardian period is also hinted at in *Bertram’s Hotel*. For example, the narrator responds to Miss Marple’s description of Lady Selina’s artist-niece—Miss Marple comforts Lady Selina, “I’m afraid dear Joan is rather modern”—with a correction that “Joan West had been modern about twenty years ago, but was regarded by the young *arriviste* artists as completely old-fashioned” (11). This hint about the neutralization of the avant-garde into the “real” (a process similar to the one Peter Burger describes modernist art succumbing to in *Theory of the Avant-Garde*) is seconded in a conversation between the Colonel and the manager, who admits, “The place has got to look Edwardian, but it’s got to have the modern comforts that we take for granted in these days. Our old dears—if you will forgive me referring to them as that—have got to feel that nothing has changed since the turn of the century” (8). By his repetition of “got,” the manager stresses the labors involved in making Bertram’s Hotel appear Edwardian; the hotel is less a survival from the Edwardian era that, in the post-war light, appears to be the last survivor of “traditional” modern hospitality than it is a special effect stage-managed carefully by the hotel staff, whose labors are meant less to provide hospitality than to evoke such hospitality as explicitly, almost flamboyantly old-fashioned. As a result, even though the only hip and young-at-heart guest in the hotel, the race-car driver and thrice-wed Bess Sedgwick, feels that “this highly respectable and
old world hostelry seemed strangely alien” (14), yet like the hotel, Lady Sedgwick’s dress is also a hyperreal artifact: though the dress looks “like the coarsest kind of sacking, had no ornamentation of any kind, and no apparent fastening or seams,” the narrator explains that the “women knew better. Even the provincial old dears in Bertram’s knew, quite certainly, that it had cost the earth!” (15). If Bess finds the hotel to be “alien,” she nonetheless, with her faux-rustic clothing as strange and temporally displaced as Bertram’s, fits in perfectly.

The alienness and postmodernity of the zombie-like resurrection of the modern hotel in 1965 is underscored by the exchange that closes this conversation between Luscombe and the manager. The manager describes the effort it takes to provide both old-fashioned hospitality for its elderly British customers and state-of-the-art comfort for non-British tourists as creating, essentially, two separate hotels: he explains, “The rooms all look alike, but they are full of actual differences” (9). The two incommensurable halves of Bertram’s Hotel neatly dramatize Guy Debord’s description of the spectacular image in his classic work on postmodern culture, *The Society of the Spectacle*:

> The images detached from every aspect of life fuse in a common stream in which the unity of this life can no longer be reestablished. Reality considered partially unfolds, in its own general unity, as a pseudo-world apart, an object of mere contemplation. The specialization of images of the world is completed in the world of the autonomous image, where the liar has lied to himself. The spectacle in general, as the concrete inversion of life, is the autonomous movement of the non-living. (7)

In terms of the hospitality industry, Bertram’s Hotel does exhibit the uncanny “autonomous movement of the non-living,” just as in terms of the genre of detective fiction, this cleavage, “in which the unity of this life can no longer be reestablished” and “the liar has lied to himself” is particularly ripe for criminal activity, which, as we shall see, thrives in the uncanny temporal
dynamics of the hotel. Christie (whose works, such as *Death on the Nile*, often present a single Marxist character, invariably represented as rather foolish, not quite interesting or witty enough to have “dunnit”) underscores the alienness of the situation when the eminently respectable and veteran Luscombe calls the two hotels inside Bertram’s as giving “to each according to his need.... Quite Marxian” (9). For reasons I will discuss below, both Luscombe’s apparent sympathy for socialist ideals and this superficial presence of Marxism in Bertram’s are short-lived, but for the moment, Christie’s description of Bertram’s unlikely leftism represents another moment when the hotel’s alienness is emphasized. This unreal atmosphere is compounded by the running commentary generated by tourists; for example, a French visitor reacts to the traditional high tea, exclaiming by “*Le Five-o’-clock. C’est bien Anglais ca, n’est-ce pas?*” even though the chief inspector reflects, “‘le Five-o’clock’ is as dead as the dodo” (120), and an American tourist judges, “So beautifully Edwardian. I just feel Edward the Seventh could walk right in any moment and sit there for his afternoon tea” (121). Its public spaces filled with “dodos” like Edward the Seventh walking about, Bertram’s, is, in effect, a house of zombies.

