

**A BEAUTIFUL LEISURE: THE DECADENT ARCHITECTURAL HUMANISM
OF GEOFFREY SCOTT, BERNARD AND MARY BERENSON**

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Abstract

“A Beautiful Leisure: The Decadent Humanism of Geoffrey Scott and Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Berenson”

This dissertation utilizes a critical reading of Geoffrey Scott’s *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* (1914) to examine a series of broader architectural concerns during the period 1890-1924. Fascinatingly, Scott’s history is not only the “most interesting product of early twentieth-century English architectural writing,” as Reyner Banham rightly acknowledged, but also one of its most undeniably eccentric. While he intended this work to promote the “humanist principles” he read in Italian Renaissance architecture, with the hope of restoring a sense of “taste” to English architecture debased by late-Victorian eclecticism, this study reflected a kind of prudish (if academically lax) historicism and a particular strain of late-nineteenth-century aestheticism, as it was personified by Scott’s mentor, the connoisseur Bernard Berenson, and his wife Mary Berenson. In this way, the *Architecture of Humanism* simultaneously offers a repudiation of contemporaneous architectural thinking, as articulated by John Ruskin, W.R. Lethaby, and Reginald Blomfield, while also expressing the culturally pernicious beliefs held by the Anglo-American leisure classes who sought to sublimate the “imperfections of the world” through the aesthetic pursuits of a beautiful leisure.

While agreeing with the critical consensus that the most immediate academic value of *The Architecture of Humanism* lies with its negation of these critical misconceptions, or ‘fallacies,’ this dissertation is especially concerned with two other less obvious readings. In the first reading, if architecture constituted a way of remembering for Scott (providing the “least conscious record of society”), it also facilitated a mode of forgetting in which the past was idealized — or simply forgotten — in the efforts of refuting the present. (With the humanist ambitions of the work exposed as anachronistic by the mechanized slaughter of the first world war.) Secondly, following his interpretation of German empathy theory, Scott’s argued architecture was ‘humanized’ through the inhabitant’s psychosomatic inhabitation of space. However his own exhausted ‘sensitivity’ toward architecture, together with his referral to the ‘modern science of psychology,’ meant his ‘history of taste’ unwittingly evidences the fracture of subjectivity many other figures, such as Sigmund Freud and T.S. Eliot, considered symptomatic of the emergent modernist epoch.

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To Peter, Ella & Anya

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Introduction

An Unusual Architectural Outcrop

“The course of history was not that of a billiard ball — which, once it is hit, takes a definite line — but resembles the movement of clouds, or the path of man sauntering through the streets, turned aside by a shadow here, a crowd there, an unusual architectural outcrop, until he at last arrives at a place he never knew or meant to go to. Inherent in the course of history is a certain going off course.”¹

Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities* (1930)

Published only weeks before the outbreak of war Geoffrey Scott’s 1914 treatise, *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste*, is one of the more eccentric works of twentieth-century architectural writing. Unlike other more canonical texts, in which the argument can be charted with a degree of assurance, Scott’s ‘history’ is not only eccentric in the sense of being “slightly strange” (which encourages its reading as an ‘oddity’), but also in that the intellectual axis on which it depends — the exposition and advocacy of a ‘humanist architecture’ — is often more peripheral than central to its argument. In this regard, the historian Reyner Banham was correct in noting how Scott’s promotion of Italian renaissance architecture as “an art of pure form, pure taste, and pure pleasure” relied on an indeterminate definition of ‘humanism,’ with the author using the term to refer to both humanist ‘knowledge,’ considered through a willful misreading of renaissance socio-politics, and the human observer’s emotive projection into architectural space. While Banham suggests this “*double-entendre* appears to be quite unconscious,” this dissertation will argue it is both characteristic of Scott’s writing, reflecting the historical laxity of his aestheticized conception of architecture, together with the influence of his mentors, the famed Lithuanian-American connoisseur Bernard Berenson and his wife Mary Berenson, who sought to live ‘aesthetically’ “as if in a dream” surrounded by the circle of *anglo-florentinos* who gathered around their palatial Villa I Tatti in Florence.

Despite this indeterminacy, Banham rightly noted how Scott’s treatise was the “most interesting product” of early-1900s English architectural writing. His enthusiasm was twofold. Firstly, by arguing against the orthodox views of the Arts and Crafts critic and architect William Richard Lethaby, as represented in his *Architecture: An Introduction to the History and Theory of the Art of Building* (1912), Scott’s *Architecture* effectively countered one of the period’s most dominant critics. Secondly, his plea for the restoration of humanist architectural principles — as exemplified in the buildings of the Italian renaissance — represented the culmination of the classicizing tendency in English architecture. A tradition that began with Reginald Blomfield’s advocacy of the ‘Grand Manner’ in his influential *The Mistress Art* (1908) and would be completed with the aversion Scott’s generation toward the architectural eclecticism of the nineteenth-century ‘Battle of the Styles.’ For most critics the

intellectual value of Scott's *Architecture* rested in the first 'destructive' section of the work in which he describes and dispels the critical misconceptions — or 'fallacies' (as he termed them) — that informed this eclectic production. Although highly effective, this refutation is generally considered as a summation of several contemporaneous criticisms within a single volume, rather than the provision of an especially original argument. Banham was rare among architectural historians, however, in asserting Scott's *Architecture* was "neither trivial nor superficial" in its description of the psychological inhabitation of architecture in the second 'constructive' section.

Scott's conception of renaissance architecture figured it as a "beautiful dream of space," in which the human inhabitant invested this space — through an "unconscious analogy" with their bodily actions and sensations — with "human movement and human needs." Within such an anthropomorphism, "*We transcribe ourselves into terms of architecture,*" enacting a metaphoric translation that constitutes "the humanism of architecture." In this way, space can both "affect and control our spirit" and provide "a large part of the pleasure we obtain from architecture."² Set in these terms, Scott's concept of architectural 'space' had been derived from his understanding of contemporaneous German aesthetic theory, primarily through the works of Theodor Lipps and Adolf Hildebrand, as interpreted by his interlocutors, Berenson and the expatriate English writer Violet Paget (who wrote under the pseudonym Vernon Lee).

Although Banham acknowledged Scott's introduction of the German concept of empathy — or *Einführung* ("feeling into") — into Anglo-American architectural discourse was "innovative," he admitted this introduction was "not seminal," as it reflected an emerging trend that was first evident in Berenson's account of the 'tactile values' of renaissance painting, Lee's "extensive biography" on the subject, and Blomfield's refutation of this theory in his *Mistress Art*. In this way, empathy was "common currency" among the Berenson circle and the *Architecture of Humanism*, Banham concludes, was "an illustration of a process which must have happened elsewhere."³ However, it is precisely this sense of 'elsewhereness' that illustrates the larger intellectual significance of Scott's history, alluding to the manner in which it effectively distills, while often misinterpreting, a number of pervasive intellectual concerns. In this way, the volume expressed "that vanished world of cultivated Anglo-American connoisseurship,"⁴ as the historian David Watkin memorably noted, together with Scott's insistence on a notion of architectural 'taste' that not only provided an inspiration, but also an irritant to a number of writers during the twentieth century.

The antagonistic attitude towards Scott's *Architecture* is best exemplified through the historian Rudolf Wittkower's cursory reference to it in his *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (1940). During his introductory remarks concerning the importance of centrally planned churches, Wittkower despairingly notes how "Renaissance architecture is nowadays usually interpreted in terms which stress its worldliness." An emphasis that expressed the "simple — not to say naïve —

formula” espoused by most ‘contemporary’ historians,¹ who argued “mediaeval transcendental religion was replaced by the autonomy of man in the Renaissance.” For Wittkower, this autonomy led to a perceived equivalency of built form and the marginalization of the church as the principal architectural typology. “At best it is argued that the classical apparatus of forms was used on an equal level for sacred, profane and domestic buildings,” he concluded, “without any gradation of meaning; and that consequently, Renaissance architecture is an architecture of pure form. Often in discussions of Renaissance architecture this underlying assumption is taken for granted.”⁵

In a footnote to this contention, Wittkower restated his opposition to such formalistic interpretations by referring to the two works he thought represented the extremities of this tendency. On the one hand, he argued John Ruskin offered the “extreme statement” of an ecclesiastical moralism in the *Stones of Venice* (1851-3), in which “an architecture is invented, as it seems, to make plagiarists of its architects, slaves of its workmen, and sybarites of its habitants.” On the other, Wittkower suggests Scott’s argument in *Architecture* was “equally disputable” as it suggested the “Renaissance style is ‘an architecture of taste, seeking no logic, consistency, or justification beyond that of giving pleasure.’”⁶ His revulsion is obvious and Wittkower later noted the critic Kenneth Clark summarized his intention “in a nutshell” by understanding how his *Architectural Principles* sought “to dispose, once and for all, of the hedonist, or purely aesthetic, theory of Renaissance architecture.”⁷

Wittkower is being disingenuous in his dismissal, however, as Scott’s *Architecture* represented his “chosen foil,” the critic Alina Payne noted, allowing the historian to “set him apart from a specific and influential theorization which had affected architectural history and theory in the “early years of modernism.” In this way, Wittkower’s inclusion of the term ‘humanism’ in *The Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* also constitutes a riposte to Scott’s *Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste*, further emphasizing his conception of architecture as “a conscious intellect-driven will to form aimed at conveying meaning, and hence, aimed at the mind rather than the senses.”⁸ As Banham rightly recognized, while Scott had access to the same archival materials as Wittkower his aestheticism afforded the writer an “academic dispensation,” which allowed him to dismiss any materials that contradicted his argument as ‘pedantic’ and essentially ‘meaningless.’⁹

Such a dissuasion was illusory, however, and Scott’s reliance on a self-assured and privileged notion of aesthetic taste, coupled with the insubstantiality of his argument, justified Banham’s analysis that the *Architecture of Humanism* suffered a “condign fate in becoming the aesthetic handbook of the Neo-Georgian and Playboy phases of English architecture.”¹⁰ In this way, its influence can be read in an overly cultured strand of English architectural criticism, informing the work of such diverse figures as Kenneth Clark, Christopher Hussey, Edwin Lutyens, Colin Rowe, Adrian Stokes, H. Aviary Tipping, Geoffrey Webb, Clough Williams-Ellis, John Vanburgh, and culminating — as

Antony Vidler has recently suggested — in the ahistorical ‘humanist aspirations’ of postmodernism.¹¹ These references typically occur in footnotes, or asides, however, illustrating the manner in which Scott’s *Architecture* is both an essential contribution to — and a tangential presence within — the history of twentieth-century architectural aesthetics.

This marginality is evident in Rowe’s discussion of Scott’s notion of ‘humanist space’ in reference to his own conception of civic space in “The Present Urban Predicament” (1979), in which he notes the *Architecture of Humanism* was “exceptional” less for the intellectual value of its argument that its position “outside of” — but essential to — conventionally accepted genealogies of “space-talk.”¹² In his article, Rowe argued modernism’s ‘misreading’ of architectural space emerged from two critical misconceptions: reflecting its resentment of scientific rationalism, which he termed “physics envy”; together with its obsession with its own historic development, or “zeitgeist worship.” For Rowe, these misconceptions led to the modernist building being disengaged from the larger spatial, urban, and historic contexts, resulting in an “object fixation” — or “obsessive overestimation of the built solid” — that considered architecture independently of any external association. (This obsession was so prevalent, he concluded that a more appropriate title for his lecture would have been “Object Fixation: Cause and Cure.”) After suggesting a series of remedial measures, including a reexamination of “long, skinny buildings” (that are both an ‘object’ and a ‘space definer’) and a “return to the garden” (the “first victim of modernism”), Rowe admits such gestures would only be the first steps towards treating the “basic condition” of “what might be called ‘space shyness.’” The persistence of this spatial timorousness was even more perplexing, he concluded, given that “in no previous century has there ever been so much talk about space as in the present.”¹³

While Rowe agrees with Banham and Watkins that a notion of ‘space-talk’ entered the popular lexicon of Anglo-American architectural discourse with the publication of Siegfried Giedion’s *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941) and Nikolaus Pevsner’s *Outline of European Architecture* (1943), he also suggests it occurred in a less critical form in the writings of Berenson and his “disciple” Scott. Using Ernst Samuels’s encyclopedic biography, *Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Connoisseur* (1979), Rowe then examines the influence of German aesthetic theory on Berenson’s thought, which was formed, in particular, through his acquaintance with Adolf Hildebrand during the mid-1890s. Hildebrand had been resident in Florence since 1874 and — together with his colleague Conrad Fiedler — had published the *Problem der Form der bildenden Kunst* (The problem of form in the fine arts) in 1893, a small work which aroused “a great deal of attention,”¹⁴ with Berenson eagerly digesting this work as he formulated his central notions of “tactile values” and “space composition” in his *Central Italian Painters* (1897).

Throughout the next 50 years Berenson steadfastly refused to revise these concepts and they directly informed Scott’s consideration of architecture. As Rowe rightly notes, the intellectual basis of

these formulations were not only confused, but also deliberately obscured by the connoisseur, who expressed his “inveterate dislike” of these theorists and complained about “swallowing hundreds of pages of German rubbish on art” during the late-1890s.¹⁵ This obfuscation was even more pronounced, Rowe concludes, in the “quasi-eighteen-century accents of [Berenson’s] protégé Geoffrey Scott whose *Architecture of Humanism* still makes no reference to Vienna, no reference (as far as my patience is aware) to Lipps, Hildebrand, Schmarsow?”¹⁶ Rowe’s characterization is significant as it illustrates both the reader’s frustrations with Scott’s laxity, together with the extent the volume should be considered in relation to its extension of Berenson’s notion of aesthetics. An indebtedness that Berenson acknowledged by spuriously claiming to Henry Hope Reed, the editor of the ‘American edition’ of Scott’s *Architecture*, that he had authored the work and deserved credit for its argument. (Similarly, Clark also recalled the connoisseur’s attempts to claim authorship.) Despite this intertwining, however, Berenson and Scott disagreed on one critical point: the aesthetic value of architecture.

For Scott, architecture offered a way of remembering. And, in this way, his aestheticism typified an attitude in which “the sense of beauty” represented “the self-preserving instinct not of our bodily life,” as Lee noted, “but of man’s life as a creature who sees and remembers what he has seen.”¹⁷ This recollection was less expressive of Ruskin’s didactic moralism or the vitalized ‘self-preserving instincts’ of Berenson, however, than flush with the complications Sigmund Freud attributed to the act of memory. Following his reading of Heinrich Wölfflin’s *Renaissance und barock* (1888), Scott noted how he also considered architecture the “least conscious record of society.” One that was not only capable of satisfying the requirements of ‘firmness, commodity, and delight’ demanded by the seventeenth-century English writer Henry Wotton (paraphrasing Vitruvius), but also of providing that satisfaction anonymously. The correspondence of memory to an actual building was only relative, however, as history could not be conceived of as “the repository of unchanging fact,” as one of Wölfflin’s former students cautioned, but rather was “a process, a pattern of living and changing attitudes and interpretations.”

Despite their marked differences, Giedion was an exact contemporary of Scott. For Giedion this dynamic historical process embodied a “backward look,” in which the historian’s gaze not only “transforms its object,” but also through their description of this object or moment “inevitably transforms the past according to his own nature.” “History,” he concluded, “cannot be touched without changing it.”¹⁸ If Giedion sought to explain how the modern epoch “came to consciousness of itself in architecture” in his *Space, Time, Architecture*, then Scott’s *Architecture of Humanism* illustrates a more retrogressive sense of history, one in which the past was idealized in order to refute the ascendancy of the future. A future marked by the uncertainties of the modern age. (In this way, Scott’s historical view was less interested in understanding the past, than denying the future.) Which



Geoffrey Scott, 1914.
Unknown photographer ©National Portrait Gallery, London

is to say, if architecture engendered a kind of remembering — or a “coming to consciousness” — then for Scott it also implied a kind of forgetting, or neglectfulness of fact, which would be written into a history that was less definite or authoritative, than distracted.

Chapter One of this dissertation, “Aspects not Things: Geoffrey Scott’s View of History,” locates Scott’s lax historical method in the context of his nascent aestheticism. As he noted in his introduction to *The Architecture of Humanism*, Scott began this volume with the intention of addressing the “lack of architectural taste” he found in the misguided eclecticism of late-nineteenth century English architecture. Although he argued architecture could be reinvigorated by focusing on a historical understanding of ‘taste,’ as opposed to the “*a priori* aesthetics” manifest in the ‘Battle of the Styles,’ Scott’s own observations on architecture would be governed less by actual subjective experience or historicized knowledge, than by a series of aesthetic preconceptions.

As a 1908 letter describing his visit to the ancient Graeco-Roman ruins of Paestum suggests, prior to his arrival in Italy Scott had already “invested Paestum with extravagant perfections in my imagination.” Following these sentiments, this early letter not only illustrates how Scott’s aestheticism would be framed by architecture, deliberately tying him to a lineage of English aesthetes and Grand Tourists that extended from Richard Payne Knight and the Society of Dilettanti to Percy Bysshe Shelley and Ruskin, but also how his conception of ‘taste’ would attempt to reconcile the disjuncture between the imaginative and the real. If his conception of Paestum was self-consciously picturesque, then it was also less consciously modern, in the sense the time and the space it described have a malleability that was not only rhetorical but also perceptual.

In his dual role as a guide and correspondent, Scott understood how narrative could provide a sensible form to experience by sacrificing the occasional detail to narrative casuistry. Such laxity was anathematic to the ubiquitous guidebooks of the period, the Baedeker, which were relied on by many aesthetes — including Scott — for their studiousness, accuracy, and vividly detailed maps. The tension between the guidebook’s professional acuity and his quest to “live aesthetically,” in thrall to the erotic charge of the art-work, was illustrated in E.M. Forster’s *A Room with a View* (1908), with Scott’s refusal to engage in a professional ‘expertism’ understood as both an aesthetic posture and a critical myopia. A limit borne of a trait Forster recognized in his compatriots, their innate Englishness.

Published in the months after his return from Italy, Scott’s *The National Character of English Architecture* (1908) illustrates a generalized concern for the loss of identifiable sense of ‘Englishness’ in architecture. In response, this essay attempts to define how “English history has its counterpart in English Architecture,” while also introducing a number of preoccupations that would later resurface in *The Architecture of Humanism*, notably the ‘fallacies’ that misinformed late-nineteenth century

criticism; the ‘humanization of space’ conceived in relation to the architecture of the Italian Renaissance; and the affirmation that architecture is the unconscious product of society.

Scott’s equation of the architectural with the national was indebted to Ruskin, who had argued in his *Lamp of Memory* (1849) that it was impossible to “remember” without poetry and architecture. In this way, the ‘duty’ of architecture lay in preserving “the most precious of inheritances, that of past ages,” through an inscription in stone, which rendered it unforgettable. In contrast to Ruskin’s moralistic insistence that such a monumental architecture bear “lasting witness against men,” Scott presented the ruinous architectural figure of the Saxon Keep: a poetic artifact he argues was a distinctly English amalgam of the military ‘castle’ and domestic ‘cottage.’ Set in these terms, his use of this example was determined more by his literary ambitions than any architectural logic. And Scott’s polemical reliance on the Keep offers an insight into his emerging historiographic approach, illustrating how the object would always remain subject to its narrative description, which would ultimately prove less national in scope than personal in conception.

Scott’s nationalism was indebted to the influence of Lethaby, who believed the “very best form of modern civilization” was found in “house-keeping in the country, tea in the garden, boy-scouting, and playing tennis in flannels,” and his friend and rival Blomfield, who similarly held that architectural tradition expressed the “mental and moral qualities” of the nation.¹⁹ Lethaby pursued this ‘Englishry’ through a post-Ruskinian attempt to include vernacular craft practices within contemporary architectural production, together with an institutionalized return to “instruction,” “reality,” and “structure” (as opposed to “cultivated taste” and “expertism”).²⁰ Although he argued, “Art is a well-made thing,” several of Lethaby’s colleagues remarked on his ‘misguided optimism,’ with Blomfield ridiculing his “art socialism” and naïve idealization of craftsmanship. A view that was borne out with the construction of Lethaby’s All Saints’ Church (1902) in Brockhampton, Hereford.

In contrast to Lethaby’s social utopianism, Blomfield believed in the symbolic potential of architecture. A fierce advocate of the neo-classical ‘Grand Manner’ style, Blomfield reasserted the primacy of the architect through numerous books and lectures that stressed the completeness of the architectural conception — not as a totality or assemblage (in the sense of being a *gesamkunstwerk*) — but rather as a necessarily sober building that had been “thought out to the uttermost.” In an uncharacteristic formulation that runs counter to this rationalism, he argued “temperament” was both “an essential element in all good architecture” and a reflection of nation’s “sober dignity.” However, his definition of temperament as “some *force or passion* within a man which drives him to do certain things in a certain way”²¹ was complicated by his design for the Menin Gate (1921-7), a war memorial in Flanders, Belgium, that was famously described by the poet Siegfried Sassoon as “a sepulchre of crime.”

At the conclusion of his *National Character* Scott was still unable to provide a coherent definition of the ‘Englishness’ of English architecture, with the problem in defining that history lying in interpreting the “consistent purpose . . . behind so much outward discontinuity.”²² The eclectic urge was “always present in English architecture,” he noted, which resulted in a variegated architecture that grew out of a “succession of reactions” to the influences of France, Germany, and Italy. His failure to provide that definition would continue to grate, moreover, underlying his subsequent criticism and motivating the historiography of taste he intended the *Architecture of Humanism* to provide. In this way, his inability to define this character can itself be read as an indication of the native idiosyncrasy he argued was a defining feature of English architecture.

The awkwardness of his nationalism is most evident in Scott’s citation of William Morris, who described a link between the nation and architecture that was invested with social, moral, and naturalistic meaning. If “England is a country whose every scene is in miniature,” then this sense of delimitation also evinces a paradoxical notion of ‘snugness,’ one that both comforts and suffocates in its familiarity, which resonates throughout Scott’s historiography, demarcating the physical and imaginative limitations of English architecture and leading to a lack of intellectual and sensual ‘engagement’ he ascribed to the subject.

Scott ultimately despaired of describing architecture from “the irrelevant point of view of national character” and following the publication of this essay his nascent career as a critic lay at a critical juncture. As he later concluded, there were two types of criticism during the period: the “essentially historical,” inspired by Ruskin, which described ‘past styles’ in terms of their generative influences and — as such — was unable to “furnish no general estimate or true comparison of style”; and the dictatorial, which “For the sake of simplicity lays down some ‘law’ of architectural taste.” By contrast, the “true task of criticism” — as he defined it (in reference to the ‘aesthetic criticism’ of Berenson) — was “to understand such aesthetic pleasures as have in fact been felt, and then to draw whatever laws and conclusions it may from that understanding.” As he concluded, “no amount of reasoning can create, or can annul, an aesthetic experience; for the aim of the arts has not been logic, but delight.”²³ Considered in these terms, the temperament Scott alluded to in the *National Character* — and on which his subsequent criticism would draw — was one determined by the romantic lethargy of the leisure class, whose self-conscious pursuit of the ‘aesthetic delight’ was parodied by Forster.

In contrast to the intellectual familiarity of England, Scott realized he could pursue a wealth of intellectual, sensual, and romantic opportunities among the ruins of the Italian landscape, a panorama which offered “room for one’s imagination to expand in, without dwarfing it like an ocean or a dehumanised desert.”²⁴ In this regard, his growing interest in Italian renaissance architecture reflected the influence of the Berensons. With his decision to immigrate to Italy and accept a position

as Berenson's private secretary, Scott inadvertently collapses the expanse of the Italian landscape that lay before him, illustrating how his underlying concern would lie with "aspects not things," reflecting a historiographic method in which a multitude of details — no matter how architecturally, historically or sensibly mismatched — were assembled within a single view.

Chapter Two, "A Beautiful Leisure?: Flirting with Taste in *The Architecture of Humanism*," examines the importance of Scott's literary ambition and his immersion within the "beautiful leisure" of the Berenson circle at I Tatti. As the art critic Meyer Schapiro recalled, the aesthetic pursuits of these *anglo-florentinos* attempted to "sublimate the imperfections of the world."²⁵ In this way, leisure was not only palliative, in the sense that it sought to transcend reality through a metaphysical transport in the 'aesthetic experience,' but also operative in its mechanical disengagement of the art-work from the complications of reality. "Who knows the beauties of this enchanting land as we do?" Mary Berenson noted of this pursuit. "And yet everything we see and enjoy adds to [Berenson's] capital, deepening his understanding of beauty, of art, of Italy, of history, so that we don't feel like mere idle or self-indulgent tourists."²⁶ In contrast to the tourist's indulgence, Berenson understood how the notion of "conspicuous leisure" — as defined by Thorstein Veblen's in his *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) — illustrated the "non-productive use of time," which, in turn, afforded a publically demonstrable consideration of the art-work.

Scott was first introduced to the Berensons in March 1906. Mary Berenson immediately recognized the young man as her "favourite kind of lame duck," who possessed the characteristics she most admired by being young, handsome, highly educated, and extremely neurotic. While her romantic ambitions were complicated by Scott's homosexuality, Mary Berenson's effrontery was something of a guise, however, illustrating both the convoluted sexual machinations of the I Tatti circle and the dramatic affectedness of such liaisons, which were played out through the act of writing. Both Scott and Mary Berenson were compulsive letter writers, who understood how the scripting of amorous communiqués did not require a receptive audience because the true object of desire lay in the act of writing itself. For Scott these rhetorical gestures were a form of actualizing the "epistolary self," who was "completely disengaged by the pen" and liable to "lose all reason." (And would come to inhabit his *Architecture* in the form of the observer.)

Unlike her husband and protégé, Mary Berenson was unconcerned with the correlation of facts to narrative, describing how she enjoyed such details as they "gave substance to the dream." "All art is a lie," she noted of this substantiation, with "the value of the art depending on the beauty of the lie, not on the veracity of the fact." Mary Berenson equated Scott's sexual impotence towards her with that of a literary impotence and his homosexuality not only represented a flirtation with an

inappropriate object of desire for Mary Berenson, but also a form of critical arrest that would reemerge when Scott came to add to the ‘history of taste’ he began with *Architecture*.

As the psychoanalyst Adam Phillips has explained, the act of flirting so vital as it constitutes an attempt to extend — rather than realize — desire. In concluding chapter of *Architecture*, “Art and Thought,” Scott argued the observer’s psychosomatic reactions to architecture were innately sexual, governed by an attraction that eluded the “reason’s search.”²⁷ Following the exaggerated anthropomorphism he read in several renaissance writers, including Leon Battista Alberti and Filareté, he subsequently sought to explain the “present condition of our art” through a romantic allegory in which ‘Taste,’ figured as the masculine lover of a feminized ‘Architecture,’ is seduced by an adulterous ‘Criticism.’ In this way, he fully appreciated how such a flirtation was “an attempt to reopen, to rework, the plot” and extend aesthetic desire.²⁸

Scott insisted architecture solicited ‘delight,’ while fostering a “disinterested desire for beauty” that allowed it to “truly become art.”²⁹ This formulation echoes Immanuel Kant’s assertion in *The Critique of Judgment* (1790) that the “definition of taste lies in the ability to judge the beautiful,” in which such a judgment engages a subjective and aesthetic — rather than objective and cognitive — apperception of beauty. Following this definition, the notion of ‘taste’ is accompanied by an associated feeling of pleasure, a *Lebensgefühl* (or “feeling of life”), which stems from the observer’s recognition of their intellectual response to the object. Scott’s explanation of this dynamic was complicated, however, by his insistence that the sense of taste was exclusively able to determine aesthetic “value.” Scott’s self-consciously interpretation of the Italian renaissance as the highest period of aesthetic taste reflected both an emerging interest in architectural classicism and a refutation of such critics like Lethaby, who despaired of the period’s “aristocratic humanism.” In this way, the renaissance evidenced an “architecture of taste” that was removed from the exhausted eclecticism and innate ‘snugness’ of English architecture he previously explored in his *National Character*.

In structural terms, Scott’s *Architecture of Humanism* is divided into two parts. The first ‘destructive’ section discusses and dispels the romantic (including natural and literary), mechanical, ethical, and biological fallacies. His exposition of each of these fallacies and their relative importance to his conception of architectural aesthetics is discussed in turn. The second ‘constructive,’ or ‘theoretical,’ section outlines his conception of the observer’s tactile-sensorial response to architecture. “What we feel as ‘beauty’ in architecture is not a matter for logical demonstration,” he explained of this process. “It is experienced, consciously, as a direct and simple intuition, which has its ground in that subconscious region where our physical memories are stored.”³⁰ Following this process, Scott later suggested a study of psychology would explain such an unconscious transition,

“revealed with such a degree of clarity that mitigated extraneous influences,”³¹ in which architectural space becomes “unconsciously invested” with the desires of the observer.

The observer’s ability to translate architectural elements into bodily sensations not only provided the basis for the “critical appreciation” of architecture, however, but also determined their ability to derive pleasure from architecture. An aesthetically determined pleasure that illustrated both their “sensibility to architecture” (demonstrating a “great feeling for space”), together with the culmination of a process of inhabitation that — he concluded — constituted the “humanism of architecture.”³² Scott’s exposition of this empathetic notion of inhabitation is discussed in relation to the influence of Berenson, Lee, and other contemporaneous notions of German empathy theory.

In the epilogue to the second edition of *Architecture* (published in 1924), Scott associated the continued dehumanization of architecture with an ‘inability to see,’ in which the observer was deprived of relevant architectural examples and lost in “a welter of commercial and municipal monstrosities. It is as though one had to tune a violin in the midst of a railway journey.” Interestingly, his association of the training of the eye with the musical training of the hands illustrates the importance he placed on repetitive physical gestures — the fingerings and movements of tuning — that are not only required to produce art, but also, through their sheer repetition, become unconscious acts. In response to this visual impoverishment, Scott argued architects should seek “a more saturated familiarity with the tradition of humanist architecture” and this appeal is crucial to understanding both the retrospective impulses of his argument and his despairing recognition of how the mechanized slaughter of the first world war negated his conception of humanist space. Published only weeks before the outbreak of hostilities, Scott realized his *Architecture* “will hardly be read.” Its relative failure was not only determined by the immediacy of the war, which decimated the readership he sought, but also the manner in which the conflict was fought realized his concern that humanism faced two enemies, “chaos and inhuman order,” making his recourse to an outdated classicism increasingly absurd. In this way, the continued ‘inability to see’ he identified in 1924 can be related to a more generalized shock — a “deregulation of perception,” as the critic Paul Virilio described it — in which the “masses no longer believed their eyes.”

