

LIBRARIES
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
EAST LANSING, MICH 48824-1048

This is to certify that the
dissertation entitled

Psychic Economies of Modernism: The Material Limits of
Consumer Capital

presented by

Carey James Mickalites

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Ph.D. degree in English



Major Professor's Signature

6 -10 -2005

Date

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
01-24-10		

**PSYCHIC ECONOMIES OF MODERNISM: THE MATERIAL LIMITS OF
CONSUMER CAPITAL**

By

Carey James Mickalites

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

2005

ABSTRACT

PSYCHIC ECONOMIES OF MODERNISM: THE MATERIAL LIMITS OF CONSUMER CAPITAL

By

Carey James Mickalites

This dissertation examines British and American modernist narrative to articulate a model of the subject of modernity in relation to consumer capitalism during and following the second industrial and technological revolution. I read Dreiser, Joyce, Ford, Freud, Dos Passos, Lewis, and Rhys to show a range of literary interventions into the contradictory ideologies of twentieth century consumerist abundance. These moderns narrate psychic and cultural economies of loss and acquisition, in terms of melancholia and narcissism, gendered disembodiment and collective identification, as effects of capital's expansion and flux. For each of these writers the category of the subject is shaped by the tension between loss and surplus in a consumer economy, and subjectivity, in turn, figures a fictional zone from which to critique a pervasive commodity culture.

The traditional understanding of modernism as an effort to transcend the alienated experience of modernity through an authorial precision in assembling the cultural fragments shored up against the ruins of bourgeois society can be reconfigured as a historically immanent process of critique. Modernism, as Fredric Jameson has repeatedly shown, is a historical product of mass commodification. But by showing the continuous creation of new desires to stem from overproduction, modernism also exposes the fundamental contradictions of a capitalist system that devours itself in its necessary expansion. I thus argue that, through its figurations of subjectivity and psychic economies

of loss in anxious flux with the market, the modernist text performs a tacit critique of capitalist expansion on its own grounds.

**Copyright by
Carey James Mickalites
2005**

**This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my father, Carey James Mickalites, Sr.
(23 February 1946 – 17 January 2005).**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1	
“THE POWER AND SATISFACTION OF THE THING”: CAPITAL AND THE LIMITS OF GENDER IN <i>SISTER CARRIE</i> AND <i>WOMEN AND ECONOMICS</i>	23
CHAPTER 2	
CAPITAL’S INTERIORITY COMPLEX: JOYCE, FORD, AND THE AESTHETICS OF EXCHANGE.....	66
CHAPTER 3	
PERVERSE PLEASURES OF SPECTACLE: TIME AND VISION IN DOS PASSOS AND LEWIS.....	109
CHAPTER 4	
LOSS INCORPORATED: JEAN RHYS AND THE MELANCHOLIC ECONOMY OF LATE MODERNISM.....	163
ENDNOTES.....	189
WORKS CITED.....	194

Introduction

“History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.” (*Ulysses* 34)

This project works to interrogate late capitalism and the commodity form through the “fictions of capital” (Godden) we call modern narrative. The shift from industrial to late capitalism hinges on the second technological revolution—which gave us photographic mass reproducibility and the cinema, swifter modes of urban transport, and a boom in popular and high-brow magazine publications fed on advertising revenues. That revolution also gave us literary modernism. Woolf wrote about the pleasures of shopping *and* the inequalities of sex and class structuring modern society, Joyce painstakingly incorporated the commodity detritus of 1904 into his picture of the mental operations of Leopold Bloom and Gerty McDowell, and Eliot gave us the dark, fragmented wasteland of overproduction. Reading turn of the century naturalism through early and high-modernist formal experimentation and late modernism’s interest in the public construction of subjectivity in the face of mass production and politics, we witness a continuing cultural preoccupation with the ways in which capital acts on the subject. And that process of shaping subjectivity, simultaneously thrilling and threatening, part of everyday life in the metropolis and yet uncanny, is appropriated by literary moderns in attempts to understand, aestheticize, and critique the dominant economic system of modernity. Just as an advertising industry comes increasingly to play on the fears and desires of individual consumers, as part of the process of generating new markets for increasing production, the project of modernism explores and experiments with new psychic and narrative economies to express the cultural anxieties attending the necessary

production of surplus.

In the chapters that follow, I read British and American modernist texts to articulate a model of the subject of modernity in relation to consumer capitalism during and following the second industrial and technological revolution. I read Dreiser, Joyce, Ford, Simmel, Freud, Dos Passos, Lewis, and Rhys to show a spectrum of cultural interventions into the contradictory ideologies of consumerist abundance. These moderns represented the impending scarcity or loss which drives and marks the interior limits of capital by way of corresponding psychic and cultural economies shaping the subject of capitalist modernity, specifically melancholia and narcissism, gendered disembodiment and collective identification. For each of these writers the category of the subject is shaped by the tension between loss and surplus in a consumer economy, and figures a fictional zone from which to critique commodity culture as part of a pathological system.

Fredric Jameson has tirelessly reminded us of the close yet ambivalent historical relation between commodification and modern literary production. High modernism, in particular, not only follows from the development of mass culture and the increasing commodification and reification of modern experience, but is ambivalently, self-consciously, and structurally dependent upon that earlier formation; the high modernist text “signals the vocation *not* to be a commodity” (“Reification and Utopia” 16). He sees this modernist effort at resistance as “reactive, that is, as a symptom and as a result of cultural crises, rather than a new ‘solution’ in its own right” (16). Further, Jameson’s symptomatic reading posits the subject in modern writing to be a product and expression of late capitalism. Dreiser’s *Carrie* is a “closed monad” of desires accessible to readers

only through “identification and projection” and an expression of “the newly centered subject of the age of reification,” but “the effects of reification—the sealing off of the psyche, the division of labor of the mental faculties, the fragmentation of the bodily and perceptual sensorium—also determine the opening up of whole new zones of experience and the production of new types of linguistic content” informing experimental and mainstream writing of the early twentieth century (*Political Unconscious* 160). The reactive modernist text and the reified psyche of modern subjectivity are thus, for Jameson, mutually imbricated. The impressionistic inwardness associated with canonical Anglo-American modernism is an effort “to reappropriate an alienated universe by transforming it into personal styles,” an effort that seems “to reconfirm the very privatization and fragmentation of social life against which they meant to protest” (*Fables* 2). But this failed protest gives rise to an important ambivalence; modernism does reinforce the “fragmentation and commodification of the psyche” but its practitioners also “seek to overcome that reification as well, by the exploration of a new Utopian and libidinal experience of the various sealed realms or psychic compartments to which they are condemned, but which they also reinvent” (14). This theoretical synthesis of commodification/reification, the psychological subject, and modernist writing, then, makes the modernist project a “protest” against itself, “a protest against the reified experience of an alienated social life, in which, against its own will, it remains formally and ideologically locked” (14).

In the wake of Jameson’s definitive work why should we continue to study the relationship between cultural modernism and capitalist modernity? What is to be gained

by re-examining modernist conceptions of subjectivity and the subject as a product of capital? Why should we read capital through modernism when the development of twentieth century consumerism is a cultural and historical topic in its own right? At the risk of exposing my own anxiety of influence, I want to take issue with Jameson's symptomatic reading of modernism and the subject of capital. Modernist production is symptomatic of capital's repetitive, expansive reproduction of commodities (and new market segments), and the texts I read in this project figure the bourgeois subject in ways that express the failed promises of twentieth century ideologies of abundance: through conceptions of its desires (and how they are formed), its relation to the body, its fixations on loss and acquisition. The consumer subject, by definition we might say, is constituted by its relation to surplus and contingency, that contingency being embodied in the commodity-objects that mediate social life and the subject's relation to itself. The conflicted figurations of the psychological subject—from the naturalism of Dreiser through the early high-modernism of Joyce and Ford, the internalization of spectacular time in Dos Passos and Lewis, to a psychic interiority anxiously posited on market relations in Rhys—show modernist subjectivity as one of negotiation with the contingency of capital. Thus, rather than reading modernism as a necessarily failed “protest” against the reified social life of commodity culture, I suggest that modernism inhabits and foregrounds the contradictory forces of capital, building an aesthetic out of those contradictions, in order to self-consciously critique the system of its own making.

Recent work on modernism and material culture expands on Jameson's groundbreaking work. Edward Comentale, for example, reads the cultural work of the

period and its part in the violence of an expanding market based in the continuous production and consumption of difference. Comentale draws an important distinction between the British avant-garde and classical modernism. The former, in its violent push for newness and formal difference, “performs the continual production of difference and thus affirms a market that must ceaselessly and efficiently overcome itself with new products” (31); in turn, many modernists recognized that no radical aesthetic effort was “immune to the expanding market” but was “quickly contained and neutralized by the affective dimensions of advertising, fashion, and consumer demand” (7). In contrast, “‘classical’ modernism, with its emphasis on contingency and limit . . . provides a potential critique and alternative to modernity” (4). “The [classical] work’s very promise of fulfillment,” he continues,

is denied by its own coldness or inaccessibility; it thus both inspires and impedes the spectator’s desire for identification or sublimation. British artists valued this intentional *halting* insofar as it could transform blind desire into conscious choice, as it could expose the treacherous identifications of modern culture and reground the subject within the world. (8)

Comentale is right to point out that the market’s need to “overcome itself” by endless reproduction of difference poses a significant problem for literary and artistic experimentation, and that the classical turn offers one means of resisting the process of commodity identification through aesthetic coldness. But this take on the avant-garde versus classicism, while it demonstrates an important internal conflict within the

modernist project, also reinscribes Jameson's model of modernism as "reactive, . . . as a symptom and as a result of cultural crises." That is, by offering and withholding the fulfillment of identification, modernist texts challenge the ideological limiting of desire to consumer choice, but not necessarily in order to "reground the subject" in a world somehow more real than the reified dreamscape of consumption. Rather, modernism works to show psychic economies in flux and therefore to destabilize the ideology of the individual in a free market. By foregrounding the material limits, embodied in the commodity form, that structure economic surplus and the consumer subject, modernism is a project of immanent critique. To make this argument, we need to inhabit those contradictory material limits of twentieth century capital that shape, and are reshaped by, literary modernism.

The psychic and narrative economies of modernism take shape within and against the material limits of consumer capital. This latter phrase, the second half of my title, requires explanation. The material limits of twentieth century consumerism take two distinct yet mutually imbricated forms. The first occupies and defines the social spaces of consumption. Following Marx's model of the exchange value of the commodity as constitutively concealing the labor time of its making and use value, the booming consumer economy of the early twentieth century is posited against its own interior materiality of the laboring body. Mark Seltzer describes the consumer subject's relation to market society as a "privilege of relative disembodiment or relative weightlessness" in consumption, a disavowal of the natural, material body through social identifications mediated by appropriate commodities (124). This "achievement of personation," as

Seltzer calls it, depends on the disavowed materiality of labor, constitutive of social and individual subjectification in relation to surplus. Just as “the wealth of any wealth class is ultimately derived from a labouring class,” as Richard Godden puts it (2), the booming development of department stores and advertisements appealing to “individual” consumers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries requires the “erasing of the memory of labour through the gratification of leisure” (4). We see this disavowed interior limit structuring consumerist abundance across a range of modernist texts. Consider, for example, *The Great Gatsby* and its figure of the “ash-grey men” laboring in the uncanny zone between West Egg and New York who “stir up an impenetrable cloud which screens their operations from your sight” (27), or Sophia’s observation in *Good Morning, Midnight* that a thriving service economy posits leisured consumers against “the dark background” of faceless, surplus labor (26). But perhaps nowhere is this socially repressed, interior limit of consumer capital more *anxiously* evident than in *Sister Carrie*, the text I focus on in chapter one. Carrie’s coming into a sense of self-presence through her rise to stardom and identification with the magical trinkets she once could not afford is figured in the novel against the surplus bodies of labor and unemployment. Thus, Carrie as a closed “monad” with an inaccessible psychic interior, a psychological subject, is a product of the necessarily repressed, the interior, material limits of consumer capital.

Carrie exemplifies the modern psychological subject as an expression of the contradictions of capital, particularly the ideology of abundance that works by displacing its own interior limits. In Deleuze and Guattari’s reinterpretation of Marx, capital is simultaneously a limit and a devouring, expansive surplus. Capital operates according to

a “double movement”:

[O]n the one hand, capitalism can proceed only by continually developing the subjective essence of abstract wealth or production for the sake of production, that is, “production as an end in itself, the absolute development of the social productivity of labor”; but on the other hand and at the same time, it can do so only in the framework of its own limited purpose, as a determinate mode of production, “production of capital,” “the self-expansion of existing capital.” Under the first aspect capitalism is continually surpassing its own limits, always deterritorializing further, “displaying a cosmopolitan, universal energy which overthrows every restriction and bond”; but under the second, strictly complementary, aspect, capitalism is continually confronting limits and barriers that are interior and immanent to itself, and that, precisely because they are immanent, let themselves be overcome only provided they are reproduced on a wider scale. (259)

As an end in itself capital is its own interior limit, and yet its reproduction requires that that limit be widened, displaced: “the ever widening circle of capitalism is completed . . . only if the surplus value is not merely produced or extorted, but absorbed or realized” (234). A society that successfully and continually expands its interior limit via expanding consumption relies on an operative tension between scarcity and abundance. Capital constitutes the subject along the lines of this contradictory double-movement.

We see this process at work most clearly, and in its most concentrated form, in the

subject's relation to the mass produced commodity. Regenia Gagnier, tracing the shift in economic thinking from a nineteenth century emphasis on scarcity to a twentieth century focus on consumer markets, argues that "scarcity became the dominant feature of economic man's environment only when the economy seemed ostensibly to shift from scarcity to abundance. Only multiple consumer choice made people aware of their relative scarcity" (20), and that "*modern* man would henceforth be known by the insatiability of his desires" (4). Speculative capital—investing simply to generate more capital—relies on the increasing production of new consumer needs and desires supported by, among other things, advertising and improved technologies for image reproduction. Late capitalism expands its interior limits by displacing them onto the consumer subject. And literary moderns, whether resistant to, thrilled by, or ambivalent about new means of representation and advertising as a growing cultural text in its own right, frequently figure new forms of subjectivity emerging with capital's ever-widening limits. Subjectification is part of the general process of technological modernization that "has been seen to entail a retraining or disciplining of the subject" (Daly 59), and produces psychic economies that register, through the cultural work of literary modernism, the material limits structuring surplus. The seduction of the commodity, its personalized promises, works on a necessary failure. If modern advertising, for example, "both exposes and remedies defects" in offering an idealized wholeness of the body and self "which is constantly deferred," as Tim Armstrong points out (100), this is because the widening circle of capital (exchange values) necessarily diminishes the value of particular commodities, as Marx had already shown. The consumer subject, and its

anxieties, is constituted in this materialized loss driving the production of surplus.

Psychic economies of modernism, ranging from the cold externality of an early Joyce or a later Lewis to the full-blown intermingling of consciousness and discourses that lie outside of and precede the subject (as in *Ulysses* or *The Waves*), ambivalently figure subjectivity in flux with capital's voracious and continuous overcoming of its own material limits.

It is in light of these external and internalized material limits of market culture that we should approach the problem of psychic interiority in the period. Interiority—whether understood in terms of psychological depth, individual memory, or the mental make-up of the subject in structural relation to the object world—is both a defining and crisis-ridden aspect of the subject of modernity. Several critics have laid useful groundwork in examining modernist interiority, usually along period-specific lines, and its relation to broader concerns with politics, technology, gender, and capital. Michael Levenson traces a shift from the pre-war modernism of Conrad, James, and Ford and its “retreat to the surer . . . zone of the self” in the face of expanding democracy and mass culture to the equally reactionary classicism of Eliot, in which “the dissolution of the boundaries of the self” and of consciousness is concomitant with formal restraint and discipline that works to transcend “the cult of inner experience” (61, 197, 211). More recently, Michael Tratner has argued that modernism was always “an effort to escape the limitations of nineteenth-century individualist conventions and write about distinctively ‘collectivist’ phenomena,” making it the artistic expression of the shift from laissez-faire liberalism’s celebration of the individual to collectivist politics (3). Using what Freud

describes as a collective unconscious released from repression in the crowd, Tratner argues that modernists “sought to release the passions of group involvement that capitalism had suppressed” in its emphasis on a dominating rational ego (46). Similarly, Michael North sees the period between the wars as one of a becoming unconscious of private and public alike; the public sphere is increasingly conceived of as irrational, “the very source of prejudice and bias” and, at the same time, “the private self is already thoroughly public” (70).¹ As each of these critics demonstrate, modernism from the turn of the century through the inter-war period expresses a political and social shift from the individualism and presupposed psychic autonomy of Liberalism to an irrationality at the heart of both the individual unconscious and collectivist politics. While my work in the chapters that follow does not work to dismantle any of these arguments, I do want to stress that the shift is not so simple. The blurring of subject-object categories, categories that structure interior psychic zones of the modern self, make interiority a conflicted site across the literature of the period. Whether figured as outside the contingencies of finance and commodity exchange or as fully constituted by the market, interiority does not disappear from the cultural imaginary, but is a zone from which modernism critiques the dominant social system of modernity.

Psychic economies of modernism, including interiorities in flux, are profoundly implicated with the problem of the object *qua* commodity. It is difficult to think modernist subjectivity somehow beyond the pale of the commodity world (even much avant-garde work of the period incorporates the outmoded commodity junk of the previous generation, as Walter Benjamin and Hal Foster have shown). And if interiority

as a zone of crisis is most consistently figured by moderns as either retreating from or incorporating the repetitively new objects of commodity culture, then those objects, precisely since they blur the boundaries of subjectivity, play a central role in the modernist imaginary. Douglas Mao usefully articulates the problem the made object holds for modernism in the face of the constant absorption of the social and cultural landscape by commodification. “What the object world represented for modernists above all,” Mao observes, “was a realm beyond the reach of ideology but not secure against the material consequences of ideological conflicts” (9). This bind is complicated further by the relation of modernist production to commodity culture: “few if any modernists were immune to the pleasures of consumption, [but] most also showed a profound mistrust of the capitalist formations that made what Adorno called a ‘culture industry’ possible” (18). Thus the profound ambivalence we have long associated with modernism centers on “a complex relation to the culture of the commodity in which horror and surrender were not only compounded but, at times, scarcely distinguishable from each other” (18). The “horror and surrender” Mao rightly observes stems specifically from a modernist engagement with the commodity-objects that embody the slippage between their exchange value in a system of equivalences and particular material signification. Just as John Dowell in Ford’s *The Good Soldier* expresses a need for “anchorage in the spot,” the “attachments” and “accumulations” and familiar objects “that seem to enfold one in an embrace” (27), modernism often registers a profound anxiety induced by the subject’s psychic investment in objects whose material stability is always-already thwarted, subsumed by the temporal contingency of surplus and exchange value. “The

commodity,” as Terry Eagleton argues, “is a kind of grisly caricature of the authentic artefact, at once reified to a grossly particular object and virulently anti-material in form, densely corporeal and elusively spectral at the same time” (*Ideology* 208).² Modernist interiority, and modernist subjectivity, is shaped and unsettled by its relation to the object as both “corporeal” and spectral,” by the internalization of this slippage between the material and the ghostly equivalence of exchange.

As I have suggested, the increasing distrust and reconfigurations of psychological interiority and its integrity do not provide for a clear teleology; rather, interiority poses a recurring problem across and within a larger matrix of psychic and narrative economies of modernism and of capital. In working to theorize capital through modernism, I focus on what I see as four of the most pressing cultural concerns of the period: gender and the visibility of consumption, the impending loss or sacrifice structuring the system of commodity exchange, the pervasive force of capitalist spectacle, and the threat of economic depression. Admittedly, each of these categories could be studied throughout the period in its own right, and they overlap, inflect, and inform one another. So while there is a chronology implied in my reading literary modernist production specifically in the period between 1900 and 1939, that chronology is designed to show the shifting conceptions of the subject in terms of those categories that register the material contradictions of twentieth century capital in the cultural sphere. Finally, each of these modernist configurations of the subject of capital—revealing a pathologically expanding and devouring market—is at once symptomatic and critical. In spite of his moral interjections, Dreiser’s text is symptomatic, positing Carrie’s reified conscious desires

against the bodies invisible to the spaces of leisured consumption, bodies devoid of the privileged markers of gender. The restrictive, impersonal economy of Joyce's *Dubliners* is less interested in exploring the psychic depth of Dublin's lower-middle-classes than in portraying them as subjects paralyzed by a national industry restricted to feeding the growth of international finance (*After the Race*, for example, which I read in chapter two). And Ford constructs a schizophrenic narrative around an anxious loss not only of cultural stability (as Ford himself lamented), but also around the displacement of an authorial, knowing subject by the system of relational exchange values. But even these symptomatic narratives of reified psychic space, expressing the cultural unconscious of the material limits of capital, read from our own historical vantage point, lay a certain critical groundwork within modernism writ large. If the subject is shaped by the constantly displaced limits of capital and the homogenizing force of exchange value, and the modern text reproduces that system, then the text also works to defamiliarize and denaturalize the repressive system of commodity-governed social relations. Reading such a symptomatic production of the modernist text helps us "to understand the unconscious as material history and history as the unconscious, as the necessarily repressed that can be rendered visible in sites of contradiction or incomplete elision" (Brown, *Material Unconscious* 5). The modern text, even as symptom, exposes the mutually enfolded psychic and social sites of contradiction. As such we witness an uneasy modernist engagement with the psychic economies of capital that, through a critical ambivalence of its own historical moment, constructs stories of that moment based on its own contradictions. This is modernism as immanent critique.

Situating modernism within the material limits of capital—through its figurations of psychic economies mediated by the commodity form—helps us to qualify Jameson’s definitive work on modernism as a symptomatic formation of commodity culture. Modernism historically emerges from commodity culture and the shift from high to late-capitalism, but also works dialectically within that historical moment. In aestheticizing psychic economies as they are reified by the pervasive force of commodification and capital’s expansive limits, modernist production works to expose the contradiction between Enlightenment rationality and the irrational flux of speculative capital. Textual economies of modern narrative, despite differences in technique and ideological positioning, build an aesthetic out of the signs of wasteful overproduction and the ahistorical contingency of exchange, an aesthetic that explores the devouring logic of commodification for its own cultural ends. As Douglas Mao points out, Lewis and Woolf, for example, “found the explosion of making made possible by mass production techniques at once stimulating and perverse” (135), and “existential explorations could be prompted by the spectacles of large-scale production and the modern subject’s bombardment by commodities” (134). And if that bombardment is figured with the attendant failures of the commodity to live up to its promises, modernism operates, from within, on the contradictions of capital. Terry Eagleton’s “idea of culture” is useful here; the cultural figures as a transformative set of utopian possibilities existing within the reality of the present and “can thus become a form of immanent critique, judging the present to be lacking by measuring it against the norms which it has generated itself” (22). Culture thus “can act as a critique of the present while being based solidly within it”

(23).

Eagleton's historical dimension is particularly important for understanding modernist production and its anxious relation to commodity culture. The long-held view of the modernist text transcending the alienated experience of modernity through an authorial precision in assembling the cultural fragments shored up against the ruins of bourgeois society, can be reconfigured as a historically immanent process of critique. Modern narratives of the subject of market culture work to reproduce and to hold in tension the material limits structuring surplus. In other words, the modernist text figures its own present to be lacking by showing that the "norm" of capital—its continual reproduction of itself—necessitates and contains its own material limits.

We can now return to the specific cultural and psychic configurations that these narratives both express and use to critique ideologies of surplus. In chapter one I read Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* to articulate a model of gender in spectacular consumption. Dreiser's novel is obsessed with the historical moment of its own making, whisking Carrie through the newly emergent department stores, electrically lit city streets, and fashionable districts of Chicago and New York at the turn of the century. Her rise to stardom is marked by an increasingly disembodied status, following the process Mark Seltzer has called an "aestheticization of the natural body" through practices of consumption (124). Gender is both a socio-economic construct and a performative category. The novel figures Gilman's "sex-relations" as fundamentally economic and corresponding to a nineteenth century divide between masculine public production and feminine domestic consumption, but also shows the historically emerging privilege of a

performative gender in consumption. Gender is marked by “the power and satisfaction of the thing” that is the commodity fetish, and the narrative shapes the production of Carrie’s psychic depth and desires, self-presence and gendered performativity around the auratic, visual appeal of commodities that “touched her with individual desire” (26). But the commodified gendered subject is radically juxtaposed with the invisible surplus bodies of labor, the material bodies marking the interior limits of capital and gendered consumerism. Carrie as consumer subject par excellence and as the novel’s foremost figure of the psychological subject thus illustrates what Jameson calls the “psychological monad” of reified consciousness, but that status is posited on the necessarily repressed and displaced limits of capital.

In chapter two I turn to the pre-war modernism of Joyce and Ford to discuss the problem of the psychological subject and questions of interiority as a problem of commodity exchange. I begin with a discussion of Georg Simmel’s model of modern exchange, in which objective value accrues to the material object through an affective “tinge of sacrifice.” In two-sided exchange, surplus is created through the feeling of loss attending acquisition, and the origin of value thus seems to lie with the subject. But Simmel’s model, which implies the Marxian division between exchange and use value, presupposes a material object to be exchanged. I take up this problem through Joyce’s “After the Race” and “Two Gallants,” both of which posit interiority and psychic desire as products of the objects of exchange, namely money and the IOU. These commodity-objects function as “support for a properly ‘externalized’ desire” characteristic of pre-war modernism (Nicholls 179), but also as structural support for interiorized subjectivity. And

as embodiments of the radical contingency of value in an exchange economy, the object unsettles any presupposed and autonomous subjective interior. This objectification of the subject via exchange is supported by a formal tension between a restrictive, “miserly” economy of the text (Osteen) and its figurations of deferred surplus. I then turn to the anxious impressionism of Ford’s *The Good Soldier*. Dowell’s disjointed narrative is a result of his inability to “anchor” himself in the external object world and expresses Ford’s lament that mass democracy and mass production—modernity—result in an increasing abstraction and leveling of culture and psychic integrity. The problem of the novel is not, as many critics suggest, that Dowell is an unreliable narrator,³ but rather that unreliability is already built into the contingent, external objects that mediate modern psychic interiors. In bringing Joyce’s early neo-realism together with Ford’s impressionism, I do not simply want to show stylistic and formal differences within a conflicted modernism. For these formally and figurally different narratives both emerge from a problem of the object, whose contingency undermines the psychic interiors the object is held to support. Against the autonomous psyche of a privileged Cartesian observer, these texts pit the subject between the materiality of the object and the ephemerality of exchange.

Capital’s tautological spectacles simultaneously embody surplus and temporal contingency and function as governing epistemological referents of twentieth century collective and visual culture. In my third chapter I argue that capitalist spectacle—advertising and cinema, for example—both begs a collective fixation and marks a temporality of the present in its own future reification, its impending outmoded status. In

John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer*, narrative and subjective time follow the logic of the commodity form, and the novel locates subjectivity between spectacle's tautological newness and its own waste. I read this commodity-governed temporality with Walter Benjamin's theory of the "outmoded" in the avant garde to argue that the novel's figurations of the residual waste structuring the spectacular present poses a challenge to capital's ahistoricity. In *Time and Western Man*, Wyndham Lewis attacks the fetishized temporality of spectacle in both popular culture and politics, seeing capitalist spectacle as both cause and symptom of a regressive, irresponsible "child-cult." But the text formally builds its critique upon massive assemblages and constellations of the spectacular, homogenizing, temporally contingent commodity form. By assembling internally contradictory elements of mass culture, Lewis's text inhabits and employs the distracted fixations beggled of spectacular capital in order to expose them as pathological regression. On both sides of the Atlantic we thus see investments in the "perverse pleasures of spectacle" constitutive of modern temporality and collectivity, an investment that also yields a modernist pleasure of critique operative within the complacency of capital's eternal present.

I conclude my dissertation by reading Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight* with Freudian psychology to show the economy of melancholia structuring the novel and, in turn, the melancholic economy of capital informing Freud's theory. I read these texts together to show that introjected loss and an acquisition impulse are parts of the same economy defining the subject of capital. In Freud's model, introjecting a lost, material object constitutes the subject's ego around that loss, but can also develop into manic

acquisition. Rhys figures the subject's introjection of an occluded material, bodily particularity demanded by commodity culture as that which sustains consumption. The second part of the discussion extends this model of melancholic-manic consumerism to the dissolution of subject-object barriers and of bodily integrity in late modernism. I apply Freud's understanding of an affective, bodily ego (in *The Ego and the Id*) to the novel's figurations of residual traces of embodiment, lines in the flesh as a text of the body. Bodily text and embodied memory work to disrupt the homogenizing, commodified construction of the private self. The displacement of loss structuring consumer capital defines the melancholic-manic subject; Rhys's late modernist writing of that subject pathologizes capital. But the traces of embodiment defining the subject provide a material excess irreducible to the manic thrust of capital to homogenize its subjects.

Each of the different conceptions of psychic and textual economies I trace throughout the period show modernism as a project of immanent critique. The dissertation explores psychic and narrative economies as they are shaped by the material limits structuring surplus, as well as modernists' interests in gender, the cultural role of advertising and spectacle, and new configurations of embodiment and disembodiment. Each of these concerns reveals the ambivalently critical role modernist production plays in consumer capital and the reification of subjectivity, while also pointing to other texts that might seem all too obviously absent. Woolf's novels, for example, narrate disembodied leisure with an ambivalent awareness of the laboring and servant classes that make such a lifestyle possible. Eliot's classicism incorporates the disjecta of

commodity culture into its cold aesthetic form in an effort to resist what he feared as the commercial erasure of cultural tradition. And *Ulysses* performs every psychic configuration of advertising and consumerism that I discuss. Aside from the frustrating but necessary process of selection, the reason I do not examine these and other relevant texts is that I want to cover less critically traveled terrain. That said, readers will notice that this project also does not work to illuminate or rescue any clearly marginalized texts from the period, with the possible exception of including Dreiser with the modernist canon. But my purpose in what follows is not to redefine modernism by making it a more inclusive project or using it simply to celebrate alterity and difference, as should be clear by now. Such studies are unquestionably valuable in bringing to the cultural and intellectual fore texts previously disregarded because of inequalities of race, sex, and social and cultural capital. But they also risk reproducing and reinscribing capital's "continual production and consumption of cultural difference" (Comentale 3). All of the texts I consider work, at a more fundamental level, to link cultural and psychological anxieties of loss, embodiment, and self-presence to a modernist understanding of the pathological expansion of capital.

Having briefly dwelt on what the following pages do and do not argue, and before turning to the makings of the gendered consumer in Dreiser, I want to echo the dream of one philosophical modernist. At the conclusion to his study of Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin describes the historical dialectic operative within capitalist modernity:

Every epoch not only dreams the next, but while dreaming impels it towards wakefulness. It bears its end within itself and reveals it—as Hegel

already recognized—by ruse. With the upheaval of the market economy, we begin to recognize the monuments of the bourgeoisie as ruins even before they have crumbled. (176)

We might read this as a model for the modernism I describe in what follows. As a multifaceted, internally-conflicted project emerging with the repetitive dream world of what we have come to call twentieth century consumerism, Anglo-American moderns incorporate the contradictions and failed ideological promises of abundance in an effort to waken subjectivity out of the expansive limits of capitalist tautology. “*The upheaval of the market economy*” has not occurred, but the moderns’ critical acknowledgment of capital’s wasteful production of its own ruins dreams our own epoch. Modernism bears the nightmares of historical modernity within itself, as an unfinished project of immanent critique of the material limits of capital.

Chapter 1

“The Power and Satisfaction of the Thing”: Capital and the Limits of Gender in *Sister Carrie* and *Women and Economics*

Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* is perhaps more explicitly concerned with exploring urban consumption than any other turn-of-the-century American novel. This concern, more specifically, is expressed as an uncanny anxiety driving the narrative. We see this narrative anxiety in both the text's obsessive structural symmetry and in its representations of characters who seek to construct social identities by way of visible relations to commodities, relations that seem to enable, very much according to Marx's logic of commodity fetishism, what Mark Seltzer has called "the privilege of relative disembodiment in consumption" (136). Indeed, this privilege inscribes every body in the text, sometimes ironically, as it consistently denies the body's presence, as location of the subject of desire or even as object of commodification and desire in looking. Even in Carrie's rise to stardom, the process of commodification signaling her full entry into market relations that the text ambivalently substitutes for agency, the process is one in which her name in lights effects that subjectification by displacing an embodied status. This signals a crisis of agency repeatedly encircled by the narrative, in which the question of who produces that disembodied image—Carrie as socio-economic agent or the system of exchange, capital accumulation, and commodity display often rendered in "naturalist" terms—remains unanswered.

This unresolved crisis serves to situate Dreiser's 1900 novel within a modernist problematic that includes questions of self-making, subjectivity and consciousness, and

desire in terms of the social constructions of gender within an uneasy shift from productionist ethics to the acknowledgment of economies measured by consumption. This shift, however, is not teleological, as the problems in Gilman's gendered progress will show, but rather one that modernist texts interested in commodity-governed social and subject relations symptomatically reproduce, often as a way of narrating the failure to contain the uncanny that structures those relations. Tim Armstrong refers to this generally as "an expression of the anxieties of modernity in relation to flows of desire and capital" (9), anxieties which are variously registered on or around the body "as the locus of anxiety, even crisis" (4). I read Dreiser with Gilman to foreground this crisis of the subject around the tensions of gendered embodiment and disembodiment that emerge with a growing literary interest in the contradictions and pathologies of capital. In other words, in this chapter I explore the pathological anxieties that attend the privileged disembodied status of gender as a way of exposing the signifying threat to subjectivity and representation in an emerging of consumer economy.

To fully explore how these texts pathologize market culture and the discourse of economic progress, we need to ask how they posit the relations between the social body and the force of capital. How do the flows and concentrations of capital produce and make visible the producing or consuming body? What is the structural role of surplus bodies—the laboring, material bodies from which surplus is extracted—in representing the privilege of relative disembodiment as marked by capital? What kinds of frictions result from reading these texts together, and in contradiction, and how do those frictions indicate problematic cultural relations between gender, capital, and socially produced

bodies? It is in exploring these questions that we see both texts involved in a project of negotiating and interrogating the limits of gender as defined by the flows of capital. Both articulate the economic production of gender as symptomatic of the anxieties created by economic abundance structured on scarcity. Specifically, *Sister Carrie* read against Gilman's socio-economic theory of sex-relations speaks to the larger social concerns of the contradictions of capital legible in gender, the corresponding racialization of and by gender, and the crisis that acknowledging these forces poses for narrative and a realist project of representation. Gender serves as a performative, even liberating category in this story of an emerging consumer economy, but is constituted by that which it simultaneously constructs as its outside: the abject threat of embodiment that is antithetical to the abstract privilege of capital. Reading the social configurations of gender in Dreiser and Gilman allows us to critique the limits of capital and its pathological construction of gender.