Apart from Luscombe, the clientele of this discreet, quietly expensive London hotel, including both the tourists and the elderly, impoverished British aristocrats and clergymen, speak of Bertram’s being unchanged, old-fashioned, and miraculously untouched by the London Blitz as being *real*. Lady Selina Hazy calls Bertram’s the “only place in London you can still get real muffins” (4), while Lady Bess Sedgwick, with “rich red real strawberry jam gush[ing] over her chin,” exclaims, “That’s what I call a real doughnut. Gorgeous” (15). Christie makes it clear that Bertram’s Hotel apparently exceptional access to the “real” is not merely an after-effect of nostalgia or memory loss among its elderly guests; the novel’s repetition of the word “real” may
reflect the desire of its elderly clientele, but at the same time, these “real” qualities do appear to exist objectively. But each time the “real” (like the red jam in Lady Sedgwick’s doughnut) erupts in an epiphanic scene, it does not accumulate and reestablish the reality of Bertram’s Hotel, but instead localizes the real, territorializing it into specific objects and calling the reality of all else into question—the ultimate source, I would argue, of the hotel’s mysterious atmosphere. Even Miss Jane Marple, staying at Bertram’s on holiday, misleadingly appears to inhabit the same function as the hotel: an unlikely survival of an older type. When the Chief Inspector first sees her, he muses, “The one with white fluffy hair and the knitting. Might almost be on the stage, mightn’t she? Everybody’s universal great-aunt.” The receptionist, Miss Gorringe, multiplies this effect by responding, “Great aunts aren’t much like that nowadays nor grandmothers nor great-grandmothers, if it comes to that,” and by clarifying this new normal for elderly ladies with an example: “We had the Marchioness of Barlowe in yesterday. She’s a great-grandmother. Honestly, I didn’t know her when she came in....her face a mask of pink and white and her hair platinum blonde and I suppose an entirely false figure, but it looked wonderful” (109). When even Miss Marple’s old acquaintance responds unbelievingly to Miss Marple’s appearance—she exclaims, “Why I do believe that’s old Jane Marple. Thought she was dead years ago. Looks a hundred” (3)—the reader is again asked to regard Miss Marple’s presence there as a miraculous resurrection, thus sealing the parallel between Bertram’s Hotel and Miss Marple herself.

But Miss Marple, in spite of her knitting and fluffy hair, is not all that she appears. While Lady Selina Hazy theorizes that Miss Marple’s village, St. Mary Mead, to be “a sweet unspoiled village....just the same as ever,” Miss Marple reminds Selina that the village has changed, and further, that “one has to accept change” (10) because, as she later explains, “the essence of life is
going forward” (156). When she visits a cousin’s apartment building, only to find there “a vast skyscraper building of modernistic design,” she remarks, “There must be progress” (93), and when she is taken aback by the changes in the Army and Navy Stores, making them “quite unrecognizable from the old times,” she judges that the Stores have been greatly improved, being “gayer and much brighter” (58). Unsurprisingly, then, Bertram’s Hotel is met by Miss Marple with something other than nostalgic bliss. Upon arrival at the hotel, long before the Chief Inspector of Scotland Yard begins to suspect that “Bertram’s Hotel, somehow, sounds almost too good to be true” (101), Miss Marple reflects, “Bertram’s Hotel had not changed. It was just as it had always been. Quite miraculously so, in Miss Marple’s opinion. In fact, she wondered.... It really seemed too good to be true” (13). Her curiosity is further piqued, and she begins to deconstruct the discourse of the “real” around her when, having ordered breakfast in bed, she becomes surprised at the arrival of a “real chambermaid looking unreal, wearing a striped lavender print dress and actually a cap, a freshly laundered cap. A smiling, rosy, positively countrified face. Where did they find these people?” (38). While enjoying her “real breakfast” with its “proper eggs” and “delicious-looking rolls” (39-40), she wonders,

Miss Marple’s attachment to the hotel as “a very interesting set of problems” reveals her unconventional views of leisure, similar to those of Christie’s Hercule Poirot, who embarks on his legendary voyage down the Nile as a desperate measure to distract him from his lamentable
lack of detective work. Complaining to a waiter at the opening of *Death on the Nile* (1937), Poirot complains, “I am, alas, a man of leisure.... I have made the economies in my time and I have now the means to enjoy a life of idleness...it is not so gay as it sounds” (14). On Poirot’s voyage, not only does he escape his idleness in favor of what he perceives as the bliss of detective work when a murder occurs, but also, nearly every suspect is also merely pretending to be on holiday, including the real criminals (pretending to be on his honeymoon, he is actually working on what is essentially a business deal with another passenger by plotting to murder his rich wife), but excepting the novel’s token Marxist (who, as a closet aristocrat, is pretending to be working on an analysis of modern Egyptian labor practices). The inability of any passenger to prove that he or she is truly on holiday provides much of the work’s comedy. For example, when Poirot interrogates a passenger, asking simply, “And your reasons for visiting this country?” the question is met with “a pause. For the first time the impassive Mr. Fanthorp seemed taken aback. He said at last—almost mumbling the words, ‘Er, pleasure.’” Though Poirot portentously cries out “Aha!” he merely follows it up with a mild question, “You take the holiday; that is it, yes?” whereupon the confused Fanthorp mumbles, “Er—yes” (140).