Chapter Three, “The Indiscreet Charms of the Bourgeoisie: Bernard Berenson and the Profession of Memory,” examines Berenson’s notion of connoisseurship as a contra-thesis to Scott’s *Architecture of Humanism*. Although Scott’s history is rightly considered as an extension of Berenson’s aesthetic project, the pair disagreed on two fundamental points. Firstly, they were at odds over the aesthetic value of architecture and its capacity to elicit a kinesthetic response in the observer. Berenson preferred the metaphoric suggestion of the paintings two-dimensional ‘space composition’ over the three-dimensionality of architecture, which he considered “overly literal,” and Scott suggesting the

correspondence between the observer's physical body and architectural space provided a "true and reliable experience."

Secondly, Berenson and Scott also differed in their conception of the act of remembering. While Scott described how the observer 'wrote himself out' into space (with architecture forming a kind of archive of these bodily projected images), Berenson measured his memory against his vast collection of photographic images, referenced against the recollections of his personal secretary. In this way, the turn in Berenson's notion of connoisseurship —from a "scientific" method of examining the art-work to an overtly biographic description of it — not only prefigured Scott's final anesthetization of architecture (which is discussed in chapter four), but also the tensions within a process riven with unconscious doubts and mnemonic failings.

By the early-1900s Berenson had come to personify connoisseurship and he presided over an expatriate society infused with cultural snobbery, social elitism, and "fierce rivalries." "Culture submits character to aesthetics," he noted of his ambition, "So culture is perhaps possible in a condition of things in which class distinctions are very great."³³ Berenson represented this society both figuratively and literally, offering his services to a number of private collectors, including the Boston heiress Isabella Gardner, and commercial art dealers, including the unscrupulous London firm Duveen Brothers. In contrast to the 'Sage of Settignano,' these figures viewed Italy less as a source of aesthetic pleasure than a supply of purchasable art-works.

From the 1910s onwards, Berenson began to suggest such 'interests' had distracted him from his "true purpose" of writing "the aesthetics of all humanistic art."³⁴ (A distraction he also attributed to Mary Berenson who had induced him to write the "wrong kind" of books.) As many critics have noted, the connoisseur's intellectual limitations were well known, however, and his principal contribution to the study of renaissance art was more mechanical than intellectual, stemming from his unique ability to attribute art-works using the techniques of scientific connoisseurship. Berenson had originally adopted these techniques following his reading of Giovanni Morelli's *Italian Masters in German Galleries: A Critical Essay on the Italian Pictures in the Galleries of Munich, Dresden, Berlin* (1883) during the 1890s. According to his practice, the scientific connoisseur undertook a concentrated visual study of a given artist, evaluating the work in evidential terms by focusing on such details as earlobes, fingernails, or the shapes of fingers in order to attribute the art-work and "learn to see correctly." By focusing on those "inadvertent little gestures," Morelli's technique, as Carlo Ginzburg noted, shared an affinity with the techniques of a criminologist or psychoanalyst.

Berenson challenged his knowledge of this technique with his *Lorenzo Lotto: An Essay in Constructive Art Criticism* (1891). Lotto was notoriously inconsistent artist, however, and the failings of this work hastened his criticism of Morellian connoisseurship, which — as he explained in

“Rudiments of Connoisseurship (A Fragment)” (1902) — failed to appreciate the aesthetic value of the art-work. “The Sense of Quality is indubitably the most essential equipment of a would-be connoisseur,” he contended, as it not only provides “the touchstone of all his laboriously collected documentary and historical evidences,” but also suggests “the Art of connoisseurship.³⁵ The public performance of this art aside, Berenson realized his success depended on a professionally certifiable memory that remained liable to correction by the most mechanical of means.

From the early-1890s onward, the Berensons assembled a vast collection of photographs that he used to augment a memory, which he acknowledged was “inadequate to the task of recalling every detail.” For the critic Alan J. Sekula such archives provided a comparative — rather than an explanatory — system, in which images could be laid alongside one another (as Berenson had seen in the dual slideshows of Charles Eliot Norton), in order to allow details to be compared.³⁶ While this archive depended on the dispassionate “accuracy of the camera,”³⁷ Berenson appreciated how such a memory was liable to mistake one illustration for another with the same ease a series of spilled photographs could be hastily reordered for his inspection.

If this archive was intended to provide a technical correlate to memory, by contrast the *mémoire involuntaire* of Marcel Proust illustrated the fictive character of remembering. Berenson fascinated Proust and the denizens of this “bored villadom” eagerly digested the writer’s *In Search of Lost Time* (1913-27). A work that not only illustrates the essentially mitotic character of modern experience, but also the performative value of rumors, with Berenson, like Proust, recognizing when an event is fragmented into stories that are misheard, recycled, and reinvented it becomes a vestige — a rumor — of itself.

Despite his reliance on technical media, Berenson refused to be filmed and this reluctance illustrates how he preferred to exist in “the memories of those who knew him.” Those memories were carefully mediated by the connoisseur, whose “thinking aloud” was the continuation of a public monologue in which every apparently spontaneous aphorism had been rehearsed, refined, and endlessly regurgitated. In addition to his photographic archive, Berenson’s personal secretary also acted as another form of his professional memory, recording his impressions of the art-work while also providing an extension of his biographic project.

In the final instance, Berensonian connoisseurship can be considered an unwilling illustration of the inauthenticity of modern experience. As he acknowledged, Berenson was unable to let go of his attachment to the connoisseurial object and his sybaritic longing for it was figured by Karin Stephen — Mary Berenson’s daughter and a trained Freudian psychoanalyst — as a melancholic absorption with the lost object of desire. In this way, his conception of the memory-work of connoisseurship constituted a nostalgically infused rebuttal of modernity, which was evident

in both his antipathy toward modern art, together with his description of the ‘aesthetic moment’ as irrecoverably lost.

Chapter Four, “Nothing but Sheer Nerves’: Geoffrey Scott and the Humanism of Architecture,” examines the conflict between Scott’s positivistic conception of architecture and the fragility of his “exhausted nerves.” When he returned to add to the ‘history of taste’ he began with *Architecture*, Scott was struck by a sudden attack of writer’s block. The reappearance of this “dank mist” coincided with his misguided plans to marry, with the impropriety of this union precipitating his eventual nervous breakdown. After retreating to a fashionable Swiss clinic, Scott underwent a treatment that sponsored “the habit of eliminating unnecessary thoughts and worries.” Given that the draft of the second volume of his ‘history of taste’ ended with the ellipsis “It is very difficult,” it appears Scott was already familiar with such an erasure.

Despite his writer’s block, Scott used this confinement to pen a number of poems that evince his increasing preference for the “associative meanings” of literature, as opposed to the “direct meaning” he read in the observer’s relation to architecture. However, the poetry of T.S. Eliot, another of the clinic’s patients, describes the psychological complications that separated the positivistic account of inhabitation Scott offered in his ‘history of taste’ from the enervated forgetfulness of biographic experience. Held within such an “unhappy relation” to time and space, Eliot’s modern subject projected their psychical state onto architecture, “as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen.”³⁸ If Eliot’s recognized these ‘bad nerves’ were a manifestation of the subject’s complex interaction with an emergent modernity, Scott’s nervousness consoled itself with his retreat into two anachronisms of the nineteenth-century: aesthetic connoisseurship, which has been discussed in earlier chapters; and the nervous ailment of neurasthenia.

The “psychological inertia” of figures like Scott and Berenson not only expressed their attempts to mitigate the enervating demands of modernity, but also an “endemic disorder of fatigue” that generated such conditions as neurasthenia and the attendant “culture of therapeutics.” For the American neurologist George M. Beard, neurasthenia merely implied a “lack of nervous strength” and his definition of this nervous loss is important here for two reasons. Firstly, Beard associated this mental strain with the increased technologization of modern society; and secondly, he was sympathetic to the rhetorical manner in which the neurasthenic displayed their “panoply of symptoms.” Instead of aligning neurasthenia with the progress of modernity, Beard’s European rivals preferred to consider it in terms of the nervous debilitations of the ‘degenerative society,’ with Achille Adrien Proust and Gilbert Ballet’s *The Treatment of Neurasthenia* (1902) exemplifying this concern through their discussion of the mental strain of being “wholly taken up with the pursuit of pleasure.”³⁹

If this work can be read as a missive to Proust's son, Marcel (the quintessential hypochondriac), then Karin Stephen's frank study of hypochondriac duplicity, *Psycho-analysis and Medicine: A Study of the Wish to Fall Ill* (1933), undoubtedly refers to her mother, Mary Berenson. As she notes, this "wish" illustrates the neurasthenic's attempts to "fall ill 'on purpose' . . . in order *not* to know" the unconscious desires they repressing. In these terms, hypochondria represented a kind of flirting with disease, which offered "one of the escapes from ennui."⁴⁰ Ironically, this fragile pleasure — or rather, the pleasure in their own fragility — contradicted the vitalistic conception of art that lay at the center of both Berenson's notion of aesthetic connoisseurship and Scott's elucidation of humanist architecture. "The pleasure of art exists in being made conscious of a surplus of energy," Mary Berenson noted of this principle, "But you must not be required to work too hard and exhaust all your surplus energy"⁴¹: an exhaustion that haunted both Scott and Berenson's consideration of an engagement with art.

In the second edition of *Architecture*, Scott reiterated "what we feel as 'beauty' in architecture is not a matter for logical demonstration," but rather an unconscious recognition that "rises to consciousness simply as 'pleasure.'" He often wrote of his own exhausted 'sensitivity' toward architecture, however, describing how a building's physicality tended to accent his natural "hopelessness and lethargy," resulting in "a kind of unbearableness in the things one is most sensitive to."⁴² Scott's limited practice as an architect — undertaken in partnership with the English architect and landscape designer Cecil Pinsent — illustrates how his notion of taste was fragmentary (composed of disparate elements), together with the diminishment of his architectural ambition from the Italian landscape, to the architecture and gardens of the renaissance, and finally to 'snug' domesticity of objects he had rejected in his *The National Character of English Architecture* (1908). Scott and Pinsent's alterations to the Berenson's Villa I Tatti and Augustus Strong's Villa Le Balze are discussed, together with the critical importance of their renaissance gardens, which mediate between the architectural order of these villas and the ungoverned nature of the landscape beyond. Ironically, Scott noted how this landscape "proved to be" the only thing that could comfort his sensitive nerves as nature "asks for no active responses, suggests nothing, and waits patiently without obtruding itself."⁴³

Berenson rightly interpreted Scott's abandonment of architectural practice as an example of his characteristic 'dilettantism,' which not only implied a critical lassitude, but also a kind of resigned decadence. If decadence entailed both an enervated decay and a heightened artificiality, then Berenson and Scott both considered this perversity in benign and impotent terms, rather than as a threatening and destructive force. The distortive threat of decadence are discussed in reference to the delicate process of objectification offered by Henry James in his *Portrait of a Lady* (1881), in which the aesthete's "cluster of appurtenances" not only sought to reinforce their character, but also illustrated

a proto-modern concern with the fragmented limits of subjectivity, caught within an inability to distinguish the boundaries between the object and self.

The tenuous nature of this division is further discussed in reference to J.K. Husymans's Decadent classic *À rebours* (1884), in which its protagonist indulges his aestheticism by decorating the interior of his apartment with eccentrically themes and ornamenting the shell of his pet tortoise with "precious stones." The fatal inability of this animal to bear this ornamented weight is associated with Nick Mariano's description of Scott's wife, Lady Sybil Cutting, amidst a "refinement of luxury" in their Villa Medici, Florence. Not only is Cutting's own neurasthenic ennui palpable in this portrait, but also the inability of the decorative furnishings — chosen by Scott — to compensate for her nervous exhaustion is obvious. Set in these terms, the 'dazzling splendor' of this interior alludes to a kind of baroque excessiveness that is antithetical to the proportioned and ordered space Scott celebrated in renaissance architecture.

At the conclusion of his *Architecture*, Scott again restated his conception of how architecture was 'humanized' through the observer's psychosomatic inhabitation of space, with their "transcription of the body's states" constructing "within the world as it is, a *pattern of the world*."⁴⁴ Although he was convinced of the veracity of this exchange, Scott was sensitive to the necessity of providing "a more exact analysis of aesthetic experience," which he posited could be offered through the "modern science of psychology."⁴⁵ A suggestion that embedded his understanding of architectural history within the machinations of memory and desire. Despite this insistence, he omitted any reference to psychology in the 1924 edition of *Architecture*: a deletion that can be attributed to his realization that a psychosomatic explanation of the observer's reception of the artwork had become antiquated, together with his concern that this 'science' had been perverted by the psychoanalytical theories of Freud.

In his 1895 essay, "On the Grounds of Detaching a Particular Syndrome from Neurasthenia under the Description Anxiety-Neurosis," Freud formulated his notion of anxiety through a reading of Beard's *Practical Treatise on Nervous Exhaustion* (1869) and *American Nervousness* (1881). For Freud, none of the neurasthenic's symptoms were "false," but rather — like metaphors — they constituted a progressively enervating allusion to something else. An allusion that further suggested Scott's "dream of space" would be tied to the lax dynamics and characteristic forgetfulness of neurasthenia. In his "Interpretation of Dreams" (1899), Freud also noted how such dreams constitute a "wish fulfillment" that attempts to create a "pattern of the world" within the material world. This patterned desire was distorted through its emergence in representative form, however, with this process producing a "screen" that lay between the material world of the conscious and the instinctual life of unconscious desire. This screen was only a filament, a 'thin film,' which the observer sought to drape

over their body — like a silken coverlet, or an ornamented tortoise shell — in order to shield against the provocations of the material world.

This “beautiful dream of space” was not only capable of expressing desire, but also — as Freud’s colleague Sándor Ferencsi noted in his conceptualization of psychological trauma — mediating the traumatic return of the real. In this way, these dream-works were “compromise formations” that expressed the ambivalence that marked modern subjectivity, with Freud’s explanation of the “Psychical Mechanism of Forgetfulness” (1896) leading to his formulation of the screen-memory, which show “no concern for historical accuracy,” and, in their displacement of “unwanted images” and repression of “unwanted thoughts,” illustrate how “people often construct such things unconsciously: almost like works of fiction.”⁴⁶

Read in these terms, Scott’s attack of writer’s block evinced a moment when he became aware of the self-consciousness of his “dream of space.” Speaking of a moment in which his nervous exhaustion acknowledged how the onslaught of modernity negated his ambition of restoring an idealized humanist conception of architecture. In this way, this ‘history of taste’ is less unique for its exposition of an empathetic notion of “space,” which occurs elsewhere, than for its description of the observer’s projective “writing-out” of the self into space, which unwittingly evidenced a fracture that Freud and Eliot, among many others, read as symptomatic of modern subjectivity. In the final instance, like the hypochondrical symptoms the neurasthenic used to describe their disease, Geoffrey Scott’s *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* offers an unwitting — which is to say, an unconscious — reminder of the ambivalence inherent to inhabiting space.

In conclusion, a short epilogue, “A Veil of Ether,” restates the argument that it is a diseased fallibility, rather than the aestheticized vitality he argued for in the volume, which constitutes the titular ‘humanism’ Scott left undefined in his *Architecture of Humanism*. Scott died aged 45 in New York City on 14 August 1929 after succumbing to a form of pneumonia the attending physician admitted had “no known treatment.” As this dissertation concludes, it is precisely this fragility (or exhausted vitality) — evidenced in both biographic and professional terms as an inability “to bear the things one is most sensitive to” — that illustrates the significance of Scott’s *Architecture*. A work that not only evidences the influences of such critics as Ruskin, Morris, Lethaby, and Blomfield, but also the “culture of therapeutics” which existed between 1890-1920.

Like other members of the *anglo-florentino* world he inhabited, Scott understood how “the unfavourable influence exerted upon a man’s personal life by the times in which he lives may even extend to his physical organism.”⁴⁷ Although this condition afforded a kind of recuperative comfort, as Thomas Mann described it in his epic of medical incarceration, *The Magic Mountain* (1924), it also



Bernard Berenson, c. 1930.
©David Seymour/Magnum

illustrated the fragility of the human body and the inability of both language and architecture to compensate for — as opposed to merely accommodating — the nervous exhaustion associated with modern life. Caught within the suspended reality of disease, “space, like time, engenders forgetfulness” and the difficulties with remembering extended from the misplacing of phrases or historical periods (evident of the ‘psychopathologies of everyday life’), to the struggle Freud associated with the efforts of the psychological defenses — the ‘veil of ether’ — in shielding the subject from the exigencies of modernity. In these terms, Scott’s nervous sensitivity can be considered as an illustration of the precariousness of inhabiting an architectural space marked by the profligate confusions of hypochondria, neurasthenia, and mnemonic laxity. This fragility is not only symptomatic of the ‘humanism’ he left undefined in his titular *Architecture of Humanism*, but also illustrative of the capricious delicacy — in both physical and psychological terms — of the subjective experience of architecture.

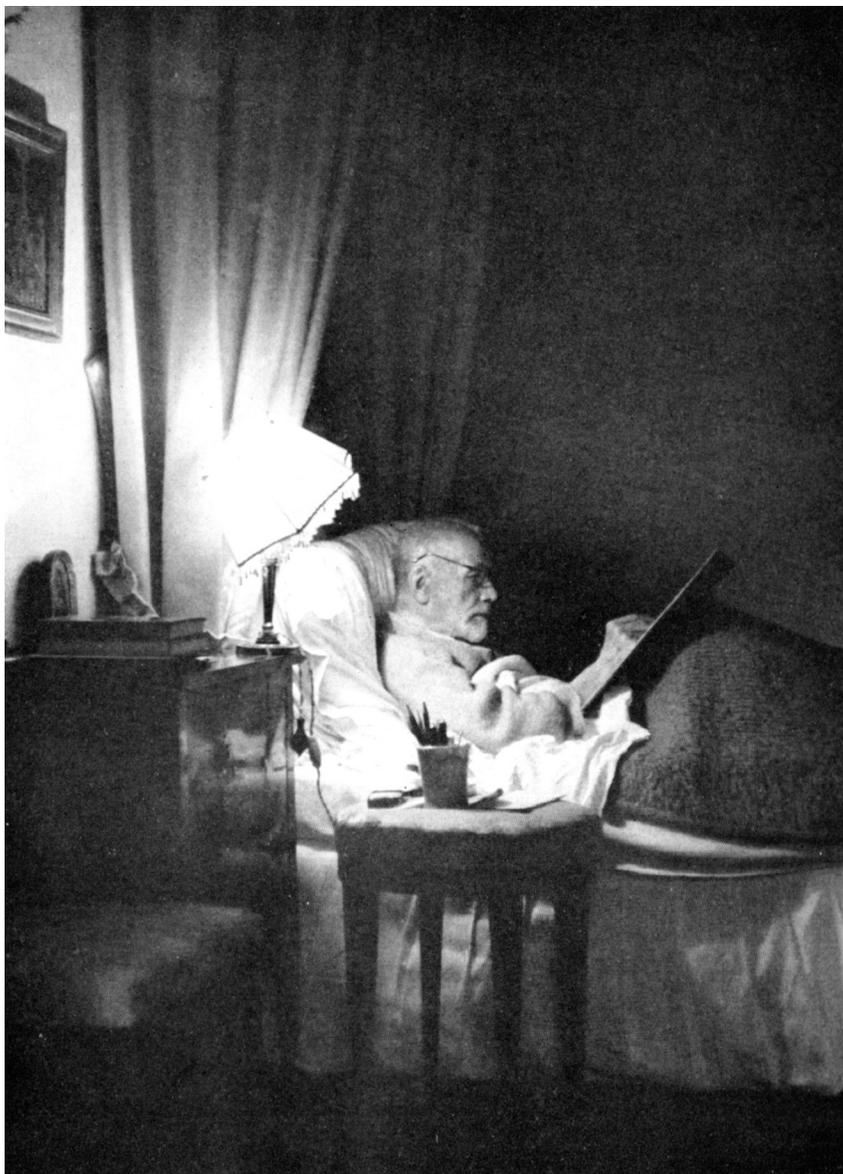
One note of clarification. Throughout this dissertation the human inhabitant of architecture is referred to as the ‘observer.’ Scott is typically ambivalent in naming this figure who rests at the center of his thesis and the process of sensorial experience and mnemonic reconstruction — or ‘tactile values’ (to use Berenson’s phrase) — it explores. As the concluding epilogue also notes, Scott’s closest approximation of this figure occurred in his short essay, “The Basilica of St. Peter’s” (1926-7), in which he describes the “excellent judgment and proper sensibility” of an English tourist who “burst into tears” at the sight of the basilica. An outburst that, however overwrought, evidenced the “ideal” architectural inhabitant for Scott.⁴⁸

In contrast to Scott’s relative ambivalence, Berenson pointedly referred to this figure as the “aesthetic spectator,” employing the phrase for its deliberate evocation of the convergence he sought between the connoisseur and the art-work. In this way, he acknowledged the etymological derivation of the term from the Latin *spectare* — “to gaze at” — in which the spectator was defined through the act of viewing a spectacle. (An object or event that, by nature, is “exhibited as to view the unusual, notable, or entertaining.”) By contrast, the term ‘observer’ has more technocratic associations, with the act of observing not only entailing “watching carefully” (while ostensibly paying “special attention to detail”), but also the “compliance of one’s practice to” convention through that gesture.⁴⁹ If the spectator’s view embodies an ever-increasing immersion in the fantastical event, as suggested by Guy Debord in his *Society of the Spectacle* (1967), then the practice of the late-nineteenth century connoisseurial observer — at least in the terms Scott understood it — involves a kind of critical and anxious detachment. Although he occasionally refers to the spectator, lazily deferring to Berenson’s phrase, the human figure described by Scott is more appropriately considered as an observer: one who is left to “look on” architecture, arrested in the past, and is unable to truly ‘inhabit’ the

architectural space from which they have been excluded by their own desires. Like the weeping aesthete he celebrated in 1926-7, Scott's observer is palpably exhausted by architecture.

Naturally, the use of this term is also heavily indebted to Jonathan Crary's *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (1992), in which his definition of the observer refers to the human subject at the historical moment of their transition into modern subjectivity. A process in which "the body, including the observing body" becomes "a component of social, technological, and libidinal structures."⁵⁰ As Crary suggests, the co-opting of vision and the training of the physical body, understood in the terms of Michel Foucault, were intertwined with the emergence of this modernist — and, this dissertation argues, post-humanist — subject and their subjugation within such libidinal, social, and technological structures. Although Crary correlates the observer's emergence to a "reorganization of vision" — implemented through specific optical devices, such as the *camera obscura* and stereoscope (which he interprets as "points of intersection where philosophical, scientific, and aesthetic discourses overlap with mechanical techniques, institutional requirements, and socioeconomic forces"⁵¹) — in the retrogressive sense of the Berensonian connoisseur, this gaze was closed to peripheral vision by being concentrated through the magnifying glass.

Defined in the antiqued terms of Berensonian connoisseurship and neurasthenic diagnosis, Scott's myopic observer is both an anachronism and — in the expression of their antimodernist sentiments — a subject of decidedly lax resistance. In these terms, the 'history of taste' he began with *The Architecture of Humanism* not only embodied a "certain going off course," illustrative of a peripatetic argument that was anathematic to the delineated intelligence of modernist historians like Giedion, Pevsner, and Wittkower, but also — in terms of its aesthetic indulgences — expressive of a very-English eccentricity that would consign this volume to the footnotes and marginalia of that discourse.



Bernard Berenson, c. 1948.

Chapter One
Aspects not Things: Geoffrey Scott's View of History

“The light was perfect. The effect of the evening colours, after a clear day, upon the temples, was more splendid than I could have imagined, though I have already invested Paestum with extravagant perfections in my imagination. We lay for hours watching the lights changing upon the columns, and saw the actual Sunset — ‘the sun’ — dropping behind a promontory over the molten sea and from inside the Temple of Poseidon framed between two pillars.”¹

Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson (24 April 1908)

As he looked out toward a molten sea, Geoffrey Scott had an epiphany of sorts. Like many such epiphanies, however, neither the casual eloquence of its description nor the leisurely nature of its inheritance disguised the extent of its premeditation (nor was it especially intended to). It was the beginning of spring 1908 and the young Englishman had spent the previous two months touring Italy, as a guide to one of the scions of American society. As the pair visited the various ruins, monuments, galleries, museums, festivals and towns on their itinerary, Scott had tied together all of these disparate events with the singular thread of his commentary. Their visit to Paestum, however, always promised something extraordinary. Walking through the ancient Greco-Roman ruins, the world's finest example of Doric architecture, Scott found his burgeoning aestheticism aroused: the moment had a scenic “perfection,” he wrote that evening, “more splendid than I could have imagined, though I have already invested Paestum with extravagant perfections in my imagination.” As his other letters from that spring attest, it was not only the Italian landscape and its native culture that Scott had grown to love, but also, crucially, his own innately poetic conception of it.

Given the self-declared extravagance of his imagination, it can be asked what role Scott's aesthetic predilections had on the formation of this epiphany. Or, more pertinently, what lingering affects would this revelation have on his scholarly conception of architecture, detailed in his famous treatise, *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste*, written only three years later? (A history that while ostensibly concerned with the humanistic in architecture manages to avoid defining the terms of that humanism, subsuming it instead — as the subtitle suggests — within an overarching conception of ‘tastefulness.’) Despite of the brevity of Scott's letter, the vividness of his account alludes to the growing importance of three characteristics that would eventually define his thought: firstly, it illustrates how his aestheticism would be framed by architecture; secondly, it alludes to the perceptual difference between the imaginative and the real; and finally, it suggests how his conception of ‘taste,’ cultivated through the eye and nourished through aesthetic experience, would assume an operative role in navigating the molten seas between the imaginative and actual.

To some extent these questions can be framed, as Scott's own missive suggests, through his view of the ruins of Paestum. Founded during the seventh century BC, Paestum is the Roman name for the Greek city of Poseidonia, which lay at the border of the Greek and Etruscan empires and was the northernmost Greek settlement in Italy. After a period of divided rule, Poseidonia was eventually conquered by the Roman legions in 273 BC and renamed Paestum. Although the city was only secured from the rapacious local banditry and safely excavated during the late-nineteenth century, it had been a storied destination since the mid-eighteenth century, drawing aesthetes and archaeological enthusiasts to the desolate fields overlooking the Gulf of Salerno, and inspiring such masterpieces as Piranesi's *Avanzi degli Edifici di Pesto* (*Remains of the Edifices of Paestum*, 1777), in which the weathered shadows cast by the temples suggest a perfect correspondence between the city's architectural remains and the passing light of history.²

As he examined these ruins in 1908, Scott followed the precedent of countless other tourists, rebuilding these structures in his imagination, placing one fragment over another and investing each construction with extravagant perfection until the dust and the weeds turned to roads and orchards, and the city grew to life around him. Accordingly, the Paestum Scott describes is an architecture of affect; a ruin of color, tone and atmosphere in which the amorphous shadows assume a greater significance than the buildings from which they are drawn. With such a conceit Scott seems to have had in mind not only Piranesi's etchings, which he colors in sunset tones, but also the advice of John Ruskin, who counseled architects to "think in shadow" and consider architecture not as a "lily skeleton" but "as it will be when the dawn lights, and the dusk leaves it; when its stones will be hot, and its crannies cool; when the lizards will bask on the one and the birds will build in the other."³ Central to Scott's epiphany was his understanding of how his description of that afternoon, delivered with a lithe assurance which revealed his literary ambitions, would tie him to a lineage of English aesthetes and Grand Tourists that extended from Ruskin, Richard Payne Knight and the Society of Dilettanti⁴ to Scott's literary hero, Percy Bysshe Shelley (whose death he had commemorated in undergraduate verse a few years earlier⁵). Figures who had sought a marriage of the exotic and quixotic in an Italian landscape that was entirely foreign to the trimmed hedgerows and thatched cottages of their native land.

Despite these rhetorical aspirations, however, Scott made one simple factual error: mistakenly noting how his view was framed by the columns of the Temple of Poseidon. (Although the Greeks had dedicated their city to Poseidon, their god of the sea, none of the temples were dedicated to the deity and Scott was undoubtedly referring to the Temple of Hera II, the larger of the two great temples of Hera at Paestum.) And it is this absent-minded laxity, moreover, which further alludes to a more invidious concern with Scott's view of history.



Leon Battista Piranesi, *Avanzi degli Edifici di Pesto* (Remains of the Edifices of Paestum, 1777)

If Scott's conception of Paestum is self-consciously picturesque — in that it collapses the fore-, middle- and backgrounds of landscape and architecture into a harmoniously reconciled two-dimensional image — then it is also less consciously modern, in that the time and the space it describes have a malleability which is not only rhetorical but also perceptual. Which is to say, Scott's view is a tenuous amalgam of his preconceptions (“though I have already invested Paestum with extravagant perfections”), with his experience (“watching the lights changing upon the columns”), and the after-image recollected that evening, blessed with “perfect light” and “molten seas.” Such an amalgam was not only preconditioned by his assumptions, but also actively sought to reaffirm those expectations. It was as if his first physical encounter with this landscape was actually only a recurrence, an encore to a performance he had long rehearsed in his imagination at home in London. In this sense, the Paestum of Scott's description is more fantastic than real, with his reconstruction lending both the city and his memory of it a completeness neither possessed, ensuring the ‘extravagant perfections,’ or desires, he had invested in that moment would be fulfilled. Unfortunately, reality often intrudes on the satisfaction of desire and his strangely unconsummated description has a floridity that is at odds with the historical gravity of the city. (In a similar manner, the human and animal figures that Giovanni Piranesi added to his father's etchings to provide scale only detract from their original appeal.⁶) And Scott's view of Paestum — like his view of history — was illuminated less by the light of that epiphany than by what remained obscured within it, forgotten beneath the sunset's shadowy charms.