Recent critics of *Sister Carrie* interested either in the text's ambivalent Naturalism, or in psychologizing the characters' object-desires, tend to ignore the intersections of capital, gender, and the body that govern the narrative and in a way that anticipates the economic anxieties of modernism. Karl Zender, for example, reads Hurstwood's financial and bodily decline as "a dialectic of character and circumstance," calling this dialectic "distinctively modern" (64). By extension, he sees Hurstwood's movement toward poverty and death as a reflection of dialectical history, "a conflict between nostalgia for a vanishing agrarian ideal and the dynamism of an emerging consumer culture" (64), which he argues is played out in the psychology of failure and

denial as Hurstwood gradually retreats from any possibilities of paid work. Clare Virginia Eby, in the first long study of Dreiser and Veblen, focuses on the psycho-social points of intersection between the two contemporary American writers, particularly arguing for the significance of Veblen's "pecuniary emulation" in informing not only Dreiser's text but recent cultural theory as well. Applying Veblen's theory of the psychology of social display in consumption (his "pecuniary emulation"), she contrasts Carrie's "hungry self-creation" in buying clothes and acting (118) with Hurstwood's tragic need for social self-maintenance, embodied in his economic failure haunted by "the specter of [his] former self" (133). In her constructionist position on the self, Eby reads the movement of the text as governed by the contrast between Carrie's self-creation in consuming (as a kind of agency) and Hurstwood's failure to emulate associated with his static sense of self.

Eby's insistence on Veblenian social psychology in Dreiser usefully puts forth a fin de siècle view of the consumer subject. But her argument does not fully consider the sociality and geography of the urban flow of capital and desire in the novel. By contrast, I argue that the text's anxious preoccupation with the consuming subject and the contradictions of capitalist desire shows how normative subject categories work to disavow those contradictions, particularly the material limits against which surplus is figured. Fredric Jameson links the psychological to the *historical* symptom, claiming that "'Carrie' has become a 'point of view': this is in effect . . . the textual institution or determinant that expresses and reproduces the newly centered subject of the age of reification" that is partly based in the relays between that self, the body, and the exterior language of commodification. We see this in a "modern practice of *style* in Dreiser, a

strange and alien bodily speech which, interwoven with the linguistic junk of commodified language, has perplexed readers of our greatest novelist down to the present day” (160–61). It is in light of this “strange and alien bodily speech” that we should consider how commodified desire in the period shapes the social and individual body. Irene Gammel, in a slightly different historical bent, reads Dreiser with Foucault’s work on sexuality, in which the body and sexuality are not natural but parts of a “complex historical construct” (32). She claims that Dreiser’s novels “[strengthen] the impression of the body as an easily graspable, physical or natural entity, whose existence is presumed to have been hidden behind veils of conventions” (32). This is an important strain in *Sister Carrie*. But rather than chastising the novel for such ideological naivete, it’s important that we consider its interest in the natural body as an after-effect of capital and its social contradictions, as something retroactively posited in support of a disembodied consumer ideal. Other recent readings focus on the relations between capital and technology, the body and desire, or masculine production of desire and projection of the threats of cultural destabilization inherent to capital progress. Tim Armstrong, in an argument focused on the commodification of electricity and its implications for desire and self-making in the text, observes that Carrie’s ability “to turn her talent into a commodified product, a ‘name in lights,’ signals the liberation of desire from the domestic sphere and its deployment in the marketplace” (25). The result, he argues, is that “Carrie is more than simply a human being, a body; she becomes a desiring-machine whose energies are understood by the engineer. That is the real scandal of *Sister Carrie*, that a human being should become a system for sustaining and disseminating desire”

(26). Charles Harmon, on the other hand, sees scandal in the ideological production of gender, one that serves in the period to conceal the social and cultural contradictions of capital. More importantly, he sees the text as reflexive of a socio-economic dependence on waste (bodies, selves, and objects) and the cultural management of the anxieties that result, in which, “instead of entertainment, Carrie’s work is revealed to be fundamental to the stabilization of capitalism’s internalized contradictions,” and “Dreiser’s treatment of Carrie’s rise effectively dramatizes the methods by which normalized gender relationships were used to manage the anxieties that beset subjectivity within an urbanizing capitalism” (131).

Much of my argument concurs with Harmon’s—especially his claim that “the subtle utilization of gender roles” helped manage the anxieties triggered by capitalist growth (137). But I want to ask both how gendered embodiment and disembodiment are shaped around capital and how those categories function in market culture as the very condition of making the bodies present. For while “normalized gender relationships were used to manage the anxieties that beset subjectivity within an urbanizing capitalism” (131), this also assumes the pre-existence of those gender relations that are then simply reinvoked to contain the contradictory dependence on labor in creating a limitless surplus.

I want to show, then, how Dreiser’s text, in light of Gilman’s economic feminism, reveals that the consumerist body is made self-present by the movement of capital which, through the commodity, marks and en-genders bodies. But I also stress throughout the chapter that this self-presence is posited by way of the threat of the interior specters of

surplus, the paradoxical invisibility of those bodies not culturally mediated by capital. The chapter thus moves from theorizing gendering capital from the picture of the social/pathological that emerges from reading Dreiser against Gilman, the cartographies of modern consumption and capital, to the way *Sister Carrie* figures its subjects therein. I conclude the chapter by considering the self-reflexivity of the narrative itself. The novel's inability to wholly reduce the subject to the social formation of bodies exposes the interior limits of capital-constructed gender.

I.

“When a girl leaves home at eighteen, she does one of two things,” says the narrator at the novel's opening; “Either she falls into saving hands and becomes better, or she rapidly assumes the cosmopolitan standard of virtue and becomes worse” (7). While the narrator's explicit concern here is with virtue, morality, and the corruption of young girls by the sexual allures of the modern city, it also raises a problem of the social body that governs much of the text. The act of assuming a “standard,” while it grants an active subject, also implies a pre-existing “standard,” a logical limit to subjective agency. The seeming inability to resolve questions of agency in the modern production of the body or its cultural image is similarly evident in Peter Brooks's *Body Work*, in which he claims that in modern culture “the material body, like the individual personality, is a final point of reference, an irreducible integer, in views of the world that are increasingly secularized,” and “with the decline of traditional systems of belief, the meanings of the body no longer are assigned; they must be achieved. This means that each body must in turn be made semiotic—receive the mark of meaning” (54). For Brooks, then, the body in

modernity is not an ontological a priori, but rather socially and culturally inscribed with meaning. But at the same time he claims that the meanings of the body “must be achieved” and “receive the mark of meaning.” This contradiction is symptomatic of a distinctly modern problem of representing the body, a problem with which contemporary culture and politics still struggle. That said, we can turn to Dreiser’s engendering of the body. Moving from the question of her fate, the narrator passes over the bodies of Carrie and the traveling salesman Drouet, in which Carrie is “a fair example of the middle American class” and “in the intuitive graces she was still crude. She could scarcely toss her head gracefully. Her hands were almost ineffectual. The feet, though small, were set flatly” (8). Similarly fragmented, awaiting the narrator’s mark of meaning, Drouet is first made present by his voice, then by Carrie’s being “conscious of certain features out of the side of her eye. Flush, colorful cheeks, a light mustache, a gray fedora hat” (9). Without “good clothes,” moreover, “he was nothing” (10). Drouet is described as an assemblage of commodities on the surface of the body that conceal, fetish like, nothing, the nothing of sexual desire as lack taking as its object “the indescribable thing that made up for fascination and beauty in [Carrie]” (11).

What is this “thing” and why is it indescribable? The text resists representing the natural body beyond the visible fragments of hands, feet, and clothing. The opening of the narrative suggests that the material body does not exist prior to its external representation. The bodies of both characters are spectral after-effects of the fetish objects representing them; embodiment, sexuality, sexual difference, and desire follow the objects and images that socially define them. From Drouet’s flashy dress to Carrie’s

name in lights to Hurstwood's physical decline, the body as known entity requires a surplus, a disembodied relation to its own commodity image to bring it into being. We see this in returning to the opening passage of the novel, in which the well-clothed Drouet points to his name on his business card and says to Carrie "That's me" (12); agency follows its external, object-representation as, most importantly, that which can be exchanged, as Carrie "felt that she had yielded something" after receiving the card (13).

This early mention of loss, appropriation, possession, and account balances of the self signals the gendered flow of capital in the rest of the novel, in which a positive balance sheet indicates surplus, and this surplus is manifest in the social product, the commodity, that is the gendered subject. Dreiser repeatedly suggests that the circulation and growth of capital is fundamentally gendered, revealed in certain forms of control of cultural capital, in terms that mark out a social economy of abundance structured on lack. In other words, capital, while certainly shaping sexual desire in the text, and while not preceding sexual identity, does serve as the condition of the latter. Gender is an effect or product of capital and serves to contain and distance the abject, pathological surplus bodies on which continued accumulation depends.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Women and Economics* both clarifies and complicates the relations between sex, gender, the body and capital in Dreiser. The sexed body—categorized as masculine or feminine—in Gilman's argument is both natural and socially formed. Her central premise is that in industrial societies at the turn of the century sex relations are primarily economic. Differentiated from other animals, humans are "the only animal species in which the sex-relation is also an economic relation. With us an

entire sex lives in a relation of economic dependence upon the other sex, and the economic relation is combined with the sex-relation. The economic status of the human female is relative to the sex-relation" (5). Further, women in industrial society are implicitly likened to slaves, explicitly compared to peasants, in their economic dependence on masculine productivity: "their labor is the property of another: they work under another will; and what they receive depends not on their labor, but on the power and will of another" (7), a condition that is not due "to any inherent disability of sex, but to the present condition of woman, forbidding the development of this [masculine] degree of economic ability" (9). This analysis is of course important in its participation in late nineteenth and early twentieth century discourses on domestic and public space, production and consumption, and sex-roles under attack by early feminists. Veblen explains an economy of gender in similar terms, claiming a vicarious economic subject position for women in which the housewife's consumption is an expression of normative and accumulative masculine industry outside the home (61). Gilman also argues that bourgeois divisions of labor and the resulting increase in national production, technology, and wealth have necessitated vicarious social and cultural participation: "the female obtains her share in the racial advance only through him" (9).

It is not enough, however, to indicate a pecuniary gender operative in the period in order to explain those conceptions of capital and gendered bodies. More importantly, we see in Gilman's argument the implicit but radical positing of the very creation of gender within and by the oppressive and exclusionary flow of capital; it is not "any inherent disability of sex" but the triangulated force of capital, production, and power, all

stabilized by cultural assumptions of normativity, that produce gender as disembodied ideal distinct from the productive body yet maintaining the economical, functional role of maternity. And it is this production of gendered identification that retrospectively posits a natural body even as it abjects that body. Carrie's entry into market culture illustrates this process: aligning her name, capital-marked homosocial male space, and the movement of the narrative over against her laboring body in the shoe factory, the narrator concludes Drouet's mention of her to Hurstwood prophetically: "Thus was Carrie's name bandied about in the most frivolous and gay of places, and that also when the little toiler was bemoaning her narrow lot, which was almost inseparable from the early stages of this, her unfolding fate" (50).

Dreiser and Gilman both figure an organic social system inherited from an Enlightenment view of an atomistic social and political system of progress or growth. What is radically different in both thinkers, and what points toward the consciously modernist break with eighteenth and early nineteenth century figurations of the social organism or machine is the acknowledgment of a surplus that constitutes the social body, the cancer-like growth of capital as an end in itself. And if the body's being made present to itself and the symbolic order of exchange is contingent upon its image according to the logic of the commodity and capital as surplus, then we need to ask under what conditions this subject of capital is produced.

The economic historicizing of Dreiser read against the social-evolutionary speculations of Gilman help articulate the social conditions through which gendered and surplus bodies emerge on the modern stage. Gilman asserts that the pathologically

underdeveloped female of the human “race” is a direct result of the social concentrations of production and capital. The continued circulation and growth of capital and “racial progress” depend upon its inscription of gendered, categorical normativity, and her argument sheds considerable light on my reading of *Sister Carrie* and its own anxious efforts to represent the relations between gender, social surplus, and desire. Together, Dreiser and Gilman show how capitalized gender systems rely on what Judith Butler describes as the normative process of “assuming a sex” at the expense of other possibilities. For Butler, the “exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed . . . requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet ‘subjects,’ but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject” (3).

If we apply Butler’s point specifically to the “domain” of capital, we see how Dreiser’s text anticipates her notion of the constitutive outside, specifically insofar as the outside structures gendered disembodiment. The passage describing Carrie’s first visit to The Fair, for instance, inserts the surplus bodies, or “constitutive outside,” within the historical expansion of consumer capital. The passage figures the coordination of capital as the condition of the visible social spaces of consumption:

The nature of these vast retail combinations, should they ever permanently disappear, will form an interesting chapter in the commercial history of our nation. Such a flowering out of a modest trade principle the world had never witnessed up to that time. They were along the line of the most effective retail organization, with hundreds of stores co-ordinated into one and laid out upon the most imposing and economic basis. They were

handsome, bustling, successful affairs, with a host of clerks and a swarm of patrons. Carrie passed along the busy aisles, much affected by the remarkable displays of trinkets, dress goods, stationary, and jewelry. Each separate counter was a showplace of dazzling interest and attraction. She could not help feeling the claim of each trinket and valuable upon her personally, and yet she did not stop. There was nothing there which she could not have used—nothing which she did not long to own. The dainty slippers and stockings, the delicately frilled skirts and petticoats, the laces, ribbons, haircombs, purses, all touched her with individual desire, and she felt keenly the fact that not any of these things were in the range of her purchase. She was a work seeker, an outcast without employment, one whom the average employee could tell at a glance was poor and in need of a situation. (26)

The visual movement of the text complicates the very essentialist assumptions of sexed desire that it invokes. The passage begins by announcing its role in narrating the “commercial history” of the United States. The focus on the development of large corporate mergers in the late nineteenth century is written in terms of the department store, “the most effective retail organization, with hundreds of stores co-ordinated into one and laid out upon the most imposing and economic basis.” The key here is the socio-economic discourse of organization. The passage, and much of the novel as a whole, carefully articulates the accumulation of capital functioning within an organic system of units or organs of production, distribution, display, and consumption, the latter even

parasitically rendered as “a host of clerks and a swarm of patrons.”

The text’s movement from a telescopic to a microscopic view shows Carrie’s desires—distinctly bodily, felt desires—to follow upon an almost magical appeal commodity display. We could read this as an instance of a patriarchal productive system shaping feminine desire. Rita Felski addresses this view as an irrationality that is distinctly modern, based in a “managed desire, manipulated by a logic of calculation and rationalization in the interest of the profit motive,” in which “women’s emotionality, passivity, and susceptibility to persuasion renders them ideal subjects of an ideology of consumption that pervades a society predicated on the commercialization of pleasure” (62). She ultimately rejects this thinly veiled behaviorism in favor of one that includes “women . . . becoming consuming subjects” (64). Felski is right to reject models of the passive feminine consumer, partly because they tend to reinscribe the gendered economy of growth they try to critique. But the above passage in Dreiser suggests a social production of bodily desire that her privileging of consumption as social act of agency can only tenuously support. Dreiser’s text posits an organic system of sales, based in the commodities displayed, as a surplus that produces its own consumers. Carrie as body comes into view only as desire and lack and, more importantly, as an uncanny remainder, surplus body without labor, an “outsider,” the repressed (invisible) yet constitutive outside of the organs of production and consumption.

This organic system figured by the early passages in the novel contains the surplus, material bodies that structure capital expansion and a gendered cultural system. The text performs this in its sharp contrast between the organically figured department

store filled with commodity fetishes that magically “claim” the bodily desire of its subjects, and the shoe factory as site of mechanistic production and bodily fragmentation, the site of a material embodiment that haunts the narrative as a whole. Starkly juxtaposed with this primal scene of consumer desire is the men’s shoe factory where Carrie is first employed. Carrie, unlike the other workers is untrained, inefficient, unable to adapt her body to the mechanical demands of industrial production. Her unnamed trainer, after voicing the basic instructions for punching eyeholes in leather uppers, “suited action to word” (38). This collapsing of performance and linguistic representation contrasts with Carrie’s strained performance rendered as an inability to disarticulate language-psyche from bodily, mechanical performance: failing to keep up with the divided, repetitive motions of the production line, “she was concentrating herself too thoroughly—what she did really required less mental and physical strain” (40).

This juxtaposition shows the mechanical structuring the capital-gender matrix of commodity culture. The laboring bodies in the passage, those that suit action to word, lack any clear shape and even the cultural markings of dress, adornment, or hair that serve visually to represent most of the characters in the text. They exist in the narrative by way of the machines that serve as bodily extensions, able to work efficiently, unconsciously, in a mode of mechanical embodiment. Thus, economic and productive needs not only shape the need to labor, but produce the body that does labor; if labor is the only commodity available, this brings commodification directly into line with the body as its product, in Marxist terms. The passage renders the workers as a homogeneous mass, undifferentiated bodies that are determined by the repetitive labor they perform.

These are the culturally repressed, abject bodies of labor against which the text's figuration of gender as defined by capital is built. This complicates a reading like Laura Hapke's, who responds to Dreiser's descriptions of working women as "'shapeless' and 'colorless'" (106), which she claims is used in *Sister Carrie* to maintain Carrie's "innate purity" (111). What such a reading misses is how the labor scene and its reduction of the female body to its product of labor also brings Carrie's body into being, in a logic of the symptom that is key to understanding the relations between bodies, genders and capital in the rest of the narrative. For one, the factory labor is prosthetic, in that the workers need not concentrate on the work itself. But this is the mechanically embodied, perverse underside to Freud's observation in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that "man has, as it were, become a kind of prosthetic God. When he puts on all his auxiliary organs he is truly magnificent; but those organs have not grown on to him and they still give him much trouble at times" (44). Linking mechanical production to embodiment figures a radical limit to subjectivity. This is different from Carrie's "[withdrawal] into herself" (42) against the implied sexual promiscuity of the other laborers, and her feeling that the "place . . . impressed itself on her in a rough way" (40). Failing at mechanical reproduction by "concentrating herself too thoroughly" signals the direct confrontation with the reality of material embodiment: "her hands began to ache at the wrists and then in the fingers, and towards the last she seemed one mass of dull, complaining muscles, fixed in an eternal position and performing a single mechanical movement which became more and more distasteful, until at last it was absolutely nauseating" (41).

This revolting experience of embodiment structures cultural images of the

commodified body in the rest of the novel. In articulating the role of the socially produced body image in shaping the subject, Elizabeth Grosz argues that “without the mediating position of the body image, [the] interactions with the organic and the psychical would not be possible. It is by affecting, modifying, transforming the body image, on one side or the other, that each is able to effect transformations in the other” and that “the body image is as much a function of the subject’s psychology and sociohistorical context as of anatomy. The limits or borders of the body image are not fixed by nature or confined to the anatomical ‘container,’ the skin” (78-9). Grosz’s point that the images of the body extend beyond anatomy offers a more interesting way to read the production of laboring bodies in Dreiser’s text than readings that lament his authorial dismissal of the laboring community. The body image posits a dynamic relationship between the subject and the social and cultural forms of the body understood in terms of race, gender, class, and cultural capital. In this sense, the laboring women are not only figured, through Carrie as a “point of view,” as nameless and formless, but as a threatening specter in which the social images of the body are collapsed into the organic processes of bodily/economic production. The zone of performative gender offered by capital cannot be perceived here; rather, the body as produced and producing is uncannily linked to its mechanical embodiment, registered as the machines slowly shut down and “there was an inaudible stillness, in which the common voice sounded strange” (41), and this is in turn associated with the repetitive threat of identification with abjection: not only does the factory smell of oil and leather, but “the washrooms were disagreeable, crude, if not foul places” (41-2). Further, when Carrie withdraws into herself, it is not

only, as Hapke claims, because Dreiser “casts her as a princess among the serfs” (109), but because Carrie embodies what Fredric Jameson calls “the textual institution or determinant that expresses and reproduces the newly centered subject of the age of reification” (160). The reified centered subject of commodity culture and the gendering movements of capital requires an abject surplus, the threat of embodiment always distanced by capital and commodity.

Labor clearly structures and sustains consumption, and the women laborers in *Sister Carrie* are the abject embodiment of surplus, economic and biological. The near equation of economy (capitalist production) and biology opens the question of race and its role in discourses of progress. To bring the problem of racialized labor to the fore, we can turn to Gilman and the way her pathologizing of gendered industrial society invokes discourses of racial development. The radical force of Gilman’s analysis in *Women and Economics* lies, we recall, in her assertion that sexual differentiation is fundamentally economic; that is, she rejects a social-Darwinist pseudo-biologism. But a certain racial biology still informs her text, marking a limit to her critique of masculine production. Gilman argues that “the economic progress of the race, its maintenance at any period, its continued advance, involve the collective activities of all the trades, crafts, arts, manufactures, inventions, discoveries, and all the civil and military institutions that go to maintain them” (8). But, she continues, “such economic processes as women have been allowed to exercise are of the earliest and most primitive kind. Were men to perform no economic services save such as are still performed by women, our racial status in economics would be reduced to most painful limitations” (8). This progress is already

hindered, paradoxically, by its own internal order, in that “the more absolutely a nation has triumphed over physical conditions, the more successful it has become in its conquest of physical enemies and obstacles, the more it has given free rein to the action of social forces which have ultimately destroyed the nation” (24). This “internal disease,” as she calls it, is the economic sex-relation that equates woman and maternity to the exclusion of other forms of productivity, and thus undermining the potential for a collective, working social order: “the woman . . . hinders and perverts the economic development of the world” (121).

In Gilman’s critique, “race” is thus both biologically given, human, and socially and economically constructed. Further, the category of race precedes modern “womanhood,” casting the woman as an internally racialized other. Citing discourses of woman-as-consumer under cultural assumptions of masculine production and progress, she calls this nonreciprocal consumption “the enforced condition of the mothers of the race” that is linked to “the perverted condition of female energy” (119). A culturally disavowed primitivism is built into the discourse of progress, which she can only explain by way of racial categories; the sexed division of labor, she claims, “keeps alive in us the instincts of savage individualism which we should otherwise have well outgrown” (121). Thus the economic relegation of woman to maternity, domesticity, and consumption (vicarious consumption in Veblen’s comparable analysis) is not only a pathological, perverted hindrance to “racial progress,” but posited simultaneously on a comparison to and distancing from less developed races, as she asks, “how do we, with the human brain and the human conscience, rich in the power and wisdom of our dominant race—how do

we, as mothers, compare with our forerunners” (181). Finally, the “cure” for this pathological racialization of women under industrial capitalism is economic independence and equality in production opportunity—a natural, apathological development of the social organism which would lead to “enormous racial advance” (317). The acknowledgment of race as the economic precursor to gender (“sex-relations”), and as artificially produced, is here to be governed and advanced naturally. The logic her operates on a curious contradiction: the text’s radical rejection of biological essentialism is posited against and within a racial limit, the primitivism internal to progress limits both that progress and Gilman’s argument. In short, the move beyond racialized gender in industrial society requires that difference as perversion be culturally located elsewhere.

This social limit to gender and capital informs the spaces of consumption in *Sister Carrie*. Just as abject embodiment is bound up with wage labor, positing both as regressive factors on which commodification and consumption are implicitly based, progress in the novel necessitates the construction of and confrontation with racialized specters of embodiment. The quintessential representative of upper-middle-class domestic space, for instance, is the Hurstwoods’ home. The domestic economy is built on its incorporation and abjection of a service labor that vaguely embodies biologicistic race, essentialized and naturalized in its close proximity to the necessity of labor over against the economic privileges culturally manifest in “the ‘perfectly appointed house’” (83). Here, in fact, the textual materiality, the quotation marks that signify a citation without giving the original, establishes or refers to an externally system of exchange

value. As in the department store passage, the text moves inward visually, from the public view of the house “near Lincoln Park,” to the ten rooms “occupied by himself, his wife Julia, and his son and daughter,” where “there were *besides these* a maid-servant, *represented* from time to time by *girls of various extraction*, for Mrs. Hurstwood was not always easy to please” (82, my emphasis). Obviously, the servant is occluded by the economy of the home. More importantly, the idea of the maid-servant is “represented” by the laboring bodies given only a vague ontological reference to biological-racial groups; the racialized body that marks the transgression of public and private, commercial and domestic, is almost erased, denied presence and agency by its representational function. The potentially eruptive force of the racially and sexually specific body is diminished, disappearing with the labor it performs, in its commodification. Further, Hurstwood’s quick dismissal of “the rancorous subject” is symptomatic of the displacement of the threat of embodiment and its specificity onto the more easily managed threat of commercial contamination of the domestic. Anne McClintock explains this in the context of Victorian Britain: “domestic space became racialized as the rhetoric of degeneration was drawn upon to discipline and contain the unseemly spectacle of paid women’s work” (165). Thus, invoking the Enlightenment view of the family as a microcosmic image of economic society, with its division of labor and cooperation based in sex differences in the domestic traceable from Hobbes through Marx, Darwin and Freud (Birken 72-4), the narrator establishes the “home atmosphere” within “the mystic chords which bind and thrill the heart of the nation.” The Hurstwood’s home is not “infused with this home spirit,” not because of the racialization of non-gendered wage labor, but, implicitly

aligning that with the bourgeois standard, discontent and discord are based in disharmony between George Hurstwood and his “not easy to please” wife. The citation of consumer authority is thus ironic, inserted as it is into that which the “perfectly appointed house” as standard disavows: “the rancorous subject” (82) of the variously extracted yet all equally other Marys. What Gilman sees as the degeneration of the consuming, domestic woman is here displaced by its constitution against the racialized laborer in the very act of domestic consumption.

But the domestic is only one scene in which embodiment is figured as surplus to be managed by bourgeois normativity. Clearly contrasted with earlier references to the crowd, that moving, shadowy site of safety that swallows up the abjectly-embodied Carrie as work-seeker (27-8), the later Broadway scene privileges the crowd as a dynamic force of representation that brings its subjects into being by way of a representation, a semiotics of the body, that is both distanced from and makes present any specific material body. Made visible within a consumer gaze, “it was *literally* true that if a lover of fine clothes secured a new suit, *it* was sure to have its first airing on Broadway”(288, my emphasis). The focus on the literal, performative function of fashion both suggests and denies any prior embodiment. For Carrie this involves a coming to consciousness in the crowd, a specular economy of consciousness; in the Broadway crowd Carrie “awoke to find that she was in fashion’s crowd, on parade in a show place—and such a show place!” (289). Consumer self-fashioning that denies embodiment (bodily form, movement are elided from the passage except at a removed level by way of clothing description) suggests Benjamin’s description of the nineteenth century flâneur as “someone

abandoned in the crowd. In this he shares the situation of the commodity. . . . The intoxication to which the *flâneur* surrenders is the intoxication of the commodity around which surges the stream of customers” (55). The commodity fetish implicitly invoked by Benjamin, as the magical effect of concealing the labor time of commodity production is similarly evoked in Dreiser’s description of the fashionable subject. It is not only that subjects are commodities, that they must make themselves objects, or even identify themselves with objects in commodity culture. Rather, just as Benjamin suggests, the process of abandonment in the crowd following the intoxicating allure of the commodity locates subjectivity precisely in the process that conceals labor time. The body is granted the consumerist ideal of its own integrity by way of negation. Similarly, gender and its cultural markers precede and occlude the sexed body in a way that, the text suggests, constructs the gendered consumer subject around those limits against embodiment. The repeated references to staring, ogling, gazing, and display are both conditioned upon and submerged by the commodified, normalizing gender that denies sexual specificity and even the sexual desire it calls up. Thus, “men in flawless topcoats, high hats, and silver-headed walking sticks” look at the women “in dresses of stiff cloth, shedding affected smiles and perfume,” who wear also “rouged and powdered cheeks and lips” (289). Desire and its reconfiguration by consumer capital merges commodity and sexual fetishism.

This normalizing of gender and desire via commodity display operates against the spectral presence of beggars, illustrating Jonathan Crary’s claim that fashion works as “a protective shield of signifiers, a reflective armor carefully assembled to mask a core of

social and psychic vulnerabilities” (118). If it is “literally” the case that a new suit (and not the body within it) “was sure to have its first airing on Broadway,” then this is posited in the text against the very *literal* surplus bodies that economically and culturally structure the desexualized, disembodied dynamics of consumer display. Just as the text renders the gendered subject of capital against the abjection of labor and homogenized others, it also exposes the pathological concentration of capital through its surplus bodies. The interior limits to the spaces of spectacular consumption on Broadway and the Casino where Carrie performs are figured by the “peculiar individual” who “took his stand at the corner of Twenty-sixth Street and Broadway” (431), the mysterious “Captain” who works each night to find beds for the homeless. In its juxtaposed views of “the night, pulsating with the thoughts of pleasure and exhilaration—the curious enthusiasm of a great city bent upon finding joy in a thousand different ways” (431) and the homeless men emerging from the shadows to seek nightly aid from the captain, the novel “shows that the enticing sense of possibility that characterizes American culture is constantly accompanied by—even dominated by—the colossal waste of human talent that is necessary for the growth and health of capitalist economies” (Harmon 137). More importantly, once within “the glare of the store lights,” surplus bodies become legible as degenerate, worn, ill: “some of the faces looked dry and chalky; others were red with blotches and puffed in the cheeks and under the eyes; one or two were rawboned and reminded one of railroad hands” (433). As in the factory scene, bodies are reduced to their functional components, as “hands” of labor. And while the figures are all male and associated with labor, the gendering of the Broadway scene is absent, clearly enough, reduced in fact to a spectral

embodiment that can only be represented by way of pathological markings.

Distinctly free from Dreiser's moralizing, the captain and his entourage operate within the narrative as the surplus bodies conditioned by the life under the fire signs, necessarily repressed by a culture defined by capital. Like the economically-induced pathology of "woman" and "race" as the degenerative core of progress in Gilman's argument, the spaces of consumerist, gendered identification in meet their interior, repressed limits in a pathological degeneracy necessitated by the movement of capital in the novel. Visible surplus bodies are not so much a threat to the world in which Carrie moves, but part of that world. The text illuminates the socially surplus body as a pathological excess irreducible to the limits of gender.

II.

Having examined the social spaces of consumption as defined by the movement of capital, we can focus more attention on Dreiser's figure of the gendered consuming subject. Subjectivity is shaped around the experience of the body in relation to commodification. Specifically, the body takes on a relative value within the semiotic systems of consumption, raising a problem of representing the subject. While Carrie is often described in nineteenth century terms of the feminine—passive, domestic, dependent—and Hurstwood according to the masculine, public rationality of management, the text complicates these categories through a distinctly modernist crisis of representation encircling gender. What the text calls "the power and satisfaction of the thing" (230) locates its subjects between an interior fantasy of wholeness of body and self promised by commodity culture even as this promise is based in the split between self

and representation inherent to commodity-governed social relations.

Carrie's experience in the shoe factory, we recall, is one of uncanny embodiment, most intensely rendered in the working women who, lacking capital, are reduced to functional bodies defined in their relation to machines (where lack and the mechanical meet on and define the prostheticized body). Even as she struggles with the mechanical embodiment demanded by factory labor, Carrie's disembodied status begins to unfold into the commodification of the name. When Drouet first mentions her to Hurstwood, the narrator reminds readers that she "was bemoaning her narrow lot, which was inseparable from the early stages of this, her unfolding fate" (50). We can apply a Freudian understanding of the embodied ego here, in which the ego "is something like an internal screen onto which the illuminated and projected images of the body's outer surface are directed" (Grosz 37). In Dreiser's picture of modern consumerism this split becomes one in which the ideal ego is always one of externally-imposed exchange value that both offers and denies embodiment. Carrie's fate, retrospectively considered by the narrator, is "unfolding," dividing within itself, between a prosthetic embodiment indicative of lack and a name that can accumulate capital and, in so doing, represent and engender a body and its fantasy of integrity.

Money, as the most fundamental commodity-object, provides a useful trope through which to theorize the split consumer subject. The passage in which Drouet gives the desperate Carrie two ten-dollar bills serves to introduce the problem of the gendered subject in a cultural economy that both constructs and denies the body in terms of surplus and lack. Prostitution is implied, even as sexual desire is all but elided from the narrative,

when Drouet “made her take [the money]” and Carrie “felt bound to him by a strange tie of affection” (62). But Carrie’s ambivalence is important here: she feels ashamed and thrilled, the narrator tells us. It is this thrill that complicates an otherwise traditional reading of patriarchy, including Veblen’s notion of women in western culture as emblems of masculine productive power and social status. Rita Felski observes that the prostitute in modern culture, as “both seller and commodity . . . was the ultimate symbol of the commodification of eros, a disturbing example of the ambiguous boundaries separating economics and sexuality, the rational and the irrational, the instrumental and the aesthetic” (19). The threat that Felski points out certainly applies to Carrie’s sense of shame as she comes to inhabit the “ambiguous boundaries” between sex and the market. But if we recall Marx’s notion of commodity fetishism as the metaphysical attachment “to the products of labour” resulting in “social relations between things” (83-4), then Carrie’s acceptance of the money, resulting in an uncanny “tie of affection,” opens up the division between the organic, sexual body and the subject as commodity. Money initiates the intersubjective relation between Drouet and Carrie and serves as the mediating object through which the abstraction of consumer desire in the text takes shape. We can consider this in Georg Simmel’s terms: “money is the purest reification of means, a concrete instrument which is absolutely identical with its abstract concept; it is a pure instrument. The tremendous importance of money for understanding the basic motives of life lies in the fact that money embodies and sublimates the practical relation of man to the objects of his will, his power and his impotence; one might say, paradoxically, that man is an indirect being” (211). Money as pure instrumentality and abstract concept helps

explain the novel's figuration of disembodiment as the condition of the consuming subject. It is the seeming privilege of "indirect being" through exchange that, by contrast, posits mechanical and prosthetic embodiment as a threatening outside or perverse reduction of the subject in market culture to the cycle of production and waste.

