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Bringing the World Inside: British Modernism and Taste – Gustatory, Social, and Aesthetic

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**BRINGING THE WORLD INSIDE: BRITISH MODERNISM AND TASTE—
GUSTATORY, SOCIAL, AND AESTHETIC
BY
MICHAEL DAVID BECKER**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
ENGLISH**

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DISSERTATION
OF
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ABSTRACT

As nineteenth-century scientific and industrial developments in food processing were increasingly applied on larger scales, and to a greater diversity of food items, modernity made its mark on the early twentieth-century consumer's daily foods. In addition to industrial and scientific developments, World War I and World War II brought significant changes to food production, distribution, and consumption as populations suddenly worried about the availability, allocation, and quality of food items. Early twentieth-century novels demonstrate a preoccupation with the newly modernized and altered foods and explore how food behaviors and tastes change during the period.

This project examines literary representations of food, food behaviors, and tastes through close readings of four modernist novels. I argue that the novels of E. M. Forster, Evadne Price, Virginia Woolf, and Jean Rhys demonstrate a modernist preoccupation with, and an active critique of, modernity's foods, changing food behaviors, and tastes. Analyzing a diversity of narrativized food behaviors, such as the selection, consumption, and preparation of food, I investigate the historicity and cultural significances behind specific foods and food behaviors by drawing on food history, sociological and historical studies of eating, culinary science, theorizations of the written recipe as a genre, postcolonial investigations into particular global dishes, and, when productive, science. When conceptualizing taste, I consider both literal tastes, as one of the five senses and related to gustatory pleasure, and figurative tastes, which extend to aesthetics, manners, and socially appropriate etiquettes including food

behaviors. To address taste's literal and figurative usages, I turn to disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, and cultural studies.

In my first chapter I focus on the character Leonard Bast, a hungry modern autodidact attempting to balance comestible and cultural consumption, in E. M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910), arguing that Bast engages in a type of snobbery through his judgments in taste and his efforts to gain cultural capital. In my second chapter on *Not So Quiet...* (1930), written by Evadne Price, I explore the importance of location in literary depictions of WWI food consumption, analyzing characters that eat both at (or near) the warfront and later return to dine in the home front's domestic and public spaces. Focusing primarily on the famous *boeuf en daube* scene of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and drawing upon both culinary science and the kinetic molecular theory of matter, my third chapter identifies and highlights the novel's "liquid aesthetic" and the drawing of disparate individualized characters into community without collapsing their separate identities. My final chapter on Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939) explores the behaviors of dining, performing, and exhibiting to investigate the novel's multifaceted theorization of national identities set in the complex, interwar, and cosmopolitan restaurants of Paris. The conclusion situates my project in the larger discourses and controversies regarding the expansion of modernist studies and the new formalists' call to return to form, illustrates how my project relates to these conversations and debates, and highlights how others might view my project as a productive model for negotiating similar conflicts within the methodologies and theories of literary studies.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this to Nancy and Marcy,
and in memory of David.

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INTRODUCTION

Modernity, Modernism, Food Behaviors, and Taste: Forster, Price, Woolf, and Rhys

The modernization of food and the food chain has at least a two hundred year history—a path defined by the accelerating processes of hybridization, preservation, pasteurization, synthesizing, and (presently) genetic manipulation. The initial years of the industrial revolution are generally viewed as laying the scientific groundwork that eventually impacted early twentieth-century consumers' experiences. While modern preservation and pasteurization have their beginning in the nineteenth century, it is the pivotal years of the early twentieth-century where the consuming public truly experiences and confronts the sudden modernization of food. In 1812 Bryan Donkin purchased from a London broker the patent for canning food items inside tin containers; within the next few decades canned goods were available for purchase in some places in Britain and France (Robertson 123). In the spring of 1862, Louis Pasteur and Claude Bernard's scientific experiments with heating liquids eventually led to pasteurized drinks—first wine and beer and then, later, milk (Greene, Guzel-Seydim, and Seydim 88). While in 1860 England consumed only 150 million gallons of milk, by 1914 that figure had increased significantly to 600 million gallons of milk; by 1914 the five largest milk companies in England were selling pasteurized milk (Burnett 34). After nineteenth-century scientific and industrial developments in food processing were applied on larger scales, and to a greater diversity of food items, the processes of modernization revealed stark changes to early twentieth-century consumers' daily foods.

In addition to these nineteenth-century industrial and scientific developments, historic events during the early twentieth century had important impacts on Britain's relationship with food. World War I and World War II brought significant changes to food production, distribution, and consumption as populations (with previously abundant and rather secure food sources) suddenly worried about the availability, allocation, and quality of food items.¹ During this time food was truly marked by modernity; the preserved and canned could circulate widely at the home front and further away at the warfront, playing a crucial role in feeding the hungry bodies of the early twentieth century.

A number of early twentieth-century novels are concerned with newly modernized foods and explore the ways in which individual and communal food behaviors change during this period. For example, the concern over modern foods marked by the industrialized processes of preservation (canned food) and concentration (bullions and gelatin desserts) appears in E. M. Forster's *Howards End*. The character Leonard Bast assembles a thoroughly modern meal of a dissolved "soup square" that converts water into broth, a "freckled cylinder of meat" presumably from a can, and a dessert of "another square dissolved in water (jelly: pineapple)" (46).²

¹ For an overview food and food behaviors in WWI, see chapter 5 of Gerd Hardach's *The First World War: 1914-1918*. For an overview of food and food behaviors in WWII, see chapters 5, 15, and 16 of Lizzie Collingham's *Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food*.

² In chapter one I argue that Bast's meal preparation should be read as a process marked by the passivity of assembling rather than an active manipulation of ingredients (often to change their properties, tastes, or textures) through the use of heat. As such, I consider his meal preparation more of an activity of assembling than cooking.

³ As a noun which assigns a perceivable trait to an object, (literal gustatory) taste is "That quality or property of a body or substance which is perceived when it is brought into contact with certain organs of the mouth, etc., esp. the tongue; savour, sapidity; the particular sensation excited by anything in this

² In chapter one I argue that Bast's meal preparation should be read as a process marked by the passivity of assembling rather than an active manipulation of ingredients (often to change their properties, tastes, or textures) through the use of heat. As such, I consider his meal preparation more of an activity of assembling than cooking.

Bast, as my first chapter will detail, is a hungry character and this modernized food neither satiates him nor offers him nutrition; Bast must attempt to convince his body that “it was having a nourishing meal” (46). In Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* Mrs. Ramsay worries over the production and availability of clean milk, a topic “she did feel passionately [about], and would, if she had had the chance, have liked to take people by the scruff of their necks and make them see” (57). Later in the novel she speaks “with warmth and eloquence, as she describe[s] the iniquity of the English dairy system, and in what state milk was delivered at the door” (103). If she did not have the domestic duties of raising her children, she thinks she would bring both “a model dairy and a hospital” to the island where she vacations (57-8). For Forster’s novel, as illustrated through the character of Bast, one preoccupation of the modern alimentary subject is the quality of modernized food. Woolf, in her novel’s passage on Mrs. Ramsay, focuses on issues of availability and quality.

My dissertation takes up modernist literature as an object of study because its content can be explicitly concerned with modernity’s mark on food and can explore how modern foods change food behaviors. In the two brief examples above from Forster and Woolf, we see that modernist literature explicitly addresses a concern about modernity’s foods and the behaviors surrounding it; Bast’s behavior involves assembling (rather than cooking) and eating (but not being nourished), while Mrs. Ramsay’s behavior involves talking about and advocating for cleaner and purer foods (pasteurized milk). Through a predominately New Historicist approach, one that frequently employs an exploration of the historicity behind specific foods and behaviors of eating, I investigate modernist literature’s preoccupation with early

twentieth-century material concerns about modernized foods and changing food behaviors in my chapters.

My dissertation's general concern is food and food behaviors, which I trace through close readings of literary scenes depicting selection, consumption, and or preparation of food. An additional concern of my dissertation is the issue of taste, which is always already bound up in the activities of selection and consumption. An interdisciplinary term, "taste," with its literal and figurative usages, spans diverse disciplines such as philosophy, physiology, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. Literally, of course, taste is one of the five bodily senses, a sense relating to gustatory pleasure and the consumption of food. Figurative taste, on the other hand, has a long tradition in the philosophical discourse of aesthetics and is also employed in the discourses of everyday manners, social etiquette, and appropriate behaviors. These three distinct valences of taste are shown in the *Oxford English Dictionary's* entries for taste.³

My dissertation investigates four British modernist novels' depictions of food, eating, and, more broadly, enactments of tastes. A wide body of philosophy and history informs my conceptualization of taste—from Enlightenment philosophy (Immanuel Kant) to twentieth-century philosophy, anthropology, and sociology

³ As a noun which assigns a perceivable trait to an object, (literal gustatory) taste is "That quality or property of a body or substance which is perceived when it is brought into contact with certain organs of the mouth, etc., esp. the tongue; savour, sapidity; the particular sensation excited by anything in this manner" ("taste"). However taste is also defined as discernment: "The faculty or sense by which that particular quality of a thing described in sense 5 [given above] is discerned, the organs of which are situated chiefly in the mouth; one of the five bodily senses" ("taste"). Figurative (aesthetic) taste is, "The sense of what is appropriate, harmonious, or beautiful; *esp.* discernment and appreciation of the beautiful in nature or art; *spec.* the faculty of perceiving and enjoying what is excellent in art, literature, and the like" ("taste"). Lastly, (figurative) taste, concerned with social manners and conventions, is "the style or manner favoured in any age or country" ("taste"). To avoid confusion, I use parenthetical notations to mark literal or figurative, gustatory or aesthetic, etc.

(Carolyn Korsmeyer, Pierre Bourdieu, and Roland Barthes). Immanuel Kant's seminal aesthetic lessons suggest that taste is a faculty for judging the beautiful (96); pure judgments of taste should be conducted through a position of disinterestedness or "un-investment" in the object's material existence (95-6); and literal taste can only offer access to the agreeable, the category of that which merely pleases the body (95).⁴ Carolyn Korsmeyer's work is also useful to my project. She criticizes Kantian aesthetics for establishing a hierarchy of bodily senses, placing sight (visual art) and hearing (music) above the more bodily senses: "The use of the term 'taste' [by Kant and others] to refer to an ability to discern beauty and other aesthetic qualities is intriguing and paradoxical, for literal, gustatory taste is by and large excluded from among the chief subjects of the theories of taste that become prominent in Enlightenment European philosophy" (38). Korsmeyer suggests that close critical attention to literal (gustatory) taste can help redress the traditionally underprivileged bodily sense and shed light on what the taste metaphor both reveals about, and conceals within, aesthetic discourses inherited from Enlightenment.⁵ The work of anthropologist and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu also informs my project; Bourdieu critiques the (Kantian) disposition of disinterestedness, contending it is a powerful class-construction.⁶ In short, this disposition is not equally available to perceiving

⁴ Kant writes, "Taste is the faculty for judging an object or a kind of representation through a satisfaction or dissatisfaction without any interest. The object of such a satisfaction is called beautiful" (96). Kantian disinterestedness argues that one can judge the beauty of an object, such as a palace, even if one feels it is frivolous and should not exist (90-1). For Kant a taste for food specifically falls under the agreeable (95).

⁵ Korsmeyer writes, "Metaphors constitute parts of the webs of meaning from which conceptual frameworks emerge" (39). Metaphors of taste are more than rhetorical turns; they underpin the operation of theoretical and conceptual structures—the stakes are truly high.

⁶ As Jeremy Lane writes, "One of Bourdieu's primary aims in *Distinction* was to debunk the claims of legitimate aesthetics to universal validity by demonstrating that lofty assertions of aesthetic 'disinterest,' were in fact rooted in profoundly material and social 'interests'... Bourdieu sought to

subjects from all socio-economic backgrounds and thus disinterestedness becomes a potent way to define and maintain class distinctions. Equally important to my conceptualization of taste is Bourdieu's insistence that we must reunite literal taste with aesthetic taste:

one cannot fully understand cultural practices unless 'culture,' in the restricted, normative sense of ordinary usage, is brought back into 'culture' in the anthropological sense, *and the elaborated taste for the most refined objects is reconnected with the elementary taste for the flavours of food.* (italics added 1)

Central to Bourdieu's project is his reconnecting literal gustatory taste with figurative aesthetic taste, an undertaking that directly challenges Kant's distinction between the categories of the beautiful and the agreeable. My work on taste, as well as my work on food behaviors more generally, often pairs the literal (the gustatory) alongside figurative tastes (aesthetics and manners). I find Roland Barthes's methodology in *Mythologies* inspirational; he closely reads beverages and foods—such as wine (58-61) and *steak-frites* (62-4)—in order to investigate how food and food behaviors signify (or gesture) in a particular context or community (France); he attempts to bridge the gap between the individual's (literal) taste and a greater national identity based on similar gustatory taste and social manners (figurative taste).⁷

My theorization of the specific behavior of taste draws on the work of Kant, Korsmeyer, Bourdieu, and Barthes. When investigating other food behaviors I draw on food history (John Ayto; Lauren Janes; and Richard Tellström, Inga-Britt

challenge what he termed 'class racism,' that process whereby the bourgeoisie's socially determined taste for legitimate culture was passed off as a marker of their inherent moral and spiritual superiority and, by extension, of the dominated classes' inherent inferiority" (148).

⁷ According to Barthes, wine, in France, is a social gesture as well as a gustatory taste, a pleasure of the tongue and an instructed—even coercive—social gesture or mannerism (58-61). Wine drinking outside of the context of France, particularly when consumed by drinkers of other nationalities, gestures differently, putting forth different meanings and social significances.

Gustafsson, and Håkan Lindgren), sociological and historical studies of eating (Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, John Burnett, Joanne Finkelstein, Paul Fussell, Jack Goody, Anson Rabinbach, and Corinna Treital), culinary science (Anne Gardiner; Sue Wilson; and Nathan Myhrvold, Chris Young, Maxime Bilet, and Ryan Matthew Smith), theorizations of the written recipe as a genre (M. F. K. Fisher and Jack Goody), postcolonial investigations into particular global dishes (Susie Protschky), and other sources, like the kinetic molecular theory of matter, when productive.

Through my readings of E. M. Forster's *Howards End*, Evadne Price's *Not So Quiet...*, Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, and Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight*, my dissertation builds upon a greater body of knowledge around the history of food, food behaviors, and taste. My project argues that we cannot fully understand the cultural significance of these four modernist novels unless we reconnect the literature (written, narrativized culture) with the gustatory, through a Bourdieusien process where "the elaborated taste for the most refined objects is reconnected with the elementary taste for the flavours of food" (Bourdieu 1). Building up Barthes's work, I argue that specific gustatory tastes and social manners signify and operate differently given their particular national setting; for this reason, my selection of modernist literature is limited to British modernism as I flesh-out food selections and behaviors in a discrete socio-historical context in an attempt to understand the functioning of specific signs and gestures located inside their particular system.⁸

In my first chapter I focus on the character Leonard Bast in E. M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910). We read that this character's "mind and his body had been alike

⁸ In my conclusion I highlight how my four selected authors relate to the contemporary crisis in modernist studies about how to define modernism and explore the implication of reading these four novels in the canon of British literature.

underfed, because he was poor, and because he was modern they [i.e. both mind and body] were always craving better food” (39). Paying close attention to scenes involving his comestible and cultural consumption, my chapter suggests Bast’s relationship to and behaviors regarding modern food run parallel to his outlook on culture. His food behaviors (assembling and eating) rely heavily on industrial and prepared (modernized) foods that are quickly and easily served, indicating he values convenience over nutrition when it comes to his meals. Likewise Bast’s project of acculturation embodies a desire “to come to Culture suddenly, much as the Revivalist hopes to come to Jesus” (43) and relies on self-improvement through exposure to literature and music, indicating Bast is initially uncritical about the process of gaining social capital from cultural experiences. While Bast attempts to balance cultural and comestible consumption, he ultimately fails in both. Chapter one also argues that Bast’s conceptualization of cultural consumption should be read alongside the issue of snobbery. Building upon the work of Sean Lantham, I argue that Bast functions in the novel as a failed or naïve snob, laying bare the complex interconnections of social capital and aesthetic appreciation. As such, Bast’s food behaviors and tastes as a failed or naïve snob highlight that *Howards End* is a novel concerned not only with physical nutrition but also cultural nutrition.

In my second chapter, which turns its attention to *Not So Quiet...* (1930) by Evadne Price (published under the pseudonym Helen Zenna Smith), I explore the importance of spatial and social contexts in literary depictions of WWI food consumption. The novel depicts two modes of eating at the warfront, communal dining in the canteen and the eating of supplemental food items sent through care

packages by the volunteers' families. I argue that the depictions of the canteen's food explore the historical discourse of "rational nutrition," a discourse that conceptualizes food by reducing it to caloric value that is exchangeable for an outcome of accomplished manual labor or work, while the care packages allow for different food behaviors and enactments of individual tastes, which ultimately resist the "rational nutrition" discourse. I also closely read the novel's passages involving breakfasting in bed (at home in domestic space) and dining in England's public restaurants. My readings of these two behaviors of home front dining analyze spatial contexts; I historicize the English restaurant space during WWI through the work of Joanne Finkelstein and John Burnett, highlighting gender and class, in order to argue that the space is figured as potentially dangerous—particularly for the solitary female diner. Yet Price's novel does not straightforwardly depict the dangers as unidirectional, for the Folkestone restaurant scene posits both Smithy (the solitary female diner) and Robin, potentially a naïve citizen leaving for the trenches, as both predator and prey alike (Price 170-4). Ultimately, my chapter argues, the English restaurant during WWI is depicted in *Not So Quiet...* as a place that is threatening, but also as place that can facilitate the care of others who are in need.

In chapter three I turn to Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and focus primarily on the famous *boeuf en daube* scene to explore issues of food behaviors, specifically manners and taste. Building upon Jack Goody's work that identifies four formal (written) structuring agents to a meal's form, I read the *boeuf en daube* scene through the lens of the guest list, the menu, the recipe, and opening (or closing) prayers or graces. The list of diners at the meal reveals a state of initial dispersal and

disconnection between the characters; while they initially exist like molecules of gas, Mrs. Ramsay's dinner will eventually condense them into a more cohesive community, one that behaves like a liquid. The list of dishes served in the scene (the menu) highlights the liquidity of the meal's multiple offerings. With the aid of culinary science, I explore the cooking method behind *boeuf en daube*, a process that carefully balances temperature to liquefy the collagen in tougher cuts of meat. Lastly, I suggest that though the meal's start and end are not marked with graces, the start is marked with a sounding gong and the end is marked with a spontaneous and organic poetry recitation, spoken words that "sounded as if they were floating like flowers on water" (Woolf 110). Overall, my third chapter identifies a "liquid aesthetic" in the novel; on the level of content, Mrs. Ramsay brings together a collection of disparate individuals at mealtime, ensuring that they compose a more cohesive liquid-like community rather than maintaining their initial state of gas-like dispersal at the scene's start.⁹ On the level of form, I build upon Erich Auerbach's and R. L. Chamber's discussions of the fluidity of the novel's style, but I ultimately suggest that the descriptor "liquid" rather than "fluid," is much more precise.

My final chapter on Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939) investigates the interwar Parisian restaurant alongside the figures of the passport and the international exhibition; this final chapter explores the possibility of integrating critical attention on food behaviors with other discourses such as national identity. I argue that the novel's important restaurant, the Pig and Lily, becomes an informal (i.e.

⁹Mrs. Ramsay's process of condensing her dinner guests into a community is a process contemplated by one character, Lily. Reading this scene closely in chapter three, I call Lily's explanation of this process a "theory of visual connection" since the connection originates—according to Lily—with an individual viewing another individual at the dining table.

not state-sanctioned) international exposition that puts on display representations of multiple nationalities (through the restaurant's name, decoration, clientele, and menu). Importantly, amongst the Pig and Lily's multiple displays and creations of national identities and cultures, the protagonist Sasha declares her own national affiliation as English; this declaration does not occur at the state-sanctioned exhibition at the novel's end or when she presents her passport at the novel's start. Performances of nationality are important in both the informal international expositions of the restaurants scenes and the state-sanctioned international exhibition at the end of the novel. A fundamental link exists between passports and exhibitions in the novel; if a passport entails certification for a recognized insider to leave for the (foreign) outside and travel there, than an international exposition is an invitation extended to the outside (foreign) to enter in and display itself. I also establish a link between the passport and the restaurant when I investigate passages where Sasha views her restaurant bill (among other tickets indicating her purchase of goods and/or services) as a formal recognition of her right to occupy a particular space. As such, my chapter is concerned with exploring how Rhys's novel theorizes national identity in a complex, interwar, cosmopolitan context, through passports, international exhibitions, and restaurants.¹⁰

¹⁰ To theorize the concept of passport I build upon work by Martin Lloyd and Andreas Fahrmeir, suggesting a passport attempts to function as a state-sanction certification of one's nationality.

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CHAPTER 1

“Always Craving Better Food:” The Mind and Body of Leonard Bast in E. M. Forster’s *Howards End*

Leonard Bast, a relatively minor character in E. M. Forster’s *Howards End* (1910), yearns for culture and engages in issues of taste throughout the novel; Bast, a representative of an ambitious lower socio-economic class, attempts to cultivate a more refined taste as he interacts with the Schlegel sisters, whose leisure time and educational backgrounds have informed their tastes. From the food Bast decides to eat to the cultural products he attempts to consume, he discerns from multiple choices throughout the novel and his motivations for, and the problematics of, his cultural and comestible consumptions become equally as important as his particular selections. Often, as we will see, the economically poor Bast must balance two types of consumption, deciding how and when to forgo the comestible in favor of the cultural. As such, Bast’s tastes highlight that *Howards End* is a novel concerned with not only physical nutrition but also cultural nutrition.

However, critics have shied away from devoting close, sustained critical scrutiny to the issues of taste in Bast’s selections and activities. In this chapter I redress the lack of criticism focusing on the character of Bast after I outline why critics have not previously turned to Bast for discussing taste, the problematics that such a project might entail; in short, *Howards End* is a novel that is engaged in satire on multiple levels, positing Bast’s tastes—as well as the other characters’ tastes—as part of the novel’s larger critique of the consumption of culture. Despite the complexities of scrutinizing Bast’s tastes, such an investigation promises to be

productive. Through my close readings of Bast, I argue that his choices and selections, which are constrained by his socio-economic position, force him to constantly balance comestible and cultural consumptions, pitting the needs of his body against the desires of his mind. My close readings also uncover a remarkably passive model operating at the center of Bast's relationship with food; his modern meager meal and sparse tea, particularly when read against the post-concert tea scene of the Schlegels, reveal him as a passive assembler of food, rather than an active cook, and as a consumer of remainders, rather than a discerning selector of preferences (like Tibby). Importantly, the passivity of Bast's relationship to food runs parallel to the passivity with which he approaches cultural consumption; Bast's mode of cultural consumption operates under the assumption that his mere exposure to culture will change his fate and position in life. Bast, a hungry character in both mind and body, relies on a passive model when he consumes food and culture, a model in which he refuses to participate actively as a dynamic actor; culture, he feels, does good to him, believing this (at least initially) uncritically.

As the novel progresses, Bast loses faith in the promise of culture as a path to better his life. He slowly comes to realize that he cannot so easily adopt the values and choices of a leisured class whose socio-economic position removes it from life's more basic, pressing needs such as food and shelter. On the one hand, Bast ultimately cannot cross the wide (socio-economic) gulf and adopt the leisured classes' tastes and cultures—he will instead die buried beneath the weight of its culture at the novel's end. On the other hand, the novel (at least initially) explores Bast as a character whose tastes do not directly correspond to and are not directly determined by his

particular socio-economic position in society.¹¹ Building on Sean Latham's work on the figure of the snob, I ultimately argue that Bast functions in *Howards End* as a naïve or failed snob, laying bare the complex "ways in which aesthetic knowledge can be used to generate social prestige and financial reward" (Latham 7). It is through Bast's particular choices and selections while attending concerts, discussing art, preparing his meals and teas, and reporting his walks through the woods of Wimbledon (with an empty stomach and a full and cluttered mind)—scenes, as my close readings highlight, where the comestible and the cultural collide—that we see the passivity of Bast's consumption most clearly and most productively.

Problematics and Rewards of Analyzing Bast:

The job for a critic investigating Bast's comestible and cultural tastes is anything but a straightforward path, primarily for two reasons. First, as critics like Paul Armstrong have pointed out, the formal structure of the novel, specifically Forster's "elusive, idiosyncratic narrator" (324), does not provide an easy or stable platform from which to interpret the evasive Bast or his attempts at learning and experiencing culture. Armstrong writes in "The Narrator in the Closet: The Ambiguous Narrative Voice in *Howards End*" that the narrator's "explicit address" can be "contradicted, subverted, or questioned by the implicit meanings he suggests" (324), and thus it is hard to take anything too seriously, including the grand cultural ambitions of this relatively minor character.

¹¹ My reading of Bast's class-based tastes is influenced by Pierre Bourdieu's work on taste in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*.

The narrator of *Howards End* holds much at arm's length, from the novel's first opening line: "One may as well begin with Helen's letters to her sister" (Forster 3). As Armstrong notes, the novel's casual opening line "suggests the absence of any subversive intent, its very carefree manner foregrounds the contingency of narrative authority—he [the narrator] could just as well start somewhere else" (306).

Armstrong contends that the narrator's "arbitrariness in turn cuts two ways. It demonstrates the narrator's power (he is the one who gets to decide), but it also dramatizes the lack of necessity of his constructions (another way of telling the story might be just as plausible and effective)" (306). If the novel's opening line suggests the problem of selecting one from the many possible beginnings and, at the same time, highlights the relative inconsequentiality of this selection act, the presentation of Leonard Bast's story highlights an opposite problem for the narrator.

Rather than having multiple starting places, as the story of the Schlegel sisters has, there are only two perspectives for Bast's story, according to the narrator, either that of the statistician or the poet. The narrator confides, "We are not concerned with the very poor. They are unthinkable, and only to be approached by the statistician or the poet" (Forster 38). Only clinical and sterile numbers of abstractions (raw statistics) or the lyrical imagination of a poet (emotional embellishments) are options for telling Bast's story. Rather than being in power to decide the story-telling manner—where to start and how to proceed—the narrator feels disempowered to tell of Bast and his position in society. Bast, and more generally the story of the poor, is not part of the narrator's central concern and he claims to lack the perspective, and perhaps the

motivation, to do so properly; apparently neither a poet nor a statistician, the narrator is out of his element when it comes to Bast.

When introducing Bast, the narrator forms the novel's concerns to both exclude and, only partially or hesitantly, include Bast: "This story deals with gentlemen, or with those who are obliged to pretend that they are gentlemen" (38). The narrator's subsequent description of Bast clearly places Bast and his (presumed) fiancée outside the circle of genuine gentlemen and the narrator, true to his words, is only concerned with the Basts when they "are obliged to pretend that they are gentlemen" (38) as they interact with the Schlegels. While Leonard Bast is often depicted in his attempts to be a cultured gentleman, interacting with the Schlegels and others, he is only once depicted in his own home, posing as a gentleman for his fiancée, after having attended a concert and attempting to discuss culture with the Schlegels. In short, close critical attention to Bast is made difficult by the novel's narrator who explicitly tells the reader that Bast is of little or no concern—he falls outside the novel's "true" scope—and by the fact that the narrator's stance toward Bast is at times marked with contradiction and subversion.

The second reason that the character of Leonard Bast has not received much close critical attention is that Forster's text tends to privilege the abstract over the concrete, so much so, as critics like J. H. Stape and Mary Pinkerton have contended, that symbolic value comes at the cost of depersonalized characters, which ultimately strains the believability of his characters, their motivations, and plot events. Stape's work in "Leonard's 'Fatal Forgotten Umbrella': Sex and the Manuscript Revisions to *Howards End*" contends that Forster's revisions of early *Howards End* drafts privilege

“archetypal and symbolic resonance[s]” (127) over realism. Pinkerton’s “Ambiguous Connections: Leonard Bast’s Role in *Howards End*” suggests the novel’s “presentation of Leonard’s subjectivity and humanity are sacrificed to the demands of the plot” (241) when “Forster attempts to give Leonard’s actions archetypal significance” (242). Ultimately, I concur with Stape and Pinkerton that Forster’s lack of details about Helen and Leonard’s relationship (and Charles and Margaret’s marriage) is largely due to Forster’s efforts in constructing symbolic resonances into the form of his novel, rather than as a result of the author’s personal sexual preferences. Stape and Pinkerton’s criticism offers an answer to the oft-cited contention of Katherine Mansfield that she “can never be perfectly certain whether Helen was got with child by Leonard Bast or by his fatal forgotten umbrella. All things considered, I think it must have been the umbrella” (Mansfield 121). We might respond to Mansfield’s witty comment, which questions the novel’s depiction of Helen and Bast’s relationship, by mentioning the incompatible goal of Forster’s novel to balance symbolic values and realist details. As the critic Pat C. Hoy II suggests in “The Narrow, Rich Staircase in Forster’s *Howards End*,” moments of incoherence—such as those identified by Mansfield—seem less significant when the novel’s multiple levels of signifying are held in one totalizing view; Hoy writes, “*Howards End* is especially coherent if we recognize that Forster’s primary inquiry is conducted on an abstract level” (231).¹²

While an analysis of Leonard Bast as a modern autodidact is made difficult by Forster’s narrator and the novel’s ambitious attempts to balance the disparate goals of

¹² Speaking specifically about Helen and Leonard’s relationship, Hoy writes, “On the more realistic level, the relationship simply will not support the symbolic weight Forster places on it” (231).

symbolic resonances and individualized characters, close critical attention to Bast's model of cultural and comestible consumption promises to be fruitful in discussions of taste. This is particularly true since, as Angus Collins points out, "the model of sustenance, of appropriate nourishment, is central to the book's significance. For *Howards End* is very much a novel of spiritual malnutrition, and in it Forster distills and extends his concerns to concentrate on an impoverishment of spirit inseparable from the conditions of urban life" (51).

Despite Forster's unconventional narrator and the implications of Forster's privileging, perhaps in a heavy-handed manner, the symbolic value over individualization of characters in order to illustrate abstract principles, serious critical attention to Leonard Bast as a gustatory and cultural taster reveals how Forster theorizes the problems of the modern autodidact's cultural consumption, particularly when this cultural consumption attempts to occur across, and erase differences between, class boundaries in the early twentieth century. Not taking Leonard Bast's tastes seriously as an entry point for analysis comes at a cost. As Hoy indicates,

Leonard [Bast] would be only a pathetic boob if he simply danced through the pages of this novel in pursuit of culture. But he is not a boob; he is a victim. Ironically, he is one of those people [Matthew] Arnold identifies in *Culture and Anarchy* who, in a special way, stand outside class: "*aliens*, if we may so call them, —persons who are mainly led, not by their class spirit, but by a general *humane* spirit, by the love of human perfection" (V: 146). Forster gives Leonard this kind of potential but pits him against the complexities of modernity that work against his humane but naïve spirit. He remains compelling because deep down within him there is something fine and genuine, something that wants an outlet. (226)

Referencing Matthew Arnold, Hoy suggests that Bast is not an inconsequential character in *Howards End* but is instead important since he occupies a special place as

an alien from his social class. Bast might be read as character, to use Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, who "is born... with a curiosity about [his] best self, with a bent for seeing things as they are, for disentangling [himself] from [the] machinery" of his class, while chasing "the love and pursuit of perfection" in art (Arnold 80). Removed from his class, Bast's "distinguishing characteristic" might be read as "not [his] Barbarianism or [his] Philistinism, [or his position regarding the Populace,] but [his] *humanity*" (italics in original 80). Arnold acknowledges that this category of class-alien, "in general, [has] a rough time of it in their lives" (80); this is so very true for Leonard Bast in *Howards End*. Using Hoy and Arnold, I suggest the *humane* spirit, in Leonard Bast, is also a hungry spirit, one contained within an equally hungry body.

Hungry Leonard Bast "Getting" the Modern Meal:

In Chapter VI of *Howards End*, the narrator first describes Bast in abstract and general terms, revealing that Bast "was inferior to most rich people, there is not the least doubt of it. He was not as courteous as the average man, nor as intelligent, nor as healthy, nor as lovable. His mind and his body had been alike underfed, because he was poor, and because he was modern they [i.e. his mind and body] were always craving better food" (39). Bast is the modern poor, figured as one of those who are underfed, on multiple levels, and desiring better. This passage establishes the joint approach that Forster takes in investigating both the "food for thought," or the cultural products (books, music, paintings, etc.) that Bast consumes, and the literal food, or viands consumed by Bast, side by side.

In *Howards End*, Leonard Bast is a hungry character, both physically and mentally. He declares, “I care a good deal about improving myself by means of Literature and Art” (46) and he saves his money for purchasing books and tickets to concerts. As a clerk with limited income, he is concerned that he “had spent money enough at [the concert at] Queen’s Hall” and wonders “whether he would take the tram as far as a penny would take him, or whether he would walk home” (39) while his “empty stomach asserted itself” (39).¹³ He decides to save this penny and, a few pages later, we see Bast “put a penny into the slot of the gas-meter” (45) as he “tided up the sitting-room, and began to prepare their evening meal” (45); having already splurged by spending “two shillings” (34) at the concert, the penny saved on transportation, by walking home, now goes to utilities, rather than culture. If the concert of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony offers, as our narrator wryly puts it, “the most sublime noise that has ever penetrated into the ear of man” (26), the purchased gas, instead, offers an assault to the nose as it results in “the flat . . . reeking with metallic fumes” (45). Breathing the metallic fumes inside a furnished flat he cannot afford (45) and shortly after having put down a copy of Ruskin’s *Stones of Venice* (40-6)—one of his few possessions he owns (41)—Bast prepares a meager meal for his presumed fiancée Jacky and himself.

In this scene, the act of preparing their meager modern meal is significant to note, not only for the inversions of the gender expectations but also for the important verbs used to describe the meal’s preparation. When Jacky arrives home, she states that she is tired and eventually tells Leonard that she has “been out to tea at a lady-

¹³ This is not the only time we see Bast hungry and walking. Indeed, his (in)famous ramble at Wimbledon (102), as I will discuss later, heavily echoes this passage.

friend's" (44). Jacky, "a massive woman of thirty-three" whose "weight hurt him" as she sits on his knee (44), does not prepare the meal.¹⁴ Instead, Leonard initiates and completes the meal: "Now get off my knee a bit; someone must get supper, I suppose," Leonard says to Jacky (45). As Jacky frivolously attends to fluffing her hat, Leonard takes care of the domestic work; he tidies up "the sitting-room and [begins] to prepare their evening meal" (45). Jacky remains distinctly apart from the kitchen during the meal's preparation, something the narrator specifically highlights: "When supper was ready—and not before—she emerged from the bedroom..." (46). Leonard prepares the food in Jacky's absence, inverting the common gender norms that housework (tidying up) and meal preparation (getting supper ready) are tasks to be done by women.

In this scene, the verbs describing Leonard's preparation of the meal are equally important to note. Leonard supposes that "someone must get supper," initially using the verb *to get*, a durable verb that equally suggests an act of retrieving or moving food as well as its notion of preparing the food (45). As the reader encounters the other verbs associated with their meal in this passage and reads the description of the food items served, it becomes apparent that little actual cooking is done by Bast for this meal; instead it is more "prepare[d]" (45). When the verb "cooking" (45) is finally connected to Leonard, coming after the use of "get" and "prepare" (45), this new verb, which often denotes the addition of applied heat (frequently to change the properties of food items), serves only to highlight the absence of using heat to make

¹⁴ Not only are Leonard and Jacky marked by different class ambitions, different approaches and appreciation of culture but also their age difference is also quite substantial; Leonard promises to marry Jacky as soon as he is twenty-one, on "the eleventh of November next" (45), making her thirteen years his senior.

the food ready for consumption. Colloquially, the verb *to cook* often collapses the preparation of food and the heating of ingredients—one does not say that one is “cooking” a salad for lunch—making the latter (the heating of ingredients) synonymous with, or nearly a requirement for, the former (preparing food) when the verb is used. This colloquial use is highlighted when Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin defines cooking in *The Physiology of Taste: Or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy* (1825). Brillat-Savarin shows the close relationship between cooking and the application of heat or fire when he writes, “Cooking is the oldest of all arts...Cooking is also of all the arts the one which has done most to advance our civilization, for the needs of the kitchen were what first taught us to use fire, and it is by fire that Man has tamed Nature itself” (283). The *Oxford English Dictionary* concurs that cooking often denotes (or at least connotes) the use of heat; the *OED* notes in its entry for the intransitive verb “to cook” that it is “to prepare food by the action of heat” and, for the transitive verb, “To prepare or make ready (food); to make fit for eating by due application of heat, as by boiling, baking, roasting, broiling, etc.” (“cook”). In the scene from *Howards End*, the items served by Bast more properly align with the notion of assembling the meal rather than cooking it.

In the meal that Bast prepares, the only application of heat is to water before a bullion cube is dissolved into it. “They began with a soup square, which Leonard had just dissolved in some hot water. It was followed by the tongue—a freckled cylinder of meat, with a little jelly at the top, and a great deal of yellow fat at the bottom—ending with another square dissolved in water (jelly: pineapple), which Leonard had prepared earlier in the day” (46). The content of this meal again supports the notion of

meal assembling rather than cooking. The bullion cube is added to hot water, assembling (but not truly cooking) soup by adding hot water to a square of mass-produced concentrate. The tongue, in its cylindrical form, recalls ready to serve canned or potted meats. Canned meat would be precooked and need only be opened and sliced before its serving. The shapes of squares and cylinders are juxtaposed with the viands; a square shape misfits with our notions of soups as much as cylinder misfits with the organic shapes of butchered meat muscles (specifically the tapered natural form of the tongue muscle). This juxtaposition of shapes and forms highlights the food items were first produced elsewhere, in factories, and on large scales and have been reformed, into strange but geometrically standardized shapes, elsewhere. In his article “Defending the Realm: Domestic Space and Mass Cultural Contamination in *Howards End* and *An Englishman’s Home*,” Jon Hegglund notes that as “the late nineteenth-century advent of tinned meats and processed foods sold at low costs, culinary consumption emerged as a practice that separated the ‘classes’ from the ‘masses’” (412). Bast’s selections and tastes signify socially; the quality and cost of the food in this scene illustrate that Bast, as part of the “masses,” is truly separate from the Schlegels, who belong to the “classes.”

If cooking commonly denotes the changing of a food item through the addition of heat, often changing the physical or chemical properties of the food item before it is consumed, then Forster specifically describes this scene in terms of assembling, rather than cooking. Bast’s non-nourishing modern meal is more *assembled* than *cooked*—his involvement is limited only to heating water, dissolving already manufactured concentrates, and opening a tin. As John Gilliver and Malgorzata Nitka write in “E.

M. Forster's Tea-Table," the meager meal's preparation and dishes are marked negatively through their association with privileging speed and convenience over quality and nutrition:

Their meal embodies the ugliness of the poor, as well as modern repast. For all its pretensions to substantiality and slowness—after all, it is a three-course affair—it exudes not just obvious skimpiness, but also speed, which assisted its preparation. Quickness constitutes the vital ingredient of the dishes, the convenience food of sundry squares dissolved in water communicates the modern civilization of hurry as forcibly as its more manifest agent, the motor-car. Here quickness does not act as an ally of simplicity, but in its non-naturalness, its disregard for or dissolution of the essential, it provides a flavor awkward, synthetic and unsavoury. Leonard and Jacky's food combines in a curious way solidity and substancelessness: the solidity is implied by the insistently geometrical forms out of which dishes are fabricated, or in which they are served, but no formal solidity can make up for their lack of substance and failure to nourish. (92-3)

Indeed Gilliver and Nitka are correct in their assessment that Bast's food is marked as unnatural, awkward, and lacking traditional or formal solidity. If Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse* employs an aesthetic sensibility that privileges liquidity, as I will suggest in chapter three, here the formlessness of Bast's liquid and jellified three-course meal should only be read as lacking. The hot bullion soup (liquid), the cylinder of meat sandwiched between jelly on top and (congealed) fat below, and the pineapple-flavored jelly fail to convince Bast's stomach that "it was having a nourishing meal" (46). Instead, it seems the task to convince the body that the meager meal was substantial is left to Bast's mind: "And Leonard managed to convince his stomach that it was having a nourishing meal" (46). Leonard himself, or perhaps more precisely Leonard's mind as isolated from his body, is the cause of his stomach's hesitant conviction that nourishment was had; this modern food by itself remains unconvincing to the body.

Brillat-Savarin notes that food is not the only possibility for securing pleasure at the dining table: “the elements of the pleasure of the table...should be distinguished from the pleasure of eating” (189). If the Basts have had little “pleasure of eating” through “the actual and direct sensation of satisfying [their] need” of food (189), there are still “the pleasures of the table...which [are] born from the various circumstances of place, time, things, and people who make up the surroundings of the meal” (190). However, as Heggland notes, “The Basts’ diet, consisting of processed squares and tinned meat, confirms the unhealthy quality of their domestic life” (412). Heggland further suggests the “impersonal, artificial quality of the interior” of their rented flat is echoed in their meal (411). The “place” and “things” which surround the meal, to use Brillat-Savarin’s words, do not bring pleasure to the couple’s dining table. Heggland is not the only critic to connect the meagerness of the Basts’ meal with other aspects of the pair’s discontented lives. Gilliver and Nitka make direct and insightful links between the food served on the table and the couple’s conversation at the table. They write,

Here the ugliness of the food concurs with that of the conversation attached to the meal: disjointed, shabby and as bland as if it too were made of some squares dissolved in water. ...Itself disjointed, the conversation is also disjointed from the repast. ...Although reduced to food, the meal provides poor nourishment, and not only because of its measly comestibles, but also because of its emotional discomfort. (93)

The conversation between Jacky and Leonard that surrounds the meal does indeed match the substancelessness of their meager meal. Jacky is interested only in reminding Leonard of his promise to marry her (45), betraying her own insecurities that she might again be left “in the lurch” by a male lover (46), while Leonard attempts to discuss the concert and Ruskin with Jacky (44, 46), betraying his own

insecurities about his ability to get “a wider outlook” on life through the “means of Literature and Art” (46). Talking across purposes, neither is listening nor fully engaging the other’s concerns; they both reveal their own particular insecurities. The ugliness of food coincides with their failed attempts at a conversation of substance. Gilliver and Nitka write that a “distressed self-consciousness eats away at personal affections and aesthetic enjoyments [of the meal]; *part of the painful grotesqueness of the meal is the way in which both Jacky and Leonard are eaten away even as they eat*” (italics added 93). Indeed, both Jacky and Leonard seem undernourished physically and emotionally by their meager modern meal. Though Jacky, with her “hungry” eyes (Forster 41) and “massive” body (44), seems less undernourished than Leonard, the couple is “eaten away even as they eat” (Gilliver and Nitka 93) over the course of the novel; it is Leonard’s body that fails, ultimately, by the novel’s end.

A Tale of Two Teas:

As mentioned previously, the context for the Basts’ meager modern meal is Leonard’s cultural excursion to Queen's Hall to hear Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (26-31), but their meal scene should also be read in context of two scenes depicting tea, which occur between the concert and the Basts’ meal. These two tea scenes occur roughly at the same time (after the concert and after Bast has retrieved his umbrella), but in very different locations across town from each other. The Schlegels take tea in Wickham Place (36-7), while across town on Camelia Road (40), Bast, in his sparse flat, takes his tea alone.

After the concert, at the Schlegels' residence, Tibby has "rejected the Orange Pekoe [tea] that the parlour-maid had provided, poured in five spoonfuls of a superior blend, filled up with really boiling water, and ... [has] called the ladies to be quick or they would lose the aroma" (36). Gilliver and Nitka suggest the Schlegels' tea scene provides "a coda to the cultural experience, the just ended concert, [as] the tea itself becomes a purely aesthetic brew. Ostensibly social and meant to be jointly appreciated, ultimately it is quite a selfish affair in that it professes Tibby's refined taste and caters for specifically his appreciation" (91). Indeed, Tibby's tea satisfies his gustatory taste alone, while Bast's tea, as we will see, is a tea of remainders and does not involve selection between various options.

In the work of Gilliver and Nitka, the two critics investigate the social contexts that occur as Forster's characters take their tea, suggesting that Forster's "tea-table examines the notion of closeness, of social intimacy and exchange" (90). In regard to *Howards End*, Gilliver and Nitka state:

To reveal the principles and values by which and for which the tea-table should be laid Forster guides his reader through a succession of tea-tables that go wrong in that they lean too much towards one end, which could be just food, just talk or just business. The understanding of what the substance of the tea-table, and therefore human relations, consists in is garnered piecemeal, it seems, by an apprehension first of what the tea-table must *not* be about. (italics in original 90)

Their study is an investigation into the metaphorically unbalanced tea-tables in *Howards End*, those which tilt too far toward one of the three possible extremes: selfish pleasure, idle talk, or sterile business. In regard to this specific tea scene, where Tibby selects tea for his own pleasure, Gilliver and Nitka suggest that the table is unbalanced and tilts too far to selfishness, providing, in context of other tea scenes

in *Howards End*, one important example of what a tea should not be—self-centered and socially disengaged from meaningful interactions with others.¹⁵ Gilliver and Nitka ultimately suggest that Tibby is “artistically mature,” but “socially puerile to the point of insensitivity to all that lies without the scope of the beautiful. His aestheticism is exclusive, since it lets in those who already belong” (91). If, as I discuss later, the character of Bast becomes a test subject for the modern autodidact, then the tea scene here, according to Gilliver and Nitka, suggests the danger of placing gustatory and cultural enjoyment over social concerns: “To Tibby, making tea is a concern superior to Leonard Bast’s future” (91).