As another amateur archaeologist, Sigmund Freud, noted of such obscurantism, once an object is formed in the imagination it never perishes, but instead remains preserved in memory until it can “once more be brought back to light.”⁷ Referring to the ‘Eternal City’ of Rome, he wrote that those shadows which lie over memory have a uniquely architectural quality, with indefinite and amorphous layers that are subject to constant revision. Freud immediately noted the inappropriateness of this spatially dependent metaphor, however. Not only did it fail to acknowledge that the ‘destructive influences’ that drove the development of a city were not always at work in mental life, it also tended toward nonsensicality; with the smallest of mnemonic slights, such as misplacing one mismatched fragment over another, or misplacing one building for another, resulting in divergent memories occupying the same instant, creating a recollection as indistinct as it was disconsolate. The only way to recall accurately, Freud concluded, is through a displacement that rearranges and reconfigures these mnemonic objects in both space and time to conform to a narrative, rather than historiographic, sense. Considered in this manner, such memories are useful not only because they accord a representational legibility to the process of remembering, but also because they encourage a certain forgetfulness. (As the psychoanalyst and writer Adam Phillips has

recently noted, Freud not only articulated a pathology of forgetting, defined through the processes of repetition and working-through, but also suggested — however obliquely — that this forgetfulness engenders a certain artfulness.⁸)

Although Scott might have adhered to a more reliable history that spring, he proved an animated guide, amusing his companion with a monologue that was as unremitting as it was lax, and which acknowledged the benefits of sacrificing the occasional detail to narrative casuistry. Scott had proved an animated guide throughout that spring, amusing his less-interested companion, the son of the wealthy American banker Henry W. Canon, with a stream of commentary that verged on the free associative.⁹ As he realized, the role of the guide (even such an avowedly amateur one as himself) was not only to interpret the view and give it a form that had an appropriate degree of historical reference, but also to value the mental, physical and financial expenditure of the traveler. But while Scott's performance of his informal duties artfully flitted between narrative legitimacy and historical comprehensibility, he believed that being independent from guidance (that is, separating personal experience from historical precedent) guaranteed the individuality of the experience — a quality that he, like many others, crudely equated with authenticity.

The commercial success of the period's best-selling guide, the *Baedeker*, rested precisely on this exaggerated sense of individually defined experience. With his stated aim of keeping readers at “as great a distance from the complacent, and often wholly invisible, tutelage of hired servants and guides,” Karl Baedeker virtually guaranteed that each traveler would “receive his own impressions with clear eyes and a lively heart.”¹⁰ (To an extent, Baedeker's aversion to guides stemmed from his well-known hatred of tipping, a “wicked practice” he condemned at every opportunity and sought to insure his readers against, especially in their travels to Italy, “for probably nowhere in Europe is the patience more severely taxed.”) Although the initial success of Baedeker's guidebooks was predicated on their coincidence with an age of mass rail travel (of which they were a potent symbol, despite Baedeker's own siderodromophobia), their uniqueness lay in the author's rhetorical sensitivity to his readers. Each volume was structured along numbered routes that list practical information, sights and possible excursions, coupled with a reformulation of existing guides so as to remove their principal shortcomings — the dry recording of landmarks (as with the volumes of the English publisher John Murray¹¹) or, at the other end of the scale, a tendency towards lyricism that overshadowed the traveler's own experience (as with the art historical writings of the German critics Johann Winckelmann, 1717-68 and Jacob Burckhardt, 1818-97¹²).

Instead, Baedeker sought compromise, developing a concise and deliberate style that provided his readers with the minimum information necessary to reach each sight and appreciate it ‘correctly.’ By the time Scott embarked for Italy the red covered *Baedekers* were ubiquitous, and for a

cultured traveler it would have been as inconceivable to embark on a voyage without the appropriate volume, as it would to accept a room without a view.

The obsessive accuracy of Baedeker's guides was legendary, with a well-known adage affirming that "Kings can err, but never Baedeker"¹³, and the volumes were nothing if not instructive, as the description of Paestum from Scott's own *Baedeker Guide to Southern Italy and Sicily* (1903) suggests:

"197ft. long, and 80ft. wide, with a stylobate of three steps, [the temple] is one of the noblest specimens of pure Greek architecture of the middle of the 5th cent. B.C. At each end are six massive, fluted Doric columns, on each side fourteen, in all thirty-six well-preserved columns (those at the corners being counted twice), 28 ft. high, 6 1/2 ft. in diameter at the base, 4 3/4 ft. at the top. The temple proper, consisting of the elevated cella, with a pronaos and opisthodomos, is divided in the interior into three aisles by two rows of seven columns each (ca. 3 ft. in diameter), with two columns of smaller columns above, which supported the roof. On the S. side 5, and on the N. side 3 of these small columns are still standing. The stone is a kind of travertine, to which age has imparted a golden yellow tone. The whole was once covered with stucco to conceal the imperfections of the stone. The proportions of the symmetrically tapering columns (practically without entasis), whether viewed from the vicinity or from a distance, are perfect."¹⁴

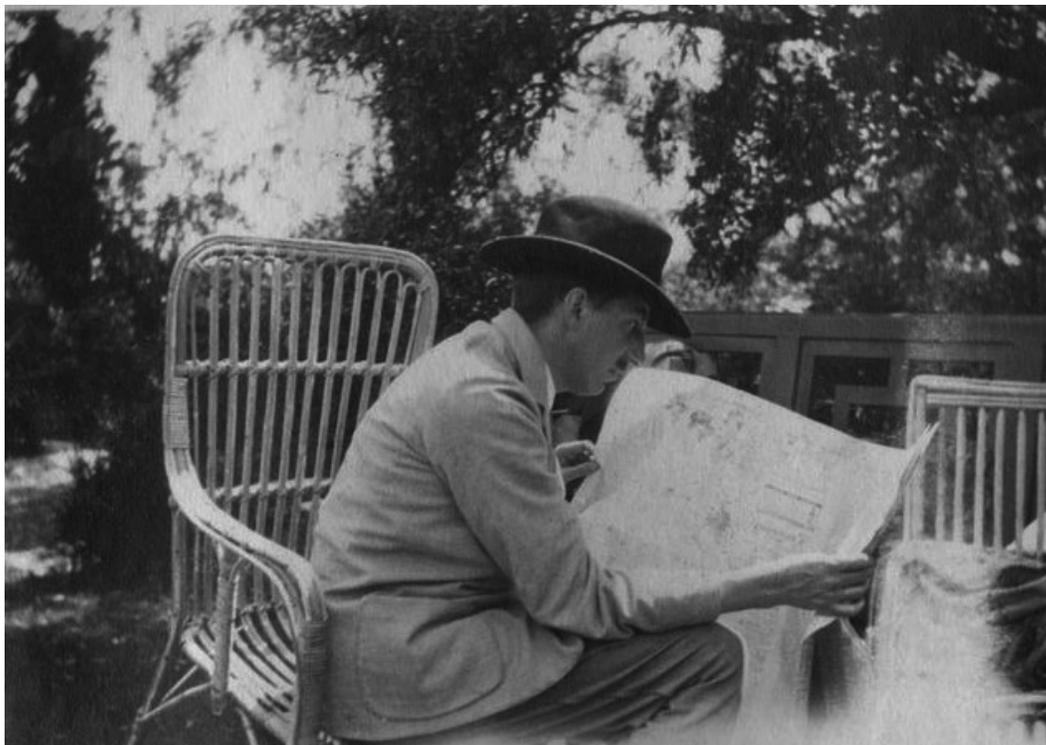
Although both Scott and Baedeker refer to the temple's architectonic perfection (attributed to the light framed by its pillars, in Scott's letter, or to the magnificence of the overall composition, in Baedeker), the difference in literary character could not be more pronounced. Scott's active tone not only illustrates a subjective, somewhat gushing engagement with the building (figured only in interiorized terms, with both the light and the observer "framed between two pillars"), but also reveals a confederacy between reader and writer on which he would subsequently depend. Regardless of context or subject, his writing habitually assumes the intimacy and complicity of a letter, in which the epistolary observation of buildings — like those remarks that describe the view from a hotel room or the passing weather — is only a constituent part of a larger aesthetic conception. In this sense, his view of Paestum would be framed as much by the postage marks on the envelope as by the two pillars of the temple. By contrast, Baedeker's dryly-passive tone suggests an expertism unconcerned with soliciting boredom in its detached explanation of *pronaos* and *opisthodomos*, entasis and *stylobates*.

For aesthetes like Scott, who traveled to Italy in anticipation of discovering unimaginable pleasures, Baedeker's obsession with detail — as further revealed in the illustrative quotations, suggested reading lists, train timetables and seasonal weather forecasts that litter the guides — was not only considered overtly pedantic (if innately useful), but also diametrically opposed to a life 'lived aesthetically.' Yet the cultural resonance of Baedeker's guides was inherently more complex than this

simplistic, aesthetically determined criticism allowed – as a novel published by one of Scott’s Bloomsbury acquaintances during the year of his visit to Paestum illustrates.

Considered in these terms, a reading of E.M. Forster’s *A Room with a View* (1908) offers an insight into Scott’s aesthetic and historical view in several significant ways. Foremost among these is the way the novel not only illustrates the cultural ubiquity of the *Baedeker* and satirizes the leisure-class’s dependence on its guidance, but that the narrative role of the guidebook also alludes to the tension that arises out of the disparity between the traveler’s imaginative preconceptions and their actual experience — a discomfort Forster suggests is subject to both the conventions of social form and the vagaries of memory. Because each of the characters’ narrative role, if not their actual experience, is constrained by social convention, the book also suggests that character is defined by its confirmation to stereotype. The possibility, for example, that Scott provided Forster with the principal inspiration for Cecil Vyse (the novel’s supercilious art critic) — a possibility that is as unverifiable as it is immanently plausible — is consistent with Scott’s understanding of his delimited role within Edwardian society. And while he remains less interesting for the details of his biography, Scott is fascinating because of his relative anonymity and the manner in which his writing on architecture synthesizes prevalent cultural thought, inadvertently illustrating a kind of humanist engagement with architecture (one entirely at odds with the intellectual schema proposed by *The Architecture of Humanism*, in the sense that it is not so much concerned with vitality as it is with fragility, and is more about amateurism than expertism and, crucially, more about the neurasthenic exhaustion of experience than the invigoration of the aesthetic sensibility). Forster’s novel ultimately figures these tensions between convention and experience, stereotype and individuality and the aesthetic and the formative as an inherently physical — which is to say, an explicitly sensual — force. Such a coupling of aesthetic experience with sensual abandon was itself entirely conventional. And the reception of an artwork was often figured in pseudo-religious or ‘oceanic’ terms that threatened to overwhelm the divisions between the observer and the artwork. (In this respect, the French writer Stendhal’s famously psychosomatic reaction to Florence’s Basilica di Santa Croce, during which he experienced a “sort of ecstasy [that] reached the point where one encounter[ed] celestial sensations,” was not only entirely expected but also reenacted to such an extent by subsequent visitors that they were said to be suffering from ‘stendhalismo.’¹⁵)

Finally, both Forster’s *A Room with a View* and Scott’s letters also describe separate, yet consistent, incidents in which ‘something tremendous happens’ as their protagonists set aside their *Baedekers* to view Italy through their own eyes; a gesture that expresses their affected, and noticeably nervous, quest to ‘live as artists.’ In this sense, something does indeed occur for both Scott and Forster’s heroine, Lucy Honeychurch, because something tremendous has to happen to counter the suggestion that they could be disappointed (or even bored) by the sights they had invested with such



E.M. Forster, 1922.

Photograph by Lady Ottoline Morrell ©National Portrait Gallery, London

great expectations. And, while Scott's innate sense of entitlement led to a brash over-reliance on his own, often misguided, judgment, in the case of Honeychurch, the *Baedeker* was not so much consciously ignored as unconsciously neglected; which is to say, simply forgotten.

As Forster writes, excited by her first visit to Florence, Honeychurch insists on viewing the Basilica di Santa Croce, Arnolfo di Cambio's thirteenth century gothic masterpiece and the container of a staggering number of significant Renaissance art-works. (Donatello's *Crucifix* (1425) and *Annunciation* (1430-35), Benedetto da Maiano's Pulpit (1472-80), Antonio Rossellino's *Madonna of Milk* (1478) and Vasari's Tomb for Michelangelo and the Tomb of Marchiavelli — to name but a few — are all housed within the Basilica.) Yet, rushing through the city in a bustle of petticoats with her companion, the somewhat mannered novelist and tourist Eleanor Lavish, she almost immediately loses her way. While Honeychurch consults the street map in her *Baedeker*, Lavish snatches the guide out of her hands, insisting that the only way she can truly hope to 'see' Florence is through her own eyes. (Ironically, in their haste Lavish has rushed through the Square of the Annuziata in complete obviousness to the treasures within it.) But this loss of the guidebook — and with it Honeychurch's 'understanding' of Florence — is only the precursor to a more definitive event the following day.

While she is buying some souvenir photographs in the Piazza Santa Croce Honeychurch witnesses a petty quarrel that quickly, if melodramatically, escalates into murder. As the victim dies, he staggers across the square to Honeychurch and lunges at her in a final appeal of sympathy, at which point she duly faints. Waking to the enquiries of the novel's romantic anti-hero, George Emerson, she immediately asks him to retrieve the photographs she had dropped as she collapsed. Later, as Emerson escorts Honeychurch to the *pensione* they share, he throws a package into the Arno, prompting Honeychurch — who has rightly suspected they were her photographs — to demand the reason behind his impetuosity? At which point Emerson is forced to admit that he discarded the souvenirs because they were soiled with the victim's blood: both Honeychurch and Emerson pause at his confession, acknowledging the significance of a moment in which the recognizably blood-red cover of the *Baedeker* has been grotesquely mimicked in the bloodied stains on the photographs, which could also be seen as a prescient allusion to Honeychurch's conflicted virginal attraction to Emerson, and with it her expectations of Florence supplanted by the less fortunate and infinitely more complicated reality of experience. In this sense, Honeychurch's mementos had to be destroyed because they represented an incident that, while undoubtedly authentic, would be irreconcilable with both her aesthetic preconceptions and her publicly admissible recollections of Florence. Despite her assurances to the contrary, Honeychurch's subsequent actions suggest that it is easier to cast aside an unwanted photograph, or misplace a forgotten guidebook, than it is to disentangle the associations they cultivate in memory.

As the narrative role of these incidents suggest, Baedeker's guides were indefinitely more sophisticated cultural mediators than either Honeychurch (whose petulant naivety is relentlessly parodied by Forster) or Scott (who courted self-parody with his aestheticized predispositions) were prepared to allow. The uneasy marriage between the prosaic and poetic that underlies all guidebooks is evident not only in Baedeker's frequently awkward language¹⁶, which reflects his anxiety that he might possibly have overlooked something or erred, but also in the seemingly anonymous street maps that lie between the pages of a *Baedeker*, offering the kind of reassurance to the lost or weary traveler that Honeychurch had so desperately sought.

Unlike the sophistic phrases of a guidebook, or the rambling tutelage of a guide, each of the indelibly beautiful maps in a *Baedeker* acts to mitigate the potential for disappointment, if only because each map, by its very nature, offers the possibility of endless displacement. By tracing the contours of future journeys along the railway tracks, carriageways and tramlines that lie within the creases of each fold-out map, the reader engages in an imaginative transport, with the reference to scale and distance providing a refuge of empirical reason. Printed on bible stock, a Baedeker map is as thin and pliable as the cigarette paper it also resembles, offering a form of profane liturgy of rail travel while also enabling each map to be rolled and unfolded between the fingers with an ease and complicity that belies the difficulties in traveling the distances it describes. The suggestion here is of a spatial concertina in which time and distance expand as they are opened outwards, only to contract again as each Baedeker map is folded back into the guide. These movements of expansion and contraction are seldom equivalent, however, and each voyage – whether imaginative or actual — is best undertaken with an understanding that such journeys might not be as easily folded back into the everyday as these deceptively modest maps suggest. In this way, the map offers not so much a scaled analogy to the physical regions it refers, marked out with 'plain terrestrial routes', as a rhetorical allusion to the imaginative space it engenders – one that according to the French writer Marcel Proust, who was an avid collector of guidebooks and railway timetables, assumes a greater presence than any place we happen to occupy.

Naturally Proust, whose declinated sentences can be considered a form of grammatical voyage, appreciated the possibilities of continuing to dream of — rather than visit — those imagined places. It was for this reason that he suggested while guidebooks or maps would stimulate his imagination to a greater extent than any book on aesthetics, they inspired him less than his collection of railway timetables in which the calibration of distance and time was so immediate it made travel unnecessary. "What moved me," he wrote of this convergence, "was the thought that this Florence which I could see, so near and yet inaccessible, in my imagination, if the journey which separated it from me, in myself, was not a viable one, could yet be reached circuitously were I to take the plain, terrestrial route."¹⁷ In this sense, Proust not only suggested that the imaginative transit was viable



Karl Baedker, Gatefold Map of Venice, *Baedker Guide to Northern Italy*, 1913.

(and preferable to the plain terrestrial journey) but also embodied a circuitousness which further sustained the imagination through its deference to a moment “so near and yet inaccessible.” A deferral in which the “memory of a particular image is but a regret for a particular moment,” Proust concludes, and in which it is futile to replicate “in reality the pictures that are stored in one’s memory” because those images, once forced into a view, “lose the charm that comes to them from memory itself.”¹⁸

Naturally such an abstraction of space and time embodied a distinctly modern poetic: what mattered, as a number of contemporary writers also noted, was an ability to read the correspondence between expansion and contraction; a reading which not only required an inquisitive mind, but flattered a languid disposition — one which understood the necessity of not actually visiting those ‘longed for places.’ Although Scott delighted in Proust’s evocation of involuntary memory in *À la recherche du temps perdu*¹⁹, he did not share the novelist’s indefatigable intelligence, instead he had an unimaginative and antipathetic ambition that was apparent in the manner he navigated a chauffeur-driven limousine along the Italian coastline in 1908. (“Going up a hill at a fast pace gives on the oddest sensation of flattening landscape,” he noted of such a transport, providing “an extraordinary sense of power.”²⁰ Despite his continued love of motor-touring, however, Scott’s view of Italy remained oddly static, reflecting a retrospection that was less spatial in conquest than it was temporal in arrest.) During this period he was flirting with the idea of transcribing these travels in the form of a guidebook to Renaissance architecture, following the precedent of Burckhardt’s *The Cicerone* (1855) and *The Civilisation of the Renaissance* (1878)²¹, yet, in spite of the reoccurring allusions to this project in his letters, he never seriously pursued the idea, abandoning it on the grounds that authoring a guidebook — as with a separate commission to write a series of artistic biographies — was insufficiently ambitious in conception.²²

This explanation seems almost entirely disingenuous, however, because Scott, like his friend and frequent traveling companion the American writer Edith Wharton (who once embarked on a ten-week Aegean cruise with ‘a few chosen friends’, silk sleeping bags from Harrods and 168 bottles of vin rosé) realized that such a crass professional impulse could best be disguised as an ostensibly leisurely pursuit in the form of an ‘excursion.’²³ (Despite her indulgences, Wharton was a highly disciplined writer who understood the difference between public demonstration and private proclivity, using these tours as the basis for works such as *The Decoration of Houses*, 1897, *Italian Villas and their Gardens*, 1904, and *A Motor-Flight through France*, 1908.) Although it might be argued that Scott’s desire to write a guidebook would be sated with *The Architecture of Humanism*, which joins a number of different buildings and historic periods in a travelogue of taste, his view remained oddly static, reflecting an increasingly nostalgic conception of the artistic and the architectural that appears anti-modernist and self-consciously amateurish. (Resulting in a position that was increasingly less

tenable in an age in which, several writers have noted, vision — or the visual means of perceiving the world — was not only becoming progressively problematic in conception, but also professionalized in practice.²⁴) Moreover, this conspicuous refusal to engage a professional ‘expertism’ can be understood as both an aesthetic posture and a particular critical myopia — a limitation borne, in Scott’s case, out of that most readily identifiable and easily caricatured trait of an Englishman abroad: his Englishness.

The English National Character

Given the grandeur of his ambitions, it seems odd that Scott felt the need to preface *The Architecture of Humanism* with an apology. Although he had originally conceived the book as an exposition on the principles of classical design, with a conclusion arguing for their contemporary application, Scott noted that this “simple purpose” had quickly become “a complicated issue” because of the intellectual confusion he found within English architectural circles. (“I soon realized that in the present state of our thought,” he explained, “no theory of art could be made convincing, or even clear, to anyone not already persuaded of its truth.”) Scott was referring here to the heated and seemingly never-ending stylistic debates that raged in the architectural profession throughout the nineteenth century. Known as the ‘Battle of the Styles,’ they were characterized by a profligate and often confused formal eclecticism. While there might “be a lack of architectural taste,” he observed tartly, “there is, unfortunately, no lack of architectural opinion.”²⁵ And, as the portentous subtitle of his work — *A Study in the History of Taste* — suggests, Scott further thought that it was only by recalibrating that opinionated debate to focus on historical issues of ‘taste’ rather than “*a priori* aesthetics” that architecture could be reinvigorated as an art.

In that sense, these cursory remarks not only reflect the opinionated and often fractious nature of these debates, together with the critical importance he assigned to the mediatory function of ‘taste,’ but also Scott’s irrationally configured perception of the absence of taste. A loss that was less unpalatable than potentially fatal. “Architecture is not seen as one of the forms in which the national energy, intellect, and spirit shall expand,” the critic William Richard Lethaby (1857-1931) noted, “but it is diverted and maimed and caged into formulas which are not only dead, but never had life.”²⁶ Lethaby’s histrionics aside, many contemporaneous writers also employed metaphors of death and exhaustion to describe the dissipative affect of eclecticism and their concerns that the vital energies of English architecture were ebbing away with a force which Scott, amongst, allied to an even greater loss: that of a coherent sense of Englishness. Indeed, when he apologized for the “limited scope” of *Architecture*, Scott was only reiterating a concern he had first expressed in 1908 and, for him, the dangers of eclecticism lay less in excess (of an over-stuffing of inappropriate and

anachronistic styles) than in absence — specifically, in his anxiety at what he foresaw as a future that was deprived less of a humanist impulse than an identifiable sense of ‘Englishness’ in architecture.

This concern is evident in Scott’s first critical work on architecture, a short historical essay titled *The National Character of English Architecture* (1908), which was published in the months after his return from Paestum. First drafted out during the final year of his undergraduate degree in Classics at New College Oxford, the essay displays the intellectual influence of Ruskin, William Morris and, in the architectural specificity of the argument, the architect and critic Reginald Blomfield (1856–1942). It also introduces a number of preoccupations that would later resurface in *The Architecture of Humanism*, notably the ‘fallacies’ that misinformed late-nineteenth century criticism; the ‘humanization of space’ conceived in relation to the architecture of the Italian Renaissance, an element that would ultimately both underpin and undermine Scott’s conception of architecture; and the affirmation that architecture is the unconscious product of society. As the work’s title suggests, however, Scott’s principal concern in 1908 was to define an architectural Englishness — a sensibility that would offer an inextricable reflection of the English nation, with its own particular climate and landscape, social conventions and traditions of culinary ineptitude. (His epistolary despair with English cuisine is itself, in part, an allusion to Morris’s propensity for culinary asides.) Following this formulation, Scott suggests that a national architecture not only displays the effects of the weather and location, but also presents a history of the nation that can only be read through its buildings. “English history,” he succinctly concludes, “has its counterpart in English Architecture.”²⁷

The problem with reading that history lay with interpreting the “consistent purpose . . . behind so much outward discontinuity,”²⁸ however, and the difficulty with reforming that purpose into a historically cohesive narrative — as Scott notes throughout the essay — rested with the inherently frustrating character of English architecture: a character, which while entirely unique, was ultimately based on something else. The eclectic urge was “always present in English architecture” and led to a variegated architecture that grew out of a “succession of reactions” to the influences of France, Germany, and Italy. These responses were typically mishandled, however, and the incongruous use of foreign styles was marked by an innate inappropriateness, a desuetude in which “Forms [that] had been invented by Greeks, perverted by Romans, handed on to Italians, recovered from Italian ‘pattern books,’ and subjected to the misuse of Teutons, reached the summit of incongruity beneath a Tudor gable.”²⁹ As Scott rightly notes, such tortured styles often required an equally convoluted justification and even an eminent historian like Blomfield would offer historically implausible arguments in defense of their aesthetic preferences. (Blomfield, for example, suggested that the gothic truly originated in English because it was an innate expression of the native “Celtic temperament.”³⁰)

In contrast to many other critics, Scott argued that the disconsolate effects of eclecticism had actually increased, rather than waned, during the first years of the twentieth century; an increase he specifically attributed to an accelerated perception of time. Noting that a “fusion” of styles in which “foreign influences” were incorporated within “national styles” was at least plausible in the past, Scott querulously remarked that such a “slow and timely . . . passage of example” was impossible during the modern era, an epoch he thought was flooded with an instantaneous “historical knowledge” of style that had led to a “loss of precedent.”³¹

Scott’s equation of the architectural with the national is indebted to his unquestioning reading of Ruskin, and in particular to the famous suggestion in ‘The Lamp of Memory’ (1849) that while it might be possible to worship, or even live, without architecture, it is entirely impossible to “remember without her.” Moreover, Ruskin entirely associates this act of recollection, figured in a dialectical relationship with forgetfulness, with the idea of nationhood: the two ‘duties’ of national architecture, he argues, are “to render” architecture “historical” and to “preserve, as the most precious of inheritances, that of past ages.” Although Ruskin’s argument regarding the necessity of preservation over the dangers of restoration is well known, it is worth recalling his insistence that cultural memory should be written in stone, a conceit further informed by his belief that architectural “perfection” is enacted in the process of “becoming memorial or monumental.”³² As with the surviving temples at Paestum, such rendering was evident not only in the formal perseverance of architecture, but also in the enduring symbolic resonance of that form – a voice, like that of the national character, which would resound throughout the ages. “For, indeed, the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, nor in its gold,” Ruskin sermonized,

“Its glory is in its Age, and that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity. It is in their lasting witness against men, in their quiet contrast with the transitional character of all things, in the strength which, through the lapse of seasons and times, and the decline and birth of dynasties, and the changing of the face of the earth, and of the limits of the sea, maintains its sculptured shapeliness for a time insuperable, connects forgotten and the following ages with each other, and half constitutes the identity, as it concentrates the sympathy, of nations.”³³

Scott’s view of history in the *National Character* is entirely commensurate with Ruskin’s definition of architecture as “quiet contrast with the transitional character of all things[, which] connects forgotten and the following ages with one another.” Like many of his contemporaries, however, Scott abhorred Ruskin’s insistent morality and would later criticize it as being generative of the ‘ethical fallacy,’ while also countering the suggestion architecture could hold “lasting witness” or offer “approval or condemnation” by arguing that such judgment remained the critic’s prerogative. (Other less didactic critics, like the anglophile Henry James, agreed that English architecture was a manifestation of social

convention, but also rightly cautioned that such “sermons in stone” often gave voice to “the hard heavy prose of British civilisation.”³⁴)

In the *National Character* Scott provides a somewhat unconvincing response to Ruskin’s moral charge by arguing that because architecture is an expression of the “practical purposes” of society and an expression of “life’s general current,” it is, by definition, diametrically opposed to an “irreverant concern” with architecture as an ‘art,’ which resulted in their rendering of architecture with “moral significance,” or a similarly damaging misconception that interpreted architecture as a “mechanical science . . . dictated from without as new materials or new resources of science appear.”³⁵ (Although this is a nascent formulation of the critical ‘fallacies’ he would later develop in *Architecture*, within this essay Scott does not name them as ‘fallacies’ or develop his conclusions about their invidious influence.) While conceding that an artistic interpretation had a certain relevance, he maintained that architecture had to be ‘interpreted as the symbol of the human forces which produced it, the visible and enduring record of the environment from which it sprang’³⁶ – that is, architecture is the unconscious, or the least-consciously considered, product of society. (Naturally, Scott’s inadequacies as a critic stemmed from the highly subjective nature of his criticism, which conformed to both a consciously constructed aesthetic view and an innate sense of ‘Englishness’.) However this formulation, which Scott explicitly derived from his reading of Blomfield and would later augment through a reading of Heinrich Wölfflin, only figures speculatively in his essay, with the correspondence between the ‘practical purposes’ of architecture and its symbolic expression appearing less assured than Scott presupposed, as his idiosyncratic reference, later in the essay, to the “simple and imperturbable lines” of the Saxon hut suggests.