The simultaneous separation and relation brought about by the mediation of money is linked to questions of gender and power in the passage. In denying Carrie the masculine rationality of economic value, the narrator explains that

It was something that was power in itself. One of her order of mind would have been content to be cast away upon a desert island with a bundle of money, and only the long strain of starvation would have taught her that in some cases it could have no value. Even then she would have had no conception of the relative value of the thing; her one thought would, undoubtedly, have concerned the pity of having so much power and the inability to use it. (63)

Having and using power, the narrator claims, particularly as embodied in the object of money, are distinct. This distinction, moreover, needs to be rationalized according to the relative value of money, which we can read as also implying capital and commodities. The claim that she would have no conception of money's relative value, however, is contradicted by an understanding by negation: having the object while acknowledging the inability to use it, its removal from the market economy, and the "pity" resulting, indicates a negative conception of value based in exchange. Power does not inherently reside in money, other commodities, or the subjects possessing them. It emerges only

from the abstract relations between things, a ghostly presence haunting the consumer subject.

It is this ghostly power associated with money and the commodity that shapes disembodied, gendered conceptions of the self in the novel. The contradictory notion that money is “power in itself” recalls of course Marx’s designation of the commodity as fetish, as a base material object to which the “metaphysical subtleties” of exchange value accrue (81). But the novel interestingly complicates Marx’s socially systemic fetishism, establishing a point of contact between capital-based power and gender within a merging of Freud’s theory of the infantile gift and a Marxian surplus. Freud discusses the role of feces for the infant as “part of the infant’s own body” and that which “represent[s] his first ‘gift’: by producing them he can express his active compliance with his environment” (52). Drouet’s gift, then, while not biological or organic, is of the same logic of compliance and excess. If in Gilman’s economic analysis women are gendered (“sexed”) by way of dependence, then Drouet’s gift shows his “active compliance with his environment” in constituting Carrie’s gendered, dependent status. In these terms, the money is also excess, surplus, potential capital; in situating Carrie on the threshold of gendered desire via the money-gift, she also appears on the limit between surplus bodies and disembodied gender marked by capital-desire, on the border between her “shame” and desire.

Therefore, rather than dwelling on the absence or violent dismissal of agency in the text’s representation of commodified subjectivity and desire, I read in Carrie a displacement or deferral of humanist-individualist agency within a trajectory that moves

from the specter of embodiment to the spectacle of a commodified disembodiment. In the seductive offer of disembodied spectacle, the text operates on an important temporal reflexivity. Carrie's rise to a commodified subject signaled repeatedly by her name in lights shows a disembodied gendered subject in the process of commodification, but also points to an anxiety of the suspected limits of capital and desire that constitute the subject within a temporality defined by the traumatic memories of embodiment.

Tim Armstrong argues that Carrie's "ability . . . to 'electrify' her audience, to turn her talent into a commodified product, a 'name in lights,' signals the liberation of desire from the domestic sphere and its deployment in the marketplace" (25). It is as though she is able to escape the domestic confinement of degeneracy in Gilman's analysis, and even to overstep the limits of production that the novel represents as a threatening reduction of the body to its labor capacity, to a commodity in contrast with Gilman's predictions of sexual equality based in a productivist ethos. The reproduction of the name in the public market shows the commodification of Carrie, making her a gendered subject suspended between embodiment and the iterative force of the name as image of capital. Upon encountering her name in a newspaper theater review, "she read it with a tingling body" and then "hugged herself with delight" (407). This reflexive relation to selfhood brought out by the commodification of the name is supported by the relation between that body and private space, in which the latter confers not only economic status but also an economy of the body as knowable on the condition of private space. When assigned her own dressing room, "her sensations were more physical than mental. In fact, she was scarcely thinking at all. Heart and body were having their say" (414). The affective

experience of the body follows private property. When she is offered rooms at the glamorous Wellington on the grounds that her “name is worth something” (415), she revels in the split between capitalized name and private body. Carrie’s “unfolding fate” thus reconfigures nineteenth century conceptions of the feminine-domestic within a performative gender that effectively blurs the boundaries between self-making and commodification.

We can situate this move toward the disembodied performative within the temporal progression of the narrative. Gender is supported by a traumatic, retrospective embodiment. In the process of her shift of affection from Drouet to Hurstwood, Carrie is described in a way that supports Armstrong’s point that the novel’s equations of electric images and desire anticipate the later twentieth century star system (26): “Every hour the kaleidoscope of human affairs threw a new luster upon something, and therewith it became for her the desired—the all. Another shift of the box, and some other had become the beautiful, the perfect” (139). The fateful shifting of the kaleidoscope, always casting a “new luster” upon something else, follows the repetitive newness of the commodity culture in which Carrie’s desires take shape. Desire lies outside the subject and is shaped by contact with the commodity. But the narrative situates this notion of desire as consumer choice against a traumatic limit to memory and knowing, the limits that define, through disavowal, the disembodied consumer. Carrie is able to leave the factory behind, but the abject laboring body returns, as that which cannot be fully assimilated by her new environment, when the narrator describes her vision of “many a spectacle” of labor:

On the street sometimes she would see men working—Irishmen with

picks, coal heavers with great loads to shovel, Americans busy about some work which was a mere matter of strength—and they touched her fancy. Toil, now that she was free of it, seemed even a more desolate thing than when she was part of it. She saw it through a mist of fancy. . . . Her old father, in his flour-dusted miller's suit, sometimes returned to her in memory, revived by a face in a window. A shoemaker pegging at his last, a blastman seen through a narrow window in some basement where iron was being melted, a benchworker seen high aloft in some window, his coat off, his sleeves rolled up; these took her back in fancy to the details of the mill. . . . Her sympathies were ever with that underworld of toil from which she had so recently sprung, and which she best understood. (140)

The intrusive vision that signals memory indicates the traumatic limits of memory in psychoanalytic discourse. In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan asks, “is it not remarkable that, at the origin of the analytic experience, the real should have presented itself in the form of that which is *unassimilable* in it—in the form of the trauma, determining all that follows, and imposing on it an apparently accidental origin?” (55). Carrie’s vision and the resulting memory suggest the limit, the line dividing laboring bodies, wavering between the invisible surplus on which the commodity landscape is structured and the eruptive reminders of socially, economically constituted surplus bodies denied the power of the thing. We see thus, particularly for Carrie as consumer subject and, almost inversely for Hurstwood, the threatening specter of embodiment (as distanced from capital) as a repetitive force, in which “we see preserved

the insistence of the trauma in making us aware of its existence” (Lacan 55), which, in its simultaneous repetition and resistance to signification, “is then specifically held responsible for the limits of remembering” (129). It is this notion of the limit, the narrative origin centered on traumatic memory that triggers, again, Carrie’s fantasy in Sherry’s in New York: “But in a flash was seen the other Carrie—poor, hungry, drifting at her wit’s end, and all Chicago a cold and closed world, from which she only wandered because she could not find work” (298). Carrie’s experiential journey from material embodiment and financial desperation to the spectacle of the male gaze is posited on a retrospectively acknowledged embodiment, registered as a traumatic limit to remembering, the eternal threat of slipping into the spectral world of surplus bodies. We see, therefore, a performative notion of the gendered subject within the turn-of-the-century consumer landscape, but one that in its repeated acts and rituals of consumption tied up with spectacle, works constantly to keep, as Robert Seguin points out, that “specter of class society at bay” (27), the specter written across the surplus bodies of consumption.

And while Carrie’s material condition denies a comparison with the manifest violence we usually associate with trauma, the logic of the imaginary does indicate that of traumatic memory in defining the subject, particularly in the consumer environment that marks the subject’s temporal divisions even as it conceals these under a veil of the promised integrity of the self through gendered identifications. Further, the production of the gendered subject is based in a cultural pathologizing of embodiment, the uncanny association of the women laborers with the foul space of the factory being one example.

This system of pathology expresses class division even as class division is repressed. Economic dependency and the limits of agency resulting from the tenuous inclusion of the feminine within the category of a human “race” is shown to be a surplus embodiment denied the capacity to produce (in Gilman) and the abject structuring consumer privilege in Dreiser. The temporal limits against which Carrie emerges as subject are intimately, if subtly, related to a distinctly, economically, gendered coming-into-being, in her interests as they shift from Drouet to Hurstwood to Ames. Embodiment, then, like psychological interiority or integrity, is an after-effect, a fictional construction based in the anxiety-laden threat of impending loss.

It is in this light that we should read Ames’s advice to Carrie towards the end of the novel. As an electrical engineer, Ames is partly responsible for designing the urban geography of energy and light fueled by capital. As such, his character functions as a trope linking capital, progress, and the visual. That positioning lends his voice a certain authority when he calls Carrie the “representative of all desire” and tells her “it just so happens that you have this thing” (448). The phallic reference is clear, but as a commodified image that is socially produced, we should note a distinction between having and being “this thing.” Judith Butler’s treatment of the performative is useful: “the reading of ‘performativity’ as willful and arbitrary choice misses the point that the historicity of discourse and, in particular, the historicity of norms . . . constitute the power of discourse to enact what it names. To think of ‘sex’ as an imperative in this way means that a subject is addressed and produced by such a norm, and that this norm—and the regulatory power of which it is a token—materializes bodies as an effect of that

injunction. And yet, this ‘materialization,’ while far from artificial, is not fully stable”; it “requires a differentiated production and regulation of masculine and feminine identification that does not fully hold” (187). The production of gendered subjects against the disavowed specters of laboring, racialized bodies requires this “regulatory power” in sustaining gendered norms, but the very vagueness of Ames’s statement—“you have this thing”—points to the instability of the process. And while Carrie, far from subverting sex roles, bows and curtsies on stage according to nineteenth century bourgeois norms, the text’s playing on the thing, the phallic and yet arbitrary force of capital, suggests this performative or slippage as a threat immanent to commodity culture.

This slippage is manifest in the figure of Hurstwood who, in his theft, sacrifices the power of the thing and comes gradually to inhabit the abject world of embodied need. The narrator represents the early stages of Hurstwood’s decline with a hyperbolic equation of capital and the organic, linking material fortune to the physical development of the body: “Either he is growing stronger, healthier, wiser, as the youth approaching manhood, or he is growing weaker, older, less incisive mentally, as the man approaching old age. There are no other states” (304). This implies, as the passage continues to illustrate, an invisible division between the two states, only that the biological “tendency toward decay” is offset by the potential of “fortune” to continue to amass capital, as long as the “process of accretion is never halted” (305). While passages like this in Dreiser have often been read within a naturalist paradigm—the naturalizing of the social forces shaping the subject—the economy of biological degeneracy here contains a curious twist: the body “naturally” decays beyond a certain point, but the decay in accretion of wealth is

halted from the outside.

The process of Hurstwood's accretion is of course halted, and his physiological decline, his "tendency toward decay," is a direct manifestation of increasingly limited capital. Capital comes to define decay and embodied need by negation. As the power of the thing slips away, so too does the satisfaction of living vicariously through fortune. The explicit equation of capital and organic growth, rather than naturalizing the social forces of exchange, serves to economize the biological, and does so in terms of gendered consumption and its constitutive abjection of embodiment as impending threat. When Carrie, desperate for income, finally decides to seek acting work on her own, leaving Hurstwood alone in their shabby apartment, "he saw her depart with some faint stirrings of shame, which were the expression of a manhood rapidly becoming stultified" (347). The text clearly aligns masculinity with capital; sexual desire is in fact notably absent. And this explains his response to the clerk at the Brooklyn City Railroad when, applying for a position, and is asked what he is (for what he is trained), he replies, "'I'm not anything'" (379). Reduced to bodily need, he is not anything, paradoxically, and yet in light of his coming entry into the spectral world of the Captain's beggars, this loss of the thing and not *being* anything serves to structure Carrie's success and Hurstwood's former self over against this ontological negation. This negation of being following the loss of capital narrates, through Hurstwood, what Butler describes as "the unspeakable, the unviable, the nonnarrativizable that secures and, hence, fails to secure the very borders of materiality. The normative force of performativity—its power to establish what qualifies as 'being'—works not only through reiteration, but through exclusion as well" (188).

Dreiser's performative gender and its abject, its constitutive outside, on which subjectivity in the text is constructed, not only anticipates Butler's arguments, but, as this reading of the capital-based privilege of disembodied gender shows, locates such a theory of gendering performativity specifically within an imaginary of consumerism. The surplus bodies of consumption exist as the necessary specter structuring the connection between the social economy of consuming and a culturally rendered pathology, each the condition of the other and meeting on the body they constitute in gender. This not only reiterates the modernity of such an ambivalent, divided notion of the subject, but serves to place *Sister Carrie* in conversation with modernism and its self-referential problems of linguistic representation, anticipating, on the bodies of its subjects, an anxiety at the heart of modernist representation, especially when navigating between individual desire and the formative power of socio-historical discourse. Toward concluding, I will now turn to this problem of narrative representation of the subject in the novel as a problem of the cultural anxieties arising from the material distinction between representation and embodiment.

III.

Carrie as commodity-star has the power of the thing bound up in her name (in lights) and yet the text repeatedly points to this as distinct from, and yet the condition of, a bodily becoming. Her unfulfilled desire as productive force behind that image is linked to the socio-economic waste structuring consumer excess and its representation within the cultural imaginary of a continual becoming through commodity-identification. Hurstwood's degeneration from the narrative point of his theft frustrates any attempt at

resolving this tension in terms of agency/desire as against the inscription of the body in its relation to surplus, abjection. Temporality of the subject is fragmented, marked by varying degrees of disembodiment via capital or experiences of the material limitations of the natural body. These tensions reside in the ambivalence, even contradictions, of the narrative voice and are symptomatic of the consumer landscape it works to represent through subjects variously shaped by capital. This then serves to situate Dreiser's text within a modernist problem of linguistic representation that includes Conrad's displaced narrative voices through which the ambivalent representations of race and empire take shape, and the explorations of language, commodities, and bodies in urban consumerism that we see in the work of Dos Passos, Joyce, Lewis, Rhys, and others. More importantly, the narrative anxiety stemming from the problem of representing the consumer body not only points to the limits to narrative resolution as symptom of modern social pathology, but opens a performative space within twentieth century representations of gender, one that repeatedly challenges the very limits within which it takes shape.

Despite the pathos in the narrator's concluding observations of the unfulfilled star, the questioning of representation as a force in commodity-governed gender-making self-reflexively speaks to a distinctly modern anxiety structuring the conception of the "subject" in commodity culture. Summing up the "progress" of Carrie in light of her dissatisfaction, the narrator recites the "things" that drew her, marking her narrative spatially and temporally: "Chicago, New York; Drouet, Hurstwood; the world of fashion and the world of stage—these were but incidents. Not them, but that which they represented, she longed for. Time proved the representation false" (463). While the

narrator implies that there might be a “true” representation, it also renders that judgment tenuous at best. The passage elides, or even conceals that which is to be represented: the body visualized by contact with the commodity, the fetishistic representations of the forces of capital and desire. On the one hand, the narrator’s foregrounding “representation” and its being “false” calls into question the entire narrative of Carrie, the coming into being as subject by way of contact with capital and commodification that renders the organic body abject even as it constitutes it. This, moreover, suggests and questions the promise of integrity held out by gendering capital in the shape of the commodity (in Carrie’s first visit to The Fair, the commodities on display “all touched her with individual desire, and she felt keenly the fact that not any of these things were in the range of her purchase” [26]), which Armstrong describes as advertising’s “posit[ing] a body-in-crisis, a zone of deficits in terms of attributes” (98). In other words, the narrative thread concerned with Carrie-as-becoming through the gendering relation to capital, a commodified definition of disembodied status, is deemed false.

The self-reflexivity of the text here exceeds, however, a rejection of spectacle or fashion—the commodity form, in short—on the grounds of some illusory falseness of market culture. Based in the almost obsessive play on the shifting limits to the subject and agency, including the threat of embodiment constituted by the limits of capital, what the text deems false is any attempt at representing the consuming subject solely on the grounds of its own making, a self-contained presence. Carrie, as en-gendered, is left unfulfilled by the promises of capital held out by the commodified objects of desire as fetishistic representation, but her unfulfillment must be read against the specter

necessitated by gender. Shortly before this concluding scene, the narrator describes the Bowery types nourished by surplus, the formation of bodies which “caused a daily spectacle which, however, had become so common by repetition during a number of years that now nothing was thought of it” (450), and “they were of the class which simply floats and drifts, every wave of people washing up one, as breakers do driftwood upon a stormy shore” (451). Finally, and in keeping with this merging of spectacle and homogenized spectrality, the text figures this ever-present wave of bodies as antithetical to a consumerist obsession with the production of difference and the new: “from the beginning to the present time there had been little change in the character of these men” (451). Just as the Marxian surplus is that which conceals material labor, subjectification as disembodied by capital occludes the materiality of certain bodies; gender as privileged performative category is a “false” representation insofar as it participates in the making of and distancing from the specter of bodily material, the surplus bodies structuring the power of the thing.

Thus, the autonomous consuming subject is a fiction structured against the materiality of embodiment, which entails all the disavowed threats to integrity in terms of sexual, racial, and class difference. This posits a challenge to the limits inscribed by capital and serving to constitute its subjects on the exterior, the abject, and thus departs from Gilman’s analysis of economically-defined gender and her hopes for productive inclusion. Gender in these texts is a socio-economic construct, but within the cultural imaginary of its performative possibilities, it is also based in a problem of representation stemming from the contradictions of surplus. Dreiser’s text calls into question a realist

project of representation, and the text's self-reflexive denial of its ability to represent in realist fashion not only anticipates other twentieth century (modernist) experiments with linguistic representation, but locates such a challenge to realism within the limits of capital anxiously governed by a semiotics of the body always tied to surplus. The failure of *Sister Carrie* to resolve its tensions of economically made bodies and a performative agency locates modern consumer subjects in a space between, in which the anxiety of the limits of capital and the performance of gender coalesce around and against the disavowed materiality of the bodies it constitutes, the surplus bodies of modernism.

* * * * *

Sister Carrie articulates a psychic becoming in which gender is produced within—and problematized by—the privileged spaces of disembodied consumption. The novel participates in late nineteenth-century Naturalism in that the self, subjectivity, and the body's visibility are largely determined by the social forces of production. But Carrie's becoming what Jameson calls the psychologically "closed monad" of late capitalism is posited against the repressed surplus bodies devoid of both gendered identity and private interiority. This understanding of the consumer subject split by the contradictory social spaces of capital also anticipates "high" modernist literary and cultural production. The modernist problem of psychic space emerges, as I argue in chapter two, from the constitutive tension between abstract finance capital and its materially finite forms, whether cash or the empty promises of the commodity. By pitting Joyce's "miserly realism" (Osteen) against Ford's accretive impressionism we see how modernists locate the subject of exchange, the "self" of modernity, within the

contradictory impulses of commodity exchange. Further, I read Joyce and Ford together in order to map a defining conflict within modernist narrative, a conflict traditionally read as a question of aesthetic form. High-modernist form—including its questioning of psychic interiority in the face of public exchange—is symptomatic of a subjectivity “anchored,” to use John Dowell’s term in *The Good Soldier*, in external objects. I work with Bill Brown’s understanding of “how literature helps us to understand the unconscious as material history and history as the unconscious, as the necessarily repressed that can be rendered visible in sites of contradiction or incomplete elision” (*The Material Unconscious* 5). However, we can also locate such a symptomatic reading of the psychological in light of the material limits structuring capital surplus, a tension fundamental to Joyce’s and Ford’s investments in the formal aestheticization of the subject of exchange.

For Joyce and Ford, despite the stylistic differences in their narratives, the subject of modernity is founded between investment in the object under commodity exchange and a simultaneous affect of loss symptomatic of the failed promises of an exchange value that is always deferred or displaced. Georg Simmel’s sociological model of exchange, in which each act carries with it a “tinge of sacrifice” (44), helps contextualize the modernist aesthetic problem of materiality under corporate capital. For Simmel, subjective loss determines objective value in the process of exchange. While such a model speaks to modernist discourses of subjectivity in the market, I interrogate Simmel’s assumptions by looking to the material objects structuring the space of exchange, the materiality which his subjectivist stance necessarily presupposes. It is this

assumed yet disavowed materiality that produces the “tinge” or trace of sacrifice. But this disavowal, based in the reification of closed off psychic interiority, is part of the problem informing modernist questions of form. “After the Race” and “Two Gallants” construct narrative form around the problem of representing the object as supplement to the absent force of capital, pitting the subject between presence and absence, surplus and contingency. In Ford, objects must be psychologically invested in an uncertain process of anchoring the temporal and spatial flux of consciousness. Explicitly, these texts posit a different origin of object-value; implicitly they show a psychology of loss informed by the social pervasiveness of commodity culture. This psychology of loss is centered on an uncanny, material object that always defers or displaces value, structuring subjective and objective values around immanent loss. It is through this loss structuring the commodity-thing’s presence and value that I read a narrative engagement with formalizing psychic depth—definitively modernist psychic economies—in terms of material contradictions of capital. Just as Carrie enters commodity culture, is interpellated, when in *The Fair* “she could not help feeling the claim of each trinket upon her personally” (26), a modernist aesthetics interested in the tensions between psychic interiority and external world is founded on exchange—material, psychic, and sexual—and its uncanny objects.

Chapter 2

Capital's Interiority Complex: Joyce, Ford, and the Aesthetics of Exchange

In *The Good Soldier*, the early fiction of Joyce and Lewis, and Georg Simmel's sociology of exchange, the subject is a product of exchange with made objects. For each of these, modernist subjectivity emerges within the increasing threat to the autonomous, self-possessed, rational individual of Enlightenment, and the subject is site of crisis endemic to modernity and an increasingly international corporate capitalism.⁴ At issue is not whether these thinkers or this internally conflicted breed of modernist cultural production are socially, politically, or ethically reactionary. Rather, a focus on psychic interiority as a subjective site both produced and challenged by capital and its contradictory relation between surplus and contingency exposes a sense of loss immanent to capital's material forms.⁵ As site of this tension, the very constructedness of subjective interiors figures a space of cultural critique immanent to the pathological growth of corporate, international capital.

In this chapter I read the pre-war modernism of Joyce and Ford to show that psychic interiority is shaped by the contingent world of object exchange. An interior space of psychological depth, while not wholly an effect of object relations, does register the referential slippage between the material object and the purely relational, fleeting, spectral value of exchange. It is on the grounds of this contingency, interior to capital growth, that Ford and Joyce share a psychological economy of narrative; Joyce's realist use of a detached narrator and Ford's schizo-narrative of the loss of self in the equivalencies and contingencies of value are two sides of the same coin. First, the pre-

war modernism of Joyce and Ford reveals an interest in the psychological and epistemological crisis emerging from the contradictions of material exchange in which the objects of commodified value embody the loss immanent to capital surplus. Second, my metaphor of the coin is more than a simple, two-sided pun. The objects of exchange foregrounded by the texts I read here figure Marx's "social relations between things" (84), and the material representation of capital surplus, but also the embodiment of materialized loss, temporal contingencies of value marking desire. The flux of capital *and* a psychic economy of consumerism circulate around those objects (whether coin, commodity, or the body of the other), and the subject of exchange is one of flux, suspended between the external object world and a conflicted interior space of desire.

In Georg Simmel's sociology of exchange, the subject is shaped between loss and investment, a tension generated by the paradoxical production of surplus in sacrifice. Applying a Marxian understanding of diminished returns to the level of subjective affect, he posits a psychic energy that moves between the subjects of exchange across a mediating object, generating value. Energy and affect ambiguously generate a surplus of energy through expenditure:

What one expends in interaction can only be one's own energy, the transmission of one's substance. Conversely, exchange takes place not for the sake of an object previously possessed by another person, but rather for the sake of one's own feeling about an object, a feeling which the other previously did not possess. The meaning of exchange, moreover, is that the sum of values is greater afterward than it was before, and this implies

that each party gives the other more than he had himself possessed. (44)

Further, “of all kinds of exchange, the exchange of economic values is the least free of some tinge of sacrifice” (44). A mutual surplus is generated in two-sided exchange, but is simultaneously touched on both sides by the “tinge of sacrifice.” Sacrifice involves not a quantifiable or named object, but a “tinge,” a coloring or trace evoking an affective mood, and is constitutive of both a psychic “solipsism” and the objectivity of modern exchange, the latter emerging out of the former in an interior economy of balancing: “This subjective process of sacrifice and gain *within the individual psyche* is by no means something secondary or imitative in relation to interindividual exchange,” he continues. “On the contrary, the give-and-take between sacrifice and attainment within the individual is the fundamental presupposition and, as it were, the essence of every two-sided exchange” (46, my emphasis). That fundamental presupposition is itself predicated on a psychic interior, individual psychic spaces each working to balance sacrifice and gain in a way that produces mutual surplus: “we should not let ourselves be misled because in exchange this process is reciprocal, conditioned by a similar process within another party. The natural and ‘solipsistic’ economic transaction goes back to the same fundamental form as the two-sided exchange; *to the process of balancing two subjective events within an individual*” (46). Objective value depends on a psychic balance sheet, the subject’s constant negotiation between sacrifice and gain. The psychological negotiation that occurs within each individual allows value to emerge from the made object: “all feelings of value . . . which are set free by producible objects are in general to be gained only by foregoing other values” (47).

This dialectic between the interindividual and a psychic interior based on the balancing of energy expenditure opens a critical problem in high-modernist attempts to narrate the subject of exchange. Joyce also shows that surplus and desire are generated and sustained by an affective sacrifice. But the stories I read here also complicate Simmel's dialectic by figuring loss to originate in the object of exchange, the material object that Simmel's argument presupposes. We can begin with the energies of capital in Joyce, and the way those energies both illuminate the surplus social body and prefigure the interior psychic balance sheet of the subject of exchange.

I.

Read together, "After the Race" and "Two Gallants" articulate a dialectical tension between capital and commodity, international finance capital and its local, signifying objects of exchange. Further, both the status of particular bodies and an interior life of desire are governed, simultaneously, by an authorial, restrictive economy and its ambivalent figurations of surplus. In what has traditionally been read as modernist narrative objectivity or externality, and what Mark Osteen has more recently described as a "miserly" narrative economy, the two stories work together in mapping the production of social space as text. The social text is governed by the flux and internal limits of capital, and psychic interiority is displaced by an ambivalent logic of exchange. Before theorizing an early Joycean psychic space constituted around the absent thing-ness that goes by the name of commodity, I want to read the stories' figurations of capital as indicative of the limits to an Enlightenment celebration of the individual in the public sphere.

Both stories begin with descriptions of the depressed urban space of Dublin. "After the Race" juxtaposes the poverty-ridden masses of colonial Ireland, the surplus bodies of imperial economic control, with the flows of foreign capital. As "the cars [come] scudding in towards Dublin," the masses emerge into the textual field of vision as a body marking and marked by the space of economic stagnation through which the commodity-machines of capital flow: "At the crest of the hill at Inchicore sightseers had gathered in clumps to watch the cars careering homeward and through this channel of poverty and inaction the Continent sped its wealth and industry. Now and again the clumps of people raised the cheer of the gratefully oppressed" (42). "Two Gallants" similarly opens with social space illuminating its subjects. As evening descends, "the streets, shuttered for the repose of Sunday, swarmed with a gaily colored crowd. Like illumined pearls the lamps shone from the summits of their tall poles upon the living texture below which, changing shape and hue unceasingly, sent up into the warm grey evening air an unchanging unceasing murmur" (49). "After the Race" foregrounds international corporate capital by which the masses are "gratefully oppressed," while the constantly changing texture of the crowd in "Two Gallants" merges into an "unceasing murmur," suggestive of the simultaneous newness and repetitive homogeneity of commodification. Both stories situate "the masses" within the flows of capital; both foreground the open space of exchange as constituted in a simultaneously expansive and restrictive economy. The flows of bodies and desire follow and are illuminated by the flows of capital. The social and the individual psychological spaces of exchange merge, and "each of these two kinds of space involves, underpins and presupposes the other"

(Lefebvre 14). As subjects and objects of exchange converge within the virtual text of capital, Joyce's stories problematize, at their openings, a realist division between a psychological "closed monad" (Jameson 160) and a solid signifying externality.

A psychic economy of flux between excitement and reserve emerges from the tension between surplus and its limit under the restrictive textual economy of "After the Race." Jimmy Doyle's investment of his father's capital in the French auto industry generates thrill, affect: Jimmy is "too excited to be genuinely happy" (43). This psychic tension, or distinction between excitement and happiness, is symptomatic of that between acquisition and expenditure, the text's dialectical economy. Investment generates a surplus of capital *and* energy. Spoiled spendthrift, investor, and thrilled participant in the spectacle of speed, Jimmy not only has "a great sum under his control," but is the trope of consciousness grounded in the simultaneity of expenditure and gain. His inherited financial "instincts" and awareness of his father's invested expenditure toward accumulation "had previously kept his bills within the limits of reasonable recklessness and, if he had been so conscious of the labour latent in money when there had been question merely of some freak of the higher intelligence, how much more so now when he was about to stake the greater part of his substance" (44). The language here ironically naturalizes the contradictions of exchange-based surplus, placing it in the realm of "instincts" and personal "substance." As in Simmel, sacrificing part of one's "substance" is necessary to increasing "the sum of values" (Simmel 44). In Joyce's story, however, this is figured as a division between capital surplus and its material value, resulting in a subject split between material and exchange values. Jimmy's attempt "to translate into

days' work that lordly car in which he sat" (45), invoking a closed model of quantifiable labor time, fails. The commodity split between material use value and its "metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties" (Marx 81) shapes the subject around the tension between sacrifice and surplus, entropy and energy.⁶

The text manages this irrational capital flux with its own reserved economy. The language of (capitalist) economy yields the economy of Joyce's short fiction and its operative tension between references to characters' psychic interiority and immaterial surplus on the one hand and an authorial, restrictive formal economy on the other. The bare description of Jimmy's excitement suggests the dominance of the pleasure principle in the Freudian economy. Consciousness, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, is figured as the psychic agent responsible for binding unpleasurable excitations; the dominance of the pleasure principle is maintained by binding, or minimizing the shock of, both external forces and instinctual impulses. The process of binding instinctual impulses "into a mainly quiescent (tonic) cathexis" is a reserved economy, bent on maintaining pleasure via reducing unpleasure, which, however, "does not imply the suspension of the pleasure principle. On the contrary, the transformation occurs on *behalf* of the pleasure principle; the binding is a preparatory act which introduces and assures the dominance of the pleasure principle" (75-6). The pleasures of managed accretion and loss similarly determine the affect of exchange in Joyce's story. Prior to dinner, Jimmy gives "a last equation to the bows of his dress tie, [and] his father may have felt even commercially satisfied at having secured for his son qualities often unpurchasable" (45). Commercial satisfaction is based in a binding of excess, the elusive qualities that generate surplus are

managed, figured by the neat “equation” of Jimmy’s tie and bound by the narrative economy that privileges external description over a surplus of interior pleasure. Further, the Doyles’ dinner party celebrates their investment in the French company and articulates social being within the seemingly limitless potential of capital merger; the gathering is one of “productive consumption” and surplus is a self-reproducing end in itself. The language of the text describes, rather than reproduces, conversation, linking the economy of language to that of material exchange, or, in Mark Osteen’s formulation, “words circulate like money and thereby figure exchange in several registers at once” (182). The text employs the language of capital growth as determinant of the social body and its discursive economy; after dinner “the party was *increased* by a young Englishman named Routh” and the men “talked volubly and *with little reserve*” (46, my emphasis). The figuration of social discourse emerging from the language of surplus economy, however, ambiguously posits that surplus on (the threat of) lack: they have “little reserve” with which to (re)produce. This contradiction inherent in the economy of social discourse is supported, again, by the text’s reserve. The content of excess is both distanced from and contained by Joyce’s restricted textual economy, or, in Osteen’s formulation, “Joyce uses the mock realism of documentary facts [in *Ulysses*] but undermines it by permitting the text to smuggle in tropes, homophones, and tricks that demonstrate how the linguistic economy of realism—one meaning per word—always eludes its encirclement by the forces of authority” (201). Reproducing itself by way of the continued expenditure of the subject’s limited reserve, verbal exchange is figured as the paradoxical economy of surplus generated by managed expenditure.

The (anti-) climactic gambling scene illustrates the way surplus is structured on material loss, throwing the rationality of bourgeois exchange and accumulation into question. In his reading of late nineteenth-century American cultural economies of leisure, Bill Brown usefully articulates the threatening role gambling poses within capitalism's systems of rationality:

If Lefebvre is right that people perform a spontaneous critique of everyday life 'achieved in and by *leisure activities*,' then gambling may be the transhistorical and transcultural recreational form that can achieve a specifically economic critique of modern life. It produces a spectacular economy of loss and gain dislodged from a rationalized system of production and remuneration. (71)

Gambling as performance "dislodged" from economic rationalism exposes the irrationality concealed by "mechanization" and "calculability"; quoting Lukács, Brown argues, "the economic system is in fact incoherent—'a chance affair'—the irrationality of which becomes plainly visible at moments of economic crisis" (100). As the men in Joyce's gambling scene "[fling] themselves boldly into the adventure" and "[drink] the health of the Queen of Hearts and the Queen of Diamonds" (48), they perform the transhistorical play of chance Brown locates outside the realm of rational capitalist management. Play is measured in gains and losses, appropriately blurring into the immeasurable with the intoxicating supplement of excess alcohol: "Play ran very high and paper began to pass. Jimmy did not know exactly who was winning but he knew that he was losing. But it was his own fault for he frequently mistook his cards and the other

men had to calculate his I.O.U.'s for him" (48). The text here inverts the privilege of rationality over the surplus it is to sustain, and shows an ideology of managed abundance to be structured on the promise of unlimited expenditure.

But this reading also serves to qualify Brown's critical location of gambling as "dislodged" from or outside rationalized capitalist economies. While he is right to assert that "gambling remains irreducible to the market" (96), Joyce's gambling scene maps an economy of diminution and accumulation as the inherently irrational heart of modern exchange and its narratives. For example, "Jimmy understood that the game lay between Routh and Ségouin. What excitement! Jimmy was excited too; he would lose, of course" (48). The constitutive tension between excitement and loss centers around the paper IOUs, objects that signify value by deferral, spatially and temporally. As material support for virtual capital, the IOU marks the future by way of impending loss *and* gain, foregrounding the irrationality of a surplus structured on continuous deferment. The temporal displacement of value together with the incalculability of loss is submitted to the text's figural and formal restraint: in a stupor of alcoholic *consumption* and spectacular financial *expenditure*, Jimmy retreats to the manageable task of "counting the beats of his temples" (48).