While Margaret had invited Bast to have tea with the Schlegel family (34) at Wickham Place (36-7), Leonard refused the invitation and “fled, with the lilted step of the clerk” (35) after Helen inadvertently insults him when calling his umbrella “appalling” (35). Leonard is clearly hungry during his long walk home from Wickham Place (39) to Camelia Road (40). On this walk home his “empty stomach asserted itself, and told him that he was a fool” (39). This assertive stomach’s contention that Bast is a fool, I suggest, operates on multiple levels. First, Bast can be viewed as a fool for not accepting the Schlegels’ invitation to tea. Second, the lower bodily organ, the stomach, and its baser, more bodily, needs for food, also correctly labels Bast’s mind as foolish, disabusing him of his wandering thoughts that the Schlegels might be unladylike, “ill-natured and cold,” frauds with “a chloroformed handkerchief” at the ready to steal more possessions from him (39). Under this second

¹⁵ Gilliver and Nitka write, “Leonard Bast, his umbrella, and his embarrassed flight can hold no interest for [Tibby] who favours the aesthetic, and so get shrugged off as a commonplace incident. People, objects and events are worth noticing and caring for, provided they are aesthetically engaging or gratifying” (91).

reading, we have a (lower) bodily desire (of hunger) informing and correcting the (higher) mind about the nature of Bast's acquaintances, inverting the hierarchy of bodily senses established by eighteenth-century aesthetics. This assertive bodily signal from his empty stomach interrupts such fanciful thoughts and reminds him of the consequences of turning down invitations to tea. However, the hunger pains from his stomach are not the only bodily signal Bast receives while walking home: "A sharp pain darted through his head, and he was conscious of the exact form of his eye sockets" (39-40). With a hungry assertive stomach and a sharply painful headache, Bast's body seems to be rebelling against his program of acculturation through music (and the resulting physical activity needed as he walks out of his way to retrieve his old umbrella), demanding instead that physical and bodily needs be met rather than him attending to his mind's cultural desires.

When Bast arrives home, having fled the Schlegel's invitation for tea, he "drank a little tea, black and silent, that still survived upon an upper shelf. He swallowed some dusty crumbs of a cake. Then he went back to the sitting-room, settled himself anew, and began to read a volume of Ruskin" (41-2). In isolation and in the sparseness of the flat he cannot afford, Bast consumes a small quantity of tea and old cake crumbs that have somehow, in being overlooked, not yet been consumed. Highlighting the differences between the tea at the Schlegels' house and Bast's flat, both occurring at similar times but in different parts of the city, we should observe that Tibby has the option to select different types of tea and even alters (or corrects) the choice by the household's domestic worker for his own personal enjoyment. The Schlegels' tea is copious; it serves multiple people (35-8) and is even offered,

spontaneously, to a stranger who calls at the house unexpectedly. Bast's tea is of small quantity for even one person, limited only to "a little" cup (41). Bast's tea is a forgotten remainder on an upper shelf, an item not yet swallowed up in the household's hungry consumption of its meager provisions. It is served black, without the addition of milk or sugar. Although tea served black can speak to one's personal taste or preferences, Bast's little black tea, consumed in his space of emptiness and lack, perhaps speaks more to his poverty than his personal discernment. While the tea at the Schlegels' comes with expectations of scones (36), Bast's tea is accompanied by additional old waste of more forgotten or overlooked remainders (crumbs from a cake). A literal reading of the adjective "dusty crumbs" (41) suggests the morsels are coated in non-nutritive particles of dust, perhaps composed of dirt and soil, further highlighting the notion of Bast eating remainders or waste.¹⁶ Figuratively read, dusty crumbs are only slightly more appetizing than literally dusty crumbs; metaphorically dusty cake crumbs are insubstantial and meager. These dusty cake crumbs, whether read literally or figuratively, only temporarily delay his hungry body's demand for nutrition, something put off, presumably, until the mealtime with Jacky discussed above. However, Bast's aforementioned meager modern meal, of squares and cylinders, occurring after his meager tea, is not entirely satisfactory in and of itself; again, Bast must convince his stomach that the liquid and jellified meal, the items which follow his meager tea, were nourishing.

¹⁶ Further analysis of Bast as a non-nutritious consumer might take the opportunity of a literal reading of "dusty" to explore connections between Bast's gustatory consumption and the eating disorder Pica, where non-nutritive and non-foodstuffs are habitually consumed.

Bast's Passive Cultural Consumption & Problematic Possession of Books:

Closely reading Bast's meager modern meal and tea drinking scenes reveals striking similarities between his methods of consuming food and culture. The novel presents Bast's meal assembling as passive, rather than as a dynamic activity of cooking; Bast's approach to accumulating cultural experiences is likewise marked as passive in the novel. Bast "felt that he was being done good to, and that if he kept on with Ruskin, and the Queens Hall concerts, and some pictures by Watts, he would one day push his head out of the gray waters and see the universe" (42). Constructed in the passive voice, this sentence casts Bast not as the accomplisher of action, but instead as the passive recipient of the action by an outside force; the literature and culture, according to Bast's model, act upon him. For Bast, the transformative acts of culture are inherent and made manifest by the cultural products themselves; he need only experience them to receive their promised results and push his head above the water to see a wider world. Bast adopts a mechanical approach to (aesthetic) taste and culture, feeling that if he simply conducts his cultural education in a straightforward way he will eventually gain social capital and climb the social ladder. Despite Bast's attempts to balance the competing costs of comestible and cultural consumptions, his "mind and his body had been alike underfed, because he was poor, and because he was modern they [his mind and body] were always craving better food" (39). His modern model of consumption fails to sustain him on the two fronts of the comestible and the cultural. Bast "hoped to come to Culture suddenly, much as the Revivalist hopes to come to Jesus" (43) just as he hopes to come to a meal suddenly, with the opening of a tin and dissolving of squares.

In the important scene in which Bast first interacts with the Schlegels, after the music concludes at the concert hall, we see how Bast conceptualizes the model of how one learns culture, what culture's uses are, and what problems he thinks he might encounter while attempting to possess culture. Attempting to discuss music with the well-cultured Margaret Schlegel, whose thoughts and words are fanciful and rather disjointed but certainly not uninformed (32-3), Bast is very much out of his element. "Her speeches fluttered away from the young man like birds. If only he could talk like this, he would have caught the world" (34). Bast admires Margaret's talk of culture and envies her ability to talk; he does not admire or envy Margaret's feelings or appreciation that accompany her exposure to culture—nor for that matter, her ability to think about or critique culture. Bast associates Margaret's talking about culture, not the experience of culture itself, as the way to catch "the world" (34). This important passage continues, "Oh, to acquire culture! Oh, to pronounce foreign names correctly! Oh, to be well-informed, discoursing at ease on every subject that a lady started!" (34). When it comes to culture, Bast privileges the cultural capital gained through social discourse; he does not view aesthetic experience as the end itself. Through this social integration and interaction Bast hopes to join those with "their hands . . . upon the ropes" (88).

In this lengthy passage, Bast also identifies a specific limitation to his project of self-improvement through exposure to culture. "But it would take one years," continues the passage from Bast's point of view, "With an hour at lunch and a few shattered hours in the evening, how was it possible to catch up with leisured women, who had been reading steadily from childhood?" (34). The dream of discoursing

easily, the promise of culture, is potentially impossible for Bast since he does not have enough leisure time to fully complete his lengthy project of becoming cultured. Starting on the path to culture later in life than the Schlegel sisters, and being employed as a clerk, Bast identifies an important limiting factor in his project as a temporal problem. Identifying his limitation as predominately temporal, Bast's assumptions further highlight his contention that everyone who encounters culture receives the same benefits; he initially fails to acknowledge that different individuals (from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds) may experience culture differently and may thus experience different social benefits.

Without significant time to devote to culture, Bast fears his brain will remain muddled without having the complete information and experiences that leisured, well-cultured ladies like Margaret have access to: "His brain might be full of names, he might even have heard of Monet and Debussy; the trouble was that he could not string them together into a sentence, he could not make them 'tell'" (34). In a later conversation with Margaret, Bast does mention the proper names, but his string of words fails to "tell" as he merely lists authors' names (100-3). Indeed, Margaret will eventually declare, "His brain is filled with the husks of books, culture—horrible; we [Margaret and Helen] want him to wash out his brain and go to the real thing. We want to show him how he may get upsides with life" (124). Note here that Margaret does not want to do the flushing out or purging of Bast herself but instead wishes to guide Bast through the process of self-expelling the non-nutritious husks (mere names) that are stuck within him. According to the Schlegel sisters, Bast has mistaken the

non-nutritious husks for nutritious aspects of culture.¹⁷ This waste, perhaps like the modern meal that lacks nutrition, has negatively impacted his processing of cultural experiences. To use a bodily metaphor, the husks (fibrous, non-nutritious, non-incorporable “remainders”) have interrupted the peristalsis of his cultural consumption, resulting both in giving him the “runs” of cultural names (100-3) and, at the same time, requiring an outside force (Margaret and Helen) to induce the system to flush or wash out and reset itself; in short, Bast, it might be said, suffers from both cultural diarrhea and constipation at the same time.

In addition to the temporal limitations of Bast’s project as an autodidact, the exchange between Leonard and Margaret, after the concert, highlights a second obstacle: Bast’s financial limitations. One of the reasons that Bast’s brain cannot make the culturally significant names of painters and composers “tell” is because

he could not quite forget about his stolen umbrella. Yes, the umbrella was the real trouble. Behind Monet and Debussy the umbrella persisted, with the steady beat of a drum. “I suppose my umbrella will be all right,” he was thinking. “I don’t really mind about it. I will think about music instead. I suppose my umbrella will be all right.” Earlier in the afternoon he had worried about seats. Ought he to have paid as much as two shillings? Earlier still he had wondered, “Shall I try to do without a programme?” There had always been something to worry him ever since he could remember, always something that distracted him in the pursuit of beauty. For he did pursue beauty, and, therefore, Margaret’s speeches did flutter away from him like birds. (34)

Financial constraints, such as the potential loss of an umbrella, impede Bast’s ability to focus on and enjoy culture; he simply cannot concentrate on beauty while more material needs press upon him. Bast is distracted by the cost of experiencing culture; he worries over the consequence of spending his limited disposable income at the

¹⁷ Later Margaret feels she knows Bast’s “type very well—the vague aspirations, the mental dishonesty, *the familiarity with the outsides of books*” (italics added 98).

concert. Feeling guilty about splurging for the event, he wonders if the additional expense of a program is cost-effective—if the experience without the program might be less beneficial than an experience with one. In addition to his temporal limitations, Bast identifies his lack of economic stability and his lack of disposable income as important limitations on his project to experience culture. Both of Bast's concerns directly relate to his socio-economic status as a clerk trapped in cycles of poverty. His choice and selections, are informed by his class and cannot “neutralize ordinary urgencies...[or] bracket off [the] practical ends” to art (Bourdieu 54) because “the material conditions of [his] existence [are not]...freed from economic necessity” (56). Bast's socio-economic position, a place without distance from the pressing, basic material needs of life (food and shelter), forecloses from him assuming a stance of disinterestedness like the leisured class. Bast's position in life is quite tenuous due to his financial position of earning little as clerk: “The boy, Leonard Bast, stood at the extreme verge of gentility. He was not in the abyss, but he could see it, and at times people whom he knew dropped in, and counted no more” (Forster 38). As previously mentioned, “He was renting the flat furnished: of all the objects that encumbered it none were his own except the photograph frame, the Cupids and the books” (41). Importantly, these books would not remain his own possessions throughout the duration of the novel; they are repossessed when the Basts fall on economic hardships.

After the marriage of Margaret to Henry, Leonard's preoccupation with bettering himself through “Literature and Art” (46) is abandoned when he confesses to Helen his wish to instead find gainful employment again. “We shall be all right if I get work. If I could only get work—something regular to do. Then it wouldn't be so

bad again. *I don't trouble after books as I used [to].* I can imagine that with regular work we should settle down again. *It stops one thinking"* (italics added 203). In this confession of his new life ambitions, Leonard first declares he has relinquished his passion for culture and education; second, he places his faith in embracing a work-centered life; third, he directly attributes the “bad”ness of his past to his desire of, and troubling after, books. In applying himself to work, Leonard’s new logic contends, he will thus stop thinking and he can settle down again; it was the books, the drive for cultural literacy, Bast suggests in this confession, that truly disrupted his life—not his interactions with the Schlegels and their interventions in his employment status.

Bast’s identification of the books as bad disturbs Helen, who refuses to believe that Bast’s new work-centered life could be considered a life at all (203). To clarify his new life program, Bast divulges information regarding his own lived experience, something he rarely does when talking with the Schlegels; he says to Helen,

Oh, I did talk a lot of nonsense once, but there's nothing like a bailiff in the house to drive it out of you. When I saw him fingering my Ruskins and Stevensons, I seemed to see life straight real, and it isn't a pretty sight. My books are back again, thanks to you, but they'll never be the same to me again, and I shan't ever again think a night in the woods so wonderful. (203)

While Helen can use her money to ensure the physical books return to Bast, she cannot redeem the books fully in his mind—they have been altered after the bailiff has fingered and flipped through them. The bailiff’s evaluation of the books’ exchange value (what money might be gained through their repossession and subsequent liquidation) has caused Bast to reevaluate their use value. Later, when Tibby, at Helen’s request, attempts for a second time to track down Bast and insist that Bast take a large sum of money from Helen, Tibby finds the “Basts had just been evicted

for not paying their rent, and had wandered no one knew whither” (219); he is met with a “scurf of books and china ornaments” (219), presumably turned out on the street like the Basts. The inability to attain financial stability repeatedly separates Bast from his books. While Helen functions as the guarantor to reunite them, eventually, despite her best efforts, she cannot reunite Bast and his books when he refuses her help; ultimately, in the tumbling of both the Basts and the books out onto the streets, they are eventually separated.

The Schlegel family books are also moved, packaged and placed in, presumably, temporary storage in Howards End, only to be unpacked by Miss Avery (225); “[t]he floor sounds covered with books” (225), indicates Dolly. Discovering this information, Margaret cries “Books...Dolly, are you serious? Has she been touching our books?” and Dolly confirms, “Hasn't she, though! What used to be the hall's full of them” (225). Knowing that another person, without her permission, is handling her valuable books, Margaret decides to take action, saying, “I must go down [to the house] about it at once. Some of the books are my brother's, and are quite valuable. She had no right to open any of the cases” (225). In the novel, at various times, Bast's books and Margaret's books are moved by another person without their permission. While Bast, due to his inability to pay rent, has forfeited the physical control and ownership of his books on multiple occasions—and eventually those who do turn his books onto the streets are within their rights to do so—the violation of Margaret's possessions is an act she feels empowered to correct and manage. Importantly, the Schlegel family books are merely rearranged inside the house that, later, becomes their permanent home, while Bast's books are first repossessed and,

later, are evicted from his rented flat. In short, while the Schlegels' books are moved, the question of ownership is never in jeopardy.

Forster's novel is not only concerned with who consumes the cultural capital located in cultural products (and how—whether passively or actively) but also with the repossession or redistribution of the physical materials of cultural products. It is not only a preoccupation of who owns (and can use) the information and cultural capital inside Bast's books, but also (at least for Bast) a preoccupation with who owns the physical material. While Bast's child with Helen will not have access to his father's books, this child will have access to the large collection of books at Howards End from his mother's family, the "books...that had rumbled down to [the Schlegels] through the generations" (127). The Schlegel family books have been collected by the Schlegels' father, "there were all their father's books—they never read them, but they were their father's, and must be kept" (127), as well as Tibby's books from his days at Oxford (225) and books over which Helen claims ownership (238, 249). These are the books stored on the bookcase with which Bast attempts to catch himself as he falls at the novel's end and which "came down over him" as his life ends (279); these are the "Books [that] fell over him in a shower" as he dies (277). Bast cannot catch hold of nor support himself with the books themselves, nor does the structure that supports the books, the bookcase, support him; this collapse (of Bast, the books, and the bookcase) is intimately bound up in the scene of his death.

Bast as a “Failed” Modern Snob:

When discussing the modern autodidact Leonard Bast, it is useful to turn to Sean Latham’s work in *“Am I a Snob?”: Modernism and the Novel* to think through how Bast disrupts the notion of aesthetic experience. In his work, Latham argues that the snob is a figure that disrupts notions of pure aesthetics by unveiling the cultural value of certain social manners or tastes. For Latham, the snob disrupts the equation that art exists only for the aesthetic experience inherent in the beautiful, for the snob makes apparent the cultural capital involved in particular tastes, manners, and poses. By posturing and presenting certain tastes, the snob reveals the social economy of tastes, short-circuiting the aesthetic system for a different end—social advancement rather than disinterested experiences of the beautiful. As such, Latham’s work theorizes the relationship between aesthetic taste and social advancement, an important issue when analyzing Leonard Bast’s consumption of culture.

To bring forward the powerful figure of the snob, Latham historicizes two particular incarnations of snobbery. Latham traces the evolution of the figure by looking at a wide range of literature from the late Victorians to the late modernists.¹⁸ Latham notes that “the term snob only entered the written language in 1848, when it was used in Britain to refer derisively to those who imitated poorly the tastes and habits of the upper classes” (6). Linguistically a second incarnation of snobbery evolved later: “It was not until sometime after 1900 that the word began to acquire its modern definition as someone who arrogantly displays his or her own refinement” (6). Whether an imposter or one arrogantly displaying (overly) refined tastes, “Snobbery

¹⁸ While Latham’s work does not engage with Forster, he includes chapters on Thackeray, Wilde, Woolf, Joyce, and Sayers.

carries with it the charges not only of elitism and pretentiousness but of hypocrisy and insincerity as well. *To admit to snobbery is to air in public the fact that even the most highbrow culture can be deployed in the most vulgar struggles for fame, celebrity, and wealth*" (italics added 1). As such, the snob forces attention to the social capital inherent in aesthetic judgments of taste. The snob troubles the Kantian model of aesthetic theory by replacing disinterested judgments of taste for tastes made, or posed, on the interestedness of vulgarities such as "fame, celebrity, and wealth" (1).¹⁹ When interested judgments are circulated alongside disinterested judgments, the system of aesthetics is troubled as the snob shows that tastes and mannerisms can be posed, or displayed, to advance socially.

In *Howards End*, an important question is whether or not Leonard Bast might be considered a snob. Bast certainly seems to imitate poorly the tastes of those, such as the Schlegel sisters, who are refined, and thus he seems to fit the earliest usages of the term as identified by Latham. Bast might also be viewed, when using Latham's theory of the snob, as a character who "arrogantly displays his or her own refinement" (6), particularly in the scene where Bast attempts to discuss culture with Jacky. Bast reminds Jacky that he has "been to that classical concert [he has already previously] told [her] about" (Forster 44) and, since she did not notice him reading Ruskin, he draws her attention to his reading habits as well by saying,

I'll tell you another thing too. I care a good deal about improving myself by means of Literature and Art, and so getting a wider outlook. For instance, when you came in I was reading Ruskin's *Stones of*

¹⁹ One of Latham's larger goals in his work is to demonstrate a parallel ascent of snobbery and modernist aesthetics: "Snobbery's evolution, in short, matched with uncanny precision the rise of both aesthetic modernism and modern mass-mediated culture, and it is through this embodiment of sophistication that new ideas of cultural value were shaped, contested, and critiqued" (6).

Venice. I don't say this to boast, but just to show you the kind of man I am. I can tell you, I enjoyed that classical concert this afternoon. (46)

Leonard's insistence that he is not boasting indicates the opposite; he is actually boasting to Jacky about his cultural pursuits, perhaps even arrogantly. His display of cultural refinement, according to himself, also illustrates his ethic of self-improvement and speaks to the type of man he is—one who will not leave her in the lurch as others have (46). Bast, at least in this scene, assumes the pose of a cultured man in order to be viewed by Jacky in a certain light; he is interested in appearing as a certain “kind of man” (46), as a respectable man. At least initially, Bast seems to be a snob.

In his work Latham identifies “two essential elements” of snobbery in both the early and late usages of the word snob (6). The first essential element, writes Latham, is that “the snob must be recognized as a figure of mediation, facilitating the exchange of social and cultural capital. *Moving fluidly through these different economies*, the snob *eagerly demonstrates* the ways in which aesthetic knowledge can be used to generate social prestige and financial reward” (italics added 6-7). As noted above, the figure of the snob highlights the problems of cultural capital exchange inside aesthetics; however, Latham states in this section that the figure of the snob is comfortable, natural, and eager to transgress these different worlds of aesthetics, social advancement, and economic gain. This is certainly not the case with Bast.

Bast's movement between communities of uncultured and cultured is anything but fluid. He attempts to keep the various aspects of his life compartmentalized, separating out art (culture) and employment (financial reward) throughout the novel. The narrator notes, “He did not want Romance to collide with the Prophyron [his employer] ... [the Schlegel sisters] were denizens of Romance, who must keep to the

corner he had assigned them” (Forster 104-5). Bast is a character who instead awkwardly moves between the compartments of his life, fails to “facilitat[e] the exchange of social and cultural capital” (Latham 6), and fails to “demonstrat[e] the ways in which aesthetic knowledge can be used to generate social prestige and financial reward” (7). At these tasks Bast tries, but Bast is ultimately a failed snob because his movements between worlds are neither fluid nor successful. His attempts at posing as a cultured man to Jacky are unsuccessful; calling him to bed repeatedly (Forster 47), she refuses to believe the pose he attempts to strike, that of cultured man who would prefer a night of reading to retiring to bed with her. Her insistent beckoning of him to abandon his reading and join her bed might also be viewed as displaying her continued worry that Bast is the type of man who might leave her, despite his offered “proofs” otherwise that, at least according to him, cast him as a “kind of man” who reads Ruskin and attends classical concerts in the afternoon (46).

The second element of the snob that Latham identifies is “the ability to manipulate shrewdly the external signs of social and cultural sophistication. He or she must grasp the fact that even the most complex aesthetic artifact is subject to the purely semiotic nature of fashion” (7). Latham notes that the snob is an expert at translating one semiotic code to another—knowing, and manipulating, the exchange rates between the two systems of aesthetics and cultural capital. Again, this is not the case with Bast. As Armstrong writes:

Bast pursues connection by reading, and the failure of his acquisition of cultural literacy has similar implications about the limits of language as an instrument of social mediation. The inability of language learning alone to make him one with the groups he aspires to join dramatizes the irreducible multiplicity and differential powers of the discourses that make up a culture. When he speaks of books, his attempt to make

another language his own ironically marks all the more distinctly the differences of his own native speech. His awkwardness shows that he is speaking the language of another which, as such, he cannot know how to use with the facility of a native speaker, so that his very attempt to transcend his linguistic position reveals it. His insecurities about how to speak this foreign language and his inability to get what he wants by using it also demonstrate how discourses are linked to power. Learning the texts of the privileged class cannot by itself give Bast the authority the Schlegels enjoy. His efforts to enhance his social power by extending his literacy are ultimately ineffective because learning a discourse does not necessarily convey the entitlements those at home in it possess. (320-1)

While Bast comprehends that the intersection of aesthetics and cultural capital is part of the social game of culture that is played, and he perhaps wrongly assumes this is the whole of the game of culture, he is largely unable to manipulate the languages or signs in the two systems, let alone “manipulate [them] shrewdly” (Latham 7) by posing the “facility of a native speaker” (Armstrong 320). As Armstrong writes, “his very attempt to transcend his linguistic position reveals it” (320); Bast is a failed snob rather than a successful snob, for a snob’s success is determined by the individual’s skillfulness in hiding his or her attempts to translate languages and signs. As previously mentioned, Bast suffers from a curious case of concurrent cultural diarrhea and constipation when he attempts to manipulate the signs of aesthetics and culture capital; he is not “regular” like the Schlegel sisters.

Latham has much to say about this second fundamental element of the snob and it is important to pause here and highlight the significant consequences. For Latham the snob’s manipulation of sign systems leads to troubling consequences. As he points out:

This [the second fundamental element of the snob] is the source of the snob’s peculiar power and the origin of our deepest suspicions, because this mastery of what I call the “logic of pose” requires the snob to

deploy the idealized language of eternal beauty in describing an aesthetic artifact even while inserting that same artifact into circulation as a commodity like any other. This is not simply dishonesty, nor is it a malicious sort of hypocrisy. By putting cultural capital in circulation and inviting us to recognize that it does indeed function like any other sort of capital, the snob poses a direct challenge to some of our most closely held aesthetic ideals. (7)

The snob is the mistrusted figure that forces our attention toward cultural capital and, therefore, prompts us to question our aesthetic assumptions and theories.²⁰ Like the gourmand or aesthete, the snob is skilled in the language of culture. However, the snob uses these valuable skills to different ends. Through knowledge and mimicry, the snob parrots or speaks aesthetic language but speaks with a different motivation: the interestedness of social advancement. Latham's work on the second fundamental element of the snob also sheds light on Bast, partially explaining the curious power of this character. As highlighted earlier, the critic Hoy contends, "Leonard [Bast] would be only a pathetic boob if he simply danced through the pages of this novel in pursuit of culture. But he is not a boob" (Hoy 226); Hoy insists that Bast does have power as a character. Similar to the successful snob that Latham theorizes, Bast's power comes from his operation outside of questions of his honesty or dishonesty, his kindness or maliciousness, his authenticity or hypocrisy. As a failed snob, Bast's particular strain of aesthetic naiveté, which includes a largely-unquestioned faith in culture combined alongside an inability to "digest" the culture due to limited leisure time and more pressing basic needs (shelter and food), lays bare the same structures of aesthetics that Latham's snob does. Bast, through his inability, awkwardness, and failure to mimic

²⁰ Note, in Latham's work, his end goal is not to dismiss the snob outright, but rather to show what the figure makes visible. Indeed, in Latham's later chapters—particularly in part two of his work, subtitled *The Work of Snobbery*—he pays both respect and admiration to the complex figure of the modernist snob.

the language of (disinterested) aesthetic experience turns our attention to issues of cultural capital and forces us to consider the role of cultural capital missing from traditional enlightenment models of aesthetics, most notably Kant's. Both Latham's figure of the snob and the figure of the failed modern snob, such as Bast, make apparent the interface and gap between aesthetic taste and social exchange of cultural capital.

Another Hungry Walk:

Returning to the Schlegels to apologize for Jacky's poor manners during her house call and her inquiry about his location, Leonard attempts to explain his previous absence from his own house, which prompted Jacky's investigation of whether he had spent the night at the Schlegels' home. Bast creates an initial misunderstanding between the Schlegels and himself when he attempts to mimic their social language and graces to smooth over the situation, but he is unsuccessful in his pose as a gentleman with manners and is, instead, read as a potential philanderer. He attempts to explain Jacky's unusual house call, presenting the situation as a simple misunderstanding, but his attempts betray "an air of evasion" and it is apparent to the Schlegels that he is "obviously lying," for his story does not account for the full duration of his absence (99). Aware that he might appear discredited since he had not returned to Jacky before morning, Bast attempts to defuse the social situation first through what he thinks is a pose of social grace and manners, yet he misplays this social game comically and ultimately feels the need to confess the truth of why he did not return home that night in question. With "his elaborate manner breaking down"

(100), he tells the Schlegels that in truth he was inspired by *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, “a beautiful book” (100), and *Prince Otto*, and he wishes to “get back to the earth” (100). His extended absence and Jacky’s resulting worried inquiry about his location were due to his wish to ramble the English countryside at night, he explains. However, due to a series of compounding factors, he was only able to return home much later, the next morning. In order to preserve a pose as a gentleman, and not be potentially viewed as a philanderer, Bast tells his story of his hungry walk that night he did not return home.

Leonard locates the inspiration for his ramble as affected by the books he has read, but when he attempts to discuss these books with the Schlegel sisters his words are incomplete, posed, and awkward (100); instead, it is his story of rambling all through the night that openly intrigues the sisters. They coax Bast away from referencing any other books, specifically *Open Road* (100) and *Virginibus* (101), and wish to hear instead about his adventure. Indeed, the books, to the Schlegel sisters, are only a distraction: “A thrill of approval ran through the sisters. But culture closed in again. He asked whether they had ever read E. V. Lucas’s *Open Road*” (100).²¹ Bast mentions George Meredith’s *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (100), Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Prince Otto* (100), E.V. Lucas’s *Open Road* (100), a celestial atlas (101), Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Virginibus puerisque* (101), the work of Richard Jefferies (102), the work of George Henry Borrow (102), the work of Henry David Thoreau (102), and returns to Robert Louis Stevenson before his “outburst ended in a swamp of books” (102). Rejecting Bast’s desire to talk about literature, first politely and

²¹ Unlike his sisters, Tibby shows, again, little patience for Leonard Bast. While the sisters listen and attempt to tease out Bast’s story, “Tibby, who preferred his comedy undiluted, slipped from the room. He knew that this fellow would never attain to poetry, and did not want to hear him trying” (101).

passively when Margaret nods her head dismissively, then later audibly when “Helen and Tibby groaned gently” (100), the Schlegels attempt to focus Bast on his personal narrative. Such attempts fail and Helen must be more aggressive in redirecting the conversation, ultimately saying to Bast, “No doubt [*Open Road*]’s another beautiful book, but I’d rather hear about *your* road” (100 italics in original). At Bast’s fifth book reference Helen cuts him off from talking, not even allowing him to finish the full title of Stevenson’s work (101). The Schlegel sisters, well versed in the art of conversation, steer Bast into discussing his night walk, refusing his poses as a well-read and well-cultured gentleman of manners. They are much more concerned with the material reality of his experience rather than the reading material that inspired his actions.

Importantly, the truth of Bast’s absence, the reality behind his ramble, is largely framed in the context of food. He frames this story, both its beginning and end, with information about the food he either ate or wished he had eaten. Bast prefaces his rambling story by telling his interested audience that he “had a bit of dinner at Wimbledon” (101) before starting his walk—a comment that becomes significant at the end of his story. His brief description of his dinner highlights not its quality, but rather its quantity; once again, he has had only a small quantity of food. With a stomach relatively empty of food and mind relatively full of inspirations from books—perhaps his first mistake of the night—Bast attempts his ramble. As Bast continues to divulge the details of his walk, we find he had underestimated numerous other conditions required for a successful night of countryside rambling.

Having also picked a poor location for a night ramble, for Wimbledon accessed by the underground only offers a potential Rambler “gas lamps for hours” (101), he eventually finds his way into the woods with their “difficult uneven ground” in the dark (101) while encountering “gorse bushes” (102).²² Bast is further frustrated by his inability to navigate by the Pole Star, which he fails to track due to “all the street-lamps, then the trees, and towards morning it got cloudy” (101). Despite his preparations of looking up this star in “the celestial atlas,” Bast finds he is quite lost once he starts his walk and is unable to locate himself by referencing celestial bodies (101). If this passage suggests comedy, a city clerk impassioned to go out for a walk in the English countryside “to get back to the earth” (100), to the reader, the Schlegel sisters instead take his story as a potentially inspirational romanticization of man’s ability to connect with nature. They expect a teleologically driven narrative from Bast, one that concludes with an aesthetic experience of dawn’s light after a night of tribulation.

However, Bast rejects these romanticized expectations and telos when he declares the breaking of dawn was neither wonderful nor beautiful; instead, Bast says, “The dawn was only gray, it was nothing to mention” and he adds, “I was too tired to lift up my head to look at it, and so cold too” (102). Ultimately, while Bast is “glad” he rambled, he confesses, “at the time it bored me more than I can say” (102); boredom replaces what the Schlegel sisters seem to demand—the excitement of an aesthetic experience at dawn’s breaking. Of more concern, Bast indicates to the Schlegel sisters anticipating their potential disbelief, was his hunger:

²² Noting Bast’s choice of Wimbledon, accessible by the underground, for his return to nature, the critic Jon Hegglund writes, “Even in ‘nature,’ Leonard has not left the suburbs” (413).

And besides—you can believe me or not as you choose—I was very hungry. That dinner at Wimbledon—I meant it to last me all night like other dinners. I never thought that walking would make such a difference. Why, when you're walking you want, as it were, a breakfast and luncheon and tea during the night as well, and I'd nothing but a packet of Woodbines. (102)

Bast exerts significantly more energy in his rambling than he consumes through eating. Traveling less efficiently, due to an inability to navigate, Bast's body demands more than his initial "bit of dinner" (101) that fails to "last [him] all night like other dinners" (102) do on other, non-rambling, nights. Only accompanied by a "packet of Woodbines" (102) cigarettes, his small dinner does not provide the quantity of nutrition needed for such a ramble. Instead, as Bast suggests to the intrigued but potentially doubtful Schlegel sisters, ramble required the continuous sustenance of multiple meals—"a breakfast and luncheon and tea" (102) in addition to the dinner because he has treated his night like a day.

Conclusions: Staircases and Gulfs

After Bast leaves the Schlegels and reflects on their conversation, he feels their discussion "buoyed him as he journeyed home beneath fading heavens. Somehow the barriers of wealth had fallen, and there had been—he could not phrase it—a general assertion of the wonder of the world" (106). Bast is also tempted to be, on some level, critical of his own model of consuming culture: "He had hitherto supposed the unknown to be books, literature, clever conversation, culture. One raised oneself by study, and got upsides with the world. But in that quick interchange [with the Schlegel sisters] a new light dawned. Was that 'something' walking in the dark among the suburban hills?" (106). Yet this moment of buoyancy and insight is certainly

short-lived for Bast. While Hoy contends that “Leonard momentarily transcends culture because the Schlegels have confirmed his worth” (227) in this scene, it is important to note that his transcendent state is not permanent.

The Schlegels, as Bast has previously noted, “had all passed up that narrow rich staircase at Wickham Place, to some ample room, whither he would never follow them, not if he read for ten hours a day. Oh, it was no good, this continual aspiration. Some are born cultured; the rest had better go in for whatever comes easy” (Forster 47). Later in the novel he admits, “Oh, I did talk a lot of nonsense once, but there's nothing like a bailiff in the house to drive it out of you” (203); this moment leaving the Schlegels, where the “barriers of wealth” (106) seem to have fallen, might be a moment that Bast will later (after his encounter with the bailiff) retroactively decide is a moment of “nonsense.” With Margaret and Helen able to ascend the narrow rich staircase to an upper, inaccessible to him, sanctuary, Bast faces a gulf that will wreck him as he attempts to cross it—a gulf visible from Margaret’s position atop the staircase’s sanctuary; “[c]ulture had worked in [Margaret’s] own case...during the last few weeks she had doubted whether it humanized the majority, so wide and so widening is the gulf that stretches between the natural and the philosophic man, so many the good chaps who are wrecked in trying to cross it” (98). As Hoy writes, “Leonard cannot move freely between classes; the distance between him and his guides is so great that neither books nor the intellect nor diligence can deliver this lower middle-class man from cultural bondage” (226). Ultimately, culture will not provide a way for Bast to cross the gulf, to climb the staircase, and join the Schlegels.

When looking at consumption of comestibles and culture, Bast expects his model of consuming food—where items are simply dissolved through stirring together or revealed as a metal lid is peeled back—to work for accruing cultural capital; he feels he need only read the correct books to improve his life and his socio-economic position, to climb the staircase from the abyss that threatens to the sanctuary the Schlegels enjoy. Instead, Bast's model of cultural consumption fails for the reasons he identifies—a lack of leisure time and financial constraints. He is separated from his books at multiple points in the novel, despite the Schlegel sisters' best efforts, and dies at the novel's end buried beneath the collapsed books and bookcases.

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CHAPTER 2

Eating the Foods of WWI: Evadne Price's *Not So Quiet...* and the Contexts of Consumption

We have existed mostly on our own Bovril, biscuits and slab chocolate since arriving in France, and when all is said and done it is a colourless, discouraging diet for young women of twenty-three—which our six ages average—who are doing men's work. Tosh is the only one who can systematically eat the canteen tack without vomiting or coming out in food boils; but she has a stomach as strong as a horse's. Also, she has been out longer than the rest of us and is more hardened. At first her inside used to revolt as ours still does...

Evadne Price
Not So Quiet...(1930)

Astrid Eril, whose work traces a field of study concerned with generational production and reception of WWI literature, notes that Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues* (1929), translated into English as *All Quiet on the Western Front* in 1929 by Arthur Wesley Wheen, "had enormous 'recruiting power' internationally. ...It transcended national frames" (392) as it quickly moved from the original German text, to "thirty translations" by 1930, and was adapted into a 1930 Hollywood movie directed by Lewis Milestone (392). Eril notes, "The sales figures imply that it must have been one of the most widely read novels not only in Europe and the United States, but also in Russia and in Japan" (392). Likewise, Jane Marcus observes, "Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* appeared in 1929 to instant international acclaim. It remains a classic anti-war novel, a touching, comic, life-affirming first-person narrative of a young German soldier's experience" (266).

During this early period that the text circulated internationally in many different translations and forms, “Albert Marriott, the publisher, approached Evadne Price with a free-lance project to write a spoof from a woman’s point view ([to be titled] ‘All Quaint on the Western Front’)” (266). However, Price was hesitant to produce a spoof of Remarque’s work:

[Price] read Remarque and found “quaint” an unsuitable response to its power. She herself had never been at the Front, so she convinced Winifred Young, who had kept diaries of her experience as an ambulance driver, to let Price write a novel faithful to Young’s experience of actual life at the Front. We do not have those diaries to compare to *Not So Quiet*.... We know that Evadne Price locked herself up with them for six weeks and wrote a novel fit to put on the shelf next to Erich Maria Remarque’s. The questions of its origins as a work of art, its originality or creativity in the face of Evadne Price’s deliberate mimesis of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and her use of Winifred Young’s diaries are fascinating. (266)

As “a very successful freelance journalist” (263), Price writes her first novel of public notice, titled *Not So Quiet...Stepdaughters of War* (1930). As a curious combination, the novel’s origins borrows from a female English ambulance driver’s lived experiences as recorded in a personal diary to revise an internationally-acclaimed male German’s best-selling WWI novel. Arguably, *Not So Quiet*... presents itself as further displaced or removed from Price when “the English journalist Evadne Price [publishes it] under the pseudonym Helen Zenna Smith” (Eril 394).

Like Marcus, Eril sees “the fictional memoir *Not So Quiet*...” as “a rewriting of Remarque’s novel” from a different perspective (Eril 394). The male German soldiers in Remarque’s work are now revised into female English volunteer ambulance drivers in Price’s novel. Eril notes,

The fictional war memoir revolves around the experiences of female nurses at the Western Front. Price not only echoes the title of Remarque's book in its English translation, but takes over much of its plot structure and character constellation. *Not So Quiet...* is clearly a "deep writing" in that it draws also on technical details such as the narrator's shifts between personal and communal voice as well as the structure and wording of its generation rhetoric. All these strategies serve one end; to inscribe *women* into the "lost generation," which by 1930 may have transcended national borders, but was still tacitly assumed to be an all-male formation. (italics in original 394)

Indeed, much of the critical attention to *Not So Quiet...* investigates the text's inscription of the female voice and story into the predominantly masculine histories and discourses of WWI. For example, Meg Albrinck's work on the authors Evadne Price and Vera Brittain notes:

In general, the [English] postwar atmosphere concentrated all of its attention on the men who had survived [WWI], paying little salutary attention to women's achievements. Brittain and Price had seen women lose their jobs and had seen the culture quietly "forget" the wartime work of women. They had also witnessed postwar pronatalism shape popular perceptions of women's role. (277)

Albrinck continues, "In efforts to reclaim recognition for the power of women's wartime experiences, Vera Brittain and Evadne Price work both within and against the wartime and post-war rhetorics of femininity in their exploration of VAD work" (278). Laurie Kaplan, whose work investigates Evadne Price alongside Mary Borden, writes that both Evadne Price "and Borden focus on the 'shattered' bodies and psyches of the 1914-18 generation, on the loss of faith that resulted from the reality of caring for the damaged bodies of the war zone, and their essentially modernist texts extend the feminist perspective of war-writing" (42). As Eril, Albrinck, Kaplan, and Marcus argue, one important contribution that the novel makes to the canon of WWI literature is to tell a different story from a different perspective.

However, Marcus's afterward to Price's novel also specifically argues that reinscribing female perspectives and narratives of WWI is not the only value of *Not So Quiet*.... Marcus writes, early in her afterward, "I do not simply valorize the feminine over the masculine war narrative [in her reading of *Not So Quiet*...], but rather wish to recover the lost voices, the cultural 'music' as Gertrude Stein says, of a noisy war" (242). Marcus notes that "Helen Zenna Smith's *Not So Quiet*... (1930) is a book about the body" (242). These female ambulance drivers' bodies come from "patriotic upper-class families proud to sacrifice daughters as well as sons for the war effort, sending packages of cocoa and carbolic body belts to keep off the lice" (243).²³ The families' care packages attempt to guarantee the safety of their offspring's bodies, providing disinfectant soaps and lice-repelling undergarments alongside cocoa and other food items intended to supplement the notoriously bad canteen food served to the volunteers. Marcus argues that "Both *Not So Quiet*... and *All Quiet on the Western Front*" are novels that "fetishize food, because, of course, getting enough to eat is everyone's primary concern in wartime. ...Everyone is hungry" (290).

My work on *Not So Quiet*... investigates this notion of Price's text as a novel of hungry bodies. I look at the eating scenes near the frontline of WWI in the context of the novel's later eating scenes when the volunteer ambulance drivers return to dine in or near London, both at home (in bed) and in public (in restaurants), while WWI continues to rage just across the English Channel. I suggest through my various readings of eating scenes in *Not So Quiet*..., which are occasionally contextualized

²³ For more on the volunteer ambulance drivers' patriotic upper-class families and their relationship to war propaganda in *Not So Quiet*..., see Celia M. Kingsbury's insightful "Propaganda, Militarism, and the Home Front in Helen Zenna Smith's *Not So Quiet*...*Stepdaughters of War*" in *War and Words: Horror and Heroism in the Literature of Warfare*, edited by Sara Muson Deats, Largetta Tallent Lenker, and Merry G. Perry.

against brief readings from *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Remarque, that Price's novel explores the importance of location and context in literary depictions of WWI food consumption. As such, the novel engages with two models of food consumption: the machine-model of "rational nutrition" operating at the war-front, which privileges efficiency (mere caloric energy) over the social aspects of food, and a home front model, which attempts to reinsert the social aspects of consuming food despite the pressures and contexts of WWI.

Warfront: The Frontline's Canteen

Price's opening scene of *Not So Quiet...* has Smithy and her fellow volunteer ambulance drivers enjoying a moment of relative peace and quiet, after weeks of intense work, as they "munch slabs of chocolate and stale biscuits" after most have "slept like logs through the evening meal" (9).²⁴ After Bovril is prepared (9) to fortify the women's diet, Smithy reports, "We are hungry, but we are used to hunger. We are always hungry in varying degrees—hungry, starving, or ravenous. The canteen food is vile at its best; at its worst it defies description" (9-10). Later in the novel we come across a more specific description, as reported in Smithy's narration, about the poor quality of the canteen's food. In regard to the food served at the canteen, she notes:

Not only is the food badly cooked, but it is actually dirty. One is liable to find hair-combings in the greasy gravy; bits of plate-leaving from the

²⁴ While the first-person protagonist of the novel is referred to by many different names, I refer to her as Smithy. Her VAD colleagues call her "Smithy" (12) and address her as such in letters (178), the Commandant while serving with the VAD calls her simply "Smith" (58), her mother calls her "Nellie" (184) and address her letters to "My Dearest Girlie" (228), her family's domestic work calls her "Miss Nellie" (175), both Robin and Roy call her "Nell" (174, 187-192, 231), her future mother-in-law Ethel Evans-Mawington addresses her as "Nellie" (229-30), her Unit Administrator with the W.A.A.C. (like her VAD Commandant) simply calls her "Smith" (223), her W.A.A.C. colleagues (like those from her VAD service) call her "Smithy" (214). On occasion, in inner monologue, she refers to herself in third-person as "Nellie Smith" (146).

day before and an odd hairpin. The principal dinner dish is a sort of disgusting soup-stew made of meat that hangs over a drain until it is cut up...sinister-looking joints of some strange animal—what we cannot decide. We often go outside in groups to examine it...but we cannot determine its origin. It is certainly not beef or mutton. (ellipses original 51)

The canteen's "sinister-looking" food is represented as the remaining bits and pieces to be "strained" in two senses of the word. First, it "strains" the definition of, as well as the ability to be recognized as, food; visually the meat does not fit with the expected image one can identify as beef or mutton. Secondly, the canteen's food is "strained" over a waste drain; hanging suspended, the eventual remainder (that which does not drip down the waste drain's pipe) is tentatively declared "meat" by Smithy, while it is strained by gravity, a process that attempts to remove that which is more clearly considered waste, which enters the waste drain's plumbing. This "sinister-looking" food, first described as "meat," is then later revised into the pluralized "joints" (which denotes combinations of meat, bone, cartilage, and sinew) of an unknown animal.