For Scott, this unassuming building assumed a strangely totemic role. Like other such architectural precedents as the ‘primitive hut’ of Abbé Laugier in his *Essai sur l’Architecture* (1775), Scott’s recourse to the Saxon hut — which he argues foreshadows both the gothic “complexities” and “careful attitudes” of the Renaissance — is both an attempt to define an emblem of architectural origin and legitimate his thesis through that referral. Partly because of its age and uncertain origin, the hut appears to Scott to be indisputably nationalized, with its unresolved form providing “curious evidence, not certainly of a national style in the full sense, but of the presence . . . of some native force.” Paradoxically, this force is not embodied in a stoic or lasting construction, but in a technical ineptitude and “clumsy native endeavour to build”³⁷ — a characteristic that Scott reads as a peculiarly English trait. (Foreshadowing, for example, the inability of English builders to execute the complex mathematic calculations required of the gothic, which he argues directly resulted in the “beautiful intricacy” of the English gothic, with its flourishes of plaster composite moldings.³⁸)

The Saxon hut is also pivotal because it not only underlies the two types that he considers indisputably English — the ‘cottage’ and ‘castle’ — but also, crucially, because it is a curious amalgam

of both. Extending this symbolism from the Saxon to the succeeding Norman period, for Scott the keep is “perhaps the most English product of our architecture,” expressive of not only “a thing built to live in,” but also “a focus of old history, territorial loyalties and a gentler feudalism; made from the quarries of its own hills and merging itself into the lines of them.”³⁹ This description figures the keep as both an organic extension of the landscape and a domesticated form, reflecting the “human stature and motion” Scott read in the “common occupation” and the military tactics in the “movements of men, their attacks, and their retreats.”⁴⁰

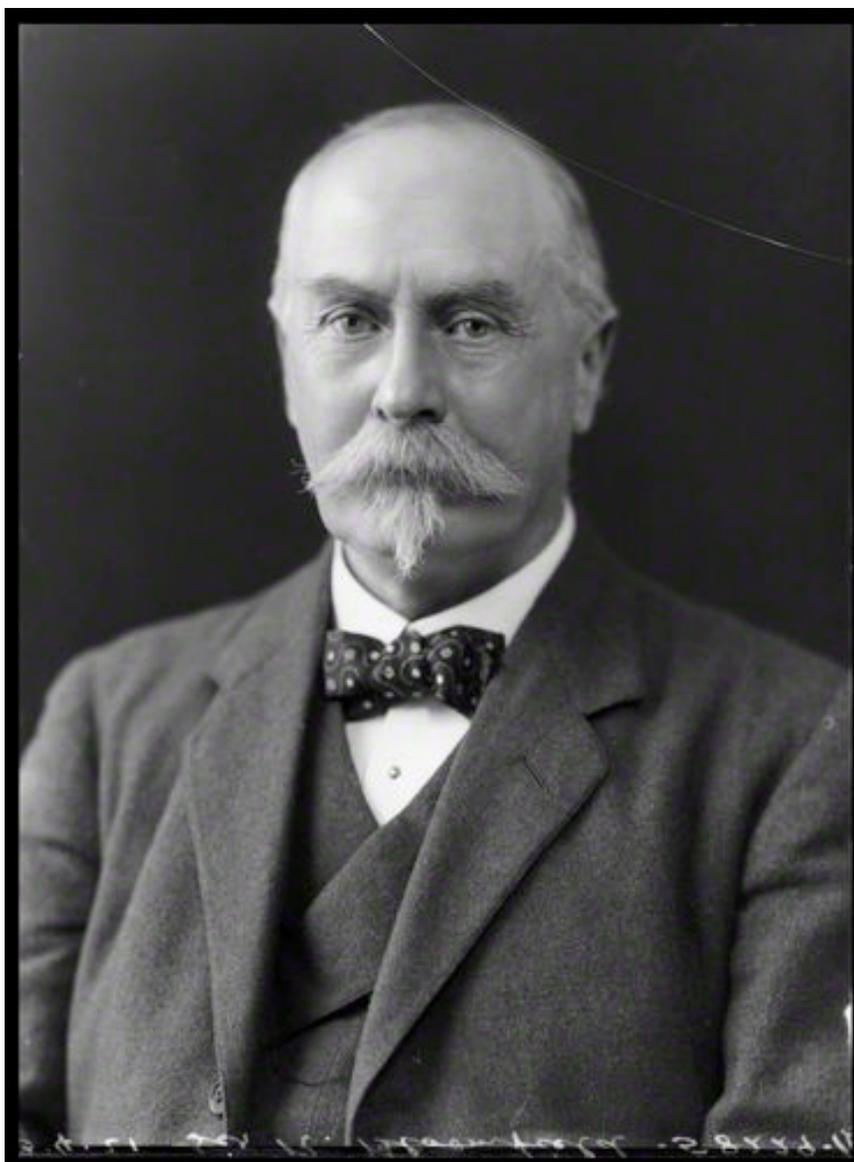
Although Scott is fully cognizant of the romanticism inherent in his conceit, which is an example of the literary disingenuousness he railed against in the essay, he revels in taking further poetic license with the fortress’s ruinous nature. “A northern air weathers its walls, and misty sunlight colours them; and shadow, which is for architecture the moving life, passes . . . to add yet something to this liberty, touching with an idle accent the broken outlines, as it wanders over gables and battlements across a home half cloister and half fort.”⁴¹ The literary influence of Shelley and the romantics is obvious, as is the tutelage of Ruskin, who had argued that the other great “conqueror of the forgetfulness of men,” in addition to architecture, is “Poetry.”⁴² (With the poetic, Ruskin concluded, inseparable from the architectural.) In this regard, as it passes into ruin the keep assumes an ungainly register of the collapse of the architectural into the poetic: that is, once it becomes the subject of a romantic, rather than a utilitarian, interest; one subject not only to a picturesque conception of England, but also “prey to the literature” of such historical fantasticists as Walter Scott.⁴³

In this way, the ruin that Scott describes is complete, with its battle-scarred outline casting a cogent and unbroken silhouette against the perennially misty sky. (Although he typically favored sunset tones in his architectural descriptions, it should be noted that these skies possess a nostalgic placidity that is at odds with the turbulent proto-modernist atmospherics of other figures, such as his fellow romantic J.W.M. Turner.) In Scott’s conception of the keep there is no sense of a figure-ground relationship, in which the architectural detail is given context in relationship to the landscape, rather there is only the ground or scene, expressed in the writerly description of the view. In this sense, as with his description of Paestum, the rhetorical value of the keep offers an insight into Scott’s emergent historiographic approach, one which illustrates how the object is always subject to the narrative constitution and its ‘practical purpose,’ as he defines it here, not only lies within its rhetorical malleability, but also through its concession to a forgetful history that would ultimately prove less national in scope than personal in conception.

The National Temperament

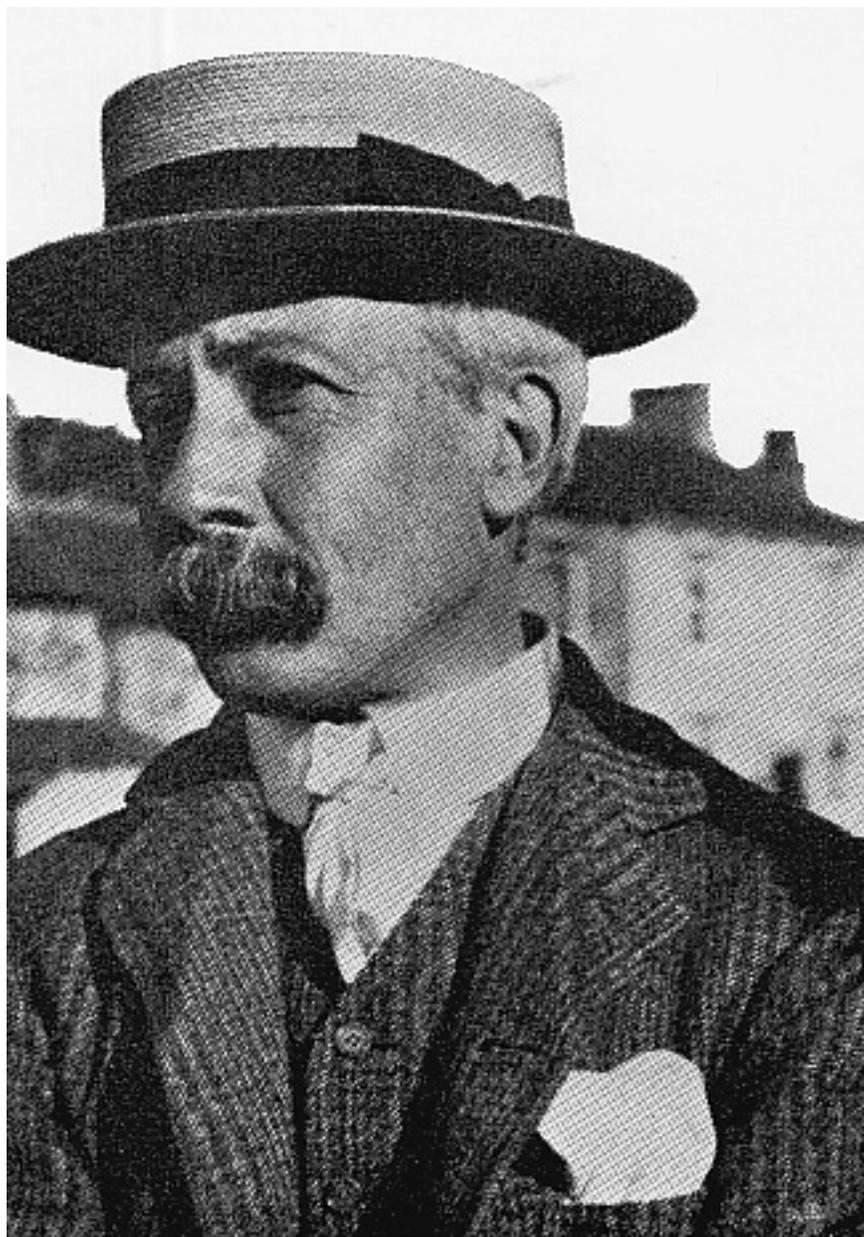
Although he acknowledged the occasional benefits of interpreting architecture as an art or science, writing in the *National Character* Scott insisted that it should — in the first instance — be considered as a form of symbolic representation. Despite his insistence, however, this reliance on the legibility of architectural correspondence (on which the argument of *Architecture* would also be based) was not only complicated by the formal incoherence of eclecticism, which was itself transitory in nature, but also by his conception of architecture as an “effort informed by hidden purposes shaped to an unknown dream.”⁴⁴ An assertion that consciously ignores the discrepancies between these ‘unknown dream’ objects — which he tacitly acknowledges are governed by hidden desires — and their manifestation in architectural terms. (Rather, he would later explore these discrepancies in *Architecture* through their fostering of the “subconscious motives” that invigorate the observer’s individualistic relation to architecture and inform their psychological investment in space.) Writing in 1908 Scott sought to define the outlines of dream in collectivized, nationalistic, terms by further arguing that any sense of the architect’s “independence” was exaggerated as the individual remained subject to convention and “cannot wholly override custom, nor contradict tradition, and his individuality must express itself within the forms of the past.”⁴⁵ It is through a tracing of the ‘hidden purposes’ of English architecture that Scott argues the notion of ‘tradition’ — as it is worked into and embodied in architectural form — can be considered as an expression of the “established formula of established preferences,” which itself determined “temperament.” Considered in these terms, “style is visible tradition” and a manifestation of “the temperament of the race.”⁴⁶

The intellectual premise of Scott’s essay depends on this recourse to temperament: a recourse that is both self-consciously brief and underdeveloped. And it is this assured stance on temperament, moreover, which further reflects the influence of Blomfield, who had previously argued that the English architectural tradition expressed the “mental and moral qualities[,] simplicity of taste and directness of purpose of a race who [had] spent the best part of their existence in fighting by land and sea.”⁴⁷ (Such truculence was typical of Blomfield, who was a vocal member of the Inns of Court Mounted Infantry, a territorial cavalry unit based in Lincoln’s Inn Fields, London, and an open opponent of the political inclusiveness advocated by such groups as the Suffragettes, to whom his daughter was a prominent member.) Blomfield’s stoic conception of the role of national architectural tradition was in full agreement with his close friend and contemporary Lethaby, who similarly held that the “very best form of modern civilization” was to be found in “house-keeping in the country, tea in the garden, boy-scouting, and playing tennis in flannels.”⁴⁸ As he rightly noted, architectural thought in England from the mid-1890s to the early-1920s was dominated by the pair, with Scott’s argumentative expansion from the *National Character* to *Architecture* conditioned by



Sir Reginald Theodore Blomfield, 1921.

Photograph by Bassano ©National Portrait Gallery, London



W.R. Lethaby, c. 1900.
Unknown photographer

Blomfield's collected lectures, *The Mistress Art* (first published in 1908), and Lethaby's collection of articles and public lectures, *Architecture: An Introduction to the History and Theory of the Art of the Building* (first published in 1912).

Blomfield and Lethaby both augmented the virulent polemics of their lectures with sober architectural creations and — among their many mutual interests — they shared a belief in the necessity of defining an essential “Englishry” (to use Blomfield's term), which wedded architectural aesthetics with social morality. In this conviction the pair followed one of the central tenets of the Arts and Crafts movement, which suggested architectural form embodies the values of the society that produced it, and — to varying extents — Blomfield and Lethaby both remained convinced that something as frustratingly immaterial as the ‘national character’ could be expressed in architectural form.

Blomfield and Lethaby were members of the second generation of the Arts and Crafts movement that also included Edward Prior (1852-1932), Ernst Newton (1856-1922), Gerald Horsley (1862-1917), Mervyn MacCartney (1853-1932), and Ernst Gimson (1864-1919); figures who were united by their belief in the importance of vernacular tradition. As Blomfield recalled, following William Morris's death in 1896 Lethaby became the movement's most vocal member through his organization of the Art Workers Guild and formation — together with Sidney Barnsley, Blomfield, Gimson, Alfred Hoare Powell, and Macartney — of Kenton & Co., the noted furniture company which explored the possibilities of traditional craft practices. (In this respect, Kenton & Co. followed the model of Morris's eponymous venture.⁴⁹) Most notably, Lethaby was the founding principal of the Central School of the Arts and Crafts; an institution Hermann Muthesius once described as “the best organized contemporary art school in the world.”⁵⁰ In spite of their many mutual concerns, Blomfield noted how the pair was divided by “differences in temperament” that resulted from their diametrically opposed views on architecture.⁵¹ Naturally, the pair, whose friendship was as querulous as it was genuine (with each delighting in public criticizing the other), differed in how that sense of ‘Englishry’ could best be expressed. And that argument hinged — as would many of their disagreements — on their differing views of Ruskin.

As he realized, Blomfield's major difference with his peers stemmed from his unfaltering contempt for Ruskin's ‘Art-Socialism,’ with Blomfield — who had been taught by Ruskin at Oxford — maintaining a lifelong objection to his tutor's regard of “the arts and morals as interchangeable terms.”⁵² This disdain even provided the basis for his 1932 obituary of Lethaby. “Ruskin's teachings colored all Lethaby's views,” Blomfield noted with a finality his friend could not defend, leading to Lethaby's translation of “architecture and the arts into terms of a generous if impossible socialism. I used to differ from Lethaby habitually when it came to Ruskin.”⁵³ However ungenerously timed, Blomfield's criticism was apt and illustrated the naïve limitations of Lethaby's nationalistic



John Ruskin, 1898.

Photograph by John McClelland ©National Portrait Gallery, London

conception of architecture, which followed Ruskin's writings unquestioningly, regarding them with a "meekness and reverence, no matter how strange they might seem, or how irrelevant to the Art of Architecture."⁵⁴

Although Lethaby derived his belief in the centrality of labor from Ruskin and Morris, his "optimistic enthusiasm" (as several colleagues remembered) led him to argue that the negative effects of industrialization could be countered through an incorporation of those processes within the production of art, rather than through any fundamental societal changes as Ruskin had advocated.⁵⁵ Lethaby attempted to deracinate any radicalism from Ruskin and this intellectual shift is further evident in his program for the Central School, which he conceived as a form of pedagogical instruction in industrialized application that "provided for apprentices, pupils and workmen engaged in, or connected with, artistic handicrafts the best instruction in art and design as applied to their particular industries."⁵⁶ Following this logic Halsey Ricardo — Lethaby's appointed Head of Architecture — would similarly caution his students that they "must not come to use to learn 'styles'" because the faculty saw architecture from "the builder's point of view," resulting in a self-conscious disregard for aesthetics that meant "whatever beauty we may gain is such as springs naturally out of utility, and perhaps, that is the surest way of teaching beauty."⁵⁷

Lethaby's attempts to find the beautiful through the utilitarian not only reflect his weariness with the debates about architectural taste he had fostered during the 1890s, but also permeate his *Architecture* in which he repeatedly argues for a pedagogical return to "instruction," "reality," and "structure" as an opposition to the indulgences of "cultivated taste" and architectural "expertism." And in that sense, he would famously define "Art" — by which he meant the 'art of building' — as simply a "well-made thing." "Art is not a special sauce applied to ordinary cooking," he further noted (extending Morris's culinary allusions), "it is the cooking itself if it is good. Most simply and generally art may be thought of as the *well doing of what needs doing*."⁵⁸ Paradoxically, such a seemingly irrefutable utilitarianism ("the *well doing of what needs doing*") was not only highly subjective in its intellectual conception, but also distinctly unprofessional in its execution.

In 1891 Lethaby had been of the signatories of an open letter to *The Times* newspaper in London, which protested the Royal Institute of British Architect's proposals to legislate architectural education. Architecture should be considered as an artistic practice not a professional pursuit, the letter argued, and — as such — it lay beyond the realm of examination.⁵⁹ In a following essay, "The Builder's Art and the Craftsman," which was included alongside his fellow dissenters' contributions in the volume-length polemic *Architecture: a profession or an art?* (1892), Lethaby provided a typically Ruskinian plea for the inclusion of vernacular craft practices in contemporary architectural production and a reaffirmation of the role of the craftsman ("who works with his hands") at the

expense of the architect (who he considered “pundits” and “mystery men” due to their detachment from actual production).

As Blomfield rightly noted, Lethaby’s formulation – on which much of his conception of architecture would depend – hinged on a conception of craftsmanship that was not only highly idealized but also simply naïve; one in which buildings were constructed “by Guilds of Craftsmen in an ideal state of things, where the workman loved his work, where everybody was good and happy, a world of sunshine, of joyous life and romance, such as never really existed except in the imagination of the Poet.”⁶⁰ Despite his belief that architecture was “a natural response to the psychology of the times,”⁶¹ Lethaby refused to acknowledge that the era in which he lived was undergoing profound changes and his architectural “dreams” (as Blomfield characterized them) were based “on a hypothetical past” that became ever-more increasingly idealized as the “individual craftsman, loving his handicraft and living by it, disappeared before the machine.”⁶² (Moreover, Lethaby’s reluctance to abandon this hypothetical past is evident in a description of the coming century written in 1891. “All will be sweetness, simplicity, freedom, confidence and light,” he wrote, “the new, the future, is to aid life and train it, so that beauty may flow into the soul like a breeze.”⁶³) And it is this sense of loss that both informed Lethaby’s eventual disillusionment with an agrarian utopianism — in which the landscape and architectural are conceived as natural extensions of one another — and haunts his final realized architectural project, All Saints’ Church in Brockhampton, Hereford.⁶⁴

Following a number of conservative residential projects that reflect his admiration for the “austere simplicity” of Phillip Webb⁶⁵, Lethaby was commissioned by the Philadelphian heiress Alice Madeleine Foster to design a parish church in commemoration of her recently deceased parents. In architectural terms, Lethaby’s design is composed of several simply proportioned and uncomplicated vernacular forms, which are composed with the intention of expressing both a solidity of purpose and the local crafts practice. Lethaby clearly viewed the project as an opportunity to express a uniquely English architecture through his idealization of the Arts and Crafts movement, which is evident in the buildings carefully worked and forceful materiality (with heavy stone walls and thatched roofs) and — most especially — in its applied surfaces, such as the famous tapestries, including the *Angeli Laudantes*, which was designed by Edward Coley Burne-Jones (1833-98), with details by John Henry Dearle (1860-1932), and woven by Morris & Company in the late-1800s.⁶⁶ In Lethaby’s final design the parishioners’ visual attention is focused on this elaborately woven tapestry, which has rightly been celebrated as an Arts and Crafts masterpiece, illustrating the crafted anonymity he sought in architectural terms. In this way, however, Lethaby’s All Saint’s Church also provides a perfect illustration of Blomfield’s criticism that an Arts and Crafts building merely provided the “‘occasion’ for a great assemblage of the crafts” in which the architect “content[ed]

himself with the part of a space-provider for carving and ornament, storied tapestries and beautiful glass.”⁶⁷

Blomfield’s comment is apt, moreover, as Lethaby was not only content to play the role of the ‘space-provider’ but also — driven by his idealization of craftsmanship — that of the principal contractor for the project as well, employing direct labor under his personal supervision to construct All Saints Church. Needless to say, his naïve optimism was sorely tested by the experience and his Chief Clerk Randell Wells remembered how unforeseen budgetary expenses and a lack of communication between the various craftsmen marred the construction. “I came in one morning,” Wells noted of this breakdown, “to find [Lethaby] all upset again, this time because he had just discovered that [one of the contractors] had made the tower eight or ten feet higher than the original plan! And so it went on.”⁶⁸ And on. At least until the point at which his exacerbated client threatened the architect with legal action, shattering his allusions about the art-socialist project. As his letters of this time and the contract documentation further suggest, the construction of All Saints Church was deeply unsettling for Lethaby and directly contributed to his decision to retire from professional architectural practice.

In the final instance, Lethaby abandoned the practice to which he had been so intellectually and morally intertwined for two reasons. Firstly, the demands of his academic career had become increasingly untenable. In addition to serving as Principal of the Central School (until 1911), he also served as the Chief Arts Inspector of the London City Council, took on the Professorship of the School of Ornament and Design at the Royal College of Art in 1900, and in 1906 was appointed as the Surveyor of Westminster Abbey, a position that afforded him the opportunity to oversee the ongoing preservation of one of the nation’s most historically resonant buildings. Secondly, Lethaby had become progressively disillusioned with the role architecture was playing in the construction of modernity: a disillusionment that is evident in his complicated use of building materials. Writing in 1907 he noted his discomfort at using unfamiliar, modern, materials and further argued that his training did not allow him to deal with contemporary construction methods and materials. “If I were again learning to be a modern architect,” he confided, “I’d eschew taste and design and all that stuff and learn engineering with plenty of mathematics and hard building experience.”⁶⁹

Despite Lethaby’s contented restraint there is something strange — perverse even — in the manner in which he juxtaposed traditional architectural forms (redolent of the English character and its historical associations) with modern materials (suggestive of both the contemporary age and future possibilities), resulting in a disjuncture that is most evident in the concrete vaulted roof structure at All Saints’ Church. Lethaby had first used concrete as a material for his Chapel at Melsetter House in the Orkneys (1900), in which he contrasted rough timber plank concrete and coarse rubble walls with the smoothly finished domestic surfaces of the house. Although he had



W.R. Lethaby, All Saints Church, Brockhampton, Hereford, 1906.
Unknown photographer

originally intended to use reed thatch in the roof construction of All Saints Church, prohibitive cost estimates and problems securing a reliable thatcher (who were already scarce by the early-twentieth century) meant Lethaby was forced to compromise, resulting in his decision to form the concrete vaulted roof over rough shorn boards, which had been covered with straw in an attempt to imprint the ceiling with a crude patterning suggesting traditional thatching. As this bold (if thoroughly mishandled) use of concrete suggests, Lethaby was more amenable to employing modern materials than he openly allowed, even if he sought to temper them with thatch. In this sense, his attempt to embed the patterned aesthetic — which is intended to evoke traditional technique — within the contemporary materiality of the concrete surface is more illustrative of an intellectual failure than a material mishandling. And this ceiling not only contradicts his assertion that the beautiful would “spring naturally out of utility” (or material compromise), but also that it was the ‘facts’ of the modern age, rather than the materials which expressed it, that Lethaby was unable to incorporate within his deeply nostalgic conception of English architecture.

In contrast to his friend Lethaby, who would continue to argue in works such as *Form in Civilization* (1922) that a sense of architectural authenticity and societal cohesion could be enacted through artesian manufacture (which was itself realized through mechanical process), Blomfield offered a more intellectually nuanced argument that followed a closer attention to architectonic composition. Blomfield is rightly considered the principal advocate of the ‘Grand Manner’ — a neoclassical style that sought to synthesize space, materials, and details into a harmonious entity — and together with Macartney and Newton he cofounded the *Architectural Review* in 1896 with the intention of further popularizing the emerging trend toward a pared-down neoclassicism. As another of their contemporaries noted, Blomfield was widely recognized for bringing a “fresh impetus” to architecture through his buildings and “even more by his monumental books on the work of the great classical architects of England and France, and especially by his famous group of essays published in 1908 under the title *The Mistress Art*, he swept the board of the ill-digested stuff [of Victorian revivalism].”⁷⁰ Such praise was typical, moreover, with Blomfield’s timely promotion of the Grand Manner attracting a sympathetic audience who agreed with his pleas for restrained classicism and the reinstatement of architecture as the governing ‘mistress’ art.

Originally delivered as a series of lectures, the *Mistress Art* was an attempt to “define the aims and province of architecture”⁷¹ and — set in those terms — the work has a suitably didactic two-part structure, with the first section progressing from the historical study of architecture and the role of design (while emphasizing the necessity of balancing observation and analysis), and the second section outlining a historiographic definition of the influences and precedents behind the Grand Manner. In the first overtly pedagogical section, Blomfield argues that the study of architecture should be based on practical knowledge rather than any historic, literary, artistic, or moral

understanding. The architect “need not concern himself with dogmatic theories on the relation of art and morality in studying architecture,” he counseled, instead “He should concentrate on the *facts* of building.” These ‘facts’ were expressed in the building’s “anatomical structure,” he further argued, and were not only reflective of the architecture’s constructive principles but also the architect’s “true intentions.”⁷² (It was through such a pedagogical study that Blomfield noted he was able to ascertain that “Wren did not evolve his dome [at St. Paul’s] out of his own consciousness,” but rather out of his knowledge of structural precedent.)

Although his recourse to pragmatic knowledge was entirely consistent with the pedagogical attitudes of the era — as was also evident in Lethaby’s curricula for the Central School (1896) and Royal Institute of Architects (1906-7) — Blomfield’s work was unique in its rhetorical virulence, indicative of the extent to which it was conceived in reaction to architect’s pursuit of “the fashionable manner of the time.”⁷³ In this sense, his address to architectural ‘facts’ can be considered as the antithesis to what Blomfield derisively called “sketch book architecture,” in reference to architect’s “habit of collecting merely attractive details,” which he considered “one of the most disastrous legacies of the Gothic revival,” and the employment of these details within architectural compositions that were inherently transitory in nature (in sense that they combined multiple historical periods). “There is no such thing as ‘impressionism’ in architecture,” he raged, “Our art does not allow us to leave our conception sketched out in masonry or brickwork. The idea must be thought out to the uttermost.”⁷⁴

Although he agreed with Ruskin’s insistence that the perseverance of the national character could be expressed through architectural form, Blomfield specifically attributed the intellectual disingenuousness, lack of formal resolution, and empty morality of ‘sketch book’ architecture to the influence of the Oxford don. “Few things have done more to retard the intelligent appreciation of architecture in this country,” he explained, “than that rhetorical method which dealt with architecture in terms of morality, and for the last fifty years of the last century led the layman to suppose that Classical architecture was morally deplorable.”⁷⁵ In that sense, his critique of Ruskin was not only informed by his defense of classical architecture, which Blomfield sought to disassociate from any ethical concern, but also from his own unflinching Victorian moralism, which differed from that of Ruskin in its objecting to any appeal to the emotions. Ever the pedagogue, Blomfield cautioned an aspiring generation of architects seated before him against succumbing to such romanticism. “To let the mind drift in awe-struck contemplation, or dream of past romance, is pleasant enough — but it will not teach you architecture.”⁷⁶

By contrast, Blomfield argued that a studied knowledge of architectural history — read through the buildings themselves — allowed architects to “disentangle fact,” examine the “external conditions” that govern architecture (whose “development is largely determined by conditions

external to the art itself”), and “discriminate between the accidental and the permanent.”⁷⁷ Despite his didactic adherence to historical reason, Blomfield acknowledged the limitations of explaining the “mysteries” of “great architecture” within such terms and conceded, “There will always be an element of mystery in great buildings, some quality that defies analysis and can only be felt.”⁷⁸ And felt, in the final instance, because architecture is “addressed to the emotions.”⁷⁹

In a strange formulation, Blomfield sought to synthesize this split between historical reason and the “element of mystery” through the recourse to “temperament,” which he considered in both individual and nationalistic terms. “Temperament, no less than imagination and intelligence, is an essential element in all good architecture,” he argued, “and by temperament I mean some *force or passion* within a man which drives him to do certain things in a certain way.”⁸⁰ And this sense of individual forcefulness has a collective dimension both in terms of the governance of the individual through societal convention and morality (driving him “to do certain things in a certain way”), and in the expression of these conventions in architectural terms, which reflect the “sober dignity” of the nation.

In the conclusion of the second section of his *Mistress Art*, Blomfield reiterated how “Great architecture has been great in so far as to set itself to realise noble aims, and to embody in concrete form noble thoughts, and aspirations which lie beyond the aim of fashion. It is for the artist to devote his life to this high and austere ideal.” Blomfield’s own practice reflected his often even fierce advocacy of these aims through the Grand Manner, which he argued continued the “spirit” and “highest ideals . . . to which the masterpieces of architecture owe their great and permanent qualities.”⁸¹ Several contemporaneous critics found this unrelenting architectural sobriety objectionable, however, and censured the style for its “dullness, pomposity, and vain affection.” Blomfield’s response to such criticisms was characteristic, countering such charges did not negate the “general principles” that informed his architecture. “The greater effects of architecture are obtained through scale,” he explained, “through orderly distribution, through a certain abstract and impersonal simplicity of treatment, which relies for its success on its fidelity to large conceptions, rather than on wealth and intricacy of detail.”⁸² Despite his rhetorical assertiveness, Blomfield’s definition of these ‘principles’ alludes to the formal rigidity — the “fidelity to large conceptions” — that would result in the least rational design decision of his career: the displacement of the names of war dead from his commemorative Menin Gate (1921-7). An act of erasure that not only evidenced the “abstract and impersonal simplicity,” which governed Blomfield’s conception of classical architecture, but also the complex “purposes of the race” he sought to represent.

At the conclusion of the first world war in 1918, the Vice Chairman of the newly established Imperial War Graves Commission, Major General Sir Fabian Arthur Goulstone Ware, appointed Blomfield as one of four ‘Principal Architects’ for the design of the numerous commemorative

memorials and cemeteries that were being planned to mark the European battlefields and English sacrifices. During the war, Ware had commanded an ambulance unit and — horrified by the lack of any legible system to record the graves of war dead — had successfully lobbied for the establishment of a Commission that would be charged with ensuring these graves were duly commemorated. Ware was a tireless advocate and his determination to ensure ongoing public recognition of the Commission's work led him to recruit a number of prominent artists, architects, and writers, who included — in addition to Blomfield — Herbert Baker, Edwin Lutyens, and Rudyard Kipling (who authored the famous memorial inscription).

Over the next fifteen years Blomfield became the principal designer of the war memorials erected in towns and cities throughout Britain. In addition to designing the 'Cross of Sacrifice' that stands in all Commission cemeteries, he further collaborated with the architect Aston Webb (1849-1930) and sculptor W. Hamo Thornycroft (1850-1925) on several notable war memorials in London, including the Royal Air Force Memorial on the Thames Embankment, while also designing the municipal memorials at Leeds, Luton and Torquay, together with the Memorial Chapel at Oundle School, Northamptonshire.⁸³ In these macabre terms, Blomfield's work with the Commission afforded him the perfect opportunity to display his beliefs in both patriotic convention (made manifest in classical proportions and the symbolic representation of sacrifice), and the architectural embodiment of 'noble thoughts in concrete form.' As his statements from this period attest, he acknowledged that no commission could be nobler, more austere, or of greater national significance, than this commemorative act.

During his first tour of the battlefields along the western front in 1919, Blomfield traveled to Ypres Salient in Flanders, Belgium, the Commission's largest commemorative site where he would construct his most infamous work, the ceremonial Menin Gate entrance to Tyne Cot Cemetery. (The design of the cemetery itself was awarded to Baker, who was knighted and received the 1927 RIBA Gold Medal in recognition of his efforts.⁸⁴) From 1921-7, Blomfield worked on the enormous monument, which is designed — in true Grand Manner style — as a triumphal Roman arch measuring 135ft in length, 140ft wide, and 80ft high. The Gate dominates the surrounding landscape and is crowned with the sculpture of an English Lion, carved by the Scottish artist William Reid Dick (1879-1961) to appear "not fierce and truculent, but patient and enduring" as it stares out over the 'Menin Road' along which the troop columns marched into action. The interior of the monument is lined with stone panels incised with the names of the British soldiers killed during the conflict.