In *At Bertram’s Hotel*, too, we find confusion and humor arising from what is essentially a devaluation or suspicion of leisure, a revelation that pleasure is not always so pleasurable. Like Poirot, Miss Marple is only too glad to have her leisure interrupted by a new case. Her presence at Bertram’s hotel is due, in fact, to her niece’s ill-conceived wish to compensate Miss Marple for her “failed” vacation to the West Indies the year before, which also ended in a murder investigation (the story is told in Christie’s *A Caribbean Mystery* [1964]). This niece decides to give Miss Marple a holiday when explaining to a friend, “She enjoyed her trip to the West Indies,
I think, though it was a pity she had to get mixed up in a murder case. Quite the wrong thing at her age” (12). Jane Marple, however, is all too willing for all her holidays to be busman’s holidays—a fortunate situation for Scotland Yard, for it turns out that, just as in *Death on the Nile*, the vacations taken by Bertram’s guests all seem to be fake. Scotland Yard at first misses what Miss Marple first intuits and then proves; one detective muses that the hotel is “the one place in London that was absolutely above suspicion” (111), while the Chief Inspector observes, “Nobody flashy, nobody out of place, most of them enjoying an old-fashioned English afternoon tea. Could there really be anything seriously wrong with a place that served old-fashioned afternoon teas?” (120) and then claims the guests are “all pure as the driven snow. No beatniks, no thugs, no juvenile delinquents. Just sober Victorian-Edwardian old ladies, county families, visiting travelers” (131). But right before the doorman is murdered, Miss Marple’s suspicions come to a head; she tells the Chief Inspector, “I am nervous tonight—the feeling one has...that something is about to happen...evil of some kind” (155, 157). The possibility for an event has been opened up by Bertram Hotel’s air of unreality; as Miss Marple explains, the hotel’s unusual ability to take her “back to 1909” (39-40) creates unique opportunities not only for nostalgic old ladies but for a more sinister group of people:

It seemed wonderful at first—unchanged, you know—like stepping back into the past—to the past of the past that one had loved and enjoyed...But of course, it wasn’t really like that.... It was mixed up—real people and people who weren’t real. One couldn’t always tell them apart.... There were retired military men, but there were also what seemed to be military men but who had never been in the Army. And clergymen who weren’t clergymen. And admirals and sea captains who’ve never been in the Navy...Even Rose, the chambermaid—so nice—but I began to think that perhaps she wasn’t real. (155-6)

When the chief confirms her suspicions by noting that Rose is indeed “an ex-actress,” her unease intensifies. And indeed, possessing the uncanny talent of the hotel itself, Miss Marple finishes
speaking with the Chief Inspector about her fears at the very moment that a shot rings out—and
the doorman is found dead. The receptionist protests, “Such a thing has never happened at
Bertram’s. I mean, we’re not the sort of hotel where murders happen” (193), but in the course of
investigating the murder, Miss Marple and the Chief Inspector discover that Bertram’s Hotel, not
merely nostalgic but “is to all intents and purposes the headquarters of one of the best and
biggest crime syndicates that’s been known for years” (206).

This sense of shock, of disillusionment, of the existence of a sinister hotel existing,
unperceived, inside of or parallel to the modern hotel, is shared by a text I have already
examined in an earlier chapter—Arnold Bennett’s tale of crime-solving in a modern hotel, The
Grand Babylon Hotel—which presents an interesting set of similarities and differences when
compared to At Bertram’s Hotel. Bennett’s novel presents the network of modern grand hotels as
havens for criminals, including Slesak, the mastermind, who “often used to be found at the Hotel
Ritz, Paris” (201) and the Grand Babylon’s incomparable French chef, Rocco, who turns up
again in the eponymous hotel of Bennett’s Imperial Palace thirty years later. At the Grand
Babylon, as at Bertram’s Hotel, “[t]he ‘note’ of its policy was discretion, always discretion, and
quietude, simplicity, remoteness” (16), yet, also like Bertram’s, this discretion provides a
convincing cover for criminal activity. The hotel’s original owner, Felix, tries to warn Racksole,
its new owner, “Do you not perceive that the roof which habitually shelters all the force, all the
authority of the world, must necessarily also shelter nameless and numberless plotters, schemers,
ever-doers, and workers of mischief? The thing is as clear as day—and as dark as night...I never
know what is going forward” (26). Like his daughter, who doubts, “Did queer things actually
happen in Europe? And did they actually happen in London hotels?” (63), Racksole refuses to
believe Felix, and when the first signs of criminal activity begin to surface, he accuses the newspapers of “manufacturing mysteries for fun” (54). But after discovering a hidden room with a peep-hole looking into the State suite, and finding a corpse within, he marvels,

Could this be a West End hotel, Racksole’s own hotel, in the very heart of London, the best-policed city in the world? It seemed incredible, impossible; yet so it was.... The proprietor of a vast and complicated establishment like the Grand Babylon could never know a tithe of the extraordinary and queer occurrences which happened daily under his very nose; the atmosphere of such a caravanserai must necessarily be an atmosphere of mystery and problems apparently inexplicable.... He decidedly thought that there was a little too much mystery here for his taste. (99-100)