The problem of psychic interiority—and of its representation—emerges from this tension between the material embodiment and displacement of value. The IOU serves as the "support for a properly 'externalized' desire" attributed to an alleged monolithic male modernism (Nicholls 179). This operative externalized desire, however, is complicated by its own system of aesthetic representation. The IOU as centralized thing and the

external marker of desire structures psychic interiority around the temporal contingency of value and thus around negation. Jacques Lacan's reading of *das Ding* in Freud, and of the subject split by its investment in an always-already lost object, sheds light on Joyce's rendering of subjective value based in the uncanny materiality of the object of exchange, whether coin, commodity, or IOU. Lacan's interpretation of the pleasure principle posits the subject and its desire as "oriented around the *Ding* as *Fremde*" (*Book VII* 52), foreign and often connotatively uncanny. This model "assumes that it is this object, *das Ding*, as the absolute Other of the subject, that one is supposed to find again. It is to be found at the most as something missed. One doesn't find it, but only its pleasurable associations" (52). This pleasure at a remove hinges on a play of the presence and absence of a governing materiality: "What is sought is the object in relation to which the pleasure principle functions. This functioning is in the material, the web, the medium to which all practical experience makes a reference" (53). And such a reference hinges on a problematic *Vorstellung*, representation centered on the materiality of the object as absence; "the Thing is not nothing, but literally is not. It is characterized by its absence, its strangeness" (63).

In this light, the IOU is not only a temporally contingent sign of equally contingent capital value, but figures, at a remove, as the material center of loss affectively registered: "Jimmy did not know who was winning but he knew that he was losing." But the object "in relation to the pleasure principle" here becomes not only the absence of value, but the material signifier linking the pleasure principle, as invoked by Lacan, to a modernist economy of expenditure. The cards and the IOUs are clearly temporally

contingent embodiments of desire in flux between capital gain and expenditure, excitement and entropy. At the close of the race, Jimmy is “too excited to be genuinely happy” (43), because “rapid motion through space elates one; so does notoriety; so does the possession of money” (44). Speed and notoriety linked to the machine embodying international finance capital “scudding in towards Dublin” (42), are affectively rendered as excitement perversely structuring the pleasure principle: excitement at the story’s end is linked to impending loss, the absence embodied in the IOU, as Jimmy’s “regret,” is of an “unpleasure correspond[ing] to an *increase* in the quantity of excitation and pleasure to a *diminution*” (Freud, *Beyond* 4).

Capital surplus and contingency, subjective affect and loss, also govern the economy of “Two Gallants.” Corley’s material-sexual exchanges reveal that the conflicting motives in two-sided exchange structure an infinite displacement of value and desire. His meeting with the servant girl—who is significantly occluded from the story’s social-textual economy—is one of chance and a source of parasitic acquisition: “Cigarettes every night she’d bring me and paying the tram out and back. And one night she brought me two bloody fine cigars—O, the real cheese, you know, that the old fellow used to smoke. . . . I was afraid, man, she’d get in the family way. But she’s up to the dodge” (51). The assumed reciprocal promise of marriage is appropriately displaced, deferred; she is “up to the dodge,” or evasion of bourgeois reciprocal obligation. Her expenditure, of her own cash and her employer’s fancy cigars, yields a sexual return that is glaringly (and teasingly?) absent from the text. This expenditure as investment in a deferred and displaced return of surplus is the counterpart to Corley’s parasitic economy

and to his investments in woman as commodity. Having spent money on countless and nameless women, he rejects such sexual investments by concluding, "And damn the thing I ever got out of it" (52). But the dialogue is predicated precisely on loss, expenditure without return. *Being*, in this instance of male verbal exchange, is structured on a constantly deferred *Having*, exceeding any simple sexual contract.

The impending loss driving capitalist surplus via expenditure we see in "After the Race" figures here on the microsocial level, taking the form of an inherent imbalance based in conflicting motives between partners. Again, Simmel articulates such conflicting motives in terms of expenditure (of energy, psychic investment legible in one's "substance") generating surplus: What one expends in interaction can only be one's own energy, the transmission of one's substance. Conversely, exchange takes place not for the sake of an object previously possessed by another person, but rather for the sake of one's own feeling about an object, a feeling which the other previously did not possess. The meaning of exchange, moreover, is that the sum of values is greater afterward than it was before (44). The subjective, verbal exchange in "Two Gallants" figures Simmel's model of a founding imbalance in motivationally conflicting exchange processes, but in a way specifically based in and posing a challenge to a male homosexual economy. "Spend[ing] money on them right enough" does not yield a sexual return, a surplus, except "off of one of them" (52) teases Corley. That one encounter suggests the logic of the prostitute in Rita Felski's formulation: "both seller and commodity, the prostitute was the ultimate symbol of the commodification of eros, a disturbing example of the ambiguous boundaries separating economics and sexuality, the rational and the irrational" (19). As

Corley tells Lenehan, “she’s on the turf now. I saw her driving down Earl Street one night with two fellows with her on a car” (53). But the significance here lies in eschewing moral agency; her multiply invested, commodified body is not a result of Corley’s “doing,” but the object that serves to solidify and sustain (male) social exchange, as Corley’s argument that “there was others at her before me” suggests that the sexual object is one of pure exchange value, of the homogeneous, abstract commodity form. The male verbal exchange foregrounded by the text circulates around the simultaneously material and immaterial body of the woman and anticipates Luce Irigaray’s model of “women on the market.” Under modern capitalism woman, according to Irigaray, is the material support for the disavowal of a fundamentally homosexual male economy: “Reigning everywhere, although prohibited in practice, hom(m)o-sexuality is played out through the bodies of women, matter, or sign, and heterosexuality has been up to now just an alibi for the smooth workings of man’s relations with himself, of relations among men” (172). Further, “the use made of women is thus of less value than their appropriation one by one. And their ‘usefulness’ is not what counts the most. Woman’s price is not determined by the ‘properties’ of her body—although her body constitutes the *material* support of that price” (174-5).

But the point here is not that the text, in light of Irigaray’s model, simply articulates the objectification of women and bodies under patriarchal capitalism. Rather, the woman’s body figures as an infinitely substitutable material support of psychic investment, that around which a psychology of loss in exchange takes shape. The text’s one overt reference to a possessive psychic interiority posited against externalized desire

is voiced as a threat emerging from within this (homo)sexual economy. As the servant girl enters their field of vision, and Lenehan asks to “have a squint at her,” possessive individualism links the external object of desire to the guarded fantasy of interiorized ownership: Corley’s defensive response is to ask “are you trying to get inside me?” (54). If Lenehan’s gaze at the woman as object of desire poses a threat, it is because it is *both* stepping between Corley and the woman, taking possession (in a scopophilic economy), *and* crossing the interior threshold of desire for that object: borrowing a gaze threateningly avows that private psychic interiority is predicated on the external material objects of exchange. Further, this kind of scopic consumption relies on deferred fantasy, the limit structuring desire, as Lenehan argues, “all I want is to have a look at her. I’m not going to eat her” (54). The suggestion of a regression to the oral phase, during which the ego is constituted in the oral consumption of a cathected (substitute) object, and “the sexual *aim* consists in the incorporation of the object” (Freud, *Three Essays* 64), is both offered and withheld.⁷ But the point is that when reduced to its bare material necessity the system of exchange structuring male psychic economies betrays the interiority (Simmel’s “solipsism”) it supposedly supports.

This betrayal is supported by a tension between imagination driven by lack and the text’s formal restraint; the subject of narrative—interior psychic life—is both private, autonomous, and a conventional fantasy emerging from capital’s material(ized) limits. Left alone, Lenehan is given an interior life, but one linked to the psychic entropy implied in Simmel’s model of exchange, Jimmy’s being “too excited to be genuinely happy,” and the Freudian limits to pleasure. As he eats his meager meal of peas and

ginger beer, vision and consumption meet on the grounds of an interiorized absence, and this within the restrained moral judgment of Joyce's realism:

In his imagination he beheld the lovers walking along some dark road; he heard Corley's voice in deep energetic gallantries and saw again the leer of the young woman's mouth. *This vision made him feel keenly his own poverty of purse and spirit.* He was tired of knocking about, of pulling the devil by the tail, of shifts and intrigues. He would be thirty-one in November. Would he never get a good job? Would he never have a home of his own? He thought how pleasant it would be to have a warm fire to sit by and a good dinner to sit down to. . . . *He might yet be able to settle down in some snug corner and live happily if he could only come across some good simple-minded girl with a little of the ready.* (57-8, my emphasis)

Possession is predicated on a lack that structures the bourgeois fantasy of private domestic space. But more importantly, Corley's "energetic gallantries" are linked to the "sensual leer" of pleasure and juxtaposed with both Lenehan's "poverty" and the entropic, shock-resistant vision of "settl[ing] down in some snug corner." And as this is to be attained by finding "some girl with a little of the ready," Lenehan's thinking/fantasy suggests lotteries or gambling or advertising—bliss with little effort or expenditure. A girl as absent fantasy figures the virtual value of investment capital.

This absence driving surplus is materially (and symbolically) rendered at the story's conclusion, when Corley opens his hand to reveal that "a small gold coin shone in

the palm”; that coin becomes the material support—*das Ding*—of absence structuring desire, an emptied symbol around which the narrative is retroactively constructed. The text elides both affect, or conscious investment in the coin, and the sexual investment in the encounter between Corley and the woman. But as newly acquired money-object revealed to be the object of desire operative within the narrative, it is also structurally determined by both the subjective loss preceding it and a future contingency, the loss in expenditure determining its value. As such, money here “plays several contradictory roles,” as Osteen points out, in that it “not only represents a standard of value (Imaginary function) and a real quantity that may be stored—signs of stasis—but also functions as a medium of circulation and hence a symbol of motion (Symbolic function)” (72). But in “Two Gallants,” removed from the leveling force of exchange (and its failure, imbalance) as well as any indication of use, it also functions as a doubled no-thing, simultaneously a substantive object and “sublime thing” (Brown, *A Sense* 41). The male economy structured on a fantasy of psychic interiority in acquisition thus hinges on absence made present, given material support in circulation, deferral, and contingency. The coin is an empty material signifier betraying the subject’s autonomy by rendering it a deferred category of infinite exchange.

Together, these two representative stories map a tension important to modernity and modernist examinations of capital and the material constitution of subjectivity. A psychic economy hinging on symbolic loss emerges between investment capital and its abstract contingency (“After the Race”) and its money and commodity forms on the level of two-sided exchange (“Two Gallants”). The subject of capitalist exchange in Joyce’s

realism is only legible as an affective response to the uncanny nature of the material forms capital takes. Here it's worth repeating the operative tension between "excitement" and pleasure operative in "After the Race," which is comparably figured in the mutually imbricated expenditure of energy and endless movement toward entropy in "Two Gallants" (where Lenehan's constant motion figures nonproductive walking as simultaneous expenditure of energy and consumption of time). The mechanical-temporal logic of labor—the extraction/expenditure of energy in the reproduction of surplus—perversely structures an impossible leisure around deferred acquisition. But movement and entropy also structure a conflicted psychic economy which can only be figured as affect: the material objects of exchange inform the embodied subjectivity of capital's limits, whether it is Simmel's solipsistic seller, Joyce's gambler reduced to counting the beats of his temples, or Lenehan's pathetically rendered fantasy of sensual pleasure emerging from the absence of a little of the ready. Such descriptions of affect constitute a "miserly" textual economy of representing absence, often by gesturing toward some temporally displaced or deferred presence. The material embodiments of capital value mark subjectivity by and as negation, imbricating subjective value in the limits and deferral of the commodity-object. But the modernist radicality of *Dubliners* lies in its simultaneous withholding or elision of psychic interiority as seat of subjective desire in that the exchanging and exchangeable subject is pitted between a formal aesthetic of objective signification and its figurations of surplus. In other words, in Joyce's social space of exchange founded on loss, psychic interiors of possessive individualism are a fantasy of the uncanny nature of capital.

II.

The Good Soldier narrates subjectivity, and the subject's attempt to "anchor" itself in the objectivity of things, as a crisis continually circulating around the impending slippage of signification, the deferred presence embodied in the objects of exchange. Of interest is not the question of the impressionist narrator's (un)reliability, but the psychological subject emerging from the contingency of value embodied in the objects of exchange, those objects which supposedly ground the private bourgeois psychic interior. Thus, the formal and stylistic differences between Joyce's early realism and Ford's accretive impressionism are nonetheless part of a shared preoccupation with objects of exchange—commodities, money, bodies—as contradictory embodiments of loss, surplus, and immanence.

If Joyce's authorial narrative economy subsumes private psychic interiors under the material conditions of social exchange, Ford's narrative foregrounds mind as anxiously guarded private property. In *A Genealogy of Modernism* (1984), Michael Levenson traces the shifting relationship between "*physis*, the elaboration of an external physical space," and "*psyche*, the construction of an internal psychological space" (7) within early modernism. Beginning with Conrad, he sees an aesthetic shift from or alteration of Enlightenment Humanism's primacy of the centered, rational subject as the determinant of meaning in the external, material world. "The sovereign subject has not disappeared," he claims of Conrad's narrators; "it has only retreated to safer, if more narrow, ground," a ground posited in various forms of literary impressionism, by "the dissociation of fact and subjectivity" (35). Levenson notes Ford's lament of the decline of

the liberal humanist subject under mass democracy, production, and consumption: “we are standardizing ourselves and we are doing away with everything that is outstanding,” to point out that Ford “attributed the change to the spread of mass democracy, mass education, and mass culture” (50).⁸ Levenson argues that Ford is exemplary of a large-scale shift to “literary individualism”; Ford’s “retreat to a sceptical individualism was not only a literary retreat—from moralizing, generalizing, rhetoric, sentimentality—but quite confessedly a retreat from mass culture, widening democracy and the political crises of a declining liberalism,” and that “the individual subject became the refuge for threatened values. The process was almost territorial: as traditional values were jeopardized, there was a retreat to the surer, if more modest, zone of the self” (61).

Tamar Katz takes up this problem specifically in terms of literary impressionism and its gendered negotiations with psychic interiority in a radically shifting public sphere. She centralizes the figure of “the newly mobile woman [who] offers literature a subject both public and private, vulnerable and interiorized,” marking a problem of “how to ground masculine literary authority” (18). While she locates this problem in a broad cultural shift from feminized domestic spaces associated with interiority to a kind of feminizing dissemination across the public sphere, resulting in a tension between “a world broken into false surfaces and unknowable depths” (125), her narrative operates on a striking circularity as it outlines the gendered problem of interiority and modern narrative:

In his extended essay “Women and Men,” written in 1911-12 and serialized in the *Little Review* in 1918 . . . his discussion of the relation

between men and women becomes an essay on the mysterious inaccessibility of character. Just as gender relations quickly become a question of interior mystery for Ford, so too do the ideas of internal mystery and the narrative means of rendering it lead him inexorably to the unstable relation between the sexes. (109)

The circularity here—that gender relations create “interior mystery” and this in turn leads Ford to consider gender relations—is perhaps symptomatic of an impressionism that tries to anchor the subject in its perceptions of external objects in order to posit a psychic interior that is both separate from and dependent upon those objects. The modernist problem of representing psychic interiors conceived in an increasingly public sphere of consumption and exchange does include gender relations, particularly with middle-class female consumers playing an increasingly important role in the expansion of commodity culture. But such a focus on gendered duality displaces or disavows the flux and contingencies of capital shaping the subject—public and private—through its relation to commodification and material culture.

Levenson’s genealogy and Katz’s more recent formulation of the problems of subjectivity centered around the unknowable depth of the psyche are useful in mapping the private psychological subject in the public sphere as an important site of modernist conflict. More interestingly, however, these critical accounts (separated by sixteen years) share an investment in socially and historically locating Ford and his contemporaries without considering the force of international capital structuring the novel’s problematic category of the narrating subject. We do well to recall Fredric Jameson’s claims for a

capitalist psychology at the heart of modern narrative, a subjectivity emerging “in the object world of late capitalism” which is “accompanied by a decisive development in the construction of the subject” and “by the constitution of the latter into a closed monad, henceforth governed by the laws of ‘psychology’” (*Political Unconscious* 160). This process marks the subject as “the textual institution or determinant that expresses and reproduces the newly centered subject of the age of reification,” that subject centered by way of “the sealing off of the psyche” (160). John Dowell’s narration of the uncanny sexual exchanges shaping the subjects of the narrative and its melodramatic tragedy, as an act narrators perform “just to get the sight out of their heads” (9), supports Jameson’s claim. But the novel also allows us to extend such a consideration of the effects of commodification on modern subjectivity and its unconscious; for it is just this centered psychological subject with which the novel takes issue if we read the construction of an unreliable narrator as critique of the form of high-capitalist exchange as embodied in the fleeting thingness of its objects.

Narrative anxiety hinges on “the sealing off of the psyche,” or understanding the subject as a reified psychological monad. John Dowell’s opening announcement of “the saddest story” is linked to the uncanny nature of the Other, ambiguously stating that “my wife and I knew Captain and Mrs. Ashburnham as well as it was possible to know anybody, and yet, in another sense, we knew nothing at all about them” (7). This link between sadness and the Other that exceeds straightforward observation/representation and a psychology of exchange posits a melancholic loss and alienation as a contradiction internal to the logic of possessive individualism and acquisition. Dowell doubts his

memory in the face of lost “permanence” and “stability” (10) among the four protagonists, resulting in schizophrenic assertions: “and yet I swear by the sacred name of my creator that it was true” (11). And this impressionist-schizophrenic flux structures and betrays psychic depth by way of the material(ized) limits of knowing; a Cartesian epistemology anchored in private possession is figured as impending decay:

If for nine years I have possessed a goodly apple that is rotten at the core and discover its rottenness only in nine years and six months less four days, isn't it true to say that for nine years I possessed a goodly apple? So it may well be with Edward Ashburnham, with Leonora his wife and with poor dear Florence. And, if you come to think of it, isn't it a little odd that the physical rottenness of at least two pillars of our four-square house never presented itself to my mind as a menace to its security? (11)

Psychic depth, memory, and value hinge on the anxious awareness of a temporal contingency that both structures the private subject's knowledge *and* is “a menace to its security.” More importantly, however, possession of “a goodly apple” that is later perceived to have always-already been rotten at the core—which we can read here as material support for hidden motives—raises questions of the temporal limits of knowing structuring a subjectivity in flux. So when Dowell laments shortly thereafter that their period of unbridled wealth and consumption marked by melodramatic breaks in the various socio-sexual contracts—saying “to have all that and to be all that! No, it was too good to be true” (13)—he expresses simultaneously a modernist “growing preoccupation with interiority as a more primary zone of truth” and the failure of that project “traceable

to a sense of epistemological crisis” (Jacobs 30, 38). Loss marks the shifting limits of memory as the site of unreliable, anxiety-ridden, uncanny psychic depth.

But this preoccupation with loss, rendered as unreliable memory, is part of Dowell’s need for “anchoring” in objects of exchange, *das Ding* in Lacan’s reading of Freud, that stands in for absent and contingent capital value. The impressionist style registers an expressionist content in the narrative’s tourist economy of psychic experience; shock governs the impossible need for anchorage as the narrative voice seems to follow the circulation and flux of capital. The four protagonists’ whirlwind tour of the great cities of the Continent hinges on vision impressing itself on the mind, but fleeting: “Not one of [the cities] did we see more than once, so that the whole world for me is like spots of colour in an immense canvas. Perhaps if it weren’t so I should have something to catch hold of now” (19). And while this is a problem of memory as detached from the material, it is a problem rooted in the material, the text’s obsession with a materiality out of which desire, memory, and interiorized fantasy emerge. Bodily movement is in conflict with the presumed stasis of signifying objects, producing an anxiety of affect that governs the narrative. “I dare say the patients get a home feeling and some sort of anchorage in the spot,” Dowell proclaims while reflecting on Florence’s stay at the Nauheim baths in 1904 (27). That “home feeling” requires that subject and object remain in mutual stasis, which, in turn depends on possessive individualism and accumulation. Unfamiliar “open space” threatens to strip the subject of its hold on the external and itself:

But, for myself, to be at Nauheim gave me a sense—what shall I say?—a

sense almost of nakedness—the nakedness that one feels on the sea-shore or in any great open space. I had no attachments, no accumulations. In one's own home it is as if little, innate sympathies draw one to particular chairs that seem to enfold one in an embrace, or take one along particular streets that seem friendly when others may be hostile. And, believe me, that feeling is a very important part of life. (27)

The result here is the exchange of one pathology for another; anxiety stems from the absence of objects with which to identify (“no attachments, no accumulations”). This need for identification also anticipates Freud’s distinction between object-choice and a regressive identification in *Group Psychology* (1921), in “*that identification has appeared instead of object-choice, and that object-choice has regressed to identification . . .* ; it often happens that under the conditions in which symptoms are constructed, that is, where there is repression and where the mechanisms of the unconscious are dominant, object-choice is turned back into identification—the ego assumes the characteristics of the object” (48). Dowell *feels* the need to identify via object-choice, but only as negation. The loss of a stable object world in marking out a finite space of mind and self leaves him in a state of identification similar to Freud’s model of regressive object-choice in the absence of a stable object. This also extends our concern with the materiality of psychic investment which, in Ford’s novel, links such anxiety-ridden regression to knowledge and the imagination. The knowledge of Florence’s suicide hinges on “some little material object, always, that catches the eye and that appeals to the imagination” (126). That little material object, the flask of prussic acid, becomes pure thing, *Das Ding* eluding the

novel's system of exchange while it also links the repression and identification that drive exchange.

Material objects, infinitely exchangeable, both sustain and betray psychological depth anxiously associated with the private "self" of bourgeois modernity. Two objects operative in the novel—Florence's flask and Leonora's key to her secret dispatch box—link a problematic subjectivity to the mystery of the commodity form, both split between empirical knowledge and the "metaphysical subtleties" (Marx 81) of surplus and abstracted, rationalized contingency. The loss necessitated and presupposed by exchange is embodied in the material object which, in turn, shapes the affective psychic economy of loss in "the saddest story" and renders the status of the subject one of infinite displacement in excess of the materiality in which it invests. The text's anxious psychic economy follows the logic of the signifying displacement of value operative in the commodity's simultaneously material and immaterial form. The narrative economy redeploys the economy of object exchange, reproducing the subjective anxiety produced by the contingency of the object in an effort to show that unreliability originates in the commodity object. First, the flask of prussic acid signifying Florence's suicide (rendering it valuable, we might add) and marking Dowell's memory suggests a traumatic limit to memory centered on the object and driving the narrative. In Lacan, the traumatic subject repeats rather than remembers, and this repetition circulates around that which exceeds symbolic representation, "that which is *unassimilable* in [the real] . . . determining all that follows, and imposing on it an apparently accidental origin" (*Book XI* 55). The materiality of the signifier which, in trauma, cannot be reduced to or contained by the

symbolic order “is then specifically held responsible for the limits of remembering” (129).⁹ The flask recurs, in traumatic repetition, as the little material object marking the limits of remembering. But, more importantly, value only accrues to the object in the narrative by becoming literally emptied, when Florence consumes the prussic acid. This emptying of the material (signifier) retroactively creates narrative value and indicates the material limits to possession just as Florence’s bodily desire exceeds the marriage and sexual contract. In the narrative virtually devoid of production, the subject is anxiously suspended between the emptied material signifier and a virtual value that is always-already displaced. Leonora, the rational manager of capital investment, also embodies value in excess of the material, again through the objects’ displacement of value:

Certain women’s lines guide your eyes to their necks, their eyelashes, their lips, their breasts. But Leonora’s seemed to conduct your gaze always to her wrist. And the wrist was at its best in a black or a dog-skin glove and there was always a gold circlet with a little chain supporting a very small golden key to a dispatch box. Perhaps it was that in which she locked up her heart and her feelings. (39-40)

The fashionable markers of the body as value indicate, on the one hand, what Jonathan Crary has described fashion to be, “a protective shield of signifiers, a reflective armor carefully assembled to mask a core of social and psychic vulnerabilities” (118), vulnerabilities, in this case, emerging from the absent surplus that is capital. However, as the gaze traverses the aesthetics of the physical we witness an infinite visual economy summarized by the displacement of value to the absent dispatch box which the narrator

assumes to hold emotional investment and the “heart” of the subject. The subject is an uncanny categorical space in flux between the material and the (absent) value it signifies. And the object, the key, is the second operative material signifier. Unlike Florence’s flask marking the traumatic limits of memory, however, the key and its dispatch box suggest the Lacanian Thing. Just as Joyce’s IOUs embody an always-already lost value in the object’s associations, Leonora’s key is the material signifier around which the subject as displaced value is structured. But both the flask and the key serve to figure subjectivity as alterity, marking consciousness, memory, and value with the absent surplus they refer to. The subject of capital is the infinitely displaced value of its objects.

Leonora thus figures as the uncanny embodiment of capital value, exceeding her own materiality through infinite displacement. This is part of a logic in which the body becomes sheer surface signification, reduced to a materialism that is divorced from and sustains capitalist abstraction and that structures an anxious psychic economy. As Dowell’s vision of Florence as commodity figure in a history of sexual exchanges unfolds, he realizes “that Florence was a personality of paper—that she represented a real human being with a heart, feelings, with sympathies and with emotions only as a bank note represents a certain quantity of gold,” and, upon hearing of her earlier sexual liaison, he “thought suddenly that she wasn’t real; she was just a mass of talk out of the guide-books, of drawings out of fashion-plates” (142), or what David Trotter has recently called “the pure product of social mimesis” (215). This logic of loss retroactively informing possession and reducing the subject-as-other to the empty signifier or representation of exchange value serves to secure, but only tenuously, a fantasy of detached psychic

interiority. He cannot chase her to prevent her drinking the prussic acid because “it would have been like chasing a scrap of paper—an occupation ignoble for a grown man” (142). In other words, the material as sheer representation—whether the body or money—threatens the subject’s fantasy of a sealed-off psyche through the displacements of investment as value. Subjectivity is produced by a materiality that displaces that which it represents and whose value is temporally contingent, a subjectivity anxiously constituted in the threat of contingency.

Further, the link between the indeterminacy of representation and the temporal contingency of value both determines and dissolves the borders of privileged psychic space according to the logic of capital and commodity. The anxiety-ridden unknowability of Edward Ashburnham, for instance, hinges on the tension between the absent rule of capital—represented by the Burlington Arcade firm in the fashionable Piccadilly district—and a catalogue of fetish objects of the self, objects of exchange marking a fantasy of subjective stasis. Edward’s suggestion to buy from Burlington is based in an economy of potentiality that structures the temporal economy of the subject. But as finance capital structures the subject around potential surplus, it also yields an epistemological crisis of absent production and distribution; the problem of knowledge (of the subject) is a problem of capital flux:

Otherwise I should not remember the name of the Burlington Arcade. I wonder what it looks like. I have never seen it. I imagine it to be two immense rows of pillars, like those of the Forum at Rome, with Edward Ashburnham striding down between them. But it probably isn’t—the least

like that. Once also he advised me to buy Caledonian Deferred, since they were due to rise. And I did buy them and they did rise. But how he got the knowledge I haven't the faintest idea. It seemed to drop out of the blue sky. (32)

The speculative knowledge of capital is naturalized and de-realized, rendered uncanny. Edward is the similarly uncanny subject of capital: "And that was absolutely all I knew of him," Dowell continues, except for those other "things" he knew of Edward. Edward Ashburnham is a category in flux between investment knowledge and the litany of commodities whose exchange value, once possessed, is transferred onto the body as site of contingent value. The subject, again, is a shifting category of the uncanny as Dowell concludes that "that was all there was of him, inside and out" (33).

We can apply the temporal contingency of value operative and the novel's participation in a high-modernist discourse of cultural consumption to the transitive nature of modern subjectivity exemplified by Bergson and William James. The shift in psychology's emphasis on spatial models of psychic unity (Crary 60) to operative accounts of consciousness as temporal flux historically coincides with a shift to economic models of abundance, speculative capital, and consumer choice. First, as Stephen Kern writes, James and Bergson "agreed that [thought] was not composed of discrete parts, that any moment of consciousness was a synthesis of an ever changing past and future, and that it flowed" (24). This "'personality . . . flowing through time'" constitutes an "inner self" based in "'a continuous flux, a succession of states, each of which announces that which follows and contains that which precedes it'" (Bergson, qtd. in Kern 25). Ford

applies a similar temporal thinking to the novel, emphasizing the “synthesis” of unordered impressions constituting psychological interiority:

It became very early evident to us [Ford and Conrad] that what was the matter with the novel, and the British novel in particular, was that it went straight forward, whereas in your gradual acquaintanceship with your fellows you never do go straight forward . . . To get . . . a man in function you could not begin at his beginning and work his life chronologically to the end. You must first get him with a strong impression, and then work backwards and forwards over his past. (qtd. in Kern, 30-1)

But the temporal flux of psychic successions and impressions defining an inner self is informed by a change in economic thought. As many historians and critics have noted, economic thinking shifts around the end of the nineteenth century. With the necessary proliferation of commodity forms under increasing mass production, “scarcity,” as Regenia Gagnier has recently argued, “was no longer a material obstacle but a recognition of society’s ability to create unlimited new needs and desires as its productive capacity and leisure time increased” (1). While this account is perhaps too universalized and hence historically reductive, it is part of a larger post-Marxian process in which “value ceased to be comparable across persons: it became individual, subjective, or psychological. The theory of economics became more psychological than sociological” (4).¹⁰ The increasing productive capacity and expanding market generate the psychological flux articulated by Bergson and James and narrated by Ford, exemplified in the novel’s fixation on the impossibility of fully knowing the self or other

when both are psychologically mediated by the temporal contingency of capital and its objects of exchange. And we see this ideological shaping of modern psychology according to the commodity form most clearly in the logic of twentieth century advertising, in which, as Franco Moretti writes, “we find precisely the randomness, rapidity, discontinuity, uncontrollability and depth of the stream of consciousness. . . . [But] the associations of stream of consciousness are by no means ‘free.’ They have a cause, a driving force, which is *outside* the individual consciousness. . . . the absence of internal order and of hierarchies indicates its reproduction of a form of consciousness which is subjugated to the principle of the *equivalence of commodities*” (Moretti 196-7).

Such a model of consciousness “subjugated to” the abstract “equivalence” of the commodity form is certainly operative under capital’s foregrounding of exchange value, but Moretti’s argument does not fully consider the contingencies of commodity value that structure consciousness and challenge internal psychic order as pathologically narrated by Ford. “Knowledge of one’s fellow beings” is destined to failure, to eternal incompleteness and flux because linked to the “dishonesty” of capital value, temporal contingency, and this is the epistemological problem informing the crisis to the subject centered on a privileged psychic interiority. “How does one put in one’s time? How is it possible to have achieved nine years and to have nothing whatever to show for it?” asks Dowell in reflection. And having nothing to show for it does not devolve upon the souvenir logic of collecting kitsch, but upon the contingency of value fundamental to such psychic, subjective investment in the object:

Upon my word, I couldn’t tell you offhand whether the lady who sold the

so expensive violets at the bottom of the road that leads to the station, was cheating me or no; I can't say whether the porter who carried our traps across the station at Leghorn was a thief or no when he said that the regular tariff was a lire a parcel. The instances of honesty that one comes across in this world are just as amazing as the instances of dishonesty. After forty-five years of mixing with one's kind, one ought to have acquired the habit of being able to know something about one's fellow beings. But one doesn't. (44)

The equivalence of commodities (violets) is concomitant with the contingency of value under capital flux. Honesty and dishonesty are empty terms, subsumed under the drive for surplus as an end in itself. Dowell anxiously registers this fundamental contradiction of capital—interior to its functioning—as that which constitutes the paranoid subject of leisure reduced to protecting his psychic deposit box.

As the passage also suggests, exchange-based contingency shapes a fundamental alterity, an inability to fully know one's self or the other. In a similar vein, Jonathan Crary argues for a shift in late nineteenth century realism from mimesis to “a tenuous relation between perceptual synthesis and dissociation” (92). The newly emerging and problematic relation between synthesis and dissociation—or unity and fragmentation in traditional literary terms—is indicative of the way capital flux both informs and betrays modernist psychic interiority. We see in Manet's *In the Conservatory*, for example,

a figuration of an essential conflict within the perceptual logic of modernity, in which two powerful tendencies are at work. One is a binding

together of vision, an obsessive holding together of perception to maintain the viability of a functional real world. The other, barely contained or sealed over, is a dynamic of psychic and economic exchange, of equivalence and substitution, of flux and dispersal that threatens to unmoor the apparently stable positions and terms that Manet seems to have effortlessly arranged. (92)

Ford stages this conflict between a “holding together of perception” and exchange based in substitution, but in such a way that the former can only fail in the face of the latter. The inability “to know something about one’s fellow beings” is based, Dowell speculates, in “the modern civilised habit—the modern English habit of taking everyone for granted” (44) according to the equivalencies of exchange. This problem of equivalence and flux in exchange is the temporal contingency of value that both generates and is in conflict with Dowell’s need for psychic anchoring, as he later says that “with all the taking for granted, you never really get an inch deeper [into the psyche of the other] than the things I have catalogued” (45). And that need repeatedly registers a psychic economy of loss that is shaped by modern systems of exchange. In the multiple sexual exchanges around which “the saddest story” retrospectively circulates, the failed reciprocity of the marriage contract is expressed as loss. Florence’s infidelity is part of Dowell’s loss of anchoring in external objects and Edward’s series of affairs are investments in the “equivalence and substitution” of bodies, requiring an expenditure that leads, in turn, to the Ashburnham’s financial decline. These failed psychic and interpersonal exchanges illustrate the epistemological crisis of the novel. The text is a schizo-narrative; its self-reflexive

unreliability stems from the inability to resolve the tension between anchoring desire in the external objects of commodification and exchange—including sexually charged, invested bodies—and the flux of contingency which those objects represent.