Indeed, historical documents at the British National Archives highlight the difficulties the War Office had in procuring quality meat to distribute during WWI. The War Office partially relied on South American meat suppliers, who sent frozen and chilled shipments, to fulfill its needs. In a letter to the War Office on October 16th, 1914, Lieutenant Colonel (A.S.C.) R. G. Berry, the acting "Meat Purchasing Officer to the War Office in Liverpool and District," writes of the "most serious" issue with receiving frozen and chilled meat cargo from overseas suppliers, particularly from Argentina, during WWI. He notes, "The meat is not of the contract quality. Anything is put in from finest quality to 'crapp' [sic]. New brands have been invented, mostly to cover the most barefaced roguery and good and bad are so

hopelessly mixed that every quarter has to be inspected” on some shipments (Board). In his “Report on Shipments of Frozen Meat from Argentine,” dated similarly, R. G. Berry reports that some cargo “consisted of inferior grades of meat that would be graded from ‘excessively fat’ down to ‘crapp’ meat, i.e., emaciated quarters” (Board). He goes on to catalogue a series of health concerns, highlighting the unsanitary conditions on the ship, of the men unloading the cargo, of the port’s dock, and of sorting and inspecting of the cargo before it is placed in cold storage.²⁵ Yet his most pressing concern is the quality of the meat itself; the report ends with two lengthy appendices, detailing the various South American meat shipments’ cargo, levels of quality, and rejection rates. When H. Rawson writes on November 13th, 1914, he echoes the concerns of R. G. Berry, noting, “I would say at once that the quality of the beef I saw was positively disgraceful. Had I not actually seen it myself I should not have believed it possible that such meat could have been rendered under the contract...” (underline original, Board). As many historical documents clearly indicate, sourcing quality meat was problematic for the War Office. These documents also do not entirely clarify what happened to the low quality meat once the War Office rejected it, the meat having already arrived in the UK; one solution, selling the rejected meat at local markets, was briefly attempted by R. G. Berry, but, following the protests of multiple parties, this idea was quickly officially abandoned (Board).

Returning to Price’s novel, the “joints of some strange animal” have been distributed to the canteen’s cook as provisions for the volunteer ambulance drivers; the

²⁵ R. G. Berry writes, “The sanitary condition of the holds of the ships and the quays is disgusting. The labour is filthy and loathsome, and entirely uninspected and may come from any diseased slum. The handling is generally disgraceful. Such conditions would not be permitted in the U.S.A. or even the Argentine” (Board).

uncanny item both intrigues the women, for they “often go outside in groups to examine it” (51), and repels the women, for they find it “disgusting” (51), and confounds them, for they “cannot decide” from which animal it might be (51). This ingredient is cut and presented in a soup-stew. This “soup-stew” requires a hyphen to contain its full meaning; it is neither recognizable as soup nor recognizable as stew, but it is instead an amalgamation of both (while not being entirely either).²⁶ In short, and quite importantly, the food embodies the uncanny and the unrecognizable on multiple levels: it is meat/joint; it is from an unknown animal; it will become both, and yet neither, soup and/or stew.

Added to this soup-stew meal of unrecognizable meat/joints, and disguised inside of it, are items that are easily recognizable but are distinctly non-food items. These items are non-edible waste, such as hair combings and hairpins, as well as waste whose edibility has already been rejected previously, such as yesterday’s waste from plates that the volunteers attempted to discard. These distinctly non-food items and rejected (judged non-edible or inedible) food waste have not found their proper locations in waste bins but have instead appeared disguised (along with the “meat/joints”) in the disgusting soup-stew. As one volunteer declares, “The food is not fit for pigs to eat. It stinks” (133). Later Smithy reports, “Dinner stank so badly it was almost impossible to stay in the mess-room. Etta Potato [a fellow volunteer

²⁶ In chapter three, I investigate Virginia Woolf’s aesthetic of liquidity in the *Boeuf en Daube* scene in *To the Lighthouse* and argue that the delicate balance of combining both the liquid and solid to ensure tender meat can be likened to Mrs. Ramsay’s figurative condensing of her guests into a dining community greater than the sum of its disparate individuals. However, in Price’s *Not So Quiet...* the liminal space between solid (stew) and liquid (soup) is figured as threatening and uncanny, rather than productive or positive. As such, Smithy’s description of the unnaturalness of the meat is more similar to Leonard Bast’s meager modern meal than Mrs. Ramsay’s triumphant dish—these different literary depictions of space between solid and liquid foods are, as Korsmeyer might say, “rendered with different aesthetic tenors” (188-9) and signify differently.

driver] and I made the usual Bovril upstairs” (137). The food, while perhaps fuel (calories—potential energy) for the bodies of the female ambulance drivers, is resisted and refused by Smithy and her friends. In an earlier encounter with the canteen food, Smithy’s colleague and friend Tosh describes this soup-stew as “Dead dog” and Smithy reports that “The soup-stew literally stinks” (65), a comment Smithy will repeat throughout the novel. It is no wonder then, to the reader, why the women might wish to sleep through the evening meal and instead subsist on chocolate, biscuits, and Bovril, as they do in the novel’s opening scene.

We must note that the novel posits the canteen’s food as both posing direct and indirect threats to the body. Of bad quality and poorly cooked, the food threatens all, we are told, with dysentery and food poisoning—even the “constitutionally strong” Smithy gets “an occasional dose of food poisoning” (49). The food contains an immediate (short-term) threat to health, in the form of food poisoning, and this immediate threat is a large reason for the volunteers’ refusal to consume it. However the food also indirectly (medium to long-term) threatens the bodies of the ambulance drivers in that the food inhibits their bodies’ natural processes, particularly the process to heal itself. Smithy notes, “No wonder we have all had food poisoning. No wonder we have so many dysentery cases. No wonder our smallest cuts fester and have to be treated in hospital. I grazed my thumb cleaning the fireplace the other day, and went septic immediately” (51). Denied the raw material of bodily reconstruction, their bodies’ small cuts and minor grazes become larger problems and injuries. The food not only is unappetizing and dangerous but also is rejected by all the volunteers, but for Tosh who “has a stomach as strong as a horse’s” and “has been out longer [in the

field] than the rest” of the drivers (10). We read that Tosh “never misses a food-call on principle” (9); however, Smithy’s narration does not indicate that Tosh always consumes the food, only that Tosh is always present at the meal’s service. Tosh’s attendance, furthermore, is predicated on principles, perhaps of politeness, indicating that her motivation is more in line with social manners and graces, recalling that she is often referred to as the niece of an earl (24), rather than individual taste or individual appetite.

The only other character in the novel who “systematically” (10) attends the canteen’s food service like Tosh is the unit’s Commandant; the Commandant, we read, both attends and consumes the meals served at the canteen. The Commandant is described as “dreadfully efficient” (19) and, “Like all efficient machines, she has no humanity” (49); she dismisses complaints that the food is too poor in quality for human consumption by saying “I eat it...If it’s good enough for me it’s good enough for you” (133). The Commandant’s determination that the canteen’s food is of passable quality operates through a logic that forecloses any possible objections based on any other individual taste; the Commandant’s logic does not accept others’ individual tastes as a possible criterion for determining quality. At the heart of the Commandant’s taste is a machine-model of food, which conflates the volunteer drivers to mechanical devices with tanks that require fuel.

The consumption of food is generally both a biological necessity (an obligation or a non-choice—one must eat to survive) and an active conscious decision or selection (a choice—there are generally multiple options for selection). However, as the machine-model contends, particularly during the exceptional times such as war,

this general rule of an individual selecting his or her fuel can be suspended. The human body's need for food, when depicted as a hungry war machine working to win the war, can be figured as the demand for raw material needed to fuel the human war machine. In this model, the consumption of food, with its multilayered levels of meanings and significances (culture, nationality, religion, heritage, play, pleasure, taste, individuality, and social to name but a few), is now reduced to the caloric value exchangeable for an outcome of accomplished manual labor or work. Under the "food is fuel" model, if food is a problem during a time of war (the production, distribution, etc.) then the rationality of science is the proper tool for finding the problem's answer.

Anson Rabinbach's work in *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* investigates the "central argument...that modern *productivism*...first arose from the conceptual revolution ushered in by nineteenth-century scientific discoveries, especially thermodynamics" (italics in original 3).²⁷ As World War I quickly became "a war of exhaustion" (259), and "seemed to be an apotheosis of the dance of energy and entropy" (259), the efficiency of a machine-model highlighted that "the reorganization of agriculture and the monumental problems of feeding a nation at war required new adjustments to severely restricted and rationed diets, including the introduction of new synthetic foodstuffs" (259-60). Before the war in Germany, Rabinbach informs us, the physiologist "[Max] Rubner argued that the laws of thermodynamics were a sound basis for a total science of social hygiene, encompassing not only nutrition but all aspects of social endeavor. His

²⁷ Rabinbach defines productivism as "the belief that human society and nature are linked by the primacy and identity of all productive activity, whether of laborers, or of *machines*, or of natural forces" (italics added 3).

program...included...the promotion of his most coveted social ideal; ‘rational nutrition’” (226). Corinna Treitel notes that,

In a series of articles published between 1878 and 1883, Rubner presented experimental evidence for a new physiological law, the isodynamic law, which stated that proteins, fats, and carbohydrates were mutually interchangeable in the body according to their caloric equivalents...In myriad ways, then, Rubner played a central role in casting the body as a “heat machine” converting proteins, fats, and carbohydrates—now measured in the universal unit of the calorie—into work. (3)

Rubner, “By the early twentieth century...was arguably the world’s most famous and influential physiologist” spreading his idea of “rational nutrition,” based on a machine-model of the usefulness of food, to international audiences across Europe and America (4). In short, Rubner’s working assumption was that a machine-model could benefit a society’s nutritional deficiencies by applying rational scientific principles, a theory that was initially explored before WWI and quickly gained attention during WWI, where multiple nations instituted the basic principles of Rubner’s theory in various ways.²⁸ Rubner himself worked at the Kaiser Wilhem Institute for Labor Physiology, founded in 1913, to “undertake a series of studies on the nutritional requirements of troops and domestic forces, as well as the optimal use of labor power in the munitions industry” (Rabinbach 262). Rabinbach writes, “Given Rubner’s interest in the energetic of diet, the institute’s chief object was to find adequate means of replacing or supplementing scarce foods with suitable substitutes” (263). If food is mere calories, and all calories (as potential forms of energy) are equally exchangeable for work from a human body, then the food as fuel model quickly becomes a race to

²⁸ For a detailed historical account of Rubner’s theory of rational nutrition, including the events that preceded and influenced his work and the ways in which the theory was used and coopted by Nazi Germany, see Corinna Treitel’s “Max Rubner and the Biopolitics of Rational Nutrition.”

the make a cheaper, more economically efficient, food calorie while the quality of food, as defined by any other criterion, can be quickly left behind. Unrecognizable and “sinister” joints of meat cooked into foul smelling “soup-stews” can successfully fuel the bodies engaged in war work, this logic contends.

Price’s novel addresses the problematics of wartime food by highlighting the outcomes of the machine-model that posits the volunteers’ bodies as machines in need of fuel; while the mystery meat “soup-stew” (that includes hair combs, trash, and hairpins) might provide the caloric requirements for transporting injured soldiers in ambulances (according to the Commandant’s logic), Smithy complains the food is inadequate fuel to carry out the human body’s needs to self-heal, a distinctly non-machine like quality of the human body. Additionally, Smithy contends, food poisoning occurs and wounds fester on the diet determined adequate by the machine-like Commandant, whose logic seems to take Rubner’s theory to the extreme. Furthermore, the novel suggests, other aspects of food consumption are pushed aside when the volunteers are treated like their ambulances—as machines with tanks that simply need to be filled with fuel. The canteen’s “soup-stews” are inadequate for fulfilling the driver’s emotional and social needs. This canteen’s caloric fuel will not “work” for the women and they find ways to fill their fuel tanks with alternative fuels, such as chocolate, biscuits, and Bovril, food items that at least partially fulfill some of their emotional and social needs.

Alongside the warfront’s introduction of the “food as fuel” model, and the reduction of food options and availability to the bodies at war, come various non-state channels to release tension on the volunteer’s social and emotional demands.

Specifically, the novel *Not So Quiet...* figures a coping strategy for the female ambulance drivers as the care package sent from home. Price's inclusion of care packages is a revision of Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, where the act of scavenging figures as the coping strategy for limited food supplies of the German soldiers in his novel. Importantly, the social complexities of these channels (care packages and acts of scavenging) lead back to the social and emotional connections with food, connections that remain "blind-spots" to the machine-model's theorization of food. The coping strategies of receiving care packages (*Not So Quiet...*) and scavenging (*All Quiet on the Western Front*) provide more than mere supplementary calories and nutrition to the less-than-desirable food offered the bodies at war; they provide a way for the characters to reassociate their machine-like lives away from the model of efficiency and toward an existence more closely resembling the humanity of pre-war eating, reinscribing food and eating with social and emotional significance.

Warfront: Care Packages

In order to discuss the care package as an important source of supplementary food in World War I, and specifically in Price's novel *Not So Quiet...*, Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* is useful for he outlines the historicity of the care package. WWI, a modern war with modern forms of rapidly transporting goods and posting parcels, facilitated the use of the care package, which increasingly contained perishable items alongside the traditional items of non-perishable food items:

Letters and parcels normally took about four days, sometimes only two. Exotic foodstuffs could easily be sent across [the channel to the front], not just standard non-perishables like tinned kippers and oysters, tinned butter and fowl, pâté and chocolate, cheese and cherry brandy and wine

(by the dozen bottles at once), but perishables like gingerbread, cakes, and tarts; fresh fruit and butter and eggs; and fresh flowers (primroses, violets) for the “table.” Sometimes one took postal pot-luck. ...And only occasionally did things arrive spoilt... (66)

Not only were the practical items of high-protein food sent (tinned seafood and meats) to the troops to supplement the trench food, but exotic or gourmet items were mailed as well (sweets, fruits, dairy items, and flowers). Fussell notes that the tradition “of the well-to-do sending off hampers of treats to boys at the better public schools” (66) was shifted and expanded to send hampers of treats to men on the frontlines. By changing the mailing address from a school to the warfront, the care packages that previously went to one form of infantry—“Infants collectively, or as a body”—were sent to another form of infantry—“The body of foot-soldiers; foot-soldiers collectively; that part of an army which consists of men who march and maneuver on foot and are armed with small arms, now a rifle” (“Infantry”).²⁹ Yesterday’s child who desires supplemental food becomes the adult (soldier or, in Price’s novel, volunteer ambulance driver) in need of supplemental food.³⁰

As previously mentioned, the ambulance drivers in *Not So Quiet...* supplement the canteen meals with food from care packages sent from their family and friends in England. This process involves the ambulance drivers sending their own personal requests for food items when writing letters home; Smithy explains, “We have all written home for supplies. Tosh for Bovril and Huntley and Palmer’s Best Assorted

²⁹ I am indebted to my colleagues in Seminar 13 “Modernisms: Wars, States, and Citizens” (co-hosted by Marlene Briggs and Paul Saint-Amour) at the 2010 MSA conference (Victoria, B.C.) for drawing my attention to the usefulness of the two definitions of “infantry.”

³⁰ While the images seem awkwardly posed for the benefit of the (newly invented) film camera’s recording, Part 4 of the film *Battle of the Somme* (1916), specifically shots three and four in sequence 48 subtitled “Effects of British Shell Fire on German Trenches between Fricourt and Mametz: The Post Reaches the Devonshires during Battle” (at the 53:36 mark), show parcels and packages arriving and being distributed near the frontline trenches in WWI.

and potted meat. Me for Bovril and ginger biscuits. We have a heated argument as to the rival merits of Best Assorted and ginger. Ginger wins easily. Ginger warms you up, sustains you...” (ellipsis original 54). By requesting specific items from home, for example either assorted biscuits or ginger biscuits, the women are able to engage in personal selection and choice. Their tastes are not only exercised in their written requests—in one sense they are shopping from afar—but become a discussion amongst themselves. The “heated arguments as to the rival merits” of selecting one flavor or the other re-inscribes social exchange into the activities surrounding food consumption, a social aspect notably missing from the canteen’s service of food, where individual taste is foreclosed and the Commandant’s logic disallows discussions of personal taste.

Whether organized centrally to guarantee a selection of multiple types of biscuits and meat products (both solid potted meat and liquid, in the form of reconstituted Bovril, are requested) or done informally in an ad hoc manner, the women’s efforts frequently ensure enough food supplies to avoid the meals served by the canteen’s cook. Importantly, the food items delivered via care packages embody a missing trait of the canteen food—individual taste and the opportunity to choose from a selection of options. Where the canteen gives a binary choice to the alimentary subject (to eat or not to eat), the care packages allow for the expression of subjective tastes in food items (benefiting those arguing the merits of particular types biscuits—assorted or ginger—based on personal taste and convictions). Additional selections are available once the care packages arrive, such as if one prefers to eat a solid meat product (like potted meat) or a liquid broth (like Bovril); this is a choice specifically

denied by the “soup-stew,” which is neither liquid soup or stew with solid pieces, found in the canteen. In short, the food items sent by post replace the canteen food but also give the women more choices about when they eat (temporal autonomy), the food items eaten (autonomy of selection), and the quantity of food eaten (autonomy of quantity). Instead of being forced like machines to fill their fuel tanks with the canteen’s “soup-stew” (liquid-solid) at a given time in a given ration (quantity), the women prepare Bovril (liquid—beef broth) or potted meat (solids—meat products) as desired at convenient times and in the quantity they wish. However, when the post fails to arrive, the women are forced to eat the canteen food; Smithy complains, “No post in yet. That means eating the canteen filth to-day. We shall probably be poisoned, but we are so starving after our work in the snow we are prepared to eat anything” (63).

While initially, upon the care packages’ arrivals, the items in the care packages are held privately and exchanged for personal benefits, the care package food items are sometimes pooled together and communally held and consumed by the ambulance drivers, often to mark a special event or occasion. Smithy reports, after the arrival of the care packages, that “Wholesale trading is going on, body-belts for Bovril, biscuits for cigarettes, hairpins for saccharine. . .” (ellipsis original 68). The exchange here posits food items privately traded for non-food items but does not depict food items traded for different food items. It seems the volunteers have successfully fulfilled their desires by shopping for food from afar; the food choices they request have been delivered. No fan of ginger biscuits has the need to trade her subjectively less desired assorted biscuits for her desired ginger biscuits; each individual’s taste is fulfilled and

thus there is no bargaining of one food item for a different (more desired) food item. In this passage, the bargaining with food exclusively exchanges food items for non-food items (*for* body-belts, *for* cigarettes, *for* hairpins).

After the initial trading, and after one's needed non-food items are procured through barter, the remaining food items are often placed in a communal pool, a process that involves the community acknowledging the "owner" or contributor of the item. The most prominent scene of communal pooling of care packaged food items is the goodbye feast when Bertina Farmer (called The B.F. by her friends) leaves to go back to England. In this passage, the food items are distributed to all, but the contributor of the items is fully acknowledged and given her credit. Creating a space by drawing the beds together and physically eating in (or on) the beds, the goodbye party for Bertina should also be read in context of the novel's motif of breakfast in bed—a topic discussed later in this chapter. First, however, Smithy's narration of the goodbye party for Bertina reads:

We are having a farewell party, to the great annoyance of those who are trying to sleep in the adjacent cubicles. We have drawn our beds closely together and have spread a large sheet of brown paper on which repose our joint contributions—biscuits, a few ounces of real butter, two tins of sardines, twenty-three cigarettes, a jam-pot of potted meat, a stale seed cake, and, last but by no means least, two bottles of *vin rouge* which we are drinking out of cups borrowed from the canteen. It tastes, candidly, rather like red ink, but we are not fussy. It is contraband, of course. (*italics in original* 104)

The contributed items are catalogued and inventoried, allowing each contributor recognition through a process of connecting food with the women's nicknames: "The butter we owe to The B.F., who has been saving it since last mail day; the sardines are from Etta Potato; the potted meat from Skinny; The Bug has given the biscuits, while

the stale cake is my contribution to the feast” (105). Tosh “secured the wine” in a daring unauthorized trip to a town. By bringing together the food items communally, the women celebrate their close homosocial community one last time before an important colleague leaves them to return to England.³¹ While the food quality is not the main event here (at least two items, the stale cake and inky wine, are noted, through their description, as inferior), one must notice that the food is described in more appetizing terms than the canteen’s food; furthermore, the food served in this care package feast becomes the lubricant or catalyst for the important social interactions here in this scene of the community’s celebration of Bertina.

Against the theorization of the machine-model’s positing of the ambulance drivers as cogs in the war machine, merely viewing them as another tank to be filled with caloric fuel, Joanne Finkelstein’s work, particularly in *Dining Out: A Sociology of Modern Manners*, draws out the social and emotional needs of eating. Arguing that food is more than the mere fulfillment of the body’s caloric needs, Finkelstein argues, “food represents values and interests much removed from the nutritional function of the foodstuffs per se. Food can be the insignia of a subculture and its meaning may have only remote connections to calorific or nutritional content” (45). Finkelstein, primarily concerned with the specific action of eating in restaurants, a topic I will discuss in a section below, notes, “In context of the restaurant, the meaning of food and its consumption has acquired a breadth and complexity that extends far beyond bodily sustenance” (53). Finkelstein contends that, “In the practice of dining out, a

³¹ This scene also depicts Tosh’s attempts to strictly police the boundary between the group’s homosocial interactions and (potentially) homosexual interactions; the goodbye party ends on a sour note when Skinny, perhaps after too much wine, confronts Tosh—presumably for accusing her as being or behaving as a lesbian (108-113).

lower order of being, namely, the nourishment of the human body, has been intertwined with a higher order of experience, namely, that of taking pleasure; the banality of eating has been elevated to the abstract and symbolic” (27). While the women are not out in public eating at a restaurant in this passage, the goodbye party for Bertina occurs in communal space, depicts pleasure taking, and demonstrates the volunteer drivers’ subculture.

Rather than food as fuel, Finkelstein suggests that food, particularly when eaten in communal space, is the fulfillment of desires that transcend the mere requirements of nutrition. She notes, “In modern society, as foodstuffs and the manner of their consumption have become symbols of social differentiation and individual preference, dining out has become a commodity reflective of desires other than those of immediate physical gratification” (27). Social differentiation and individual preference, or taste, is specifically denied in the canteen, a place where individual desire is suppressed against the immediate physical needs of fuel. If Rubner’s work at The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Labor Physiology at War collapses the multilayered levels of meanings of food into calorie counting, Finkelstein’s approach brings out the inaccessible “blind-spots” in a machine-model of food and might be investigated as an opposing pole when theorizing food in the context of WWI.

Using Finkelstein’s theorization of food, we can see that exchange of “food represents values and interests much removed from the nutritional function of the foodstuffs” in the scene of Bertina’s goodbye party— “[food’s] meaning [in this scene] may have only remote connections to calorific or nutritional content” (45). While the

caloric value is also important to the bodies of the women, the feast allows for artful creation of new dishes with the available materials: “The provisions disappear quickly. The potted meat is home-made and goes down amazingly well with sweet biscuits. Tosh invents a savoury, ‘Sardines à la B.F.’—slices of cake with mashed sardines in between. It is surprisingly good” (Price 105). Here Tosh uses culinary creativity to express artistry with the available food supplies. This scene of artful food construction—a different figuration of making do or doing one’s bit in the war effort—heavily echoes the “three heaps of ethereal sandwiches” served to Christopher Tietjens, the main character and protagonist in Ford Maddox Ford’s tetralogy *Parade’s End* (631). The sandwich maker in Ford’s novel, who “regarded cooking as an Art,” serves food that Tietjens “shall never forget” (632). Tietjens’ narration describes the heavenly heaps of three types of sandwiches, their contents, and the artistry behind them: “The meat in the sandwiches consisted of *foie gras*, that pile: [the second pile had] bully beef reduced to a paste with butter that was margarine, anchovy paste out of a tin and minced onion out of pickles; the third pile was bully beef *nature*-seasoned with Worcester sauce. . . . All the materials he had at disposal!” in the trenches (italics in original 632). These two scenes, from *Not So Quiet...* and *Parade’s End*, when read together, highlight that the discourse of food as fuel (the efficiency model) does not properly account for artistry in food preparation and issues of taste, even when the human body is consuming food in, or nearby, the frontline trenches of WWI.

If the answer to food shortages is the supplemental food sent via care package to the female ambulance drivers in the novel *Not So Quiet...*, then scavenging is the

coping strategy for the soldiers in the novel that Price revises, Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. While care packages are at least partially supported by state channels when they are transported to the frontlines, scavenging, on the other hand, occurs outside of state channels and often against the wishes of state. In Remarque's novel, Paul Baumer and his fellow soldiers are often left to fend for their own bodily needs when food supplies are insufficient. One character Kat, a fellow soldier and friend of Paul, has an unnatural ability to scavenge food: "Kat appears...he has two loaves of bread under his arm and a blood-stained sandbag full of horse-flesh in his hand" (39). Kat's ability to find food in any location and under any circumstance prompts Paul to comment, "I'm sure if [Kat] were planted down in the middle of the desert, in half an hour he would have gathered together a supper of roast meat, dates, and wine" (39). Paul later muses that, "If for one hour in a year something eatable were to be had in some one place only, within that hour, as if moved by a vision, [Kat] would put on his cap, go out and walk directly there, as though following a compass, and find it" (40). In addition to finding horse-meat multiple times in the novel, Kat also locates "four boxes of lobsters" (40), two geese (52 and 91-3), "a dozen eggs and two pounds of fairly fresh butter" (233), and suckling pigs (234) throughout the novel's storyline.³² While the occasional care package is mentioned in Remarque's novel, the coping strategy to relieve the soldiers' hunger is to scavenge the countryside or the enemy's trenches for edible food items.³³

³² Kat's abilities are not limited to providing raw food materials either. He can provide the requisite material for food preparation; "He finds everything—if it is cold, a small stove and wood [for cooking], hay and straw, a table and chairs" (40). Kat's scavenging skills include intimate knowledge on food preparation; "Kat knows the way to roast [scavenged] horse-flesh so that it's tender. It shouldn't be put straight into the pan, that makes it tough. It should be boiled first in a little water" (39-40).

³³ The most notable care packages in *All Quiet on the Western Front* are the potato cakes that Paul's mother gives him for his return to the front (198), the bread and sausages the soldiers "gift" the French

Price's revision of Remarque's motif of scavenging into the motif of care packages relocates the responsibility of providing supplemental food from the individual (German soldier) at the frontlines to social communities (the volunteers' families) at the home front. Importantly, it might be noted, those who suffer from unstable and undesirable food rations are supported by their communities in Price's version, rather than relying solely on their self-sufficiency, perhaps casting England as a nation better able to support and care for the bodies it sends to war. Remarque's scavenging characters, who are forced to rely on self-sufficiency, are revised into characters whose families can, and do, send care packages.

Home Front: Breakfasting in Bed and Dining in London Restaurants

The novel *Not So Quiet...* develops the motif of food served in or on bed(s) throughout the novel. As previously mentioned, we see the food in bed motif deployed in the physical arrangement of food—literally served on beds that have been pushed together—in the community's goodbye party for Bertina. However, the recurring subject of food in bed, almost always figured as a breakfast in bed, is first introduced in the letters of Smithy's sister Trix, who also volunteers as a V.A.D., though in a different unit than her sister. This early letter, which is whimsical and playful rather than dark and cynical like Trix's later letters become, posits breakfast in bed as the only acceptable payment for the V.A.D.'s service to her nation. Trix writes to her sister Smithy, "They seem to think a V.A.D. is never tired, or that she ever

women in exchange for sex (147), and the "bag of grub" Paul and Albert collect while the food depot is shelled (before the two are injured) (245). However, in Remarque's novel, instances of food scavenging, particularly through the character of Kat, are much more central to the characters' behavior for supplementing their rations.

wants any sleep ...All I ask is home and breakfast-in-bed for the rest of my life...Being a V.A.D. is an overrated pastime” (84). While perhaps jokingly introduced, the exchange of frontline service for privileged and leisured food consumption at home (both in bed and—as I will examine later—in restaurants) is developed in a serious fashion in the novel. Shortly after getting the letter, Smithy has her first dream of the breakfast-in-bed at home—the promised, or perhaps demanded, exchange for her taxing services:

I smile and sit up, propping my head with the tiny, oval, rose-satin cushion Sarah [her family’s domestic worker] passes me. She places my breakfast-tray where I can get it without effort. It is rose wicker, edged with a transparent glass bottom, ...the very latest thing in breakfast trays, ...and the china is rose-colored and iridescent. I will have everything to match, and they pander to me shamefully. There are tiny snippets of toast on my tray, a boiled egg, marmalade, little rolls of fresh butter. (ellipses original 86)

After a “shrill piecing scream” of the “Commandant’s whistle” and a verbal command to “Get a move on,” Smithy is awakened into a reality of the never-ending work of transporting injured soldiers away from the frontlines (87). This passage places the unreal (the dream of breakfasting in bed) as an escape from the reality of the war’s front. The dreamt, leisurely consumption of breakfast in bed is shattered by the disorientating demands of Smithy’s volunteer duties. Smithy’s resistance and trouble at moving between the dream world (her vision of breakfast in bed) and the real world (“the midnight convoy” she is being called to) is marked by disorientation: “Merciful God, what was that? I sit up with a stifled cry. I stare round the bare room, bewildered. Where am I? Who are these strangers, these half-dressed strangers?” (87). This resistance to the movement between the dream and the reality—and the

inability to tell the two apart—foreshadows Smithy’s later bewilderment when she is actually served breakfast in bed on her return to England.

After witnessing the traumatic death of Tosh, Smithy leaves her job as a volunteer ambulance driver in France and returns to England. Having volunteered her time and energy for her nation—and as foreshadowed by Trix’s letter—Smithy’s eventual arrival at her parents’ home is marked with the privileged and leisurely consumption of breakfast foods in bed. When Smithy returns to England, Sarah does serve her breakfast in a scene that heavily echoes Smithy’s previous dreams in France:

I awaken gradually, gently. I half open my eyes and close them quickly again... That was Sarah. I watch her place the dainty breakfast tray on the little bed-table where I can reach it without effort... I am awake. I am not dreaming. I am at home. I am not dreaming... “Now then, Miss Nellie, I boiled that new-laid egg myself; eat it up like a good girl and get some flesh on your bones.” (175-6)

As in the previous scene in which Smithy’s transition from dreamt breakfast in bed to the real convoy duty is a confused and mistrusted transition, Smithy’s transition here from sleep to a real breakfast in bed is marked by bewilderment and confusion. Straddling the dream world and real world, she gradually awakens to that which was once familiar in her former civilian life (the maid Sarah) but now, in her post-volunteer deployment life, seems strange. Breakfast in bed becomes uncanny—both real and unreal—for Smithy; her past experiences threaten that a whistle may sound, at any moment, to awaken her and rip her away to yet another midnight convoy. Smithy repeats, perhaps in an attempt to manifest the event as true (to guarantee its reality and erase the unreality of it), that she is awake and that she is not dreaming the luxury of breakfasting in bed. She must insist to herself that the breakfast in bed, complete with a cooked “new-laid egg,” is not an illusion (176).

For critics such as Albrinck, whose readings of Price's novel focus mainly on the reinscription of the female voice and story into the narratives and discourses of WWI, the breakfast in bed scenes provide Price with an opportunity to illustrate Smithy's feminine side. Engaged in duties associated with manual work (the transport of bodies) and mechanical work (ensuring the ambulances are maintained), as well as behaviors that were not typically associated with femininity (such as cutting their hair short), the volunteer drivers' gender performances can be read as non-normative or subversive. Albrinck suggests that the breakfast in bed scene allows Price an opportunity to illustrate the complex gender performance of Smithy, re-inscribing her feminine side. According to Albrinck, Price

establishes [Smithy's] femininity by imagining an elaborate, yet feminine, breakfast in bed, complete with "tiny snippets of toast...(and) little rolls of fresh butter." [Smithy's] constant attention to the delicacy of her things and the daintiness of her meal support conventional images of womanhood, successfully position [Smithy] as appropriately feminine. (280)

Albrinck later catalogues the dream of breakfasting in bed as one of Smithy's "escape fantasies" (281) while she is in France. While I do not dispute the complexity of Smithy's gender performances, or take issue with Albrinck's reading of Smithy's femininity in this passage, I suggest that the breakfast in bed motif in *Not So Quiet...* also serves to problematize the transition of Smithy's consumption of warfront foods (canteen food and care packages) to the home front foods (dainty breakfasts in bed and dinners at restaurants). All three references to breakfasting in bed—Trix's letter (84), Smithy's initial dream (86), and Smithy's actual breakfast in bed on her return home (175-6)—posit this manner of dining as a transition between a life of war and a civilian life. For Trix, breakfast in bed is what she is due from society, in *exchange*

for services, on her return to civilian life. In Smithy's dream (86) and on her return home (175-6), the startling awkwardness of her difficulty navigating between her dream world and her real world runs parallel to the difficult transition from a life of war to civilian life. With the aid of Roland Barthes's work on food behaviors and taste in *Mythologies*, I contend that Smithy's social manners and selection of food items promise to operate differently given her new (home front) context of consuming food.³⁴ In short, breakfasting in bed in *Not So Quiet...* offers the character Smithy a transition, albeit a difficult transition, from the life and food of the warfront (with its particular gestures of food) to a life and food of the home front (with a potentially different system of significations), once she has returned to England.

In a section titled "A Ridiculous Proximity," Fussell draws our attention to an important difference between the two world wars, noting that "'Shipping out' is significantly a phrase belonging to the Second War, not the First... what makes [the] experience in the Great War unique ... is the ridiculous proximity of the trenches to home" (64). The closeness of the trenches to the home front can be measured or figured in different manners, theorized and seen through different lenses. Fussell uses two modes of measurements, spatial closeness measured in distance ("Just seventy miles") and closeness measured in the time taken to traverse the space (64). This second figuring of proximity is what interests me, particularly when the time is measured against the everyday events of mealtimes. Fussell provides multiple examples of the proximity of trenches figured and measured against the consumption

³⁴ Barthes contends that the symbolic meaning of foods and drinks (and the behavior of consuming them) have different specific significations depending on their contexts. For example, in France, wine may gesture one thing, while in other countries, where drunkenness is an "intention" rather than a "consequence," wine gestures differently, putting forth different meanings and social significances (Barthes 59).

of daily meals; these examples come from soldier journals and literary sources (64-5). According to Fussell, Arnold Bennett reported in his 1917 journal that his acquaintance “had breakfasted in the trenches and dined in his club in London,” presumably that very same day (Bennett qtd in Fussell 64). Fussell also presents a literary representation, an unnamed and unpublished P.H. Pilditch’s novel in the archives of the Imperial War Museum, where one character:

discovers that the thing he finds especially “hard to believe” about the war is this farcical proximity. In the way back up [to] the [front] line on a train, one officer returning [to the trenches] from leave remarks to others in his compartment: “Christ! ... I was at *Chu Chin Chow* last night with my wife. Hard to believe, isn’t it?” (Pilditch qtd in Fussell 64)

Both figurations of proximity show the trenches removed from the London club or London restaurants by just one (or perhaps less) meal. These examples, from a soldier’s journal and an unnamed and unpublished novel, illustrate the public discourse that one might, in a single day, eat an early meal in the trenches and late meal in London, or vice versa. The distance between the warfront and home front, when figured temporally in the register of the mundane (the daily consumption of meals), collapses when the temporal measuring stick becomes the familiar taking of meals.

Inspired by Fussell’s connection—the *ridiculous proximity*—between the frontline trench and the London restaurant, I pair the reading of Smithy’s care packages alongside the representation of food at home when the volunteer or soldier leaves the hostile space of the frontlines. I focus on the space of the London and Folkestone restaurants in Price’s novel. This restaurant dining should be

contextualized against my earlier readings, which focus on the domestic space of the house when Smithy breakfasts in bed—a form of *eating in* rather than *eating out*.

In Chapter IX, the narrative of *Not So Quiet...* quickly transitions from the domestic scenes of the “eating in” of breakfast in bed to depictions of the “eating out” of dinner at a public restaurant. As Smithy breakfasts in bed (175-6), she opens three letters (177-8). The third letter Smithy reads while breakfasting in bed is from Bertina Farmer (The B.F.). In her letter Bertina reports that she has dined with Tosh’s uncle in London’s famous restaurant the Savoy, in an effort to console the older man over the death of his niece Tosh:

Tosh’s uncle, the darling old Earl, came to see me and took me to lunch at the Savoy, and he was terribly cut up about Tosh, and, I must confess, wasn’t frightfully patriotic about the war; said the W.O. would be satisfied when it had killed off its young women as well as butchering its young men. “Now,” I said to him, “you know you’d go to-morrow if you were young enough,” and what do you think he said? “No, I’m damned if I would if I could get out of it decently”—so like dear blunt Tosh in his manner, but a sweet thing underneath, I feel sure. (178-9)

I wish to highlight three important items about this reported restaurant scene, which is delivered to the reader in epistolary form. Returning to Finkelstein’s work on the restaurant and public eating, and augmenting Finkelstein’s work with John Burnett’s *England East Out: A Social History of Eating Out in England from 1830 to the Present*, I suggest this passage engages with three social preoccupations and historical changes to the public restaurant space in the time surrounding WWI: an active feminization of the space, the mixing of multiple social classes in the space, and concern over a questionable or possibly subversive social discourse circulating in the space.

First, the restaurant that Bertina and Tosh's uncle eat at is the Savoy, a restaurant, both Burnett and Finkelstein highlight, that actively feminized its interior before the advent of WWI in an attempt to encourage female patrons to dine there. According to Burnett and Finkelstein, historically the space of the restaurant drastically changed before and during World War I. Burnett notes that restaurants such as the Savoy actively courted the new demographic of women with disposable incomes at the turn of the century, using different approaches in attempts to attract the newly emergent female customer:

If the soft, pink shades of the lamps at the Savoy flattered complexions, Escoffier's naming of his creations after great ladies did even more their reputations—the Soufflé Sarah Bernhardt, the Pêches and Toast Melba, the Poulard Adelina Patti and the Oeufs à la Chimay (after the Princesse de Chimay)...By the end of the century women of the middle and upper-middle classes whose lives had been bounded by domesticity were beginning to participate in many public spheres formerly closed to them... (147)

The soft pink aesthetics of the Savoy and the nomenclature of Escoffier's dishes actively courted new women customers, redefining the gendered space of the grand hotel restaurant through a process of feminizing their interiors and naming their dishes. Finkelstein's work agrees with Burnett's historical narrative; Finkelstein writes, "in the last quarter of the nineteenth century...The grand hotels were hugely successful in large part because they permitted women of the more esteemed social classes to dine out in public for the first time" (40). Historical economic forces pushed the re-gendering of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English restaurant. Here at the Savoy, which had "soft pink shades of the lamps...[intended to] flatter [female] complexions" (Burnett 5), Bertina dines as a female accompanied by a male of an older generation, Tosh's uncle.

Secondly, the combination of Bertina and Tosh's uncle also speaks to the expansion and intermingling of the classes during the activity of eating out in public. Bertina, we should remember, is described as coming from a lower socio-economic class than Tosh and her family; Bertina, called The B.F. by the other drivers at the front, is "flattered at being on nickname level with the niece of an earl" (24) and has her own suspect motivations for volunteering for service—she wishes to marry an officer and climb the social ladder (24-5). My highlighting of this pair's sex and class is not to suggest the two are coupled together in any romantic or sexual relationship, but to suggest the cross-generational nature of the old male aristocrat seated alongside the younger female (without, at this point, the household duties required of a wife) embodies the historical narrative of the English restaurant's changes as constructed by Finkelstein and Burnett.

History indicates that the changes to restaurants' class demographics continued to alter in the early twentieth century and accelerated during World War I, particularly when it came to the newly upwardly-mobile working class. Burnett's narrative of the English restaurant notes that "Some families where all the members were employed, often on war work, enjoyed combined incomes unthinkable in peacetime... Women and girls were also beneficiaries, moving from low-paid domestic service and sweatshops to munitions factories" (172), allowing the formerly lower-income individuals and families to consider dining out in the restaurants alongside the upper classes. Finkelstein echoes this historical narrative of the English restaurants' changes when she writes, "In the modern era, the restaurant has become a venue for the vivid display of shifting social arrangements and class boundaries. In the early restaurants,

the luxuries of the aristocracy so long forbidden to the lower classes were made available to everyone” (43). As the space of the restaurant opens up to multiple classes, and the advent of WWI resulted in fewer and fewer restaurants remaining open for business, the restaurants experienced a more heterogeneous mixture of people, classes, and motivations for dining in public. Burnett adds, “The habit of eating out did not end during the war: in some respects it continued to grow, though it was much changed. If there were now more people who wished, and could afford, to eat out, there were fewer places to go, scantier menus, earlier closing hours, poorer service and higher prices” (183).

Lastly, the third important item I wish to highlight in this passage is that this scene specifically inscribes the space of the restaurant as a place where one can be “frightfully [unpatriotic] about the war” by questioning the War Office and its actions (Price 178). When conservation of food is inscribed through the discourses of propaganda as part of the war effort, the eating of food in a fine restaurant (such as the Savoy) can be seen as an unpatriotic luxury, a dereliction of doing one’s proper bit for the war effort.³⁵ Whether it is the permissiveness of women (newly) eating in public, the mixing of (newly upwardly-mobile) social classes, or the potentially subversive behavior of eating pleasurable food (in a manner which figures it as more than just fuel) while critiquing the nation’s war effort, the English restaurant can be read as a space of threatening change during WWI.³⁶

³⁵ For more on public sentiment on restaurant dining during war, see Allison Carruth’s essay, which addresses the discourses of food consumption in England and America during WWII, investigating George Orwell’s essays that critique “fine dining as an extralegal form of gluttony” in the English restaurant during WWII (777).

³⁶ For another example, see also A. T. Fitzroy’s *Despised and Rejected*, where Kitty Mowbray’s tea shop is a wonderful literary example of a restaurant figured as a potentially subversive space. Mowbray’s tea shop is first described as “crammed full of actors, journalists, artists and rebels of all

Like her colleague Bertina, Smithy also dines in English restaurants on her return home. An early passage involves a hotel restaurant or lounge in Folkestone (170-2) and later she eats in a London restaurant (188-90).³⁷ Unlike the meal scene of Bertina and Tosh's uncle in London described above, Smithy's first trip to a public restaurant or lounge is in Folkestone. Interestingly, Smithy has decided, after she has already left Boulogne, France (168), to delay her arrival in London. She reports that while she has previously "pictured [herself] arriving at Charing Cross" (169) in London and being welcomed home by her family, she suddenly realizes to herself that, "I do not want to go home" (169) and later determines, "I cannot go home. In the morning, perhaps, but not to-night" (170). She stays in the English port town of Folkestone, an unusual behavior that intrigues a stranger, who tells her, "I've been watching you all through dinner, wondering why you stayed in Folkestone instead of going straight through [to your final destination]" (170). This scene, which occurs before Smithy's breakfasting in bed, might also be read as another transition from warfront to home front, allowing Smithy to pretend that her two worlds do not exist, to borrow Fussell's words, in such a ridiculous close proximity to each other. Smithy actively chooses to insert a meal (and a night) between her meals in France and her meals at home in London.

descriptions" by Dennis (172). Later, Barnaby clarifies the space is not just defined by its clientele's professional lives but is also defined by their political views: "this is entirely the haunt of pacifists" (173).

³⁷ Importantly, the Folkestone passage (170-2) is different from the London restaurant scene. In the former, Smithy's narration takes us quickly from her arrival in England to the prolepsis of her "look[ing] up from the coffee [she is] drinking in the hotel lounge" (170) in Folkestone as she enters into a conversation with a stranger. She later reports, retrospectively, that she has already had her "pre-dinner hot bath" (170), but, it seems to the reader, her meal falls in the ellipsis between her arrival in England and the finishing of her coffee. The male stranger, named Robin, reports that at least one character in this scene has been recently dining; he says, "I've been watching you all though dinner" (170), though it remains unclear to the reader of the novel if his reference to a completed dinner posits it as her and/or his meal.