In spite of disavowing a taste for adventure, and in spite of disliking those he perceives as merely “manufacturing mysteries for fun,” Racksole, as well as his daughter, soon agree with Miss Marple and Poirot’s belief in the supreme leisure value of crime-solving while on holiday. Miss Racksole, for example, reacts to her father’s claim that something else mysterious has happened with breathless impatience, crying out, “What? Murder? Arson? Dynamite plot? How perfectly splendid!” (172), and when the beleaguered Prince Aribert objects, “Why should you and Mr Racksole be here—you who are supposed to be on a holiday!” she excuses her involvement by insisting, “It began at our hotel—you must’t forget that.” (135). By interpreting her all-too-willing participation in crime-solving as part of her duty as the owner’s daughter, Miss Racksole shrewdly invokes the labor theory of value to justify her fun. She thus unconsciously echoing the sentiments of the criminals themselves: Miss Spencer, the front office manager who “leisurely raise[s] her head” whenever a guest came into her office; Jules, the head-waiter, who could enjoy the carnivalesque opportunity of judging and correcting any monarch, business titan, or movie star if he or she was not familiar with the etiquette of the grand hotel; and Rocco, the chef, who gloats, “We had great opportunities, here in the Grand Babylon. It was a great game. It was worth
the candle. The prizes were enormous” (107). By encountering the grand hotel as a Goffmanian action space (a concept I discuss in Chapter Five), Rocco is, in fact, one of the most successful occupants of the modern leisure space. Furthermore, just as criminals like Rocco—employed at the hotel but using it as headquarters for criminal activities—enact the becoming-leisure of labor, so does the specter of hotel crime enable the Racksoles—made restless and unhappy by their surfeit of leisure—to enact the becoming-labor of leisure.

In the denouement of *At Bertram's Hotel*, it is the criminal mastermind (no less than the detective) who has been suffering from the ennui of the leisured class. Lady Sedgwick, the astonishingly beautiful and ultramodern figure whose act of checking-in creates such a spectacle and disturbance in the book’s opening scene, confesses that she is the boss of the crime ring based out of Bertram’s Hotel:

> Yes, I ran this show. You’re quite right when you say it was fun. I loved every minute of it. It was fun scooping money from banks, trains and post offices and so-called security vans! It was fun planning and deciding; glorious fun and I’m glad I had it. The pitcher goes to the well once too often? That’s what you said just now, wasn’t it? I suppose it’s true. Well, I’ve had a good run for my money! (212)

Running from the hotel lounge, she enjoys one final adventure in Bertram’s Hotel, crying out, “Catch me if you can” and climbing out the window onto the roof, causing Miss Marple to exclaim, “She’ll fall. She’s climbing up a drainpipe. But why up?” (213) The danger she courts, Miss Marple suggests, is superfluous, far beyond the bare minimum needed to escape from the hotel. Still maximizing the excitement and danger of her escape, she drives her race car at “ninety miles an hour into the park railings” (215). An early example of the adrenaline junkie native to contemporary forms of leisure, and far too wealthy to be driven by an economic compulsion to manage a smuggling ring, Lady Sedgwick turns to crime because it is the ultimate
leisure. But, in a way, so do Miss Marple, Poirot, and the Racksoles. For both detective and criminal, then, crime is their true leisure activity of choice; crime is the actually existing leisure denied to so many of the other characters of leisure modernism, whose fates I have been tracing the preceding chapters of this dissertation. In the case of crime, the glamor and spatial complexities of the modern hotel (and in the case of Death on the Nile, the modern cruise ship) are not in themselves sufficient for creating the fun, romance, and adventure of ideal leisure but nonetheless provide a supportive social and spatial context for it.

This unique affordance of the modern hotel in At Bertram’s Hotel is due largely to the same reasons why the modern cruise ship provides the spatial and social environment for the unusual events depicted Vita Sackville-West’s No Signposts in the Sea and Evelyn Waugh’s The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold. For Sackville-West, the cruise ship uniquely dramatizes the end of empire and beginning of the post-Fordist global economy, and for Waugh, the cruise ship foregrounds the perceived waning attention given to literary modernism in favor of the the postmodern spectacle and the mass communication technologies that enable and transmit such spectacles. The crime in At Bertram’s Hotel is perhaps nothing more and nothing less than the creative manipulations of these two shifts—in economic structures and in technologies of representation—in order to produce leisure-effects. Consider, for example, Superintendent Andrews’s early characterization of the crime ring:

We’ve nothing actually on any of these people. We know that they all have ways of maintaining contact with each other, and with the different branches of the concern, but we don’t know exactly how they do it. We watch them and follow them, and they know we’re watching them. Somewhere there’s a great central exchange. What we want to get at is the planners. (32)
Superintendent Andrews’s theory depends on a centralized model of authority rapidly becoming irrelevant in the context of postmodern finance capital and commodity production; indeed, the gratification of the novel’s ending arises partly from Christie’s nostalgic affirmation of such an outdated model of a centralized and hierarchical distribution of tasks, orders, and rewards.