In fact, the “viability of the real world” is figured as a lost feudal order (associated with Edward) seemingly in conflict with capitalist homogenization and flux, equivalencies, contingencies, and surplus. Edward embodies these contradictions. As a remnant of a leisurely class generously, if patriarchally, providing for his tenants, he also “consumes” women across the class spectrum. But his consumption, which is also marked by a continuous expenditure of desire, meets with the “rational” management of capital, the historical absorption of all surplus. Sexual surplus (what Freud would call hyper-cathected drives) is contained and sublimated by the figure of La Dolciquita and the cool calculations of “a perfectly reasonable commercial transaction” (187). Even the secrecy of the transaction, a kind of surplus knowledge, is absorbed by the logic of managed speculation: “there was the risk—a twenty per cent. risk, as she figured it out” (187), that the Grand Duke would hear of the affair, and the virtual threat thus requires real payment. Managing the multiple potential flows of desire here follows the interior tension of desiring capital, as capitalist production works both to liberate and contain desire. We can follow Deleuze and Guattari’s reinterpretation of Marx and the limits of desire under late capitalism, particularly their claim that “capitalism . . . liberates the flows of desire, but under the social conditions that define its limit and the possibility of its own dissolution, so that it is constantly opposing with all its exasperated strength the movement that drives it toward this limit” (139-40). As part of the process of capitalist

expansion, “reproducing its immanent limits on an ever larger scale” by both producing and absorbing surplus (234), the channels of desire open with expanding production, but must be managed and recontained to be sustained. It is this contradictory liberation and management of desire in the interest of expanding the interior limits of speculative capital that governs the sexual exchanges in Ford’s novel, exemplified by the affair between Edward and La Dolciquita, and that produces what Dowell calls “the saddest story.” We might claim, in fact, that the story’s sadness lies less in its melodramatic narration of loss than in its self-reflexive rendering of its subjects as products of the contradiction of capitalist desire, the result and expression of schizo-capital.

The novel’s form, in fact, is the counterpart to a psychic economy of loss based in speculative exchange. The text is a flux of digressions and chronological contradictions, resulting in what one reader has called an overall “uncertainty . . . reinforced by the narrative’s method of progression, which stages gradual revelations by withholding the narrator’s knowledge of central events” (Katz 131). In other words, exchange is the disavowed virtual threat to the materially and psychologically anchored narrating subject. *The Good Soldier*, like the subject of capital, is a formal digression, performing the fundamental contradiction between capitalist growth and contingency on the one hand and loss endemic to material exchange on the other. “Is all this digression or isn’t it digression,” asks Dowell in recalling his impressionist memories of their Continental tour with the Ashburnhams (19). The answer, “again, I don’t know,” has been read as setting up an unreliable narrator in an effort to resist the feminized and sexualized circulation of knowledge in favor of a masculine standard of impersonality (Katz 131-2). I would

argue, however, that digression as unreliability and its schizophrenic paranoia is Ford's formal effort at rendering, in order to defamiliarize, the contradiction and structurally necessary relation between material loss and absent surplus. As negative narrative accretion, *The Good Soldier* is fundamentally about capitalist exchange.

In his discussion of Ford's impressionism and the psychic trace, Peter Nicholls argues, "the impression is . . . merely the trace deposited in the mind by a previous experience, leaving art to re-present that trace so precisely that the intervening passage of time will be obliterated" (172). His description is accurate, and appropriately suggests the reification, the congealing of social history and the private mind under capitalist production, that the novel appropriates. The formal unfolding of schizophrenic revelation supports but also complicates this model. The first moment of crisis occurs during the visit to Marburg, when Florence praises Luther's protest as the Weberian origin of Edward's capitalist work ethic, simultaneously denouncing the Catholic Irish. This racial economy of history sets the terms, in that particular narrative moment, for Leonora's contemptuous appeal to John—"don't you know that I'm an Irish Catholic" (55). Later, however, Dowell acknowledges this moment as the origin of the liaison between Edward and Florence as well as Leonora's recognition of the attraction: "And then—smash—it all went. It went to pieces at the moment when Florence laid her hand upon Edward's wrist, as it lay on the glass sheltering the manuscript of the Protest" (219). If we recall Dowell's early epistemological quandary of whether the later discovery of Edward's and Florence's "rotteness" throws the past-present into question, possession marks the stable space of mind; but the contingency of possession is also potentially a "menace to its

security” (11). The mental trace is “re-presented . . . precisely,” but with a difference. Any psychic trace structuring possessive interiority is contingent, subject to the slippage in meaning under capitalist exchange. In this way, the formal representation of psychic interiors inhabits and critiques the internal limits of capitalism. As Deleuze and Guattari put it:

Schizophrenia . . . is indeed the *absolute* limit that causes the flows [of capital] to travel in a free state on a desocialized body without organs. Hence one can say that schizophrenia is the *exterior* limit of capitalism itself or the conclusion of its deepest tendency, but that capitalism only functions on condition that it inhibit this tendency, or that it push back or displace this limit, by substituting for it its own *immanent* relative limits, which it continually reproduces on a widened scale Hence schizophrenia is not the identity of capitalism, but on the contrary its difference, its divergence, and its death. Monetary flows are perfectly schizophrenic realities, but they exist and function only within the immanent axiomatic that exorcises and repels this reality. (246)

John Dowell’s schizo-narrative and self-questioning memory, in this light, are more than some simple social mimesis of a pathological capital. If Deleuze and Guattari are right in positing monetary flows as schizophrenic, and this as the system’s own constantly reproduced and displaced alterity-within-itself, then Ford’s construction of an unreliable narrator is an effort to expose and pathologize capital on its own grounds of alterity. The contingency of value, the slippage of meanings and impressions under capitalist

exchange, is a “menace to [mind’s] security.” But the schizo-narrative reproduces, as subjective affect and momentary impressions, the schizophrenic difference operative within capital’s expansion. In its foregrounding of schizophrenia as “the conclusion of its deepest tendency,” *The Good Soldier* narrates an immanent menace to capital’s tautological security.

The aesthetics of Joyce and Ford are profoundly ideological. Rooted in the contradictory market forces that they represent and critique, however, the texts I have examined here exceed a simple mimetic impulse. In their deliberate aesthetic experimentation with the problematic relation between subject and object under capital, they take us beyond a Lukácsian model of the inevitable reproduction of capitalist ideology on the level of the subject, exposing, rather, the referential slippage in the commodity form that allows for an aesthetic critique of the terms of its own making. We can approach this by way of the perverse logic of the commodity form, and Terry Eagleton’s discussion of “the Marxist sublime” is useful. As Eagleton argues, the commodity “is a kind of grisly caricature of the authentic artefact, at once reified to a grossly particular object and virulently anti-material in form, densely corporeal and elusively spectral at the same time” (*Ideology* 208). This split between presence and absence is sustained by the continuous displacement of value “in an endless deferral of identity,” making the commodity “the contingent bearer of an extrinsic form” and yet “forming a compact space in which the pervasive contradictions of bourgeois society bizarrely converge” (208-9). And while this latter point simply repeats the concealing of

labor operative in Marx's model of the fetish, its significance for us—and for a modernist critique of exchange and its unconscious—lies in the commodity's endless, "metonymic chain" of reference, the "endless accumulation of pure quantity [that] subverts all stable representations" (212), producing an irreconcilable fissure between material signifier and surplus. Most importantly, this fissure is the space of ideological production, of a fantastic conflation of materiality and abstract form; following G.A. Cohen, Eagleton summarizes this conflation as illusion: "'Confusion of content and form creates the reactionary illusion that physical production and material growth can be achieved only by capitalist investment.' It is the bourgeois political economists who are in this sense the 'classicists,' wedded to a conflation of capitalist form and productive material" (217).

Despite their stylistic differences—and the radically different representations of exchange-based consciousness—the aesthetics of Joyce and Ford intervene in this ideological conflation of materiality and capital growth. "After the Race" figures the simultaneous material particularity and spectrality embodied in the French automobile racing through Dublin, generating "excitement" in the split between its presence among "the gratefully oppressed" and the absent capital to which it refers. This is what Eagleton calls the "endless deferral of identity" of the commodity form, most legible in the IOUs that, in their homogeneity, can only refer to equally homogenized finance capital. Similarly, the coin retroactively driving the economic parasitism of Corley and Lenehan operates as both irreducible material thing and as the Lacanian Thing of desire, referring to an unattainable surplus. This is where Joyce's revision of social realism takes on its radical critique: in subsuming the materials and subjects of exchange under a tightly

contained descriptivist form, those objects also refer to the extra-textual space of capital. And here is where we might revise traditional Joyce scholarship; rather than seeing the Joycean epiphany as a sudden flash of moral insight, we should pay attention to the way the text inhabits the radical fissure between material representation and the extrinsic, displaced value to which it refers, locating reified subjectivity in that fissure. As such, Joyce's restrictive economy simultaneous with its extra-textual references critically occupies the space of the commodity form, the "space in which the pervasive contradictions of bourgeois society bizarrely converge." Similarly, Dowell's failed effort at "anchoring" in the particularity of any object is Ford's success. The novel's form of expansive repetition and revelation conflicts with Dowell's investment in objects as sources of stable signification; the epistemological crisis, the contingency of all knowledge driving the flux of the narrative, is of an endless accumulation of endlessly deferred value.

Desire is displaced by capital flows in "After the Race," constituting the subject in an infinite flux of acquisition: Jimmy is "too excited to be genuinely happy." "Two Gallants" foregrounds the commodification and reification of desire, in which bodies are displaced, desexualized by the coin as exemplary commodity, the embodiment of contingent and deferred value. The reified subjectivity figured by the restrictive economy of these narratives emphasizes the division between capital and the commodity form on the one hand and material objects on the other, showing the illusory conflation of an ideology of abundance and its material signifiers. The subject of exchange, however minimized in its representation of desire, affect, or psychic depth, is a categorical site of

the loss fundamental and internal to the flows of capital across the social and individual body. Therefore, reading Joyce together with Ford posits a tension between externalized desire and internalized flux, representative of a defining modernist conflict, between a realist effort to represent the materiality of everyday life and the anxious explorations of psychic depth, the latter anticipating, for example, Woolf's work of the 1920's and thus pushing the limits of any rigid literary-historical parsing.¹¹ Joyce's subjects, while not wholly lacking social agency, embody the limits of capital structuring surplus and thus circulate with the movement of capital, driven by its own impending, internal loss; the thrust of acquisition is always already marked by loss. Ford's narrator is the schizophrenic voice of capital flux, a psychic writing symptomatic of the contingency of value embodied in the commodified objects of anchorage.

And while Joyce's narrative voice and Ford's leisured individual of disembodied vision perhaps signal the detachment we have long associated with an elite canonical modernism, they also emerge as immanent to the force of capital, locating the pathological threats to individuated psychic space in the flux and contradictions of capitalist exchange. In this light, stories of modernists detached from the market (or from political economy, for that matter) appear as reductive fantasies. The formal conflict between Joyce's narrative detachment and Ford's anxious impressionism symptomatically registers the necessary tension between finance capital and the body in the market, a tension out of which emerges a psychic economy of flux, the internalization of loss in acquisition. But this linkage on the grounds of the contingency of value also locates internally conflicted modernist narrative symptomatically and critically within the

material limits of capital, as “a form of immanent critique, judging the present to be lacking by measuring it against the norms which it has generated itself” (Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* 22), in which the subject of exchange as psychic flux emerges from the contradictory embodiment of loss and surplus in the objects of exchange. A modernist narrative of negative accretion is the culturally symptomatic performance of psychic economies of loss in the socially managed systems of surplus creation; as the privileges of psychic interiority and disembodied detachment unfold in an economy of eternal loss, modernism’s subject of exchange becomes the site of a cultural critique of the social, internal limits of capital.

Chapter Three

Perverse Pleasures of Spectacle: Time and Vision in Dos Passos and Lewis

In this chapter I argue that spectacle is central to understanding a collective epistemology under modern consumer capitalism, privileging vision in a way that links it to and structures our experience of time. In its various guises under consumer capitalism—including advertising, photography, cinema, and the dissemination of spectacular events in the popular press—spectacle performs and embodies the exponential reproduction of surplus for a presumably collective vision. And while modern spectacle shares a visual centrality with its more traditional historical forms (of repeated ritual performing shared community values, for example), in following the temporal reproducibility of the commodity form, capitalist spectacle also governs the temporal experience of the eternally new we customarily associate with modernity.

As Mary Anne Doane points out, two operative modalities of modernity are “abstraction/rationalization and emphasis on the contingent” (10-11). During and following the second technological revolution, the rapid change and contingency associated with technological advance and economic surplus “[become] synonymous with ‘newness,’ which, in its turn, is equated with difference and rupture—a cycle consistent with an intensifying commodification” (20). More specifically, she distinguishes between the *event* and *spectacle* by claiming a different relation to temporal contingency. In early cinema and the questions it raises over the recording or elision of temporal contingency, spectacle emerges as one “attempt to deal with the temporal instability of the image [which] involves not the taming of the contingent, but its denial,”

she argues. "Like the event, spectacle effects a coagulation of time The event bears a relation to time; spectacle does not. Spectacle is, as Laura Mulvey has pointed out, fundamentally atemporal, associated with stasis and the antilinear" (170). Further, "spectacle functions to localize desire, fantasy, and longing in a timeless time, outside contingency. In this respect, spectacle, in contrast to the event, is epistemologically reactionary, decidedly *unmodern*," whereas "the event comes to harbor contingency within its very structure" (170, 171).

The operative modality of spectacle is indeed based in its denial of contingency. But its seeming timelessness, its very "denial" of contingency, *is* a relation to time. First, effecting a "coagulation of time" presupposes a relation between the spectacle and its temporal status, even if only suggesting a false totality, an absolute present shaped around it. Secondly, spectacle's denial of its own contingency is part of its temporal structure when this admittedly "unmodern" construct is seen in its modern, commodified form signifying capital surplus. In its very "timeless time," capitalist spectacle, increasingly implicated with twentieth century visual technologies, is fundamentally structured on its impending loss of value and future outmoded status. The radical simultaneity of temporal contingency and its denial effected by the newness of commodity reproduction significantly informs the fascination and anxieties of modernism's immanent relation to market culture, demonstrated by Dos Passos's narrative flux and Lewis's polemics. By appearing as the radically new, the visual event marking the present, any particular spectacle necessarily anticipates its impending reified, outmoded status, thus structuring modern subjects' experience of time as suspended

between these two moments and arousing Wyndham Lewis's complaint that modern, collective urban culture is "the trance or dream world of the hypnotist" (11). Modernists between the wars interested in the ideological cultural leveling of mass-oriented politics and consumption, "the unconscious mass mind" (Tratner 11), centered around spectacular representations of capital growth such as mass marketing and the proliferation of commodities, were variously intrigued or shocked by, imitative or critical of, the role of spectacle in shaping the cultural imaginary. Reading the force of spectacle in shaping psychic economies of narrative in Dos Passos together with Lewis's critique of the "time-mind" helps show how collective and individual experiences of time coalesce around capital's systems of spectacular representation. But more importantly, both authors show a modernist anxiety of temporal contingency and configure that anxiety with the ephemeral value of spectacle in an effort to critique the totalizing force of capital through its psychic, subjective effects.

That said, literary modernism's interest in the spectacular time of capitalist modernity is not only one of fatalistic loss, pessimistic outrage, or nostalgia for a pre-capitalist historical continuity, much less one of a naive rejection of market culture. Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* reshapes realist narrative around the temporal dream-world of spectacle, while Lewis's *Time and Western Man* critiques a cultural fixation with the dreamy present of the spectacular commodity form. The formal and logical differences between these texts of course demonstrate divergent modernist responses to the central epistemological role of capitalist spectacle. More importantly, though, Dos Passos and Lewis share an ambivalent, critical acknowledgment of modernism's position in mass

culture: both posit the impending outmoded status—that which structures the temporal limits of capital—built into the logic of spectacular referents of surplus, and thus expose a contradictory newness at the heart of capitalist production and its culture of consumption. Both authors, in other words, acknowledge that spectacle shapes a perverse collective pleasure of the eternally new in order to carve out a site of material critique immanent to the capitalist expansion between the wars.

I'm applying the term spectacle in a way that posits a critical relay between Guy Debord's critical observations in *The Society of the Spectacle* and a Freudian understanding of perverse fixation. Debord's analysis situates spectacle not only as the primary organizing referent of modern society, around which "all consciousness converges" (12), but as always intimately linked to the proliferation of the commodity form. Extending a traditional Marxist notion of alienation under capitalist production to the social effects of late capitalism, he argues that "the spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images" (12). Further, the (re-)production of these mediating images is concentrated in the expanding pervasiveness of commodities, leveling the vision of the masses: "commodities are now *all* there is to see; the world we see is the world of the commodity" (29). Such a mass fixation determined by the pervasive role of commodity production converges, on the level of the subject, with a psychoanalytic understanding of perversion. In the *Three Essays*, Freud acknowledges that a "perverse" attachment to objects supplemental to libidinal aims is universal (37), but that when the object mediating that aim becomes the site of "exclusiveness and fixation" it can be regarded "as a pathological symptom" (27).

It is this psychoanalytic understanding of pathological exclusive fixation, beyond libidinal supplement, that I apply to the paradoxical relation between mass production and spectacle, in which “the would be singularity of an object can be offered to the eager hordes only if it has been mass-produced” (Debord 45), to reveal a collective economy of perversion, a fixation on the repetitive production of capitalist spectacle.

More recently, Jonathan Crary has argued persuasively for the centrality of spectacle in modernity in general and cultural modernism in particular. Crary reads spectacle through the paradoxically intertwined modalities of attention and distraction, arguing that modern phenomena of distraction have a “reciprocal relation to the rise of attentive norms and practices” (1), which he exhaustively traces through nineteenth and early twentieth century discourses in the social sciences, philosophy, and aesthetics. Modern spectacular culture, in his model, emerges from new scientific understandings of embodied and hence contingent vision, having “no enduring features,” being “embedded in a pattern of adaptability to new technological relations, social configurations, and economic imperatives” (13). My argument attempts nothing nearly so comprehensive, but his comments on the role of specifically capitalist spectacle deserve attention. The increasingly pervasive “stream of heterogeneous stimuli” and its call for recurring inattentiveness in the twentieth century, he argues, “have produced alternate experiences of dissociation, of temporalities that are not only dissimilar to but also fundamentally incompatible with capitalist patterns of flow and obsolescence” (77). Modern subjectivity, understood as temporal experience in flux between the new and the obsolete, is further shaped by an “essential conflict within the perceptual logic of modernity”: the

tense cooperation between a perceptual realism of focused attention versus “a dynamic of psychic and economic exchange, of equivalence and substitution, of flux and dispersal” threatening temporally stable subject positions (92). But while he suggests a psychic economy of fleeting temporality emerging with the spectacles of capitalist exchange, one which is potentially “incompatible” with the flux of capital, Crary’s argument does not fully take this tension into consideration.

This tension performed by capitalist spectacle, as both epistemological focus of consumer subjects’ attention and marker of a dissociative experience of temporal order, structures modernist responses to and narrative reconfigurations of a rising culture of the spectacle. The work of Dos Passos and Lewis between the wars anticipates Debord’s critique of the cultural pervasiveness of the mass-produced commodity image. Their work also marks a growing cultural ambivalence about finance capital and mass consumption, about the spectacular images of surplus and their relation to collective psychic and epistemological systems. But it is on the grounds of this ambivalence that my reading of the role of spectacle in literary modernism diverges from Debord’s model. I begin by reading *Manhattan Transfer* for its figurations of subjectivities shaped by the technologies of capitalist representation according to the logic of commodity time, and this in light of Walter Benjamin’s conceptions of commodity culture’s collective wish images and the dialectical potential of their impending outmoded status. I then consider Lewis’s seemingly reactionary attacks on modern culture’s fixation with the successive flow of time associated primarily with Bergson in order to draw out Lewis’s forceful critique of subjectivity as it’s shaped by the ever-new and ever-the-same promises of the

spectacular commodity form. Finally, in reading these otherwise disparate texts together, I show how both anticipate the totalizing force of spectacle (Debord), and yet performatively inhabit the logic of spectacle as a zone of immanent critique. The reproduction of the commodity form and its temporal contingency generates collective fixation. By foregrounding the immanent pastness and material limits of value built into the spectacularly new, these texts work to expose the temporal stasis structuring the new and the effect of this tension on the subject. The result of this exposure is a critical engagement with the ahistoricity demanded of spectacle. A (modernist) pleasure of critique is the counterpart to the collective perversion of capital.

Manhattan Transfer begins with birth and the discourses of rapid capitalist growth through financial speculation; it ends with the wasted remains of commodity capital. The novel figures the metropolitan subject as suspended between these moments. We can begin *in medias res*. The epigraph to the “Nickelodeon” chapter collapses future and past within the concentrated spectacular field of vision in the already outmoded stereopticon, tomorrow and yesterday measured by commodities always on their way out:

A nickel before midnight buys tomorrow ... holdup headlines, a cup of coffee in the automat, a ride to Woodlawn, Fort Lee, Flatbush ... A nickel in the slot buys chewing gum. Somebody Loves Me, Baby Divine, You're in Kentucky Juss Shu As You're Born ... bruised notes of foxtrots go limping out of doors, blues, waltzes (We'd Danced the Whole Night Through) trail gyrating tinsel memories ... On Sixth Avenue on Fourteenth there are still flyspecked stereopticons where for a nickel you

can peep at yellowed yesterdays. Beside the peppering shooting gallery
you stoop into the flicker A HOT TIME, THE BACHELOR'S
SURPRISE, THE STOLEN GARTER ... wastebasket of tornup
daydreams ... A nickel before midnight buys our yesterdays. (264)

A nickel buys the future in the form of a leisurely drive or a pack of gum; a nickel buys the visual pleasure of the past contained in the present. The “gyrating tinsel memories” are linked to advertisements for spectacles past, which have become the wasted “daydreams” and “yellowed yesterdays” marking the temporal contingency of vision in the spectacular landscape of commodity culture. I will unpack this passage further below, but here we do well to note the centrality of spectacle, doubled as stale advertisement seen in the not-so-current technology of spectacle, in governing a temporality of the present structured on the commodity’s slipping into the outmoded. Modernity is figured in the spectacle of the now in tension with the immanent waste of the past.

In the urban landscape of the text, collective and psychic economies are shaped around the spectacular representations of capital flux. As in Dreiser’s earlier, naturalistic account discussed in chapter one, *Manhattan Transfer* repeatedly juxtaposes the visible spaces of surplus with the spectral sites of wasteful overproduction. The novel’s foremost surplus body, Bud Korpenning, moves from Broadway through zones marked by the wasted products of the recent past and into the suburban space of middle-class consumption early in the novel. In what becomes his eternal quest for work and for the metropolitan “center of things,” he

walked down Broadway, past empty lots where tin cans glittered among

grass and sumach bushes and ragweed, between ranks of billboards and Bull Durham signs, past shanties and abandoned squatters' shacks, past gulches heaped with wheelscarred rubbishpiles where dumpcarts were dumping ashes and clinkers ... until he was walking on new sidewalks along a row of yellow brick apartment houses, looking in the windows of grocery stores, Chinese laundries, lunchrooms, flower and vegetable shops, tailors', delicatessens. (33)

Bud's movement from the void-land where nature and the wasted "signs" of commodity culture meet in the poverty invisible to a still-spectacular center of capital both predates post World War II urban sprawl,¹² and places that center of modernist epistemology in an uncanny relation to its spectral waste.¹³

But the text does more than simply stage a return of capital's repressed by figuring a socio-geographical linkage between surplus and its wasteland. Capital's tautological representations shape metropolitan subjectivity. For example, the following passage describing the young and jobless Jimmy Herf foregrounds the spectacular legibility of capital:

Jobless, Jimmy Herf came out of the Pulitzer Building. He stood beside of pile of pink newspapers on the curb, taking deep breaths, looking up the glistening shaft of the Woolworth. It was a sunny day, the sky was a robin's egg blue. He turned north and began to walk uptown. As he got away from it the Woolworth pulled out like a telescope. He walked north through the city of shiny windows, through the city of scrambled

alphabets, through the city of gilt letter signs.

Spring rich in gluten ... Chockful of golden richness, delight in every bite, THE DADDY OF THEM ALL, spring rich in gluten. Nobody can buy better bread than PRINCE ALBERT. Wrought steel, monel, copper, nickel, wrought iron. *All the world loves natural beauty*. LOVE'S BARGAIN that suit at Gumpel's best value in town. Keep that schoolgirl complexion ... JOE KISS, starting, lightning, ignition and generators.

(315)

The narrative and visual movement shifts from the buildings as spectacular embodiments of capital investment and rationality to the jarring superlatives of advertising slogans, linking them by a process of reading the visual signs of investment and consumer capital. Like the description of Bud's movement through the wasteland of yesterday's commodities, the passage here organizes spatial epistemology around spectacle, while also, in tension with the former passage, positing that organization against the spectral zone of poverty and labor. The material, social space of the city and of the novel is organized around the relative value of the visible.

Such passages articulate a dialectical relationship between surplus and its impending waste, part of the text's exposure of the naturalization of spectacular spatial epistemology. The epigraph to "Nine Days' Wonder," one of the episodes most explicitly concerned with the flows of capital and its commodified bodies, describes the end of the day on Wall Street in the terse language of the press and stock market reports. Mechanical labor time, as "elevators go up empty, come down jammed," meets with the

reportage of spectacle: “SENATORS 8, GIANTS 2, DIVA RECOVERS PEARLS” (158). The totalizing and naturalized movement of capital frames this jolting mimesis of the language of spectacle; the passage begins with the sun setting over Jersey at the end of the Wall Street work day and concludes: “It’s ebbside on Wall Street, flood tide in the Bronx. The sun’s gone down in Jersey” (158). The relative visibility of the social landscape and its bodies ebbing and flowing with speculative capital is naturalized; capital flux is figured with the solar cycle.

The figurative naturalization of the movement of capital is the effect of capital’s self-reflexive universality, suggesting the extent to which it shapes the psychic economies of its subjects according to its own flux. Or, echoing Georg Simmel, individual metropolitan psychology is founded on “the intensification of emotional life due to the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli” (325). We see this in the novel’s figuration of collective identification around the “great lady on a white horse,” an advertisement for Danderine. Reading the spectacular signs of consumer space opens the way for interpellation as the subject negotiates its own position in relation to the social signs of surplus, or, as another reader has put it, “the metropolis is a world of iconic signs, turning the letters into figures, the characters into compulsive readers and consumers. The word made sign invades their inner lives” (Goodson 99). First at Lincoln Square and then at Thirty fourth Street, “a girl rode slowly through the traffic on a white horse; chestnut hair hung down in even faky waves over the horse’s chalky rump and over the giltedged saddlecloth where in green letters pointed with crimson, read DANDERINE” (129, 135). The repetition in plainly descriptive prose anticipates

Debord's claim that "the world we see is the world of the commodity" (29). The repetitive description suggests both the centrality of spectacle (and the fixation it begs) and a realism that assumes a clear relation between signifier and the world it signifies, but it also elicits the playful mockery of the product slogan compulsively performed by Stan. In jest with Ellen Thatcher he chants, "With rings on her fingers and bells on her toes, And she shall make mischief wherever she goes" (133), and later reiterates the slogan in its original form: "And she shall cure dandruff wherever she goes" (135). The doubled repetition—one in realist prose and the other performed humorously by consuming subjects—is a striking narrative performance of the tautology of spectacle as described by Debord: "its means and ends are identical" (15) in that as image of sheer surplus, "the only thing into which the spectacle plans to develop is itself" (16).

In fact, Ellen's private response to public spectacle—the Danderine lady—symptomizes this very tautology. After witnessing the text's first mention of the "great lady," she later tells Stan that the Danderine lady "*impressed* [her] enormously" (133, my emphasis). As the narrative then tracks her movement to the park, where she becomes the object of two sailors' gazes, the continuous, filmic movement of the narrative passes swiftly from the Danderine lady to Ellen's stroll in grammatical third person, enabling the visual transference of the epistemological force of spectacle from the one to the other, registered as affect: "she could feel their seagreedy eyes cling stickily to her neck, her thighs, her ankles" (129). The fixation on individual body parts/objects to which a greedy gaze "cling[s] stickily" corresponds to the Danderine lady—"with rings on her fingers and bells on her toes"—and the erotic investment in the relative value of those parts.

Ellen participates in a mass psychology in which “identification endeavors to mold a person’s own ego after the fashion of the one that has been taken as a model” and whereby “the ego assumes the characteristics of the object” through its introjection (Freud, *Group Psychology* 47-9). The narrative movement similarly throws the relation of ego and object into question: to be “impressed” by spectacular capital, according to the logic of the narrative, is to become its object. The text resituates Freud’s psychoanalytic model in the public space of consumer desire.

But more importantly, this naturalized epistemology following the flows of capital hinges on spectacular temporality, that out of which the novel’s psychic and narrative economies emerge, and to which I now turn. The novel’s organization of a simultaneously alienated and collective epistemology around the spectacular spaces of capital and its waste relies on *and* defamiliarizes the temporality of the commodity form as repetitively new. This newness, on which the spatial centrality of spectacle is posited, includes the repressed temporal contingency figured in the liminal and spectral site of capital waste through which Bud moves. The novel presents this temporality by way of psychic effects, performing a psychic economy structured on the temporal contingency of value embodied in the commodity form, wherein newness is equated with compulsive repetition and constituted against the pastness, or outmoded status, contained in and yet suspended by spectacle.

The material remains of surplus and commodity that embody and structure the temporal contingency of value are not only, as we see in Bud’s entry to the city through its liminal wasteland, spatially repressed; they are also fundamentally constitutive of

memory and the subject's sense of its own history and future, relegating memory to the laws of the commodity. Following his mother's funeral, the young Jimmy Herf walks to forget the auditory, olfactory, and tactile sensations associated with the ritual; the visual is elided from memory, displaced by the visual landscape of barnside advertising, where death, vision, and memory curiously meet. The passage traces Jimmy's movement out of a densely populated suburban sector, registering a shift in the visual landscape in flux with childhood consciousness:

on the sides of barns peeling letters spelled out LYDIA PINKHAM'S
VEGETABLE COMPOUND, BUDWEISER, RED HEN, BARKING
DOG ... And muddy had had a stroke and now she was buried. He
couldn't think how she used to look; she was dead that was all. (109)

The catalogue of particular advertisements followed by ellipsis materially generates the rhetorical effect of infinity, the eternal present of spectacle in all its tautological excess. However, such self-referential infinity is in tension with the temporal contingency materially figured in the "peeling letters." And this pastness, spatially repressed, not only has its rhetorical and figural corollary in death, but throws the status of visual memory, the subject's history, into question. Memory is displaced by the continuous process of spectacle slipping into the past, illustrating Debord's claim that spectacular events "are quickly forgotten, thanks to the precipitation with which the spectacle's pulsing machinery replaces one by the next" (114), and Richard Godden's more recent formulation that "amnesia has always been one of the staples of a successful commodity culture" (4). Thus, the concluding clauses—"she was dead that was all"—deploy a

grammar of the infinite with a logic of finitude, echoing the temporal repetition of the commodity form.

However, the tense juxtaposition of the dream-world of capital's seemingly infinite chain of self-referentiality and the universal real of death also works to defamiliarize the totalizing force of the former. Deleuze and Guattari describe the necessary tension between capital and its limits: "the ever widening circle of capitalism is completed, while reproducing its immanent limits on an ever larger scale, only if the surplus value is not merely produced or extorted, but absorbed or realized" (234). And capitalism "has interior limits under the specific conditions of capitalist production and circulation, that is, in capital itself, but it functions only by reproducing and widening these limits on an always vaster scale" (250). Dos Passos's narrative does more than simply expose these limits of capital (in socio-spatial terms) ever in flux and defining the consumer spaces of the metropolis. In figuring capital's tendency of continuous absorption via the forgetting subject, it also works to denaturalize and defamiliarize the process whereby reproducing the commodity form as spectacular representation acts as a displacement of capital's immanent, impending limits concomitant with the subject's forgetting and displacement of death.

First, the text works to denaturalize spectacular time by positioning subjectivity between the homogenizing commodity form and the statistical rationalization of death. After receiving X-ray treatment for an ailing throat, Ruth Prynne meets a failing fellow actor, Billy Waldron, who mentions bouts of melancholia and neurasthenia, and warns her about x-ray treatment possibly causing cancer. Traveling to another engagement,

Ruth rides the subway crowded with various bodies “under the sourcolored advertisements,” while the repetitive rationality of medical statistics echoes in her consciousness:

Cancer he said. She looked up and down the car at the joggling faces opposite her. Of all those people one of them must have it. FOUR OUT OF EVERY FIVE GET ... Silly, that’s not cancer. EX-LAX, NUJOL, O’SULLIVAN’S ... She put her hand to her throat. Her throat was terribly swollen, her throat throbbed feverishly. Maybe it was worse. It is something alive that grows in flesh, eats all your life, leaves you horrible, rotten ... The people opposite stared straight ahead of them, young men and young women, middleaged people, green faces in the dingy light, under the sourcolored advertisements. FOUR OUT OF EVERY FIVE ... A trainload of jiggling corpses. (266)

Statistical knowledge renders the body uncanny; self-knowledge is governed by an abstraction and rationalization of impending threat. The visual trajectory links this uncanny relation with the body to advertising spectacle and back to a statistical knowledge hovering between certainty and uncertainty, illustrating what Mark Seltzer describes as “the conversion of individuals into numbers and cases and the conversion of bodies into visual displays” in a social control mechanism linking statistics and surveillance (100), which, in the realm of consumption, “has the effect of inciting and directing that consumption” (114). The statistic, in other words, reduces the subject’s knowledge of itself to a quantifiable threat met with a set of medical conditions, linking

health to consumption in order to better incite consumption.

But this is only half the picture. Ads govern the scene, creating a momentary epistemological frame for the subject. And if advertising spectacle contains its own slippage into the forgotten past, as we saw in the case of young Jimmy Herf, then here we see, again, the psychological emerging from the fleeting material representations of abstract capital within a modernist psychic economy that hinges on the temporality of the spectacular commodity. In *Group Psychology*, we recall, Freud writes that “identification endeavors to mold a person’s own ego after the fashion of the one that has been taken as a model” (47), and that by way of introjecting that model, “the ego assumes the characteristics of the object” (48). *Manhattan Transfer*’s figurations of psychic economies in the public space of capital elide any such ego-model that Freud would approve of, setting up instead the pervasive “sourcolored advertisements” as organizing referents of the passage’s visual epistemology. In the shifting visual movement from those ads to the desperately felt threat of illness, the text figures the effect of introjection. As the governing visual referent, the ads are for laxatives, appropriately indicating the body’s failure to rid itself of waste, of contingency, and this is figurally linked to Ruth’s uncanny relation to her body as object of medical knowledge and impending death. The body becomes the object of contingency itself, felt as uncanny object to the subject. We thus have a psychic economy in which the momentary effects of the commodity form and generalized statistical illness meet on the particularized body. In figuring the displacement of contingency from the commodity form to the private body, the passage also figures that contingency in league with a seemingly rational, universal threat. Thus,

anxieties stemming from the temporal contingency of the world of capitalist spectacle, spectacle continuously arresting attention in a state of fleeting distraction, is in collusive tension with the statistical rationalizing of knowledge and value.