Equally important to this scene is the fact that Smithy is alone at the hotel, without the guarantee of an attending gentleman. Finkelstein notes what is “at risk” when a female dines alones in public during this historical period:

When women dine out without men a series of social violations may be seen to occur. Such women are publicly taking their own pleasure and they are doing so without any visible attachment to those for whom they are usually responsible, namely, children, the elderly and men. Dining out for women can be a demonstrative refusal to meet the social obligations of being in service to someone else. Women dining together or, more rarely, alone, are publicly demanding a status not usually granted them. (50)

If Bertina’s meal with Tosh’s uncle can be read as a newly socially-acceptable mix of gender, class, and politics, then Smithy’s first reported trip to a hotel restaurant or lounge and her meal (or at least coffee) alone is significantly more transgressive of social norms, particularly when one remembers her refusal to go directly to the patriarchal protection guaranteed by the domestic space of her family house. Additionally, the reader should recall that Smithy has also literally abandoned her obligations of serving her nation’s wounded men; she is returning home under the pretense of “A rest—sick leave [the Commandant] calls it” (167), but her true reasons for leaving her position are more complex. Smithy has previously declared, after witnessing Tosh’s death, “I have finished with the war for good. I will take no more part in it. Why should I, who hate and fear war with all my heart, and would gladly die to end it if that were possible, work to keep it going?” (167). In the context of her leave from the warfront, her rejection of the war effort, and her refusal to be in service to her nation and her nation’s wounded soldiers, Smithy’s dining significantly transgresses multiple social and political norms. Finkelstein remarks that “the public domain, without the company of men, has never been [women’s] territory; women

have been historically prohibited from restaurants, private clubs, hotels and bars. When dining out, women are temporarily refusing to play their servile role and this can be seen as a transgression of social norms” (51). Smithy’s leaving of the ambulance corps and her consumption of food alone in a public restaurant should be read in context of her refusal to play multiple servile roles to society, to nation, and to family.

When one transgresses social expectations of servility, negative social repercussions are certainly possible. Finkelstein notes women dining alone “may be subjected to subtle reprisals such as poor service from restaurant personnel or the unwelcome overtures of strangers” (51). While Price does not address the former in the novel, a male stranger (without invitation) approaches Smithy:

“You’ve just come from France, haven’t you?”
I look up from the coffee I am drinking in the hotel lounge...
He smiles disarmingly. “*Awful cheek my coming over*, but I
embark to-morrow. First time out. Frightful novice.”
[...]
“Do let me talk to you,” he begs. “I’m lonely and you seem
lonely, too. *I’ve been watching you all through dinner*, wondering why
you stayed in Folkestone instead of going straight through. (ellipsis
outside of bracket original, italics added 170)

A few pages later, this male who interrupts Smithy is named—or at least wishes to be called—Robin (172). Smithy’s occupation of the hotel’s space designed for consuming food, particularly as a solitary female figure, prefigures other social transgressions that occur later that night with Robin: provocative dancing (171), consumption of copious amounts of alcohol (171), kissing in public (172), and (presumably) a sexual encounter with a near-stranger (173-4).

While Finkelstein's work informs our reading of what is at risk when Smithy dines alone, Burnett's work helps to flesh out the historical discourses surrounding male WWI soldiers at public restaurant. Burnett reports that the government passed laws making it an offense to treat soldiers to drink in order to "protect servicemen from over-generous well-wishers" (173). Indeed, much social concern was centered on the soldier's ability to control himself when on leave and eating in restaurants or drinking at bars during WWI. On the one hand, the returning soldiers helped to ensure the continuation of the culture of dining out, particularly when the soldiers returned and celebrated their leave. Burnett observes that "there was no evidence of widespread decline in the restaurant habit: on the contrary, many people ate out to conserve domestic supplies, and there was much dining by and for soldiers on leave from the Front, a psychological compensation for the horrors of the trenches" (173). However, on the other hand, the celebratory soldier, freshly arrived from the relatively uncivilized warfront—a space where manners of food consumption were not always strictly enforced by normative civilian social codes—and wanting his "compensation" for his tour of duty, is also figured as a threat to society and civilians. Burnett notes, "Extravagant meals with cocktails, champagne and liqueurs...were often criticized for corrupting young officers who had no experience of spending money sensibly" (173).

Indeed, returning to Smithy and Robin in the Folkestone passage of *Not So Quiet...*, it is not altogether clear who might be taking advantage of whom, or if their interactions occur on equal footings. While one reading might posit the victim as Smithy who, as an unaccompanied female, is placed in peril when she dines alone and is accosted by a pleasure-seeking soldier leaving shortly for the warfront, another

reading suggests Robin actually becomes prey to the world-wise Smithy. After all, Smithy uses the relatively innocent and inexperienced Robin to temporarily stop the nightmare visions of damaged male bodies that haunt her; Smithy's attraction to Robin is at least partially explained when she thinks to herself,

But it was not only because he was *whole and strong-limbed*, not only because his body was young and beautiful, not only because his laughing blue eyes reflected my image without the shadow of war rising to blot me out...*but because I saw him* between me and the dance orchestra *ending a shadow procession of cruelly-maimed men. ...*" (all ellipses original, italics added 173-4)

Smithy awakens Robin when her watch reads "four o'clock" (173) to ensure he embarks off to war "at five" (172), after she thinks, "Poor Robin, poor baby" (174) while watching him sleep innocently, "deep in [an] abyss" (173) and "like a child" (173). On his awakening, she is the one to assuage his fears that they will not stay in contact by promising they will write to each other (173), and she dissuades him from viewing himself as "a cad" in context of the previous night (173). Additionally, she lies to him, saying that she too is "a bit in love" (173) with him when she knows this is not the case.

The Folkestone hotel passage in *Not So Quiet...* depicts the restaurant as a space intimately bound up with many social concerns about restaurants in England during WWI; the interactions (between men and women, but also between returning volunteer/soldier and civilian yet to become a soldier) are loaded and complex. The restaurant and those who patronize it can be simultaneously threatened and threatening. However, the novel also theorizes the space of a restaurant as a location that facilitates the care of others. Later in *Not So Quiet...*, Smithy dines with Roy,

who is on leave from the frontlines. In a pink-shaded restaurant (perhaps Price is again referencing the Savoy), Smithy narrates her experiences dining:

Queer sitting in a pink-shaded restaurant alone with Roy.
Queerer still catching my breath because he looks at me instead
of choosing dinner, to the waiter's irritation.
Queerer even to have him fussing—can I eat this, that, and the
other? Am I well enough to have an ice? ...
“I'm not ill, Roy, not physically, anyhow. I'm war-sick. I'm
fed up with the whole business, scared to death; Mother's ashamed of
me, bitterly, that's why she's telling people I'm ill.”
He understands, as I knew he would. Of course Roy would be
the only one to understand. (188)

In the “pink-shaded” restaurant, Smithy and Roy can discuss their arguably unpatriotic views of the war in a scene that echoes heavily with Bertina's and Tosh's uncle's discussion of the war. Both exchanges offer the ability for one alimentary subject to care for another in a process of candidly discussing personal lived war experiences, a process that culminates in understanding and sympathy. Bertina presumably meets with Tosh's uncle to help offer him closure on the death of his niece. Roy's caretaking of Smithy first takes the form of concern for her diet; he worries over what she can and cannot consume as a presumably physically ill individual on leave from the frontlines. However, once Roy is aware of the real nature of Smithy's suffering (she is war-sick), Roy's caretaking of Smithy takes a second form—the form of listening and understanding. *Not So Quiet...* suggests that the English restaurant facilitates the caretaking of civilians (Tosh's uncle), volunteers (Smithy, but also perhaps Bertina), and soldiers (Robin and Roy) by fellow humans during WWI. *Not So Quiet...* illustrates that caretaking in public restaurant spaces can occur despite the space being marked by society as potentially threatening.

The work of Burnett suggests that the English restaurant was also directly caring for soldiers itself. It is historically documented that at least one famous English restaurant ensured that soldiers on leave had sufficient food even if they could not pay. Burnett reports that Rosa Lewis of the Cavendish “cajoled food from market stall-holders and from Fortnum and Mason, regarding this as legitimate comfort for her ‘boys’ returning to the Front...her favorites were the young airmen, Americans and subalterns who were given free meals if they could not afford to pay” (185). However, the care of soldiers by Lewis and the Cavendish did not merely stop with soldiers geographically situated in England either on leave or in pre-deployment. Indeed, to circle back to a topic previously discussed, Lewis ensured these soldiers were provided for while deployed at the frontlines when she (in addition to giving free meals) “loaded [them] with food parcels on [their] departure” (185) to the warfront. Burnett suggests that “the Cavendish has been described as ‘a social first-aid post’” due to its free meals and care packages given to soldiers (185). When the Cavendish’s food parcels were deployed to the frontlines, the “ridiculous proximity” of the frontline trenches to the London restaurant further collapsed as men ate restaurant food in or near the trenches (Fussell 64). The restaurant’s meal to go (or, take away) became the supplemental care package eaten in or near the frontlines.

Conclusions: Smithy Cooking at the Warfront

Not So Quiet... reveals a complex figuration of food during wartime. Price’s text suggests that the machine-model of rational nutrition is unable to account completely for the complex social interactions of the alimentary subject when the

model reduces food to mere fuel (to a caloric value) for the human motor. While at times productive and necessary, the machine-model leaves aside issues of food as culture, art, and an expression of individual tastes. If food is only calories, merely a potential form of energy exchangeable for a body's work, then a rational, scientific approach can posit Smithy and her fellow volunteer ambulance drivers simply as machines in need of caloric fuel. However, Smithy and her fellow ambulance drivers reject the logic of the machine-model when they refuse the meat/joint soup-stew's calories at the canteen and, instead, eat and *enjoy* food items from their care packages, items they have requested or shopped for from afar. The women's manners and consumption of food play out, and give voice to, a refutation of the scientific model's cold logic. Likewise, in Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Paul and his fellow soldiers reject low quality food items when they frequently place themselves at risk in order to scavenge for food—looking for both quality and quantity food to supplement their rations. Similar to the process of communally pooling care package food items, the process of discovering, collecting, preparing, and eating the scavenged food in Remarque's novel creates deeper bonds of brotherhood than the state-rationed food items can foster.

However, the ending of Price's novel has Smithy return to the frontlines of the war, joining those who cook en masse for the soldiers in the trenches. As Marcus points out, Smithy "trades the 'Khaki and red' world of ambulance-driving at the Front for the (relatively) 'green' world of preparing food for the W.A.A.C.s" (288). Marcus further notes that,

[Smithy], who has refused to return to the Front, much to the shame of her family...[eventually] enlists [and thus secretly secures money to

quietly finance her sister's abortion] in the W.A.A.C.s as an assistant cook, infuriating her family by rejecting the class glamour of the ambulance unit for the drudgery of peeling vegetables with working-class women, for whom the war salary is a great boost in status. Deliberately suppressing her experience, which would have given her an officer's commission, [Smithy] *chooses* to be declassified, to do women's traditional dirty work, preparing food rather than cleaning the remains of killing. (287-8 italics in original)

Not only does Smithy's work as a W.A.A.C. assistant cook reinscribe her in the female role of a food preparer, but her new position also casts her as ultimately accepting a machine-like life. Smithy reports it has been "nearly seven months since [she] started peeling potatoes and onions at the trestle table outside the camp kitchen" and she has "had no leave, at [her] own request" (Price 214). Her existence as an assistant cook becomes monotonous and machine like: "The months pass, each day a replica of the last, time on and time off, work and rest and recreation" (214). Her mechanical existence is apparent even to herself when she reports,

I have become accustomed to being a machine, to living by the clock, to having my amusements and my religion set before me in carefully-measured doses, to sleeping certain hours, to working certain hours, to exercising certain hours, to taking aperients on certain days whether they are necessary or not, and to donning the cheery indomitable personality of a member of the women's army each morning with my uniform, and discarding it only when the bugle signals "Lights Out." (214)

Smithy becomes a machine programmed to work, and this machine work that she accomplishes, willingly, is very programmed itself. Smithy understands her new life as a machine and also appreciates the role that food, as fuel, has in allowing her to accomplish work: "I am a slot machine that never goes out of order. Put so much rations into the slot and I work so long, play so long and sleep so long. The administration is perfect. Everything is regulated" (214-5). Once Smithy has returned

to the warfront, she has already accepted her role as machine—a machine with a slot for rations, for food. In this passage, we see Smithy both complicit in mass production of rational food for the bodies engaged in war work, something she previously critiqued as an ambulance driver during the earlier sections of the novel, and also acquiescing to the cold logic of the machine-model, seeing herself as a machine whose work is directly determined by the rations, or fuels, placed inside her. While Marcus contends, “A feminist reader recognizes that [Smithy’s choice to abandon ambulance driving in favor of becoming an assistant cook] is a refusal of the glorification of death-work and a connection made to the eternal round of woman’s work in the kitchen, life-work” (288), I suggest that the novel associates Smithy’s new position as an assistant cook as more machine-like than as the life-affirming role of the traditional female cook and provider of sustenance. Smithy is more automaton than female provider. She observes, “Automatically I bathe my body, automatically I converse with my fellow-workers, automatically I write letters, obey orders, *eat* and sleep...a flesh and blood case containing nothing save the machinery that keeps Smith, assistant cook, alive” (italics added 217). Smithy’s consumption of food, like all aspects of her life—which now include the preparation of food for others—now embraces the machine-model’s logic.

When looking at the historical pressures WWI placed on the alimentary subject deployed to, or near, the frontlines and or patronizing English restaurants, one can see that neither Rubner’s focus on rational nutrition nor Finkelstein’s and Burnett’s focus on the social aspects of eating out can posit a singular solution to the theorization of food in the context of war. The machine-model is useful for it indicates that war does

indeed create state-regulated bodies eating state-regulated food; in exceptional times, for the sake of efficiency, institutions, rather than individuals, make important decision in regard to selection, preparation, distribution, timing, and allocation. At the end of Price's novel, Smithy acquiesces to this model, though the reader, noticing her traumatized experiences and deadened, numbed emotions, certainly wishes she had not.

Finkelstein contends that food shows us who we are in our specific historical moment. She argues, "The changes in styles of eating show that the evolution of the culinary arts should not be isolated from other changes in human society. Indeed, it would seem that fluctuations in the repertoires and manners of everyday human exchange are readily visible through styles in food preparation and presentation" (34). *Not So Quiet...* investigates the changes in styles of eating through the context of the cold logic of rational nutrition, illustrating the coping strategy of turning to alternative fuels (sent in care packages) that reinscribe the emotional and social resonances of food. If we take Finkelstein's argument seriously, if we engage with her contention that food "should not be isolated from other changes in human society" (34), then analyzing the consumption of the food of WWI allows for a greater understanding not only of society at that particular historical moment but also of modernity as well.

When read alongside Fussell's portrayal of the frontline trenches and London restaurants as being ridiculously close in proximity to each other, Price's novel *Not So Quiet...* suggests that all of food's meanings, regardless of their context, are wider and more complex than their mere caloric values—a human treated as a machine to be fueled will look for alternative fuels, perhaps from care packages, and celebrate the

social aspects of eating when afforded the opportunity, particularly on her return home, despite the potential dangers. However, if we are left with broken, damaged humans, such as Smithy at the novel's end, food behaviors and taste may not be enough to liberate one from the pressures of war. Ultimately, one should read Price's novel with dual attention to the consumption of food at the warfront and at the home front, to meals served in (or near) trenches and—perhaps even later that same day—meals served in England's restaurants.

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CHAPTER 3

A Taste for the Liquid: Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*

Critics have largely read the climactic *boeuf en daube* scene from the first section, titled “Windows,” of Virginia Woolf’s 1927 novel *To The Lighthouse* in two polarizing ways. For critics such as Lisa Angelella, the scene depicts Mrs. Ramsay as a serving, and subservient, “woman [who] is alienated from her own bodily needs and desires and does not incorporate her external world, but rather serves it” (176). For Angelella, Mrs. Ramsay serves the dish in a manner that defers her own needs to others’ needs; Angelella sharply contrasts Mrs. Ramsay from other female characters in Woolf’s oeuvre like Mary Datchet in *Night and Day* and Sara Pargiter of *The Years*, both hearty eaters who do not suppress their desires for the “iron- and protein-rich food” (177) of meat when they eat in public.

The critic Elizabeth Dodd, likewise, reads Mrs. Ramsay’s allocation of food as an act of subservience: “while Mrs. Ramsay has learned this social artistry, this attending to others, very well, she also appears to have learned the anorect’s lesson to mistrust her own needs and desires, considering her appetites to be greedy and inappropriate” (152-3). While Dodd acknowledges that Mrs. Ramsay might be read as what Peter Conradi calls a “metaphysical hostess,” a hostess that unites disparate people into a communicating community, Dodd offers us a feminist reading, ultimately contending “that lurking behind this positive portrait of the ‘metaphysical hostess’ is in fact that specter whom Woolf criticizes, ‘the angel in the house,’ a woman who channels all her energy and emotion into loving service to others,

sometimes, ...until she enters an early grave” (151). Central to her controversial diagnosis that “Mrs. Ramsay exhibits an anorectic relationship with food” is Dodd’s contention that the reader “never see[s] *her* [Mrs. Ramsay] take a single bite” (152 italics in original) during the *boeuf en daube* scene and that Mrs. Ramsay, at the end of the meal, specifically refuses an offered pear from Rose’s artistically arranged centerpiece. Dodd takes pains to inventory all of the characters that are depicted or referenced as having eaten, claiming that:

we see Charles Tansley finishing his bowl [of soup] and laying his spoon in the precise center of the empty dish; we see Mr. Bankes finishing his portion and wiping his lips; we see Mr. Carmichael finishing his and asking for more (much to Mr. Ramsay’s displeasure); we see Mrs. Ramsay serving the Boeuf-en-Daube, and Mr. Bankes eating; we see her yet again “Helping Mr. Bankes to a specially tender piece” (*TTL* 158); and serving seconds to her son Andrew. From this list, we see that the only characters who are actually described as eating anything are men; while the hostess, Mrs. Ramsay, is ever present helping her guests to tender morsels, she is never seen to consume the food herself. (152)

Importantly Dodd oversimplifies these markers of the meal’s progression, claiming that “we see” all of these events of males eating. However, Woolf’s stylistic rendering of the *boeuf en daube* scene, where the narrative perspective travels amongst different characters noticing different events and thinking different internal thoughts, undercuts Dodd’s claim. For example, Dodd’s assertion that “we see Mr. Carmichael finishing his [soup] and asking for more” (152) is not a precise reading of the scene. Instead, as discussed in detail below, we might more precisely say the reader experiences Mrs. Ramsay becoming conscious that her husband “was screwing his face up ... was scowling and frowning, and flush with anger,” (Woolf 95) which Mrs. Ramsay then attributes to Mr. Carmichael’s request for more soup, at which time the reader

concludes that Mr. Carmichael has finished his first helping. My point here might be subtle, but it remains important. Woolf's style in *To the Lighthouse*, a style that does not privilege realist depictions of eating, is sustained throughout the scene; the mastication and swallowing of food items is not the narrative focus in the *beouf en daube* scene, regardless of the characters' genders. To argue that the absence of depictions of Mrs. Ramsay chewing or swallowing at the table suggests a particular relationship between this hostess and her food is to hold Woolf to a particular stylistic standard (realism) that she has never been associated with and outwardly rejected.

Other critics also take issue with Dodd's interpretation of Mrs. Ramsay as "a portrait of a lady anorect" (Dodd 155), based on the reading that she does not "take a single bite" (152). Harriet Blodgett insightfully points out, "We may [...] infer that Mrs. Ramsay has finished eating when 'she tucked her napkin under the edge of her plate' (*TTL* 110), even if we have not seen her chewing. Woolf's preferred and modernist style precluded her describing the tedious details of narration" (47).

The second common way to read the *beouf en daube* scene is to associate Mrs. Ramsay's serving of food, and bringing dinner party guests together, as positive act, rather than as a patriarchal prescribed act of the woman's gender-determined subservient role. Unlike Angelella and Dodd, who read Mrs. Ramsay's act of allocating the main dish as a problematic depiction of the serving (passive) female, critics such as Blodgett and Bettina Knapp read this scene as positive and empowering for Mrs. Ramsay. The work of these critics offers a second reading of the scene, one not exclusively focused on the gendered norms of food serving. Blodgett, reading food scenes from across Woolf's oeuvre, ultimately concludes "Inspecting [Woolf's]

food imagery for itself rather than its autobiographical implications clarifies her ideas and points up her techniques; it also confirms her aesthetic values” (45). Blodgett feels that “With *To the Lighthouse* (1927), Woolf’s food imagery has become subtle, economical, and at its most effective. The elegant-sounding and closely described *boeuf en daube* dinner shows her skill at unostentatiously converting naturalistic detail to symbolic effect” (52). Importantly, according to Blodgett, the cause of Mrs. Ramsay’s refusal to eat a pear is not that she is an anorect, but rather that she “opts for beauty rather than physical gratification at the moment because [the author] Woolf...has a point to make about the role of art in life” (47). Like Blodgett, I argue that closely reading Woolf’s *boeuf en daube* scene reveals Woolf’s aesthetic, but my conclusions about Woolf’s aesthetics are different from Blodgett. I argue in this chapter that Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* establishes a taste for liquidity.

Other critics who read the scene in a positive light, such as Bettina Knapp, argue that Mrs. Ramsay’s hosting is closely likened to artistry. Knapp writes “that the ‘dinner’ [Mrs. Ramsay] prepares enters the sphere of the work of art” (30). Here, I agree with Knapp, but with the provision we read the idea of “preparation” liberally; though Mrs. Ramsay makes many preparations for the dinner, she does not prepare the dish itself, the kitchen staff does (100).³⁸ For Knapp the dinner is figured largely as spiritual and “take[s] on the power and dimension of a religious ritual” (30). Instead of “the angel in the house” (Dodd 151) that Dodd identifies for critique, Knapp feels that Mrs. Ramsay is

installed at the head of the table like those ancient masters of ceremonies, the priests, handing out the Host and the wine. . . . The evening meal is ‘the culmination of a life’ for Mrs. Ramsay; it is an

³⁸ “The cook had spent three days over that dish” (Woolf 100).

agape, during which each person present will enter a blessed area and there experience a sense of sharing and belonging. (31)

Where Dodd reads gender-forced servitude, Knapp reads power framed in religious symbolism. Between both readings of the scene, we can see that Mrs. Ramsay's preparation and serving of the dinner is largely read as an act of selflessness; the debate is whether it should be read as selflessness assigned to her by gender expectations or selflessness in terms of *agape* giving.

My own readings of *To the Lighthouse*, and in particular the *boeuf en daube* scene, suggest that Woolf's novel employs a "liquid" aesthetic on multiple levels. The dinner guests threaten the event with their isolation, each existing in their own independent states and, initially, having little connection or impact on the other guests. Like particles of a gas, they float freely with little to no interaction with others. Mrs. Ramsay's event brings each guest into contact with the others, changing the guests' bonds into a relationship of liquidity, rather than gaseousness, where they interact with each other and connect. This process happens at the dining table that serves food either described or associated with liquidity. The first course, soup, is in liquid form. The second and third courses, *boeuf en daube* and the dish of fruit, are particular dishes that should be read in terms of liquidity as well. Focusing most closely on the *boeuf en dabe*, the "Triumph" (100, 105) of the meal, I suggest that the culinary science behind this particular dish, the delicate balance of heat and liquid to braise tough collagen-filled meats into tenderness, runs parallel to Mrs. Ramsay's activity of joining together her disparate guests into a larger community. Lastly, Woolf's style in this novel should be reassessed in terms of this liquid aesthetic in order to be more precisely defined and appreciated.

Defining Liquidity

A liquid is defined as “a material substance in that condition (familiar as the normal condition of water, oil, alcohol, etc.) in which its *particles move freely over each other* (so that its masses have *no determinate shape*)” (“liquid”—italics added). Importantly, the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* draws a distinction between a liquid and a gas by adding that liquid substances’ particles “do not tend to separate as do those of a gas” (“liquid”). To be precise, both liquids and gases are considered fluid, which is defined by the *OED* as “Having the property of flowing; consisting of particles that move freely among themselves, so as to give way before the slightest pressure. (A general term including both *gaseous* and *liquid* substances)” (“fluid”).

Importantly, when looking on the level of the molecule or particle, gases and liquids behave differently.³⁹ According to the Kinetic Molecular Theory of Gases, “one of the greatest milestones of science” (Oxtoby, Gillis and Campion 410), there are no significant forces of attraction or repulsion between gas particles—the individual molecules simply fly by each other without altering each other’s pathways through space (395-431).⁴⁰ For liquid molecules, however, the intermolecular forces of attraction or repulsion are much stronger (due to their closer proximity) and, since

³⁹ I used the words *molecule* and *particle* through their common usage in chemistry, not through physics. The former, as understood by chemistry, is “a group of two or more atoms bonded together by forces strong enough to maintain its existence for a reasonable period of time” (Oxtoby, Gillis, and Campion I.18), while a *particle* is a part of system with at least two components (e.g. fat particles in milk). In physics the scale is shifted, since the term *particle* refers to items that are sub-atomic.

⁴⁰ Oxtoby, Gillis and Campion indicate that gas molecules—particularly those of ideal gasses, but also those of other gasses at moderate pressures and temperatures—do interact when they collide, but importantly the molecules do not attract or repel each other as they travel through space: “Molecules with no net electrical charge exert significant forces on each other only when they are close...in the study of gases it is a legitimate simplification to ignore interactions between molecules until they collide and then to consider collisions between only two molecules at a time” (396). This is the third principle of the Kinetic Theory of Gases: “The molecules exert no forces on one another between collisions, so between collisions they move in straight lines with constant velocities” (410).

they are consequential, must be accounted for mathematically (444). While all fluids (liquids and gases) have indefinite shape and freely moving particles, the nature of interaction between the particles differs depending on whether the substance is in a liquid or gas state; in liquid substances intermolecular forces (the attraction between particles) are significant. In short, the internal dynamics of a substance, whether or not the substance's particles affect other particles' pathways, depends on if the substance is a liquid or a gas.

The preparation and serving of foods is intimately connected with the two most common states of matter in which we find our food in the kitchen: liquid or solid. Transforming ingredients into servable food frequently involves manipulating the ingredients and their flavors together while often, at the same time, adding or subtracting energy.⁴¹ Adding or subtracting enough energy to our ingredients results in changes in phases (commonly freezing and boiling, but also occasionally condensing and sublimation) inside our kitchens. While in the kitchen we might not necessarily be aware of the commonality of the states of matter, nor the changes between them, a linguist might note this awareness commonly underwrites much of the activity in the kitchen; one of the most common ingredients in the home kitchen, H₂O (dihydrogen monoxide), has three distinct, common names for each of its phases: ice (solid), water (liquid), and steam (gas). Yet the solidity or liquidity of food is not merely a concern that stays within the kitchen—the state of liquidity or solidity of foods is a concern we carry with us to the dining table.⁴²

⁴¹ In chapter one, I argue that Leonard Bast, in E. M. Forster's *Howards End*, should be read more as a meal assembler than as a cook, for he does not use heat to alter his meal's ingredients (only to dissolve).

⁴² In the kitchen, the gaseous is generally considered a tool to be applied to our food (we cook various dishes by steam), rather than an appropriate phase for our food to exist in. While aroma is prized, and

The serving of food is often also predicated on whether or not they are liquid or solid. Aside from the practical concerns of table setting (bowls or plates, spoons or forks and knives), the food's state influences other considerations of service. The formal arrangement of food at a meal, particularly in the western European tradition, has been structured around the food's liquidity or solidity. The entry for "liquidity" in the *OED* lists, as the first illustrative quote, Tobias Venner's words from *Via Recta* (1620) where he writes "They..doe..by reason of their liquiditie, very fitly prepare the way for other meats" ("liquidity"). To this day, soups are still traditionally served before main courses; that which is liquid and light is consumed before that which is more solid and dense. Whether we think in terms of the liquid as preparing the way for the solid, as Tobias Venner did, or we (uncritically) continue the custom of soups preceding meat out of tradition, the solidity and liquidity of food is still a preoccupation while we are at the dining table.

Volume one of *Modernist Cuisine: The Art and Science of Cooking* (2011), by Nathan Myhrvold, Chris Young, and Maxime Bilet, dedicates much attention in to topics related to liquidity, solidity, and gaseousness.⁴³ Preceding recipes, which are predominately given in the later volumes, the science of the kitchen is presented as

aeration can create foams and lightness, one cannot image a meal based (primarily) on a gaseous state. When it comes to food, gases are too insubstantial and we rely on foods in liquid and solid states; the gaseous as the insubstantial is a topic I return to at the end of this chapter, where I argue Woolf's stylistics in this novel should be considered in terms of a "liquid aesthetic" rather than as fluid (a category that includes the gaseous).

⁴³ Winner of the 2012 James Beard Foundation's "Cookbook of the Year" and "Cooking from a Professional Point of View" awards, the six-volume cookbook treats the notion of liquids, solids, and gases as foundational science for those in the culinary arts. Volume one of *Modernist Cuisine: The Art and Science of Cooking* subdivides chapter 5, titled "Heat and Energy," into three entries "The nature of Heat and Temperature," "Energy, Power, and Efficiency," and "Heat in Motion." Chapter 6, titled "The Physics of Food and Water," divides into seven entries labeled "Water is Strange Stuff," "The Energy of Changing States," "Freezing and Melting," "Vaporization and Condensation," "Sublimation and Deposition," "Water as a Solvent," and "Water Quality and Purity." For Myhrvold, Young, and Bilet, understanding the nature of gases, liquids, and solids is fundamental for molecular gastronomy.

fundamental knowledge for the activities inside of the kitchen. In a section titled “The Energy of Changing States,” Myhrvold explains the molecular freedom in solids, liquids, and gasses by likening these states of matter to human bodies occupying a lecture hall, festival, and spacecraft (1: 301). Myhrvold writes: “Imagine sitting in a lecture hall at a formal presentation. You can fidget all you want in your seat, but you’re not free to get up and dance or move around the room. A molecule in a solid is similarly locked into position in a fixed structure and enjoys very few degrees of freedom in its movements” (1:301). As for a liquid, Myhrvold writes, their molecules “are more like people milling about at a street festival. They’re free to walk around, and any one of them could wind up anywhere in the area, but their feet can’t leave the ground, and their movement may be impeded by social clusters that keep disbanding and re-forming” (1:301). Lastly, Myhrvold argues, “Molecules in a gas are the most liberated. Like astronauts ‘floating’ in three dimensions in the nearly weightless free fall of orbit, gas particles have the most degrees of freedom” (1:301). Here the operative metaphor, using the vehicle of spaces that predetermine human movements (and the possibilities which result, such as physical closeness and bodily interactions), is likened to the tenor of the states of matter (solid, liquid, and gas). Similarly, Woolf’s aesthetic privileging of the liquid is an operative model for human interaction in the *boeuf en daube* scene.

Cooking requires a working knowledge of manipulating solids and liquids, but liquidity has also been a preoccupation in modernist studies. Recent work by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has investigated and equated the later stages of modernity with liquidity. Bauman’s work in *Liquid Modernity* and *Liquid Times*:

Living in an Age of Uncertainty argues that “The ‘melting of solids,’ the permanent feature of modernity”, has far reaching consequences (*Liquid Modernity* 6). Bauman’s work in sociology is concerned with liquid modernity’s effect on “[f]ive of the basic concepts around which the orthodox narratives of the human condition tend to be wrapped...emancipation, individuality, time/space, work, and community” (8) and his theorization of liquidity is useful to my project. In *Liquid Times*, Bauman argues that “‘Society’ is increasingly viewed and treated as a ‘network’ rather than as ‘structure’ (let alone a solid ‘totality’): it is perceived and treated as a matrix of random connections and disconnections and of an essentially infinite volume of possible permutations” (3). This notion of liquidity is present in Woolf’s novel, particularly in the climatic *boeuf en daube* scene. While much of Bauman’s work does not directly engage with literary studies, let alone my interests in the aesthetic liquidity of Woolf’s novel, Bauman’s theorization of liquidity is important to highlight.

Bauman’s insights and theorization of liquidity and their relationship to time, which is the groundwork he lays for his sociological investigations, are useful to borrow when considering the aesthetics of Woolf’s novel.⁴⁴ Bauman notes, when theorizing liquidity, fluidity, space, and time,

that liquids, unlike solids, cannot easily hold their shape. Fluids, so to speak, neither fix space nor bind time. While solids have clear spatial dimensions but neutralize the impact, and thus downgrade the significance, of time (effectively resist its flow or render it irrelevant), fluids do not keep to any shape for long and are constantly ready (and prone) to change it. (*Liquid Modernity* 2)

Bauman’s close critical attention to liquidity uncovers how shape and form reveal a state’s nature in relationship to space and time. If a shape or form deteriorates over

⁴⁴ For Bauman, the liquidity of modernism has altered frames of human references (1), power and politics (1), as well as “the collapse of long-term thinking, planning and acting” (*Liquid Times* 3).

time, if the substance's occupied space alters with the passage of time, then the state of the matter is fluid (again, a trait of liquids and gases). Bauman goes on to contend,

so for [liquids and gasses] it is the flow of time that counts, more than the space they happen to occupy: that space, after all, they fill but "for a moment." In a sense, solids cancel time; for liquids, on the contrary, it is mostly time that matters. When describing solids, one may ignore time altogether; in describing fluids, to leave time out of [their] account would be a grievous mistake. Descriptions of fluids are all snapshots, and they need a date at the bottom of the picture. (*Liquid Modernity 2*)

In order to understand a liquid, Bauman's work suggests, we must acknowledge the context of time. Since a liquid can flow (i.e. alter position and shape over time), any description must involve an attempt at admitting that instability of the liquid by denoting the description's relation to an existence in time.

In *To the Lighthouse* Mrs. Ramsay, at the end of the *boeuf en daube* dinner scene, realizes that her guests, like the molecules of a liquid, cannot hold shape and are not immune from space and time; they will alter, change, and disperse. Mrs. Ramsay has brought together a collection of individuals, at great work, ensuring that they are more cohesive (like a liquid) rather than continue to exist in their initially dispersed state (like a gas) at the scene's start. However, Mrs. Ramsay knows this cohesive arrangement is not permanently fixed; it is fluid and only temporary. In Woolf's novel we read, "With her foot on the threshold she waited a moment longer in a scene which was vanishing even as she looked, and then, as she moved and took Minta's arm and left the room, it changed, it shaped itself differently; it had become, she knew, giving one last look at it over her shoulder, already the past" (111). Here Mrs. Ramsay takes a visual "snapshot" of the scene, which is already changing; she values this arrangement of people at this particular time. Returning to Bauman's

work, we might say Mrs. Ramsay dates, or time stamps, the mark of time's passage at the bottom of her picture—it is “already [of and in] the past” (111). Her memory of her liquid guests is like a “snapshot..[which needs a temporal marker] at the bottom of the picture” (*Liquid Modernity* 2). The arrangement (of people), which she has labored to produce, to condense, will rearrange itself almost immediately. When removed, Mrs. Ramsay's pressure, her force, her power, her will, can only briefly delay the rearrangement of the party's guests over time and space. She captures her guests—both making a moment, which is later remembered in her absence (by Lily), and capturing the form (or composition) of this arrangement in her mind.

With the description of the party shaping itself differently, Woolf makes the familiar passage of time unfamiliar or strange by highlighting the passing of time by reference to the shape of the scene. The dinner party's collective shape changes like fluids which “‘cannot sustain a tangential, or shearing force when at rest’ and so undergo ‘a continuous change in shape when subjected to such a stress’” (*Encyclopedia Britannica* qtd in Bauman *Liquid Modernity*). Here, to borrow the term “defamiliarization” from Shklovsky, Woolf makes not the “stone stony,” but instead makes the dinner party liquid—in order to “recover the sensation of life” (Shklovsky 12), the sensation of the liquidity of life. The strangeness of this passage operates on multiple levels. Mrs. Ramsay herself is both part of and apart from the scene as she relocates herself, leaving the others behind. She is “On the threshold” and “wait[ing] a moment longer” (Woolf 111).

In regards to the passive voice in this scene, “it shaped itself differently,” we should note that the party, at the climax and the triumph, becomes a singular pronoun

(*it*) rather than a plural pronoun (*they*). The singular pronoun “it” is repeated four times in quick succession: “...*it* changed, *it* shaped itself differently; *it* had become, she knew, giving one last look at *it* over her shoulder, already the past” (italics added 111). When Mrs. Ramsay thinks the collection of multiple dinner guests into a singular entity, using the word “it” rather than “they,” the community of disparate guests unite much in the way a gas might change phases, through condensation, into a liquid state; the “they” of the scene has changed phases into an “it.” Something more singular and cohesive has formed from the disparate multiple ingredients initially presented. The dinner guests, previously free floating in their inner worlds and having little to no impact on each other, are brought together and interact in much more notable way. This is the triumph of the scene on the novel’s diegetic level. Mrs. Ramsay’s art is her ability to not “solidify” a dinner party (and allow particles to resist time by being rigidly fixed in a form), but rather to take individuals—who threaten, like the nature of gas, to separate and form no cohesion at all—and arrange them so that they can freely move over (not by) each other in no predetermined shape—like a liquid. This liquid aesthetic is not only embodied in the stylized narration of the characters joining together into something more cohesive than the sum of their isolated parts, but is employed in the food at the dinner’s table. The first course, soup, is liquid itself. The *boeuf en daube*, as I argue below, is a dish built around the liquefying of collagen in tough cuts of meat. Lastly, the artfully arranged fruit dish, which is served in “the horny pink-lined shell” and resembles “a trophy fetched from the bottom of the sea, of Neptune’s banquet” (97), is closely associated with liquidity as well.

Organizing and Framing the Meal: Jack Goody

Jack Goody's work in "The Recipe, the Prescription, and the Experiment" suggests there are at least four primary organizing (textual) structures to consider when examining the form of a meal. These organizing structures, often lists, "not only 'reflect' certain aspects of the social organization; they also determine other aspects, in that they have certain implicit features (such as hierarchy and lateral placement) that influence behavior, as well as other explicit features that prescribe it" (78). Largely these items structure the "who" and the "what" of the meal. Goody, turning his attention to a meal from "[w]hen the Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge, dine together," identifies the dining-list (79-81), the menu (81-2), "the board that carries the graces said before and after dinner" (82), and the recipe (82-3) as the four formal structuring elements of a meal. The first two structures, the dining-list and the menu, "represent only the surface structure" of the meal while "behind [the meal] lie two other schedules [the list of graces and the recipe] of differing kinds that serve to organize and frame the meal" (82). I must note that Woolf's text does not directly present the reader with any of these formal structuring texts. We are not given a definitive conclusive list of the guests; however, this can be constructed in our reading. Mrs. Ramsay is very aware of whom she has invited and how Mr. Bankes' acceptance of the invitation is a success in and of itself, particularly since this honored guest is a discerning eater. As readers, we are not given a decisively complete dinner menu for the meal, though, again, we are made aware of three dishes offered at the dinner scene, all marked by their liquidity. As I discuss below, the dining scene does

not open or close with a grace, but instead starts formally with the sound of a gong and ends with the recitation of poetry. Woolf does not provide her readers with a complete recipe for the soup or *boeuf en daube* in the final version of her novel, though the original holograph draft of the novel, transcribed and edited by Susan Dick, does give what might be read as a partial recipe for the main course. However, I argue, the name of the climactic dish, *boeuf en daube* tells us not only about the ingredients (beef—the “what” of the dish) but also about the preparation (*en daube*—the “how” of the dish’s construction). Critics who focus too exclusively on the first term *boeuf* (beef) miss the importance of the novel’s liquid aesthetic, which is illustrated by close critical attention to dish’s second term, *en daube*.

While the dining list, the menu, the graces, and the recipe—the four important structuring agents that Goody identifies for a meal—are not directly given in Woolf’s novel, I argue that these structuring agents are more than just lurking behind the scene as context. Goody’s theorization of guest lists, the menu, and the recipe allows us to focus our attention on the novel’s climactic dining scene in a more productive way; reading *To the Lighthouse* with the meal’s form in mind, brings forward the novel’s liquid aesthetic more clearly.

The Guest List & The Menu

When theorizing the form of a meal, Goody points to the dining-list, the first structuring agent to a meal, which records those present at the meal, their permission to partake in the food, and their spatial existence at the dining arrangement. The “nominal roll...lists the members of a group (e.g. a school class or army platoon) who

are or should be present, or who are entitled to certain [dining] privileges” (78). For Goody this list is important for “it insists upon an explicit hierarchy; the list has to be arranged so that the items, names of persons in this case, are one above another, from top to bottom” (79). Analyzing the dining-list from “the Fellows of St John’s College, Cambridge” (79) Goody notes that the traditional list of diners can also incorporate “the lateral displacement of certain names, that of guests” (81). A second organizing (textual) structure is the menu, or “the list of rations,” which

presents the shape of the meal to come. The shape is a regular one; variation falls within a restricted range, although deliberate changes do occur over the longer run. The course consists of the soup, or an equivalent preparatory dish such as antipasto or hors d’oeuvres; it is followed by the main course, a hot dish of meat and vegetables. (81)⁴⁵

Importantly Goody notes that menus vary in their different settings; not all menus operate with the same logic. Goody continues,

The role of the written menu in a restaurant is somewhat different since it specifies not the variations offered diachronically (from day to day) to a fixed Fellowship, but the alternatives offered synchronically (on one day) to a variable clientele. In the first place it acts as an advertisement, when placed in the window to attract custom. Secondly, it helps the proprietor to offer and the client to choose among a wider range of dishes. (81)

Regardless of a menu’s setting—public restaurant or private dining—it “implies not only the complete separation between consumers and preparers, between table and kitchen, but also a marked separation between the servers (standing, mobile) and the consumers (sitting, immobile), since information about the content of the meal is mediated impersonally by a piece of paper” (82). Goody notes that the menu offers more than just a literal reading. The menu reads symbolically too; “the menu in itself

⁴⁵ Note here that Goody’s reading of the menu reinforces mealtime progression from beginning with liquidity and moving towards solidity at the meal’s end, echoing Tobias Venner’s progression in *Via Recta*.

has a high status, the symbol of luxury and of choice, of the great rather than the little cuisine” (82).

Before Mrs. Ramsay’s impressive *boeuf en daube* can reach the table and bring her guests together, we first find most of Mrs. Ramsay’s guests (but not all) dispersed throughout the house and engaging in disparate activities. Others, such as Nancy, Paul, and Minta, have just arrived from being scattered farther afield, off the premises—running late from their outing to the beach (Woolf 73-9, 82). Mrs. Ramsay’s guests, in this manner, are more like a gas or a vapor, for they are dispersed, unconnected, and distant. The gong, which “announced solemnly, authoritatively” that dinner was to start, finds “all those scattered about, in attics, in bedrooms, on little perches of their own, reading, writing, putting the last smooth to their hair, or fastening dress” (82). The sounding gong indicates that each guest “must leave all that, and the little odds and ends on their washing-tables and dressing-tables, and the novels on the bed-tables, and the diaries which were so private, and *assemble in the dining-room for dinner*” (italics added 82). The guests are unassembled on more than just the physical level.

As individuals gather from the corners of the house and sit by each other, they struggle to connect, for each is existing in his or her own interior worlds. As such, the dinner party initially seems too fragmented, too separated, too isolated (much like the nature of a gas) and thus very unlikely to succeed. The opening passage posits Mrs. Ramsay as a nursing hand that gently shakes a stuck watch back into action (83). If, as discussed above, Mrs. Ramsay will eventually take a visual “snapshot” of her condensed guests at the end of her triumphant dinner party, an act which requires her

to time-stamp the already changing scene that alters (over time) even as she views it, she is first figured as the hand that starts the passage of time, gently coaxing life into a failed timepiece. Similarly, she tenderly coaxes connections and social intimacy between her guests, drawing them together and condensing them into a community, bringing life into her party. Her artistry in this scene, as many critics have noted, is the artistry of the hostess.⁴⁶ However, at least initially, the picture is rather bleak for Mrs. Ramsay's event. Ladling out soup, Mrs. Ramsay feels she "saw things truly" as they were, highlighting that "Nothing seemed to have merged. *They all sat separate. And the whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her*" (italics added 83). Even if the gong calls these bodies into close proximity, the guests remained unmerged, separate, and isolated in their individual worlds—these gas-like guests have yet to condense into something more cohesive. Only with effort, which rests on Mrs. Ramsay she feels, can the "merging and flowing and creating" begin (83).

The guest of honor at the table scene is Mr. William Bankes. Indeed, his acceptance of Mrs. Ramsay's invitation is labeled the first triumph of the novel—a fact many critics ignore when focusing on the triumph of the dinner scene: "Mrs. Ramsay greeted [Lily and Mr. Bankes] with her usual smile...and said, 'I have triumphed tonight,' meaning that for once Mr. Bankes had agreed to dine with them and not run off to his own lodging where his man cooked vegetables properly" (72-3). Before Mr. Bankes declares that her meal, "is a triumph" (100), which is again echoed later in text in a parenthetical "(The Boeuf en Daube was a perfect triumph.)" (105),

⁴⁶ As previously highlighted, Knapp takes this opinion.

the first triumph of the night is Mrs. Ramsay setting the guest list and ensuring Mr. Bankes attends as the discerning, attentive guest of honor.