Inspector McNeill’s cynical dissension—“I don’t believe in these masterminds. They sound all right in a story” (33)—even draws attention to this disconnect. At the same time, however, a gentle irony pervades the scene, for the superintendent’s description of the crime ring resembles nothing so much as it does the precise rhetorical occasion of his speech: a “great central exchange” of the decentralized population of commissioners, detectives, runners, superintendents, intelligence gatherers, and the other members of the very dispersed and complex Scotland Yard community. Similar to the deconstruction of the differences between the “good guys” (Poirot, Miss Marple, the Racksoles) and the criminals, Superintendent Andrews’s speech self-reflexively doubles back into commentary about Scotland Yard—perhaps giving a clue why they need the help of Miss Marple, who, despite looking like “somebody’s great-grandmother,” appears to be much less nostalgic than Andrew himself. The superintendent’s inability to keep up with the times is also exhibited in his musings at the beginning of the meeting:

I’ve always thought there’s a lot more to size than people realize. Take a little one-man business. If that’s well run and if it’s the right size, it’s a sure and certain winner. Branch out, make it bigger, increase personnel, and perhaps you’ll get it suddenly to the wrong size and down the hill it goes. The same way with a great big chain of stores. An empire in industry. If that’s big enough it will succeed. (31)

Although Andrews’s speech could have been copied straight from a conversation between Arnold Bennett’s financier par excellence, Sir Henry, and Evelyn Orcham, the hotelier of the 1930s who
inaugurates the first major chain of luxury hotels in Europe, it fails to describe the 1965 crime ring with enough accuracy to uncover its leader.

To catch the thief requires a more sensitive understanding of the nature of cutting-edge finance in 1965, including its relation to the hospitality industry and to crime. In fact, it is the difficulty in distinguishing among the three in postmodernity that makes the narrative possible and gives Scotland Yard such a headache. Unlike the hotels of the tourist industry that dominated the era of literary modernism—a network connecting various leisure sites with the infrastructure making it possible to visit them with a minimum of confusion and maximum of profit—Bertram’s Hotel hotel is doing something very different. It no longer works by being conveniently networked with other leisure spaces and tourist attractions; rather, it works by turning inward, by creating a hyperreal postmodern spectacle that becomes, in itself, a leisure activity, an object of tourism. Part of the reason for this shift is that the traditional hotel is simply no longer profitable: Colonel Luscombe, just moments after arriving at Bertram’s Hotel, questions the manager about how he can possibly make money with impoverished dowagers as his primary clientele (7). Also, the financial expert consulted by the Yard, Mr. Robinson, admits that he has already wondered “[a]bout Bertram’s Hotel. Financially, you know. One wonders how it can pay. However, it has never been any of my business. And one appreciates a comfortable hostelry with an unusually talented personnel and staff. Yes, I have wondered” (133). The hotel’s owner admits as much to the Chief Inspector: “As a running concern,” he explains, “it had gone down the hill” (142). What is perhaps more significant is how many favors it took the Chief to call in order to contact this financial whiz and also to how long it took for him to discover who actually owns the hotel. While tracking down these two elusive
figures, the Chief searches fruitlessly through financial records, then finally announces, “Got it here. Properly registered company. Balance—paid up capital—directors—et cetera, et cetera. Doesn’t mean a thing! These financial shows are all the same—just a lot of snakes swallowing each other. Companies, and holding companies—makes your brain reel...What I want is the real dope” (130). For this he must see Robinson, the top international financier Mr Robinson, whose “English was perfect and without accent but he was not an Englishman,” prompting the Chief to “wonder...as many others had wondered before him, what nationality Mr. Robinson really was” (132). Like Bertram’s Hotel, Mr. Robinson is hard to trace, a figure without an origin though the names (the straightforward “Bertram’s Hotel,” the English-sounding “Mr. Robinson”), thus emphasizing the mystery and obfuscation that surrounds the hotel’s participation in postmodern finance capital—ultimately making it the perfect headquarters for Lady Sedgwick’s smuggling ring.