Significantly, this exposes the production of illness under a pervasive and expanding commodification, where the naming of physical conditions follows the production of new treatments. But I want to ask, more fundamentally, how the psychological here speaks to a larger cultural economy of contingency. The threat of getting cancer endlessly repeated by the medical statistic not only directs consumption,¹⁴ but structures, absorbs, and redirects the contingency of surplus embodied in the spectacle. Advertising as investment of surplus in generating an immeasurable surplus is both cause and effect of contingency. The linkage between the immanent pastness of commodity spectacle (“sourcolored advertisements”) and the body as corpse is triangulated with the repetitive limit-effect of medical statistic, that which seeks rationally to contain and direct contingency—of capital and the body—in a process of continuous absorption. This is the paradoxical temporal stasis at the heart of capital flux. The subject is suspended between these fundamentally contradictory forces of surplus and the rationalization set in place to direct its movement, materially indicated by the ellipses that link and yet exceed the two. The textual blank spaces of meaning position the subject within a process of immanent pastness built into an unattainable present of knowing itself, its body.

On these grounds, the novel articulates spectacle as a site around which a perverse pleasure of repetitive newness takes shape. The temporal stasis of capital’s continuous

absorption of surplus posits an interesting correspondence between the Deleuzian model it figurally anticipates and a definitively modernist critique, registered in the dream world of the commodity form become spectacular representation of collective desire. In other words, I would like to offer a curious link, via the novel, between the expansive internal limits of capital, on the one hand, and the potentially dialectical force of collective wish images as articulated by Walter Benjamin.

Before turning to Benjamin's collective wish-image and its dialectical potential for immanent critique, however, we need to note the link between the pervasive force of commodity spectacle and the repetitive dream of the eternal present, a link the text figures as constitutive of the political ideology of consumption. The language of liberal humanism in its American form, in the words from the *Declaration of Independence*—"Pursuit of happiness, unalienable pursuit"—emerge randomly and fully reified into the jolting images of the urban scene governed by commodity capital and shaping Jimmy Herf's consciousness. Frustrated with newspaper work, love, and the city, he wanders at night down South Street, still hearing the clicking of typewriters, and "obsessed" by an unnamed skyscraper from which "Faces of Follies girls, glorified by Ziegfeld, smile and beckon to him" (327). He endlessly circles the building in a hallucinatory trance, looking for the entrance, and

Every time he closes his eyes the dream has hold of him, every time he stops arguing audibly with himself in pompous reasonable phrases the dream has hold of him. Young man to save your sanity you've got to do one of two things . . . Please mister where's the door to this building?

Round the block? Just round the block . . . one of two unalienable alternatives: go away in a dirty soft shirt or stay in a clean Arrow collar.

(327)

The language of a liberal humanist ideal is reified—frozen into a stasis beyond both praxis and critique—but at the same time (as the passage intimates) deterritorialized by the wave of capital surplus sustained by the voice of commodity. The unalienable rights of American humanism, once fully engrossed by the market, devolve into a binary logic of having or not having, being in or out. Reification then depends on an a priori deterritorialization which, despite the violence it employs, offers a critical force unfolding from the ideology of the “free” market. In other words, the passage not only registers capitalist deterritorialization, the absorption of surplus producing a static dream temporality, which Debord calls a “false consciousness of time,” but it also exposes the unremitting force of the past dialectically contained in the ever-present emptiness of spectacular capital. The question raised by the passage might run something like: How does one awaken the political ideals of Enlightenment within the material confinement of a clean Arrow collar?

We can begin to answer this question by considering Benjamin’s theory of collective wish images, where a historical ideal and the inadequacies of the current state of production meet in the material present. In “Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” Benjamin describes the collective images of capitalist production:

Corresponding to the form of the new means of production, which in the beginning is still ruled by the form of the old (Marx), are images in the

collective consciousness in which the new is permeated with the old.

These images are wish images; in them the collective seeks both to overcome and to transfigure the immaturity of the social product and the inadequacies in the social organization of production. (4)¹⁵

We might read, in Jimmy's dream centered around the "tinselwindowed skyscraper" (327), Benjamin's collective image, itself "permeated with the old," reified language of liberal humanism and the ever-new, repetitive language of an Arrow advertisement. However, Benjamin's description and Jimmy's dream—both representative of the congealing effect commodification has on an historical ideal—are in themselves limited. As Karen Jacobs points out, collective wish images "prepare the ground for revolutionary awareness, requiring mediation by concrete material forces to be reconstellated into properly dialectical images" (215).

That said, does the novel simply mimic the contradictory forces of 1920s capitalist production, forces constitutive of the spatial and temporal epistemologies of its subjects? The answer is both yes and no. *Manhattan Transfer's* revision of (naive) literary realism lies not only in figuring the collective and psychic economies emerging from the fleeting memory of the commodity, but in the appropriation of that very form; the paradoxical temporal stasis of consumer capital, repeatedly embodied in its spectacular self-representations, is the content of the novel. Against the organic, naturalized flows of capital ideologically corresponding to the sun rising and setting over Wall Street, the narrative is built around the momentary spectacles of a Danderine woman, a vaguely recalled Ziegfeld performance, or a series of laxative ads in radical

juxtaposition with the tin can disjecta marking the temporal and spatial limits of spectacular surplus, revealing that in the latter, structuring capitalist historicity, “we begin to recognize,” as Benjamin observes, “the monuments of the bourgeoisie as ruins even before they have crumbled” (*Charles Baudelaire* 176).

What I’m calling the novel’s immanent critique operates through a repetitive foregrounding, following the formal logic of spectacle, of contingency. By insisting on the role of the outmoded structuring the promises of the present, the novel renders the urban space of consumption uncanny. In this focus on the false consciousness of commodity temporality, my reading reverses that of A.C. Goodson, who claims that “restoring [the novel] to the expanded horizon of metropolitan modernism means recognizing the way the modernist text inhabits and naturalizes the alien element that is mass culture” (92). The novel inhabits a space where mass culture is already naturalized; it works to denaturalize and defamiliarize by foregrounding the temporal limits of its commodity-saturated collective space. In a passage at the novel’s conclusion echoing Bud Korpenning’s passage through the liminal zones of capital waste and thus marking a textual return of the materially repressed, Jimmy Herf aimlessly wanders away from the consumerist dream world of the decentered center of Manhattan, where yesterday’s objects of value become the ruins structuring the contradictory present and past of spectacle. Again unable to remember anything, wondering if “this is amnesia” or madness (359), Jimmy “walks on, taking pleasure in breathing, in the beat of his blood, in the tread of his feet on the pavement, between rows of otherworldly frame houses” (360), the ephemeral monuments of bourgeois production. Then,

Sunrise finds him walking along a cement road between dumping grounds full of smoking rubbishpiles. The sun shines redly through the mist on rusty donkeyengines, skeleton trucks, wishbones of Fords, shapeless masses of corroding metal. Jimmy walks fast to get out of the smell. He is hungry At a cross-road where the warning light still winks and winks, is a gasoline station, opposite it the Lightning Bug lunchwagon. Carefully he spends his last quarter on breakfast. That leaves him three cents for good luck, or bad for that matter. (360)

The sun rises, in radical juxtaposition with the naturalized site of Wall Street speculation discussed above, over the expelled waste of yesterday's surplus, illuminating the constitutive ruins marking bourgeois time. But this is not some grim, outlying perversion of Wall Street and Broadway; Jimmy's careful expenditure leaving him a few pennies for good or bad luck transfers the rational logic of investment and abstract capital to the space of its skeletal remains, emphasizing the radical temporal contingency that mutually imbricates "wishbones of Fords" with the Woolworth building, ruins with monuments. In this way, the text shows the pervasiveness of market logic through a psychic and visual economy hinging on spectacular representation, as well as the chance that is subsumed by the ideological totality of the market, the paradox Brown describes as "assimilating chance to assert its immunity to chance: nothing accidental can happen *to* the market because accidents happen only *within* the market" (*Material Unconscious* 99). The location of such ideological concealment as "within" is key here, for the text's concluding figuration predicts the pervasive spread of late capitalism, when "capital,"

according to Debord, “is no longer the invisible center determining the mode of production. As it accumulates, capital spreads out to the periphery, where it assumes the form of tangible objects. Society in its length and breadth becomes capital’s faithful portrait” (33).

Manhattan Transfer aspires to a “faithful portrait” of the second technological revolution and its cultural registers of improved transportation and rapid increases in material production, in which, as Hal Foster points out, “the outmoded was brought to consciousness as a category” (165). The surreal landscape through which Jimmy passes, in fact, suggests a critical intersection with Benjamin’s investment in a surrealist outmoded, the use of “the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings,” aging photos and fashions, objects of the recent past which, through their embodiment of loss in the ahistorical temporality of capitalism, might “bring the immense force of ‘atmosphere’ concealed in [them] to the point of explosion” (“Surrealism” 181-2). Hal Foster’s reading of surrealist art in light of Benjamin’s interest in the outmoded provides a useful summary here, one we can extend to Dos Passos’s journalistic constellation of capital’s artefacts statically marking the temporal flows of capital and shaping the metropolitan subject as a category. “The surrealist outmoded,” he argues, “posed the cultural detritus of past moments residual in capitalism against the socioeconomic complacency of its present moment” (159), allowing for “a twofold immanent critique of high capitalist culture”:

On the one hand, the capitalist outmoded [ranging from nineteenth century panoramas to leftover fashions to obsolete machines] relativizes bourgeois

culture, denies its pretense to the natural and the eternal, opens it up to its own history, indeed its own historicity. In effect, it exploits the paradox that this culture, under the spell of the commodity, has any history at all. On the other hand, the capitalist outmoded challenges this culture with its own forfeited dreams, tests it against its own compromised values of political emancipation, technological progress, cultural access. (162)

The spectacular visual referents of the novel's spatial and temporal epistemology, from skyscrapers to stereopticons, are repeatedly thrown into juxtaposition with the skeletal remains structuring the time of the commodity form. If the dreamscape of consumer capital defining the city-text is perpetuated by the promises of staying "in a clean Arrow collar," then the novel's chronology of these objects slipping into the past, structuring psychic and collective economies around contingency and loss along the way, also offers a modernist critique on these very grounds, challenging the necessarily "forfeited dreams" held out by spectacular capital. Consciousness of the eternal present as it is structured by immanent pastness (the outmoded) is a product of the repetitive production and consumption of the new, but also exceeds, and is an alternative to, capitalism's total reification of mind.

We can now return briefly to the fragmented stereopticon passage with which I began my discussion of *Manhattan Transfer*. "A nickel before midnight buys tomorrow" and "our yesterdays" (264), and frames the epigraph's image of the "fleyspecked stereopticons," marked with a shit figurally and rhetorically corresponding to yesterday's spectacles in the present field of vision, capital's "yellowed yesterdays." Benjamin's wish

images as embodiments of a collective desire to overcome the limits of the current mode of production are figured here in terms of the promises of consumption, ever opening out to the future; purchasing a newspaper or a day's ride out of the city is an investment in time itself. But the experience of the present and its disavowed outmoded future meet in the "wastebasket of tornup daydreams," the sites where the fantasies of political, social, and individual emancipation as promised by the dreamscape of the spectacular commodity form are challenged. If the pervasive historicity of bourgeois culture is an eternal present with its eyes on the future, then the spectacles marking that historicity also announce their own temporal limits. And this is where Dos Passos's narrative incorporation of the collective wish images of democratic utopias becomes radically dialectical, for as the spectacle's outmoded status is contained in its present as governing referent of consumer capital's epistemology, such an epistemology is exposed in all its perversion, its future past tense, and past utopias unfolding into the future.

* * * * *

While *Manhattan Transfer* offers a fictional critique of capital's ahistoricity through its dialectical figurations of the outmoded, Wyndham Lewis's *Time and Western Man* indicts modern culture's "glorification of the life-of-the-moment" (11). In a way that is comparable to the novel's dialectical images, Lewis's text constellates the spectacles of capital toward exposing the contradictory stasis structuring the reproduction of the new.

In fact, contradiction is no alien to Lewis's method, and his antagonistic role in British modernism is long and complex. His often frustratingly contradictory writing on politics and art, as well as his ambivalent yet politically or morally reprehensible

positions on women, homosexuality, and, to use our currently fashionable term, identity politics, make him difficult to read, more difficult to redeem. But, as I argue in what follows, his critical diagnoses, employing a dialectic of subversive mimicry, offer a powerful modernist critique of the commodity-governed mass consciousness he is understood to have so loathed. I read Lewis's aggression towards the "child-cult" and its regressive, narcissistic collective exemplified in popular culture—advertising, cinema, popularized science and philosophy, modern literature and art—as based in a fundamental critique of capital and its cultural representations. In *Time and Western Man* (1927) he reads the temporal contingency of value and signification in advertising, for example, as part of a larger cultural discourse, a pervasive time-obsession in politics, science, philosophy, and art. Consider the following passages:

Advertisement also implies in a very definite sense a certain attitude to Time. . . . It is the glorification of the life-of-the-moment, with no reference beyond itself and no absolute or universal value; only so much value as is conveyed in the famous proverb, *Time is money*. (11)

[Advertising] has battered and deadened every superlative so much that superlatives no longer in themselves convey anything. All idea of a true value—of any scale except the pragmatic scale of hypnotism and hoax—is banished forever from the life of the great majority of people living in the heart of an advertising zone, such as any great, modern city. (13)

Advertisement has functioned in the social and artistic or learned world

rather as the engineer has in the factory. It has taught the public—as the engineer taught the producer—that as Advertisement-value nothing is refuse or waste. Indeed, the garbage is often more valuable than the commodity from which it proceeds. (14)

Time and Western Man thus foregrounds advertising—where surplus and contingency most clearly meet in the cultural sphere of modernism—as the premier example of the tautological force of capitalist spectacle emptied of meaning, following the logic of the commodity form. It is in this light that I read Lewis’s vast constellation of contemporary social and cultural pathologies, ranging from a regressive “child-cult” steeped in a consumerist narcissism to the objectification of individual will concomitant with the ideology of mass politics.

Lewis’s anxieties concerning what he calls the “innocent public” of the middle-classes, by now well-documented in modernist studies,¹⁶ correlate with Debord’s Marxian recognition of capitalist spectacle as “a social relation between people that is mediated by images,” and thus to the governing force of spectacle in modernist epistemology. Douglas Mao astutely maps Lewis’s anxious responses to mass culture and politics in the context of artistic production and the status of the object, pointing out that “Lewis insisted that one of the great threats of the modern age . . . was a virulently spreading cult of childhood which, by promising to absolve its votaries of the adult responsibility of political participation, served the aims of world leaders trying with unprecedented thoroughness to turn their citizenries into will-less herds” (91). Further, this construction of the modern masses as will-less herds centers on passive vision: “what

is to be condemned is the subordination of the object to a subjectivity enamored of its power to see . . . and frightened by its power to do, a consciousness that can neither restrain itself from trying to reach the external world nor commit itself to the work of genuine transformation” (107). Mao’s focus on Lewis’s productionist ethics opposed to the ideological passivity of mass culture is useful, but does not fully examine the role of mass produced spectacle informing Lewis’s critique of the “will-less herds,” a critique that takes part in a much larger modernist discourse on time and vision.

Herd instinct, the cultural leveling of mass psychology and its “regressive” child-cult are all linked to a temporal epistemology of an eternal present centered around spectacular capital. Before turning to Lewis’s explicit critique of these cultural pathologies and their symptomatic relation to spectacle’s temporal contingency, we should situate his attacks on consumer spectacle, as articulated in *Time and Western Man*, in a larger cultural and intellectual context. Book I focuses on popular culture and its icons of collective desire, suggesting its central role in sustaining the broader collective ideologies he works to unmask. In a particularly ambiguous comment on the fascination of Charlie Chaplin, Lewis suggests a hegemonic model of consumerism but leaves the source of power unclear:

For the head of a crowd is like a pudding *en surprise*. Everything is put into it; it reacts to the spectacles that are presented to it partly under the direction of those spectacles, but mainly according to the directing synthesis of all that has fallen or been stuffed into it, coming from all that is going on around it. That, I think, is the way in which Chaplin endeared

himself to the great public of the mass-democracy. (65)

While it is important to note the sheer force of spectacle Lewis acknowledges, the emphasis is on the “directing synthesis” that stuffs the “head of the crowd.” The crowd reacts to the spectacular figure of Chaplin, but more fundamentally, Lewis suggests, the collective psyche of the crowd is shaped by a decentered flux or multiplicity of spectacle, the “all that is going on around it.” Finally, Chaplin as exemplary spectacle is little more than a figuration or fleeting embodiment of the directing synthesis of mass desire, that which allows him to “[endear] himself to the great public.”

Thus, the problem of agency and the public, for Lewis, comes down to the ideological construction of the masses’ images of desire in spectacle. In locating mass epistemology on the spectacle or current cultural icon of the consumption of technology, he expresses a cultural anxiety shared with other influential psychological and sociological models of the modern crowd. Georg Simmel’s turn of the century sociological work on metropolitan psychology helps us to begin mapping these productive tensions. “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1903) takes as its founding premise nineteenth century intellectual and political thought, whose “motive” is the individual’s “resistance . . . to being levelled, swallowed up in the social-technological mechanism” (324), and that an understanding of modern metropolitan social life requires “an investigation of the adaptations made by the personality in its adjustments to the forces that lie outside of it” (325). And this individual adjustment opens the way for group cohesion on the exclusion of individual irrational impulses under capitalism’s rational abstraction:

Punctuality, calculability, and exactness, which are required by the complications and extensiveness of metropolitan life are not only most intimately connected with its capitalistic and intellectualistic character but also color the content of life and are conducive to the exclusion of those irrational, instinctive, sovereign human traits and impulses which originally seek to determine the form of life from within instead of receiving it from the outside in a general, schematically precise form.

(328-9)

“The forces that lie outside” the individual personality, the rational abstraction connected with capital exchange and growth, intersect with Lewis’s emphasis on the uncanny force shaping collective identification around the fleeting spectacles that embody it. Lewis’s figuration, however, proposes a fundamental irrationality subsuming or precluding what Simmel calls “sovereign human traits,” opening a discursive tension within modern epistemologies centered on spectacle, the crowd, and subjectivity.

By the 1920s we witness what at first seems a polar shift in thought on modern mass psychology. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud borrows heavily from Gustave LeBon, taking from him the founding premises (which he modifies as he develops the argument under a psychoanalytic model) regarding the submersion of the heterogeneous elements of individuals in a crowd leading toward the release of common instinctual impulses. “LeBon thinks,” Freud states early on, “that the particular acquirements of individuals become obliterated in a group, and that in this way their distinctiveness vanishes. . . . what is heterogeneous is submerged in what is

homogeneous” (8-9). Implicitly participating in the increasingly influential role of statistics in the social sciences, Freud points out that this results in an “average character” emerging from the group conditions “which allow him [the individual] to throw off the repressions of his unconscious instinctual impulses” (9). The average or collective leveling of individuals is thus based on a set of universal unconscious impulses (to which anyone who has witnessed a riot or European football match can testify), but Freud complicates this simple model borrowed from LeBon, explained via the psychology of identification with an object, in that what solidifies and sustains collective identification and its mass leveling of individuals is the uncanny creation “of a state in which an individual’s private emotional impulses and intellectual acts are too weak to come to anything by themselves and are entirely dependent for this on being reinforced by being repeated in the other members of the group,” and that suggestion, the incitement to act, “is not exercised only by the leader, but by every individual upon every other individual” (63).

Freud’s description corresponds to Lewis’s assertion that crowd mentality, as a collective, is constituted in and by the “spectacles” of suggestion wielded by the “directing synthesis” that violently stuffs it with the increasing stimulation of modern life. But the psychoanalytic model is intended as ahistorical. Considered isomorphically, then, Freud’s group psychology based in shared, unconscious impulses outside the scope of historical conditions and Simmel’s model in which those impulses are excluded by group cohesion under modern capitalist rationality seem mutually exclusive. Lewis’s claims are clearly based in the historically situated observations of cinema and mass

consumption, and yet seem tenuously to link these conflicting approaches to the subject of the masses. These radically different models, despite their positing antithetical origins to a homogenizing group psychology, are part of a set of productive tensions emerging with twentieth century consumer capitalism and its reliance on spectacle.

Michael North's informed reading of Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, which he calls "one of the most influential books of 1922" (67), helps both to locate (historically) and resolve these tensions and, more particularly, to situate Lewis's analysis of the threatening collective leveling in relation to capitalist spectacle. North notes Lippmann's indebtedness to Freud, particularly the force of a shared unconscious irrationality shaping the public, what Lewis condescendingly attacks as "the head of a crowd." Lippmann essentially inverts the Enlightenment ideal of the public sphere as an abstract, collective, discursive space checking individual impulses and on which much democratic thought is still based. For Lippmann, the term public opinion registers a shift from the rational public sphere of the Enlightenment to a realm of collective prejudice and unconscious drives, exemplified and sustained by the dissemination of knowledge in the mass media, where private interests mold information for the equally biased public. Thus, "the private self is already thoroughly public" (70), part of a "public unconscious" constituted in its conflicting drives and phobias (72). More importantly, this public construction of the private self relegates individual agency to the fleeting realm of biased representation: "Since the individual cannot personally check on any more than a tiny segment of this world, he or she is utterly at the mercy of representations, the accuracy of which can be verified only by reference to other representations" (72).

The modern metropolitan subject, for Simmel, renounces its irrational impulses, its “sovereign human traits” (328); for Freud, the historically comparable subject of the masses is potentially reconstituted in a collective release of universal impulses in the crowd, where the individual intellect or ego is too weak to assert its sovereignty; while for Lippmann the public sphere is already constituted on a model of collective drives in conflict with one another. My point here is not that these models of subjectivity in a modern collective are to be resolved. Rather, Lewis stages these tensions, engaging in a larger cultural attempt to negotiate the relations between modern spectacle and mass consumption, politics, and psychology, a negotiation informing modernists’ often ambivalent responses to market culture. But more importantly, in its participation in this conflicted discourse of the collective, individual impulses, and the rational, *Time and Western Man* foregrounds the role of capitalist spectacle in shaping collective and individual identities. In doing so, the text exposes what these other models disavow: the repetitive force of spectacular change structuring a modern epistemology and mass psychology “at the mercy of [temporally contingent] representations.”

The subsuming of the individual qua will under modern mass democratic institutions exemplified and concentrated in the metropolis is, for Lewis, based in the “spectacular change” of technology, science, and mass production. Social and cultural homogenization is not so much a product of renunciation (Simmel) or an a priori collective unconscious, but historically emerges with a hegemonic (re-)production of spectacle: “The adventitious stimulus given to the historic sense, the imposition of this little picturesque flourish or that, a patina like that manufactured for the faking of

‘antiques’ . . . goes hand in hand and side by side with a world-hegemony, externally uniform and producing more every day a common culture” (80).¹⁷ And this externally imposed process of standardization of the simulacra machine of production is symptomatically represented in technological advancement and the fetishistic consumption of science, the “revolutionary” force, momentum, and progress of modernity masking and sustaining a mass conservatism:

What I am trying to show by these remarks is that what we call Revolution, whose form is *spectacular change* of the technique of life, of ideas, is not the work of the majority of people, indeed is nothing at all to do with them; and, further, is even alien to their instincts, which are entirely conservative. From one century to the next they would remain stationary if left to themselves. And, again, all the up-to-date, “modernist” afflatus consists of catchwords, and is *a system of parrot-cries, in the case of the crowd*. Even so they are vulgarizations, of the coarsest description, of notions inaccessible to the majority in their original form and significance. The cheap, socially available simulacrum bears little resemblance to the original. And all the great inventions reach the crowd in the form of toys (crystal-sets, motorcars), and it is as helpless children that, for the most part, it participates in these stirring events. (120, my emphasis)

While Lewis clearly rejects the notion of a public unconscious as agent of change, he does stress a passive mimicry in crowd psychology, an instinctual conservatism,

generated by spectacular simulacra; the majority unknowingly participates in historical events, but as children consuming the “watered down” advances of science “adapted to herd-consumption” (120). In this way, his thinking serves to link the “adaptations” of the subject to external forces noted by Simmel to the force of repetition among individuals sustaining the collective in Freud’s model (the conservative reactions to suggestion from one individual to the next) to the private self constituted in the public sphere of representation in Lippmann’s public unconscious.

Time and Western Man stages these models in conflict within one polemic, exposing each to be equally symptomatic of the expulsion of the subject qua will. First, Lewis notes what he calls the “triumph of the *Unconscious*” over the rational, conscious, individual intellect (300). The rational political subject of Enlightenment humanism has little power against the sensationalism of a public unconscious, and the subject is thus *of* the masses: “Inside us . . . the crowds were pitted against the Individual, the Unconscious against the Conscious, the ‘emotional’ against the ‘intellectual’” (300). What Simmel calls “the intensification of emotional life due to the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli” (325) is, for Lewis, the presupposition for the violent ousting of individual will. In Lewis’s words, “the ‘Unconscious’ is really what Plato meant by the ‘mob of the senses,’ or rather it is where they are to be found It is in ‘our Unconscious’ that we live in a state of common humanity. There are no *individuals* in the Unconscious” (301).

This collective, sensational unconscious is, more importantly, the reduction of subjective agency to the passive acceptance of the imperatives governed by the fleeting

reproduction of capital's spectacular images; will exists only as "objectified," made present in the spectacular world of exponential growth and commodification, producing the picture of a Will that just goes on for some reason "objectifying" itself, resulting in the endless rigamarole in which we participate, and of which (*qua* Will) we are the witnesses. It produces Charlie Chaplin, the League of Nations, wireless, feminism, Rockefeller; it causes, daily, millions of women to drift in front of, and swarm inside, gigantic clothes-shops in every great capital, buying silk underclothing, cloche-hats, perfumes, vanishing cream, vanity-bags and furs; it causes the Prince of Wales to become one day a Druid, and the next a Boy-Scout; it enables Dempsey to hit Firpo on the nose, or Gene Tunney to strike Dempsey in the eye, and the sun to be eclipsed; for one thing to "build bonnie babies," and another universally to sustain "schoolgirl complexions." It is a quite aimless, and, from our limited point of view, nonsensical Will. (312)

Lewis's catalogue of the spectacles of consumption and the consuming of spectacle, the reduction of will to its objectified images embodying capital surplus, is itself an "aimless" flux of spectacle. The endless production of objectified will in spectacular, quickly consumable forms, only refers to other acts of spectacular representation (like Lippman's unconscious public sphere as a system of representations). Lewis's rhetoric, mimetically reproducing this spiraling-out of technologically produced desire, works to expose the superfluous yet contradictory impulses of a collective consumerist will ("to build bonnie babies" while maintaining the outward appearance of

one's own youth). And the reduction of will to an objectified collective form follows the temporal contingency of the commodity. The collective leveling or objectification of will is linked to the reified conflation of the visual and time according to the flux of spectacle, producing in turn an eternal present devoid of social responsibility and subjective autonomy.

Lewis's critique of vision, particularly in the chapter appropriately titled "The Object Conceived as King of the Physical World," is a critique of the commodity form as the dominant epistemological referent shaping the collective experience of time. Although often read as a reactionary polemicist, a role he in fact cultivated from the early days of *Blast* and its bold-print blessing, blasting, and cursing of every aspect of contemporary political, popular, and artistic culture falling in the Vorticist wake, Lewis is careful to negotiate between the mental world of temporal flux and the "solid objects" of a "spatializing mind." His concern, in other words, is not to throw the spatial world of solid objects in the face of an ephemeral, fleeting temporality, but to place the two in relation by criticizing the relegation of vision to the momentary sensations begged of the spectacular commodity form, implicitly attacking a burgeoning epistemology of the masses of (passive) consumers. First, we should note that he sees his own belief in an "objective reality" containing "stable and substantial solid objects" (383) being displaced by the world as a moving picture, a series of impressions made by the ever-present "states" of those objects: "it is this picture for which the cinematograph of the physics of 'events' is to be substituted," and "people are to be trained from infancy to regard the world as a *moving* picture. In this no 'object' would appear, but only the states of an

object” (383). Lewis privileges vision, but interrogates a visual culture of an ephemeral present in which the momentary “states of an object” repeatedly displace memory and any will to know. Contemporary object philosophy seeks “to cut down the picture of the physical world to what we *see*. What we *know* should be excluded” (383).

He repeatedly suggests that the world as cinematic screen shapes the “time-mind” according to the fleeting, immaterial forms of capital and the temporality of the commodity. Bringing Lewis’s understanding of memory to the fore will help us to more fully grasp his critique of commodity spectacle as a critique of capitalist temporality. Lewis promotes a “memory that gives that depth and fullness to our present, and makes our abstract, ideal world of objects for us” (383). Memory, dialectically informing sensation, allows for an abstract understanding stemming from within the object world as opposed to an epistemology of successive movements that result in “a flat world . . . of successive, flat, images or impressions. And, further, these images or impressions are, as far as possible, naked and simple, direct, sensations, unassociated with any component of memory” (384). Lewis’s critical description of time theory’s displacement of memory by a fleeting temporal vision strikingly anticipates Debord’s alignment of forgetting with capital’s ongoing production of spectacle, in which spectacular events “are quickly forgotten, thanks to the precipitation with which the spectacle’s pulsing machinery replaces one by the next” (114). The result of “spectacle being the reigning social organization of a paralyzed history” and collective memory is, Debord concludes, “a *false consciousness of time*” (114), what Lewis calls a “‘continuous present’ of [the] temporal appearance” of spectacle, “consumed (and immediately evacuated)” of meaning under a

visual modernity “based on optical illusions, the phenomena of distorting media” (389).

For both Lewis and Debord, then, forgetting is central to defining the subject of spectacle. This comparison serves not only to locate Debord’s concerns within a modernist imaginary, but, more importantly, suggests a way of reading Lewis’s more broadly cultural and political concerns as symptomatically stemming from the temporal contingency of spectacular value. History is reduced to a closed dialectic of production and consumption of the new, which Lewis locates specifically in the commodity time of advertising. In neo-Bergsonian thought, he claims, “‘*reality is a history.*’ It is a pure dialectical progression, presided over by a time-keeping, chronologically-real, super-historic, Mind, like some immense stunt-figure symbolizing Fashion, ecstatically assuring its customers that although fashions are periodic, as they must and indeed ought to be, nevertheless, by some mysterious rule, each one is *better* than the last, and should (so the advertisement would run) be paid *more* for than the last, in money or in blood” (212). This understanding of historical production as hegemonic reality machine is in compromising collusion with the process of erasure of the material realities of the past. The material contradiction of capital surplus structured on the commodity’s embodiment of its outmoded status under mass production governs a cultural history of diminishing returns and exhaustion: “You can no longer nourish yourself upon the Past; its stock is exhausted, the Past is nowhere a reality. The only place where it is a reality is in *time*, not certainly in space. So the mental world of time offers a solution. More and more it is used as a compensating principle” (81). In other words, the continual present of the advertiser and his spectacular representations of the new produce, compensate for, and conceal an

underlying exhaustion structuring temporality. The material realities of past and present are rendered abstractions, subsumed by the repetitive dominance of overproduction and the commodity form.

The result is a collective pathology in which psychic and cultural economies are shaped by spectacle's creation and disavowal of contingency. He makes this point most emphatically (and hyperbolically) in his "Analysis of the Mind of James Joyce" and the "peculiar spectacle" of *Ulysses* in Book One, the section most concerned with mass culture. Psychic interiority, internal monologue as narrative method is not only, for Lewis, based in a weak, feminized aestheticism (Mao 93) or a pathologically passive impressionism (94) associated with Proust, Ford, and others, but is, more fundamentally and systemically, indicative of subjectivity as objectified will, centered around the dead stuff of commodity time, of the spectacular recent past. The "psychological" technique that is, under Lewis's satirical pen, both *Ulysses* the text and cultural symptom, is a production of "an Aladdin's cave of incredible bric-à-brac in which a dense mass of dead stuff is collected, from 1901 toothpaste, a bar or two of Sweet Rosie O'Grady, to pre-nordic architecture," creating an "expanse of objects, all of them lifeless, the sewage of a Past twenty years old" (89). Lewis's reading of *Ulysses* as a sepulchral cave of material culture and a spectacular assemblage of yesterday's mass products with a smattering of the ancient world thrown in links "the mythical guise of commodity exchange, in which the self-identical perpetually presents itself as the new (Wolin, qtd. in Jacobs 214) to the sewage-like waste on which spectacular (re)-production is based. Reproducing the self-identical commodity as the new necessitates waste (as in Dos Passos's fictional

commodity landscape) and produces, according to Lewis, a reified psychology (legible in Joyce's technique), a cultural symptom of what Debord calls "the triumph of irreversible time [as] its metamorphosis into the *time of things*" (105).

It is in the *world of things*, however, that Lewis stakes a cultural critique, negotiating between the leveling and making-passive of consumers under capital's spectacular dream world of temporal flux on the one hand and a collective, immanent materialism on the other. Part of this involves what Douglas Mao has called, in the context of Lewis's critique of Schopenhauer, the "existential explorations [that] could be prompted by the spectacles of large-scale production and the modern subject's bombardment by commodities" (134). While Mao is right in suggesting that Lewis and other modernists during what has been called the second technological revolution did little more than *explore* the increasing bombardment and centrality of capitalist spectacle in modernist epistemology, his reading does not consider the temporal flux of commodity culture as site of critique in *Time and Western Man*. For it is on the grounds of the homogenizing effects (temporal and cultural) of mass commodity production, that which Lewis found both "stimulating and perverse" (Mao 135), that the text gestures toward a potential disruption of the ideological forgetting upon which a collective, passive unconscious of "herd-consumption" (120) depends. The formal satire marks an effort at opening a space of redemption, a material collectivism over against an ideological egoism of vision following the logic of spectacular commodity time.