Mr. Bankes's declaration that the meal is a triumph marks a moment of connection between him and Mrs. Ramsay. Instead of feeling disconnected, their original state when they both are seated for the meal, the two share a moment:

“It is a triumph,” said Mr. Bankes, laying his knife down for a moment. He had eaten attentively. It was rich; it was tender. It was perfectly cooked. How did she manage these things in the depths of the country? He asked her. She was a wonderful woman. All his love, all his reverence, had returned; and she knew it. (100)

However this mutual appreciation and friendly bond between the two over the meal was not ensured as the outcome when the two sat down to dine. Mrs. Ramsay, at the start of the meal, identifies Mr. Bankes as broken and empty; Mrs. Ramsay initially pities Mr. Bankes, “poor man! Who had no wife, and no children and dined alone in lodgings except for tonight” (84), while Mr. Bankes himself thinks dining with the Ramsays is “not worth it for him. Looking at his hand he thought that if he had been alone dinner would have been almost over now; he would have been free to work. Yes, he thought, it is a terrible waste of time” (88). Preceding the appreciation and admiration is the disconnection and separation of Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Bankes. Mr. Bankes, himself, feels remote and distant from Mrs. Ramsay in the middle of the dinner party. After “laying down his spoon and wiping his clean-shaven lips punctiliously” of the soup (88), Mr. Bankes “felt rigid and barren, like a pair of boots that have been soaked and gone dry so that you can hardly force your feet into them. Yet he must force his feet into them. He must make himself talk. Unless he were very careful, she would find out this treachery of his; that he did not care a straw for her” (89-90). This

passage's metaphor, of boots that have become stiffer, more rigidly solid we might say, after being soaked and subsequently dried, speaks to the limits of Mrs. Ramsay's ability to condense her guests into a community. While liquids promise to soften leather boots, this process is temporary and can result, as the metaphor indicates, in a more rigidly solid state after the liquid has dried out. The temporary nature of the boots, which oscillate between stiffness and softness, underscores the relationship of liquidity and time suggested by the work of Bauman. Liquids, rather than solid, operate in space-time context differently than solids; time is closely tied, in importance, to issues of liquidity.

The initial separation between Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Bankes persists throughout the soup course of the meal. At the start of dinner, Mr. Bankes is not only disconnected from Mrs. Ramsay but from all other characters at the table. So too are other guests. Mr. Bankes is removed from Mr. Ramsay. Unlike Mr. Bankes, an attentive and discerning eater, Mr. Ramsay is the type of man to sometimes seem as though he is

made differently from other people, born blind, deaf and dumb, to the ordinary things.... His understanding often astonished [Mrs. Ramsay]. But did he notice the flowers? No. Did he notice the view? No. Did he ever notice his own daughter's beauty, or whether there was pudding on his plate or roast beef? He would sit at table with them like a person in a dream. (70)

Often away in a dream state at the table, unable to determine if his food is pudding (final dessert course) or roast beef (main course), Mr. Ramsay is different from the attentive eater Mr. Bankes, who notices not only the content of the meal but also the quality. Mr. Ramsay's lack of thoughtfulness about food, however, also distances him

from Mrs. Ramsay, who has carefully selected, and thought considerably about, a main course appropriate for her guest of honor.⁴⁷

When Mrs. Ramsay initially pities Mr. Bankes, this creates a divide between herself and Lily Briscoe. The attentive Lily Briscoe reads Mrs. Ramsay in the activity of pitying Mr. Bankes as being not only “old” and “worn,” but also “remote” (84).

Lily feels far removed from Mrs. Ramsay and becomes critical of her hostess: “Lily thought ... Why does [Mrs. Ramsay] pity [Mr. Bankes]? For that was the impression [Mrs. Ramsay] gave” (84). Unable to relate to Mrs. Ramsay’s point of view, or even the motivations for Mrs. Ramsay’s manners towards Mr. Bankes, Lily instead relates to Mr. Bankes for “He has his own work” just as she too “had her work” (84).

Previously Mr. Bankes and Lily have formed a tentative and timid connection, resulting from their similar situation of taking rooms in the village since the Ramsays’ house could not accommodate housing all. Mr. Bankes and Lily both have “rooms in the village, and so, walking in, walking out, parting late on door-mats, had said little things about the soup, about the children, about one thing and another which made them allies” despite their age differences (18).⁴⁸ Lily and Mr. Bankes initially connect over small talk, about topics such as soup, but Lily feels connected with Mr. Bankes at the dining table when she realizes that Mrs. Ramsay pities the man.

Lily, looking at Mr. Bankes and then at Tansley, theorizes that the close proximity of the diners, sitting now within visual contact of each other, draws the diners together: “the fact remained, it was almost impossible to dislike any one if one looked at them” (85). Lily, an artist who trains herself to view the world differently,

⁴⁷ Mrs. Ramsay “wished the dinner to be particularly nice, since William Bankes had at last consented to dine with them; and they were having Mildred’s masterpiece—Boeuf en Daube” (79-80).

⁴⁸ Mr. Bankes is “old enough to be her father” (18).

abstractly, postulates what we might call her theory of visual connection.⁴⁹ However, Lily's theory becomes more than just a passing musing at the table; it becomes an operating logic of multiple characters in the scene as the characters condense from disparate isolated subjects into something more cohesive. As they sit at the table and converse, looking at each other, the characters' separate worlds begin to come together as the characters start, metaphorically speaking, to move alongside each other, rather than move by each other. For example, Lily's theory of visual connection is further explored in the scene when Mr. Bankes and Mrs. Ramsay converse about their mutual friends the Mannings. Mrs. Ramsay tells Mr. Bankes, "It must have been fifteen—no, twenty years ago—that I last *saw* [Mrs. Manning]" (italics added 87). Having not *seen* this friend over this time, the two families (the Ramsays and the Mannings) have drifted apart substantially. Hearing that the Mannings are doing well and "building a new billiard room" (87), Mrs. Ramsay refuses Mr. Bankes's offer for him to "give [Mrs. Ramsay's] love to Carrie [Manning]" (88) because Mrs. Ramsay feels "she did not know this Carrie who built a new billiard room" (88). Having not seen each other, Mrs. Ramsay and Mrs. Manning move like gas particles; their lives proceed in individual directions and each has no effect on the other. Mr. Bankes ultimately concludes, "that friendships, even the best of them, are frail things. One drifts apart," particularly when one does not see another for a time (89). This drifting apart has

⁴⁹ While certainly not fully explored along all possible avenues here in my chapter, one might take this "theory of visual connection" further than I do in this chapter and investigate how Lily's manner of viewing the world (and others), as an artist, connects to her production of art. One might explore how Lily's production of art—specifically paintings—revolves around central questions about abstract representation, distance, and (it might be argued) a preoccupation of the artist's interest and/or disinterestedness in the painted subject, questions that might be approached (in another project with a different focus) through Kantian terms and concepts. Notably, the significant subject of Lily's painting, Mrs. Ramsay, is a subject whose presence is initially marked by her partial absence (her mind attends to other activities and inadvertently, she fears, moves her body out of its pose) and is finally marked by her complete absence (Mrs. Ramsay has already passed away when the painting is finished).

taken a while, some fifteen or twenty years for Mrs. Ramsay and Carrie Manning, and to Mrs. Ramsay it seems futile for someone like Mr. Bankes to try to draw the two together again. This reference to a friendship that has drifted apart serves also to emphasize the precariousness of the present moment, of the present connections of friendship, highlighting the susceptibility of dispersion over time.

Also seated for dinner at the Ramsay's home is Charles Tansley. Tansley, if likened to a particle, is one that very much resists condensation into a liquid state. Much like his mentor Mr. Ramsay, if not more so, Tansley is severely isolated in his own interior world, struggling with his own demons when he expressly demands, to himself, that "he was not going to be made a fool of by the women" during the dinner conversation (86). Indeed Tansley's very masculine wish to dominate threatens the party at multiple times: "he was not going to talk the sort of rot [about receiving letters] these people wanted him to talk. He was not going to be condescended to by these silly women" (85). Tansley's aggressive manners towards the dinner conversation seems to be at least partially a result of his activities preceding the gong's call to the meal: "He had been reading in his room, and now he came down and it all seemed to him silly, superficial, flimsy" (85). However, Tansley's social awkwardness with the Ramsays, and their guests, is also attributed to his class difference.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ When asked if he is a good sailor, Tansley indicates, "that he had never been sick in his life," while hoping his words convey something deeper, something that indicates his class background—a subject that is always a concern at the back of his mind it seems. He hopes his words about his never being sick, presumably seasick given the topic of conversation, also express "that his grandfather was a fisherman; his father a chemist; that he had worked his way up entirely himself; that he was proud of it" (91). Earlier, when accompanying Mrs. Ramsay on a walk, Tansley summarizes his life in terms of social class and economic hardships (11-2). When he is unable to say that he would truly like to go to the circus with the Ramsays, Mrs. Ramsay reflects on what he might prefer: "What he would have liked, she supposed, would have been to say how he had gone not to the circus but to Ibsen with

Against this labeled silliness of the conversation's topic, and perhaps against those whose background was not so socially and economically disadvantaged, Tansley repeatedly "felt it necessary to assert himself" in some unspecified manner at the dinner table, rather than join in the communal discussion about the ordinary, but leisured, life of receiving and sending letters (86). Tansley's taste in dinner conversation is notably distinct from those (of the leisured classes) who value discussions of letter sending.⁵¹ Although begrudgingly, Tansley acquiesces to the conversation and displays adequate manners in this scene. However, Tansley "felt very rough and isolated and lonely" (86) at the table; "He felt extremely, even physically, uncomfortable. He wanted somebody to give him a chance of asserting himself" (90). At one point he wishes "he could be alone in his room working...among his books. That was where he felt at his ease" (87). Like Mr. Bankes, Tansley wishes to be removed and separated from the dining party; he wishes, like a particle of gas, to come and go as he might please without having to interact with the others, engage in their conversations. Both Bankes and Tansley resist the condensation (from gas to liquid) that will happen around the dining table, but Tansley more so than Bankes.

Lily, in addition to criticizing Mrs. Ramsay and the other guests, faces her own interior struggle. Hoping that she might "not lose her temper, and [might] not argue" with Tansley, who has previously dismissed her work *in toto* because—in his opinion—female artists cannot produce true art, she tries to resist the urge to take her

Ramsays. He was an awful prig—oh yes, an insufferable bore" (12). In short, given his socio-economic background, Tansley is acutely aware of the potential social capital that staying with the Ramsays might offer him, and how this cultural capital might be liquidated and spent in the future. Attending the circus is not as valuable as attending a cultural event (the theater) with the family.

⁵¹ Bourdieu's notion of class-based tastes informs my reading of the scene.

“wanted revenge...by laughing at [Tansley]” (86). Her initial comments directed at Tansley do annoy him; he feels Lily “was trying to tease him for some reason...she despised him: so did Prue Ramsay; so did they all. But he was not going to be made a fool of by women” (86). Here again the theory of visual connection comes into play. Lily, looking at Tansley, sees Tansley as if, she imagines, she had the power to see beyond his external surfaces and into his internal body: “could she not see, as in a X-ray photograph, the ribs and thigh bones of the young man’s desire to impress himself, lying dark in the mist of his flesh” (91). By looking at Tansley, Lily feels she understands something about this disagreeable fellow diner. By looking, she starts to understand him on some level. While knowing that “There is a code of behavior” that “says on occasions of this sort it behooves the woman, whatever her own occupation may be, to go to the help of the young man [sitting] opposite so that he may expose and relieve the thigh bones, the ribs, of his vanity, of his urgent desire to assert himself,” Lily refuses to help Tansley out of his social constipation (91).⁵² The implicit arrangement between men and women, Lily reflects, is that women help men converse, while men rescue women if “the Tube were to burst into flames” (91). Tansley wishes to join the conversation so much that “he fidgeted in his chair, looked at this person, then at that person, tried to break into their talk, opened his mouth and shut it again” (90). Yet Lily, instead of helping him along, initially wonders what the world might be like if women did not facilitate men’s conversations and men did not rescue women from Tube fires.

⁵² Indeed this seated image of Tansley, fidgeting while opening and shutting a bodily orifice (to no avail)—his mouth—does call forward constipation. Furthermore, the reader of the novel encounters the language of relieving one’s self throughout this passage (90-1).

Looking next at Mrs. Ramsay, Lily feels that she understands a message from her. Despite the initial disconnect between Lily and Mrs. Ramsay at the scene's start, Lily now feels connected to Mrs. Ramsay after looking at her again. Seeing Mrs. Ramsay she understands her social experiment (a world where the implicit agreement between men and women is withdrawn) is at odds with Mrs. Ramsay's goals for the dinner party. Looking at Mrs. Ramsay, Lily acquiesces and "relieve[s] [Tansley] of his egotism" (92) by finally engaging Tansley in the conversation. The cause of Lily's aborted social experiment is a telling look from Mrs. Ramsay—which Lily sees, interprets, and then, without further delay, finally takes action:

"Will you take me [to the lighthouse], Mr. Tansley?" said Lily, quickly, kindly, for, of course, if Mrs. Ramsay said to her, as in effect she did, "I am drowning, my dear, in seas of fire. Unless you apply some balm to the anguish of this hour and say something nice to that young man there, life will run upon the rocks—indeed I hear the grating and the growling at this minute. My nerves are taut as fiddle strings. Another touch and they will snap"—when Mrs. Ramsay said all this, *as the glance in her eyes said it*, of course for the hundred and fiftieth time Lily Briscoe had to renounce the experiment—what happens if one is not nice to that young man there—and be nice. (italics added 92)

Importantly the narration of this passage indicates that this message is not communicated through a speech act from Mrs. Ramsay to Lily. Instead, this message is communicated through "a glance," in which the "eyes said it" (92). Lily's theory of visual connection, which first postulates "it was almost impossible to dislike any one if one looked at them" (85), now seems to go one step further beyond like/dislike (agreeableness) towards a form of deeper communication. By looking at Mrs. Ramsay, Lily reads a communicated request, checks her unusual social experiment that goes against the unwritten code of behavior, changes her etiquette, and instead

employs her traditional social manners.⁵³ Lily's glances are built up in a modular and sequential fashion; the foundation is the removal of the ability to dislike and what occurs next is understanding the other. Further possibilities, such as non-verbal communication, open up as the diners interact with each other, coming together from their disparate pre-dinner lives. The dinner party guests are coming together.

Despite all of the social awkwardness that persists throughout the dining scene, perhaps what threatens the party the most, to over-boil all of these sundry tensions amongst the various guests, is Augustus Carmichael's request for a second bowl of soup. The request comes at a moment when the guests again feel disconnected from each other, faking their way through conversations and presenting façades of feelings that threaten to crumble, revealing their emptiness and shallowness:

But already bored, Lily felt that something was lacking. Pulling her shawl round her Mrs. Ramsay felt that something was lacking. All of them bending themselves to listen thought, "Pray heaven that the inside of my mind may not be exposed," for each thought, "The others are feeling this. They are outraged and indignant with the government about the fishermen. Whereas, I feel nothing at all." (94)

Each individual—Lily, Mrs. Ramsay and all of the rest of the guests—is bored and aware that something is lacking in the dinner party; disconnected from the other individuals at the table, all feel that the party is not coming together properly. Pretending to be outraged and indignant about a particular situation that is being discussed, they attempt to hide their true feelings and thoughts.

It is after this moment that Augustus Carmichael asks for a second serving of soup. Carmichael is a minor character in the novel and we are provided with little information about him. According to the critic John Ferguson, Carmichael is "one of

⁵³ Later in another passage from the *boeuf en daube* scene, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay communicate through visual glances, checking Mr. Ramsay's potentially disruptive outburst.

the most teasingly enigmatic characters” of Woolf, perhaps because he only directly “speaks a total of twenty-nine words in the novel” (45, 47). As readers we understand that Carmichael takes opium (Woolf 10, 40) and is a poet who will only gain his popularity (long after the dinner scene) with the outbreak of the First World War.⁵⁴ The work of Ferguson, describing Carmichael as “a character who metaphorically spends much of his life underwater,” ultimately argues that Carmichael “becomes, in the last scene of the novel, Neptune himself” (55). While some of Ferguson’s work on the character of Carmichael relies quite heavily, and I contend problematically, on the biographical details of Woolf and Thomas De Quincey, Ferguson’s connection of Carmichael with the Roman god of water is quite convincing and evocative. Ferguson writes, “Mr. Carmichael moves, speaks, and composes [poetry] as though he lived in a medium thicker than air” (55-6). I argue that Carmichael is also a character that eats a medium thicker than air too—he has a distinct taste for the meal’s liquid soup. It is this character's request for a second bowl of soup that is figured as a possible disruption to the successful meal.

Narrated through the interiority of Mrs. Ramsay, Augustus’ request is not registered by Mrs. Ramsay’s sense of hearing, but rather she registers it visually, by looking at her husband’s face. Mr. Ramsay “was screwing his face up, he was scowling and frowning and flushing with anger. What on earth was it about? [Mrs. Ramsay] wondered. What could be the matter? Only that poor old Augustus had asked for another plate of soup—that was all” (95). The request for additional soup is

⁵⁴ “Mr. Carmichael brought out a volume of poems that spring, which had an unexpected success. The war, people said, had revived their interest in poetry” (134). Late in the novel, Lily remarks “he was growing famous. People said that his poetry was ‘so beautiful.’ They went and published things he had written forty years ago” (194).

marked differently by Mr. Ramsay—who feels it is *inappropriate*—and by Mrs. Ramsay—who labels the request as *unusual*. Quite simply, Carmichael “had merely touched Ellen’s arm and said ‘Ellen, please, another plate of soup’” (95).⁵⁵ While Carmichael is eventually forgiven his offensive transgression by Mr. Ramsay, who, being “in great spirits tonight, and wishing . . . to make it all right with old Augustus after that scene about the soup, had drawn him in—they were telling stories about some one they had both known at college” (110), the initial disruption to the pacing and timing of the meal is significant. This disruption is partially significant in and of itself (as an event), but, and perhaps more importantly, the request threatens disruption by provoking Mr. Ramsay into making a scene over the event.

In and of itself, Carmichael’s taste for soup threatens the smooth workings of Mrs. Ramsay’s dinner party; the other guests must wait as Carmichael takes additional soup. The next courses, including the *boeuf en daube*, which we read is a time-sensitive dish, must be delayed while Carmichael takes additional soup. The room descends into darkness as all but the setting sun wait for Carmichael to take additional soup (96). When properly following social etiquette and using good manners, asking for a larger quantity of food (to satiate hunger) is appropriate later in the meal during the main course. A request for more *boeuf en daube*, the main dish of the meal, does not substantially disrupt the tempo of the meal’s pacing—for we see both Mr. Bankes and Andrew Ramsay helped to a second quantity of the main dish without the turmoil of Carmichael’s request (105). Whether motivated by palate or by the stomach

⁵⁵ While Augustus’ request for more echoes *Oliver Twists*’ request, “Please, sir, I want some more” (Dickens 12), as they are both, after all, disruptions of social conventions, the consequences of the requests are significantly different.

(literally and figuratively lower), Carmichael's request for more soup—arguably a request made with bad manners—threatens social convention.⁵⁶

While we might expect that Mrs. Ramsay to be the one who would be most flustered by such an unusual request, it being her dinner party and her having worried over Paul and Minta tardiness potentially effecting the meal's timing, it is actually Mr. Ramsay who takes a greater offense. "It was unthinkable, it was detestable (so [Mr. Ramsay] signaled to [Mrs. Ramsay] across the table) that Augustus should be beginning his soup over again. He loathed people eating when he had finished" (95). Mrs. Ramsay's "visual dialogue" with Mr. Ramsay functions similarly to her previous "visual dialogue" with Lily; unspoken words are read through looking at another diner at the table. Again, what is quickly brought to the forefront in Mr. Ramsay and Mrs. Ramsay's "exchange" is the issue of manners and codes of behaviors.

When it comes to codes of behaviors in this passage we must look in two directions at the same time. First, the manners of Carmichael's request might be interpreted as lacking. Second, Mr. Ramsay might display bad manners by failing to hide his disgust and disapproval of his guest's request. If we read Mrs. Ramsay as the presiding authority figure of the meal, we can set aside Carmichael's behavior as merely unusual.⁵⁷ Mrs. Ramsay's concern is exclusively focused on her husband's possible bad behavior rather than on Carmichael's request. In the following passage

⁵⁶ In the original holograph manuscript of *To The Lighthouse*, Carmichael's request for soup is given much more narrative attention than in the final draft of the novel (153-61). In this earlier version of the novel, the narrative attention stays focused on Carmichael, describing his backstory and relationship to Andrew Ramsay in much more detail, while he sits in "the process of drinking his soup" (153). The focus of narration, however, shifts significantly in the published novel, focusing instead on the reactions of the Ramsays. We are told in this early draft a little bit more about Carmichael's motivation for taking soup; since "a second helping of soup seemed to [sic] desirable; he would, unconcernedly, ask the maid for it" (160).

⁵⁷ As mentioned above, Mrs. Ramsay is likened to a "queen" when she comes down for dinner (82). Knapp likens Mrs. Ramsay to "those ancient masters of ceremonies, [and] the priests" (31).

we see that Mrs. Ramsay is first concerned with her husband's inability to hide his displeasure, second intrigued by Carmichael's manners, and third moved to respect his individuality outside of a strict normative code of social behavior:

Why could [Mr. Ramsay] never conceal his feelings? Mrs. Ramsay wondered, and she wondered if Augustus Carmichael had noticed. Perhaps he had; perhaps he had not. She could not help respecting the composure with which he sat there, drinking his soup. If he wanted soup, he asked for soup. Whether people laughed at him or were angry with him he was the same. He did not like her, she knew that; but partly for that very reason she respected him, and *looking at him*, drinking soup, very large and calm, in the failing light, and monumental, and contemplative, she wondered what he did feel then, and why he was always content and dignified... (italics added 96)

Looking at Augustus, Mrs. Ramsay first respects him and then attempts to understand and connect with his interiority. Despite his unusual request which might possibly disrupt her carefully planned meal, a presumed reason to dislike him, looking at him forecloses on the possibility of dislike. Again, Lily's theory of visual connection seems to ring true in this scene. As this passage quickly establishes, Mrs. Ramsay is quite ready to accept Carmichael's unusual request for additional soup and forgive him his eccentricities. She even goes as far as to respect Carmichael for his individuality and decisiveness in the face of social conventions. A second bowl of soup, from Mrs. Ramsay's perspective, delays the main course only briefly. She uses this delay to have the guests light the candles, as dusk is approaching, which is something she or the guests presumably would have paused to accomplish even had Carmichael taken only a single serving of soup (96). Instead Mrs. Ramsay is much more concerned with the behavior and appearances of her own husband. As such, the Ramsays's "visual exchange" is also a way for Mrs. Ramsay to hold her husband's behavior accountable, forcing him to behave with good manners even if, or when, his guests do not. A

breach in household decorum seriously threatens the proper operation of the family's hospitality; extra soup, after all, threatens only the meal's pacing.

After lighting the candles, “[s]ome change at once went through them all, as if this had really happened, and they were all conscious of making a party together in a hollow, on an island; had their common cause against that *fluidity* out there” (97). It is at this point that the separate guests, previously living in their disparate interior worlds—complete with distractions, fears, regrets, etc.—condense into a more unified entity. Against this backdrop of sundry characters, various dishes of food pass—sometimes twice—almost seamlessly between kitchen and table as instructions move between the Mrs. Ramsay and the maid.⁵⁸

Formal Beginnings and Endings & The Recipe

For Goody, the third organizing principle is “the board that carries the graces said before and after dinner” (82). Graces said before and or after a meal serve as the formal structures marking the appropriate time dining can begin and should end. The use of opening and closing graces at Cambridge Colleges, Goody notes, draws a distinct temporal marker between meal time and ordinary life: “In this way the communal meal is marked off from ordinary life and the consumption of food and wine made into something more than either hunger or gluttony demands; it provides a ‘sacred frame’” (82). In Woolf's novel, the meal does not seem to have a formal beginning aside from the sounding gong mentioned above. Instead of a pre-authored, scripted, recitation of an approved grace, or any other formal marker, the gong denotes

⁵⁸ “‘Yes, take it away,’ [Mrs. Ramsay] said briefly, interrupting what she was saying to Mr. Bankes to speak to the maid” (87). “...[sic] Mrs. Ramsay had to break off here to tell the maid something about keeping food hot” (88).

that all must leave their activities and distractions behind and “assemble in the dining-room for dinner” (82). While ladling out soup, Mrs. Ramsay directs people to their seats (83) and the start of eating the meal happens sometime between this and Tansley’s condemnation of the diners’ conversation about receiving mail, where he has already “swept clean” his soup (85).

While the meal does not start with a definitive recitation of a grace, as in Goody’s example, the meal does end with a recitation, though not of a grace but, rather, of poetry. Mrs. Ramsay notes, “dinner was over. It was time to go. They were only playing with things on their plates” (109). As such, she waits for an appropriate time to signal the meal is over. “She waited. She tucked her napkin under the edge of her plate. Well, were they done now? No. That story had led to another” (110). Still waiting as the conversation organically flows from one topic to another, a marker of success or triumph of the party, Mrs. Ramsay suddenly becomes aware of her husband talking; “She waited. Her husband spoke. He was repeating something, and she knew it was poetry from the rhythm and the ring of exultation, and melancholy in his voice” (110). Importantly, unlike graces that are prewritten (not extemporaneous) and removed from the organic dining table conversations, this poetry seems, to Mrs. Ramsay, to come organically from the party in an otherworldly manner, without an attributable author or a speaking subject.⁵⁹ “The words (she was looking at the window) sounded as if they were floating like flowers on water out there, cut off from them all, as if no one had said them, but they had come into existence of themselves” (110). Unlike the earlier conversations around this table, which falter and stutter at the

⁵⁹ In *Virginia Woolf A-Z: A Comprehensive Reference for Students, Teachers and Common Readers to Her Life, Work and Critical Reception*, Mark Hussey notes that the recited poem is written by Charles Elton (82).

dinner's start, these words "float" and flow naturally. They transcend the previously mundane topics labeled as "silly" by some, such as the writing and receiving of letters (85), or as hollow by others, such as the government's response to fishermen (94). Instead the disembodied poetry seems to come from a more natural, larger, external source. The dinner party at this point, already bringing together these diners into something larger and more cohesive than they formed initially at the gong's sound, also incorporates the larger world, specifically poetry, as if the words have arrived by themselves. Mrs. Ramsay next realizes that "the voice stopped. She looked round. She made herself get up. Augustus Carmichael had risen and, holding his table napkin so that it looked like a long white robe he stood chanting" the poetry (111). Here we see that multiple characters come together to recite or chant the poetry, sequentially (Augustus Carmichael finishes the poem when Mr. Ramsay stops) but also, perhaps synchronously; Mrs. Ramsay feels, sometime after her husband has started the poem and before Carmichael finishes it, that "the words seemed to be spoken by her own voice" while at the same time being spoken "outside her self" (111). Whether spoken aloud with her husband, or heard in her own voice in her mind (alongside his external voice), this poetry says "quite easily and *naturally* what had been in her mind the whole evening while she said different things" (italics added 111). Through the joint marker of Mr. Ramsay starting the group's recital of a poem (110), and the conclusion of the recitation with Carmichael on his feet (111), the meal's formal ending is announced through a spontaneous, communal recitation of poetry. Poetry, in this sense, becomes a secular marker for the meal's conclusion in the *boeuf en daube* scene. Poetry, in this scene, replaces grace, to mark the conclusion of the repast.

Lastly, Goody identifies the recipe (and, under this, the shopping list) as the final written structuring form to a meal; “The fourth schedule that organizes the meal...is the recipe... Behind the recipe lies the shopping list, that is, the list of objects required to implement the recipe, which at once precedes and succeeds the ingathering of the unprepared (not necessarily raw) food” (82-3). Goody notes that “The recipe or receipt...is a formula for mixing ingredients for culinary, medical or magical purposes; it lists the items required for making preparations destined for human consumption” (84). In “The Recipe, the Prescription, and the Experiment,” Goody’s central concern for the recipe is how the written form developed over history and influenced the nature of, and the learning of, culinary skills in various cultures.⁶⁰ Summarizing his main points regarding the structuring of the meal, Goody writes that in addition to the guest list “we have three types of list concerned with the meal itself, one connected with the ‘production’ of the food for the kitchen, i.e. the shopping list, one connected with the preparation of the food, i.e. the recipe, and one with the consumption of food, i.e. the menu” (83).

Of the three dishes served at the Ramsays’ table—soup, *boeuf en daube*, and an offering of arranged fruit—no dish is fully described, in the final version of the novel, in a way which a reader might unproblematically and faithfully reproduce the dish in a home kitchen.⁶¹ Unlike M. F. K. Fisher’s interwar writing that gives recipes

⁶⁰ Goody notes, “While literate cooking is constraining (if one follows the book), it is so partly because...it often provides instruction (‘programmed learning’) for individuals who do not themselves know how to prepare the dishes. In the town, where children spend a large part of their time at school and are not required to make a great contribution to the house or garden, individuals often learn cooking indirectly from books rather than directly from the familial setting. Such a process necessitates ‘following a (written) recipe,’ rather than learning by participation i.e. by oral means” (88).

⁶¹ Hussey notes, by referencing Frances Spalding’s work and the letters of Vanessa Bell, that *boeuf en daube* “was a specialty of Roger Fry’s” and that it was a dish “Vanessa Bell and her family enjoyed in Cassis” (39).

alongside her stories, Woolf's novel does not. However, in the previously mentioned original holograph more details are given about the dish. In this earlier version, Woolf includes the following passage (which does not appear in the novel's final form):

[...] Boeuf ^{a la} ~~a la~~ au Daube, which had
been weighing on Mildred's spirits all day. You
stand it in water for twenty four hours: you ~~add~~ stir
continuously; you add a little bay leaf, & then a
dash of sherry: the whole ~~being~~ never ~~been~~ being allowed,
of course, to come to the boil. (Woolf *Original Holograph* 129)

It is important to note the soaking process for the meat, a twenty-four hour step in the process.⁶² The seasonings (both the solid herb of a “bay leaf” and the liquid of “sherry”) are mentioned, but little else about the ingredients is included. As for the process of cooking the dish, little description is given aside from taking care that the dish does not reach a boil—the temperature point at which water (liquid) turns into steam (gas). The dish must be cooked in liquid, not steam—it must be cooked somewhere below 212 °F or 100 °C. While critics like Anita Weston might feel this information is enough to be called a recipe, I disagree and turn to M. F. K. Fisher's insightful theorization of the modern recipe to argue Woolf's partial description in the early draft of the novel is insufficient to be considered a recipe.⁶³

M.F. K. Fisher's “The Anatomy of a Recipe” suggests that while cooking has changed very little over history, the method of recording recipes has seen greater changes: “It is only the way of writing the recipe itself that has evolved, to be trimmed to our changing tempo of reading, preparing, producing” (1). Historicizing the recipe,

⁶² I am careful not to call this a brining of the meat, since there is no reference to addition of salt and/or sugar to the soaking water.

⁶³ Weston writes: “in the manuscript [version of the novel] the recipe for *Boeuf en Daube* is given” (584).

Fisher notes an example from 1669 where Sir Kenelm Digby's recipe for "Herring Pye" leaves out directions for the pie's crust—a direction not included as "Sir Kenelm trusted his cook, to whom he read the instructions, to know that anything called a pie, and certainly any pie in *England*, had/has crusts above and below, perforce, of *course*" (italics in original 4). Fisher notes this recipe's omission to demonstrate that recipes have evolved to be more inclusive of all steps and ingredients, even though those steps and ingredients that might appear painfully obvious to some. Later examples of recipes reveal that cooking instructions become "much more precise, more detailed, than before" (5). According to Fisher, Mrs. Isabella Beeton's 1861 *Book of Household Management* marks a major development of the modern recipe. Fisher argues that Beeton's recipes not only provided "precise measurements" and "correct cooking times," but also included the recipe's "number of servings," "time needed for preparation," and "approximate cost" (7). 1896's publication of *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* by Miss Fannie Merritt Farmer reinforced the importance of precise measurements when Farmer "insisted with clinical sternness that level and standardized measurements be used: eight ounces to a cup, for instance, and five grams or one half tablespoon to a teaspoon, not 'some of this' and 'a pinch of that'" (8). Fisher's historicization of the recipe is both descriptive and prescriptive: "By now it is plain that there are some things I *demand* to be told, in a recipe. Basically they are two: the ingredients and the method" (italics in original 6). Fisher is not merely describing the historical evolution of the recipe, but making a value judgment on what is required for a good or successful recipe. Theorizing the recipe, Fisher writes,

A recipe is supposed to be a formula, a means prescribed for producing a desired result, whether that be an atomic weapon, a well-

trained Pekingese, or an omelet. There can be no frills about it, no ambiguities... [sic] and above all no “little secrets.” A cook who indulges in such covert and destructive vanity as to leave out one ingredient of a recipe which someone has admired and asked to copy is not honest, and therefore is not a good cook. He is betraying his profession and his art. (10).

A recipe, for Fisher, must be a formula that enables a particular dish (or result) to be unproblematically and faithfully reproduced at another time or place by another person. Precision and clarity are valued in the modern recipe. Returning to Woolf’s earliest description of the *boeuf en daube*, we can see that multiple pieces of requisite information are missing and we should not confuse, as Weston might, Woolf’s earliest narration and description of the dish with a recipe. However, as readers, we do still have a description of the dish and its name. And, as Derrida so succinctly said, since “A title is always a promise” (115), the dish’s title promises knowledge about the ingredients (*boeuf*/beef) and its preparation (*en daube*).

While literary critics have looked partially into this title or promise, much attention has been largely focused on the title’s first term, *boeuf*, rather than on the *en daube*. For Knapp the beef in the *boeuf en daube* is important for,

Symbolically, the meat represents the blood of the deity; it is energy – the food of life. Before the meat ceremony nothing seems to have truly taken on life or texture; the world was barren, the participants alienated. The succulent meat dish arouses feeling and passion; it is a hierophany possessed of its own power and magnetism, its own spiritual fermentation. (33-4)

In “Eating Well with the Ramsays: The Spirituality of Meat in *To the Lighthouse*,” Vicki Tromanhauser notes “Woolf frequently associated carnivory and an abundance of meat with male privilege and imperial power,” particularly in *A Room of One’s Own* and *Between the Acts* (15). Lisa Angelella’s work in “The Meat of the

Movement: Food and Feminism in Woolf” argues that “it is fundamentally through depictions of meat-eating that Woolf empowers her New Women characters of Mary Datchet of *Night and Day* and Sara Pargiter of *The Years*” (174). Closely reading the consumption of a particular ingredient, specifically beef, in multiple scenes across Woolf’s oeuvre, Angelella notes that

Woolf shows her New Women to have a substantial appetite and formidable bodily needs by having them desire the more substantial fare of meat (mostly red meat). Meat was the most expensive, prestigious food in England, and the one most associated with the public sphere, insofar as beef, especially roast, has served since Anglo-Saxon culture as Britain’s national fare. Meat-eating constitutes an important practice of participating in the British State. (177)

Historicizing the social context (i.e. class distinctions, gender roles, and national identity) for eating meat in England at this time, Angelella argues that “Women’s access to meat was restricted not only in accordance with their lack of personal income, however, but also for ideological reasons” that included the patriarchal fear of exciting bodily passions (178). Angelella’s article concludes that it is “by eating a food that is not soft and light-colored but of a tough texture and dark red hue, food which constitutes more of an affront to the eye and teeth and carving hands, women [and Woolf’s New Women characters] assert themselves as desiring bodies. And by eating the paradigmatic, invigorating British food, they assert themselves as Britons” (179). Ultimately, I contend, this critical attention to the gender dynamics of eating meat seem more productive when investigating Woolf’s other novels, rather than *To the Lighthouse*.

My own work on the *boeuf en daube* scene does not directly refute readings such as Angelella’s or Tromhauser’s, which focus on a single food item of meat or

the characters marked by their meat-eating. If the privilege of eating red meat in public is a right reserved for men, women who choose to adopt this form of eating actively challenge patriarchal privileges. However, instead I wish to highlight a second reading, one that closely focuses on the preparation of the beef in *To the Lighthouse*. Importantly, the beef served in this scene is neither of “tough texture” nor of “red hue” (Angelella 179). It is neither “an affront to the eye and teeth” (179) but is instead rather tender and “succulent” (Knapp 34). Furthermore, this particular dish’s name signifies Provençal France rather than an “invigorating British” fare (Angelella 179). Instead, we might return to the Dodd and Blodgett debate, the disagreement of whether or not Mrs. Ramsay takes a bite of food, to illustrate the dangers of an overly materialist approach to the text that resists realism, something my reading of the *en daube* takes pains to avoid by positing it as a symbol for the condensation of individual guests into something larger.

While contemporary English versions of this dish often translate the name *boeuf en daube* as “beef stew” and thus categorize its production as a stewing method, Myhrvold notes “A Frenchman would say that this is a silly way to categorize [the dish]– it is not a stew or a braise, it is a *daube* – which to them would be its own category” (“RE: Dissertation”). However, if one wishes to view the dish through the lens of English categories, Myhrvold states that technically,

a *boeuf en daube* is more of a pot roast than a stew. Stews typically have smaller (bite sized) pieces of meat, while a *daube* typically has bigger chunks that must be cut (perhaps with a spoon – it will be that tender). You could also call it a braise, or a braised beef dish. That is probably the most technically correct description. (“RE: Dissertation”)

While cooking *en daube* is its own particular method, it is most closely related braising, rather than stewing, a distinction that modern English adaptations of the recipe often ignore. The distinction between braising and stewing is important to understanding Woolf's usage of the dish in *To the Lighthouse*.

To make sense of Woolf's *boeuf en daube*, it is important to note that the tradition of cooking *en daube* runs closest to the English equivalent of pot roasting and braising, an old and artful way of cooking "large chunks of tougher meat" or "a whole roasting joint" (Myhrvold *Modernist Cuisine 2*: 93). However, writes Myhrvold, the "introduction of the oven and the range to the domestic kitchen... fundamentally changed the nature of braising and post-roasting... in Western Europe and America in the first few years after the First World War" (2: 96). The nature of traditional pot-roasting, which "involves both dry and moist heat, and in which heat conduction, convection, and radiation" are used to cook the meat in a tightly sealed vessel surrounded by coals, has been largely replaced with stewing, where an open vessel is heated generally from a heating element below and larger quantities of liquid are required (2: 93-6). The historical development of the modern, post-WWI kitchen might explain why contemporary English versions of a *boeuf en daube* recipe often treat the dish as a stew; given contemporary society's lost art of braising meats and the preference for preparing stews in our modern kitchens, recasting the dish as a "stew" offers the home cook an easier way to create the dish than cooking in the traditional *en daube* method. It is important to note that the translation of *boeuf en daube* to "Beef Stew" is both a translation across language—from French to English—and a

translation across time—from cooking methods most closely associated with the pre-WWI area to our own contemporary moment in our modern kitchens.

According to Myhrvold the distinction between braising and stewing is notable in the qualitative results of the dish: “meats braised or pot-roasted in the authentic way are subjected to a cooking environment that is qualitatively different from that experienced by meats that are simply stewed. The differences in flavor, although hard to describe, are real” (2: 93). The very real differences in flavors are a result of different cooking methods. When braising, “Rays of infrared light” shining from the pot’s internal surfaces partially account for this flavor difference, for “The radiating heat slowly dehydrates and then browns the upper surface of the meat. Juices leaking out of the browning food dissolve Maillard compounds that create the enticing aroma. These juices then carry these compounds to the bottom of the pot, where they collect and intensify” (2: 94). In *The Inquisitive Cook*, Anne Gardiner and Sue Wilson define the Maillard reaction by explaining that “high [cooking] temperatures quickly create intense flavors, rich brown colors, and crackling crusts” when meat is either seared or properly braised (104). “This is due to the Maillard reaction, where carbohydrates react chemically with amino compounds in proteins to create browning, deeper flavors, and tantalizing aromas” (104). Myhrvold notes that cooks in the modern kitchen will often sear meat before stewing in an attempt to “create the flavorful Maillard compounds [found in braises], but these [Maillard] molecules readily dissolve when the food is covered by water [when stewing]. Rather than intensifying through secondary reactions, as happens in a traditional pot roast [or braise], they diffuse into a dilute broth” and do not fully develop the complex flavors or aromas

offered by a braise (2: 96). Braising, in short, offers a real difference in taste due to the cooking method's ability to both initiate and sustain complex Maillard compounds, unlike stewing, which even when searing is initially used the stewing process ultimately fails to "intensif[y Maillard compounds] through secondary reactions" (2:96).

Aside from a particular method of cooking, the title of the dish *boeuf en daube* also signifies that certain cuts of beef are traditionally used. Myhrvold notes, "most *boeuf en daube* has three specific cuts of beef (shin, short ribs, chuck). A purist would say that without those three cuts it wouldn't be *boeuf en daube*" ("RE: Dissertation"). Importantly, these three cuts of meat are known to be tougher cuts and thus demand certain preparations to ensure a palatable tenderness. As Gardiner and Wilson explain, "Most braises call for the tougher cuts of meats or poultry. In beef, this means cuts such as chuck, flank, brisket, rump, and round. These cuts come from areas of the animal that are continually exercised, which allows the muscle tissues to develop more flavor extractives as well as strength" ("Braising"). When cooking a tougher cut of meat a braising liquid must be added to the dish to ensure the meat's tenderness:

Liquid, such as wine, beer, stock, or broth, is also essential for braising because less tender meats have greater amounts of collagen than tender ones. Collagen, a connective tissue, helps hold the muscle fibers in meat together. When cooked in the presence of moisture, collagen dissolves into gelatin, which allows the meat fibers to separate more easily. This is the essence of tenderizing tough cuts of meat. Note how the dissolved gelatin causes the broth to set as it cools. ("Braising")

Literally the mode of preparing *boeuf en daube* requires the cook to liquefy collagen, which is in a solid state before braising. The physics inherent in the culinary preparation of *boeuf en daube*, the careful liquefying of collagen while ensuring the

dish does not reach a boiling point, becomes, I argue, the operating metaphor of Mrs. Ramsay's dinner scene; she attempts to produce a state of figurative liquidity in her guests.

When cooking *boeuf en daube* and accomplishing this liquefying of collagen, the temperature of the dish must be closely monitored; cooking the tougher cut of meat at too high of a temperature (closer to the boiling point, where a liquid changes state into a gas) will have the undesired effect of toughening the meat. As Gardiner and Wilson write, “While collagen softens in moist heat, muscle fibers firm as their proteins unfold and form new linkages during cooking. . . . Various proteins in meat fibers coagulate over a range of temperatures from 105 °F / 40 °C to 195 °F / 90 °C, temperatures that are far below boiling point (212 °F / 100 °C)” (“Braising”). They note further that “The higher the cooking temperature, the tougher the muscle fibers become, and the more they shrink in both length and width. It's no wonder that stewing beef becomes incredibly chewy when cooked in a boiling broth!” (“Braising”). Cooking the meat at a lower temperature—Gardiner and Wilson recommend between 180 to 190 °F (82-88 °C)—necessitates a longer cooking time in order to ensure the meat is fully cooked. “Braising at low temperatures can never be done in a hurry. But those who are patient will be amply rewarded with a memorable amalgam of rich, deep flavors; heady, enticing aromas; and meat so tender it almost falls apart. Indeed, each succulent forkful reconfirms the ancient wisdom of braising” (“Braising”). Myhrvold's *Modernist Cuisine* also emphasizes the obligation of carefully balancing temperature and cooking times when working with the tougher cuts of meat: “cooking tough cuts of meat is a balancing act. You must heat them enough but not too much.

Often, the best strategy for preparing meat with strong cross-linked collagen is to cook it slowly at the lowest practical temperature” (3: 10-11). We are told, in *To the Lighthouse*, that the *boeuf en daube* dish takes three days to complete.

Not only is a careful balance of temperature and time required to dissolve collagen, and thus make tougher meat fork-tender, but a careful balance of temperature and liquid is required to produce flavorful Maillard compounds. Too much liquid threatens to dissolve, rather than intensify, Maillard compounds. In short, while stewing is our preferred modern cooking method, made more popular with the new “technological revolution[s]” of the modern oven and range (2: 96), it requires more liquid than pot-roasting and produces less complex flavors. While Woolf may or may not have known the culinary science that results in flavor differences between traditional braising and the more modern stewing, the early holograph of the novel does include reference to soaking the meat in liquid for twenty-four hours and specific instructions not to cook it at (or above) the boiling point (129). Furthermore, in the final version of the novel, Woolf does highlight the aromatic properties of the *boeuf en daube*; at its uncovering “an exquisite scent of olives and oil and juice rose from the great brown dish as Marthe, with a little flourish, took the cover off” (Woolf 100). This dish is described as a great “confusion of savoury brown and yellow meats and its bay leaves and its wine” (100), which is cooked, notably, outside the tradition of English manner, which according to both Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Bankes is “an abomination...It is roasting meat till it is like leather” (101).