 Appropriately, then, through Mr. Robinson, the Chief learns that the hotel belongs to a Mr Robert Hoffman, who “has been behind a great many—questionable deals” and “owns a lot of property, not usually in his own name” (134). Mr. Robinson may appreciate the aesthetic implications of finance capital—about the hall of mirrors through which holding companies “own” the hotel, he marvels, “It is like music, you know. Only so many notes to the octave, yet one can combine them in—what is it—several million different ways?” (133)—but the Chief complains that “it would make my head ache if I had to deal” with the “gigantic jigsaw” through which “Mayfair Holding Trust or some other name like that...is the registered owner” but is itself “owned by another company and so on and so on” (144). Like Superintendent Andrews, the Chief has little patience or appreciation for this maze; when he confronts this mysterious Mr.
Hoffman, he demands, “The real truth of the matter is that it belongs to you. Simple as that. I’m right, aren’t I?” (144). Still disavowing sole ownership, Hoffman cryptically answers, “I and my fellow directors are what I dare say you’d call behind it, yes.” (144). The Chief Inspector, unwilling to take seriously the indirections of postmodern finance, interprets this answer as a strategic lie rather than an accurate description when he reports to his detectives, “They’ve kept it very dark....If the Hoffmans are behind all this, it accounts for a lot. They’re never concerned in anything crooked themselves—oh no!.... It makes a suggestive picture—diamonds, banking interests, and property—clubs, cultural foundations, office buildings, restaurants, hotels—all apparently owned by somebody else” (146). This postmodern dispersion of ownership is not so much “solved” when they discover that Bess Sedgwick is the ringleader; not only do readers hear that the impeccable head-waiter, Henry, is in fact Bess’s co-conspirator, and not only do readers learn—in a quick aside forced at the novel’s conclusion—that Bess was not responsible for the murder of the doorman, but also, Scotland Yard’s investigation is actually frustrated by Bess’s confession because with her apparently at the helm, Hoffman is untouchable. Just as the Chief Inspector sees through Bess’s fraudulent confession that she killed the doorman, so too does he see through her claim that she herself is to blame for the entire smuggling concern. Her confession is a modern narrative, an outdated account placed over what is essentially a postmodern arrangement, as both Bess’s crime ring and Bertram’s Hotel are both postmodern structures working through flexible accumulation and financialization rather than through the kind of sole authorship represented in the context of the hotel by Bennett’s Evelyn Orcham.

Of course, we cannot separate Bess’s crime ring from Bertram’s hotel, as each is the necessary condition for the other. The slush fund from smuggling profits bolster the dying
modern institution of Bertram’s Hotel, and the hotel provides an innocent cover for the smuggling operations. For example, the tourist couple who declared that Edward the Seventh might at any moment appear are members of the crime syndicate; their luggage is full of money they’re smuggling from England to France (121). Another couple, the Cabots, readers discover, are actually vacationing in the Yucatan; the real Cabots, a couple with obviously identifiable features (such as beards, warts, and curious accents), have been “easily imitated by a good character actor” (209), and their personal records are unimpeachable enough for the members of the crime syndicate, dressed at the Cabots, to elude police interrogation. And the original incident that drew Scotland Yard’s attention (the disappearance of a clergyman) is explained by Miss Marple, who suggests that the crime ring created a double for the clergyman. When the latter returns unexpectedly early from a trip to Switzerland, he “walked in to get the shock of his life when he saw what appeared to be himself sitting in a chair facing him! The last thing the gang expected was to see the real Canon Pennyfeather, supposed to be safely in Lucerne, walk in! His double was just getting ready...when in walked the real man” (210). Bertram’s Hotel, in other words, is filled by fake tourists: the Chief Inspector concludes,

The real and the phony are mixed up very cleverly. You’ve got a superb actor manager running the show in Henry. You’ve got that chap, Humfries, wonderfully plausible....I can’t help feeling a good deal of admiration for the whole set-up. It has cost this country a mint of money.... Rich people above suspicion, coming here with a good lot of luxury luggage, leaving here with a good lot of luxury luggage which looks the same but isn’t. Rich tourists arriving in France and not worried unduly by the Customs because Customs don’t worry tourists when they’re bringing money into the country. (208)

No longer profitable as merely one respectable link in a network of modern leisure spaces, Bertram’s Hotel manages to earn money only by pretending to continue being such. What the crime ring did not anticipate, however, was the presence of Miss Marple; similar to the
unexpected arrival of the “real” Canon Pennyfeather, which threw a wrench into the works, the arrival of Miss Marple, “anyone’s great-grandmother,” who (unlike the Cabots) is not a simulacrum but rather the genuine article. She is not a zombie-like resurrection of an older type but instead a real person who remains suspicious of a too-perfect copy of “traditional” modern hospitality. When Miss Marple reflects, “Bertram’s Hotel. So many memories.... A French phrase came back to her: Plus ca change, plus c’est la meme chose. She reversed the wording. Plus c’est la meme chose, plus ca change. Both true” (198), she accepts (like Fredric Jameson in A Singular Modernity) that projects of modernization are unending, even well into postmodernity.