As opposed to the "cinematograph of the physics of 'events'" training modern subjects "from infancy to regard the world as a *moving picture*" (383) of an eternal

present, Lewis promotes a visuality linking the material world and memory. “The traditional belief of common-sense, embodied in the ‘naïf’ view of the physical world,” he satirically claims, “is really a *picture*. We believe that we *see* a certain objective reality. This contains stable and substantial solid objects. When we look at these objects we believe that what we are perceiving is what we are *seeing*. In reality, of course, we are conscious of much more than we immediately *see*” (383). In promoting this material consciousness over a cultural unconscious devoid of will and political and critical agency, he reminds us of the force of memory in constructing the perception of those solid objects of the material world: “It is memory that gives that depth and fullness to our present, and makes our abstract, ideal world of objects for us” (383). In light of this memory which exceeds commodity temporality we can synthesize his critique of the fetishistic isolation of the eye and of the epistemological contingency built into the structure of capitalist spectacle, toward a critical vision not reducible to the laws of the market. The following passages reveal these opposing modalities of vision:

[I]t would be the opposite of the truth if you wish to isolate the Eye. For it is against that isolation that we contend [my italics]. On the other hand, if by “philosophy of the eye” is meant that we wish to repose, and materially to repose, in the crowning human sense, the visual sense . . . then it is true that our philosophy attaches itself to that concrete and radiant reality of the optic sense. That sensation of overwhelming reality which vision alone gives is the reality of ‘common-sense,’ as it is the reality we inherit from pagan antiquity. And it is indeed on that ‘reality’ that I am basing all I say.

(392)

In the world of Advertisement, Coué-fashion, everything that happens today . . . is better, bigger, brighter, more astonishing than anything that has ever existed before. . . . An individual looking, with his intellect, before and after, seeing far too much at a time for the requirements of the advertiser or hypnotist, is not at all the affair of the Advertisement. (12-13)

His privileging of the “concrete reality” of the “visual sense” needs to be read in the context of memory, necessarily erased in a commodified epistemology hinging on spectacular change. Advertising, we recall, has “battered and deadened every superlative so much that superlatives no longer in themselves convey anything” (13), suggesting the tendency of capital to absorb and redeploy all surplus through spectacle. And this is key to any understanding of a modernist visual culture. Capital extorts the very materiality, material difference, and material force of language itself, that on which it (a priori) depends. Contrasting spectacle emptied of reference to anything beyond itself with an acknowledgment of its immanent pastness gestures toward a modernist critical vision of autonomous will. But these passages together also reveal a curious tension between a shared, “common-sense” reality in visual perception and the individual subject’s capacity to resist the “continuous present” (389) of the empty event of the advertisement, capital’s repetitive self-representation. And it is from within this tension, hinging as it does on the epistemological problem of spectacular time, that both the radical force and productive limits of Lewis’s critique emerge.

The critical force of *Time and Western Man* lies in its interrogation of the private

ego as constructed in the public space of capital flux. Fredric Jameson makes a similar point in his study of Lewis, arguing that “modernism not only reflects and reinforces [the] fragmentation and commodification of the psyche as its basic precondition”; it also tries “to overcome that reification” by exploring the libidinal potential contained in those sealed psychic spaces, perhaps allowing access to a “more authentic existence” (*Fables* 14, 39). I agree with this reading of Lewis’s modernism, but Jameson’s usual focus on the hegemony of production processes has its limits, excluding a consideration of Lewis’s interest in the collective bourgeois responses to spectacle, responses or effects that are constitutive of a pathological cultural moment. The ideology of a private subject, for Lewis, is sustained by temporal contingency both produced and concealed by spectacle, resulting in a subjectivism divorced from the “reality” of the material. Consumer spectacle appeals to the “private” fantasies of the individual of the masses, constituting the individual subject as both narcissistic and of a will-less, possessive ego. In this light, Lewis points out that “the eye is, in the sense in which we are considering it, the *private* organ; the hand the *public* one” (393), but that

the cutting up of the ideal, public, *one*, exterior, reality of human tradition, into manifold spaces and times, leads to a fundamental ‘subjectivity’ of one sort or the other. *And we would emphasize that our ideal, objective, world, which was wrought into a unity—the common ground of imaginative reality on which we all meet—is being destroyed in favour of a fastidious egoism, based on a disintegration of the complex unit of the senses, and a granting of unique privileges to vision, in its raw, immediate*

and sensational sense. (394, my emphasis)

This “common ground” of an aesthetic unity of the senses is what Lewis holds out against a regressive child-cult, the cultural leveling symptomatic of the homogenizing force of capital, and the epistemological passivity wrought from a visual fetishism begged by the commodity form. Fetishizing the visual is a fragmented, formalized aesthetic, simultaneously operating on an aesthetic rooted in the sensual from which it historically springs (Eagleton, *Ideology* 13) and reducing it to a scopic immediacy of the “sensational.” Although reactive, the arguments in Lewis’s text exceed their own traditional conservatism. While he does not make the point explicitly, I read the text’s constellation of the seemingly limitless subjects and objects of capital, as well as the “disintegration of the complex unit of the senses” by a privileged vision, as symptomatic of the force of commodity spectacle. Or, to invoke Eagleton, “it is not the use of an object which violates its aesthetic being, but that abstraction of it to an empty receptacle which follows from the sway of exchange-value and the dehumanization of need. Classical aesthetics and commodity fetishism both purge the specificity of things, stripping their sensuous content to a pure ideality of form” (205). The egoistic “cutting up” of public human space linked to a rendering asunder of the senses—both occurring under the logic of the commodity—is another instance of capital’s absorption of a visual logic in its own tautological reproduction, begging of its subjects passive, pornographic consumption of an (im)mediate temporal reality. The text’s obsessive constellation of the exemplary technologies of commodity culture and its temporal contradictions exposes and challenges a “fastidious egoism” emerging from a privileged spectacular vision. When he

describes a narcissistic mass consumption of the spectacular images of capital (exemplified in the reception of Chaplin), claiming that “the pathos of the Public is of a sentimental and also a naïvely selfish order. It is *its own* pathos and triumphs that it wishes to hear about” (64), Lewis does more than state a consumerist truism from a reactionary position. He exposes, rather, the ideological limits of an ego driven by the temporally ephemeral world of commodity-objects, an ego conceived as a “private” mode of vision fetishistically divorced from the very material, public, historical realities which shape that vision.

The polemic exposure of subjectification under the temporal epistemology of the commodity form, of modernity, would seem also to expose the limits of Lewis’s own critique, his cultivated role as critic surveying the cultural landscape from a privileged position beyond its contradictions and infantilisms. Despite the satirical force aimed at the production of consciousness emerging from capital’s fleeting and spectacular self-representation, he does not strike a clear note of resolution or offer a program for revolutionary change. As Douglas Mao puts it, “Lewis knows that all this selling and buying is not the human project, but by the same token he does not know what that project could in fact be, can offer nothing that would circumvent commodity culture’s centrality to quotidian life and consciousness or rival in imaginative force the overwhelming massiveness suggested by his heterogeneous list of goods” (134). Indeed, aside from a certain critical-satirical consciousness-raising, it would seem that Lewis’s extensive familiarity with philosophies of time and their various cultural expressions serve as a mere tool for opposition to a pervasive epistemological modality. But I would

like to suggest that this very limit in the conception of *Time and Western Man* offers a productive way of reading the relations between spectacle, consumer capital, time, and consciousness in a way that sheds considerable light on Lewis's modernism and its profoundly complex—and often contradictory—relations to the market. Despite the absence of a consistent and radical critique, the text stages the contradictory limits of collective culture, reduced as it is to passive attachments to the objectified will of spectacular consumption.

Time and Western Man can be characterized by its flux and repetition, superlative rhetoric, and infinite expansion, symptomatic of the concepts and cultural phenomena it attacks, especially spectacular capital.¹⁸ But what drives the flux of Lewis's writing—and provides us with the most forceful critique of the time of commodity culture—is contradiction. One of the main problems of *Ulysses* is Joyce's craftsman-like assemblage of the "Aladdin's cave of incredible bric-à-brac in which a dense mass of dead stuff is collected," constitutive of a modern psychology steeped in "the sewage of a Past twenty years old" (89). This complaint might open the way for Benjaminian dialectical arrangement of the outmoded, exposing the temporal limits of capital as embodied in its commodity form. Further, Joyce's textual assemblage of outmoded commodities might support Lewis's critique of capitalist technological history as dialectical progress, in which "reality" is governed by "Mind, like some immense stunt-figure symbolizing Fashion, ecstatically assuring its customers that although fashions are periodic . . . nevertheless, by some mysterious rule, each one is *better* than the last, and should . . . be paid *more* for than the last" (212). Lewis, however, displays no critical investment in the

outmoded; rather, contradiction drives the accretive excess of his text. The attack on Joyce's collection of commodities past would seem to undermine Lewis's own attack on the ideological forgetting necessary to spectacular capital, as in his claim that "an individual looking, with his intellect, before and after, [sees] far too much at a time for the requirements of the advertiser" (13). The time-mind he sees in *Ulysses* is of an obsession with the past, with the outmoded of material production and consumption, whereas the time-mind of Bergsonian theory and fashion culture is a problem of the successive states of an eternal present devoid of memory and agency. Lewis's method of contradiction resists privileging either temporal modality as well as positing a moderate middle-ground. Rather, the text constellates Joyce's collection of the recent past with the historical amnesia begged of mass commodity production in order to show the contradictory regression contained by a progress limited to production and consumption.

This contradictory method, while revealing the argumentative limits to Lewis's external critical role, also poses a powerful internal tension: the fleeting form of spectacle embodying and concealing the interior temporal limits of capital *is* the critical content of the text. In a recent article on Adorno's Constellation and Benjamin's Dialectical Image, Steven Helmling reads a mimetic force of juxtaposing contradictory, non-dialectical elements in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, particularly the stasis of reification at the heart of capitalist "progress." Putting binary ideas into play—in a deconstructive move on Helmling's part—produces "forcefields within which the energies of certain contradictions pulse and clash" (par. 31), allowing for an immanent critique that "undertakes not to solve, or to make disappear, but precisely, to display, to expose, which

must mean, to *suffer*, and in that special sense to ‘perform,’ to make happen, to ‘repeat’ and . . . ‘reliquify,’ in the writing itself” (par. 32). The contradiction between Lewis’s disparagement of *Ulysses* and his own massive textual assemblage is symptomatic *and* critical of the contradictory coexistence of reification and progress. The historical, including its contradictions, is resistant to the leveling temporal force of spectacle and a commodity-governed cultural economy that is “as unsubstantial as a mist on a Never-
Never landscape” (81).

It is on the grounds of this contradictory immanence that we can finally situate the tension between will and false egoism, a tension shaping Lewis’s own ambivalent privileging of vision. Will is eclipsed by its reification, which he terms objectification, as the endless reproduction of spectacular desire. The text “suffers” and “repeats” the fetishized visual commodity culture that results in the mist-enshrouded landscape of passive consumers. The “naïvely selfish order” of a bourgeois public reduced to seeing “*its own* pathos and triumphs” (64) represented to it by Chaplin and department stores, boxers and posing politicians is in league with “the picture of a Will that just goes on for some reason ‘objectifying’ itself, resulting in the endless rigamarole in which we participate, and of which (*qua* Will) we are the witnesses” (312). Lewis constellates the contradictory imperatives of this objectified will and the “fastidious egoism” of mass culture. These problems of identification with the mass produced commodity are the contradictory particulars dialectically contained in the universal of spectacle. An objectified will of collective identification and the “fastidious egoism” of a regressive, sensational immediacy would seem to counteract each other; but Lewis’s text posits the

two terms as the contradictory, yet dialectically charged, imperatives of spectacular culture. The “endless rigamarole” of spectacular vision following the logic of the commodity form reproduces the tautological will of collective passivity. But juxtaposing publicly made desires and the narcissistic self works to make an uncritical collective identification and a childish egoism “pulse and clash.” The text pleasures in its own contradictions in order to “reliquify,” through the reified objects of mass production and consumption, the collective and the individual, the visual and memory, and to bring each out of the stasis of repetitive, eternal succession.

Lewis himself describes this re-production of forcefields out of contradiction as “beyond action and reaction.” *The Art of Being Ruled*, published in the previous year, explains his dialectical method, what I have been calling a modernist critique immanent to spectacular capital, and is useful in better understanding the critical force of *Time and Western Man*. Against “the naïvely conventional ‘revolutionary’ [as] a stereotyped, routine protocol of a living activity, vulgarized for the purposes of mass use” (359), Lewis proposes a dialectical “double movement”:

No logical future has taken pictorial shape in these pages [in *The Art of Being Ruled*]. All that has been done is to lay down a certain number of roads joining the present with something different from itself; yet something necessitated, it would appear, by its tendency. Both what is desirable and what is not in it contribute contradictorily to this impression. It is this *double* movement (proceeding from combined disgust and satisfaction) that must make the planning of these roads so difficult. (357)

Further, he hopes to offer “a statement of a position that would be entirely irreconcilable, but irreconcilable outside of the cadres and clichés of any recognized federated opinion . . . the statement of a position ‘*beyond action and reaction*’” (359).

This dialectical sparring—exemplified in the lengthy catalogues of spectacle that ironically appropriate the “aimless will” reproduced in commodity culture—is an effort at creating a modernism that resists and exceeds commodification. Modernism, as Jameson has noted, stakes its force on being both part of twentieth century consumer capitalism and working to develop forms that resist total absorption by that very system (*Signatures* 16).¹⁹ And every student of modernism knows its history of being consumed by the pervasive consumer market, from a published photo of Marilyn Monroe reading *Ulysses* to Nicole Kidman giving us a sexy new Virginia Woolf to Hollywood’s marketing of the leisure industry ambivalently critiqued in *The Great Gatsby*, not to mention the less thrilling and sensational examples like glossy new editions of literary modernisms appearing in student bookstores each year. This has not happened with Lewis or his work. But this is not to say that Lewis is the better modernist than Joyce, Woolf, or any number of others. Rather, I hope it serves to emphasize my point that texts like *Time and Western Man* and *The Art of Being Ruled*, in failing (or perhaps better, refusing) to promote a complete modernist treatise, are part of a different kind of project, one of constellating the contradictions of capital built into its spectacular forms of (self-) representation. This constellation effect—building on the contradictory logic of the commodity form and the passive temporality it begs of its subjects—seeks to reawaken some force from within the endless rigamarole of capital’s spectacular, tautological landscape.

The spectacular representations of capital between the first World War and the depressions leading to the second, at least for modernists like Dos Passos and Lewis, produce a subject suspended between fixation and distraction. Modernist visual culture emerges from the centrality of the commodity form and its necessary reproduction as tautologically bigger and brighter, faster and flashier than its predecessor, regardless of use-value, making such visual fixation the complimentary respite, perhaps, from modernity's increasing instrumentalization of the psyche. This pleasure, in the psychoanalytic sense of perverse fixation, operates on a disavowal of the outmoded status written into the commodity form. The tension between the new and the outmoded, contained in each of capital's self-representations, governs the temporal dialectic of modernity, always re-synthesized by the absorption and redeployment of surplus.

But this is not a closed dialectical structure; critique is built into its disavowed stasis, even if it lies dormant in the stasis of commodified time. For Lewis, spectacular time produces the objectified will that both participates in and is witness to the endless rigamarole of overproduction and mass consumption. Dos Passos figures, à la Benjamin, the material limits internal to capital's historical amnesia. Neither text—whether the experimental realism of *Manhattan Transfer* or the rhetorical excesses of *Time and Western Man*—offers a brave new world outside the historical process of material production and its spectacular ideology. But in foregrounding the contradictory stasis structuring the time of spectacle, Dos Passos and Lewis articulate a modernist dialectical pleasure of critique from within the perverse pleasure of distracted fixation. A textuality of the spectacular, one that seeks to resist the logic of the commodity form in which it

participates, emerges, resonating down through our own historical moment as an unending modernist project of immanent critique.

Chapter 4

Loss Incorporated: Jean Rhys and the Melancholic Economy of Late Modernism

An advertisement for Burgoyne's Tintara in the April 2, 1930 issue of *British Vogue* claims that the wine "Promotes Health [and] Prevents Ill-Health." The ad features two photographs of the same woman's face. The face on top: shades of gray fading into a charcoal background, downward looking, the woman's hands pressing the sides of her face in a state of anxiety; the one beneath: sharper contrast, holding the viewer's gaze with a smile bordering on laughter. "Which is you?" reads the bold caption. Should the woman buy and drink the wine, she would be well-defined, would attain a physical and psychological integrity through that consumption; without it she is ill, haunted by a spectral anxiety.

While the advertisement asks for a simple identification, the process of identification is founded on a split; we are looking at the "same" face of a fashionable woman who embodies both states, health and spectral illness, at once. The ad relies on the harmless threat that both of these states are "you," but suggests that they are mutually exclusive, divided by the commodity and its promise of health. This split illustrates, on the one hand, Mark Seltzer's model of disembodiment in consumption, where the appropriate mediation through consumption produces a "relative weightlessness" or "aestheticization of the natural body" (124).²⁰ But the ad's tautological appeal—which is central to consumerism stimulated by image-based advertising—also serves to locate illness as a central trope, following the logic of the commodity, in defining modern consumer subjectivity and its conception of a bodily ego. If we follow the top-to-bottom

visual logic of the ad, then the spectral figure of illness both precedes and is a condition of the integrity and blissful self-satisfaction promised by the commodity. The offer of a “restored vitality” through consumption posits that vitality, and the consumer subject, against loss. In other words, the privilege of relative disembodiment, of restored vitality, is predicated on a loss of vitality in the natural body. But rather than excluding the natural, material body, the ad’s rhetorical thrust relies on a spectral *occlusion*; the consumerist ideal is built on loss. The ad throws its promise of disembodied vitality and health into question by positing it against an always already internalized loss.

Such anxieties—hinging on a presupposed loss and legible in advertising rhetoric of the period—are also part of a modernist cultural discourse, one that late literary modernists understood to constitute the consumer subject. Jean Rhys’s *Good Morning, Midnight* exemplifies a late modernist understanding of the subject suspended between material loss—whether in the form of money or the necessarily failed promises of commodities—and surplus. The melancholic narrative treats the subject’s sense of impending loss as symptomatic of consumer capitalism. My attention to a melancholic consumerism in Rhys is indebted to Deleuze and Guattari’s reading of capital’s reliance on a double movement: continually producing a surplus-for-its-own-sake, in the form of increasing overproduction, necessitates the expansion, “reterritorialization,” of its own “interior and immanent” limits (259). Capital of course extorts or absorbs every available mode of production, vampire-like, in its reproduction of surplus. But the point I draw from Deleuze and Guattari is that the limits to continued overproduction and consumption (geographic or otherwise) drive the production of surplus by being

reproduced “on an ever-larger scale” (234), always displaced. For Rhys, this displacement of capital’s immanence takes a specifically subjective form, producing a psychic economy of loss centered around the material body. The body is spectralized in the process of standardization through contact with the commodity, producing a melancholic psychic economy—most legible in capitalist crisis—as *the* trope of modern consumer subjectivity. The text turns a condition of capital into, and expresses it as, a psychological condition.

I am thus interested in the preoccupations with loss shared by its psychoanalytic theorization and literary treatments of subjectivity in negotiation with a consumer economy, both of which center on a distinctly material absence structuring subjectivity. Two recent studies serve to exemplify a recent melancholic turn in modernist studies and to situate my argument.

Luke Carson’s *Consumption and Depression* (1998) and Esther Sánchez-Pardo’s *Cultures of the Death Drive* (2003) bracket the mutually imbricated discourses of a consumer economy and melancholic loss in modernism. In his study of Stein, Zukofsky, and Pound in light of 1930s economic crisis, Carson argues for a universal melancholic subject of modernity. A melancholic loss fundamental to capitalist exchange, he argues, points to and is sustained by the utopian ideals of Enlightenment: “the utopian impulse . . . remains within the pathology of modernity, exacerbating its melancholia by finding substitutes *in order to conceal* the originary loss of the unnamed thing that haunts it as its promise of fulfilment” (6). In the ideological transformation from nineteenth-century mass production driven by ideologies of scarcity to twentieth-century mass

consumption,²¹ threats of scarcity are displaced by ideologies of abundance (7), which in turn conceal the constitutive sacrifice of modern capitalist exchange that is “always off-balance” (10-11).²² The thrust of his argument is that mass consumption sustains an economy of scarcity by concealing the loss of an unknown object of desire, producing “a state of emergency requiring all the ideological resources of the symbolic structures of the social and economic” (45). Thus, “what both [Stein and Pound] fear in the emerging consumer economy and its phantasm of material abundance is the imaginary and *melancholic concealment* of this constitutive sacrifice or loss” (11, my emphasis). But impending loss or crisis is not concealed, as I argue below. Rather, capital’s immanence is displaced onto the consuming subject, yielding a psychic economy of manic consumption that ideologically sustains an originary, unknown loss.

Esther Sánchez-Pardo maps Melanie Klein’s theories of melancholia and the death drive in order to read loss at the heart of modernist explorations of object relations, gender, and sexuality. Her “aim is to explore an endemic *mal du siècle* that under the guise of melancholia, depression, or manic-depressive illness came to the fore in the period between the two world wars,” and she claims “that uncovering the social causes that induce depression or melancholia is an urgent task if we want to understand a psychic dynamic that is not divorced from its social and material foundations, from its specific grounding in history, and from its complex implications at a larger than individual level” (7, 217). However, aside from providing new and invaluable ways of reading gender and sexuality in modernism around loss, her argument does little to theorize the economic relations between individual pathology, the social and material,

and literary modernism. It is as if capital, as object of modernist studies, is lost, uncannily marking her study in its absence.

My argument intervenes in these two approaches. In reading Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight* with Freud on melancholia and the bodily ego, I show how the psychoanalytic account of melancholia and mania follows the contradictory logic of capital, in which surplus is driven by its own immanent, repeatedly displaced limits. In Rhys this takes the form of an unknown loss, displaced onto the subject, driving commodity consumption and social identification. The novel, like Burgoyne's ad, shows consumer acquisition following from loss, and so posits a melancholic-manic subject of capital. Rhys's work, and *Good Morning, Midnight* in particular, may seem an obvious choice for illustrating modernist melancholia. My defense against this charge takes three lines. First, the novel not only allows us to show, but stakes its literary formal claims on, the unknown nature of the lost object structuring both the Freudian account of melancholia and the logic of consumer capital and its subjects. Second, the narrative shows melancholia and mania to be parts of the same consumer ideology, shedding light on the problematic relation between the two states in Freud's model. And finally, in its figurations of a bodily ego constituted in terms of loss and surplus, in continuous negotiation with market demands, the novel posits consumer subjectivity as a potential site for critique of a pathological social system. Rhys's late-modernist narrative sees the melancholic-manic subject as symptom of the loss on which surplus is predicated, and the particular bodily ego as an immanent challenge to capital's pathological culture of consumption and its concomitant disavowal of embodiment.²³

Freud's model relies on a definitive and paradoxical materialism. "Mourning and Melancholia" differentiates between the two states—beyond their shared symptoms²⁴—by way of an ambiguous idealism in melancholia, ambiguous because the idealist form emerges from and carries residual traces of an originary *material* loss. Distinct from one in mourning, the melancholic subject may be "aware of the loss [i.e., of the object itself] which has given rise to his melancholia," but "only in the sense that he knows *whom* he has lost but not *what* he has lost in him" (245). Freud concludes from this that in melancholia the ego becomes structured around the lost object, the unknowable "what" the object represents. The ego incorporates the object qua loss, the libidinal energy attached to the original object is withdrawn into the ego, and the result is an emptying of the ego. Thus, "in mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself" (246). This emptying of the ego constitutes a split: part of the ego breaks off and forms the "critical agency" that directs libidinal energy as reproaches against the site of incorporated loss. This leads to the problematic crux on which much of the developing model hinges: identification.²⁵

But the free libido was not displaced on to another object; it was withdrawn into the ego. There, however, it was not employed in any unspecified way, but served to establish an *identification* of the ego with the abandoned object. Thus the shadow of the object fell upon the ego, and the latter could henceforth be judged by a special agency, as though it were an object, the forsaken object. In this way an object-loss was transformed into an ego-loss and the conflict between the ego and the

loved person into a cleavage between the critical activity of the ego and the ego as altered by identification. (249)

The ego's identification with the lost object takes shape through incorporation of the loss, situating the ego in the shadow of the lost object. The figuration of the shadow, I want to stress, functions as an uncanny remainder of the material and its symbolic weight (the "*what* he has lost in him"), which, Freud later points out, can be "assigned" only to the unconscious, "the region of the memory-traces of *things*" (256).²⁶ The pathological identification of the melancholic hinges on the incorporation of a lost materiality in constituting the ambiguous idealism Freud uses to distinguish it from mourning. The trace of the material sustains the ideal in its absence, generating a psychic economy in which the agency of the ego "can become diseased on its own account" (247).

Good Morning, Midnight narrates ego identification governed by material loss and resulting in a subjectivity suspended between the natural body and disembodied identifications with capital and commodity. Disembodied consumption and the public construction of the private self are concomitant with the impending absence of money and commodity, the absent signifiers of the material limits of capital. The text is organized around acquisition and expenditure, and money embodies the contingency of capital against which Sophia experiences her body. The force of repetition, for example, drives a striking passage at the end of Part III of the novel: "Now, money, for the night is coming. Money for my hair, money for my teeth, money for shoes that won't deform my feet (it's not easy now to walk around in cheap shoes with very high heels), money for good clothes, money, money. The night is coming. That's always when there isn't any.

Just when you need it there's no money. *No money*. It gets you down" (120). Tim Armstrong reads such passages in the novel as the internalization of a commodified bodily ideal, representative of much 1930s literary production in response to the increasing role of idealized and fragmented bodies in advertising. He observes that Sophia "constantly experiences her body as failure and dreams of rejuvenation" (101). He is right to treat this as an example of the general, paradoxical function of modern advertising, in which fragmenting the body while promising wholeness or integrity is what "renders the commoditization of the body possible" (98), a commodified wholeness "which is constantly deferred" (100), but his reading does not consider the role of loss operative in fragmentation and deferred integrity, the repeated production of the fashionable body. Bodily commodification is profoundly linked in the text to material loss and to the disavowal of that body's materiality.

If, for Freud, the melancholic subject knows "*whom* he has lost but not *what* he has lost in him," Sophia's *lack* of money assumes value as material absence signifying a seemingly limitless quantity of commodities. And while memories of former lovers recur throughout the narrative, her dead infant's body functions as a governing trope of loss, an uncanny material remainder that exceeds a commodified body ideal. First, the infant's corpse is juxtaposed with a refashioning of the body. When Sophia describes the erasure of stretch marks with bandaging, that process of erasure is both distanced from and uncannily marked by the materiality of death, loss:

When I complain about the bandages she says: "I promise you that when you take them off you'll be just as you were before." And it is true. When

she takes them off there is not one line, one wrinkle, one crease.

And five weeks afterwards there I am, with not one line, one wrinkle, one crease.

And there he is, lying with a ticket tied round his wrist because he died in a hospital. And there I am looking down at him, without one line, without one wrinkle, without one crease.... (52)

The erasure of bodily marking can only be approached indirectly and ironically; the ritualized remaking of the virginal female body fetishistically idealized by consumerist discourses of health and beauty (and here repeatedly mentioned as absence) is ironically offset by the spectral, dead body, made present by the institutional marking of death.

But bodily erasure in the passage exceeds observations of the commodified female body spectacularized by market culture; it points to a psychic economy in which the subject is in constant negotiation between the body's mortal materiality and an abstract bodily ideal both promised and deferred by commodity culture. Producing the body "without one line" leaves only a memory trace, linking the process of its commodification to material loss. Idealization through erasure performs and sustains the material loss constituting the melancholic consumer subject. While the text indicates the shared symptoms of melancholia and mourning described in Freud's essay—"painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love" (244)—it significantly elides the process of mourning. Emotion is absent; "lying there with a ticket tied round his wrist because he died in a hospital," the child's dead body serves rather to ironize the fantasy of the timeless body under material erasure: "And five weeks

afterwards there I am, with not one line” (52). The subject “knows whom [she] has lost but not *what* [she] has lost in him,” signaling what Freud calls the “pathological” state of melancholia (over healthy mourning). The uncanny materiality of the corpse is linked to Sophia’s refashioned body. And while there is an ambivalent attachment to the child prior to its death, the text stresses that Sophia’s sense of loss is fundamentally driven by money.²⁷ Specifically, the lack of money—which we’re led to understand is partly responsible for the death—comes to be materially signified by the corpse and yields the subject’s experience of her body as that of the emptied melancholic ego:

Afterwards I couldn’t sleep. I would sleep for an hour or two, and then wake up and think about money, money, money for my son; money, money....

Do I love him? Poor little devil, I don’t know if I love him.

But the thought that they will crush him because we have no money—that is torture.

Money, money for my son, my beautiful son....

I can’t sleep. My breasts dry up, my mouth is dry. I can’t sleep. Money, money.... (50)

A similar bodily, affective response occurs in Rhys’s *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie*, when Julia states, “‘when you’ve just had a baby, and it dies for the simple reason that you haven’t enough money to keep it alive, it leaves you with a sort of hunger’” (80). Both passages see the affective state of pathological melancholia as determined by a fixation with money and its absence.

The hospital passages in *Good Morning, Midnight* are recollections, temporal disruptions of Sophia's desperate attempts at bodily identification with the commodity, the process Armstrong calls the "equation of capital and the commoditized body." More importantly, these exemplary passages of loss conclude with ellipses, material textual omissions that highlight the unknowable loss at stake. But, as the narrative moves from the recalled loss of the child to Sophia's "transformation act" (53) involving a dye job, those textual omissions also serve to link materialized loss to consumption as bodily transformation. At the hairdresser's Sophia "can't look on at [the] *operation*" (52, my emphasis). The overdetermined, surgical term further links the sensual experience of the body's (social) exterior to the medical tag signifying the child's death in a hospital for the poor and to the "operation" of bandaging, the reconstruction of a bodily ideal via erasure. This uncanny linkage, I contend, is a residual trace of incorporated loss; the process of bodily commodification via consumer investment, in which the body is left "without one line," indicates the "memory traces of things" constitutive of the melancholic ego. Her "transformation," the externalized process of supplementarity in fashion, posits an ironic relay between loss (of the child) and the occlusion of the particular material body in a consumerist logic of commodified disembodiment. Identification with the commodity, in Rhys, is predicated on what Freud calls "an identification of the ego with [an] abandoned object" (249). And that abandoned object is infinitely exchangeable with money or commodity, the material elements of ideal capital.

Rhys figures what Carson calls the "constitutive lack of the economy" as a psychic wounding linked to the occlusion of bodily particularity. Freud's biological

metaphor of the economy of melancholia is useful here. Melancholia is sometimes worked through (as in mourning) by the ego's "freeing its libido from the lost object" (252), but, Freud notes, given the tenacity of the melancholic ego's hold on the lost object, this gives us no "insight into the economics of the course of events" (253). Rather than free itself, the melancholic ego is sustained by an economy of wounding: "The complex of melancholia behaves like an open wound, drawing to itself cathectic energies—which in the transference neuroses we have called 'anticathexes'—from all directions, and emptying the ego until it is totally impoverished" (253). The biological metaphor is also a perversion of the biological; cathected energy does not heal the wound, but continues to drain the ego of its resources in an economy of expenditure with no return. And if Rhys's juxtaposition of idealized bodily erasure and the materialization of loss in Sophia's dead child registers a materialized absence structuring the logic of consumerism and its "privilege of relative disembodiment" (Seltzer 124), then the text's pathologization of market culture's ideological occlusion of bodily particularity sheds light on Freud's paradoxical figuration of the wound. The Freudian economy of melancholia follows the logic of a melancholic economy, where the "impoverished" ego is symptomatic of impending material loss. If the consumerist body is posited on a promise of self-possession, performed in self-fashioning, then this is based in a founding loss, a presupposed psychic wound linked to the occlusion of bodily materiality and sustained by the cathectic energies of capital.

Early in the novel Sophia figures this wounding at the heart of the social economy. Remembering her (inept) sales role in a women's clothing shop in Paris, she

likens the surplus bodies feeding an increasingly standardized service economy to a wound necessitated by the concentration of capital:

Well, let's argue this out, Mr. Blank. You, who represent Society, have the right to pay me four hundred francs a month. That's my market value, for I am an inefficient member of Society, slow in the uptake, uncertain, slightly *damaged* in the fray, there's no denying it. So you have the right to pay me four hundred francs a month, to lodge me in a small, dark room, to clothe me shabbily, to harass me with worry and monotony and *unsatisfied longings* till you get me to the point when I blush at a look, cry at a word. *We can't all be happy, we can't all be rich*, we can't all be lucky—and it would be much less fun if we were. Isn't it so, Mr. Blank? *There must be the dark background to show up the bright colors.* (25-6, my emphasis)

The body is materialized as wounded (“damaged”) and, simultaneously, visually occluded from the abstract force of “Society” that determines “market value.” Reduced to the “monotony” of “the dark background,” the material body is figured as the necessary surplus marking the limits to capital and necessarily emptied of particularity, a surplus body.

While the passage offers a comparison between Freud's metaphorical wound and the “damaged” surplus bodies of the market, we need to examine the process of identification on which a (melancholic) consumer economy depends. “A bit of an automaton,” Sophia's routines of excessive drink, dining, and self-fashioning correspond

to her seemingly narcissistic identification with the other. Identification in the novel is always mediated by commodities in a process we customarily associate with consumerism (and this ranges from Marxian fetishism as “social relations between things” (84) to modern humanist attacks on the ills of socially alienated individuals to postmodern observations of the tautology of society *qua* consumers). Before turning to the problem of psychic interiority in Rhys, I want to conclude this section by showing how melancholia and mania are mutually imbricated through ambivalent identification in the novel. Rhys’s melancholic subject, suspended between loss incorporated and ideologies of abundance embodied in the commodity, is fundamentally ambivalent. And ambivalent identification with the object, through consuming as an “automaton,” offers a productive way of re-reading the problematic relation between melancholia and mania in the Freudian schema.

In the Freudian economy, melancholia shows a “tendency to change round into mania—a state which is the opposite of it in its symptoms” (253). While Freud acknowledges that the transition might be “non-psychogenic,” he defers to a psychic origin (253), suggesting an ambivalence operative within the psychoanalytic method. Mania develops when, for reasons the text does not fully elaborate, the cathected energies that split the ego by binding the incorporated lost object have been liberated, indicated when “the manic subject plainly demonstrates his liberation from the object which was the cause of his suffering, by seeking like a ravenously hungry man for new object-cathexes” (255). Freud first offers an explanation based in the constitutional ambivalence of melancholia, in which the psychic energy invested in berating the internalized loss

might heal the wound, leaving those energies free to reinvest elsewhere. But he rejects this explanation, noting that it blurs the distinctions between the pathological economy of melancholia and the process, observable in mourning, of releasing hold on the object. The melancholic subject, he suggests, shows symptoms of an originary narcissistic object-choice, a regression linking melancholia to a manic phase: “The accumulation of cathexis which is at first bound and then, after the work of melancholia is finished, becomes free and makes mania possible must be linked with regression of the libido to narcissism. The conflict within the ego, which melancholia substitutes for the struggle over the object, must act like a painful wound which calls for an extraordinarily high anticathexis” (258). But, as Freud’s conflicted teleological attempts suggest, the relation between melancholia and mania raises two significant questions: on what grounds is the liberation of cathected energy linked to a narcissistic regression, and, if the manic subject seeks out “*new* object-cathexes,” must it be formulated as developmental regression? This is the economic problem of melancholia.