In an article criticizing the commissioning of such monuments, "Memorials of the Fallen: Service or Sacrifice?" (1919), Lethaby stated his objection to "advertis[ing] our regret and compassion in lavish oblations of marble, brass, and glass." Although his critique is typically limited, advocating the design of functional architectures — such as his cited examples of the Albert

Memorial Hall, Waterloo Bridge, and Trafalgar Square — rather than symbolic memorials, his criticism is insightful in terms of both his condemnation of the “lavish oblations” of the Grand Manner, and absurdity of the symbolism employed in relation to the conflicts they commemorate. “Ornamental design is dealing with signs and symbols,” he concludes, and — as such — it implies a kind of metaphoric exchange, or “the saying of something in another mode of language.” In Lethaby’s terms this exchange is not only bankrupt, but also opaque in the sense that the “lavish” materiality of these ‘advertisements of grief’ fail to bear the “lasting witness” demanded by Ruskin. “Our hope in some abstract beauty . . . is altogether vain,” he concluded, “These designs in the ‘grand manner’ are pompous nullities . . . In seeking the beautiful nothing we seek a ghost which is not there.”⁸⁵

This criticism arresting in both its condemnation of the “hope in abstract beauty,” illustrated in the pomposity of much Grand Manner architecture, and its description of the absence of any voice that might convey meaning (“which will say nothing”). And it is this loss of voice, coupled with his inadvertent recognition of an architectural inability to address this loss (“In seeking the beautiful nothing we seek a ghost that is not there”), which further alludes to the underlying absurdity of the symbolic exchange the Menin Gate performs: commemorating the exchange of the living human body for the inscribed name. Which is to say, it translates — however inadvertently — the moment when those fleshy bodies became indistinguishable from the bloodied pulp of mud, into clean calligraphy of the names that are marked into the Portland stone panels that line Blomfield’s memorial.

The absurdity of this gesture and its pompous architectural expression would also be acknowledged by the most scathing of Blomfield’s critics, the poet Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967), who denounced the newly completed monument in his “On Passing the new Menin Gate” (1928). As Sassoon wrote,

“Who will remember passing through this Gate,
The unheroic dead who feed the guns?
Who shall absolve the foulness of their fate, —
Those doomed, conscripted, victorious ones?”

Crudely renewed, the Salient holds its own.
Paid are the dimmed defenders by this pomp;
Paid, with a pile of peace compliant stone,
The armies who endured that sullen swamp.

Here was the world’s worst wound. And here with pride
‘Their name liveth for ever,’ the Gateway claims.
Was ever an immolation so belied
As these intolerable nameless names?
Well might the dead who struggled in this slime
Rise and deride this sepulchre of crime.”



Will Longstaff, *Passing the Menin Gate at Midnight*, 1927.

Tellingly, Sassoon only allowed this work to be published following his own death and within it he not only refers to the needless sacrifices of the war and the duplicitousness of their commemoration (“Was ever an immolation so belied / As these intolerable nameless names?”), but also the architectural impotence of the Gate itself, which is framed through the accusative question that opens the poem, “Who will remember passing through this Gate / The unheroic dead who feed the guns?” (This impotence is completed by the absence of any figure capable of absolving the ‘foul fate’ of those “doomed, conscripted, victorious ones.”) This sense of architectural ineffectiveness is further derided by the manner in which the “sullen swamp” of the landscape, which is infused with the “dead who struggled in this slime” (among whose number Sassoon counted himself), is governed over by “this pomp,” this “pile of peace compliant stone.” With Sassoon’s most virulent critique lying in the closing lines that state his famous admonition that the dead — betrayed by the proclamation that “Their name liveth for ever” (as it is inscribed on the monument) — should “Rise and deride this sepulchre of crime.”

As he decried the loss that haunted this monument, Sassoon would have scarcely been aware of the bureaucratic severity Blomfield’s design enacted on the fallen, who had achieved the brutal democracy of death. Following the completion of his design proposal an increasing number of bodies had been discovered on the Tyne Cot battlefield and the architect realized that it would be impossible to accommodate all of those “intolerable nameless names.” In order to adhere to the formal composition of design, thereby illustrating the “fidelity to large conceptions” he demanded of architecture, he simply displaced the “wealth and intricacy of detail” associated with a number of non-English dead to another smaller monument, which he located at a discrete distance in order not to detract from the symbolic resonance of the Menin Gate.

‘Aspects not Things’

Despite his reassurances to the contrary, by the conclusion of his *National Character* Scott was still unable to provide a coherent definition of the ‘Englishness’ of English architecture, with the essay closing with the ambivalent nonchalance that would be a defining feature of his criticism. As with Blomfield and Lethaby before him, Scott’s failure to provide that definition would continue to grate, underlying his subsequent criticism and providing a motivation for the historiography of taste he intended the *Architecture of Humanism* to provide. (An intention that can read in both the preface to the 1914 edition and the epilogue to the second edition of 1924.) In a sense, however, Scott’s inability to define that character and reconcile it with a nationalized temper can itself be further read as an indication of the discontinuity and native idiosyncrasy he argued were the defining features of English architecture.

Writing in the *National Character* about the confused adoption of an Anglicized gothic, Scott noted how this stylistic ineptitude suggested two characteristics of the national “architectural habit”: an innate “conservatism” he rightly associated with “an unwillingness to part with what it has once made its own,” and a differentiated ‘provincialism’ that is evident in localized craft practices and the “strong local character” of regional forms.⁸⁶ Moreover, this coupling of architectural conservatism and provincial tradition (expressed through a “clumsy inability to build” foreign styles) reoccurs throughout the essay suggesting that the truly national character of English architecture lay — for Scott — with its profound ambivalence. A resignation that was not only embodied in a nationalized “pragmatic willingness to compromise” but is also in a paradoxically “stubborn adherence to tradition” which forecloses architectural development.⁸⁷ It was through such an exposition of ‘compromised tradition’ that he was able to argue, for example, Christopher Wren (1632-1723) was both the professional culmination of the nation’s architectural heritage and its personification due to his embodiment of the English characteristics of “reasonability and compromise” and “leniency to[ward] the past.”⁸⁸ Characteristics he further read in Wren’s refusal to visit Italy and study Renaissance architecture directly. Earlier in the essay Scott noted how it was simpler to provide a “reliable definition” of the national character of “distant civilizations,” in which the historical disconnection is matched by a geographic remove, than the culture in which you are enmeshed. In that sense, his reading of Wren’s refusal to travel is interesting as it further alludes to Scott’s desire for a detachment that is not only critical but also absolute in its allowance of doubt.

Following the publication of his *National Character*, Scott’s nascent career as a critic lay at a critical juncture and was divided, as his essay suggests, between two divergent approaches. At one extreme lay an approach that was informed by Ruskin’s advocacy of architectural preservation: a ‘rendering historical’ that Scott realized was not only possible through the conservation of buildings but also through the literary connection of “half forgotten and following ages with each other,” which informed the poetic-historical approach of the ‘National Character.’ Such a Ruskinian urge toward preservation had been endemic during the late-1800s and led to the formation of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877 by the designers William Morris and Philip Webb, who hoped to respond to the insensitive restoration of historic buildings, and the establishment of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty in 1893 by the prominent Victorian philanthropists Octavia Hill, Robert Hunter, and the Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley.⁸⁹ This trio had been horrified by the unchecked industrialization of the English countryside and established the Trust to act as the national guardian for the acquisition, protection, and preservation of the coastline, countryside, and buildings threatened by the onslaught of progress. Informed by a typically unquestioning late-nineteenth century belief in historiography, allied with their desire to rescue a

‘national architecture,’ the Trust exemplified this Ruskinian impulse toward the act of preservation and – in the process – defining the English character.

Ironically Scott, whose social views were as steadfastly fixed and assuredly anti-modern as Hill, Hunter, and Rawnsley’s, referred to such a retrospective preservation as “archaistic” and typical of Ruskin’s followers who “made conscientious reference to a living work in the past and mistook this for a vitality in the present.”⁹⁰ A mistake he further associated with the replacement of the “formative impulse” with an “informed academic pedantry,” which he thought resulted in the collapse of “nineteenth-century eloquence” in the mire of architectural eclecticism. The virulence of his criticism is indicative, moreover, as it alludes to his decision to take the alternative intellectual approach to Ruskin’s pedantry by adopting a critical stance that interpreted the architecturally prescriptive — as it was figured in classical terms by such works as Blomfield’s *Mistress Art* — as inherently generative.

As his playfully approving (yet intellectually duplicitous) reference to the English fantasist’s construction of ‘ruins’ on their country estates suggests, however, Scott’s conception of the architecturally ‘formative impulse’ was not only intrinsically rhetorical but also less simplistic in its separation of architectural history from architectural production than it first appears. (Not to mention intertwined with the literary fallacy he abhorred.) Considered in these terms, it seems that the English ‘temperament’ Scott alluded to in the *National Character* — and on which his subsequent criticism would draw — was one determined more by the romantic lethargy of the leisure class, tempered by “tea in the garden [and] tennis in flannels” (in Lethaby’s description) than by the “hidden charms” of society.

This marriage of romantic lethargy and prescribed taste was also evident in the immediate success of a periodical that was established in 1895, two years after the foundation of the National Trust, and would also prove effective in governing the actions of the English leisure class over the approaching century. In fact by 1911 *Country Life* had become so successful that a governmental official praised it as “the keeper of the architectural conscience of the nation.”⁹¹ Needless to say, this conscience was more selective than inclusive, with the pages of *Country Life* combining a refined mix of fashion, lifestyle, and architectural reviews with advice on equestrian techniques, stock breeding, and grouse shooting positions. (In this sense the journal’s architectural position was only a more populist version of the views advocated by Blomfield, Lethaby, and Scott.)

Country Life’s interest in deliberately fostering what the critic David Watkins later described as a “dreamy nostalgia” was evident from the inaugural issue, with the journal’s first architecture feature comprising an elaborate photographic spread of the recently restored Baddesley Clinton, Warwickshire. This late medieval ‘half-fortified country house’ not only offered a “beautiful example [from] the days when the War of the Roses filled the country with the clang of arms,” but also an



Baddesley Clinton, *Country Life Illustrated* 1 (8 January, 1897)

“Among all the countries of Great Britain there are few shires more famous for princely mansions and quaint old houses of the long-lineaged English gentlemen than that of Warwick. Standing among great elms, in which for generations countless rooks have accustomed to make their homes, they lift their many-windowed walls and battlements over old-world gardens to end in high gables and twisted chimneys where doves flutter and coo in the sunshine. Mailed knights have dwelt within their walls, fugitives in troubled times have fled to their secret chambers, cavaliers have knocked at their oaken doors, and the merest flight of fancy almost enables one to hear the laughter of gentlemen with clouded canes and dames in powder and patrols rising from the alleys of their well-hidden gardens.

About seven miles from Warwick, and within a short mile of the high road thence to Birmingham, all amid the silent woods, its grey walls and timber gables reflected in a lake-like moat, stands the old hall of Baddesley Clinton. Its aspect carries you back hundreds of years. You will readily, if so disposed, conjure up an old-world history when you look at it, and if you have any antiquarian interest — and who has not at least a twinge of it? — you can easily forget for the first time that you are living in the twentieth century.”

object for imaginative poetic fantasy. “Romance lingers in these stately chambers,” the journal gushed, “and in the mind’s eye dead men loom out of the shadows when the moonlight falls though the tinted glass, and in imagination’s ear the rustle of kirtles and faringates, of brocaded silks and satins is heard anon as the wind whispers through the galleries and the rain patters on the storied pane.”⁹² As the conclusion to the lengthy caption accompanying these images suggests, the editors suggest that within this romantic aspect and the journal itself, “You can easily forget for the first time that you are living in the nineteenth century.”⁹³ (A forgetfulness and disavowal of change that *Country Life* has studiously attempted to maintain.) And it is precisely such a sense of ‘dreamy nostalgia’ that is further evident in Scott’s consideration of architecture in the *National Character*: a conception which, in part, suggests it might be possible — if highly implausible — for his readers to forget they were living in the twentieth century. Thought of in these terms it is entirely fitting that Scott, following the request of a friend who had risen to the editorship of *Country Life*, chose to publish his final architectural work, a two-part essay on “The Basilica of St Peter’s” (1926-7), in the periodical.⁹⁴

This form of willful resignation is not only evident in the underlying nostalgia of the *National Character*, but also its associated patriotism, with Scott straining — in contrast to the belligerent militancy of Blomfield and Lethaby — to sound convincing as he expresses his own nationalist sensibilities in reference to those of Morris, whose well-known celebration of Englishness in “The Decorative Arts: Their Relation to Modern Life and Progress” (1877) he quotes extensively. “The land is a little land,” Morris wrote of England,

“too much shut up within the narrow seas to have much space for swelling into hugeness: there are no great wastes overwhelming in their dreariness, no great solitude of forests, no terrible untrodden mountain walls: all is measured . . . little rivers, little plains[,] little hills, little mountains . . . all is little, yet not foolish, or blank, but serious rather, and abundant of meaning for such as choose to seek it. . . . It must be a hard heart, I think, that does not love this land, whether a man has been born among it, like ourselves, or has come wonderingly on its simplicity from all the grandeur overseas.”⁹⁵

Morris’s characterization of the English landscape, which has been invested with social, moral, and naturalistic meaning, clearly influenced Scott’s conception of a nationalistic relation of landscape and architecture, resulting in a ‘measured’ agrarian simplicity that he strains to sound convinced by. And this sense of measure not only alludes to the cautious restraint he applauds in the English temperament, resulting in the “full sympathy between the works of man, and the land they were made for” (as Morris described it), but also to the especially literal notion that every thing — every little river, plain, hill, or mountain — had been measured, surveyed, named, and “too much shut up within the narrow seas.”

Naturally Morris’s sentiments had been drawn in turn from Ruskin, who expressed similar thoughts in his earlier *Poetry of Architecture; or the Architecture of the Nations of Europe considered in its*

Association with Natural Scenery and National Character (1837), in which he noted “the principal thing worthy of observation” in the English cottage (“that embellishment of natural scenery”) lay in its “finished neatness,” with “firmly pegged down” and “mathematically levelled” thatch, unblemished whitewash, gleaming lattices and “luxuriant roses . . . trained gracefully over the window.” And it is within such a characterization that there exists a perfect — almost unconscious — convergence of the social convention with the architecturally familiar.

“A few square feet of garden, and latched wicket, persuading the weary and dusty pedestrian, with expressive eloquence, to lean upon it for an instant, and request a drink of water or milk, complete a picture, which . . . is a very perfect thing in its way. The ideas it awakens are agreeable, and the architecture is all we want in such a situation. It is pretty and appropriate; and if it boasted of any other perfection, it would be at the expense of its propriety.”⁹⁶

Such an idyllic and humble propriety does not fully negate the possibility that some of the ideas it awakens might not be so agreeable, fulfilling, or uncomplicated, however, and as Ruskin continues his description he alludes to a more complicated sense of enclosure than Morris; one in which “England is a country whose every scene is in miniature,” “Its green valleys are not wide; its dewy hills are not high; its forests are of no extent.” Moreover, it is precisely this sense of delimitation that not only offers a degree of comfort to the weary Englishman, who Ruskin rightly notes “will sacrifice everything to comfort,” but also alludes to less agreeable sense of aesthetic claustrophobia.

Within such constricted terms, “we can never see far at a time,” Ruskin writes of this foreclosure, resulting in “something inexpressible” that can only be understood through “that truly English word ‘snug.’” Read in these terms, Ruskin’s conception of the English cottage embodies a visual poverty that is constrictive and vastly inferior to the “neglected beauty” of its French counterpart, which could elicit sublime sensations “of a higher order than any which can be awakened by the sight of an English cottage.” Moreover, it can be further argued that such a paradoxical notion of ‘snugness,’ one that both comforts and suffocates in its familiarity, resonates throughout Scott’s historiography, demarcating the physical and imaginative limitations of English architecture and leading to a lack of intellectual and sensual ‘engagement’ he could only ascribe to the subject. “A little more conviction . . . will come with a better subject,” he explained to a friend,

“Although I find the architectural subject pleasant and absorbing and it has left me more interested than before I had collected my thoughts on the subject (but no keener to be a professional) I was sorry to have to treat it from rather the rather irrelevant point of view of national character, and really (in spite of having said the opposite) I see no real continuity between the English use of the Gothic formula and their handling of the Italian one. The people concerned in the two cases — monks and eighteenth-century noblemen — have, after all, nothing in common beyond living in the same country. And one can’t talk for long about cottages!”⁹⁷

As this letter suggests, Scott was through with talking about cottages — a conclusion that stemmed from his boredom with the “expressive eloquence” of English architecture, his desire to remain an



William Morris, 1874.

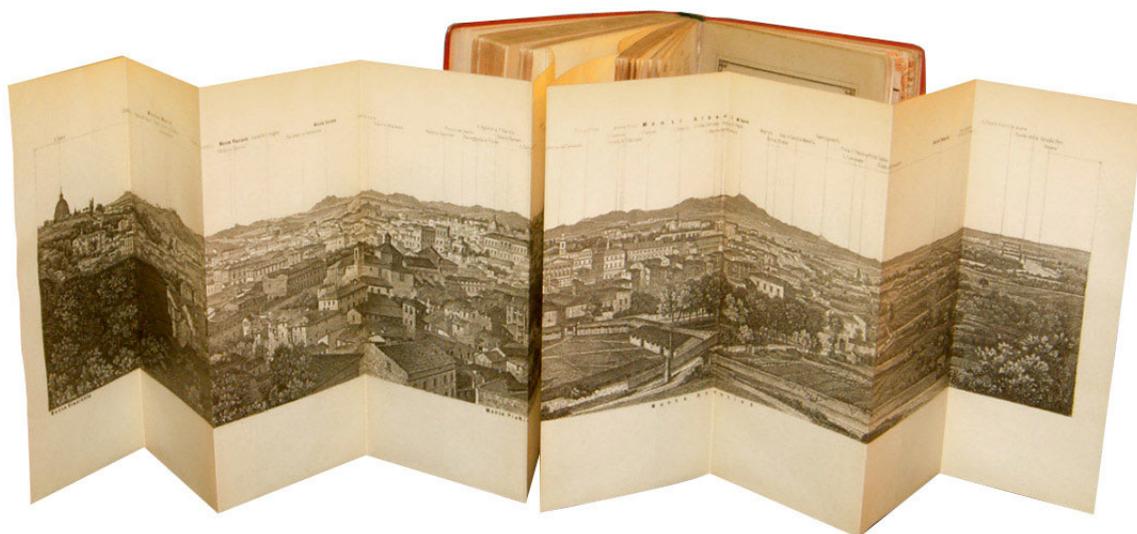
Photograph by Frederick Hollyer ©National Portrait Gallery, London

amateur (enthusiast) and his discovery of a less exhaustible subject, the architecture of the Italian Renaissance, which not only offered a “profound innovation of feeling” but also alluded to a more plausible history.

In contrast to the intellectual familiarity of English architecture, which he reads as both pedestrian and unsatisfying (in a form that is present in other contemporaneous expressions, such as the German notion of *gemütlichkeit*), Scott sought to satisfy a wealth of intellectual, sensual, and romantic expectations among the ruins and palazzos of the Italian landscape, a panorama which offered — as he explained at the end of his 1908 tour — “room for one’s imagination to expand in, without dwarfing it like an ocean or a dehumanised desert.”⁹⁸ Or, he might have added, without constricting it like his native England, that “simple,” “measured” and “serious . . . little land.” And, viewed in these terms, the epiphany Scott experienced at Paestum addressed a proposal he had been considering that spring. (As if the outcome were in doubt.) Instead of returning to London to pursue an academic career as originally planned, Scott had decided to accept the position of Private Secretary to Bernard Berenson (1865-1959), the famed Lithuanian-American connoisseur who was considered by many — and most vocally by the connoisseur himself — to be the world’s preeminent expert on renaissance art.

With that simple decision, Scott inadvertently miniaturized the sublime grandeur of the Italian landscape that lay before him, collapsing the expanse of a panorama into something which was not only more picturesque and unconsciously manageable, but also eminently transportable. In a sense, the motivations behind this gesture can be explained by referencing another of the images in his *Baedeker’s Central Italy*, a gatefold view of mid-nineteenth-century Rome — the ‘Panorama di Roma e suoi Contorni’ — engraved six decades before Scott’s tour. Although this panorama possesses the material fragility of the bible paper on which it was printed, it is both endlessly reproducible (because the view it depicts is so familiar) and entirely unique (in the sense that it remains arrested in the moment of its etching). Despite offering the conceptual promise of including everything, this panorama, like the advice of a kindly chaperone or a prospective mentor, is devoid of all spontaneity and ignorant of the “destructive influences” and excesses of libidinal desire that according to Freud constitute our modern experience. Held within the folds of this surface, the descriptive nature of the etching circumscribes the view, shielding the tourist from the disconsolate imagery and possibilities that lie in wait in the alleyways beyond. (By contrast, Piranesi’s etchings of Paestum suggest a brooding, almost calculating, sense of violence.)

Unlike the maps of a *Baedeker*, which allow for an imaginative transport, this panorama of Rome offers the polite assurance of unfolding the same view time and again, suggesting less a sense of projection than a type of disciplinary limit (a closure that Scott, who had studied Greek with the classicist Gilbert Murray at Oxford, would have recognized in the philological origins of ‘horizon’ as



Panorama di Roma e suoi Contorni, Badeker Guide to Central Italy, 1906.

“to limit.”) Viewed in these terms, the panorama provides a fitting analogy for Scott’s historiographic method, in which a multitude of details — no matter how architecturally, historically or sensibly mismatched — are assembled within a single view. Scott’s underlying concern, as one rival aptly noted, would remain with “aspects not things.”⁹⁹ For all his ongoing association with a humanist architecture, if only through the title of his best-known work, Scott’s conception of humanism is indisputably discriminate, if not irrecoverably impoverished. And, as his diminishment of the grandiose to the snug in 1908 suggests, he remained less concerned with an experience of Rome, or an epiphanic moment at Paestum, than he was with reaffirming the view before him as an object. An object that once it had been detached, creased, and drained of all unwarranted possibility could then be returned to his jacket pocket with the most offhand of gestures.

Chapter Two

“A Beautiful Leisure”: Flirting with Taste in *The Architecture of Humanism*

“I have no profession . . . It is another example of my decadence. My attitude — quite an indefensible one — is that so long as I am not trouble to anyone, I have a right to do as I like. I know I ought to be getting money out of people, or devoting myself to things I don’t care a straw about, but somehow I’ve not been able to begin.”

“You are very fortunate . . . It is a wonderful opportunity, the possession of leisure.”¹

E.M. Forster, *A Room with a View* (1908)

Geoffrey Scott was first introduced to Bernard Berenson during the Easter weekend of 1906. At that time Scott was an unknown, if potentially brilliant, classical scholar at New College, Oxford, and an inveterate aesthete who had been exploring a number of different artistic registers, including the ‘architectural subject.’² By contrast, Berenson presided over a milieu of ‘anglo-florentino’ aesthetes from his palatial Villa I Tatti at Settignano, on the outskirts of Florence. His carefully nurtured fame afforded Berenson the status of art historical royalty, with his name written in a hotel register, signed to an introduction or used in an awkward situation capable of eliciting in people an almost immediate deference. While everyone might have wanted to know about Berenson, as Marcel Proust once quipped, the connoisseur made it his business to know anyone of consequence.

In many ways, Berenson personified the notion of ‘connoisseurship’ and he reveled in the accompanying sartorial, financial, architectural, and romantic favors that he not only sought but also contractually demanded. Wielding a magnifying glass that enlarged both his persona and the painting in question, he inspired countless tourists who — armed with his description of the observer’s physiological reaction to culture as a system of ‘tactile values’ — stood transfixed in front of art-works in museums throughout Europe in an attempt to re-enact what he memorably termed the ‘aesthetic moment’. In spite of his renown, however, Berenson’s ‘expertism’ was based less on his art-historical musings, which were largely derided by his contemporaries (who rightly considered his opinions outdated by the end of the nineteenth-century), than on a particular technical skill — the ability to determine the authorship of certain renaissance paintings. A disciple of the ‘scientific connoisseurship’ advocated by the Italian expert Giovanni Morelli, Berenson’s concentrated gaze amplified each detail, turning it over and over until that fragment consumed his entire view.

Berenson “had two ideals,” the critic Meyer Schapiro rightly noted of his former mentor, “to live aesthetically, at the height of sensibility to art and nature,” and to lead an “aristocratic existence as the master a big house, holding court for the elegant, the worldly, the famous, the gifted.”³ The combination of these two ideals was instinctively uneasy, however, both because an aesthetic life required constant reaffirmation, demanding a repetitive reengagement with the art-work that was at

odds with singularity of aesthetic experience (figured as a unique and nonreplicable communion), and the simple fact that Berenson's 'aristocratic existence' was not based on hereditary privilege but rather the self-realized commercial promise of his ambitions.

For Berenson the habitual exposure to art increased the connoisseur's aesthetic sensibilities and revitalized their critical energies. In this way, the aesthetic appreciation of an art-work required both a dedicated mind and an unlimited capacity for indulging time. "We often say to each other that Bernard's 'profession' is the most agreeable one in the world," Mary Berenson admitted. "Who knows the beauties of this enchanting land as we do? And yet everything we see and enjoy adds to his capital, so to speak, deepening his understanding of beauty, of art, of Italy, of history, so that we don't feel like mere idle or self-indulgent tourists."⁴ Her recognition of this accumulated 'capital' is apt, given that it presages her acknowledgment of the relative laxity of their 'profession,' and her understanding that such 'seeing and enjoying' could easily be misinterpreted as the activities of "mere idle and self-indulgent tourists."

In this way, her remarks illustrate the couple's sensitivity toward the criticisms of their practice by such critics as their Florentine rival Vernon Lee, who argued in her work — *The Beautiful: An Introduction to Psychological Aesthetics* (1913) — that "The very worst attitude toward art is that of the holiday-maker who comes into its presence with no ulterior interest or business, and nothing but the hope of an æsthetic emotion which is most often denied to him[, which results] in the blank despondency characteristic of so many gallery-goers."⁵ A 'blank despondency' she clearly equated with the intellectual value of Berenson's criticism. In contrast to the Berensons, Lee was an ardent Victorian moralist who was concerned with "the perils of luxury and indolence," and had developed a correspondingly austere method of examining art. As her friend the writer Maurice Baring noted of a typical afternoon spent touring London's National Gallery, "Sight-seeing with Vernon Lee was sight-seeing indeed . . . It was the opposite of scampering through a gallery with the Baedeker, and ticking off what had been 'done.' For Vernon Lee and with Vernon Lee nothing was ever 'done.' It was there for ever in the haunted many-corridorred and echoing palace of her imagination."⁶

Yet it is precisely this lack of resolution ("of nothing ever being done"), which alludes to both the anxieties of expertism (in which the art-work is forever haunting the "many-corridorred imagination"), and the incompleteness of aesthetic experience (which is never able to be recalled in complete detail). In this way, the 'blank despondency' Lee read on the expressions of "mere idle and self-indulgent tourists" not only illustrated the crassness of their emotive response to art, reflecting the fatigue associated with "scampering through a gallery with the Baedeker," but also alluded to a more existential sense of exhaustion — shared by the expert and amateur alike — that is encoded within the notion of aesthetic experience at the end of the nineteenth century.



Bernard Berenson at Villa I Tatti, 1903.

Unknown photographer ©The Berenson Archives, Villa I Tatti, Florence

As E.M. Forster noted in his *Room with a View* (1908), the ability to indulge that experience not only provided a “wonderful opportunity” for further exploration, but also offered something to be ‘possessed.’ “It is a wonderful opportunity, the possession of leisure,” as he offered. And this possession that not only defined the leisure class through the demonstrably idle pursuit of pleasure, but also alluded to the impulsiveness that could irrationally influence their actions, spurring them on to ever more indulgent pleasures. Given this bind, the critical importance of leisure is twofold. In the first instance, it facilitated a temporal indulgence that allowed the aesthetic contemplation necessary for both Berenson’s notion of connoisseurship and Scott’s formulation of architecture. And secondly, the lengthy duration of this contemplation also illustrated that the observer had no demonstrable need to work. “I have no profession,” Forster’s art critic duly admitted. “It is another example of my decadence. My attitude — quite an indefensible one — is that so long as I am not trouble to anyone, I have a right to do as I like.”⁷

Schapiro alluded to the duplicitous character of leisure in his biographic “Mr. Berenson’s Values” (1961), in which he explored the tension that existed between Berenson’s aesthetic idealism and material desires. (The connoisseur had a complicated relationship with Schapiro who — following a series of visits to I Tatti during the 1920s — had wisely chosen to return to the United States to continue his academic career rather than accepting Berenson’s offer of becoming his protégé.⁸) Written the year after Berenson’s death, Schapiro’s article objects to both Berenson’s social and professional snobberies, which he rightly found evident in the connoisseur’s lack of self-criticality and literary incoherence, together with Berenson’s anti-modernist rejection of contemporary art, which was interpreted as a literal contradiction of “his own thinking and being.”⁹ As Schapiro rightly concluded, Berenson’s ‘essential worth’ “rested largely on the fact that his sensibility became the instrument of a profession. Through it he performed an essential service in the diagnostic judgment of works of art.”¹⁰

The true brilliance of Schapiro’s account lies less in its recognition of Berenson’s professional aptitude (which had been similarly voiced by other critics), however, than in the critical perceptiveness and rhetorical evocativeness of his description of the milieu at I Tatti. “Happiness and freedom were found chiefly in the enjoyment of the arts,” he notes, “in travel and refined sociability in a beautiful leisure, means only available to a fortunate few . . . Beauty was separated from the ethical, the civic, and the religious, and lifted above these as a self-sufficient, private goal. The aesthetic in itself could sublimate the imperfections of the world.”¹¹

In addition to the obvious exclusivity of the “fortunate few” (who have the financial means to affect a degree of detachment from economic reality), Schapiro’s allusion to a ‘beautiful leisure’ is arresting, with this poetic phrase perfectly encapsulating the character of an endeavor — a beautiful leisure — that is both beautiful in the terms of what it sought to appreciate (the beautiful object), and

the conditions of an existence spent in conspicuous aesthetic pursuits. In this way, leisure was not only palliative, in the sense that it transcended reality through a metaphysical transport in art, but also operative in its mechanical disengagement from the complications of reality and divorce of art from “the ethical, the civic, and the religious.”