Miss Marple’s reversal of a well-known cliche, like Bertram’s Hotel, works by acknowledging the difficulty of conceptualizing the temporal shift between modernity and postmodernity—a difficulty that not only creates Bertram’s Hotel’s uncanny atmosphere of real unreality but also underwrites the “identification racket” (209) that creates duplicate Cabots and Canon Pennyfeathers. At the same time this atmosphere supports both the criminal activities and adventures of Bess Sedgwick and the perfectly legal abstract financial maneuverings of Mr. Hoffman, so too does it make Bertram’s Hotel the perfect British example of the postmodern tourist attractions described by Eco and Baudrillard in relation to America—with the proviso that many of the “historical interpreters” and re-enactors did not have to learn their parts. The hotel manager, asked why he allows impoverished aristocrats to stay there at a reduced price, explains,

It’s a question of atmosphere... Strangers coming into this country—Americans, in particular, because they are the ones who have the money—have their own rather queer ideas of what England is like... there are a lot of people who come abroad at rare intervals and who expect this country to be—well, I won’t go back as far as Dickens, but they’ve read Cranford and Henry James, and they don’t want to find this country just the same as their own! So that they go back home afterwards and say: “There’s a wonderful place in London; Bertram’s Hotel, it’s called. It’s just like stepping back a hundred years. It just is
old England! And the people who stay there! People you’d never come across anywhere else. Wonderful old duchesses.” (7-8)

The hotel turns a profit not by appeasing the nostalgic desires of “wonderful old duchesses” but instead by deploying the latter as a hyperreal spectacle of the modern leisure class to attract the postmodern leisure class—young American tourists. Horrified by the commodification of his elderly lady-friends, whom “you’d never come across anywhere else,” the gallant Colonel Luscombe responds, “These people; decayed aristocrats, impoverished members of the old county families, they are all so much mise en scene?” (8). Virtually indistinguishable from the doppelgangers hired to mimic them, these “decayed aristocrats,” with their reduced bills, are essentially paid performers as well—laboring through performing roles in a leisure class that largely no longer exists. As their markedly sensual enjoyment of the foods provided for them in the hotel, these gentlewomen evidently take pleasure in their roles, finally achieving the balance of labor and leisure that so many modernist characters strove for.

In *At Bertram’s Hotel*, the modern leisure space and practices I have been tracing in this dissertation become, themselves, the raw material from which postmodern leisure is generated. As Luscombe’s use of “mise en scene” suggests, if the leisure of Bertram’s Hotel is no longer networked with the other tourist spaces of modernity, it is linked to the postmodern mass leisure of the spectacle. When Bess, for example, responds to death threats by exclaiming, “It was ridiculous. Like a thriller,” the Inspector answers, “But that sort of thing does happen, Lady Sedgwick. Oftener than you’d think” (170). Even more telling, before hearing of these death threats, the Inspector himself treats Bertram’s as a “thriller,” film, or play: entering the hotel for the first time, clad in rustic tweeds and boots and sporting a rural accent, he loses interest in the problem of Canon Pennyfeather’s disappearance; instead of listening to the receptionist’s
testimony, “he had turned slightly sideways, and was observing the lounge and its occupants with an apparently naive pleasure at beholding such a well-bred, upper-class world in action” (101). Later, the receptionist perhaps takes her revenge on his inattentiveness by declaring that the other detectives are “very respectable looking. Plain clothes, and very good style, not the sort with boots and mackintoshes like one sees in films. Like one of us” (194). Although it appears that only these other detectives are wholly immune to the air of spectacle and unreality about all Bertram Hotel’s occupants, readers learn not only that the receptionist is herself one of the professional actors, paid to perform the role of the “traditional” receptionist, but also that the Inspector’s clothes, accent, and star-struck demeanor were all part of his own act to appear dim-witted and therefore catch the receptionist off-guard. Bertram’s Hotel may appear to be a relic, having miraculously survived the wars and economic shifts of the twentieth century, but its very appearance of modernity, and the extent to which this uncanny performance provokes reflections on the nature of postmodern culture’s relationship to hyperreality, are what mark it as an eminently new kind of leisure taking its place as one variety of postmodern spectacle. Just as I argue in relation to Vita Sackville-West and the cruise ship in Chapter Seven, Bertram’s Hotel originally serves as infrastructure for tourism, a crucial node in a vast network of profitable modern leisure spaces, but then becomes a tourist destination: both an object of leisure and a direct producer of value in itself.

But the fictional basis on which this postmodern leisure rests is also, Christie suggests, the same basis that makes Bess’s crime ring possible, therefore throwing doubt on the ethical value of the modern hotel’s new life as postmodern spectacle. This novel arrangement for a modern leisure space not only affords new ways to have fun—in the case of Bertram’s American
tourists and British dowagers alike, by making a nostalgic theme park out of the modern leisure space—but also, by insulating it from the passage of time, it isolates the hotel and situates it as a discrete object of aesthetic contemplation. The impression that Bertram’s Hotel has been frozen in time and maintains its own brand of “reality” quite separate from postmodernity, is, however merely an illusion; this new leisure activity of enjoying Bertram’s Hotel as a simulacrum and tourist attraction is caught up in the economic shifts in a variety of ways, including its participation in the postmodern finance capital of the mysterious Mr. Hoffman and its participation in Bess Sedgwick’s smuggling (which is, after all, nothing if not an alternative arrangement for the global flow of currencies and commodities). As critical leisure studies tried to establish in the 1990s—just as new modernist studies argued in the context of modernist art—leisure is not opposed to economic, political, and cultural life but part of it.