Rhys’s narrative of ambivalent identification helps clarify this problem.

“Wander[ing] aimlessly along a lot of back streets,” window shopping, Sophia resembles Benjamin’s reading of the flâneur in Baudelaire, only to betray the flâneur’s privileged autonomy from market relations by a narcissistic relation to the other mediated by the commodity (*Arcades* 420).²⁸ The link, noted earlier, between melancholia and bodily “transformation” through consumption becomes a flux of introjection and projection. Peering through a shop window, Sophia observes a “dishevelled” woman, whose expression she describes as “terrible—hungry, despairing, hopeful, quite crazy. At any

moment you expect her to start laughing the laugh of the mad” (57-8). But Sophia then becomes the object of her own gaze, asking, “watching her, am I watching myself as I shall become? In five years’ time, in six years’ time, shall I be like that?” (57-8). This narcissistic relation informs a critical self-beratement in the eyes of fashion society, and indicates the melancholic ambivalence fundamental to commodity culture:

I am trying so hard to be like you. I know I don’t succeed, but look how hard I try. Three hours to choose a hat; every morning an hour and a half trying to make myself look like everybody else. Every word I say has chains round its ankles; every thought I think is weighted with heavy weights But think how hard I try and how seldom I dare. Think—and have a bit of pity. That is, if you ever think, you apes, which I doubt. (88)

These passages suggest Jean Baudrillard’s model of narcissistic consumption, in which “it is by coming close to your *reference* ideal, by being ‘truly yourself,’ that you most fully obey the collective imperative and most closely coincide with a particular ‘imposed’ model.” Identifying with one’s “reference ideal,” he argues, stems from a collective narcissism: “consumer society conceives itself as, precisely, a society of consumption and reflects itself narcissistically in its own image . . . right down to each individual” (95). However, Sophia’s narcissistic identification—“trying so hard to be like [them]”—suggests a certain failure necessitated by Baudrillard’s model when she says “I do not succeed.” The subject is suspended between a mimetic impulse of collective narcissism and the necessary impossibility of fully becoming its reference ideal. The logic of the consumerist narrative therefore suggests not only that necessary impossibility

but grounds it in an unknown loss, the founding ideological presupposition of what I have been calling a melancholic economy of such a collective bourgeois narcissism. Sophia's "transformation act" of self-making through consumption is an identification with a collective, narcissistic image of the commodified body, but the occlusion of bodily particularity in the process is also a redeployment of the inexpressible personal loss of her child. In her picture of the modernist consumer, Rhys qualifies Freud's understanding of narcissism as a regression to an originary object-choice; collective narcissistic identification serves to link Freud's figure of the "wound drawing to itself cathected energies" to the manic as "a ravenously hungry [consumer] in search of new object-cathexes." And if the emptied melancholic ego is figured as the occluded particularity of the material body, then melancholia and mania are parts of a single economy, a self-sustaining pathological culture of capital.

Rhys's narrative thus shows the melancholic-manic subject to be a symptom of consumer capital. However, through figurations of a bodily ego irreducible to the standards of a narcissistic reference ideal, *the melancholic-manic subject is also a site of critical ambivalence*. In order to show how this melancholic ambivalence offers a mode of critique I want to make a brief detour through *The Ego and the Id*. Freud locates the ego between external, perceived reality and psychogenic impulses, a dynamic affective zone constituted by bodily sensation and libidinal investment:

A person's own body, and above all its surface, is a place from which both external and internal perceptions may spring. It is *seen* like any other object, but to the *touch* it yields two kinds of sensations, one of which may

be the equivalent to an internal perception. Psychophysiology has fully discussed the manner in which a person's own body attains its special position among other objects in the world of perception. (15)

He concludes that "the ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity, but is itself the projection of a surface," and "the ego is ultimately derived from bodily sensations, chiefly from those springing from the surface of the body. It may thus be regarded as a mental projection of the surface of the body, besides . . . representing the superficies of the mental apparatus" (16).

On the one hand, we can situate this within shifting modernist understandings of the social subject: between the conceptions of psychic interiority posited on a disembodied status granted by the privileges of (ideal) capital, and the movement toward understanding psychic topographies as constituted in and by situated embodiment. This is, in other words, a modernist acknowledgment of its own historically-situated failure of the transparent viewing subject,²⁹ anticipating late-modernists like Rhys, Barnes, and Beckett. But to fully make this argument we need to position Freud's model of a bodily ego between a consumerist psycho-social occlusion of the material body and the interior limits of capital (impending economic crisis driving the reproduction of surplus, à la Deleuze and Guattari) structuring the melancholic-manic subject of modernism.

The melancholic ego is emptied by a loss incorporated, by its becoming the lost object; when seen in light of Freud's later model of a bodily-ego and Rhys's narration of bourgeois homogenization, this loss is figured on the particular, material body. But by linking melancholic identification to manic consumption, the novel also figures the

continuous return, the trace, of material embodiment, the bodily ego, in a way that disrupts a privileged and disembodied ideal. In so doing, the novel argues for a subjectivity irreducible to the notions of “self” constituted in the closed circuit of loss and narcissistic identification, bodily lack and completion.

First, a pleasure of expenditure linked to bodily subjectivity emerges from the constitutive loss of disembodied exchange. Following the departure of her lover Enno, Sophia is driven by repetitive consumption and self-fashioning, but the text resists both a melancholic attachment to lost love and positing that self-fashioning as simply concealing a loss. Having received money from family in England, consumption follows the mechanical time of production:³⁰ “Eat. Drink. Walk. March. Back to the hotel” (120), but also allows for leisured shopping: “Tomorrow I’ll go to the Galeries Lafayette, choose a dress, go along to the Printemps, buy gloves, buy scent, buy lipstick, buy things costing fcs. 6.25 and fcs. 19.50, buy anything cheap. *Just the sensation of spending, that’s the point*” (121, my emphasis). Thus invoking and subverting both the monotony of an expansive commodity culture and the logic of rational investment, the money-gift becomes the object in which a purely affective pleasure of expenditure is invested. In other words, “the *sensation of spending*” offers a pleasure of expenditure founded on the linkage of loss and manic acquisition. Again, this suggests Sophia to be a product of a melancholic-manic social economy, but it also posits an ego continuously refashioned by the meeting and passing of money and skin.

Money as commodity and symbol is just one marker in the heterogeneous system registering the flux of corporate capital. The process of narcissistic identification shared

by Freud's speculations on mania and the homogenizing force of commodity culture we saw in Sophia's window shopping spree is also indicated by the logic of advertising.³¹ When Sophia exclaims, in an interior voice symptomatic of commodity-governed social relations posited on (universalized) loss, "I am trying so hard to be like you," only to reject the fashionable "you" as unsympathetic "apes," copies, the text operates on a governing ambivalence central to the necessarily failed promises of advertising. In a curious process of identification with a series of ads during her pregnancy, the text complicates narcissism as regression to an originary object attachment: ads speak to the individual consumer but only by universalizing consumers on the grounds of presupposed loss. The ambivalent subject emerges from this universal threat; during the morning sickness phase Sophia sees "the chemist's shop with the advertisement of the Abbé Something's Elixir—it cures this, it cures that, it cures the sickness of pregnant women. Would it cure mine? I wonder" (110).

The near conflation of advertisement and bodily response is more than mere narcissistic identification with the commodity's promise of health and bodily integrity. The concluding "I wonder" strikes a note of ambivalence that informs the erasure of stretch marks in previous passages, where the fashionable body is defined by negation: "with not one line, not one wrinkle, not one crease" (52). In light of the ambivalent response to the advertisement, the process of erasure—which occurs later chronologically but previously in the narrative's organization—works to figure a recurring memory trace on the bodily ego. This erasure and its psychic trace exposes individual self-fashioning as a fantasy of its public, ideological, universalized construction. Such a move critically



locates the material failures of the commodity against a psychic economy that potentially exceeds the circular chronology of loss and acquisition. This psychic dynamic corresponds to Freud's model of the bodily ego negotiating between responses to internal and external excitations while also situating that process in the market space of commodified body-images or disembodied ideals.³² In doing so, Rhys's late modernist narrative points to the necessarily failed logic of a closed psychic interior. The novel's (Sophia's) interior monologue voices a continuously refashioned bodily ego, the ego in constant negotiation between the images provided by commodity culture and the recurring material traces of an occluded bodily materiality.

Echoing the specter haunting the split consumer in the ad with which I began, Sophia, while gazing into a mirror in the private space of a public lavabo, figures the body's eternal, ghostly return: "'Well, well,' it says, 'last time you looked in here you were a bit different, weren't you? Would you believe me that, of all the faces I see, I remember each one, that I keep a ghost to throw back at each one—lightly, like an echo—when it looks into me again?' All glasses in all lavabos do this" (142). On the one hand, this intense figure of recurring memory indicates and results from anxieties of bodily aging and decay, intensified in the passage by excessive drink. More importantly, Sophia's dialogue with her reflection posits a material bodily ego as *both* retroactively constituted in loss—the ghost of the body's past suggesting the melancholic ego under the "shadow" of the incorporated lost object—and as a recurring excess or remainder collapsing exterior and interior, past and present, through the ego as "the projection of a surface" (*Ego* 16). While the passage symptomatically suggests consumerism's reliance

on internal loss structuring ego-identification and its corollary of manic consumption and bodily supplementarity, it also figures “the character of the ego [as] a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes . . . contain[ing] the history of those object-choices” (19).

In doing so, the novel anticipates Derrida’s “Freud and the Scene of Writing,” in which the psyche is a system of “writing as the interruption and restoration of contact between the various depths of psychical levels: the remarkably heterogeneous temporal fabric of psychical work itself” (225), constituting an economy in which “the subject of writing is a *system* of relations between strata: the Mystic Pad, the psyche, society, the world” (227). The memory traces in Rhys’s text articulate such a system by way of the material remainders marking the psychic space of the narrative, wherein the cathexes determining the ego repeatedly erupt as residual matter exceeding the managed sociality and reified homogeneity of fashion culture. Writing the heterogeneous temporality of interior monologue is a forceful material performance of psychic—and thus embodied—particularity.

Rhys’s writing the ego as a history of object choices and the traces they leave works to interrupt disembodied identification posited against a constitutively disavowed loss. By pitting the psychic traces of loss against a privileged fantasy of interiority, the novel exposes the ideological limits of consumer subjectivity shaped by disembodied consumption. First, Sophia’s suicide attempt is the recurring origin of the story. But what determines this temporal point as origin is the material, visible remainder marking body and ego and bridging the present of narrative time and an antecedent unknown loss. Having been rescued, “nobody would know I had ever been in it,” she thinks, “except, of

course, that there always remains something” (10). This “something,” I contend, is the unknown material trace, embodied in a psychic economy always mediated by the heterogeneous flux of consumerist identification, contained by and disruptive of fantasies of privileged psychic interiors posited on the logic of manic acquisition and presupposed psychic-economic loss. Towards the novel’s end Sophia explicitly figures psychic interiority as a fantasy of possessive individualism, countered with a critical ambivalence of embodiment. She works for an unnamed literary producer who openly acknowledges market value as determinant of cultural expression, and describes her as “shrewd as they’re born . . . hard as a nail, and with what a sense of property!” claiming, “they explain people like that by saying that their minds are in water-tight compartments, but it never seemed so to me. It’s all washing about, like the bilge in the hold of a ship, all washing around in the same hold—no water-tight compartments. . . . Fairies, red roses, the sense of property—Of course they don’t feel things like we do” (140-1). Interior psychic space is explicitly linked to “a sense of property” divorced from bodily sensation, relegated to the fantasy realm of fairies.

* * * * *

Focusing on the later work of Lewis together with Barnes and Beckett, Tyrus Miller argues that late modernism reveals a shift away from “high modernism’s emphasis on interiority; its appeal to allusive ‘depth’ and ‘roundness’ of character; its obsessive concern with temporality and history; its foregrounding of the ways that events are psychologically mediated” (86).³³ Such concerns with interiority are critical

commonplace in studies of Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot, for example, and support his claim that late modernism explores the dissolution of subject-object barriers manifest in an “unsettling of individual subjectivity,” in which “the inner life . . . had appropriated the object-world in which people lived and moved, now taking the shape of a city street, later of a shop window, then perhaps of a cinema or a fascist parade” (39, 45). Rhys’s melancholic interior narrative, as anticipated by Freud, supports Miller’s generalizations, locating problems of psychic interiority, subjectivity, and embodiment within the contradictory forces and imperatives of consumer capitalism. As I have argued, the “allusive depth” of individual subjectivity is not an a priori, and Rhys’s use of a “high” modernist interior monologue in a “late” modernist text performs a material psychology of embodiment as both symptom and critique of the paradoxical public construction of the private self.

In its melancholic narrative of consumption, then, *Good Morning, Midnight* pushes the limits of literary-historical parsing. The novel does more than suggest a socio-economic parallel to, or constitution of, the bourgeois melancholic subject. First published in 1939, situating its narrative in the 1920s and early 1930s, and constructing its fictional space as interior monologue within the flux or de- and reterritorialization of capital in a localized money economy, the novel not only pathologizes bourgeois self-making in homogenization, but non-chronologically spans, consumes, and is governed by historical and ideological tensions between abundance and lack. In doing so, the text figures material loss as the founding crisis linking social fantasies of abundance to economic realities of Depression (where the crisis-limits of capital are most legible on a

large scale), and does so, particularly, in the urban cultural spaces of mass consumption. Rhys's ambivalent interior narrative, finally, negotiates those social spaces of self-making by foregrounding the occlusion of the particularized materiality of the body produced by and sustaining a melancholic economy and its closed circuit of subjectivity-in-exchange, in loss. In this light, Freud's model can be read for the preoccupations with an economy of loss it shares with modernists in the market, and as embodying in its logical tensions and irresolutions the contradictory logic of a consumerist flux between melancholic loss, manic acquisition, and narcissistic identification.

But the occluded materiality of embodiment continually resurfacing in Rhys's narrative and figured by Freud as a psychic "wound" drained by melancholic cathexes also offers a site of embodied ego-identification in modernism, an increasingly acknowledged public production of subjectivities and bodies, not just the psychological mediation of public events. Ever in "transformation," as a body commodified in and by the repeated tension between erasure and its psychic traces, Sophia is haunted by a mirrored ghost in the privacy of a public lavabo; the residual materiality of the past returns and disrupts a consumerist ego constituted in loss and return. A privileged fantasy of psychic interiority in disembodiment—the mind's "water-tight compartments" posited on "a sense of property"—is an expression of the anxieties immanent to social relations and the individual "self" governed by the failed promises of the commodity.

This haunting specter is the material body repressed by melancholic economies, the occluded site of the founding loss of surplus and impending crisis. The critical problem of narcissistic identification in Freud's model—as regression in mania following

a melancholic materialization of loss—in this light, is shaped around the material specter of the body that haunts the social economy. Sophia's mirrored ghost inverts the ideological narcissism sustaining a pathological economy; the sheer materiality of the body forcefully registers the contradictory denial of its particularity in capital-determined, standardized, body ideals. Further, this inverted narcissistic identification in Rhys's narrative takes shape in a space of a public libidinalization of bodies, effecting a force of psychic mediation that radically exceeds its ideological construction of psychic interiority and the self that are central to consumerist subjectivity and disembodiment. The novel's critical ambivalence—immanent to a melancholic consumer economy and its pathological identification—offers a modernist investment in collective embodiment irreducible to the fiction of psychic depth posited on loss and acquisition. This is what we might call a modernist ethical move: between the faces separated by the commodity fetish and consumer capital's reliance on loss incorporated—Burgoyne's site of psychic depth and its material spectrality of loss in identification—is a materialist subjectivity that is ambivalently, critically attuned to the limits of consumer capital.

NOTES

-
1. See also Tyrus Miller's "The End of Modernism" in *Late Modernism* (26-64), and the "Introduction" to Karen Jacobs's *The Eye's Mind*, both of which usefully articulate the blurring of subject-object barriers in modernism between the wars as part of a booming mass culture.
 2. Bill Brown describes this problem in a similar way: "the doubleness of the commodity (its use value and exchange value) might be said to conceal a more fundamental difference, between the object and itself, or the object and the thing, on which the success of the commodity, the success of capitalism, depends" (*A Sense* 13-14). Derrida's deconstructive reading of the commodity form is also consistent with this thinking. Use value, he argues is a ghostly yet material after-effect of commodification: "the commodity . . . haunts the thing, its specter is at work in use-value. This haunting displaces itself like an anonymous silhouette or the figure of an extra [*figurante*] who might be the principle or capital character" (151).
 3. For exemplary discussions that treat both Ford's reaction to democracy and mass culture and the question of unreliability in the novel, see Levenson (103-136), Nicholls (165-192), and Katz (108-137).
 4. For a persuasive study of modernist collectivism as a shift from nineteenth century individualism, see Michael Tratner, *Modernism and Mass Politics*. Tyrus Miller's *Late Modernism* also takes up collectivist efforts among the moderns, but focuses on the period between the wars. For a discussion of the problem of modernist artistic and individual autonomy in the face of increasing mass production, see Douglas Mao, *Solid Objects*.
 5. For a discussion of the relation between managed surplus and temporal contingency in modernity, see Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*. For a study of the epistemological crisis in visual representation within modernism and capitalism, see Karen Jacobs, *The Eye's Mind*.
 6. For a reading of the split in the object itself, constitutive of the commodity, see Bill Brown's recent reading of Marx's model of commodity fetishism: "the doubleness of the commodity (its use value and exchange value) might be said to conceal a more fundamental difference, between the object and itself, or the object and the thing, on which the success of the commodity, the success of capitalism, depends" (*A Sense of Things* 14).
 7. See also *The Ego and the Id* for a complication of the oral phase, likening it to the mechanisms operative in melancholia: "It may be that by this introjection, which is a kind of regression to the mechanism of the oral phase, the ego makes it easier for the object to be given up. . . . It may be that this identification is the sole condition under which the id can give up its objects" (19).
 8. This was also a primary concern behind Wyndham Lewis's tirades against mass culture, despite his own disparagement of impressionism and its practitioners, including Ford. See chapter three of this dissertation for my discussion of the role of capitalist spectacle in Lewis's critical writing on mass culture.
 9. See also Linda Belau's essay, "Trauma and the Material Signifier."
 10. See also Fox and Lears on the shift, in the United States, from "a nineteenth-century 'producer ethic'—a value system based on work, sacrifice, and saving . . . into a dominant twentieth-century 'consumer ethic'" (x).
 11. I am thinking in particular of Michael Levenson's influential study, *A Genealogy of Modernism*.
 12. Guy Debord critically notes this late capitalist geography, in which "capital is no longer the invisible center determining the mode of production. As it accumulates, capital spreads out to the periphery" (33).

13. We might also compare this to the brilliant passage in *The Great Gatsby* where Nick Carraway describes the wasteland between West Egg and New York. Invisibly linking the two zones of fantastic consumption “is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens, where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air” (27).

14. This exponential production of medication and newly emerging “conditions” is even more fully developed in our current historical moment. We might think, for example, of the many drugs entering the market each year for male impotence, social anxiety, and depression, marketed via such all-inclusive rhetoric as “Do you often feel tired?” “Are you withdrawn in a crowd, unable to be yourself?” etc.

15. In Benjamin’s complex oeuvre, and in this passage in particular, there is a problematic tendency to rely on a naive Jungian universal category of the collective unconscious defined by static archetypes acting as stable signifiers. However, as Susan Buck-Morss points out, “the images of the unconscious [in Benjamin] are . . . formed as a result of concrete historical experiences, not (as with Jung’s archetypes) biologically inherited (278).

16. See Michael Tratner, *Modernism and Mass Politics*, Michael North, *Reading 1922*, Tyrus Miller, *Late Modernism*, Douglas Mao, *Solid Objects*.

17. Here Lewis strikingly anticipates Theodor Adorno’s philosophical and sociological work on the culture industry. In his essay, “On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening,” for example, Adorno notes the “liquidation of the individual” in hand with the ideology of “individualism” under modern mass production and consumption: “The sacrifice of individuality, which accommodates itself to the regularity of the successful, the doing of what everybody does, follows from the basic fact that in broad areas the same thing is offered to everybody by the standardized production of consumption goods. But the commercial necessity of connecting this identity leads to the manipulation of taste and the official culture’s pretence of individualism which necessarily increases in proportion to the liquidation of the individual” (40).

18. In this way, *Time and Western Man* differs from Lewis’s other major non-fiction work from the same period, *The Art of Being Ruled*, which is much more argumentatively straight-forward; likewise, two of his most important fiction works, the early *Tarr* (1918) and *The Apes of God*, follow relatively simple and intensely rigid structures. And as both novels articulate many of the same ideas of *Time and Western Man* and together serve to bracket the text chronologically, the formal and repetitive excess I’m discussing here in the context of spectacular society deserves mention.

19. Jameson works to modify the Frankfurt School’s frequent celebration of modernism as subversive to reification and instrumentalization. “Modernism,” he argues, “can only be adequately understood in terms of that commodity production whose all-informing structural influence on mass culture I have described above: only for modernism, the commodity form signals the vocation *not* to be a commodity, to devise an aesthetic language incapable of offering commodity satisfaction, and resistant to instrumentalization. The difference between this position and the valorization of modernism by the Frankfurt School . . . lies in my designation of modernism as reactive, that is, as a symptom and as a result of cultural crises, rather than a new ‘solution’ in its own right: not only is the commodity the prior form in terms of which alone modernism can be structurally grasped, but the very terms of its solution—the conception of the modernist text as the production and the protest of an isolated individual, and the logic of its sign systems as so many private languages . . . are contradictory and made the social or collective realization of its aesthetic project” (16).

20. For Seltzer this process is integral to notions of self-making through consumption: “a privilege of

relative disembodiment or relative weightlessness is one sign of the *aestheticization* of the natural body in market culture, and such an aestheticization of the body one sign of the achievement of personation through practices of consumption" (124).

21. For a detailed study of the gradual shift in political economy from models of scarcity and production to an emphasis on the creation of new needs and desires in consumers, see Regenia Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants* (1-60).

22. See also Georg Simmel's essay "Exchange" for an early twentieth century sociological discussion of an imbalance in modern exchange. Simmel argues that objective surplus arises from the subjective balancing of loss and acquisition; acquiring an object invested with a surplus of "feeling" also always entails a "tinge of sacrifice" (44). Even Simmel's emphasis on the psychological and subjective creation of surplus and loss presupposes a material object to be exchanged.

23. For useful studies of modern market culture's disavowal of embodiment, see Seltzer (47-90), Armstrong (77-105), and Jacobs.

24. The shared symptoms listed in the text are "painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings," except that the "disturbance of self-regard is absent in mourning" (244).

25. Judith Butler focuses on melancholic ambivalence as central to gender identification in her reading of "Mourning and Melancholia" together with *The Ego and the Id*, in *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (132-150). While I consider the role of ambivalence in identification below, questions of gender are beyond the scope of this essay, and here I am most interested in the material-economic implications of Freud's essay.

26. The uncanny nature of material memory traces discussed here also anticipates, we might note, Freud's discussion of the unconscious in light of the *Pcpt.-Cs.* system in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. In developing a model of consciousness as "on the borderline between outside and inside," excitations crossing this threshold "leave permanent traces behind in them which form the foundation of memory" but which are most powerful when they never enter consciousness, thus forming what we might call a dynamic economy of material unconscious (26-27).

27. At this early stage in the narrative there is no clear indication of the constitutive role ambivalence plays in Freud's model of melancholia, in which it splits the ego and results in a certain painful pleasure through in the critical agency's beratement of the incorporated loss, the loss determining the ego.

28. What Benjamin calls the "dialectic of flânerie" posits "the man who feels himself viewed by all" against an undisclosable psychic depth, "the man who is utterly undiscoverable, the hidden man" (420). Sophia incorporates the gaze of others to the extent that any hidden psychic depth is always mediated by commodified bodily ideals.

29. According to Karen Jacobs, "Cartesian perspectivalism is characterized by a monocular, disembodied, objective, and ahistorical vision. From the nineteenth century onward, Cartesian perspectivalism comes under increasing assault, its assumption of a detached, neutral observer discredited by a competing scopic regime traceable to the Baroque." This scopic regime, manifest in social sciences, the development of a consumer economy turning its producers, following Debord, into (passive) consumers, and the cinema, evolves into a "model of compromised transparency which comes to achieve dominance in the twentieth century" (7).

30. Both Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard argue that time as commodity under industrial production (in its modern and late capitalist forms) shapes leisure and consumption. For Debord, "the entirety of the consumable time of modern society ends up being treated as raw material for the production of a diversity of new products to be put on the market as socially controlled uses of time" (111). Baudrillard also notes the endless redeployment of the use value of time in producing exchange value, claiming that "the time of consumption is that of production" and that "leisure is not the availability of time, it is its display. Its fundamental determination is the *constraint that it be different from working time*. It is not, therefore, autonomous: it is defined by the absence of working time" (155, 158). Despite the differences between Debord's traditional Marxism and Baudrillard's structuralist anthropology (as I see it), their understandings of the *production* of leisure time clearly converge with Sophia's mechanical use of time in the novel. However, as I discuss below, Rhys figures affective pleasure and a constitutive ambivalence in potential excess of such a hopelessly hegemonic state of affairs.

31. For an interesting study of early twentieth century advertising as social, heterogeneous narrative which, as employed in Joyce's *Ulysses*, "reshaped the reception of narrativity as a whole," see Jennifer Wicke, *Advertising Fictions* (120). In *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England* Thomas Richards begins with the nineteenth century in arguing that the commodity image becomes a frame of reference in shaping modern English cultural and national identity well into the twentieth. For the early twentieth century role of advertising in shaping not only cultural frames of reference but in its specific relationship to informing the reception of modern literature, see Catherine Turner, *Marketing Modernism Between the Two World Wars*. For similar studies concerned with modernism and advertising in the market as parts of a broad, heterogeneous cultural narrative, see *Marketing Modernisms: Self-Promotion, Canonization, Rereading*, eds. Kevin Dettmar and Stephen Watt. See also Stuart Ewen's thoroughgoing, if at times under-theorized, analysis of commodity image and style in twentieth century consumerism, *All Consuming Images*. While this list is not exhaustive, it does indicate the recent interest in advertising as cultural text and many modernists' responses, whether reactionary, radical, or experimental, in acknowledging its force in shaping modern consciousness and narrative.

32. Recent cultural theory also works to stress a socio-cultural dimension in reading psychic embodiment in Freud. Elizabeth Grosz, for example, goes so far as to argue (in her reading of *The Ego and the Id*) that a "significatory, cultural dimension implies that bodies, egos, subjectivities are not simply reflections of their cultural context and associated values but are constituted as such by them" (38).

33. See also Michael North's *Reading 1922* for a genealogy of this earlier development in modernism, in the making of what he calls "the public unconscious" (67). He notes the growing publicity of psychoanalysis, particularly in England and the United States, as part of a political and cultural recognition of "irrationality and bias" at the heart of the public sphere. Referring to Freud's *Group Psychology*, Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, and Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, to name a few, he argues for conceptions of the public sphere becoming increasingly based on a "public unconscious," one "reconstituted on a psychoanalytic model" (72).

WORKS CITED

Adorno, Theodor. "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening." *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. Ed. J. M. Bernstein. London: Routledge, 1991. 29-60.

Armstrong, Tim. *Modernism, Technology, and the Body*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. London: Sage, 1998.

Belau, Linda. "Trauma and the Material Signifier." *Postmodern Culture* 11.2 (2001).

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999.

---. *Charles Baudelaire*. Trans. Harry Zohn. London: Verso, 1999.

---. "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century." *The Arcades Project*. Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2003. 3-13.

---. "Surrealism." *Reflections*. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. New York: Schocken Books, 1978. 177-192.

Birken, Lawrence. *Consuming Desire: Sexual Science and the Emergence of a Culture of Abundance, 1871-1914*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988.

Brooks, Peter. *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993.

Brown, Bill. *The Material Unconscious: American Amusement, Stephen Crane, and the Economies of Play*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996.

---. *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003.

Buck-Morss, Susan. *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York: Routledge, 1993.

Carson, Luke. *Consumption and Depression in Gertrude Stein, Louis Zukofsky and Ezra*

-
- Pound*. New York: St. Martin's, 1999.
- Crary, Jonathan. *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999.
- Daly, Nicholas. *Literature, Technology, and Modernity, 1860-2000*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2004.
- Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: Zone Books, 1995.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Robert Hurley et al. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Freud and the Scene of Writing." *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass. U of Chicago P, 1978. 196-231.
- . *Specters of Marx*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Dettmar, Kevin and Stephen Watt, eds. *Marketing Modernisms: Self-Promotion, Canonization, Rereading*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1996.
- Doane, Mary Ann. *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2002.
- Dos Passos, John. *Manhattan Transfer*. New York: Penguin, 2000.
- Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. 1900. New York: Signet, 1980.
- Eagleton, Terry. *The Idea of Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
- . *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.
- Eby, Clare Virginia. *Dreiser and Veblen: Saboteurs of the Status Quo*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1998.
- Felski, Rita. *The Gender of Modernity*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995.
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. New York: Scribner, 1995.
- Ford, Ford Madox. *The Good Soldier*. (1915) Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.
- Foster, Hal. *Compulsive Beauty*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995.

-
- Fox, Richard Wightman, and T.J. Jackson Lears. "Introduction." *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*. New York: Pantheon, 1983. vii-xvii.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Norton, 1961.
- . *Civilization and its Discontents*. 1930. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Norton, 1961.
- . *The Ego and the Id*. Trans. Joan Riviere. Ed. James Strachey. New York: Norton, 1960.
- . *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Bantam, 1960.
- . "Mourning and Melancholia." *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XIV*. London: Hogarth, 1957. 243-258.
- . *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. 1905. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Basic Books Inc., 1962.
- Gagnier, Regenia. *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000.
- Gammel, Irene. "Sexualizing the Female Body: Dreiser, Feminism, and Foucault." *Theodore Dreiser: Beyond Naturalism*. Ed. Miriam Gogol. New York: New York UP, 1995. 31-54.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *Women and Economics*. 1898. Berkeley: U of California P, 1998.
- Godden, Richard. *Fictions of Capital: The American Novel from James to Mailer*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.
- Goodson, A. C. "Manhattan Transfer and the Metropolitan Subject." *Arizona Quarterly* 56 (Spring 2000). 89-103.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994.
- Hapke, Laura. "Men Strike, Women Sew: Gendered Labor Worlds in Dreiser's Social Protest Art." *Theodore Dreiser and American Culture: New Readings*. Ed.

-
- Yoshinobu Hakutani. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2000. 104-114.
- Harmon, Charles. "Cuteness and Capitalism in *Sister Carrie*." *American Literary Realism* 32 (Winter 2000): 125-139.
- Helmling, Steven. "Constellation and Critique: Adorno's Constellation, Benjamin's Dialectical Image." *Postmodern Culture* 14.1 2003
<http://muse.jhu/journals/postmodern_culture/v014/14.1helmling.html>.
- Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which is Not One*. Trans. Catherine Porter. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977.
- Jacobs, Karen. *The Eye's Mind: Literary Modernism and Visual Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, the Modernist as Fascist*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1979.
- . *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981.
- . *Signatures of the Visible*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Joyce, James. *Dubliners*. New York: Penguin, 1976.
- Katz, Tamar. *Impressionist Subjects: Gender, Interiority, and Modernist Fiction in England*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2000.
- Kern, Stephen. *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983.
- Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. Dennis Porter. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. New York: Norton, 1992.
- . *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI. The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Vintage, 1977.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.
- Levenson, Michael H. *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908-1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.

-
- Lewis, Wyndham. *The Art of Being Ruled*. Ed. Reed Way Dasenbrock. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1989.
- . *Time and Western Man*. Ed. Paul Edwards. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1993.
- Lyotard, Jean-François. *Libidinal Economy*. Trans. Iain Hamilton Grant. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993.
- Mao, Douglas. *Solid Objects: Modernism and the Test of Production*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998.
- Marx, Karl. *Capital, Vol. 1*. Trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. New York: Modern Library, 1906.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Miller, Tyrus. *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts Between the World Wars*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1999.
- Moretti, Franco. *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*. Trans. Susan Fischer et al. London: Verso, 1983.
- Nicholls, Peter. *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1995.
- North, Michael. *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern*. New York: Oxford UP, 1999.
- Osteen, Mark. *The Economy of Ulysses: Making Both Ends Meet*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1995.
- Rhys, Jean. *After Leaving Mr. McKenzie*. London: Penguin, 1971.
- . *Good Morning, Midnight*. London: Penguin, 2000.
- Richards, Thomas. *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990.
- Sánchez-Pardo, Esther. *Cultures of the Death Drive: Melanie Klein and Modernist Melancholia*. Durham: Duke UP, 2003.
- Seguin, Robert. *Around Quitting Time: Work and Middle-Class Fantasy in American*

-
- Fiction*. Durham: Duke UP, 2001.
- Seltzer, Mark. *Bodies and Machines*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Simmel, Georg. "Exchange." Trans. Donald Levine. *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1971. 43-69.
- . "The Metropolis and Mental Life." *On Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings*. Ed. Donald Levine. U of Chicago P, 1971. 324-339.
- . *The Philosophy of Money*. 1907. Ed. David Frisby. Trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Tratner, Michael. *Modernism and Mass Politics: Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, Yeats*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995.
- Trotter, David. *Paranoid Modernism: Literary Experiment, Psychosis, and the Professionalization of English Society*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.
- Turner, Catherine. *Marketing Modernism Between the Two World Wars*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2003.
- Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. 1899. New York: Modern Library, 2001.
- Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Trans. Talcott Parsons. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.
- Wicke, Jennifer. *Advertising Fictions: Literature, Advertisement, and Social Reading*. New York: Columbia UP, 1988.
- Zender, Karl F. "Walking Away from the Impossible Thing: Identity and Denial in *Sister Carrie*." *Studies in the Novel* 30 (Spring 1998): 63-76.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 02736 3765