The sublimation of such ‘worldly imperfections’ required a more socially acceptable determination than mere capital, however, with the aesthetic “perfection of the individual” redeeming the egotism of practical affairs on which the well-being of this class rested.” (Despite these complex desires, Schapiro rightly noted such a ‘beautiful pursuit’ was wholly inadequate in providing a convincing cover for the rapacious capitalism of the American industrialists who frequented I Tatti.) With this critique, Schapiro is undoubtedly referring to Thorstein Veblen’s characterization of the ‘gentleman of leisure’ in his *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899). This work is engaging for a number of reasons including: Veblen’s suggestion that the life of leisure is intrinsically beautiful and ennobling; his insistence that the adjudication of taste is based on a symbolic recognition of value rather than the “aesthetically true”; and finally, because of his conclusion that the inherent conservatism of the leisure class acts as a refutation of modernity.

As he repeatedly states, this *Theory* is doubly concerned with the collective capacity of the ‘leisure class’ as an economic force in “modern life” and the individual’s deterministic role in that collective action. “As a matter of selective necessity, man is an agent . . . of unfolding impulsive activity,” he explained, who possesses an innate “distaste for futile effort.”¹² In this way, the individual’s compulsive accumulation of wealth illustrated their economic ‘efficiency’ (or “pecuniary strength”) and their conspicuous display of that wealth symbolized their social statuses. With this necessity to represent wealth leading to Veblen’s famous conception of “conspicuous consumption,” and — consequently — an excess of time, which augured in a “conspicuous leisure.” Interestingly, the notion of ‘leisure’ did not “connote indolence or acquiescence” for Veblen, but rather “the non-productive use of time.” (In contrast to the tourist’s ‘idle and indulgent’ pursuits, there is a direct purposefulness to this definition of leisure.) And such a non-productive consumption is not associated with laziness, which he defines as a “habitual neglect of work,” but rather with the conscious rejection of productive work (which is “unworthy” and “debasing”) and the ability to “afford a life of idleness.”¹³ In this way, he figured laziness as a deliberate refusal to act, in the immediate circumstance, and, in a larger context, as an existential negation of human agency through its rejection of this “unfolding impulsive activity” in favor of less arduous pursuits. (At the extreme, Veblen considered laziness a subversion of the teleological progress of human evolution.¹⁴)

As Schapiro’s commentary evidences, the ‘anglo-florentino’ community in which Berenson and Scott resided was fully aware that the ‘life of idleness’ necessitated a degree of ‘comfort,’ furnished in the “‘decent surroundings’ and exemption from ‘menial offices,’” which offered the

possibility for “higher thinking.” “A degree of leisure and of exemption from [work,]” Veblen concluded, “has ever been recognized by thoughtful men as a prerequisite to a worthy or beautiful, or even a blameless, human life. In itself and in its consequences the life of leisure is beautiful and ennobling in all civilized men’s eyes.”¹⁵ In this regard, he not only recognized the leisurely existence as one that was inherently “beautiful and ennobling,” but also capable of exonerating the observer from the consequences of everyday life (through its provision of a “blameless human life”), with his description of the manner in which the ‘gentleman of leisure’ enacts this disengagement through the mechanism of ‘taste’ explained in terms that echo Berenson’s notion of connoisseurship.

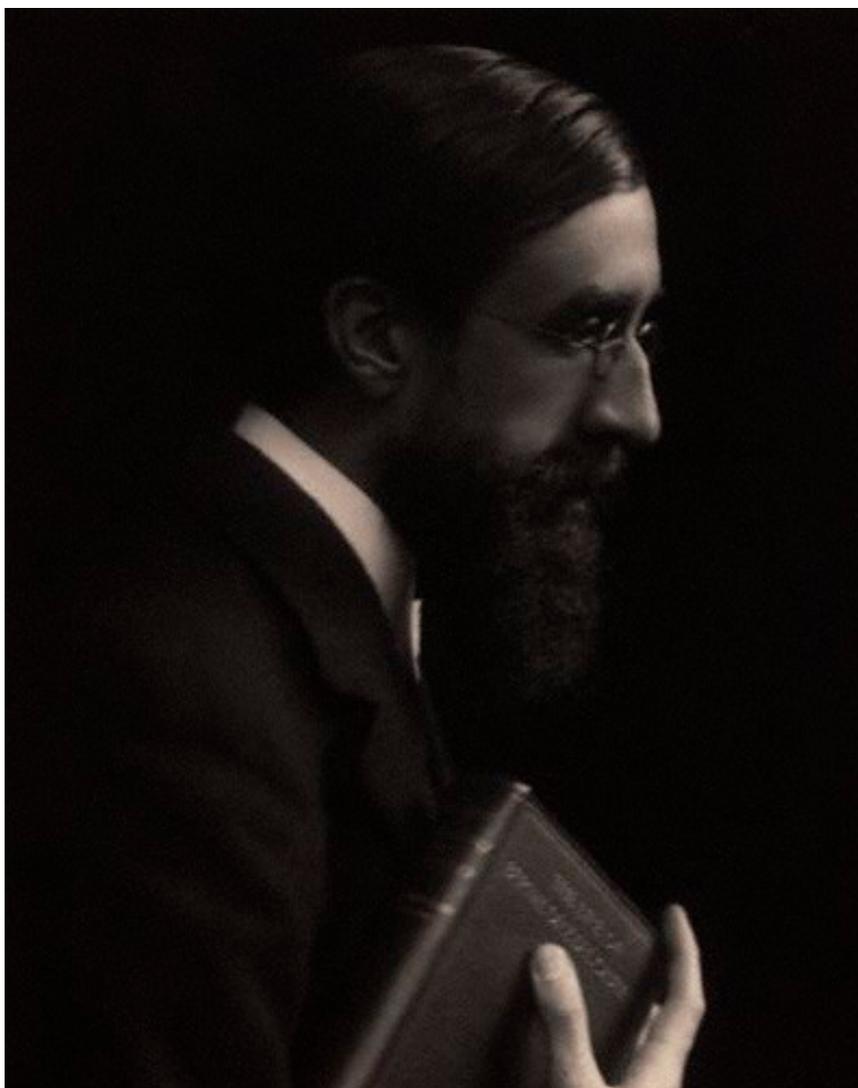
In order to maintain their societal position, moreover, Veblen argued that this gentleman/connoisseur needed to “cultivate his tastes” through the selective consumption of “luxuries and comforts,” including the ‘most desirable’ forms of “food, drink, narcotics, shelter, services, ornaments, apparel, weapons and accoutrements, amusements, amulets, and idols.”¹⁶ This consumption must not only be selective, in the sense that it inaugurates a “canon of taste” through its exclusivity, but also excessive, in the sense that it “must be wasteful.”¹⁷ With this ‘principle of wastefulness’ further dictating the “sense of beauty,” in which as an object becomes ever more beautiful, it also becomes less able to perform the role it was ostensibly designed for. In this way, the beautiful is associated with a symbolic abstraction.¹⁸ And it is through such a cultivated consumption that the leisure class dictates ‘taste’ by referring to a retrospectively considered “canon of classicism,” guided by a deeply conservative impulse that is not only ‘regulatory’ (in that it refutes “creative . . . innovation or initiative” in order to reaffirm the “existing maladjustment of institutions”), but also nostalgic (in favoring a “reversion to a somewhat archaic scheme of life”). Finally, this notion of taste — which both Berenson and Scott would equate with an ability to judge beauty — was inherently anti-modernist, in that it expressed an “aversion to change” Veblen specifically associated with leisure class’s collective desire to alleviate the nervous impotence and mental stresses of modernity through such indulgent distractions.¹⁹

‘All Without an Erection’

Together with the economist John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946) and writer Lytton Strachey (1880-1932), Scott had been selected from among the “brightest prospects” of Oxford and Cambridge and invited to spend Easter 1906 with the Berensons at the Villa I Tatti. This invitation was less academically motivated than prospective, however, as Berenson’s wife Mary had charged her sister Alys Russell — the wife of the philosopher Bertrand Russell — with finding “elegant, worldly, and gifted” young suitors for her teenage daughters Karin and Ray Costelloe. Cognizant of the social opportunities the invitation represented, Scott immediately accepted, with Keynes consenting out of a sense of macabre curiosity. Strachey had pointedly refused, however, on the basis of his personal disdain for Berenson, whom he thought had “sold his soul for a life of luxury,” and his contempt for the connoisseur’s writing, which he considered crass and academically ill informed. (Naturally, the other members of the Bloomsbury group also shared this contempt, fueling Berenson’s animosity towards a group he would derisively refer to as the ‘Gloomsbury Set.’²⁰)

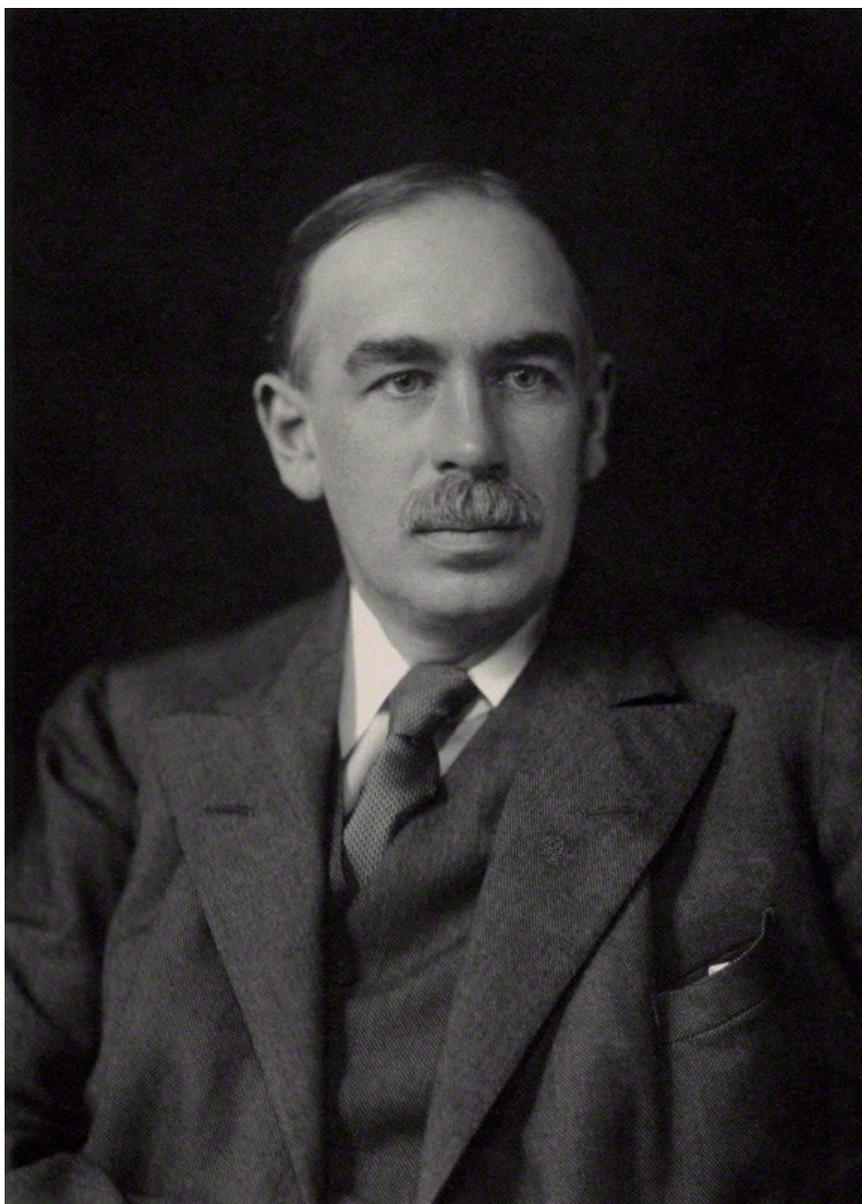
On their arrival, Scott and Keynes would have passed through the entrance foyer, which featured a copy of Alois Riegel’s *Die spättrömische Kunstindustrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn* (1901) that was ceremoniously kept on a lectern as a challenge to visiting scholars²¹, before passing through to the dining room, where they witnessed the evening’s conversation during which Berenson expounded - at length - on his aesthetic theories. (The repetitiveness of this performance left many visitors, as the American critic Elizabeth Hardwick memorably noted, with “the belated feeling you were seeing the matinee of a play that had run far too long.”²²) Despite these civilities, Berenson and Scott would both later recall the sense of suspicion they felt during this meeting, fostering the sense of scholarly distrust that lingered throughout their friendship. Following his irritation with Scott’s interjections during the evening meal, which he felt had disturbed the pace of his monologue, Berenson instructed his wife not to extend any future invitations to the young scholar. By now, however, Mary Berenson had entirely different ideas.

At the conclusion of the weekend’s festivities, the party — minus Berenson who had churlishly remained at the villa to work — embarked on a motoring trip through Tuscany. “To them everything was fun, the scrappy lunches under the trees in a drizzle, the arrival of cold carpet-less inns, the horrible meals in the mud[,] the enforced changes of route . . . everything was a source for merriment.”²³ This frivolity further inspired Mary Berenson’s growing affection for Scott, which is evident in her description of the party’s final evening spiced with champagne and cross-dressing. “They all got slightly tipsy,” she wrote of her charges. “Ray dressed herself up in Maynard’s dress suit and Karin in an old one of her stepfather, while Geoffrey wore a black dress of mine with a gold coronet on his head, and Maynard a gown of chiffon with a headdress of pink ribbons.”²⁴ Despite



Giles Lytton Strachey, 1918

Photograph by Emil Otto ('E.O.') Hoppé ©2010 E.O. Hoppé Estate Collection
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John Maynard Keynes, 1930.

Photograph by Walter Stoneman ©National Portrait Gallery, London

this general mirth, neither Ray nor Karin Costelloe were especially taken with Scott, who they nicknamed the ‘Quivering Freak’ in reference to his nervous demeanor and awkward laugh, or Keynes, who had failed to conceal his obvious delight at the sartorial role-play.²⁵

Although she found Keynes overly “self-assured and independent” (but nevertheless began a lasting correspondence with the economist), Mary Berenson recognized Scott was her “favourite kind of lame duck,” one who possessed all the characteristics she most admired by being young, handsome, highly educated, and extremely neurotic. (And pliable.) Despite the pronounced age difference, she soon became infatuated with Scott, noting how impressed she had been with his ability to keep up with her husband’s “most startling paradoxes,” and — in a characteristic inversion of reality — that “we all liked him.”²⁶ She did also note, however, the degree to which she thought Scott’s neuroticism would limit his achievements, “But I see his defects and impossibilities very clearly, and am not particularly hopeful about his future.”

However well intentioned, Russell could scarcely have made a more comically inappropriate selection of ‘suitors’ than Keynes, Scott, and Strachey: a trio who were engaged in a romantic triangle that as fraught with deep-set suspicion as it was with sexual desire. And, while Scott had traveled directly from England to Florence that Easter, Keynes had caught a train from Genoa where he had been “eating omelettes and discussing sodomy” with Strachey.²⁷ As Scott and Keynes visited the sights along their motoring journey, the economist not only recorded their enjoyment of the architecture and landscapes they encountered, but also updated Strachey with their appraisals of the “local ‘ragazzi.’” “The boys vary amazingly from place to place,” he noted, “some towns and villages were without a passable face within their walls; in others every other had at least a good complexion. We had a good opportunity for observation, for an admiring company of them gathered everywhere about the car.”²⁸ Despite of his refusal of Berenson’s invitation, Strachey took a keen interest in the subterfuges at I Tatti and was responsible for instigating the turbulent events that followed those Easter celebrations.

Although she immediately began pursuing Scott, beginning a friendship that he would remember as the most significant of his life, Mary Berenson was suspicious of his involvement with the “revival of Platonic love” that had “swept Oxford,” questioning him whether he was “a practitioner of ideated romance?” Given the perspicuity of these suspicions, it was a scant surprise that Mary Berenson soon received an anonymously penned letter that confirmed Scott as “a disciple of the deplorable practices of Oscar Wilde[, who] under the pretence of Greek friendships cloak the most unnatural and shocking form of vice.”²⁹ As Keynes explained to Strachey, who had authored the anonymous letter, “Scott is dreadfully Oxford — a sort of aesthetic person . . . Even in his sodomy, which he takes more solidly than anything else, he seems to want to worship an idealized vision.”³⁰ Scott and Strachey despised one another with a passion. “Scott is . . . a bad character,”

Strachey noted, “all egoism and love of amusement and importance for their own sakes. He’s clever, and amusing, and extremely scandalous . . . His queer secret history (and it’s extraordinary secret — above all in Florence) is that Mrs. Berenson is fanatically in love with him. He remains a confirmed sodomite, and she covers him with fur coats, editions of rare books, and even bank notes and all of which he accepts without a word and without an erection.”³¹

Although Scott was unusually frank about his homosexuality with Mary Berenson, in part to deflect her advances while simultaneously accepting her tokens of affection, in turn, she never attempted to conceal the avariciousness of her sexual desires, or the extents to which she was prepared to enact its consecration. Nor was she especially concerned with voicing her disapproval of his “disgusting and dotty” affections and her frustrations with his failure to reciprocate her advances. “I don’t know whether a mere friendship, without a touch of sex, is possible to me,” she concluded to her husband, “He isn’t my child after all.”³² Her sense of effrontery was something of a guise, however, and it is not only illustrative of the convoluted sexual machinations that were played out at I Tatti, but also the dramatic affectedness of these liaisons, which were disproportionate to their relative importance, and the manner in which these ill-conceived desires were realized through the act of writing.

This act was vital to Mary Berenson and Scott, who not only viewed it in terms of its generative capacity and symbolic resonances, but also as a kind of compulsion. A play in which the rhetorical gesture was a form of actualizing the self. (An actualization Scott even extended from the two-dimensional surface of the page to the three-dimensional volume of architecture through his suggestion of how the observer “writes themselves into space.”) As Mary Berenson understood it, writing was compulsive and engendered a kind of romantic — or narcotic — withdrawal from the object of desire. “I shan’t write more *than I can help*,” she apologized to her sister (who had complained about the volume of correspondence). “But it is like the drug habit, I know I shall fall from time to time, but in a general way I see I must check the facile flowing of my pen.” Moreover, it is her recognition of the superfluity of emissions that further illustrates her understanding of the correspondence between flirtation, sexual adventure, and literary purposefulness. (In truth, she did not consider any literary discharge facile, finally admitting to her long-exhausted sister that she considered “writing and re-writing fascinating and tormenting.”³³) As avid letter writers, Mary Berenson and Scott both recognized that the act of writing, in general, and the scripting of amorous communiqués, in particular, did not necessarily require a receptive audience, as the true object of desire lay in the act of writing itself. As with the bonds formed by lovers, “there is no insurance against the risks of writing.”³⁴ (Within the Berenson household it appeared that the production of words, which evidenced the flirtatious exchange between the writer and the page, was more capable of eliciting jealous concern than any sexual liaison.)

Mary Berenson was a formidable character and mischievous intellect and her influence over Scott — which was both operative (in the mechanics of her manipulations) and figurative (in the sense of the literary expressiveness of these gestures) — cannot be overstated. In professional terms, she was instrumental in guiding his interests towards architecture by encouraging his brief study at London’s Architectural Association, securing him a number of positions as a ‘guide’ to the aesthetic and architectural pleasures of Italy, employing him as an architect (in partnership with Cecil Pinsent) for the renovations to I Tatti, persuading her husband to engage him as his Private Secretary, and — finally — in encouraging Scott’s writing of the *Architecture of Humanism*. In this way, Mary Berenson rebutted both her husband’s dismissal of Scott as a scholar and his rejection of architecture as a suitable topic for intellectual study, while also simultaneously ‘completing’ his aesthetic project — which was primarily based on painting and sculpture — through Scott’s architectural argument in *Architecture*, which is heavily reliant on the underlying precepts of Berensonian connoisseurship.

In particular, Scott’s role in assisting Mary Berenson’s editing of her husband’s manuscripts, which was his principal duty as Berenson’s Private Secretary, not only illustrates the professionally crucial aspect of writing, but also the misunderstandings fostered by the act of writing. According to Mary Berenson — who was a more astute and a less-generous critic than most — her husband was a terrible writer; crippled by indecision, hobbled by vocabulary, and disenfranchised by the conventions of grammar. In contrast to Scott, who was a naturally gifted writer, Berenson had an awkward and labored style and remained sensitive to his “penshyness,” threatening to throw manuscripts into the fire and even listing his grievances with writing.³⁵

As Mary Berenson recalled of one typically protracted editorial session, “During the long period of not writing, his style has grown frightfully rocky. . . . he hangs on modifying clauses, and adds hints and innuendos till the result is more like a tapeworm than anything else. We were quite worn out by luncheon.”³⁶ This sense of exhaustion had persisted from her editorship of Berenson’s earlier works, such as the *Northern Painters of the Renaissance*, which resulted in “collapse from ennui and fatigue and contempt,” and concluded with Berenson’s acrimonious response that “dripped with jocose bitterness.”³⁷ A bitterness that frequently led him to lash out against any perceived threat to his aesthetic authority, or failure to afford him due credit.

This sense of indignation was ironic, moreover, given that Mary Berenson initiated the publishing contract and encouraged her husband to “make lists of all the genuine works of the Venetian painters,” which resulted in the Renaissance Painters series and assuring his ongoing fortune and notoriety. And while she first argued that the *Venetian Painters of the Renaissance* (1894) should be co-credited, “I am glad my name is not attached to it in any way,” she later noted, “not only for personal reasons, but because it is too small a book to bear two names.”³⁸ And following

publication she would only refer to it – as would the connoisseur himself – as “Bernard’s book,” beginning a history of erasure that would last for the remainder of their union.

In terms of her editorial acuity and instinctive ability to resolve conflicting ideas, Mary Berenson possessed an intellectual agility that was beyond both Berenson and Scott. This sense of playfulness is apparent in her conversation with Scott regarding the use-value of ‘facts’ in historical argument. “I like an ideal margin between me and ‘facts,’” Scott explained in summary of his historiographic methodology. “One in which I can advance and withdraw and move about generally without appreciably affecting a situation. Without that I feel neither safe, nor tranquil nor happy, nor able to appreciate value and enjoy what there is to enjoy.” (As he states in *Architecture*, Scott associated historical accuracy with an academic laboriousness he thought negated architecture’s aesthetic charge.) Mary Berenson replied with customary aplomb, noting that while Scott’s “philosophy” agreed with her husband’s, she did not share their mutual “fear” of facts. Instead, “I like ‘em,” she countered, “for they give more substance to the dream (it is always a dream), which to me is the most fascinating when it clings close, like a veil, to the mysterious thing that is other-than-myself.”³⁹ A substantiation she further argued illustrates the inherent usefulness of facts. “All art is in a certain sense a lie,” she concluded, “and the value of the art depends on the beauty of the lie, not on the veracity of the fact. But some people pretend that facts are beautiful *per se*, and that the nearer you get to them the more beautiful your art must be.”⁴⁰ Not only is her nuance and wit apparent in this declaration of the ‘beauty of the lie,’ but also the usefulness of ‘facts’ — which is less a matter of latent truthfulness than skillful plasticity — in the substantiation of her arguments.

Crucially, Mary Berenson regarded writing as both a professional necessity and an indulgent pleasure. (A joyfulness that is apparent in her suggestion to Scott that he address the “over-desiccated” style of writing in the first draft of *Architecture* by “making it swing.”⁴¹) In this way, she would also consider the failure to realize the potential for either literary, or sexual, pleasure as a form of impotence. As she noted to Keynes of her continuing frustrations with Scott — conflating her sexual desire and professional mentorship with his neurotic lack of writerly progress — “I have been telling everybody that Scott has engaged upon a work treating of Greek Myth in Renaissance Art. There are half a dozen people who finally believe he is writing the book. I wonder if he will? I gave him a fountain pen filled with ink to take notes, but I daresay they will act the opposite way.”⁴² The sexual connotations of her letter are obvious. Unconvinced of the purposefulness of her support (“I wonder if he will?”), while cognizant of her imminent disappointment (“I daresay they will act the opposite way”), she associates her annoyance with his literal sexual impotence towards her with that of a literary impotence. In these terms, Scott’s homosexuality not only represented a flirtation with an inappropriate object of desire for Mary Berenson, but also a form of critical impotence. (An

impotence that would return with his attempts to add to the ‘history of taste’ he began with *Architecture*.)

Mary Berenson’s intellectual and romantic flirtations were mercurial. She “liked to take her fiction ‘live,’” her granddaughter Barbara Strachey remembered. “She could never resist an unhappy love-affair, and would write all the details of the latest ones she had come across in her daily letters . . . She was not above stirring the pot if things were not dramatic enough for her, but she was liable to lose interest suddenly and pass on to the next fascinating set of characters.”⁴³ This odd-ball cast variously included: her first husband Frank Costelloe⁴⁴, a staunch moralist and fellow-Quaker who practiced abstinence; the young socially-ambitious Berenson⁴⁵, whose aestheticism and charm were in stark opposition to her religious and political views (and who embodied a more expedient form of culture); the brooding German sculptor Hermann Obrist⁴⁶, with whom she conducted a disastrous “exploration into that ‘Dark Continent’ we call ourselves”; the failed writer Wilfred Blaydes⁴⁷, who came to Italy in an attempt to escape his career as a London barrister; the English explorer and socialite Mounteney Jephson⁴⁸ (with whom she conducted a brief affair before marrying Berenson in 1900); and her brother-in-law Bertrand Russell.⁴⁹

Mary Berenson dutifully chronicled these adulterous liaisons in daily letters to her family and her sexual attraction to these suitors, as she freely admitted, was primarily determined by their literary value. These letters are rich with the sexual desire and intellectual ambition that reflects the movements of these liaisons as they shift from engagement and dedication, to flippancy and imminent exhaustion. Her stubbornness enflamed her romantic myopia, leading her “to fall under the influence [of] an emotion genuine and sincere from its own point of view,” as she described it, “which for the moment shut my eyes to every other point of view.”⁵⁰ And it is this moment of critical and sensory abandonment, during which she blocked out the reality of circumstance in order to freely indulge her sexual desires, that contrasts her nuanced conception of aesthetic value — determined erroneously through romantic intrigue — from the faux intellectual sobriety of Berenson and Scott.

Although he recognized “the habit of letter-writing has estranged more lovers than it has united,” Scott also found this form of flirtatious act highly addictive. “To dip the quill in ink is a magical gesture, it sets free in each of us a new and sometimes a forbidding sprite, the epistolary self.” In this way, letter writing was a kind of alchemical exchange that opened the real self out to their fictional others, engendering a “personality completely disengaged by the pen” who was radically other to “that other personality of act and speech.”⁵¹ (As Sigmund Freud once noted of the primacy of such an action, it is “only in the realm of fiction that we find the plurality of the lives which we need.”⁵²) Scott not only ascribed significance to writing letters because it afforded the



Mary Berenson, 1915.

Unknown photographer ©National Portrait Gallery, London

freedom of the 'epistolary self' (who was "completely disengaged by the pen"), but also because it facilitated a form of disengagement in which it was possible to "lose all reason."

In this way, his letters to Mary Berenson are less descriptive of his intellectual development, than illustrative of the role writing played in liberating the disengaged and 'unreasonable' self that would come to inhabit his *Architecture* as the observer. The compulsiveness of this gesture was such that, in addition to Mary Berenson, Scott also formed significant "literary relationships" (as he termed them) with the American writer Edith Wharton (1862-1937), and Vita Sackville-West (1892-1962), the English socialite and author of *The Edwardians* (1930) and *All Passion Spent* (1931), with whom he undertook a correspondence which clearly illustrated the elisions that lie between the fictive and real.⁵³

Although she advised Scott on his revisions to the second edition of *Architecture* (1924) Sackville-West believed his letters constituted his most able writing. His writing does achieve a rare fluidity in these attempts to seduce Sackville-West and their subsequent trysts amongst the shrubbery of Sissinghurst Castle seemed to provide the basis for a literary, rather than sexual, prolongation of their affair. "Vita I have never known reality like this," he first gushed, "All the flux and shifting and swimming sense of things is only the unreality going away: everything moving and changing round the fixed centre of you in my life."⁵⁴ "Yes coming back is bad," he replied in description of the complications that arose from their respective marriages. "[T]he contrast, the memories, the grip of circumstances, the sense of a relentless mechanical system of one's life at discord with all one's dreams and promptings . . . It all came over me as I entered the door."⁵⁵ And finally, in a passage that prefigures her imminent departure in especially literary terms, "The ghost of Vita is so vivid that I feel it ought to be entered in the visitor's book, next to mine, in invisible ink."⁵⁶

The performative aspect of these letters was painfully obvious, with Sackville-West rightly noting how they appeared as practiced as they were flattering, and seemed to have been written more in an attempt to satisfy the author's emotiveness than seduce the recipient. (As her son later remembered, Sackville-West was notoriously quick to tire of her dalliances and she finally dismissed Scott for another writer, Virginia Woolf, who wrote her 1928 biography *Orlando* as "the longest and most charming love-letter in literature" in honor of their affair.⁵⁷) Moreover, Sackville-West's criticism was exceptionally astute in its recognition of Scott's confusion of his literary and actual shelves, together with the repetitiveness of these missives. A repetition that Wharton, who had acted as his literary advisor on numerous occasions, recognized when she noted that this relationship was essentially a rewriting of his previous liaison with Mary Berenson.

Fittingly, the relationship between Mary Berenson and Scott was only exhausted with the publication of his 'literary biography,' the *Portrait of Zélide* (1925), which described the life and works of the eighteen-century epistolarist Madame de Charrière (Isabelle de Charrière, 1740-1805). Scott



Vita Sackville-West, 1924

Photograph by Emil Otto ('E.O.') Hoppé ©2010 E.O. Hoppé Estate Collection /
Curatorial Assistance Inc.

had been preoccupied with the biographic genre since the emergence of Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*⁵⁸ in 1918 and, like many of his contemporaries, aspired to write a biography of "literary, rather than scholarly, merit." At the prompting of his then wife, Lady Sybil Cutting, Scott had been drawn to the neglected figure of de Charrière, whose comically inappropriate desire for a much-younger man invited comparison with Mary Berenson's infatuation in terms of its description of the "instinctive war of two consummate egoists."⁵⁹

This work was unsettling, however, as it confused the distinctions between the fictive and real, biographic and autobiographic. "You must have felt some of the subject painful," he noted to Mary Berenson shortly after sending her an autographed copy. "I myself found it so acutely reminiscent that I laid it aside for three years: it was too difficult to write."⁶⁰ Although she was pained by the dissembling nature of this work, by the early-1920s she had become progressively exhausted with the protracted dissolution of their friendship. As she had first noted in relation to her early affairs, Mary Berenson understood that the value of such liaisons did not lie in their recollection (although she admitted a certain pleasure in the nostalgic longing for past love), but rather in that moment when they were at their most demonstrable and able to be incorporated within a larger aesthetic conception. "I cannot imagine anything more enchanting than to be desperately in love," she noted of this possibility, "and yet able to sublimate that love . . . into an intense enjoyment of art and beauty." Such a degree of sublimation was impossible to maintain, however, and the inevitable failure of these relationships was attributable to their inability sustain dramatic interest. "I read over the correspondence between Obrist and I," she noted of one such demise, and "I must confess, it was much duller than I thought it would be. It bored me to death."⁶¹ As these dalliances suggest, both Scott and Mary Berenson not only knew how to flirt (in inherently literary terms), but also were aware of the inherent tensions within that flirtatious act, which were more exhaustible than vital, and more impotent than generative.