Miss Marple provides a vivid metaphor for the entangling of leisure, economics, and culture when she regretfully muses, “Poor Bertram’s.... It is always sad when a work of art has to be destroyed.... It is like when you get ground elder really badly in a border. There’s nothing you can do about it—except dig the whole thing up” (199-200). It is impossible, Miss Marple argues, to extricate the hotel from its criminal network without also abandoning the simulacra that make the hotel such a unique destination. Miss Marple suggests that separating the “real” from the “unreal” in a simulacrum of modernity is not only too difficult but also (given the uneasiness with which she enjoys Bertram’s modern amenities) undesirable. Her nostalgic implication that a time did exist when Bertram’s Hotel was innocent of such relationships with criminals and capitalism is counterbalanced by her austere willingness, in the name of social justice, to forego the pleasures of the modern hotel. At the same time, Miss Marple (to recall a phrase from The
Ambassadors) has indeed had her fun, just as the readers of At Bertram’s Hotel experience leisure-effects in contemplating the uncanny atmosphere of Bertram’s Hotel, whose inextricable and intriguing dialectic of the real and unreal entertain the readers, in addition to Miss Marple. As much as Miss Marple feels horror at the prospect of Bertram’s Hotel being at the center of a smuggling ring, and as much as the Chief Inspector refuses to accept as true the Mr. Robinson’s and Mr. Hoffman’s indirections and abstractions about the hotel’s dispersed and nebulous existence as a postmodern financial instrument, the hotel’s involvement in crime and capitalism, as well as the difficulty in pinning down the exact nature of this involvement, are the necessary preconditions that allow the dowagers, Miss Marple, American tourists, and the readers of At Bertram’s Hotel to enjoy leisure.

Of course, Miss Marple’s leisure is fleeting; the graphic description of Bess Sedgwick’s all-too-real car crash against the outer walls of the hotel—an inversion of the early scene in which she bites into a “real” jelly doughnut—disrupts the hotel’s careful balance between reality and unreality, and the hotel will not survive the scandal. Christie thus demonstrates the difficulty of achieving leisure, and the often unsavory imbrication of capitalism with actually existing leisure spaces and experiences—a problem that is, unfortunately, one of modernity’s surviving bequests to postmodernity. Consider how many vacations end, it seems, in exhaustion and failure, leading newly-returned vacationers to exclaim that they need vacations from their vacations. Consider the invasion of coffee shops by students and professionals who sit alone and silent, working on their laptops and making a parody out of the phrase “coffee break.” Today, play is hard work, and leisure spaces are always in danger of becoming another kind of workplace. To understand this predicament, we can consider the archive of modern leisure,
which addresses the very problems of leisure that we face today. In particular, we must identify and appreciate the ways in which postmodern subjects can still derive leisure values through manipulating the leisure institutions available to them—a tactic used by modernists and their characters, including Christie’s impoverished aristocrats in the hotel, who produce postmodern leisure by performing modern leisure. By acting out a very specific vision of modernity—itself generated, as the manager reminds Colonel Luscombe, from modern literature, texts about the English leisure class by Gaskell and James—these dowagers are not also accomplishing in *At Bertram’s Hotel* precisely the same kind of cultural work I have attempted to accomplish in this dissertation. Whereas the dowagers seem content with a nostalgic reenactment of past leisure, and whereas Miss Marple seems content to see Bertram’s Hotel razed to the ground, Christie’s novel, as well as all of the fiction and non-fiction I have been exploring in this dissertation, thematize and interrogate the relationships between leisure and power and the distance between leisure ideology and actually existing leisure. Crucially, although some of these works appear to critique or reenvision modern leisure, and others seem content to affirm or reproduce modern leisure, all of them participated in the cultural production of the discourse with which we continue to produce, enjoy, and critique leisure in the present day.


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——. “Mrs. Bennett and Mr. Brown.”


Vita
Shawna Ross

EDUCATION

Ph.D., English  The Pennsylvania State University  Expected Aug. 2011
M.A., English  The Pennsylvania State University  May 2007
B.A., English  University of Tennessee, Knoxville  May 2005

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

You Cannot Go Further in Life Than This Sentence by James: Deleuze, Guattari, Henry James.” (Modern Language Association Conference, Los Angeles, California, January 2011).

“Behaving Like a Film Star: Waugh and Le Corbusier on the Cruise Ship.” (Modernist Studies Association Conference, Victoria, B.C., November 2010).


“What the English Lakes Put Together, the Marabar Caves Tear Asunder: Revisionary Geography in E. M. Forster's A Passage to India.” (Graduate Humanities Conference at the University of Pennsylvania, February 2007).

AWARDS

Ben Euwema Award for Graduate Research, Spring 2009.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Modernist Studies Association, 2007-present.