The novel’s description of the dish itself offers a curious grammatical construction where the word “and” is repeated three times in quick succession. My

reading of these three cascading “ands” in this sentence suggests that the eye beholding the main dish faces a distinct challenge. Those that encounter the dish (i.e. both the diners at the table and the reader of the passage) cannot easily identify or recognize where the dish begins and ends. In a traditional list, grammatically the last item is preceded with the conjunction “and” to signify the last item or descriptor. The repetition of “and” confuses this logic by promising the end is in sight. Yet this promise is continually broken as successive descriptors, each promised terminal by a preceding “and,” is subsumed by another. The eye cannot easily determine the limits of the dish as it expands beyond the “brown and yellow” to include “and its bay leaves,” only to expand yet again to include “and its wine” (10). This overflow of description, this subsuming of yet another sight impression, which seems to promise a final containment or definition of the dish’s limits, suggests an over-spilling and limitless dish. In short, I wish to argue, the grammatical description of the dish, complete with its thrice repeated “and,” suggests the dish is associated, both on the level of the character and the reader, with the Kantian category of the sublime.⁶⁴

For some critics, like Tromanhauser, the *boeuf en daube* signifies limitation rather than expansiveness. Tromanhauser writes:

⁶⁴ This passage of the dish spilling over, adding more “ands” as it is seen by the characters and read by the reader, might be likened to Kant’s example of the Egyptian pyramids (inspired and adapted from Nicolas Savary): “in order to get the full emotional effect of the magnitude of the pyramids one must neither come too close to them nor be too far away” (135-6). This dish seems to bewilder the sensing subject with its ability to overflow and refuse limitation—it is almost as if we need to lean back (away from the aromas) in order to ascertain its visual boundaries, estimate its magnitude. Yet, from the reader’s perspective we are leaning forward into the stream of aromas, unable to visualize the dish’s boundaries with our eyes as it spills over its presumed limits. Under this reading, I might suggest that the (lower) bodily sense of smell (our leaning forward for the aroma) overtakes the visual (the traditionally privileged sense), challenging aesthetic philosophy’s traditional hierarchy of the senses (i.e. the visual being privileged over the aromatic). As Carolyn Korsmeyer’s *Making Sense of Taste: Food & Philosophy* argues, the philosophical discourse of aesthetics traditionally privileges the visual over the aromatic (11-37); in this scene, however, we experience an inversion of the traditional hierarchy as we lean towards the aroma and obscure our view.

The atmosphere of the early part of the dinner party has the suffocating intensity of the main dish, a Provençal stew that requires three days to prepare. This slow cooking, which Mrs. Ramsay doesn't accomplish herself but by proxy through Mildred the cook, provides a fitting metaphor for the evening's forced sociality over which the hostess can preside at a safe distance from its raw, fleshy realities. (15)

I agree with Tromanhauser that the beginning of the dinner party is initially unsuccessful and, to some, particularly Tansley and Mr. Bankes, "suffocating." I also agree that the *boeuf en daube*, specifically its liquidity in context of the other dishes of liquidity, provides "a fitting metaphor" for the dinner scene. My reading, however, disagrees with Tromanhauser's assessment of what this metaphor is. Like the collagen that changes states into a liquid form, allowing tough cuts of meat to become tender, the unification of the party, from a state of gaseousness to liquidity, is a positive outcome. My reading also highlights that Mrs. Ramsay is, if anything, not far from the "raw, fleshy realities" but rather very much engaged. Her pleading looks to Lily and her check on her husband's manners directly engage with social messiness, averting a failed dinner party of socially isolated guests. She does not preside over the meal at safe distance, leaving the social work to another. I disagree with Tromahauser that "Despite Mrs. Ramsay's desire to feed the disparate diners into a unity, she remains aware that Tansley and Lily 'were both out of things,' unassimilable [sic] into her social stew" (16). Instead I agree with Weston that the meal is "the miracle of unifying the disparate elements" (384). In the same paragraph of the dish's unveiling, Paul's use of the first personal plural "we" is noticed by Mrs. Ramsay:

"We went back to look for Minta's brooch," he said, sitting down by her. "We"—that was enough. She [Mrs. Ramsay] knew from the effort, the rise in his voice to surmount a difficult word that it was the first time he had said "we." "We did this, we did that." They'll say that all their lives, she thought, and an exquisite scent of olives and oil

and juice rose from the great brown dish as Marthe, with a little flourish, took the cover off. (100)

While the literal “we” of this passage includes Minta and Paul, who have presumably become engaged only moments before, this “we” should be applied more liberally. Likened to spreading scent (gas, water vapors, and aromas) that fan out from the uncovered dish, the “we” of this passage also spreads out amongst the guests. In the following passages of the novel, many recall their time with the Ramsays, thinking at various time “We did this, we did that.” The dinner guests are united in community around the *boeuf en daube* at the dinner party, a moment fixed in time in for Mrs. Ramsay when she records the image in her mind; the dinner guests will also recall many years later, in the final section of the novel, the relationships and interactions Mrs. Ramsay helped to foster at this meal.

Woolf’s Liquid Style in *To the Lighthouse*

Formally, Woolf’s style has been a site of discussion, appreciation, and contestation for modernist scholars. Both R. L. Chambers and Erich Auerbach, among many others, note Woolf’s stream of consciousness and the fluidity of her style. In 1946, Auerbach’s “The Brown Stocking” insightfully uses the verb “to dissolve” in order to describe the project of modernist writers. Auerbach writes, “At the time of the first World War and after...certain writers distinguished by instinct and insight find a method which *dissolves reality* into multiple and multivalent reflections of consciousness” (italics added 32). If Bauman’s work in *Liquid Modernity* and *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty* suggests that “The ‘melting of solids,’ [is] the permanent feature of modernity” (*Liquid Modernity* 6), then Auerbach’s observation

indicates that the changing of solidity to liquidity is also a dominant feature of modernist literature. Reading the opening passage of *To the Lighthouse* as an example of Woolf's particular modernist style, Erich Auerbach notes "The writer as narrator of objective facts has almost completely vanished; almost everything stated appears by way of reflection in the consciousness of the dramatis personae" (23). Erasing the objective, definite, and solidly known, we might say that Woolf melts solid objective narration into liquid subjective narration. Auerbach says that in the opening passage of *To the Lighthouse* "this goes so far that there actually seems to be no viewpoint at all outside the novel from which the people and events within it are observed, any more than there seems to be an objective reality apart from what is in the consciousness of the characters" (23). Behind Auerbach's assessment of Woolf's style lurks a question of form, whether *To the Lighthouse* is mere formlessness (lack of a grounded perspective) or if this new experiment with representing consciousness, which, like a liquid, risks having no determinate shape, might be productive.

Auerbach's contention that *To the Lighthouse*'s lack of an objective viewpoint is important if we return to Dodd's controversial reading that since there is no narration of Mrs. Ramsay consuming food that Mrs. Ramsay does not eat. Instead, I contend, the lack of Mrs. Ramsay's mastication and swallowing at the table, which might be considered details more closely associated with realism, tells us more about Woolf's style in this novel than about her particular character's relationship to food. While Woolf does privilege the mundane, the everyday—for example, Tansley's laying down of his spoon (85) as well as Bankes's spoon placement (88)—she does so

artfully and masterfully, without the need to catalogue the tedious details of each character's mastication and swallowing.

While Woolf's use of stream of consciousness and her style may be called "fluid" (i.e. having the property of liquids and gases), as my readings above argue a more precise label would be "liquid." To suggest that her style is fluid, allows her style to be associated with gases, suggesting that her style does not properly "hold together," that it is "airy," perhaps "invisible," or dissipates too quickly. That which is in the state of a gas, we know from our kitchens, can be too insubstantial to satiate or provide nutrition; using the term liquidity excludes the gaseous and its negative connotations. A fluid aesthetic involves particles (and particulars) that move too quickly and are too distant from each other, in isolation, to have or form meaningful connections. Instead the aesthetic of *To the Lighthouse* is one that does hold together, resembling a state of matter "where the *particles move freely over each other* (so that its masses have *no determinate shape*)" but "*do not tend to separate* as do those of a gas" (italics added "liquid"). While this distinction between a fluid and liquid aesthetic might seem merely a rhetorical or semantic difference, the consequences are important. A light and airy style can be too easily dismissed and, indeed, this was not only an early critique of modernism in large, but a particular charge against female writers like Woolf. The authors' stylistic choices, particularly for the literary movement of modernism, are often the very terms of modernism's condemnation, leveled in the charge of political or social quietism. Here I think first and foremost of

Georg Lukács's condemnation of modernism as solipsistic or a distorted distortion of the real.⁶⁵

Woolf's liquid aesthetic manifests itself on multiple levels in *To the Lighthouse*. First, Woolf's liquid aesthetic manifests itself on the level of narration, where she dissolves what was known as objective realism by altering her scope of narrative focus and the manner of narration. As Auerbach notes, Woolf

holds to minor, unimpressive, random events: measuring the stocking, a fragment of a conversation with the maid, a telephone call. Great changes, exterior turning points, let alone catastrophes, do not occur; and though elsewhere in *To the Lighthouse* such things are mentioned, it is hastily, without preparation or contest, incidentally, and as it were only for the sake of information. (29)

Not only are the traditional narrative events (birth, marriage, death, etc.) literally relegated to parenthetical asides in Woolf's text, but the narrative path between the "minor, unimpressive, [and] random" narrated items is, itself, circuitous and liquid (29). Echoing Auerbach's point about the liquid-like flow of her style, Chambers writes of Woolf's aesthetic:

If it were aimless or a flaccid fluidity, it would be merely regrettable, not worth talking about. But it bears at its best all the marks of mastery, of control; it rarely gets out of hand, and it follows a regular purpose, often a regular pattern. Its purpose is to blur and fade a picture from the state of objective clarity given by external description—the reader's apprehension of what the writer describes—into the state of *subaqueous translucency*, as it were, where scenes, people and ideas are viewed through the oddly distorting screen of the subjective, because we are in a world *which is internal to the character's mind*. In other words, as we read we are launched into a well defined and familiar *stream of consciousness*, and soon find that it has imperceptibly merged into another which is strange to us and which takes us into the most unfamiliar and exciting places. (italics added 19-20)

⁶⁵ See Lukács's "Realism in the Balance" for his argument for realism and against modernism.

For Chambers, Woolf's style is not only masterly, but also patterned and purposeful despite the potential risks of flowing "out of hand." If Lukacs denounces modernism for its ability to distort, Chambers celebrates a fluidity that is neither aimless nor flaccid, a style of purpose, of pattern, which is developed by blurring "objective clarity" into a "state of subaqueous translucency" and involves "the oddly distorting screen of the subject" (19-20). Woolf's style in *To the Lighthouse* brings the (exterior) world, and the reader, inside the subject, to use Chambers' words, much like the act of tasting invites an (external) object inside through the dissolving across of a bodily surface.⁶⁶

In "Modern Fiction" (1921) Woolf famously wrote, "Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight of incident scores upon the consciousness. Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small" (150). Regardless of the appearance of disconnection or disorder, Woolf's style during this time privileges subjective world experiences as they unfold; her aesthetic also suggests that life equally, if not more fully, exists in the everyday and mundane. Importantly Woolf's privileging of the subjective over the objective is a balancing act, rather than an outright substitution. The *boeuf en daube* meal, the description of which offers subjective experience rather than empirical knowledge (as promised in the genre of a recipe) for recreation, balances the symbolic and the material. As Anita Weston writes:

⁶⁶ This passage from Chambers partially inspired the title of my dissertation.

the famous dinner-party scene is not only a symbolic Last Supper for Prue, Andrew and their mother, all about to die in the following section, or a Feast of Life, a marriage of Canaa at which Mrs. Ramsay performs the miracle of unifying the disparate elements, but an ‘actual’ meal, seasoned, we are told, with bay-leaves and wine, (in the manuscript the recipe for Boeuf en Daube is given), something concrete that Mrs. Ramsay will spill if Andrew does not lower his plate. (384)

Weston’s point here is that Woolf’s style in *To the Lighthouse* manages to both capture the material nature of the dish (food that can be spilled) as well as the symbolic value (a dish signifying unification). Woolf’s execution of this scene is a delicate balance that risks failure on either side, being too overly based in material existence (a realist privileging of mastication and swallowing) or being too overly abstract and subjective (failing to capture the sight and smell of the dish’s uncovering).⁶⁷

E. M. Forster also understands that Woolf’s aesthetic is a careful balance that risks much with its experimentation. In his 1941 Rede Lecture, Forster asks a provocative question of Woolf’s style:

[Virginia Woolf] has all the aesthete’s characteristics: selects and manipulates her impressions; is not a great creator of character; enforces patterns on her books; has no great cause at heart. So how did she avoid her appropriate pitfall and remain up in the fresh air, where we can hear the sound of the stable boy’s boots, or boats bumping, or Big Ben; where we can taste really new bread, and touch real dahlias? (9)

Forster’s question shows admiration that Woolf’s writing, with its risky and groundbreaking style, manages to avoid the “pitfall[s]” of the aesthete.⁶⁸ Woolf is

⁶⁷ Recall from chapter one that Mansfield complains, regarding E.M. Forster’s *Howards End*, that Forster fails in balancing material concerns (depicting characters’ relationships and interactions) with symbolic concerns (having characters represent socio-economic classes); this balance can be difficult.

⁶⁸ Forster goes on to posit his own answer to this question, an answer that does not fully capture the truth. For Forster the answer is: “She had a sense of humour, no doubt, but our answer must go a little deeper than that hoary nostrum. She escaped, I think, because she liked writing for fun. Her pen amused her, and in the midst of writing seriously this other delight would spurt through” (9).

able to focus on the subjective over the objective, privilege the interior world of consciousness over the exterior world's promise of empirical factualness, yet still make this outside world sound, taste, and feel real.

Second, in addition to Woolf's liquid aesthetic manifesting itself on the level of her style, a liquid aesthetic is located on the level of the individual sentence as well. Anita Weston offers an insightful reading on the level of sentence, using the following passage from *To the Lighthouse*: "Everything seemed possible. Everything seemed right. [...] Nothing need be said; nothing could be said. There it was, all round them. It partook, [Mrs. Ramsay] felt, carefully helping Mr. Bankes to a specially tender piece, of eternity" (104-5). Weston's reading of this passage highlights two possibilities for the sentence's meaning, each having different consequences. Weston writes that this section is an example of "blurring the literal and figurative, or privileging the figurative with the kind of imbalance reminiscent of the *Metaphysics*" (388). Weston goes on to note that

This is a Miltonic "flicker of hesitation" through the syntax, — grammatically [Mrs. Ramsay] is serving Mr. Bankes a tender piece of eternity, an effect carefully heightened by the choice of a food-associated verb, "partake"; and for a moment the reader is forced to consider this before retracing his steps and deciding exactly what she has got on her spoon. (388)

Weston's argument is that this transference between eternity and the helping of a tender piece of *boeuf en daube* is a shortcoming of Woolf's style: "'Eternity,' in its turn, assumes something of the ordinariness or even grossness of the piece of meat, and is offered as a word like any other, with an unfair philosophical load to bear" (389). Weston continues her critique of Woolf's style and grammatical construction by arguing,

it takes a strong stomach [on the part of the reader] to accept this mixture of food and philosophy, meat and eternity, and that the device of mutual transference is over-exploited. [Woolf's] linguistic sleight of hand obliges us to accept reconcilability where none exists, just as her use of connectors—because, therefore, for, etc.—ask our complicity in connections which are in no way logical. (389)

My conclusion of Woolf's artful "sleight of hand," her liquid sentence, which suggests multiple readings (i.e. a piece of eternity is served to Mr. Bankes and/or "It" partakes of eternity while Mrs. Ramsay serves Mr. Bankes), is different. The sentence does not oblige us to accept reconcilability where none exists, but rather offers connection to disparate items that seem, at first glance, unconnectable. To mix "food and philosophy, meat and eternity" shows a liquid transference grammatically as well as conceptually. The sentence's construction produces an evasive meaning, slipping like liquid, the two meanings flow "*freely over each other...[with] no determinate shape*" but "do not tend to separate" (italics added "liquid").

Rebecca Walkowitz's *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation* identifies Woolf's style as a posture of evasion. Defining style broadly "as attitude, stance, posture and consciousness" (2), Walkowitz states that Woolf "uses evasion to reject the consistency and intensity of affect that [Woolf] identifies with imperial progress and civic hypocrisy" (104). Focusing primarily on "The Mark on the Wall" and *Mrs. Dalloway*, Walkowitz contends that "A style of *evasion* allows Virginia Woolf to analyze the generalizations of British culture and to notice, for example, that many British citizens have European origins, that metropolitan art is international art, and that London's landmarks memorialize the itinerary of imperial conquest" (italics in original 31). Walkowitz's work is very concerned with the connection between stylistic choices and their socio-political effects, arguing that modernist styles and

literary tactics are not solely aesthetic discernments easily dismissed by charges of quietism: “*Cosmopolitan Style* emphasizes the tradition of cosmopolitan posture or attitude and explores how developments in modernist literary style coincide with new ways of thinking about political critique” (8). I highlight Walkowitz’s work here to suggest that what she identifies as a literary strategy or tactic of evasion in Woolf, I call Woolf’s liquid style.

Conclusions: Forster’s Reading of Woolf’s Food Scenes

In *Virginia Woolf*, E. M. Forster notes, “It is always helpful, when reading [Woolf], to look out for the passages which describe eating. They are invariably good. They are a sharp reminder that here is a woman who is alert sensuously. She had an enlightened greediness which gentlemen themselves might envy, and which few masculine writers have expressed” (18). For Forster some of the best and most helpful passages from Woolf’s writing are the scenes that depict eating. Forster goes on to highlight the shortcomings of masculine writers of food scenes and their distinct difference from Woolf, a lack of sensuousness:

There is a little too much lamp oil in George Meredith’s wine, a little too much paper crackling on Charles Lamb’s pork, and no savour whatever in any dish of Henry James’, but when Virginia Woolf mentions nice things they get right into our mouths, so far as the edibility of print permits. We taste their deliciousness. And when they are not nice, we taste them equally, our mouths awry now with laughter. (Forster 18)

To illustrate his point that Woolf is a serious and sensuous writer of food and eating, one who communicates the deliciousness of printed words, Forster turns to a specific example, highlighting,

the great dish of *Boeuf en Daube* which forms the centre of the dinner of union in *To the Lighthouse*, the dinner round which all the section of the book coheres, the dinner which exhales affection and poetry and loveliness, so that all the characters see the best in one another at last and for a moment, and one of them, Lily Briscoe, carries away a recollection of reality. (19)

Importantly Forster reads this meal as a “dinner of union” which offers cohesion to the novel. My readings of the novel agree with Forster’s assessment, but go further, suggesting that the cohesiveness operates on multiple levels. On the level of the novel’s characters the meal unites the characters from the first section of the novel into something much larger than the total sum of their disparate selves at the dinner gong’s sounding. Formally, we see Woolf’s liquid aesthetic on display as the narrative switches focus, perspective, and tone throughout the meal, tracing the stream of consciousness of multiple characters. Importantly, Forster’s choice of verb “to see” when he writes, “all the characters *see* the best in one another at last and for a moment,” connects back into what I have called Lily’s theory of visual connection. The process of seeing highlighted in the *boeuf en daube* scene is both literal (narrative descriptions of characters looking and seeing each other) and of metaphorical consequence; the process of seeing diners across the table creates communion at the table, similar to the dish.

For Forster, the *boeuf en daube* scene truly points to Woolf’s talent as a writer. Forster writes: “Such a dinner cannot be built on a statement beneath a dish-cover which the novelist is too indifferent or incompetent to remove. Real food is necessary, and this, in fiction as in her home, she knew how to provide” (19). The effectiveness of Woolf’s *boeuf en daube* points to her attentiveness and competency as a writer. “Food with her was not a literary device put in to make the book seem real. She put it

in because she tasted it, because she saw pictures, because she smelt flowers, because she heard Bach, because her senses were both exquisite and catholic, and were always bringing her first-hand news of the outside world” (19). Here Forster uses the logic of synesthesia, noting that Woolf includes food in her novels because of vision, smell and hearing; food is not included in her novels because she privileged the objective and the realistic (the materials to be depicted), but rather because the outside world offers a sensuous body stimulation of the subjective, internal consciousness (the process of experiencing material objects). Forster continues,

Our debt to her is in part this: she reminds us of the importance of sensation in an age which practises brutality and recommends ideals. I could have illustrated sensation more reputably by quoting the charming passage about the florists’ shop in *Mrs. Dalloway*, or the passage where Rachel [Vinrace] plays upon the cabin piano. Flowers and music are conventional literary adjuncts. A good feed isn’t, and that is why I preferred it and chose it to represent her reactions. (19-20)

Importantly, Forster contends that food does not more accurately or precisely portray Woolf’s notion of sensation; instead Forster chooses food to illustrate Woolf’s notion of sensation because it is less conventional and less reputable than the tropes of flowers (smell) and music (sound). In addition to our appreciation of Woolf’s insistence on “the importance of sensation in an age which practises brutality and recommends ideals,” I suggest that our appreciation should include her liquid style, a style which turns to food and eating—the unconventional literary adjuncts that are less reputable in the English tradition—to illustrate her notions and sensibilities. However, eating for Woolf is not merely about the individual body’s relationship to the outside world. Instead, eating can also be an act of communion, or, as Forster writes, a

“dinner of union... [where] all the characters see the best in one another at last and for a moment” (19). As Tromanhauser notes,

By renegotiating the borders between subject and object, Woolf intimates, eating well becomes a way of discovering the most equitable and generous means of relating to others. Woolf’s admonition in *A Room of One’s Own* to ‘dine well’ calls upon us to enlarge the scope of our obligations to others, even or especially those we would eat, assimilate, or incorporate. (16).

This renegotiation of subject and object borders, the manner in which Woolf accomplishes this task in *To the Lighthouse* is through a liquid aesthetic. By privileging that which, through its liquidity, can flow “*freely over each other...*[with] *no determinate shape*” and “do[es] not tend to separate” (italics added “liquid”), Woolf is able to, in Tromanhauser’s words, “[call] upon us to enlarge the scope of our obligations to others” (16).

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CHAPTER 4

Passports, Restaurants, and International Expositions: Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight*

Sasha Jensen, the first person narrator and protagonist, of Jean Rhys's 1939 novel *Good Morning, Midnight* is very conscious of space as she wanders the streets of Paris in 1937 recalling her previous life and times in the same city. As Sasha wanders through certain spaces or to specific locations the reader encounters her past and present through a series of narrative fragments that often resist temporal ordering. As the novel continues and more memories crowd Sasha's mind, and thus additional fragmented flashbacks crowd the narrative for the reader, Sasha eventually commands "Pull yourself together dearie. This is late October, 1937" in an attempt to keep the past and present distinguishable and separate (91). Sasha's direct command to "Pull yourself together dearie," which is formulated in second person (*yourself*), can apply doubly to Sasha and to the readers. In "Exhibitions and Repetitions: Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight* and the World of Paris, 1937" Linda Camarasana argues that recent criticism on the novel focuses too narrowly on characterization and "has paid scant attention to the significance of setting the novel in 1937 in Paris" (52). Camarasana focuses, quite instructively, on the importance of reading the novel alongside the 1937 *Exposition Internationale des Arts et des Techniques Appliqués a la Vie Moderne*. While my own reading of *Good Morning, Midnight* differs from Camarasana's reading in significant ways, I agree with Camarasana that understanding Sasha's attendance of "the Exhibition" and her viewing "the Star of Peace" (Rhys 163)

while visiting Paris in “late October, 1937” (91), clear references to the 1937 International Exposition, are crucial to understanding the text’s theorization and critique of nationality, citizenship, and identity. However, I argue that we should think through the figure of the international exposition alongside two additional figures: the figure of the international restaurants of interwar Paris and the figure of the newly modernized passport. These three figures, while at times operating independently in the novel, overlap considerably in the work the novel does to critique nationality, citizenship and identity. In investigating the figures of the passport, the restaurant, and the international exhibition, my methodology of reading objects and actions echoes Barthes’s methodologies of reading the French gesture of wine in *Mythologies*; I look behind the three figures and closely read how they signify socially.

When theorizing international expositions, French playwright Jean Giraudoux, writing for the *Le Figaro* in 1934, ponders, “What is an official exposition?” and then declares, “It is the nation putting itself on display. It is the sudden exaltation of a country that wants to give the world an example of its civilization, its imagination and its productive forces” (qtd. in Peer 1). If Giraudoux defines an exposition as an activity where countries put themselves on display for a foreign, worldly audience, we should also investigate *how* nations decided to put themselves on display during the interwar period. Using the work of Leora Auslander, one can see two primary ways a country might display itself at an international exposition during the interwar years: through a process of reflecting an established national identity or through a process that, instead, focuses on creating a national identity. Importantly, Auslander’s work

suggests that these two methods, reflection or creation, are directly tied to how a particular nation conceptualizes the status of citizenship, models based on the *jus sanguinis* or *jus soli* principles.

If Giraudoux's quote above asks us to answer the question "What is an official exposition?" we might also ask the question *what is an unofficial or informal exposition?* I suggest that the restaurants in *Good Morning, Midnight*, particularly the ones marked textually as international, become the informal, ad hoc, unofficial international exhibitions, a place for characters to display their national tastes and manners while dining in public on the cosmopolitan streets of Paris in 1937. As such, my work engages with Camarasana's work but suggests that the restaurant is equally important to International Exposition. While much has been made about Sasha Jansen's consumption of material goods in France as an attempt to be read by others as French, and some recent critical attention has turned to her consumption of alcohol, little critical attention has been paid to her consumption of food in the numerous restaurants and cafes that she visits on her return to Paris.⁶⁹ In addressing this critical oversight I turn our attention to the dining scenes in *Good Morning, Midnight* and read these scenes within the historical context of Paris of 1937.

To historicize Sasha's public eating, I draw upon the historical work of Lauren Janes, who indicates that, "During the 1920s and 30s, Parisians demonstrated an increasing interest in culinary exoticism which centered on the cuisines of the French

⁶⁹ See Jane Nardin's article "'As Soon As I Sober Up I Start Again': Alcohol and the Will in Jean Rhys's Pre-War Novels" for a discussion of consumption of alcohol in novels by Rhys.

colonies” (238).⁷⁰ Janes uses three historical points of reference, “the exotic restaurants of the 1931 Colonial Exposition, the annual banquets of the *Société d’acclimatation*, and recipes published in the women’s magazine *Le Pot-au-feu*,” to suggest that “there are times and places in history, as well as in our contemporary society, when variety [of food or national cuisines] becomes more popular and more people seek out the experience of eating new and exotic foods” (238). Janes’s work argues that interwar Paris was such a time and place (238). She writes,

Interwar Paris is a particularly interesting setting for the study of exotic eating because the First World War led to increased French interest in colonial contributions to metropolitan diets. During the First World War the colonies were called upon to help feed French soldiers and civilians as the metropole suffered from severe losses of cropland and manpower. Colonial producers and administrators offered both familiar and exotic foods to French diners. The war also brought significant numbers of colonial soldiers and workers to the metropole, spurring a general interest in colonial exoticism. (241)

Janes also closely reads Paule Hutzler’s claimed experience of having “had dinner with a Senegalese family inside their hut in the Senegalese ‘village’ at the Colonial Exposition of 1931” (241) alongside the more common experiences of the general public’s “exotic dining at the Exposition [that] took place in more structured settings like restaurants and tasting rooms within pavilions” (242).⁷¹ Here in the more common experiences of the general public, the “Exposition guests were... served by colonized peoples in the Guadeloupian, Martiniquais, Tahitian, and Somalian tasting

⁷⁰ Janes uses the terms “‘exotic food’ to refer to non-European foods, especially foods from French colonies throughout the globe, and ‘exotic eating’ to mean the eating of those foods. In interwar Paris, the presence of any exotic foods in a meal usually designated that entire meal as exotic” (240).

⁷¹ Importantly regarding this claimed experience, Jane notes “It seems that this meal was arranged for [Hutzler] as a journalist, but I have found no independent evidence outside of Hutzler’s own account to confirm that the meal actually took place as she describes it” (242).

bars” (248).⁷² Janes’s work notes the success of one particular exotic eatery at the 1931 Exposition: “The West African Restaurant was one of the most popular at the Exposition and was a financial success” (248). While focused on issues of disgust, Janes’s historical work on international eating during the interwar period of France is important for historicizing the public’s reaction to foreign foods. In order to help foreclose the possibility of diners rejecting exotic food as disgusting, Jane argues the experience of exotic eating was mediated during the interwar period. This form of mediation, Janes contends, often involved the tactic of substitution. Using Faustine Régnier’s work, Janes notes,

In the first type of substitution, familiar or local ingredients are substituted into exotic recipes in order to make these recipes more accessible. The second type of substitution is the reverse, when exotic ingredients are substituted into familiar dishes...In the last type of substitution, exotic dishes are included in a meal that follows the structure of a classic French meal, featuring an appetizer, main dish or meat, and dessert. (252)

When Sasha dines at the Pig and Lily in interwar Paris, she engages in the activity of eating foods marked as foreign. As will be discussed in detail below, when Sasha notices on her return to a restaurant in 1937 that its menu is significantly “more ambitious” as it now lists “Specialites Javanaises” such as “Rystafel” and “Nassi Coreng,” we see a restaurant in Paris offering a Dutch version of a Javanese dish (Rhys 44).

⁷² For information about the process that countries go through in deciding which foods to serve at International Expositions, see Richard Tellström, Inga-Britt Gustafsson and Håkan Lindgren’s work “Constructed National Food and Meal Archetypes at International Exhibitions from Paris 1867 to Aichi 2005.” Focusing on the history of Sweden’s choice of food to serve at international expositions, Tellström, Gustafsson, and Lindgren’s “study applies an anthropological viewpoint to how and why certain cultural food and meal forms within Sweden (and Scandinavia) were chosen to represent the nation” (314). Central to their work is the concept that “A national food culture can be understood as part of the set of symbols used by a nation (e.g., flag, anthem, armed forces) to be fully accepted as a nation, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of others” (314). Here national gustatory taste is brought into direct conversation with a nation displaying itself.

The restaurants Sasha Jansen patronizes, particularly this restaurant the Pig and Lily, function as informal international expositions, spaces to be read alongside the novel's clear reference to the 1937 *Exposition Internationale des Arts et des Techniques Appliqués a la Vie Moderne*. I do not wish to suggest that restaurants are the only non-state-sanctioned exhibition that the novel explores; there are many more exhibitions in this text. Most notable examples include Delmar exhibiting Serge's paintings for Sasha (99), Serge's previous art exhibits (103), Sasha's double being exhibited in the Rijksmuseum (117), the exhibition of Loie Fuller the American tourists wish to see (31), and the reference to René exhibiting himself when he first meets Sasha (71). However, *Good Morning, Midnight* also presents exhibitions in the form of multiple films being played (16), mannequins and dolls showing dresses (18), rooms exhibiting one's wealth and social position (33, 38), a café of sleepers which can be seen for entertainment (40), one's actions when queued for the toilet as an exhibition of one's nationality (11), the parade of child-bearing heterosexual couples in the Luxembourg Gardens (53), and the display of consumer goods available for purchase as a possible tonic for depression (145). The novel is constantly engaged with issues of exhibitions on multiple levels.

However, the Pig and Lily is particularly useful to interrogate as an informal international exposition as it displays multiple nationalities' representations through the restaurant's name, decoration, clientele, and food. It is a place marked as newly globalized. On her vacation Sasha returns to the Pig and Lily twice, once alone and once with René, her new acquaintance; against this backdrop of the Pig and Lily's informal international display, Sasha, whose nationality is both questioned by the

novel's characters and, subsequently, by critics of the novel, identifies herself as English. The location of her declaration is important to note, for it is not when Sasha is asked for a passport (at the novel's start) nor when Sasha attends the International Exposition (at the novel's end), a space intended to curate national identities for public display and consumption, that she declares herself part of the English community. Instead, her singular declaration of national identity comes while dining at an internationally marked Pig and Lily. As such, the restaurant serves as a space for Sasha to both perform and claim a nationality, to offer clarification about her identity when her passport, as I discuss below, seems to offer ambiguity.

Both the informal international expositions of the restaurants scenes in *Good Morning, Midnight*, and the state-sanctioned international exhibition at the end of the novel deal with performances of national identity. The restaurant tastes of characters, both literal gustatory tastes as they enjoy (or not) eating food and their figurative tastes in appearances and performances, echo the national projects in constructing a national identity for the consumption at international exhibits. Additionally, the figure of the passport in *Good Morning, Midnight* enters into the novel's complex discussion on national identity and its performance because passports, as I explain below drawing from Martin Lloyd and Andreas Fahrmeir's work, certify one's nationality.

Sasha's passport operates like a state-sanctioned "ticket" that theoretically justifies her occupation of the foreign space of France's capital, much like the tickets Sasha purchases to occupy the public space of the Paris's gardens and the restaurant bills which give permission to sit at a restaurant's private tables and consume food or beverage. After sitting in a chair in the Luxembourg Gardens, Sasha reports, "The

attendant comes up and sells me a ticket. Now everything is legal. If anyone says: ‘*Qu’est-ce qu’elle fout ici?*’ I can show the ticket. This is legal. . . . I feel safe clutching it. I can stay here as long as I like, putting two and two together, quite calmly, with nobody to interfere with me” (53-4).⁷³ Recalling her first experiences in Paris from her past life, Sasha remembers sitting in a café with a coffee cup, nearly empty but for the “very cold and very bitter—very cold and bitter, the last drop” (124). Here the coffee cup functions as a receipt, a marker of consumption, and becomes the ticket allowing her to occupy a coffee shop for “Three hours and a half” despite her English fears that she might be thrown out (124).

However Sasha’s passport, her certificate of nationality issued by a state institution (Fahrmeir “Passports” 96), does not function perfectly as she attempts to travel through Paris. While staying in a hotel, the hotel patron questions the way in which Sasha has recorded her nationality on his paperwork and detains her from traveling from the semi-private space of the hotel to the public streets of Paris. The hotel patron, and his expectations of easily and clearly defined nationalities, embodies the historical discourses of the international community in interwar Europe, which attempted to modernize the passport system and make the perfect model of a passport. Martin Lloyd’s work indicates that the newly modernized passport of the interwar period was highly successful in some regards, but did not address all of the problems in the passport system. Importantly, as the passport is modernized and standardized in the interwar period, and as more citizens carry one, the passport also interpellates the

⁷³ When quoting Jean Rhys, who uses ellipses throughout her work, all ellipses are original unless they appear in brackets [...], in which case they are mine and denote a shortened quotation. When quoting others in the chapter, ellipses outside of brackets denote shortened quotations.

holder as a national of the country, helping to construct and maintain categories of nationality identity, as highlighted by Bridget Chalk's work.

While the passport and the exposition involve displaying and maintaining state categories of citizenships primarily through descriptive and declarative discourses, the two figures operate differently. As both Lloyd and Fahrmeir's works suggest, passports are privately held objects or permits, "certificates of nationality" issued "by state institutions" (Fahrmeir "Passports" 96). The international expositions of the early twentieth-century were instead a public event or spectacle which marked the differences of nationalities in another manner. The exposition, according to Giraudoux's definition, is a presentation of national character rather than a certification of identity. If a passport entails promised permission for a recognized insider to leave for the (foreign) outside, then an international exposition is an invitation extended to the outside (foreign) to enter in and display itself.

Sasha Jansen's Problematic Passport: A State-issued Certificate of Nationality?

Good Morning, Midnight's opening pages begin a few days into Sasha Jansen's "late October, 1937" (91) visit to Paris, a city where she has previously lived for a lengthy period after the end of World War I. After waking and expecting her sixth day in Paris to be "a fine day" (13), Sasha's travels outside of the hotel room are delayed. She is prevented from leaving the semi-private space of the hotel for the public space of the streets of Paris when both her nationality and passport are called into question:

When I get downstairs the patron tells me that he wants to see my passport. I haven't put the number of the passport on the fiche, he says.

[...] What's wrong with the fiche? I've filled it up all right, haven't I? Name So-and-so, nationality So-and-so. . . . Nationality—that's what has puzzled him. I ought to have put nationality by marriage. (14)

Sasha's nationality and passport are both questioned in this scene. Bridget Chalk's *Modernism and Mobility: The Passport and Cosmopolitan Experience* argues that "the emergence of the passport regime resulted in major changes in the way national identity and mobility were understood and experienced in the early twentieth century" (7).⁷⁴ Chalk's work on the passport focuses on issues of mobility and notes that the general public helped to "verify the identity of suspicious-looking persons" (130) traveling through the space of interwar France. As police and public increasingly worked together, "Social interaction in public places...became the occasion for unofficial immigration control, and people were skilled at determining the nationality, profession, and legitimacy of others" (131). Chalk also writes, "The streets of Paris operated like national borders, and the authority to determine who was in or out extended to each and every citizen" (131). Because Sasha's performance of her nationality does not match her passport, the patron functions as an "unofficial immigration control" (131) and can delay her travels. It appears that there are two issues with Sasha's fiche, or paperwork. The first is the missing passport number. The second is that the patron questions Sasha's representation of her nationality, questioning if she should not instead be listing her nationality based on her marriage.

Lloyd suggests that a passport can be theorized as a privately held object or permit certifying a person's nationality. When theorizing the passport, Lloyd warns us

⁷⁴ Investigating "a central preoccupation of modernist texts [that] focused on mobility and cosmopolitan experience," Chalk's work explores "the way in which governmental administration of national identity bleeds into urban cosmopolitan life and structures the mobile individual's experience of and perspective on the world" (6).

against conceptualizing the passport too narrowly from our own historical perspective. A passport, he reminds us, is more than a permit for travel: “We tend to think of a passport simply as something a person needs in order to travel but this ignores the fact that passports and their forerunner were also concerned with such concepts as identity, nationality and allegiance” (25).⁷⁵ Historicizing the development of the modern passport system, Andreas Fahrmeir notes three distinct characteristics in the bureaucratization of the passport:

First, passports became compulsory for all travelers. Second, passports ceased to be semi-personal letters of recommendation issued to persons of rank, which were useful only where the recommender was known or had official influence, but became certificates of nationality issued by bureaucrats. And, third, travel and identity documents were no longer issued by the corporations of *ancient régime* societies, universities, guilds, or municipalities, but by state institutions. (Fahrmeir “Passports” 95-6)

Importantly, as Fahrmeir so aptly phrases it, passports develop from informal documents, which recommend a person’s character to a foreign audience, to become official documents or “certificates of national identity” generated, controlled, and guaranteed by nation states (96).

Fahrmeir attributes the first steps in the modernization of the passport system as “an invention...of the French Revolution,” refuting what he sees as the “persistent myth...[that it was] an invention of the First World War” (95). As Fahrmeir notes, traveling by the train in the 1850’s was already putting significant stress on institutional requirements for travel well before WWI:

The visa requirements and intensive controls which the passport system required were incompatible with the railway age...While it had been possible to delay a river boat for several hours...this could not really be

⁷⁵ Lloyd notes that early passports were used to move inside the borders of a country: “...a passport was also used to travel within a country, often from one town to another” (26).

done with a train in the 1850's....Visa requirements clashed with timetables dictated by railway companies; a traveler who arrived in Brussels on the evening train from England was not able to procure the necessary Prussian visa before the morning train left for Cologne. (103-4)

However, the relationship between modern travel and need for a functional passport system was further stressed by “the restless turmoil of post-war [i.e. post-WWI] Europe, with the hordes of people crossing borders daily” and the League of Nations called for “an International Conference on Passports, Customs Formalities and Through Tickets in 1920” (Lloyd 120). Lloyd identifies this moment as particularly important in the development of the modern passport, a moment which crystalized international desires to solve multiple problems in the system by creating the model passport: “One of the most far-reaching proposals drawn up by the [1920] Conference was that in order to expedite control during a journey the signatory countries should all agree on a uniform style of passport issued to identical standards and to supersede all present passport editions” (121). Six years later in Geneva, at a “Conference convened again...to assess the progress made towards the ‘international passport,’” the British passport was declared as “perfection itself” and “Countries that had not yet produced an ‘international passport’ were recommended to adopt the British Model” (128), a model passport that had been completely overhauled and been in production since 1921. Ultimately, “The intent of the [1926] Conference was not to try to get the British passport model adopted by all but to promote the universal design [outlined in the 1920 conference] of which the British interpretation appeared to be the most desirable” (129).

The modern passport, as we know it today, and its success, was born from these conferences in 1920 and 1926. Lloyd deems the two conferences' work as remarkably fruitful in solving many of the post-WWI passport system issues, noting, "The Conference's success, although only partial, was in absolute terms quite astonishing. It had managed by 1929 to change utterly the face of passports worldwide, replacing some designs that had been in use with no real modification for sixty or seventy years, and this in less than a decade" (129-30). The movement to modernize and standardize the document quickly spread beyond The League of Nations as other nations followed suit (130). Fahrmeir notes that an important aspect of modernizing the passport system involved codifying the genre of the passport, which in turn also codified the bearer's national identity. One of the implications of the newly modernized international passport system is that "the passport requirement probably reinforced the consciousness of one's nationality" while at the same time the "the travel documents were made out in an internationally recognized code" (Fahrmeir "Passports" 100).

By the mid to late 1920's modern passports had become "certificates of nationality" issued "by state institutions" (Fahrmeir "Passports" 96) even if the notion and categories of nationality were still at times very problematic and resisted fitting easily into the document's forms, boxes, or lines. While modernity offered faster, less expensive and more widely dispersed modes of international travel, at first straining the feasibility and sustainability of the modern passport system, modernity also mediated some of the very strains on the system itself. In order to meet the increased demand for passports for international travel, and to keep production costs of passports

low, nations increasingly turned to machine-made passports: “the Canadian passport of the 1930’s...was completed on a specially adapted typewriter made by a company called Elliott-Fisher” (Lloyd 143).⁷⁶ In early twentieth century modernity offered not only problems for international travel and the certification of one’s nationality, but it also offered promising solutions.

Traveling in Paris in “late October, 1937” (Rhys 91), Sasha Jansen occupies a western European world that expects passports to be standardized, codified, and easily read. The patron of the hotel expects Sasha’s certified information to be easily transferable from her passport to his hotel paperwork. This transfer should include “the number of the passport,” her name, and her nationality (14). Due to the missing information (passport number) and the suspect information (nationality), the patron informs Sasha “he wants to see my passport” (14). Yet of these two concerns, the suspect information (nationality), rather than the omission, seems to trouble the patron the most. Sasha reports that her nationality is “what has puzzled him,” and she is instructed by the patron that she “she ought to have put nationality by marriage” (14).

While the modernized passport of interwar Europe was largely codified, with similar information rather uniformly displayed across most nations’ version of the passport, the idealized passport did not fix all problems in the passport system. At least one descriptor on the newly codified passport, that of nationality, remained a problematic issue for some, particularly for the British (despite their internationally acclaimed passport). The term “nationality,” Lloyd suggests, was a relatively unstable

⁷⁶ Lloyd notes that the typewriter was not the first machine to increase the speed of passport production: “The first application of machines in connection with the production of passports was centuries old and fundamental—printing. The change from the [old] handwritten document to the [new] pre-printed form onto which a clerk made manuscript entries was a natural progression which brought several benefits” (140).

and under-theorized term that made its appearance in a post-revolution France as a term to replace, and be held in distinction against, “the words ‘allegiance’ and ‘subject’ [which] were far too redolent of monarchy and so both the USA and France...adopted the word ‘citizen’ or ‘national’ to describe what would have formerly been called the ‘subjects’ of their country” (172). If a passport is an official document “concerned with such concepts as [the] identity, nationality and allegiance” (25) of an individual, the notion of nationality, at least in the nineteenth century, was not particularly stable. Indeed, the question of whether a nationality need be explicitly stated on the passport was an openly discussed question with multiple answers; many South American countries, working under the “presumption...that the passport is only issued to nationals of that country,” did not explicitly list the nationality of individuals on their passports (172). For Britain, who was internationally acclaimed for its passport of perfection, the notion of nationality was listed on the passport pages, but what was identified as one’s nationality was truly complex; “during the twentieth century, political developments made it necessary to change the description of national status in the UK passport. The British Empire evolved into the British Commonwealth. Member countries become independent within and without it and finally the UK entered the European Union” (173). The terms or words certifying one’s nationality quickly changed depending on where one might be born, to whom one might be married, and the particulars of that moment’s political changes. The various categories—particularly for the British—were ill-defined, fluid, and often, it seems, altered or added in an ad hoc process.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ A few of the labels used on 20th century British Empire/Commonwealth passports are listed by Lloyd: “British Subject, British Born Subject, British Subject by birth, British Subject by birth—wife of a

Sasha, confronted with the hotel patron who, in his puzzlement, instructs her that she “ought to have put [her] nationality by marriage” (Rhys 14) on the paperwork, finds herself at an impasse with the patron of the hotel, a hotel which itself is located at an “impasse” (9). Sasha finds the only solution available to her; she tells the patron she “will let him have the passport in the afternoon” so that he can attempt to fix the discrepancy between his perceptions, the paperwork, and her state-issued certificate of nationality (14). I return to this specific problem of Sasha’s nationality below after discussing the implications of the complex international laws on marriage and citizenship in interwar France, but it is first important to note that Sasha’s passport is not the only passport of concern in *Good Morning, Midnight*. While Sasha’s passport creates confusion when she attempts to leave the semiprivate inside of the hotel for the public outside of cosmopolitan Paris, and it is certainly an annoyance for her, the lack of passport for another character in the novel is much more problematic.