As the psychoanalyst Adam Phillips suggested in his *On Flirtation: Psychoanalytical Essays on the Uncommitted Life* (1994), the act of flirting can be interpreted as explicitly vital.⁶² By exploring the latent ambivalence within any form of commitment and nurturing a corresponding sense of uncertainty, the flirtatious gesture not only toys with consequence but also — through its extension of desire and ambiguity — seeks to evade the conclusiveness of narrative. Flirtation is a way of "cultivating wishes," he notes, in which the fleetingness of engagement suggests a "playing for time" that means, "you never know whether the beginning of the story — the story of the relationship — will be the end." In this way, if the act of flirting can be considered a means of extending — rather than realizing — desire, then the moment of consummation illustrates the point at which the rhetorical structure of flirtation breaks down. And while the psychically rejuvenating possibility lies in

this flirtatious fostering of desire, then one of its attendant risks lies in its capacity to reproduce the same uncertainties (of time and invented personality) that it attempts to alleviate.

In this way, Phillips's suggestive description of flirtation opens-up a reading of Scott's architectural project in three distinct ways. Firstly, Mary Berenson's literary interpretation of Scott's homosexuality as a flirtation with the wrong subject, configured as a form of impotence in her sexually voracious terms, alludes to the extent to which Scott's explanation of the observer's vitalized relationship to architecture is subject to the impotence that is ingrained within instinctual human frailty. (A frailty that is figured as the 'humanism' in his *Architecture* in the concluding chapter of this dissertation, "Nothing but Sheer Nerves": Geoffrey Scott and the Humanism of Architecture.) Secondly, this description of the "fleeting engagement" of flirtation is also suggestive of his concern with the observer's felicity to architecture. And finally, such a conceptualization is oddly vital as informs the critique of the allegory Scott used to conclude 'Art and Thought,' the final chapter of *Architecture*, in which he summarizes his work through a narrative describing the flirtatious attraction of 'Taste' to 'Architecture.'

The Body of Pleasure

Despite his concerns with the fallacious misconception of architecture during the late-nineteenth century in England, Scott argued that such could not dull the naïve physical response to architecture. A responsiveness, he continued, that could be best be explained through a consideration of how most spontaneous and immediately pleasurable of those physical responses were innately sexual, with only the lover's 'unreasoned' — desirous — actions being capable of eluding the "reason's search."⁶³ And it is through this correlation of sensory delight with sexual gratification, moreover, that his argument illustrates both the influence of Berenson's overt aestheticism and the exaggerated anthropomorphism of several renaissance writers.

As he reminisced about "a life spent in art" in his late *Aesthetics and History* (1950), Berenson reiterated his belief that the connoisseur should "physically yield" to the art-work "as one would a lover." As with many of his aphorisms, this phrase not only illustrates the extent to which he associated the aesthetic moment with an increased sexual vitality, but also how the "lover alone is disinterested" and capable of appreciating the beauty of the art-work. Following his reading of Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (1790), Berenson argued that the lover is simultaneously both engaged and distracted during the 'aesthetic moment,' acting without any "desire to own nor even to frame [the art-work] in time and space," but rather "only wish[ing] to love and enjoy it." Although he relies on his reading of Kant's notion of "disinterestedness," which he correctly notes involves the observer's identification with the object to the extent their conception of self is

dissolved — or forgotten — within the object, Berenson’s self-conscious interest in framing the aesthetic moment in his own biographic terms is palpable. A framing in which that “unreasoned desire” is only too obviously predetermined through its fostering of an increased vitality in the observer, desexualizing the art-work through its reduction of it to a passive object that “should not rouse us to action [or] affect our productive, reproductive, or transitive energies.”⁶⁴

And it is in the terms of this paradoxical denial of reproductive energies, which simultaneously satisfy the observer’s engagement (“as a lover”), that Berenson’s conception of the art-work differed to Scott’s overtly anthropomorphized conception of the body of architecture in ‘Art and Thought.’ As Scott boldly notes, he conceived his *Architecture* in response to the intellectual tradition of Fra Giocondo (1433-1515), Leon Battista Alberti (1404-72), Andrea Palladio (1508-80), and Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554), whose works he considered meditations on architectural sensation, rather than practical or theoretical concerns.⁶⁵ These ‘architect-writers’ “had no need of theory,” he reasoned, “for they addressed themselves to taste” in their location of the humanistic figure at the center of architecture and thought. In Scott’s terms, this inscription was not passive but inherently generative, and he argued that Giorgio Vasari (1511-74) was “closest to the truth” when he noted in the *Lives of the Artists* (1550) that a building is “*non murato ma veramente nato* [not built but born]”. And it is in the extremity of his architectural anthropomorphism — in which the humanist body engages in a flirtatious exchange with the space in which it is contained — that Scott’s argument is sympathetic to the radicalism of another renaissance writer-architect, Filareté (pseud. Antonio di Pietro Averlino, 1400-69).⁶⁶

In his *Tratto d’architettura* (Treatise on Architecture, 1461-4), Filareté not only argued that architecture should be “constructed as a simile of the human body,” which conforms with Albertian theory, but also that through this manufactured verisimilitude the built work would be imbued with such human sentiments that it would offer a “true and reliable” correspondence between the two. A correspondence, he further argued, which would suggest the building is “conceived and then born.”⁶⁷ (It should be noted here that the majority of Filareté’s contemporaries considered his treatise ludicrous.) A conception in which the architect acts as both the “mother to the building” and its lover, enrapt with the “thing he loves.” “Building is nothing more than a voluptuous pleasure, like that of a man in love,” Filareté noted of this multivalent desire. “Anyone who has experienced it knows that there is so much more pleasure and desire in building that however much a man does, he wants to do more.”⁶⁸ The problem with such an avaricious “desire,” he concluded, lay with how to first initiate — and then sustain — that pleasurable correspondence? Which is to say, with how best to preserve it from being exhausted?

As Scott later recognized, one possibility for prolonging this architectural fascination lay in a strategy that was as vague as the mitotic subterfuge of love letters, or the propagation of misdirected

desires. That is, instead of directly engaging with the art-work (or approaching it with the blunt directness of Berenson), he alluded to the value of flirting with it. And, in this way, the centrality of a notion of aesthetic ‘taste’ to Scott’s argument in his *Architecture* can be framed through his request that the conclusion to his work, and the “present condition of our art,” was best explained through a romantic allegory in which ‘Taste,’ the masculine lover of a feminized ‘Architecture,’ is seduced by an adulterous ‘Criticism.’ As he wrote,

“Architecture in Arcadian days was the mistress of Taste, and arrayed herself, for her lover, in artful yet unconscious beauty. Taste, with a skill no less unconscious, knew how to win, and enjoy her charms. He altered his moods to the variety of hers, which, indeed, were infinite, but to him all pleasing. Criticism was the Nurse in this old play—a small part, but accepted. She had a store of wise sayings, not new, but gratefully heard, and constantly repeated. And sometimes she would whisper her too practised instigations in the ear of her lady; sometimes correct her lack of guile. But most, she sang to Taste the praises of his mistress and spread her portrait before his eyes.

But the time came—a hundred years ago—when Taste grew wanton and sighed for earlier loves. He occupied his thoughts with far-off songs; his mind grew busy with forgotten fancies; he dreamed of the maidens of strange lands and times. Thereat, his mistress, dismayed, sought to learn their arts, and even imitated, as she could, their quaint, old-fashioned garments. Wild weeds clothed her, and curious aprons. And for a while the pair kept up this fantastic dalliance.

But soon, as needs must, they fell out. Architecture, in these simulated graces, grew self-conscious and too little charming; and anxious to please, but pleasing no longer, studied fresh poses, still unlovely. She bared her limbs, though in truth they were gaunt; she made herself heavy with unimagined jewels and devised the most astonishing costumes. But Taste regarded her with a jaded and soon vacant eye. He took no delight in these new vestures. And one day, with loud shouts and a noise of many people following, came Commerce and Science in a lordly equipage. And, as they were flushed with wine and full of gayest and most ingenious proposals, Taste joined their company and went in search of new adventures. And whether these were to his liking, or whether some mischance befel, it was certain at least that he never returned.

Criticism was now no more the go-between. But she was never so busy or garrulous. She wrote the longest letters and addressed them to Taste. She went and gossiped with his new companions. She became tiresome: no one cared to see her. But Architecture, at last, was weary of the struggle, and said aloud that Taste had grown corrupt; whereby her pride was made easy, and Arcadia was forgotten quite. But the minor actors in the play, Commerce and Science (with Romance and Morality, for these also—even the last—were boon companions in Taste’s debauches), have different accounts to give of the matter that are full of scandal. They have suborned the Nurse to say that Taste was but their creature, and that they and not he were lovers of Architecture—which, indeed, is now true, but in Arcadia she cared for nobody but Taste, as any one can discover by inquiring.”⁶⁹

If the act of flirtation can rightly be considered as a speculative means of sustaining desire, as Phillips suggests, then Scott’s bizarre allegory attempts to illustrate - however crudely - how this erotic tension gives way as ‘Architecture’ is perverted through artifice and the adoption of the “astonishing costumes” of the late-nineteenth century eclectic styles. Subservient to the whims and “forgotten fancies” of ‘Taste,’ ‘Architecture’ can only question her “artful yet unconscious beauty” and seek attention by clothing herself in the imitative “wild weeds” of the picturesque, or the “curious aprons”

of neo-Gothicism. Meanwhile ‘Taste’ was distracted and seduced by the “ingenious proposals” of ‘Commerce’ and ‘Science,’ and the “wise, not new sayings” of ‘Criticism.’ (Who, with her “too practiced instigations” and false praises, seems to slyly imply a transgendered Berenson.) As the tone of this allegory further suggests, Scott exonerates ‘Taste’ for his capriciousness because of his understandable boredom with ‘Architecture,’ who had debased herself in an effort to satisfy his ever-changing desires.

Despite his condemnation of the exchange between ‘Architecture’ and ‘Commerce,’ ‘Science,’ ‘Romance,’ and ‘Morality’ (who are all fallacies), Scott blithely suggests that Arcadia can be restored and a “genuine” experience of ‘Architecture’ reclaimed if ‘Taste’ can again be seduced by his past lover. In this way, he understood that “flirtation is more than just nostalgia for the ‘once lovely and congenial world,’” as Phillips offered, but rather a more pernicious action that constitutes “an attempt to re-open, to rework, the plot.”⁷⁰ Although he wisely chose to omit this allegory from the second edition of *Architecture* in 1924, this editorial sleight of hand not only evidences the critical importance of this allegory, but also illustrates the extent to which he considered the perception of taste as physical in the first instance (in terms of its impotent sexual equation of sensorial pleasure to physical sensation), and how the restoration of a humanist architecture would ultimately depend on the historic recollection of its past beauty. A memory which would depend on the historical malleability of ‘facts’ in deference to narrative sensibility, and remain subject to the observer’s confusion of past loves.

The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste

Writing in the introduction to his *Architecture* in 1914, Scott framed this recollection of taste in relation to the English writer Henry Wotton’s well-known formulation in his *Elements of Architecture* (1624), which stated that “Well-building hath three conditions: Commodity, Firmness, and Delight.”⁷¹ As a classicist, Scott was aware Wotton’s formulation was a paraphrased translation of Vitruvius’s famous notion of *firmitas, utilitas, venustas* [solidity, usefulness, beauty] from his *Ten Books on Architecture* (15 BC). A reference he acknowledges in a carefully placed footnote, which seems to suggest that by quoting his fellow countryman — rather than the original source in Vitruvius — he is attempting to site his *Architecture* within an anglocentric tradition of architectural writing (satisfying the immediate concerns of his readership), while also alluding to the larger tradition of Italian classicism. (A duality is characteristic of his writing, which verbes between his higher ambitions, evident in his inspiration for the volume to exist within a humanist tradition, and a more peevish localism, apparent in his dismissal of the ‘fallacies.’) At the risk of “seeming pedantic,” he then



Mary Berenson and Geoffrey Scott, 1915.
Unknown Photographer ©National Portrait Gallery, London

elaborates on the significance of each of these conditions in order to establish the intellectual basis of his argument in *Architecture* on the precepts of ‘taste.’

In the first instance, he continues, architecture requires ‘firmness’ — or, put simply, structural integrity — as it remains subject to “physics, statics, and dynamics.” And it is essential, therefore, that architecture be considered as the “logical expression of material properties and material laws,” which not only make the act of building possible but also the history of that building “intelligible.” In this sense, the building provides the object for both a ‘direct’ reading by the observer and a technically verifiable entity for the critic. Secondly, architecture also requires ‘commodity’ — or the ability to “satisfy an external need” (such as “politics and society, religion and liturgy”) — which means that its responsiveness to these needs renders architecture “subservient to the general uses of mankind,” with this mechanism of material satisfaction ensuring “The history of civilisation thus leaves in architecture its truest, because its most unconscious record.”⁷² Writing in his earlier *National Character*, Scott had similarly interpreted architecture as the symbolic expression of society and a manifestation of “efforts informed by hidden purposes and shaped to a hidden dream.”⁷³ In this regard, his sentiments echo a reading of Heinrich Wölfflin’s *Renaissance und barock* (1888), in which the German scholar argued that architecture expressed the “Lebensgefühl [attitude to life] of an epoch,” with the individual example mattering less than the “fundamental temper which produced them.”⁷⁴ (In this was, a belief in the ‘embeddedness’ of history within architecture was an expression of the prevailing historicist concerns of the nineteenth century: a period which numerous writers, including the historian Stephen Kern, have rightly noted was “the Century of History.”) Finally, Scott further argues architecture requires ‘delight’ — by which he means it expresses a “purely aesthetic impulse” — through which it is able to both foster the “disinterested desire for beauty” within the observer’s sensorial and mental responses and, as a result of this engagement, is able to truly “become art.”⁷⁵

If architecture is the result of a combination of these three conditions (as Vitruvius, Wotton, and Scott variously suggest), then this combination of firmness, commodity, and delight is inherently unstable, however, because it is “distinguished by a deep and permanent disparity” that exists between this trio of conditions.⁷⁶ Although he argues that it might be possible to address this disparity by implementing three distinct and equally valid ‘schemes of criticism’ (based on construction, convenience, and aesthetics), Scott’s suggestion is ultimately disingenuous, as he further notes how the “true task of criticism” should be exclusively concerned with what “aesthetic pleasures have in fact been felt, and [establishing] whatever laws and conclusions it may from that understanding.” An analysis that not only appreciates how “no amount of reasoning can create, or can annul, an aesthetic experience,” but also understands how that experience can be transformed

through an unconscious process into an “independent sense of beauty,” or a “satisfaction of taste,” which allows the observer — or, in Scott’s terms, the architectural connoisseur — to “estimate its value.”⁷⁷

This formulation of the “aesthetic experience” echoes Kant’s assertion in *The Critique of Judgment* (1790) that the “definition of taste lies in the ability to judge the beautiful,” in which such judgment involves a subjective and aesthetic — rather than objective and cognitive — apperception of beauty. Following this definition, the notion of ‘taste’ is both aesthetically determined and accompanied by an associated feeling of pleasure — a “feeling of life” [*Lebensgefühl*] as Kant terms it — that arises out of the observer’s recognition of their intellectual response to the object. (Moreover, this pleasure further suggests the observer’s self-awareness is not wholly introspective as it is responsive to external objects.) Scott’s exposition of this complex dynamic was complicated, however, by his insistence that ‘taste’ was able to determine “value,” reflecting Berenson’s stress on a less-ethereal determination of the ‘aesthetic experience’ than that suggested by Kant.

In this way, Scott’s interest in defining the aesthetic value of Italian renaissance architecture was multifaceted. Firstly, his interest illustrates a reinvigorated concern with architectural classicism in English aesthetic circles, as advocated by Blomfield and the other members of the ‘Grand Manner,’ together with the promptings of the Berensons. And he self-consciously interpreted the Italian renaissance as the highest period of human aesthetic production, in part as a response to such critics as Lethaby, who distrusted the period’s undemocratically “aristocratic humanism” and “cult of individuality,” which meant it was not only an “art of scholars and courtiers” but also a “style of boredom.”⁷⁸ By contrast, Scott thought the period manifested the preeminent “architecture of taste,” which agreed with Berenson’s assertion that it produced the highest forms of “humanist art.” And, in this way, his *Architecture* also satisfies Mary Berenson’s carefully manipulated completion of her husband’s aesthetic project by dealing with the subject Berenson himself rejected — architecture.

Secondly, the ‘foreign vitality’ of the renaissance offered a respite from the exhausted eclecticism, “clumsy native endeavors to build,” and innate ‘snugness’ that was evident in the trimmed hedgerows and thatched cottages of his native land, which he previously explored in his *National Character* essay. “After all, one can’t talk for long about cottages,” he concluded, before describing how the renaissance not only illustrated a contrasting “new vision of life, a new method, or rule, of living it,” but also a “profound innovation of feeling” in subjective terms. (In this way, the renaissance was a “great imaginative experiment under the influence of the antique,” in which the reemergence of these classical forms was “inevitable” as they were “indigenously Italian” and — as such — represented an authentic architectural expression, as opposed to the “pedantic affectation [for] a manner of building that was alien and extinct,” which characterized English eclecticism.⁷⁹) Moreover, this innovation of subjective “feeling” not only engendered an aesthetically determined

architecture that was “not required to tell a story or point beyond itself,” but also provided a “perfect correspondence” between the observer’s idealized self-conception and the architectural form. With the solicitous anthropomorphism of the renaissance building expressing “a kind of externalization of the intimate conditions of our physical being.”⁸⁰

Thirdly, because of its inscription of the observer’s physical body at the center of its conceptual and architectural space, Scott considered renaissance architecture as a ‘humanist art,’ while also failing — as several critics have noted — to provide an adequate definition of what constituted ‘humanism’ within his argument. In these terms, Reyner Banham rightly suggested that Scott’s intellectual dependence on ‘humanism’ is misleading and he used the term “indiscriminately to refer to either the world of humane learning, or to the projection of human sentiments into the forms of architecture. This *double-entendre* appears to be quite unconscious, but it is upon it, and nothing else, that his theory of renaissance architecture as an art of pure form, pure taste and pure pleasure is founded.”⁸¹ While Banham’s critique is vital, it is by no means unique, with the critical disparity in Scott’s notion of humanism also being acknowledged by Blomfield and Rudolf Wittkower, amongst others. (For example, as Alina Payne has rightly noted, Wittkower’s definition of ‘humanism’ as an intellectual configuration — based on the Renaissance’s appropriation of Platonic philosophy, Pythagorean mathematics, and Euclidian geometry — in his *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, 1949, effectively offers a rebuke of Scott’s aesthetic conception of humanism.)

For Scott, the renaissance extended from Filippo Brunelleschi’s revival of classical forms in the fifteenth century to the rise of neogothic movement four hundred years later. “The old mediaevalism, and the new, mark the boundaries of our subject,” he concluded, with the innate forcefulness of this demarcation ensuring the “sequence of architecture is radically cleft” and the period can be considered as aesthetically self-contained. And he reads a “single complex of ideas” and “common reference to a great tradition” within the “extraordinary diversity, brevity, and force” of the various architectural periods — “primitive, classic, baroque, academic, rococo” — that have manifested the “inspiration of Vitruvius” and the arbitration of “pagan Rome.” In this way, the use of classical principles by renaissance architects expressed an innate architectural taste, resulting on the irresistible vitality within the period, which “began its own momentum” and manifested a “pageant of great suggestions.”⁸² This sense of creative vitality was best exemplified, Scott further noted, by the “problem” of the Basilica of St. Peter’s, Rome, which was explored by such diverse figures as Donato Bramante (1444-1514), Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni (1475-1564), Raphael Sanzio di Urbino (1483-1520), Baldassare Peruzzi (1481-1536), Giuliano Sangallo (1443-1516), Carlo Fontana (1638-1714), Carlo Maderna (1556-1629), and Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680). (Scott later returned to this problem in 1926 with his article, “The Basilica of St. Peter’s,” which offers a

conventional historiographic account of the basilica's development, proving an unusually well informed footnote to his allusion to this building in *Architecture*.⁸³)

Given his emphasis on the critical apperception of taste, Scott understandably rejected a historiographic survey of renaissance architecture in favor of an aesthetically determined review, which considered 'taste' as the "disinterested enthusiasm for architectural form" and the basis on which to "judge the beautiful."⁸⁴ Although he conceded the limited value of considering architecture in terms of its fulfillment of "structural principles" (renaissance architects' "'preference' for particular combinations of solid and void, light and shade" were "insignificant" in relation to the "independent and native preference of taste"), or "practical needs" (issues of "race, politics, the changes of society, geological facts, mechanical laws" do not mitigate the essentiality of taste), he reiterated that such an analysis would be essentially impoverished "because of its failure to describe the observer's 'enjoyment' of architecture. And it is only by studying architecture as "an aesthetic impulsion, controlled by aesthetic laws," he concluded, could it be truly "studied as an art."⁸⁵ (A reclamation of architecture as a legitimate art-form that not only reflected Scott's natural interest in the subject, but also Mary Berenson's discrete prompting.)

In structural terms, Scott's study of this 'art' is divided into two parts. The first "destructive" section, in which he describes the pernicious influence of the "fallacies" on late-nineteenth century architectural thought and their perversion of the observer's ability to inhabit an architecturally legible space. And the second "constructive" or "theoretical" section, in which he outlines his notion of the observer's tactile-sensorial response to architecture, which is heavily indebted to a contemporaneous Germanic notion of 'empathy theory,' as it was articulated by writers such as Wölfflin and Adolf Hildebrand as an architecturally derived projective state of *einfihlung* (or "feeling into"), and its reception and formulation within Berenson's famous conception of 'tactile values.'

For Scott these critical misconceptions left a "legacy of prejudice, ridicule, and confusion," in which architecture is regarded through a "distorting atmosphere of unclear thought" that not only influences the possibility of judging architecture "sincerely for itself" (in its own intrinsic terms), but also unduly affects the observer's immediate sensory reaction towards architecture. And, as these sensations are mediated by the preoccupations of opinion and the predetermination of experience, Scott argues it is impossible to accept the 'reliability' of these sensations before considering the "influences by which contemporary opinion . . . is unwittingly surrounded and controlled."⁸⁶ In this way, this exposition in *Architecture* is a development of the critical misconceptions he briefly outlined in his earlier *National Character*, which he had categorized as: the Romantic Fallacy, which is subdivided into the Natural and Literary Fallacies; the Mechanical Fallacy; Ethical Fallacy; and

Biological Fallacy. (Given this definition, it is worth noting the extent to which these fallacies are both interchangeable within his argument, and also permeate his own writing in *Architecture*.)

The romantic fallacy in architecture referred to the undue influence of the late-eighteenth century romantic movement, which had fostered a generalized “enlargement of the poetic sensibility” throughout England that privileged the natural over the architectural (which it considered artificial). Romanticism was associated with a spatially and temporally idealized notion of the “remote” that defined ‘beauty’ in terms of an irrational appeal to the senses, which further resulted in a retrospective “turning away from the present [and] casting on the screen of an imaginary past the projection of its unfulfilled desires.” In order that such a projective past is necessarily complete, moreover, he argues that the idealized romantic conception must be coincidental with a moment in which it is possible to translate the “poetic material into plastic form” (as the architect “can never wholly override custom nor contradict tradition”). Such architectural expressions are devalued in comparison to the ‘ungovernable’ effects of nature, however, with the romantic fascination with ‘strangeness’ both destroying the tenets of reason and considering architecture as artificial (“simply because it was not natural”). Scott rightly relates this nineteenth-century “cult of nature” to Ruskin’s advocacy of “Nature bearing witness against the formal instincts of man” in his *Stones of Venice* (1851-3), which was so pervasive that “Naturalism became the aesthetic method, and the love of Nature was the most genuine emotion of our age.”⁸⁷

While the influence of such a romantic conception of nature had a significant affect on the late-Victorian period he was criticizing (especially in terms of the influence of ‘naturalistic’ and ‘picturesque’ terms), his own argument in *Architecture* is permeated with the overt literariness he associated with the romantic fallacy. As Scott noted in reference to the ‘literary confection’ of Strawberry Hill, Horace Walpole’s house in London, “all permanence and objectivity of judgment is lost” when architecture is misinterpreted “as symbolic” and the formally representative element — or detail — is misread as “content.”⁸⁸ In this way, “taste becomes capricious,” he concluded, and the resultant architecture is “unduly stylistic and unduly antiquarian” and expressive of a “false conception of style,” which assigns an “exaggerated value” to the detail — such as a Doric pillar, or pointed arch — at the expense of the “general values” of mass, space, line, and legibility in the overall architectural composition.⁸⁹

Although such a “literary” consideration of architecture was ostensibly false as it tended towards a “pedantic” or “stereotypical” conception, Scott conceded the usefulness of such an intellectual framing by suggesting these literary devices allowed him to distinguish between the “direct” and “indirect” experience of architecture. (With the distinction between the universality of literary ‘meaning’ and an “as yet undetermined” architectural language further allowing him to suggest it remained subject to individual interpretation.) In this way, the ‘direct’ experience involved

the “sensuous experience and simple perceptions of form,” which are immediate and ungoverned, and the ‘indirect,’ which lies “beyond the immediacy” of direct experience, embodied the “associations which the work awakens in our mind — our conscious reflections upon it, the significance we attach to it, the fancies it calls up, and which, in consequence, it is said to express. This is the indirect, or associative, element.”⁹⁰ Although literature and poetry can appeal to the complex associative “meaning” of an art-work (by aspiring to universal ‘significance’), by contrast architecture has “no system of accepted meanings” and can only make a “direct appeal” to the immediate sensorial responses. (A direct appeal that represented both the authenticity of architectural experience for Scott and the overly literal nature of architecture for Berenson.)

If the observer attempts to derive an “associative value” from architecture, he continued, this sense of value will be “determined wholly by the accidents of our time and personality,” reflecting a capriciousness that is both singular and indefinite. “Thus while each individual, or generation, may add to the direct pleasures of architecture a further element of associative delight,” he noted in description of this mechanism, “this associative element is not fixed or organisable; it does not contain the true intention or typical value of the art, and it cannot be fitted to contain them.”⁹¹

Although Scott was careful not to deny the intellectual significance of specifically literary conceptions, he argued that the “habitual preoccupation with ‘significance’” lead to the literary fallacy, which sacrificed the importance of the immediate appeal to a belief in the associative meaning. In this way, this fallacy “neglects the fact that in literature meaning, or fixed association, is the universal term,” he noted of this difference, “while in architecture the universal term is the sensuous experience of substance and form.”⁹² Given the sensuous nature of that experience, however, the direct impression of architectural form is confused by the return of the ‘unfixed’ and ‘unorganized’ associative value, which — he states — constitutes the work’s “ultimate value” (in the sense that it defines what is remembered). “For since man is a self-conscious being, capable of memory and association, all experiences, of whatever kind, will be merged, after they have been experienced, in the world of recollection.”⁹³ Leading to a condensation that not only evidences the “shifting web of ideas” suggestive of “literary emotion,” but also the “more permanent element of our architectural experience,” which is riven with mnemonic associations and those “accidents of our time and personality.”

If Scott’s *Architecture* is flush with his own susceptibility to the literariness he defined in the romantic fallacy, it is largely impervious toward the second of the critical misinterpretations he identified, the mechanical fallacy. As he rightly noted, the nineteenth-century’s fascination with the mechanical and material sciences had an immeasurable affect on its understanding of the arts. And while this fascination could be expressed in the non-architectural arts in a sophisticated and

productive manner — such as the consideration of “optical facts” and theorization of “vision” that informed painting, for example — in architectural terms this fascination was largely reductive and typically lent itself towards an asinine scientific explanation of structure and constructive principles. Foremost among these “scientific critics” were Thomas Graham Jackson and Lethaby, who stressed that engineering, mathematics, and “hard building experience” should form the basis of all architectural knowledge, “not taste.”⁹⁴

For Scott, such criticism was simply concomitant with the “ideals of the engineer” and failed to appreciate architecture in its own terms.⁹⁵ Despite his suggestion that the ‘fundamental question’ of architectural aesthetics lay with the “true relation of construction to architectural beauty” (which merely reaffirmed his conceptual triad of commodity, firmness, and delight), Scott recognized such “technical” arguments failed to appreciate the aesthetic value of architecture. (A failure Blomfield similarly leveled against Lethaby when he argued that his friend’s prosaic conception failed to consider the “mysteries of great architecture.”) And it also failed, moreover, to discuss how the “constructive properties” of a building — by which Scott appears to mean the spatial proportions — facilitated the translation from “abstract logic to psychological effect” in the observer’s perception of architectural space.⁹⁶ A translation that is limited, moreover, by “more complex forms of construction,” which can only be interpreted intellectually and restrict the observer’s capacity for emotive response (as the “physical memory supplies no analogies” for such architecture). In this way, he defended the “visual simplicity” of renaissance architecture on the basis that it illustrated the architect’s understanding of the necessity for an easily legible correspondence between structural delineation and optical effect.⁹⁷

Although he conceded that the influence of John Ruskin had dramatically waned during the early-twentieth century, Scott noted that this virtually omnipotent influence had resulted in a moralist interpretation of architecture in which “intellect is idle, invention impossible, but in which all luxury is gratified and all insolence gratified.”⁹⁸ (Ironically, this quotation is also cited by Wittkower in his *Principles* as an illustration of such an “extreme statement” of ecclesiastical moralism. In this way, although Scott’s *Architecture* constituted the other aestheticized extremity Wittkower sought to counter, both critics were intellectually unified in their condemnation of Ruskin.) As Scott acknowledged, Ruskin’s persuasive argumentation in the *Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) and *Stones of Venice* (1851) made architecture “seem important,” and his literary forcefulness and “moralist vigour” not only effectively acted as a counter to the scientific determinism of the mechanical and biological fallacies, but also stressed the “psychological reference” architecture produced in the observer.⁹⁹ Although he later conceded, “Morality deepens the content of architectural experience,” Scott noted this was only because it added to the fundamental generalized contextualization of individual sensorial experience,

rather than determining experience as Ruskin had suggested, with such a “reference” remaining intellectually flawed as it was framed in “exclusively moral” terms.¹⁰⁰

The undue influence of Ruskin’s morally charged writing had been widely criticized by a number of contemporaneous critics, however, and Scott’s definition of this fallacy not only contributed to this critique, but also utilized it in order to further disassociate renaissance architecture from any potential ethical concerns, which continued to interpret it — in the words of the English writer Charles Moore — as a “distinctly political” art that reflects “national aspiration.”¹⁰¹ In this way, he not only sought to Ruskin’s moralistic influence and socially utopianist conception of the role of the architect, but also the empiricist histories of such figures as Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), who referred in his *Die römischen Päpste in den letzten vier Jahrhunderten* (“Roman Popes in the Last Four Centuries,” 1834-6) to the “slavery and degradation” of renaissance craftsman. In contrast to his citation of von Ranke’s political history, which rightly interpreted the architectural manifestation of various institutions as a representation of papal power, Scott’s aesthetically determined history considers Pius II, Leo X, and Julius II as “cultivated enthusiasts” and patrons of renaissance art, who were simply driven by “their aesthetic opinions” and “sensitive tastes,” rather than any endemic political motivations.¹⁰²

Finally, he stressed that his greatest intellectual unease stemmed from what he considered to be the least appropriate theoretical intrusion into architectural criticism from other disciplines, Darwinian evolution. “Of all the currents that have lapped the feet of architecture,” Scott noted, “the philosophy of evolution must be held to have been the most powerful in its impulse” and eventually assumed such a pervasive influence that appeared to be “less an instrument of science than a natural process of the unconscious mind.”¹⁰³ The biological fallacy, as he defined it, led to an explanation of architectural progression in terms of an organic science, which is evident in the historiographic interpretation of renaissance as a “sequence of styles.” In this way, the renaissance was divided into three successive architectural eras — the “tentative, experimental” quattrocento, “climax and prime” of Bramante and Raphael (which expressed a “complete equipoise between majesty and refinement”), and the “abuse of power” of the baroque — that crudely equated to a biologically determined cycle of “growth, maturity, decay.”