The character referred to as René, and identified as a gigolo, lacks a passport. As such, René’s ability to officially move in and throughout the city, state, and continent, is impeded by his lack of a passport; due to his undocumented, uncertified, and unpermitted status, he is fearful of the constant consequences if the police or other authorities discover him. Claiming to be “Canadian, a French-Canadian” (74), though appearing to Sasha to be Spanish or Spanish-American (75), René’s story is that “he joined the Foreign Legion, was in Morocco for three years, found it impossible to bear any longer, and escaped through Spain—Franco’s Spain” (74). Presently René’s

British Subject, British Subject—Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies, British Subject without citizenship, British Protected Person, British Overseas Citizen, British Citizen, British Dependent Territory Citizen, British Subject—the holder’s status under the Immigration Act 1971 has not yet been defined, Commonwealth Citizen” (173-4).

ability to travel is severely limited, and he is at risk for arrest, without his proper papers. By traveling through the warzone of “Spain—Franco’s Spain” (74), an area in the state of exception where territories’ sovereignty and ability to control international travel are in the turmoil of war, René has avoided scrutiny and consequences of unpermitted (illicit) border crossing. However, he now finds himself stranded in Paris, unable to freely occupy the city streets without concern of being confronted as an unpermitted, undocumented visitor. Finding himself in a tenuous situation, he can neither safely stay in Paris nor depart to another location without risk. He wishes to leave for London in order to start a new life, working as a gigolo on the other side of the channel (156-8).⁷⁸

Spotting Sasha in a café in Paris and identifying her as someone who might be able to facilitate the purchase of false passports or travel documents, René says, “I thought perhaps you could help me about my papers. You see, I have no papers, no passport. That’s just why I’m in trouble. The slightest accident and I’m finished. I have no papers. But if I could get a passport, I would go to London. I’d be safe there” (76). Rather than risk crossing the channel without a passport, René wishes to secure a false or forged passport. Sasha does not have the connections to help René illicitly secure a passport and we, as readers of the text, must remember that for the remainder of the novel René remains at risk for trouble with the authorities since he lacks proper documentation. Indeed, towards the novel’s end, we are explicitly reminded of this fact.

⁷⁸ As Camarasana aptly phrases it, “The former Legionnaire [René], having deserted the battlefield for the bed, engages in erotic rather than heroic maneuvers now” (59).

At the end of the novel René's lack of a state-issued certificate of nationality directly impacts his actions, and on the level of the novel's plot, I argue, becomes central to the novel's troubling final scene. Due to his lack of official documentation René neither meets nor confronts the threatening *commis voyageur*: "I'd better not get into a row [with the *commis voyageur*, Sasha's troubling neighbor in the hotel] before I have my papers" René states when he is tempted to confront Sasha's neighbor (150). The unfronted *commis voyageur* later creeps into Sasha's room during the novel's final pages and functions as a sexual substitute for René.⁷⁹ Importantly, this substitution at the novel's end will replace one male traveler, René, of undeterminable nationality with another male traveler, the *commis voyageur* or traveling salesman.⁸⁰

In short, René is looking to secure a false passport, in an attempt to minimize his limitations as an undocumented individual. René is attempting to co-opt the modern passport system by falsifying permits to travel, erase his suspect past, and create a newly falsified identity that appears state-approved. Sasha's passport, on the other hand, presents its own limitations and problematics. Working from within the system, her delays and confrontational examinations show the limits of the legitimate

⁷⁹ For an insightful and in depth reading of the *commis* and the implications of his substitution for René, see Mary Lou Emery's work in *Jean Rhys at "World's End": Novels of Colonial and Sexual Exile*, specifically chapter eight titled "Good Morning, Midnight: The Paris Exhibition and the Paradox of Style."

⁸⁰ The *commis voyageur*, described by Sasha as like a "ghost" (14, 35), a "skeleton" (14), "a paper man" (35), and "something that doesn't exist" (35), is not a character's whose nationality is questioned by Sasha or the novel. I read this character as markedly French due to his assigned name, his language, and oppositional position in regards to Sasha; Sasha imagines "he tells his friend on the floor below: 'An English tourist [i.e. Sasha] has taken the room next to mine. I have a lot fun with that woman'" (34). He is the one character to whom Camarasana's generalization that "All the characters Sasha interacts with in her brief visit are from disputed or colonized territories," does not seem to apply (61). If the *commis voyageur* is read as French, Sasha's likening of him to "a paper man" (35) becomes of particular importance for it marks him, again, in contrast René, who is a man that is officially paperless—an undocumented traveler.

uses of the modern passport system for women who may or may not have an international marriage, or, at the very least, have an ambiguous marital status.

Restaurants: The Pig and Lily as an Informal International Exhibition

Rattled by the patron's demands and implied accusations of misrepresenting her nationality, the delayed Sasha eventually leaves the semi-private space of the hotel for the public space of the Parisian streets. While walking, as if to settle her nerves, she assures herself that "This is going to be a quiet, sane fortnight. Not too much drinking, avoidance of certain cafes, of certain streets, of certain spots, and everything will go off beautifully" (15). One of Sasha's original goals in her vacationing in Paris is to stay in control of her ability to relate the past to the present. Sasha resolves "to have a programme, not to leave anything to chance—no gaps. No trailing around aimlessly with cheap gramophone records starting up in your head, no 'Here this happened, here that happened'" (15). While she organizes her vacation and arranges her life in both spatial and temporal terms, the two vital ingredients for any program, Sasha does indeed privilege space over time. Sasha reports that, "I have decided on a place to eat in at midday, a place to eat in at night, a place to have my drink in after dinner. I have arranged my little life" (9). Here one can see that Sasha's arranged little life is primarily organized by space. Sasha's sentence is an unusual construction; through repetition and syntax, her sentence highlights space and time, doubly using prepositions through her construction of eat *in at* midday, eat *in at* night, drink *in after* dinner. Sasha's grammatically unnecessary repetition of the words "a place" three times further underscores her central concern of space over time (midday and night) or

activity (eat and drink) and her preoccupation with organizing and controlling her bodily movements throughout space, a preoccupation that echoes the passport system's concern with bodily movement across space.

Sasha views the world as containing two distinct types of spaces: spaces where good things can and do happen or spaces where bad things can and do happen. Her worldview does not merely apply to her fortnight vacation in Paris, but is a view she has held for a while:

My life, which seems so simple and monotonous, is really a complicated affair of cafés where they like me and cafés where they don't, streets that are friendly, streets that aren't, rooms where I might be happy, rooms where I never shall be, looking-glasses I look nice in, looking glasses I don't, dresses that will be lucky, dresses that won't, and so on. (46)

With this logic of dichotomy operating in her mind, it is no surprise that one of Sasha's immediate concerns, after her delayed departing of the hotel, is to identify good spaces for her eating and drinking. Aside from thinking to herself, this identification of spaces for future meals and drinks is one of the first activities that Sasha accomplishes: "Thinking all this, I pass the exact place for my after-dinner drink. It's a café on the Avenue de l'Observatoire, which always seems to be empty. I remember it like this before" (15).⁸¹

Similar to the passport system, which certifies individuals' status for a foreign audience in an attempt to control bodies' movements through space, Sasha attempts to control and certify spaces, particularly eating and drinking spaces, as either good (allowing for happiness) or bad (promising displeasure) in order to control her own body's movement through Paris. The most important criterion for Sasha's

⁸¹ While Sasha identifies this café as the place for her "after-dinner drink" later in the day, she immediately breaks this planned program and enters the café to "have a Pernod" (15).

certification of a restaurant or café as either good or bad is Sasha's past experiences in the space. In short, Sasha's previous life in Paris often informs her selections and choices on where to eat and drink.⁸²

The restaurant in *Good Morning, Midnight* called the Pig and Lily is a space that should be read in context with the novel's scenes involving the international exhibition, a clear allusion, as mentioned before, to the 1937 *Exposition Internationale des Arts et des Techniques Appliqués a la Vie Moderne*. While the latter is an official state-sanctioned international exposition, the former is an informal international exhibit of cosmopolitan Paris's diversity, which organically occurs under the private sector (of restaurants). The novel highlights the international nature of the Pig and Lily through close and focused attention on its past and current proprietors, its official and colloquial name, the general and particular of its décor, the historical changes to its menu, and the various clientele and potential clientele that enter through its door. As mentioned before, Sasha knows this restaurant from her previous life in Paris. An acquaintance "always called that bar the Pig and Lily, because the proprietor's name was Pecanelli" (39).⁸³ Sasha too uses this name Pig and Lily, an Anglicized corruption of the former proprietor's non-English-sounding name.

⁸² Yet Sasha's programming of space and time is not always successful. More than once Sasha confuses the space she identifies as having the potential for *good* with the space that is potentially *bad*; "here I am on the wrong side of the street in the hostile café" (46). In this passage Sasha's confusion of the two spaces foreshadows the novel's ending in which René and the *commis voyageur* are confused (or substituted) for each other. Sasha's inability to select the "correct" cafés or men must be contextualized against her consumption of alcohol. Confusing (or substituting) the cafés, she is "a bit tight" (46). When she confuses (or substitutes) the men Sasha is so "very drunk" that her legs fail to work (186, 188). This final scene of *Good Morning, Midnight* is the only time when Sasha, a profuse drinker if not a high-functioning drunk, has consumed enough alcohol to lose control of her body.

⁸³ It is not entirely clear who the pronoun "he" refers to in this passage of book, but I read this as a male companion (probably not Sasha's husband Enno). Sasha describes this unnamed male as "one of those people with very long, thin faces and very pale blue eyes. After working in a Manchester shipping-office until he was twenty-five, he had broken away and come to Paris, and was reading his medical degree at the University. A loving relative supplied him with the money—that was one story. But

While this restaurant in Paris was once made “to look like an olde English tavern” (39), the new proprietor—marked by “a Dutch nose” (41)—specializes in “Javanese food” despite the artwork of “English hunting—scenes [still hanging] on the walls” (41). Sasha ironically labels these English hunting-scenes as looking “very exotic” placed in their context of Paris and she muses “Tally-ho, tally-ho, tally-ho, a-hunting we will go. . . . The cold, clear voices, the cold, light eyes. . . . Tally-ho, tally-ho, tally-ho. . . .” (41). During this visit, the first of two visits in the novel, Sasha is eating alone. Importantly, Sasha relates to the hunted in the artwork decorating the establishment; she does not identify with the hunters.

To understand why Sasha might identify with the hunted, rather than the hunters, while dining alone in the Pig and Lily, it is useful turn to Joanne Finkelstein.⁸⁴ As mentioned previously in chapter two, Finkelstein suggests that the solitary female diner, particularly in the early twentieth century, is a figure that demands recognition from a space whose history has been closely linked with patriarchal power structures:

When women dine out without men a series of social violations may be seen to occur. Such women are publicly taking their own pleasure and they are doing so without any visible attachment to those for whom they are usually responsible, namely, children, the elderly and men. Dining out for women can be a demonstrative refusal to meet the social obligations of being in service to someone else. Women dining together or, more rarely, alone, are publicly demanding a status not usually granted them. (50)

If a collection of women diners, without the presence of man, can be viewed as social violation, the potential is even greater for the solitary woman diner. When the act of

another was that he really kept going on money he won at cards very well” (39-40). This, and the additional information that Sasha reports, does not align with what we know of Enno. This unnamed “he” is the male character that introduces Sasha to the café of sleepers, “as if he were exhibiting a lot of monkeys,” where the glass eater frequents (40).

⁸⁴ Finkelstein is a critic whose work I engaged with in chapter two in my reading of Evadne Price’s novel *Not So Quiet*.... In chapter two I look at Bertina Farmer and Smithy as female characters dining in public, the latter importantly alone, who are likewise at risk for social reprisals.

restaurant eating is identified as social violation, or a dereliction of the woman's service to others, a woman can potentially experience consequences during the dining experience.

Dining out for women may well afford them some pleasure but, for the most part, women are aware that this pleasure may be contested. After all, the public domain, without the company of men, has never been their territory; women have been historically prohibited from restaurants, private clubs, hotels and bars. . . . In response, she may be subjected to subtle reprisals such as poor service from restaurant personnel or the unwelcome overtures of strangers. The service shown women in restaurants, even by female attendants, is notoriously inferior. . . . These attitudes recapitulate the view that women dining out are contravening social expectations. (51)

Sasha's act of dining alone, as a woman, has the potential to be read by others as a social violation and she, without the protection or guarantee of a male, risks being mistreated by staff and other clientele in the patriarchal space of the restaurant. It is no wonder why Sasha identifies with the hunted, rather than the hunters, in the English hunting scenes hanging on the walls of this restaurant in Paris.

In addition to the "very exotic" (41) artwork hanging on the walls, the Pig and Lily's internationalism is highlighted in their menu. Sasha not only comments on the current fare served in the restaurant, but compares it to the food served when Sasha visited the restaurant in her previous life in Paris. Once marked by predominantly continental fare or transatlantic fare, the new proprietor with his "Dutch nose" has shifted his menu significantly (41). Sasha remarks the restaurant "used to be a place where you could only get hot dogs, choucroute, Vienna steak, Welsh rabbit and things like that. Now it's more ambitious. 'Specialites Javanaises (par personne, indivisibles): Rystafel complet (16 plats), 25.00, Rystafel petit (10 plats), 17.50, Nassi Coreng, 12.50'" (44). While the restaurant's menu shows immediate and significant

change, from continental European food to food from further afield, it is also particularly useful to read closely the names of the specific dishes to highlight this shift.

John Ayto's *The Diner's Dictionary: Word Origins of Food & Drink* is helpful in tracing the histories and significances of the dishes originally served at the Pig and Lily. Ayto indicates that while the term "hot dog" has been traced to the "colloquial use of *dog* to mean 'sausage' in American English from around the middle of the nineteenth century" the food itself has German origins, "probably [having come] to America with German and other Central European immigrants in the mid-nineteenth century" (176). As for the term "choucroute," Ayto reports that "In Alsace in northeastern France, on the German border, sauerkraut has become *choucroute*, and *choucroute garnie* is a traditional Alsatian specialty: the sauerkraut is cooked with a knuckle of ham and pieces of shoulder or smoked belly of pork and served additionally with poached Strasbourg sausages and potatoes" (326). Tracing this dish to Alsace again closely ties the restaurant's original food to continental fare. "Vienna Steak," Ayto indicates, is "An early name, first recorded in 1900, for what would now be termed a *hamburger*" (387), which in turn, Ayto reports, is a meat patty whose name traces its origins through or from Hamburg, Germany (166). As for Welsh Rabbit, Ayto indicates "There is no evidence that the Welsh actually originated this dish of toasted cheese ... [but] they have always had a reputation for being passionately fond of it" since the fourteenth century (393). The original menu, remembered by Sasha from her previous life in Paris, is markedly international in nature, but is also distinctly tied to the traditional fares of continental Europe and the

British Isles, including a German-inspired dish (renamed in America), an Alsatian specialty, another German dish named after the Austrian capital, and dish loved in and named after Wales.

While the original restaurant fare displays an international disposition, the new changes to the menu highlight an ever-expanding context, one further afield than France's immediate neighbors. As for closely reading the new proprietor's new fare, the specialties from Java, Susie Protschky's work in her article "The Colonial Table: Food, Culture and Dutch Identity in Colonial Indonesia" is most informative. Protschky's work contends that this restaurant's new fare, *rystafel*, or *rijsttafel* in Dutch, is a new (or modern) international food recently created and marked by colonial enterprise. The name translates as "rice table" and "developed as a prominent symbol of colonial eating in the [East] Indies, in opposition to such lowly commoner food as *tempe*" (350), which was commonly served on the street and eaten while standing, rather than seated at a table indoors (350). According to Protschky, *rijsttafel* is marked on the one hand as "more or less derived from Indonesian cooking practices" (350), but has also

evolved into a meal associated primarily with the colonial ruling class because, apart from festival occasions, ordinary Indonesians did not eat on such a scale, restricting themselves more typically to one dish (often of vegetables) with rice. European preferences also determined further variations from the local idiom. The Dutch *rijsttafel* was consumed hot, whereas Javanese diners (according to Onghokham) often prefer their food cold or tepid. (351)

While derived from local food culture, the Dutch *rijsttafel* differs in both temperature (served hot) and size (excessive options and quantities) from the traditional pre-colonization meals of the local Javanese:

The varied and intricate dishes and condiments that comprised a *rijsttafel* were a labour-intensive affair that often involved several cooks and a procession of servants, and also took a long time to consume. While a modest *rijsttafel* might consist of ‘only’ six dishes, the grander version amounted to a luxurious feast, one that was eaten in particular places associated with elite Dutch culture. (351)

Indeed *rijsttafel* might be labeled, from both the view of the colonizer and the colonized, as a particularly Dutch presentation of Javanese food. Not only was this dish associated “as a particularly *colonial* habit” in the Netherlands and Europe (351), but also by the local Javanese population; “When hosting Dutch visitors, Javanese elites often made a point of putting *rijsttafel* on the menu, which suggests that this particular mode of serving food came to be seen among indigenous elites as a peculiarly Dutch habit” (351). Protschky’s work focuses on the historical complexity and international context of the dish/manner of eating. *Rijsttafel* is a product of Dutch colonialism, one that both captures and misrepresents the foods and manners of the Javanese. Protschky contends, whether one is European, Dutch, or Javanese, the dish communicates a particularly Dutch interpretation of foreign or exotic food. In the Pig and Lily, a Parisian restaurant decorated to look like an old English tavern, a Dutch proprietor, who has turned away from the food of continental Europe and the British Isles, now serves “Specialites Javanaises”—which we may accurately read as peculiarly colonial presentation of Javanese food. The original menu and its shift to food with origins further afield, and with more complex international socio-political contexts, highlight the internationalism of the Pig and Lily.⁸⁵ Like a palimpsest, the

⁸⁵ Like the 1937 International Exposition, my reading of which appears later in this chapter, which kept growing to allocate more space for additional and larger national representations from across the globe, the menu at the Pig and Lily has expanded with ambition, offering a larger sphere of food than merely continental fare.

Pig and Lily displays multiple international cultures—the most recent imprints do not fully erase its past incarnations.

However the art on the wall and the food being served are not the only two items that cast the Pig and Lily as a place where multiple nations are on display. This restaurant displays a wide range of patrons who appear to be from different nations. Those that enter this restaurant in Paris are distinctly “Not French” (41) and are later identified by Sasha as “Dutch” (44), and “Chinese” (44). The five Chinese that arrive “walk down to the end of the room in single file and stand there, talking. Then they all file solemnly out again, smiling politely” (45). They do not order food or drinks, for “before they ordered drinks they wanted to see the fire lighted in the open grate, which is part of the olde English atmosphere. They wanted to see the flames dance” (45), yet the proprietor does not indulge their request to complete the “olde English atmosphere” of the place (45). Here in this scene, the Pig and Lily functions most explicitly as an informal exhibition, the visiting Chinese wish to consume an exhibition of Englishness. At the same time, however, the Chinese display themselves and their manners, to the eyes of the restaurant’s patrons, themselves becoming an exhibition of a stubborn Chinese consumer. In addition to the artwork, which display’s a view of an “authentic” olde English tavern (complete, it seems, with the option of a roaring fire), the food, a Dutch version of the food of Java that tells the story of colonialism, the patrons of restaurants also exhibit internationalism.

Reading Sasha's Englishness in the Pig and Lily

Returning to the Pig and Lily in 1937 for the first time since her previous life in Paris, Sasha encounters representations of England, Dutch, Java (Indonesian), and Chinese culture on display; against this backdrop of national displays Sasha twice declares herself as part of a community of an English community, a passage often overlooked by critics discussing Sasha's nationality. While looking over the menu (44) at the restaurant, she recalls her past life alongside her present day experiences; she wishes "to be left alone [by society]. No more pawings, no more prying—*leave me alone*" (italics in original 43) and identifies with the protagonist from one of her favorite fictional books *The Autobiography of a Mare*, a book about a personified horse. In the Pig and Lily Sasha recalls a line from the novel: "'At first I was afraid they would let gates bang on my hindquarters, and I used to be nervous of unknown people and places.' Quotation from *The Autobiography of a Mare*—one of my favourite books. . . . We English are so animal-conscious. We know so instinctively what the creatures feel and why they feel it" (43).⁸⁶ A character always conscious of the way others read her nationality, this is the single place in *Good Morning, Midnight* where Sasha claims a national identity. "We English," thinks Sasha, using the first person plural pronoun "we" not just once, but twice, placing her in a collective community of the English.

In addition to Sasha's claim of being English, her past, present, and future life all closely associate her with England. Sasha's past life is largely centered in England;

⁸⁶ Unlike most other cultural references in *Good Morning, Midnight*, this reference does not seem to accurately point to a historical artifact outside the text. As far as my research shows, while this title is quite close to *Black Beauty: the Autobiography of a Horse* (1877), written by the English author Anna Sewell, neither the quotation nor the image of a horse fearful of strangers letting closing gates strike its hind quarters appear in Sewell's book.

she tells Delmar a very brief synopsis of her past, saying, “I lived here [in Paris] up to five years ago. Then I went *back* to England” (66). By including “back” in her synopsis, Sasha suggests that England is home, if not her place of origin. This “back” is present when Sasha, thinking to herself about her past, phrases her return as going “back to London that famous winter five years ago” (41). Previously, when living in Paris and in need of money, it is to England that she writes requesting money and where “At last the money comes from” (143). London is also her future, which she reveals when thinking about the advice Delmar offered to her; “[His advice] sounds pretty simple. I must try it when I get back to London. . . .” (67). Sasha budgets her money to ensure she has sufficient funds for “the journey back to London” (153). Additionally Sasha has extensive knowledge about England and London, answering inquiries from multiple characters when questioned; she knows “Notting Hill Gate,” the former abode of Serge (95). Later, when Sasha returns to the Pig and Lily and dines with René, René questions Sasha extensively about her home country of England (156-8). Sasha knowledge of London is not mere empirical knowledge, but is experiential knowledge.

English is a national identity that Sasha claims, despite her other efforts not to be read as English by others in Paris, but to instead appear as French. Sasha presumes the *commis voyageur* reads her as “an English tourist” (34); feels the questioning hotel patron reads her hat, and by extension herself, as shouting “*Anglaise*” (15); and imagines “The patronne saying [about her]: ‘*L’Anglaise* has picked up someone’” (79). Sasha worries, perceives or assumes many people read her as English. Yet this is not merely her subjective preoccupation or paranoia; the novel presents us with

evidence that exists outside her own subjectivity. We encounter characters that do read Sasha as English or potentially English. The shorter Russian that Sasha meets on the street, who seems to be a doctor, identifies Sasha as a typical Englishwoman, stating that “Englishwomen have melancholy expressions,” and inquires “What god do they worship in England, what goddess” (47). René identifies Sasha as at least a speaker of English, if not English herself, when he accosts her: “Excuse me, but can I speak to you? I think you speak English” (71). Additionally, so too does at least one fellow patron of the Pig and Lily. An unnamed female patron of the Pig and Lily says, in regards to Sasha, “The Englishwoman? No, I don’t know her” (41). This girl may not know Sasha, but she notices enough of Sasha’s Englishness to label her an Englishwoman. The international space of the Pig and Lily becomes a space for Sasha’s Englishness to become particularly visible, not only to herself, but also (yet again) to others, as her Englishness is set against a background of other national displays.⁸⁷

However Sasha attempts to cover over her Englishness. She attempts to display a French appearance, rather than an English appearance, by trying to re-create herself as an individual aligned with the French tastes and manners. During her vacation, she purchases a French hat to replace the one that shouts “Anglaise” (15, 68-70), goes to a French hairdresser to dye her hair a “nice bold cendré” (61), purchases French “scent and stockings” (149) from the “Galeries Lafayette” or “the Printemps” (145), and picks out a dress for purchase before leaving (153). All of these consumer products or services are part of her plan to transform her outward appearance: “I must

⁸⁷ While Sasha’s Englishness, set in the context of the Pig and Lily, is made particularly visible to the characters of novel, interestingly, as I discuss below, critics seem not to notice this passage or her declaration.

go and buy a hat this afternoon, I think, and tomorrow a dress. I must get on with the transformation act” (63). Yet despite this act of transformation, Sasha is constantly and consistently read and identified by other characters in the text as English. Turning to the work of Roland Barthes, we might consider how Sasha’s attitude and manners towards alcohol might undercut her attempts; Barthes argues that the collective French manner of drinking, without intention of intoxication, posits a particular gustatory taste (specifically wine) as a cohesive communal or national identity (58-9). Perhaps Sasha’s gesture of drinking (in a distinctly non-French way) signifies more loudly or more clearly than her other manners.

Sasha is preoccupied with how she is viewed and read by the people she meets on Paris’s streets; she is painfully aware the normalizing social powers of everyday choices and manners—from what type of hat one wears (and the manner of its tilt) to what food one orders (and the type of café one patronizes)—and how these choices map onto social categories such as class. This concern of Sasha partially aligns her observations in conversation with Pierre Bourdieu’s work on taste; however, since Sasha is equally concerned with selection as a marker of collective national identity, Barthes’ theorization of taste through national identity and manners also offers potential for informing our readings of Sasha’s selections. Sasha is both attracted to and repelled by the normative forces that apply pressure to her choices, performances, and values. Whether buying a dress (or hat), styling her hair, or taking a meal, Sasha must negotiate society’s pressure to select the “correctly” signifying choice. At times she selects a choice in an attempt to remain invisible and unnoticed (quiet cafes), at times she wishes to appear common and respectable (through hats and hairstyles), and

yet at other times she poses as moneyed and powerful (with her fur coat). Sasha, like Bourdieu's theory of taste, contends that exercises in taste are always already bound up in social signification, class distinctions, and power (Bourdieu 54-6).

While previously living in Paris, Sasha's husband Enno and his friend Paulette investigate Sasha's Englishness and Frenchness by testing her tastes in food.⁸⁸ This particular meal is not prepared by or consumed in a restaurant, but is instead prepared with a small heating element inside of "a hotel [room] in the Rue Lamartine" (Rhys 136).⁸⁹ The scene can be roughly placed towards the beginning of Sasha and Enno's early life in Paris; the couple has multiple friends and this collective community has enough income to occasionally eat out. The context of Sasha's test by food is that Paulette and Enno have "had dinner out. [Sasha] hadn't gone with them because [she] felt sick, but that was over and [she] was hungry" after Paulette and Enno return (135).⁹⁰ Enno's friend Paulette "cooked the steak over the flame bleue" and Sasha eats "it all up" (135).⁹¹ Enno and Paulette inquire if Sasha enjoyed her steak, or found anything unusual about it, and she replies, "I noticed it was a bit tough" and continues,

⁸⁸ Additional scenes where food consumption and preparation indicate a national identity abound in *Good Morning, Midnight*. Two notable and illustrative examples include: the waiter that "uses sugar in the German way" (121) and when Sasha quickly learns (and then uses to her advantage) the foreign French manners and rules surrounding the consumption of coffee in a café, which allow her occupy a café's seat for more than three hours after ordering only a single coffee—an act which, to her, seems hard to believe is permissible, particularly from her own cultural or national sensibility which deems such an act as subversive (124).

⁸⁹ Early in the novel another meal cooked on the "*flame bleue*" is referenced: "One night I am in the room with Lise. We have just had a fine meal—spaghetti cooked on the *flame bleue* and a bottle of *Asti spumante*" (133). *Flamme bleue* was the maker of small portable heating and/or cooking burners that ran on various fuels; with models resembling something like a backpacking stove or small portable heater, it seems useful to think of this unspecified device as similar to today's phenomena of the countertop cooking appliance (e.g. the George Foreman Grill)—an inexpensive portable device used in informal kitchens to cook food when other resources (commonly found in full kitchens) are not at hand.

⁹⁰ Sasha's sickness is never fully explained, but perhaps one reading, noting its onset and disappearance, which is accompanied by her hunger, might point to Sasha's being already pregnant in this scene.

⁹¹ Sasha has previously confessed, in regards to her husband's friend and dining companion, "I admire and try to copy [Paulette] and am jealous of her" (134). The relationship between Sasha and Paulette is tense up unto this very scene, where the two bound over the meal of horsemeat.

“Otherwise I liked it all right” (135). Enno and Paulette tell her “It was horse-steak” and the two closely watch her “with narrowed eyes, expecting [her] to do the Anglaise stuff” of reacting negatively to the French custom, and English taboo, of eating horsemeat (135). When Sasha fails to express disgust in the expected English fashion, Sasha feels that “Paulette knew I wasn’t one of the comfortable ones, and never had been, and hadn’t had such a grand time as all that. Afterwards she liked me better” (135). Ultimately, the test of Sasha’s tolerance of the horsemeat highlights Sasha’s class identity rather than her national identity; Sasha’s hunger and economic position trump what would presumably be her national distaste for horsemeat.⁹²

Unlike her vacation in 1937, Sasha’s previous life in Paris with her husband (at the time) Enno is marked by the activity of eating inside hotel rooms multiple times, rather than eating in public restaurants, particularly when their money starts to run low. The horsemeat scene is not the only time Sasha and Enno eat inside their hotel room. Sasha recalls a time from her past when the young couple, without enough money to eat in restaurants, resorted to sneaking food into their Paris hotel rooms in order to eat. Once when Enno returns to the hotel room Sasha notices, “The bottle of wine was under one arm, and [Enno’s] coat was sticking out, because the loaf of bread was hidden under it” (129-30). It seems that they, on occasion, smuggle in food that needs only preparation or assemblage, and at other times they smuggle in food that requires preparation and cooking as well, such as spaghetti or steaks (133, 135). However, the items must be smuggled into the hotel room covertly, because “The patronne didn’t like us to eat in our room. Just once in a while she didn’t mind, but

⁹² This passage figures taste as class based rather than nation based, aligning with Bourdieu’s contentions in *Distinction*.

when people eat in their room every night, it means they really have no money at all” (130). To avoid appearing poor to the hotel proprietor who allows them shelter in exchange for money, they covertly smuggle food into the room when they find themselves without the financial resources to eat out.

Sasha’s past experiences of sneaking food into hotel rooms are markedly different from her experiences, on her return to vacation in 1937, when she dines as a solitary female. Importantly, however, both methods of eating have the potential to be interpreted as social violations. As mentioned previously, when Sasha dines alone in the Pig and Lily she risks social consequences and reprisals, such as bad service and inappropriate advances from strangers, as she violates social expectations for the traditionally patriarchal space of the restaurant (Finkelstein 49-51). However the eating of food, and even more so the cooking of food, in a hotel room can also be interpreted as a social violation by the hotel patron or patronne. This social violation, that of misusing the hotel room as a kitchen and or dining room, can exist even if a male such as Enno is present. The consequences for such a violation are more severe as well; the couple risks being denied shelter if the patron or patronne becomes too annoyed or suspicious.

Sasha’s reaction to the information that she has eaten horse does not demonstrate the English distaste and contempt for French food. If she *thinks* and *identifies* herself as English while eating in the public space of restaurant and relating to a fictionalized talking horse from a novel, she has already previously *performed* herself, not as French, but instead as a poor Englishwoman. These two scenes, viewed side by side, highlight a critical duality of Sasha’s way of relating to a national

identity, a joint project of thinking and performing. Critics concerned with Sasha's national identity have largely focused on the performative aspects of Sasha's national identity and have either missed, or chosen to ignore, her declared communal identity with the English when she remarks "We English" while dining at the Pig and Lily.

My reading of Sasha as English—based on, first, her explicit declaration, second, her desires to cover over her performance of Englishness, and, third, how other characters read her—is a reading that goes against the interpretation of many critics concerned with national identity in *Good Morning, Midnight*. One group of critics reads Sasha as sharing a similar background to the author of the novel, Jean Rhys, suggesting that Sasha, like most of Rhys's other female protagonists, is tied to the West Indies, rather than England.⁹³ Referring to the work of Sanford Sternlicht and Elaine Savory, Camarasana writes, "a number of critics have noted, the [bégúine] music [played when Sasha meets the painter Serge] identifies Sasha as a Creole with a past, if not an origin, in the Caribbean"⁹⁴ (65). Sternlicht specifically contends in his own work that,

Sasha is identified as an Englishwoman who married a foreigner and who has spent much of her life on the Continent, especially in Paris. Nevertheless, Rhys seems determined to remind her readers that she herself is neither English nor French but a person of West Indian origin who is urbanely aware of the various nationalities, cultures, and races

⁹³ There are also critics, like Chalk, who feel that Sasha's nationality is ultimately indecipherable in the text; Chalk writes, "This label [i.e. a stranger calling Sasha *L'Anglaise*] does not even definitively represent Sasha's national identity, which we are never given, so the classification of her as such serves less to define her than to provide her with a category of identity that answers for her basic appearance" (132).

⁹⁴ Savory writes, "The Caribbean is a submerged text in [*Good Morning, Midnight*], even more so than in *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie*. To find it, the reader has to be alert to clues. Sasha's denial of national identity (she is supposedly English) is one such clue. If she truly were English, she would presumably have a sense of national identity, however conflicted, and even if she were English in France, her Englishness would still signify. But the issue of eased nationality is so important in the novel that it suggests something is being coded about erasure of the Caribbean which stands behind the English affiliation and gives Sasha her acute critique of the English and of power" (117).

on the globe. As part of her creative process, Rhys establishes her coterminous relationship with her heroine through encoded references to a mutual background. (95)

Camaransa and Sternlicht's assessment that Sasha is from the West Indies is an assessment with which I strongly disagree, for a number of reasons. Critics putting forward this particular reading of Sasha's connection to the Caribbean rely primarily on only two minor pieces of textual evidence, passages, I would highlight, that are open to multiple interpretations.

This group of critics that reads Sasha Jansen as a Caribbean character highlights two passages from the novel to support their interpretation. First, Sasha has feelings that she is at the seaside when her new acquaintances Delmar and Serge play "some *béguine* music, Martinique music, on an old gramophone" inside of Serge's studio (92). Sasha, hearing "The gramophone [...] grinding out '*Maladie d'amour, maladie de la jeunesse,*'" seems transported to another time and place (92). These critics interpret her feeling of transport, from Paris studio to beachside hammock, as a memory of her past, a memory which invokes the Caribbean: "I am lying in a hammock looking up into the branches of a tree. The sound of the sea advances and retreats as if a door were being opened and shut. All day there has been a fierce wind blowing, but at sunset it drops. The hills look like clouds and the clouds like fantastic hills" (92). Yet this momentary experience of being transported might be read equally as an invented daydream, rather than a remembered past.⁹⁵ Even if the interpretation is granted that Sasha, as the music is playing, is experiencing a recollection of her past

⁹⁵ A remembered past and an invented daydream are not so easily distinguished in this text. For example, Sasha's recollection of her final day working for Mr. Blank morphs from a remembered past into an alternatively imagined fantasy of what Sasha, vacationing in 1937, wishes she had said all those years ago in her youth (29).

(rather than invented daydream), it seems most tenuous to argue that a remembered beach points to a national or regional origin. Alongside the bégúine music passage, the critics often highlight a story that Serge tells of the “half-Negro—a mulatto” woman from Martinique, reading this minor character as a double for Sasha, despite Serge’s adamant statement “No, no [... she is] Not like you at all” (95). Indeed the “half-Negro” woman of Serge’s story does, to some degree, draw important similarities to Sasha’s life, but, particularly given Serge’s adamant denial of the two being similar, these similarities do not mean the two share a national or regional origin. These two minor passages, to the second group of critics, allow them to suggest that Sasha is from the Caribbean. However, I do not fully believe that many critics read Sasha as Caribbean solely based on the interpretation of these two minor passages, particularly as the counterweight of Sasha’s past and future is so closely tied to London, England—as I have painstakingly tried to highlight. Instead I believe this reading of a Caribbean Sasha is widely accepted for extra-textual reasons. Firstly, most of Rhys’s other female protagonists are tied to the Caribbean and, of course, *Good Morning, Midnight*’s plot loudly echoes the personal life of Jean Rhys, who was born in Dominica.

I am also more prone to questioning the assumptions that critics make about the nationality of Sasha’s husband Enno. While Camarasana is quite quick to contend that Enno is Dutch, I read Enno as possibly, if not probably, French. Enno has lived in Paris “since he was eighteen” and seems to have served in France’s military,

“enlist[ing] during the first week of the war” (114).⁹⁶ Camarasana’s work on *Good Morning, Midnight* twice labels Enno as Sasha’s “Dutch husband” (60, 61), but does not provide textual references for this label. Also problematic in Camarasana’s essay is her contention that *both* René and Enno have served in the French Foreign Legion (58). While René has (or at least has claimed to have) served with this division of France’s armed services (Rhys 74, 78), a division specifically designated for foreign-nationals, no such textual reference exists in *Good Morning, Midnight* for Enno’s service with the Foreign Legion. While *Good Morning, Midnight* provides some details for Enno’s service, “He enlisted during the first week of the war” (114), it is certainly not clear if Enno served in the French Foreign Legion (as a foreign-national) or in a regular division of the French armed services (as a French citizen). Perhaps Camaransana is instead thinking of Jean Rhys’s first husband, Willem Johan Marie (Jean) Lenglet, who was a Dutch citizen and joined the French Foreign Legion (Hollander 160). Like Camaransana, Sternlicht identifies Enno as “a Dutch man” in his work (95).

However, to read Sasha as from the Caribbean and Enno as Dutch, I feel, is to read too much of Jean Rhys’s biography onto the text of *Good Morning, Midnight*.⁹⁷ Instead, I find it productive to consider the implication of a reading where Sasha is English, given the reasons I provided above. Importantly, if one is to agree with my reading of the two characters’ nationality, that Sasha is English and Enno is French,

⁹⁶While much of Camarasana’s article is insightful, clear, and informative—clearly an influence on my way of reading *Good Morning, Midnight*—her comment that Sasha has a “Dutch husband” (60, 61), I feel, is either incorrect or unsupported.

⁹⁷Unlike other critics, Chalk’s work on *Good Morning, Midnight* is not quick to rush to Rhys’s biography, but instead turns to consider early drafts of the novel, which include a passage where Sasha is in possession of an expired English passport (144).

this reading would highlight an important discrepancy between how England and France would see Sasha's nationality if she is no longer married to Enno in 1937, the year that Sasha returns to visit the Paris of her past (91) and clarify her confrontation with the hotel patron who challenges her nationality (14).

As mentioned above, when Sasha attempts to leave her hotel, she is temporarily detained because her nationality resists fitting into the boxes on her hotel's paperwork. Confronted with the hotel patron who, in his puzzlement, instructs her she "ought to have put [her] nationality [on the paperwork] by marriage" (14), Sasha tells the patron she "will let him have the passport in the afternoon" so that he can attempt to fix the discrepancy between his perceptions and her state issued certificate of nationality (14). As readers we know that Sasha has indeed been married, eloping with Enno to the Netherlands short after the end of the first World War (114-5), but whether or not she remains married is unsettled; by her vacation in 1937 her marriage has effectively ended—either formally or informally—as Enno has already permanently abandoned her years earlier (142-3). I return to this earlier discussed passport scene to highlight that Sasha's specific problem of nationality (either defined by marriage or not) is caused by the complex international passport laws in interwar Europe for married, separated, and divorced women. Under my reading of Sasha as English and Enno as French, the specifics of these complex and confusing laws are worth outlining in detail.

Fahrmeir's work in *Citizenship: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Concept* provides the historical outcomes if a British woman married a French man during the interwar years. Fahrmeir states that "As a rule, the citizenship of a married woman [in

interwar Britain] was that of her husband” (130). As such, if a British woman married a French man, Britain would recognize both as French citizens. As for France’s view on the matter, “alien women who married French men henceforth remained aliens [in the eyes of France] if they could retain their original citizenship” (130). Since, in this case, the wife would not continue to be recognized as a British subject (by Britain) then France, because of Britain’s policy, would recognize the wife as a French citizen. This, at first glance, seems a rather simple solution if applicable to *Good Morning, Midnight*; Sasha, if she is read as British, would have been recognized as French (by both Britain and France) if married to a French Enno. However, Sasha’s husband Enno has left her (either officially or unofficially) and therefore the situation becomes much more complex. Fahrmeir notes that “in order to prevent former British subjects from being treated as aliens in the British Empire, British-born wives of aliens whose marriage had ended could resume their original citizenship if they resided in the Empire permanently” (130). However, it is not entirely clear, in this case, if France would also recognize the wife’s return to British citizenship, or if France might view the woman as still a citizen of France.

The problems of nationality, passports, migration, and international law was highlighted and discussed at international venues throughout the early twentieth-century to see what might be done to clarify the international confusion. The 1889 International Exposition in Paris was used as a platform for European nations to discuss issues involving citizenship, international laws, and migration. “As part of the 1889 Paris World Exhibition, the French Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Colonies organized an international conference on state intervention in international

migration” (Fahrmeir “Passports” 93). And while the International Exposition was a useful event to discuss the complex matter, a solution was not quickly arrived at. A few decades later, the question of nationality by marriage was a central concern in the larger debates on citizenship and nationality. “In 1930, an international conference on married women’s citizenship held at The Hague recommended that married women’s citizenship should no longer change without the women’s consent, though few countries took note” (Fahrmeir *Citizenship* 132). The desire to clarify the muddled and confusing international laws regarding female citizenship and marriage existed in interwar Europe, but an adequate solution had not yet been found or agreed to.

Given this historical context, the initial confusion regarding Sasha’s nationality, whether it should be recorded by marriage or not, is more easily understood. If we read Sasha as English and Enno as French, and because it is not clear if their marriage has informally or formally ended, and because it is not clear if Sasha might choose to reclaim her original citizenship, it is hard to verify what Sasha’s nationality “should” be in the eyes of the French hotel patron or other French authorities.⁹⁸ International laws on citizenship and marriage were a preoccupation of interwar Europe, but little was done to clarify the various conflicts.

⁹⁸ If Camarasana, Sternlicht, and Savory’s reading of a Caribbean Sasha is accepted, Sasha might well be traveling with a passport from the United Kingdom in 1937. As Kathleen Paul’s work in *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* indicates, “the 1914 [British Nationality and Status of Aliens] act established uniform procedures for naturalization of aliens and confirmed the *ius soli* principle of nationality, whereby all individuals born within ‘His Majesty’s dominions and allegiance’ automatically acquired British nationality at birth. The act affirmed the existence of a common status—British subjecthood—and established a common code—the means by which all members of the British Empire acquired their primary nationality and became British subjects. The code was based on the principle that all those born or naturalized within the empire possessed only one nationality” (11). In short, during the interwar period, individuals from the British West Indies would have been formally considered British subjects/nationals and traveled under the British passport.

Good Morning, Midnight's scene, where Sasha declares herself as part of the English community while eating among multiple national displays at the Pig and Lily, helps to clarify the scene where Sasha's passport is questioned. She herself, as well, is on display as an Englishwoman to the proprietor and clientele as she eats alone in the restaurant. As mentioned in my introduction, the Pig and Lily should be read as an informal international exhibition of cosmopolitan Parisian diversity and should be read in context with scenes in *Good Morning, Midnight* where Sasha attends the state-sanctioned international exposition with René, a clear allusion, as mentioned previously, to the 1937 *Exposition Internationale des Arts et des Techniques Appliqués a la Vie Moderne*.

The International Exposition: Nations Putting Themselves on Display

Before Sasha and René attend the International Exposition, they dine together at the Pig and Lily. While this is Sasha's second visit (during her 1937 vacation) to the restaurant under new management (41) and now serving "Spécialités Javanaises" (44), it is René's first visit. Sasha's motivation for returning to the restaurant this time is quite notable. She introduces the place to René ironically as "another of my gay, chic places," a place where she actually suspects to herself that "we'll have it all to ourselves" (155).⁹⁹ But Sasha is unpleasantly surprised that "there are several other people there, all eating seriously" when she arrives (155). One reason Sasha has selected the Pig and Lily is because she expects the place to be empty. She clearly

⁹⁹ This is the second time that Sasha takes René to place she expects will be empty and describes it ironically to him as chick and gay; Sasha takes René "to the café where [she goes] most nights—the place that is always empty" (76) and says, "This is my sort of place—this chic, gay place. Do you like it?" (77). Here, at the (earlier) café, René responds, "No, I don't like it, but I understand why you come here. I'm not always so fond of human beings, either" (77).

was not impressed with the newly offered food on her last visit as she thinks to herself “I expect [René] notices that the food isn’t at all good, in this damned boîte that isn’t at all gay” (156). Sasha’s second motivation for going to the Pig and Lily is that she wishes to see herself reflected in a kind mirror and in a good light and she knows the bathroom at this restaurant has both: “I want to see myself in a good light and I go upstairs to the lavabo, *one of the attractions of the Pig and Lily*. So clean and so resplendent, so well lit, with plenty of looking-glasses and not a soul there to watch you. Am I looking all right? Not so bad. Surely not so bad.” (italics added 155-6). The new food is not an attraction, according to Sasha, but the bathroom is.¹⁰⁰ Here, at the restaurant that functions as an informal international exhibition, we should wonder how the bathroom—generally a space of privacy and not exhibition—might display a nationality. Sasha has previously noted the connection between nationalities and bathroom etiquette when she thinks:

Lavabos . . . What about that monograph on lavabos—toilets—ladies? . . . A London lavabo in black and white marble, fifteen women in a queue, each clutching her penny, not one bold spirit daring to dash out of her turn past the stern-faced attendant. That’s what I call discipline. . . . The lavabo in Florence and the very pretty, fantastically-dressed girl who rushed in, hugged and kissed the old dame tenderly and fed her with cakes out of a paper bag. The dancer-daughter? . . . That cosy little Paris lavabo, where the attendant peddled drugs—something to heal a wounded heart” (11).

For Sasha, some London bathrooms display London manners, with organized lines and disciplined users with polite patience; a bathroom in Florence, Italy allows women

¹⁰⁰ Recall, as mentioned previously, that Sasha has categorized her world by sorting mirrors into complimentary mirrors (which reflect her as beautiful) and other mirrors (which cast her as less than beautiful): “My life, which seems so simple and monotonous, is really a complicated affair of cafés where they like me and cafés where they don’t, streets that are friendly, streets that aren’t, rooms where I might be happy, rooms where I never shall be, looking-glasses I look nice in, looking-glasses I don’t, dresses that will be lucky, dresses that won’t, and so on” (46). Here the bathroom at the Pig and Lily shows Sasha that she looks “Not so bad” (156).

to exhibit emotions of tenderness and affection; and a Parisian bathroom offers tools, specifically drugs, to heal a broken heart or to escape emotional turmoil through chemical intervention. Not only do restaurants and cafés exhibit national identities, but so too do their bathrooms.

If the food leaves much to be desired, René does not comment upon it. He has declared, on their way to the Pig and Lily, “I’m hungry [...] I’m so hungry that I can’t think of anything but eating” (155) and, after Sasha’s return from the Pig and Lily’s bathroom, “he doesn’t seem to notice” the bad food but instead “He eats a lot” (156).¹⁰¹ While eating and talking, René inquires about England and Sasha’s knowledge of it. He questions Sasha about nightclubs and tailors in England, but Sasha indicates that she is “the wrong person to ask all this,” indicating her position in England is not as a consumer of male fashion items (156). While unable to give him the specific fashion knowledge that he requests, through irony and humor Sasha attempts to instruct René about life in England and what to expect in London. Disabusing him of his misconceptions, particularly René’s misconceptions of English sexuality, Sasha attempts to present Englishness in a candid light.¹⁰² She exhibits to him her understanding and experiences of what England and Englishness are.

¹⁰¹ As Immanuel Kant writes, “Concerning the interest of inclination in the case of the agreeable, everyone says that hunger is the best cook, and people with a healthy appetite relish everything that is edible at all; thus such a satisfaction demonstrates no choice in accordance with taste. Only when the need is satisfied can one distinguish who among the many has taste or does not” (95-6). Kant’s thoughts on hunger equally apply to Sasha as she consumes the horsemeat; her hunger precludes her nationally determined tastes.

¹⁰² René displays a mixture of naiveté, ridiculousness, and crudeness as he tells Sasha his impressions of what England will be like: “A curious situation—according to his friends. At least fifty per cent of the men homosexual and most of the others not liking it so much as all that. And the poor Englishwomen just gasping for it, oh, boy! And aren’t they prepared to pay, if you go about it the right way, oh, boy! A curious situation” (137). René questions Sasha about English sexuality, something he has a definite opinion on, but wishes to learn more about in order to ensure his future career plan as a gigolo is financially viable and ultimately successful when he gets to “The untapped gold-mine just across the Channel” (157). Later the two return to the topic of English sexuality again when René asks “Is it true

As their conversation continues it becomes, in Sasha's opinion, more crass and she is eventually embarrassed. Sasha reports that René is "Talking away about the technique of *métier*—it sounds quite meaningless. It probably is meaningless. He's just trying to shock me or excite me or something" (157). René's discussion of the sexual technique of his trade as gigolo makes Sasha slightly uncomfortable, but when he questions the restaurant staff, in Sasha's absence, about the availability and proximity of hotel rooms for a sexual encounter, Sasha feels "vexed" (162, 163) about the situation at hand (161-3). Eventually Sasha wishes to leave the restaurant, noting "I start wondering why I am there at all, what I am doing in this box of a restaurant, swapping dirty stories with a damned gigolo. I want to get away. I want to be out of the place" (163). In the restaurant, wanting to leave, looking to get away, Sasha suddenly says to René:

"I'm going to the Exhibition," I say. "I want to see it *again* at night before I go."

"The Exhibition?"

"Haven't you been to it?"

"No, I haven't. What should I do at the Exhibition?"

"Well, I'm going. You needn't come if you don't want to. I'll go by myself."

I want to go by myself, to get into a taxi and drive along the streets, to stand by myself and look down at the fountains in the cold lights. (*italics added* 163)

Sasha uses the International Exposition as a way out of the suddenly uncomfortable situation of dining with René the gigolo. This decision to return to the exhibition seems spontaneous; Sasha and René have not previously talked about the event or expressed any interest in it. Importantly, Sasha trades one international exposition, the

that Englishmen make love with all their clothes on, because they think it's more respectable that way?" (158). Have previously attempted to display the England she knows, and finding René resistant to such knowledge, Sasha attempts the new strategy of disabusing his misperceptions through the use of humor; Sasha wryly replies, "Yes, certainly. Fully dressed. They add, of course, a macintosh" (158).

informal exposition of the restaurant, for another, the state-sanctioned exposition, the 1937 Internal Exposition of Paris.

As I explain above, the International Exhibition is a clear historical reference, as previous critics like Camarasana and Deborah Parsons have pointed out, to the 1937 *Exposition Internationale des Arts et des Techniques Appliqués a la Vie Moderne* in Paris. Critics such as Camarasana and Parsons take a teleological view that “Sasha’s journey to the Exhibition in the penultimate scene *completes* a nightmare she has at the beginning of the novel” (italics added Camarasana 53). Parson also reads this penultimate scene as a linear progression: “At the end of the novel Sasha *does* actually visit the exposition, indeed is adamant that she must go. Or perhaps Rhys has finally accorded her heroine a degree of progress in her urban journey; Sasha has at least eventually discovered the ‘Way to the Exhibition’” (italics in original 148). However, close textual attention, particularly to the fact that Sasha wishes to return *again* to the exposition, suggests that Sasha’s attendance is figured through repetition rather than a teleological marker of progress; central to my reading is that Sasha has already previously attended the exposition, an important oversight by many critics engaging this scene. The fact that Sasha is returning *again* to the Exhibition suggests a circular pattern of repetition rather than a linear path towards a completion. Sasha declares to René “I’m going to the Exhibition [...] I want to see it *again* at night before I go” (italics added 163). Sasha’s attendance of the exhibition does not “complete” (Camarasana 53) or mark “progress” (Parson 148) towards an end goal but is rather a repetition, or circling back, of a previous journey.¹⁰³ If anything, the movement from

¹⁰³ Sasha is a character that is largely at odds with linear development of teleological progressions, as demonstrated by her unusual manner of watching films. While Sasha presents her viewing of her first

the informal international exhibits of the restaurant to the state-sanctioned international exposition marks a way out of the awkward conversations with René, but it does not suggest the development or progress of Sasha's character or her journey through Paris.

Sasha desires to experience the coldness of the international exhibition late at night, when fewer people will be present. Once at the Exhibition Sasha remarks, "There aren't many people about. Cold, empty, beautiful—this is what I imagined, this is what I wanted" (163). Again, for the third time, she has brought René to a space she hopes will be both cold and empty. This is the first time, however, that she has introduced a space, which she hopes to be cold and empty, to René without irony. Unlike the Pig and Lily, which disappoints Sasha's expectations of coldness and emptiness, the Exposition fulfills her desire: "We stand on the promenade above the

film as successful and a normal experience, reporting proudly that she was "Laughing heartily in the right places" (16), a more engaged reading of her habits shows a resistance to consume linear narrative story lines, plot, and causality when she visits the cinema. Sasha's film viewing practices, which are marked by the strategies of repetition and interruption, attempt to shatter the linear and teleological drives of the films' plots. At "a cinema on the Champs-Élysées," she revels that she stays after the conclusion of the film to "see it through twice" (16). Sasha's refusal of the film's ending, and the socialized norm of leaving the cinema at the film's completion, is echoed again in her next film viewing experience, occurring a few days later. On Sasha's second visit to the cinema, she supplies the reader with a plot summary of the film and it quickly becomes apparent that the film is a comedy. This second film includes: "a good young man trying to rescue his employer from a mercenary mistress" (108), the manufacturing of "toilet articles," dialogue about suppositories, and a wedding ring that "flies [...] into the middle of [a] pond" (108). The plot, characters, and dialogue all point to a comedy, as do the audience's reactions; Sasha reports that "Everybody laughs loudly at this, and so do I" (108). However, before this comedy has the obligatory comedic dénouement, where the genre expectations promise the finding/returning of the lost wedding ring, the successful marriage of the employer's daughter to the employee, and the rescuing of the business from the mercenary mistress, Sasha reports "the film shows no signs of stopping, so I get up and go out" (108). At the moment Sasha leaves the theater the comedy appears to be approaching the plot's climax. Just before the dénouement can resolve the storyline and allocate the proper genre-prescribed comedic and happy ending, Sasha leaves the cinema. Sasha rejects the film's comedy and her precise moment of leaving the theater recasts the film as a tragedy; Sasha walks out at the moment when the protagonist is trouserless and searching for the lost ring in the middle of the pond (108). Sasha refuses the narrative and plot of the story in the scene by breaking and shortening the experience. Sasha leaves at the exact moment, shattering the linear plot of the film, which can recast its genre from comedy to tragedy. Through strategies of repetition and fragmentation, Sasha's consumption of entertainment in cultural products reveals a thorough distaste for teleological plot lines.

fountains, looking down on them. This is what I wanted—the cold fountains, the cold, rainbow lights on the water. . . .” (164). Indeed the coldness, the cold is repeated twice in close succession, and the beauty of the Exhibition is experienced and slowly creeps into Sasha and René: “We stand for some time, leaning over the balustrade [...] I can feel him shivering [...] The lights shimmering on the water, the leaping fountains, cold and beautiful. . . .” (164). Sasha’s aesthetic experience at the international exposition unites coldness with the beautiful.

The space of the Exhibition, visited in a rather unusual manner (at night when the exhibition halls and pavilions are closed and few people visit), is markedly different from Sasha’s nightmare of the Exhibition at the novel’s start, which figures the international experience as a normalizing force that equates difference with shame. The nightmare that Sasha has, after using or abusing the sleeping aid luminal (13) occurs the night before Sasha is detained by the hotel patron for failing to mark her nationality correctly on the paperwork. Sasha describes the beginning of this nightmare:

I am in the passage of a tube station in London. Many people are in front of me; many people are behind me. Everywhere there are placards printed in red letters: This Way to the Exhibition, This Way to the Exhibition. But I don’t want the way to the exhibition—I want the way out. There are passages to the right and passages to the left, but no exit sign. Everywhere the fingers point and the placards read: This Way to the Exhibition. . . . I touch the shoulder of the man walking in front of me. I say: “I want the way out.” But he points to the placards and his hand is made of steel. I walk along with my head bent, very ashamed, thinking: “Just like me—always wanting to be different from other people.” The steel finger points along a long stone passage. This Way—This Way—This Way to the Exhibition. . . . (13)¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ The description of the nightmare continues for another paragraph, devolving into a more surreal and nightmarish setting and narrative, complete with a figure that echoes the *commis voyageur* who states he is Sasha’s father, but has blood “streaming from a wound in his forehead” as he accuses Sasha of murder (13).

The underground scene of her nightmare, located in a cramped London underground Tube station (rather than the metro of Paris), forces Sasha into a crowd and allows her only a unidirectional mode of travel towards a prescribed end goal or destination, complete with authorized written directions (placards) controlling the movements of humans through space. An authorized way out is not an option in Sasha's nightmare; her desires for a way out are overruled in an attempt to shame her into normalizing behavior. Unlike her nightmarish vision, when Sasha attends the Exhibition she experiences it as something beautiful, offering her a moment of unity with René. Her mode of travel to the Exhibition, rather than the nightmare version of the subway, is accomplished via a taxi (163, 165) and at nighttime when fewer people are attending, which ensures Sasha is not confined in any nightmarish crowds. As I discuss below, when Sasha visits the exposition, her vision is not unidirectional; she focuses doubly on the fountains inside the exposition area and a particular monument that is built "just outside [the exposition's] walls" (Herbert 31). Below the monument's shining star marks both the way out and the way in to the exposition.

Camarasana points out, "the only part of the Exhibition Sasha and René comment on is the Star of Peace, a monumental structure intended to symbolize international harmony the Exhibition was to have promoted. From the characters' vantage point by the Trocadéro entrance to the Exhibition grounds, however, the monument to peace would have been behind them" (51). Indeed, referring to the maps of the 1937 International Exposition, Camarasana is correct; if on the balustrade watching the fountain displays, the Star of Peace would be outside of one's field of view. It is also important to note that this monument was outside of the walls of the

main exposition itself (Herbert 31), marking the point of entrance for the main gates to the Exposition. If one was “leaning over the balustrade” as Sasha and René are as they “stand on the promenade above the fountains” (Rhys 164), the historical documents of the Exposition show that one would instead see the remarkable and dominating “buildings of Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany that faced each other across the aptly named Champs de Mars” (Parsons 148).¹⁰⁵

It is the façade of these two building that remains, today, what is so remarkable about the 1937 International Exposition. Shanny Peer’s *France on Display: Peasants, Provincials, and Folklore in the 1937 Paris World’s Fair* remarks that “visitors were struck by the sight of two dominant structures that imposed their inescapable, foreboding presence. Towering above the other foreign pavilions in the palace gardens, the Soviet and Nazi pavilions faced off in a symbolic show of strength” (Peer 44). Peer describes the architectural competition between the two buildings as told by the architect, Albert Speer, for Nazi Germany’s building:

While looking over the site in Paris, I by chance stumbled into a room containing the secret sketch of the Soviet pavilion. A sculptured pair of figures thirty-three feet tall, on a high platform, were striding triumphantly toward the German pavilion. I therefore designed a cubic mass, also [striated with heavy pilasters], which seemed to be checking the onslaught, while from the cornice of my tower an eagle with swastika in its claws looked down on the Russian sculptures. I received a gold medal for the building; so did my Soviet colleague. (qtd in Peer 44-5)

Today, this image of the massive facades, one complete with Germany’s fascist symbol the swastika and the other with a large communist Russian statue of workers,

¹⁰⁵ For a visualization of this space, see Herbert’s *Paris 1937: Worlds on Exhibition*, particularly chapter one “The View of the Esplanade” (pages 13-40). The map and various views discussed in this chapter are presented in figure 2 (page 12), figure 3 and 4 (page15), figure 9 (page 24), figure 10 (page 32), and figure 12 (page 35) of Herbert’s work.

is commonly viewed as metaphorically standing in for the tensions building before WWII and as foreshadowing the historical events to come shortly. The image of these two building dominated the imaginations and discourses of those attending the exposition, critics like Albert Flament and also the general public. Herbert notes that:

The imposing towers of Germany and the Soviet Union, facing off against each other at the base of the Trocadéro gardens, dwarfed the surrounding pavilions and dominated the axis running from the Trocadéro to the Camp de Mars. These structures, seemingly incommensurate with the rest of the fair, transgressed the principles of good sportsmanship and fair play. The two sculpted figures atop the Soviet Pavilion, Albert Flament objected, were “totally out of proportion”; they exemplified “the bad manners, the excess of pride and the vain pretensions” that “make distasteful impression on the French, an impression shared, in front of this audacious paroxysm, by foreign visitors” (36).

Standing out from the other national pavilions, the German and Soviet pavilions were held as “distasteful” and “out of proportion” by Flament (qtd in Herbert 36) and this controversy, along with the two nation’s perceived aggressive stances, appeared as content for a political cartoon in 1937 as well (Herbert 37). This scene, of the confrontational German pavilion facing the Soviet pavilion opposite, set on the Champs de Mars, a street named after the Roman God of war, is not recorded in *Good Morning, Midnight*. Historical documents of the International Exposition clearly indicate that Sasha and René, from their spatial location described in the novel’s text, would have had a commanding view of this remarkable scene.

To understand how the German and Soviet pavilions came to be, it is important to see how the international exposition shifted historically from international exhibit halls to nation-specific, self-contained pavilions. Unlike like earlier expositions in the late 1800s and early 1900s, which traditionally exhibited various national tastes by

housing commercial or artistic products in an international exhibition hall, the 1937 exposition saw a distinct shift in focus from national products to nationalism. “By 1937, the nation itself as a collectivity, rather than its products, would become the primary register of comparison” when placed on display (Peer 7). Peer notes that,

Most of the foreign pavilions aimed to represent collective national attributes over those of individual exhibitors, and documented aspects of the nation’s cultural, political and social life alongside its industrial, commercial and artistic production. The collective, synthetic nature of these exhibits expressed the nationalist mood of the 1930s and echoed the totalitarian character of the dominant regimes. The display of national products had given way to the reification of nations on display in 1937. (37)

This conceptual expansion, from national products to nationalism, was embodied physically, in the layout and space, in the 1937 exposition as there was “a shift towards self-contained national pavilions” (6). As such, both the footprint and the budget of the exposition quickly grew. Plans for the 1937 International Exposition quickly expanded as nations requested self-contained pavilion space, rather than exhibition space in a general hall. As more nations decided to display their national identities in self-contained pavilion spaces, there were two models operating for how to exhibit a nation. Leora Auslander’s work suggests that these two models are directly related to how a nation theorizes citizenship.

Considering issues of nationality, Auslander focuses on two theoretical models for citizenship operating in Western Europe during the end of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth century, the German model of *jus sanguinis* “in which citizens are understood to be born rather than made” and the French model of *jus soli* “in which citizens are understood to be as much made as born” (110). Tracing the long history the two models of nationality in Germany and France, Auslander argues that

the two countries' divergent models were thoroughly entrenched in Germany and France as the nineteenth century led to the twentieth century (118).¹⁰⁶ Auslander also suggests the *jus sanguinis* or *jus soli* models of citizenship directly correlate with how a given nation presents its national identity at international expositions. Given that the German model defined the German citizen through blood relations—"even if a person of German parentage had never set foot on German soil, nor spoken a word of German, nor eaten a German meal, they would nonetheless be German, morally, intellectually, and emotionally" (119)—little work need be done by the nation to create a common, or loyal, tie between citizens:

The emphasis on blood-ties between individuals and the nation in Germany meant that there was little emotional pedagogy [on the part of the state that was] needed or possible. Those born of non-German parents would remain foreign (as would their children) and those born of German parents would, in a way very unlike the French, already always have known how to be German. A consequence of all of these differences...is that far less was invested by the German national State than by the French in everyday aesthetics intended to inculcate national sentiment into the inhabitants of the German lands. (119)

As long as the German citizen replicates itself, the German nation need not be concerned with creating, educating, or forming a German national identity, which is an a priori category. As such, the Germans were concerned with representing German identity through a process of reflecting it; this reflection of German identity was designed for a foreign audience:

...the moment when the German national State became most intensely involved with [national] taste was for the Universal Exposition. The

¹⁰⁶ Auslander writes, "Following unification in 1871, the new German state endorsed the principle of essentially pure *jus sanguinis*: those born of German parents were German regardless of where they were born, and those born of non-German parents were not German regardless of how long they had lived on German territory. And, just as the French State further endorsed its principles of *jus soli* when it revised its nationality code in 1889, so the German State endorsed *jus sanguinis* when it revised its code in 1913" (118).

Expositions were conceived as moments for the showcasing of national industrial and aesthetic traditions. The German State's preoccupation with taste was largely externally directed...Constructing a viable German taste [to be displayed at an exposition] was therefore more a matter of diplomatic *representation* of the nation than of its domestic *construction*. (italics in original 119-20)

Working with the assumption that the German citizen's identity exists on its own (without the need of state intervention or education), the German model sees an international exhibition as an exercise of merely reflecting (rather than constructing) the German identity so that the larger world (i.e. foreign-nationals or non-Germans) can see (but not become) what Germans are. Under the German model, a nation identifies the inherent national tastes and aesthetic traditions, and then displays a reflection of these tastes and traditions for the consumption of foreigners. This German model is unlike the French model for exhibiting a nation, which differs significantly.

On the other hand, when citizens are made (*jus soli*), as in the French model, the aims and goals of displaying at the exposition change from a process of mere reflecting to a process of educating, creating, and or maintaining a national identity. The earliest and original proposal for what would become the 1937 International Exposition in Paris was put forth by Julien Durand in 1929; Durand "envisioned a decorative arts exposition modeled on the successful 1925 Exposition des arts décoratifs et industriels which, he argued, had improved the nation's balance of trade, widened the influence of the French 'taste,' and inspired better cooperation between artists and industrialists" (Peer 23). Durand's motivations go beyond merely "reflecting" the French taste. Instead, he hoped to extend or export French taste—presumably for consumption externally (globally) but also to solidify internal

consumption in France as well. Sasha Jansen, we should remember, having already visited the International Exposition, spends much of her vacation in 1937 purchasing commercial goods and services that read as French and disguise her performances of Englishness.

Peer notes that a French preoccupation with converting others' taste to French taste was still in operation a decade later in the lead-up to the 1937 International Exposition's opening:

In his confidential 1935 report, Marcel Pays stressed that the objective of the fair's propaganda must be to "conquer foreign elites, who determine the evolution of favorable or unfavorable public opinion about our country and, in particular, to conquer feminine elites, who will decide in the end the future of our luxury industries, and therefore the fate of our national prosperity." This targeting of upper-class female consumers as trend-setters shows that French fair officials continued to link the international success of French luxury goods to the refined tastes of upper-class women, as they had since the earliest fairs of the mid-nineteenth century. (31)

Instead of reflecting a nation's taste and aesthetic products, as the German model entailed, the French largely saw the objective of their displays to educate others, particularly foreign women of privileged socio-economic backgrounds, in French tastes. Pays describe this exportation of French taste in the terms of the battlefield—foreign tastes must be "conquered" in order to ensure "the fate of [one's] national prosperity" (Pays qtd in Peer 31). The ideal subject to conquer with French taste would be the foreign woman with disposable income, but this wish to convert (or educate) was also extended to people from various socio-economic backgrounds as well, both external and internal:

The political leadership had come to realize that the French pavilions would be interpreted as an expression of French national identity, as well as publicity for the "the French label." Just as the foreign

delegations sought to use the fair for self-promotion, so French fair organizers and, increasingly, French statesmen, deemed it essential to project a positive image of France, both to attract and impress foreign visitors and to raise French morale. (33)

France's methodology for internationally exhibiting itself was not predicated on a methodology of reflection, as the Germans methodology was, but was instead theorized as the process of creation, education, and exportation.

As the exposition neared its opening day, concerns existed that the depiction of France might fall flat against other countries' depictions of themselves; Peer reports that France became preoccupied that its "neighboring countries were mastering the art of 'propaganda'" (28) and had more experiences exhibiting themselves on the world stage (28-29). "Earlier appeals in French parliament to promote peace, prosperity, and international understanding through the exposition soon gave way to strident calls for better French 'propaganda'" at its display (29).¹⁰⁷ As such, the general commissioner of the 1937 International exposition declared that their displays "would not be Parisian, but national. And to be truly national, it had to include each and every French province" (53). Yet with historical hindsight, France's self presentation was not as remarkable as the presentation offered at the German and Soviet pavilions, which were, and remain to this day, largely the talk of the 1937 Exposition.

In *Good Morning, Midnight* the propaganda of national display offered at the International Exposition is not figured into the text. Remarkably, that which historians would expect for Sasha and René to see does not appear in the novel. Instead, the two,

¹⁰⁷ Peer historicizes the term 'propaganda' and, importantly, notes that term "was a broader and less pejorative term in the 1930s than it is today. Although it referred in some instances to the propagation of a particular ideology or nationalist program, it could also designate the use of techniques—often borrowed from modern advertising—to promote a product or event such as a world's fair. Today such efforts might be categorized as publicity, promotion, or perhaps public relations" (29).

as they enter the “Trocadéro entrance” (Rhys 163), view and comment upon a monument that is more closely associated with the original humanistic goals of the international exposition, the goals to appeal for “peace, prosperity, and international understanding” (Peer 29) and to inspire “better cooperation between artists and industrialists” (23). While Sasha associates the words “Cold, empty, beautiful” with the Exposition as they enter, René notes a light high above them and draws Sasha’s attention, and their conversation, to this light (Rhys 163). René starts the conversation by asking,

“What’s that light up there?” he says.
“That’s the Star of Peace. Don’t you recognize it?”
He stares back at it.
“How mesquin! It’s vulgar, that Star of Peace.”
[...]
He says again: “It’s mesquin, your Star of Peace.” (163-4)

Unable to identify the monument or its symbolic meaning, René’s initial confusion about the source of the light is clarified by Sasha, who recognizes it as the “Star of Peace” (163). Sasha seems surprised that René is unable to recognize the symbol. René having failed to initially comprehend its significance, dismisses the monument as “mesquin” and “vulgar” (163). *Mesquin* might be translated as mean, petty, or cheap, indicating René’s rejection of such symbol of international peace at the exposition. Yet Sasha defends the structure by impersonating, ironically, the voice of authority when she says, “The building is very fine” in the voice of “a schoolmistress’s” (164).¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ For Emery, this scene points to Sasha’s relationship with the *commis* at the novel’s end; “The false unity of the exhibition’s attempt at internationalism parallels I think what we must see as a false union between the *commis* and Sasha” (170-1).

The *Monument de la Paix*, which draws Sasha's attention and René's condemnation, was a statue very unlike the other structures of the 1937 Exposition. But unlike the German and Soviet pavilions, whose difference was marked by ostentatiousness and aggressiveness, the monument for peace misfit with its surroundings for other reasons. Herbert draws our attention to the fact this monument harkens back to the international spirit of cooperation of earlier expositions; this monument would seem more at home in the past than in the ultra-nationalistic space of the 1937 exposition. Herbert writes:

Rising behind the Palais de Chaillot in the center of the Place du Trocadéro, the column of the Monument de la Paix, built for the world's fair *although just outside its walls*, heralded the spirit of international amiability. *This monument, in contrast to virtually all other structures at the fair, glorified no single country; an exedra featuring the flags of the forty-two participating nations, including that of France, cradled its base.* (italics added 31)

This monument recalls the earliest goals of the exposition, the humanistic wishes to identify and celebrate international cooperation; it does not seem to fit in the 1937 exposition where the majority of structures created space for nation-specific displays, allowing the wider dispersal of nationalistic propaganda. Importantly, spatially it also existed outside of the official walls marking the official boundaries of exposition space. Herbert further notes that the monument to peace "proved rather easy to ridicule" on multiple levels, not just in its sense of being outdated, by its contemporary critics and visitors. Its size and shape were seen as inappropriate, particularly given the context of its grand location of the main entrance (31). Additionally, the monument was critiqued since its "thin pillar belittled the noble sentiments of peace," it was hard to view (and hard to photograph) without the inclusion of the "large

advertisements” that impeded the view, and its form “evoked the Roman Column of Trajan, a commemoration of military conquest” distinctly at odds with its message of peace (31). René’s critique of the monument, as “*mesquin*” (petty or cheap) and “vulgar” (Rhys 163), while perhaps not a particularly eloquent critic of monument, echoes the sentiments of many the statue’s critics (Herbert 31).

If one attended the 1937 International Exposition, and experienced the views from Sasha and René’s location in *Good Morning, Midnight* from the Trocadéro entrance, one could only view either the main exposition, with the German and Soviet pavilions looming behind the fountains of water or, alternatively, turn around and view the Star of Peace behind the fountains; this is the historical binary forced due to the spatial arrangement of exposition. One must either align one’s bodies and eyes with the fountains or turn around 180 degrees and align one’s body and eyes with the Star of Peace. Sasha and René reject the international propaganda of the ultra-nationalized pavilions and instead view the peace monument with its outdated symbolism, a monument physically situated outside the main exposition area.

Good Morning, Midnight theorizes and critiques the ideas of nationality and belonging in interwar Europe. In an often quoted passage from the novel Sasha Jansen states that her nationality is “So-and-so” (14) and later thinks “I have no pride—no pride, no name, no face, *no country. I don’t belong anywhere*” (italics added 44). Critics have made much of Sasha’s claim in these two passages and her attempts to perform French tastes to cover over her Englishness. These readings often focus on ways Sasha’s alienation from society at large (class, gender, sexuality, “failed” mother and wife, and age) also extends to a national identity. However, critics have failed to

see the importance of Sasha twice declaring a communal English identity when she dines in the internationally marked restaurant, the Pig and Lily. What the novel makes most explicit, in regards to Sasha's nationality, is that the many people she meets in Paris read Sasha as an Englishwoman. Like the game Sasha plays where she and two men "stop under a lamp-post to guess nationalities" (46), the reader of *Good Morning, Midnight* must also use what light is available in regards to Sasha's nationality.¹⁰⁹ The restaurant scene in the Pig and Lily sheds considerable light on the matter; it is the metaphorical lamppost that shines the brightest on the subject of Sasha's nationality. As the streets of Paris fill with characters of ambiguous nationalities, those traveling with state-issued certificates of nationalities and those traveling without such documents, the Parisian streets and restaurants become a non-state-sanctioned international exhibition. Reading Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight* with the figures of the passport, international exposition, and the restaurant in mind, is crucial when looking at the way the novel constructs interwar national identities.

¹⁰⁹ Sasha wrongly guesses the two men are Germans or Scandinavians (46); the unnamed man identifies himself and the other (who we later learn is named Delmar) as Russians (46). Later Delmar confides that his own story is more complex: "He comes from Ukraine, he tells me, and it's very hot there and very cold in the winter. But again he slides away from the subject of Russia and everything Russian, though in other ways he is communicative about himself. He is a naturalized Frenchman and he has done his military service in France" (64).

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CONCLUSION

Reading for Food Behavior in Unstable Times: A Tasteful Ending

Since it is a particularly unsteady moment for both the study of modernist literature and, more generally, for literary studies, it is important to highlight the larger conversations and controversies surrounding the study of modernism and literature, focusing on the potentially problematic expansion of the term “modernism” for modernist studies and noting the new formalist call to shift our attention to literary form. “Bringing the World Inside: British Modernism and Taste—Gustatory, Social, and Aesthetic” is bound up in these complex discourses and attempts to navigate the controversies; my model of traversing these complex issues can be productive for other literary scholars working in diverse fields.

The term “modernism” has always been an elusive term and the conceptualization of what modernist literature is, or should be, has involved contention and disagreement since its origin.¹¹⁰ For better or for worse, modernism refuses to be pinned down. As Michael Levenson writes in his preface to *A Genealogy of Modernism*,

Vague terms still signify. Such is the case with “modernism”: it is at once vague and unavoidable. Anything more precise would exclude too much too soon; anything more general would be folly. As with any blunt instrument, the best that can be done is to use it for the rough tasks and to reserve the finer work for finer tools. As a rough way of locating our attention, “modernism” will do. (vii)

Like Levenson, I knowingly use modernism with all its vagueness and lack of precision; I too share Levenson’s faith that modernism still signifies and, despite the

¹¹⁰ The term modernism is often attributed to Laura Riding and Robert Graves’s 1927 publication of *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (Thormählen 2).

problematics of its roughness, is useful. Pericles Lewis notes in his preface to *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* that this rough term originally denoted an experimental literary movement shortly after WWI: “The term *modernism*, in its literary sense, became current in English shortly after the First World War to describe new experimental literature, notably works by T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, and Virginia Woolf. Since then, it has continually expanded in scope” (xvii). The expansion of the modernist label and canon has shifted significantly since its origins; as many have pointed out, the term has evolved from formal experimentation into a periodizing label. Lewis writes,

In its broadest sense, modernism has become the label for an entire tendency in literature and the arts, sometimes indeed for a whole period in cultural history, stretching as far back as the middle of the nineteenth century and continuing at least until the middle of the twentieth. Modernism has thus become a term of very wide application. (xvii)

At present, Lewis’s 2007 preface already seems quite dated with its contention that modernism has expanded to “the middle” of the twentieth-century; critics like Susan Stanford Friedman have continued this expansion to include the contemporary time of our early twenty-first-century moment.¹¹¹

New Modernist Studies, as some have decided to call it, perhaps best illustrates the recent acceleration of modernism’s expansion away from its earliest, most narrow definition.¹¹² As Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz point out in their introduction to *Bad Modernisms*,

¹¹¹ See Susan Stanford Friedman’s “Planetarity: Musing Modernist Studies” for an illustrative example.

¹¹² Both the Modernist Studies Association’s annual conference and journal *modernism/modernity* explicitly encourage a wider understanding of modernism. For further contextualization of the history, controversy, and consequences of new modernist studies, see “The New Modernist Studies” by Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz, Max Brzezinski’s response “The New Modernist Studies: What’s Left of Political Formalism?,” and Martin Pucher’s response (to Brzezinski’s response) “The New Modernist Studies: A Response.”

In its definitional aspect, the new modernist studies has extended the designation “modernist” beyond such familiar figures as Eliot, Pound, Joyce, and Woolf...and embraced less widely known women writers, authors of mass cultural fiction, makers of the Harlem Renaissance, artists from outside of Great Britain and the United States, and other cultural producers hitherto seen as neglecting or resisting modernist innovation. Some contemporary scholars have even chosen to apply “modernist” yet more globally—to say, all writing published in the first half of the twentieth century—thereby transforming the term from an evaluative and stylistic designation to a neutral and temporal one, and thus economically countering the implication that a few experimental works were somehow the only ones authentically representative of their age (as in the familiar sequence Romantic – Victorian – Modernist – Postmodernist). (1-2)

Modernism signifies more than the usual suspects now—though these were never perhaps quite as set as we, with hindsight, might now contend. Attention has now turned to the periphery and to bringing in lesser known authors, sub-movements, and parts of the globe. Discussions of modernism now often involve pluralizing the term into modernisms.¹¹³ If modernism’s expansion is desirable or inevitable, the question then becomes how expansive can, or should, the label become? Mao and Walkowitz’s introduction reveals a preoccupation with this expansion’s shift from a “stylistic designation” (1) to “a neutral and temporal one” (1-2) and the potential—as Levensen might aptly phrase it—of the “folly” of being too general (Levensen vii). Mao and Walkowitz’s solution is to include “essays in [their] volume [that] do not replace the qualitative sense of the term [modernism] with the chronological” but instead the essays investigate “what happens when the two [conceptualizations of modernism]

¹¹³ Heather Love emphasizes how modernism shifts into modernisms when she writes: “Efforts over the past several decades to imagine modernism as an expanded field have been remarkably successful. Female modernism, African American modernism, queer modernism, sentimental modernism, low- and middlebrow modernism, and colonial, postcolonial, and anticolonial modernism have all been integrated into a renewed understanding of modernism (or modernisms, as it is often written)” (744).

collide” (2); the intersection of style and historicity ensures, they feel, avoidance of the folly of generality.

For Marianne Thormählen modernism signifies in yet another important manner than the two discussed above. Thormählen acknowledges the formal and temporal but writes, “The functions of the term ‘modernism’ as employed in present-day academic discourse are threefold and interrelated: periodizing, characterizing, and valorizing” (2-3). She goes on to suggest the dates of 1890 to 1940 can generally be considered as the “outside limits” when modernism functions through periodization (3). As for the characterizing function of the label of modernism, Thormählen contends this signifies as literature marked with:

a powerful attraction to formal experimentation and innovation; logical ruptures and the linking of ostensibly incompatible phenomena; a deliberate cultivation of ambiguity, multi-facetedness, and associations; a preoccupation with disorder, crisis, randomness, and fragmentation; tautness and irony in the chosen modes of expression; an extreme valorization of art; a rejection of history as a chronological process; cultural pessimism; moral relativism and ambivalence towards philosophical idealism; rootedness in urban, even metropolitan, setting, including the anonymity of crowds and the consequences of technological developments; an interest in representations of sexuality; and explorations of different conceptions of reality and the self. (3)

Thormählen’s list is significantly more specific with its detail cataloging of the traits of modernism than the hesitant definition Lewis settles on for modernism, which “refers primarily to the tendency of experimental literature of the early twentieth century to break away from traditional verse forms, narrative techniques, and generic conventions in order to seek new methods of representation appropriate to life in an urban, industrial, mass-oriented age” (xvii). As for the third function, modernism as a valorizing endeavor, Thormählen writes,

Being designated as “modernist” has undoubtedly raised the prestige of a literary text or writer, a practice which has had two unfortunate consequences: works on which the label has not seemed to fit have been unfairly neglected, and the area of applicability has been stretched to (and sometimes beyond) the limit of meaningfulness—“this work/author is so good/important that it/he/she must be an exponent of modernism, even if nothing specifically modernist leaps to the eye.” (6).

Thormählen’s work draws out the potentially negative consequences of expanding the signification of modernism’s label: an overly liberal application of the term and the folly of generalization. If the term modernism has always been vague, the elusiveness and flexibility of the term seems increasingly bound up in the politics of the academy.¹¹⁴

At the same time, the present moment also seems to be a relatively unstable moment for literary studies in general. More scholars are questioning what has largely been the default approach to literary studies, new historicism, for quite some time and some are calling for our attention to return to form and aesthetics.¹¹⁵ In a 2007 *PMLA* article titled “What Is New Formalism?,” Marjorie Levinson attempts to give a field statement for the newly “developing theory or method emerging from the entire repertoire of literary and cultural studies” under the name of new formalism (558). Levinson analyzes this call to return to form, arguing “new formalism is better described as a movement than a theory or method” (558). Levinson gives two important justifications for her conclusion that new formalism is only, at the moment, a movement. First, new formalism is mainly motivated by pragmatic “concerns about the state of our pedagogy, our scholarship, our literary inheritance, and our democratic

¹¹⁴ See the conversation that develops between Mao and Walkowitz, Max Brzezinski and Martin Pucher’s articles.

¹¹⁵ For a relatively early and impressively forceful critique of new historicism, see George Levine’s “Introduction: Reclaiming the Aesthetic” from his 1994 edited collection *Aesthetics and Ideology*.

institutions, seen to be deprived of a crucial element in ethical subject formation by the transformation of literary studies into sociohistorical study over the past twenty years” (560). Levinson’s second justification for her claim is that new formalist scholars have not yet developed “a critique of either the premises or the defining practices of historical reading” (560). For Levinson, new formalism is still in a provisional state; in order to progress from movement to theory, new formalism would need to critique both the “founding figures of historicist critique[s]” (i.e. Greenblatt and others) as well as their second generation followers “who *are* held accountable for the sorry state of our criticism” (italics in original 560).¹¹⁶ The challenge for new formalism, as Levinson frames it, is to move from a movement with practical concerns to an engaging critical theory that refigures that relationship of history and form.

Levinson breaks the new formalist movement into two main camps, each of which hopes to “reinstate close reading both at the curricular center of our discipline and as the opening move, preliminary to any kind of critical consideration” (560). For Levinson the important distinction between the two camps of new formalists is that “we have a new formalism that makes a continuum with new historicism and [on the other hand] a backlash new formalism” (559). She labels those new formalists that attempt to build a bridge forward from a new historicist base as “activist new formalists”; Levinson sees the “normative new formalists” as a backlash movement

¹¹⁶ Levinson is referring to critics like Mark David Rasmussen who defend Greenblatt’s early new historicist work but bemoan “Greenblatt’s subsequent work and that of his followers” who are “in favor of the mining of literature for evidence of cultural practices” (Rasmussen 2). Rasmussen continues, writing, “Much of this work has been valuable, but in recent years many have come to feel that the new historicist paradigm, at least in its present orientation toward cultural studies, appears to be exhausted, its initial excitement now long since cooled” (3).

against the new historicists, i.e. those who wish for a more complete break from historicist approaches to literature (559-60).

In this particular moment of instability for modernist studies and literary studies (more generally), I argue that close critical attention to food behaviors and taste offers a particularly promising entry point for literary scholars. Such attention to food behaviors and tastes offers new historicists an opportunity to move beyond mere cultural practices, and thus avoid the criticism of Rasmussen and others, when we look at literal (gustatory) tastes alongside figurative tastes (such as aesthetics).¹¹⁷ Likewise, activist new formalists might look at this interface of literal and figurative tastes, but from a slightly differing approach and with their own distinct focuses of their movement. My project's focus on food, food behavior, and taste—a focus which integrates material readings, cultural studies, and new historicism alongside interests in aesthetics and form—gestures toward the call of activist new formalists to account more for literature's form. At the same time, my focus also attempts to refresh new historical approaches to literature, redressing the dismissal of new historicism as “exhausted” by critics like Rasmussen (3). I hope my various approaches, particularly my joint investigation into Bast's cultural and comestible consumption (chapter one) and my analysis of liquidity on the multiple levels of content and form in *To the Lighthouse* (chapter three), might serve other scholars well as they consider how to balance formalist and historicist concerns in literary studies.

Reading for food behavior and taste also facilitates the possibility of integrating—or, to use Mao and Walkowitz's terms, investigating the collision of—modernism's many figurations along the lines of periodizing and characterizing. My

¹¹⁷ As I do in my chapter on Woolf, with attention to style.

own project here is intimately bound up in these definitions of modernism and debates about what the study of literature involves. As previously stated, like Levenson I find the term modernism still useful despite its roughness. Modernism, as a relatively vague label, allows us to look at disparate authors and texts, drawing wider cultural products into our studies, looking both at the usual suspects (such as Woolf) and those from the periphery of the movement. Viewed in one manner, the four authors I analyzed in my project are at ease under modernism as a periodizing term, each novel having been published between 1890 and 1940. As for modernism being a characterizing term, Woolf and Rhys comfortably fit Thormählen's list of the specific traits characterizing modernism (Thormählen 3). In regards to Forster, while some critics like Paul Armstrong argue for his inclusion, the argument is perhaps a bit more difficult to make.¹¹⁸ Price's novel does not exhibit much "attraction to formal experimentation and innovation" (Thormählen 3) and seems further afield from this definition of modernism than the other three, though Jane Marcus attempts her inclusion.¹¹⁹

Under the vague label of modernism I have attempted to bring authors and texts that are more easily and comfortably situated in all the ways modernism signifies (such as Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight*) into

¹¹⁸ Paul Armstrong provides an argument for Forster fitting with formal definitions of modernism when he writes, "Although the use of an all-knowing narrator would seem to invoke the conventions of realism, the playful, self-undermining duplicities of Forster's narrator give *Howards End* unexpected affinities with the more self-dramatizing experiments of modernist narration. The great modernists typically invoke one or the other of the conventions of realism in order to play with it ironically and, in doing so, provoke self-consciousness about its implicit but disguised epistemological or ideological assumptions. To foreground the contingency of narrative authority and question its epistemological limits even while employing its privileges, as Forster does in *Howards End*, are classic modernist maneuvers" (312).

¹¹⁹ However, Jane Marcus attempts to argue for Price's inclusion in modernism (under its characterizing function) when she writes, "Evadne Price...shapes a new form of cinematic, dialogic, and dramatic interior monologue for modernism, a very tightly controlled but daring form, very different from James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, or Virginia Woolf" (265).

conversation with some of the authors and texts whose relationship to the modernist label is certainly less stable (such as Forster's *Howards End* and, even more so, Price's *Not So Quiet...*) without simply falling into the "valorizing" aspect of calling texts modernists, an activity that Thormählen correctly critiques. My arrangement of literary texts and authors both troubles and explores the possibilities of the term "modernism." If Mao and Walkowitz value the collision of modernism's valences, my project embodies placing these valences side-by-side while analyzing their explicit concerns with modernity's impact on food, food behaviors, and taste. Likewise my project's use of the term "British" also troubles and explores possibilities; I attend to those quite comfortably within this tradition (Woolf and Forster) and those who are not so unproblematically included, specifically Rhys and Price.¹²⁰ The choice to bring together these four authors and novels is, of course, an activity in selection itself, an exercise in distinction between options, and an enactment, on some level, in my taste for what is (or can be) part of British modernism.

To conclude, I wish to highlight how additional study of food behaviors and taste in literature promises to be a particularly fruitful territory of inquiry. For activist new formalist literary critics working in other periods of literature, a joint approach to food, with a materialist and historicist focus, coupled with attention to taste, complete with accounts for literal (gustatory) and figurative (manner and aesthetic), promises to

¹²⁰ I use British much as I use modernism, as "a blunt instrument" for the "rough tasks" at hand (Levenson vii). Jean Rhys was born in Dominica and came to England around the age of 16 or 17 (Pizzichini 46-53), later spending considerable time in Wales (233-4); her work is widely viewed as important to both the British tradition and the Caribbean tradition. Evadne Price's claims to have been born in Sussex, England were widely unquestioned during her life; however, new evidence suggests she was born in Australia (or on a ship off of Australia's coast) and arrived in Britain, around (or by) the age of fifteen (Morton 239-40). When interviewed in 1977, Price states she had never set foot in Australia before her retirement there in old age (Price); however, a birth certificate closely matching her name is in the records in Australia ("New South Wales") as well as other public records (Morton 239-40).

build upon the useful foundation of new historicism while also integrating close critical attention to form and style. My approach to combining food behaviors and taste might also be taken as a model by other modernist scholars, with disparate interests, as they attempt to account for the multiple valences of modernism (in addition to moderating between history and form). If food behaviors and taste allow for the particulars of modernism's historicity to be paired successfully alongside its "powerful attraction to formal experimentation and innovation" (Thormählen 3), I have faith that other conceptual investigations into modernist literature might do so as well. I hope that my own project offers a productive model during the unstable and troubling times for scholars of modernist literature and, more broadly, literary studies.

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