Scott abhorred such a definition to two reasons. Firstly, he thought such an analogy shifted the critical emphasis from the individual “terms of the sequence” to the progression of that sequence itself, which further illustrated a “leveling tendency” in which the architecturally unresolved “problems” of a given period were of greater intellectual significance than its more refined art-works. With this equivalency not only alluding to the lack of an “interest in value,” but also an undue emphasis on “what is historically illuminating [rather] than what is beautiful.”¹⁰⁴ As he had previously contended, Scott considered the renaissance an autonomously self-contained period, “radically cleft”

from both the preceding and antecedent eras, which not only manifested a distinct aesthetic vitality (explored in its own terms), but also an acceptance of the governing “taste” it expressed.

Secondly, he also objected to the mechanics by which the “solemn terminology of evolution” informed an approach that “forces the facts to fit this preconceived notion.” Although he allowed such an evolutionary sequence was capable of explaining the ‘birth’ and ‘climax’ of the renaissance, he especially with the corresponding conception of the baroque as embodying a ‘decline.’ By contrast, the “irrational, exaggerated, abused” formal explorations of this period illustrate a “wholly psychological” approach, which resulted in a “sort of architectural delirium” that is reflective of the “dreams of a collapsing mind.” His enthusiasm for the psychologically determined architecture of the baroque, which other critics typically read as an aberration, was also inadvertently paradoxical, however, in that it represented a confusion of the spatial legibility he had previously valued in the “simple forms” of classical renaissance architecture. And, although he argued that the baroque did not constitute a decline in architectural terms, noting that ‘true decadence’ equated to “an empty facile repetition of past phases,” Scott also acknowledged that while a biological definition of decadence as a “loss of energy” was less applicable to a description of baroque architecture, it was apt as a formulation of the observer’s experiential relation to it. One in which their excited confusion with this breakdown in tactile-values foreshadowed a more pervasive sensorial breakdown with the advent of modernity.

If the first ‘constructive’ section of *Architecture* has been duly praised for the academic value of its argument, in which the fallacies are first defined then rebuked, the second ‘theoretical’ section evinces a less logical and more emotive approach. In this section, Scott sought to explain how the observer’s sensorial and metaphoric correspondence with architecture, described in terms of ‘tactile-values,’ resulted in their appreciation of — and investment within — a humanistic conception of space. As his friend, the architect Clough Williams-Ellis (1883-1978) later recalled, “Geoffrey had a great feeling for space” that was illustrated by his “gesturing and posturing to express this feeling within buildings.”¹⁰⁵ (In this way, his bodily contortions echoed those of Lee as she toured the sculpture galleries of Italy.) Moreover, Scott should to develop this self-consciously exaggerated ‘posturing’ into a general theory that explained the observer’s aesthetic experience of architecture, enacted through an analogical exchange in which the visual reception of architecture was translated into imagined physical sensations that were then projected out — ‘writing out’ the bodily image onto the architectural space that contained it.

Scott’s explanation of this process was vital for two reasons. Firstly, he believed that this explanation of the bodily mechanics associated with such a sensory perception mitigated the intellectual distortions of the ‘fallacies.’ And secondly, this explanation also allowed the definition of

a distinctly architectural conception of beauty. “What we feel as ‘beauty’ in architecture is not a matter for logical demonstration,” he later reasoned, rather “It is experienced, consciously, as a direct and simple intuition, which has its ground in that subconscious region where our physical memories are stored.”¹⁰⁶ And it is in this interplay between the conscious reception and unconscious appreciation that he imaged architecture could be “simply and immediately perceived” as a composition of “spaces, of masses, and of lines,” revealed through light and shade, with such a degree of clarity that mitigated extraneous influences.¹⁰⁷

As the observer visually traces the architectural space, allowing “the mind to pass successively over points in space,” the compositional details that emerge are “perceived as appearances” and translated — by analogy — into “human functions.” “Through these spaces we can conceive ourselves to move,” he noted of this process, and “these masses are capable, like ourselves, of pressure and resistance; these lines, should we follow or describe them, might be our path and our gesture.”¹⁰⁸ In this way, architecture “stirred our physical memory” and fostered an “identification” that meant “*We have inscribed ourselves into terms of architecture.*” Through this process of ‘writing out’ the physical memory, Scott then argues that the architectural space becomes “unconsciously invested” with the desires of the observer, leading to the complimentary principle in which “*We transcribe ourselves into terms of architecture.*”¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the observer’s ability to realize the translation of architectural elements into bodily sensations, followed by the empathetic projection of their psychical state out into the architectural space (inhabiting that container), not only provided the basis for the “critical appreciation” of architecture, but also — crucially — determined the observer’s ability to derive pleasure from architecture. An aesthetically determined pleasure that illustrated both their “sensitivity to architecture” (demonstrating a “great feeling for space”), together with the culmination of a process of inhabitation that — Scott concluded — constituted the “humanism of architecture.”¹¹⁰

Following this logic, the legibility and continuity of architectural space were of vital importance to his notion of architectural empathy as they allowed a liberty of movement and humanized inhabitation. “The eye and mind must travel together,” he explained, as “any breach of continuity, whether of mood or scale, . . . throws us back from the humanized world to the chaotic.”¹¹¹ And, in order to stave off a return to the chaotic (or natural), Scott argued for the reinstatement of the principles of classical architecture — as exemplified in the Italian renaissance — that would result in works that offered a coherent synthesis of mass, weight, and scale. In this conception, renaissance architecture constituted the clearest expression of humanist space, which was not only proportioned to the human body, allowing physical delight, but also intellectually coherent, allowing a pure conception of beauty. And the renaissance gave a tangible form to an architectural ideal by “constructing, within the world as it is, a *pattern of the world.*”¹¹²

As he noted in a footnote to this explanation, his “theory was not new” but was an interpretation of the “constantly discussed and frequently misunderstood” notion of “empathy,” as presented by the German philosopher Theodor Lipps (1851-1914) in his *Raumaesthetik und Geometrisch-optische Täuschung* (“Aesthetics of space and geometrical-optical illusions,” 1897).¹¹³ Although he argued Lipps “fathered [a] scientific-psychological” approach to the empathetic relationship with art in this work, Scott also acerbically noted that his “influence upon purely architectural criticism has been negligible” and even Blomfield, whom he considered the “most philosophic” of English critics, had previously rebuked Lipps’s theory in the *Mistress Art* (1908). (Blomfield rejected the applicability of Lipps’s notion of empathy to architectural criticism on the basis that it — like Scott’s argument in *Architecture* — depended on an analogical correspondence between the observer’s physical body and architecture, which he thought was overly determined and nonsensical.¹¹⁴) Interestingly, Scott pointedly failed to use the German *einfihlung* in his description of empathetic projection, however, and he characteristically referred any “interested readers” to the ‘theoretical works’ of Vernon Lee, which included *Beauty and Ugliness and Other Studies in Psychological Aesthetics* (1912), and *The Beautiful: An Introduction to Psychological Aesthetics* (1913).¹¹⁵ (In particular, her 1897 essay “Beauty and Ugliness” was an attempt to introduce Lipps’s concepts to the English art-world.) Her works, he concluded, offered “the most extensive survey of the question which has appeared in English,” together with “the necessary references to the foreign literature of the subject.” With this characteristic act of intellectual dissuasion, Scott not only illustrated his difficulties with reading German, which hindered the depth to which he could develop his understanding of this theory, but also his frustrations with listening to — rather than reading — Lee’s interminable explanations. (For Bertrand Russell, Lee was the “most inveterate talker” he had ever met and Nicky Mariano, the Berenson’s intimate, remembered how the virtually deaf writer only kept a listening horn at her ear while she spoke, lowering it once someone began to reply.¹¹⁶)

As he formulated this chapter, Scott realized the necessity of delving into “the ideated sensation theories of the Lipps-BB-Hildebrand-and (alas) Vernon-Lee-nexus.” In particular, he recognized Lee’s work offered a more intellectually substantive formulation of these “ideated sensations” than Berenson, who “sails too lightly over really grave philosophical difficulties and scandalizes the logical minded beyond measure.”¹¹⁷ Given this understanding, it is ironic that he ultimately failed to critically engage with Lee’s works; a neglect that is apparent in two ways. Firstly, Lee largely discounted the “aesthetic imperative” of architecture, which she considered crass in its evocation of the observer’s emotive responses. (Like Berenson, she preferred the representational complexity of painting to the literality of architecture.) And secondly, as she pointedly noted in her *Introduction to Psychological Aesthetics* — published in 1913 as Scott was completing his *Architecture* — the “central meaning” of Lipps’s notion of *einfihlung* had been willfully misunderstood. Not only had its

centrality to the aesthetic experience been overstated, as it was simply one of a number of “various mergings of the perceiving subject with the qualities of the perceived object,” but also the recourse to this “inner mimicry” did not fully appreciate how these emotions were preconditioned in memory.¹¹⁸ (A mnemonic failure Scott that returned to in his epilogue to the second edition of *Architecture*.)

In spite of his concerns with Berenson’s laxity, Scott’s conception of empathy was determined less by his understanding of Lee’s work, or its precedents, than his discussions with the Berensons. An intellectual indebtedness he recognized, moreover, by noting — without any touch of irony — how the “most fruitful concrete application” of this “view of aesthetics” could be found in Berenson’s *Florentine Painters* (1896) and *Central Italian Painters* (1897), the final two volumes of his extensive *The Italian Painters of the Renaissance*.¹¹⁹ In this way, Scott sought to distance his *Architecture* from any “purely psychological discussion,” or overtly theoretical argument, which he elsewhere noted would detract from the rhetorical value of this work. By contrast, he reiterated that it had been his intention to “satisfy an architectural rather than a philosophical curiosity,” with the work having been “derived wholly from the author’s own immediate experience.”¹²⁰ (However, this lack of intellectual substantiation resulted in an “almost absurdly inappropriate” theory, as many critics rightly noted of Scott’s exposition of tactile-values.¹²¹)

Berenson had first been introduced to a Lippsean notion of empathy during the mid-1890s by the Jurgenstil sculptors Hermann Obrist (1863-1927) and Adolf Hildebrand (1847-1921).¹²² In particular, Hildebrand had resided in Florence since the mid-1870s and together with Conrad Fiedler (the author of ‘Observations on the nature and history of architecture,’ 1878), he had published *Das Problem der Form der bildenden Kunst* (The problem of form in the fine arts) in 1893. As Mary Berenson noted, this small work aroused “a great deal of attention” and Berenson eagerly digested the book — along with the author’s impromptu clarifications — as he composed his famous concepts of “tactile values” and “space composition” during the late-1890s.¹²³ His heavily-Lippsean conception of “tactile values” was first articulated in the *Florentine Painters* (1896), in which Berenson explained how the observer’s “retinal impressions” of the art-work engendered an intellectual appreciation that was manifested through a series of empathetic “muscular sensations.” Although these sensations were entirely imagined, he argued they were so pronounced as to be “taken for granted as real,” which allowed — in turn — an “artistic pleasure” (in the receipt of beauty) that is separate from “the interest we feel in symbols.” In this way, the art-work’s solicitation of corporeal ‘tactile values’ projects these sensations back out into an imaginative inhabitation of the two-dimensional art-work, “doing consciously what we all do unconsciously” by “constructing the third dimension.”¹²⁴ (Interestingly, Lee criticized this conception on the basis that it was not only “entirely opposed to the facts of visual perception and visual empathy,” but also blindly restated Hildebrand’s notion of spatial projection. An accusation Hildebrand shared.)

Berenson also defined his complimentary notion of “space composition” in the *Florentine Painters*. This term refers to the “painterly representation of space,” which is different from ordinary painterly composition in that its formal arrangements not only extended “only laterally, or up and down on a flat surface,” but also “inwards in depth as well.” In this way, the space-composition produced sensations in three-dimensions — “in the cube, and not merely on the surface” — and the addition of this imagined spatiality further released the observer from their “tight, painfully limited self,” allowing that self to be “dissolve[d] into the space presented, until at last we seem to become its indwelling, permeating spirit.” “Space-composition is the art which humanizes the void,” Berenson asserted, and this projective casting constituted the work’s innate ‘humanism.’¹²⁵ (In these terms, this conception is consistent with Hildebrand’s prior assertion that “we live and weave a spatial consciousness” that animates the void.¹²⁶) Moreover, these exchanges were dynamic and produced “immediate effects on the vaso-motor system” that resulted in “a feeling of heightened or lowered vitality.”¹²⁷ An accentuated vitalism that he further associated with the “art of space-composition,” in which the observer gets “a sense of space not so much as a void, as something merely negative . . . but, on the contrary, as something positive and definite, able to confirm our very consciousness of being, to heighten our feeling of vitality.”

In this way, Berenson argued that renaissance painting was not only capable of eliciting a heightened “sensation of pleasure,” but also stimulating the “psychical processes” to such an degree that the act of vision was accompanied by a “doubling of mental activity.” With this doubling equated with the connoisseur’s studiously heightened sensibility. “Those who are capable of receiving direct pleasure from a work of art are generally led on to the further pleasures of self-consciousness,” he noted of this process, resulting in an “exhilarating sense of increased capacity in the observer.”¹²⁸ Following this logic, architecture embodied a kind of aesthetic poverty as it was only capable of manifesting the ‘literal’ three-dimensionality of the space-composition, rather than the metaphoric suggestion made by the two-dimensional painting. “Space-composition in painting is the lovelier sister of architecture,” he stated of this relative impoverishment. “Architecture closes in and imprisons space, is largely an affair of interiors. Painted space-composition opens out the space it frames in . . . conveying a sense of space untrammelled, but not chaotic spaciousness.”¹²⁹ Again, for Berenson, architecture — like sculpture — was overtly literal in its embodiment of three-dimensional space.

Conversely, Scott argued that the “unique pleasure” of architecture lay precisely in this literalism, which was able to “give space its full values and surround us with a void of three dimensions,” with “whatever delight may be derived from that is the gift of architecture alone.” A delight that was intimately associated — by analogy — with the bodily functioning of the observer as the “physical memory” of architecture is constructed “every time we draw breath.”¹³⁰ Moreover,

Scott's use of this analogy is especially apt, given that the "process of breathing" is "unconscious" and of such "vital value" that any "restriction of the normal function is accompanied by pain."¹³¹ Paradoxically, this literality — of both aesthetic value and unrestricted painless vitality — depended on the metaphoric correspondence that lies within the observer's empathetic projection into architectural space. And, if by definition, a metaphor is the transcription of one thing into terms of another unrelated thing, then he not only thought the physical body is the "universal metaphor," through which the sensations of architectural experience are "profoundly felt," but also that this "transcription of the body's states into forms of buildings" constituted the "architectural art." While Scott accepted that such theory relied on the metaphoric exchange, when such "a metaphor is so obvious and immediately understood," he argued, "it presupposes a true and reliable experience [and] such metaphors are wholly different from literary conceits."¹³² Or are they?

Within such a conceit, the use of metaphor implies — in the most literal sense — the rhetorical allusion of one term, which is present, to another, which is absent. In this way, metaphor depends on "giving [*epiphora*] the thing a name that belongs to something else," the philosopher Jacques Derrida has noted, after all how would it be possible to make "anything *sensible* except by metaphor?"¹³³ Here Derrida's toying with the double meaning of sensible — in referring to both what is related to the senses, which can *be* sensed, and what is sensible, that which *makes* sense — illustrates the extent to which these two meanings are intertwined and can only be considered through that indeterminate duality. As Alan Bass has noted, Derrida utilizes a translation of the Greek *epiphora* as "transport" in order to suggest that both *meta-phora* and *epi-phora* share the same etymological root and are both derivations of *pherein*, "to transport."¹³⁴ Considered in these terms, the metaphoric — or transportative — substitution of one entity for another is governed by the rules of analogy, in which the term that is exchanged is supposedly equivalent to the one replacing it. The metaphor guarantees to "give more than it can" in this exchange, however, resulting in a 'literary deficit' that can "never be 'balanced.'" That is, in the sense that it can never fully deliver what it promised, the metaphor not only speaks of "expenditure without reserve," but also embodies a state of "decline."¹³⁵ A loss that further illustrates the fragility of the observer's metaphoric experience of architecture, which naturally tends toward an exhausted expenditure (as Scott's biography evinces), together with how this exchange is also suggestive of a 'panoply of symptoms,' described through a flow of letters, which transport the vital body from a state of health to a state of exhausted satisfaction.

A Saturated View

In the epilogue to the second edition of *Architecture*, published in 1924, Scott reiterated his continuing concerns with the dismissal of classical architecture, which had increased during the intervening decade, together with his association of this dismissal with a more immediate problem: one in which architects were losing their “habitual ability” to see. Although he admitted it was essential to appreciate what the “eyes saw in moments of concentrated research,” which he had previously stressed in the original edition of *Architecture*, he thought it even more important to take into account what “our eyes habitually see” during those moments of distracted interest. The contemporaneous observer was lost in “a welter of commercial and municipal monstrosities,” however, and Scott further lamented the disappearance of the “heritage of humanist architecture” on which the development of an observant architectural sensitivity depended. A loss to the crass commercialism of modernity (evident in his reference to commercial, municipal, and infrastructural examples), which was leading towards a visual poverty that was potentially even more damaging than the symbolic and sensorial overload of late-nineteenth-century eclecticism. Naturally, Scott compared this contemporaneous poverty to the habitual familiarity of the ‘renaissance masters’ with humanist architecture, moreover, noting how these architects “lived and moved among buildings where the values of Mass, Space and Line were often coherently displayed.”

In response to this absence, he advocated architects seek “a more habitual, a more saturated familiarity with the tradition of humanist architecture.”¹³⁶ In this way, he not only argued that it was essential architects were “saturated” with an image of humanist architecture, but also — in the sense of his conception of the observer’s empathetic projection into space — were enclosed within that image as well. (An inhabitation that can be read, in its extremes, as a defensive withdrawal from the modern world.) During the early-1910s Scott had been exposed to the works of the French philosopher Henri Bergson by Karin Costelloe, Mary Berenson’s daughter, whose studies of Bergson culminated in her *The Misuse of Mind: a Study of Bergson’s Attack on Intellectualism* (1922). In an echo of these discussions, Scott concluded that the development of such a ‘saturated’ knowledge depended on an increased unconscious intuition (as opposed to a conscious appreciation), as the “training of the creative faculty will not lie in the analysis of that process, but rather in rendering it more sensitive.”¹³⁷ A ‘rendering’ that sustains the Bergsonian *durée* through an erasure of the visually insensate ‘gaps’ — the “welter of commercial and municipal monstrosities” — that exist between the observer’s sensible experience of humanist architecture.

In this way, his dependence on the visual terms of this explanation, which extends from the observer’s individual inability to ‘see’ through to a more general loss of critical acuity, is crucial to framing both the antimodernist retrospective impulses of his argument in *Architecture* (in both the

1914 and 1924 editions), and the coincidental negation of his conception of humanist space in the wake of the events of 1914.

As he prepared the revisions to this second edition, Scott described his ambition to make the edition “a real improvement on the first” in two ways. Firstly, he sought to respond to criticisms that the second, ‘constructive,’ section was intellectually speculative by discussing his revisions to this chapter with Mary Berenson and Sackville-West (who largely commented on the style of writing), among others. Despite his concerns, however, with the exception of his deletion of the romantic allegory regarding ‘Architecture’ and ‘Taste’ the chapter remain largely untouched and he further addressed those comments regarding the brevity of this section (in comparison to his lengthy exposition of the fallacies), by noting how the “overlooking of essential passages” is the “natural penalty for a condensed argument.”¹³⁸ A gesture that allowed him to defer any intellectual development of his argument to the second, unwritten, volume of his ‘history of taste.’ “The one most can do here is to clear the ground,” he explained, “to seek to devise new codes for the operation of that instinct would be once more to intellectualise a faculty which is not in my opinion primarily an intellectual one at all.”¹³⁹

Secondly, Scott also noted his sensitivity regarding the lack of photographs or illustrations in the original publication, describing his intention to add such images. Despite this suggestion and his declared hope that the revised edition of *Architecture* would satisfy an audience of “specialists” (comprising architects, academics, and critics), together with the “general public,” ultimately this edition did not contain any illustrations or photographs that could have confirmed his analysis to those specialists, or potentially enticed the general readership.¹⁴⁰ The continued absence of these ‘suitable visual examples’ can be attributed to a combination of his characteristic laxity and the financial concerns he expressed to Mary Berenson, noting that he would refrain from “making many changes as it would sent up the price of the book.”¹⁴¹ This deficiency can also be read in more critical terms, however, as it also suggests Scott’s instinctual understanding of how the inclusion of such images would both reaffirm — rather than dissuade — any criticism of his historical inaccuracies, and offer a less familiar relationship with his sympathetic readership, who were composed, in Wharton’s terms, of “travelers after his own heart.”

As several contemporaneous critics noted, his view of history was “vague and uncertain” at best and his confusion of architects, buildings, and historical periods, is evident in the manner in which he alludes to them in his *Architecture*, with an offhandness that is not entirely dissimilar to the asides to weather, hotel cuisine, and medical ailments that litter his letters. In this way, Scott had clearly hoped that any potential addition of such “pictures” — as he instructed the illustrator Alfred Rutherston during the preparation of the images that accompanied his collection of poetry, *A Box of Paints* (also published in 1924) — would “not so much be dependent on the text as in sympathy with

it.”¹⁴² The problem with such an inclusion, he realized, was that the architectural works he referred to his *Architecture* were not wholly fictive or detachable from a legitimate historical context, but had been dutifully correlated, charted, and indexed in both the specialist works of such writers as Burckhardt and Wölfflin, and Baedeker and Murray’s popularist guides to Italy.

This critical dissuasion is further evident in this epilogue with his repeated refusal to engage with “specialists” by using “technical terms” (such as the proper names for building components), which he claimed would detract from his argument by lapsing into the ‘expertism’ he associated with an academic pedantry, which would alienate the ‘general reader.’¹⁴³ In this way, Scott continued to rely on the benevolence of that reader, assuming a generosity (or interest) on their part that would coincide with their memory of renaissance architecture, rather than any saturate imagery within the pages of his revised history. And he failed to appreciate how this memory might have been marked — both collectively and individually — by the precipitate events that occurred during the intervening decade between the publication of the first and second editions of *Architecture*. Events that were less suggestive of the difficulty of remembering, than the impossibility of forgetting what had been seen.

As he had awaited the publication of the first edition of *Architecture* in April 1914, Scott described how he felt “devoured by a desire to be at work on my next book.” Despite his enthusiasm, he further admitted to Mary Berenson “I don’t see my new book at all clearly.”¹⁴⁴ A lack of an appropriate subject matter figured in terms of a loss of visual clarity, which inadvertently alluded to an even greater shock that accompanied the outbreak of the first world war only four months later. This conflict not only physically displaced millions of people to a modern battlefield that was characterized by a bureaucratic ineptitude and mechanized slaughter, but also accelerated what the critic Paul Virilio memorably described as an apocalyptic “deregulation of perception,” in which the “American and European masses no longer believed their eyes.”

“This war is depressing and irritating beyond measure,” Scott noted at the advent of hostilities. “One cannot give one’s mind to anything else . . . It is quite impossible to find any sense of dignity or grandeur in it — only a kind of silly but quite irrefutable logic, whereby millions of friendly and amicable individuals are to kill one another passionlessly while everyone else is put to every conceivable inconvenience.”¹⁴⁵ As his biographer rightly noted, Scott was apt to be paralyzed by even the most circumstantial of inconveniences and his snobbish irritation at the war’s impending disruptions was tempered by his recognition of “silly but irrefutable logic” governing it: a logic in which the fleshy body of the observer would be crudely subjected to the unassailable mechanical progress of modernity.

Despite his anticipation of “every conceivable inconvenience,” the affect of the war on Scott was entirely psychological as he spent the first two years in a continuation of the “cloistered life” he led as Berenson’s Private Secretary, participating in the “long and almost adolescent talks” the

connoisseur would later fondly remember. Following the prompting of his friend Cecil Pinsent (who commanded a mobile x-ray unit in the Ambulance Corps), Scott was eventually seconded to the British Foreign Office in Rome, where he spent the remainder of the war composing telegraphs that amused the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George with their account of Italian bureaucracy.¹⁴⁶ Although this existence was undoubtedly secluded, like the other members of his generation Scott appreciated the profound changes the war inaugurated, evidencing his assertion in *Architecture* that humanism faced two enemies: chaos and inhuman order.¹⁴⁷

Given the uncertainty the war engendered, Scott recognized that his recently published *Architecture* “will hardly be read.” As he noted at length in a letter to Mary Berenson, “useless reviews of it come out that no one will read and no one certainly will give thought to such a subject or care to read a book about [architecture] till the war is over, and by then the book will be an old dusty thing . . . It is the worst thing, and the worst moment.”¹⁴⁸ Although his *Architecture* received generally favorable reviews, exemplified by Wharton’s praise of it as “a brilliant and discriminating book,”¹⁴⁹ Scott’s concerns were understandably prescient. And the success of his *Architecture* would not only be undermined by the immediate predominance of the war, which distracted the readership he sought, but also the manner in which the conflict was fought made his nostalgic recourse to a humanized architectural space increasingly absurd.

In his extensive *Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (1990), the historian David Cannadine described how the destruction of the first world war decimated the English leisure class, who initially viewed it as an extension of the outdoor pursuits promoted by *Country Life*, resulting in an irrecoverable decline in their socio-political influence.¹⁵⁰ This decline was measured less in terms of their continued reliance on a ‘beautiful leisure,’ than the complications in which “playing tennis in flannels” or taking “tea in the garden” were tinged with the memories of this conflict. As numerous writers and critics have noted, the great war enacted a traumatic ‘shock’ on human consciousness, in which the supposedly assured precepts of historically definable time and legible humanist space were collapsed within the more immediate — and uncertain — present. In this way, the “great historicist systems of the nineteenth century,” which sought to explain the interconnectedness of events, were overwhelmed by the blunt determinism of conflict. (As the critic Stephen Kern has argued, this shift from a lucid historicism to a more anxious and individualist explanation of subjective experience, exemplified in Freud’s conception of the traumatic experience of modernity, eradicated the “burden” of that historical legibility in distinctly violent — and anti-humanist — terms.¹⁵¹) And the “chaos and inhuman order” Scott rightly noted would destroy humanist space represented both an irretrievable break with the possibility of the reemergence of a ‘humanist architecture’ and, as Walter Benjamin argued, evidenced the destructive forces that would propel society forward into a modernist future.



Australian gunners on a duckboard track in Château Wood near Hoge, 29 October 1917.
Photograph by Frank Hurley.



Sir (Bertram) Clough Williams-Ellis, 1936.
Photograph by Howard Coster ©National Portrait Gallery, London

The American writer Gertrude Stein also recognized this modernity in her description of the war as a “cubist event,” in which the singularity of the observer’s view — as depended on by figures such as Scott and Berenson — finally gave way to the fragmented simultaneity of the modern gaze. “The framing of life,” she succinctly noted of this division, “the need that a picture exist in a frame, remain in its frame was over.”¹⁵² With this visual caesura completing the dissolution of a perceptually legible space that not only meant “fear, anxiety, estrangement” would be inextricably bound to the “aesthetics of space throughout the modern period,”¹⁵³ as the historian Anthony Vidler has argued, but also completed the transmogrification of the observer into the modern subject.

Given this transition, it is apt that Scott’s *Architecture* was remembered less in the post-war period for its attempts to render vision “more sensitive” than its reversion to a fictionalized past, facilitating its later characterization as the “aesthetic handbook of the playboy phases of English architecture.” Scott provided an “incomparable guide” to the aesthetic pleasures of Italy and “*The Architecture of Humanism* is still the best book of architectural criticism yet written,” one contemporary noted of this influence.¹⁵⁴ Unlike his friend Scott, Williams-Ellis had seen extensive action as a reconnaissance officer in the Tank Corps during the first world war and he remembered the conflict in visceral terms. “All afternoon we lost ground,” he noted of one experience, “The clay soil was torn by shells and sodden with rain . . . the fields were now long stretches of bog impassable but for tanks and the few well defined tracks were a mark for the enemy’s artillery. But to leave them was to risk death by drowning — men and pack animals were often lost so.”¹⁵⁵ Following this ordeal, Williams-Ellis returned to bucolic surroundings of Gwynedd, Wales, where he responded to the “destruction of lovely buildings and spoiling by war of beautiful places”¹⁵⁶ with his obsessive design of Portmerion, the fanaticist village he considered an “easy, gay, sort of ‘light opera.’”¹⁵⁷ In these terms, Williams-Ellis celebration of Scott’s *Architecture* can not only be interpreted as a defense for his faux-renaissance project, but also as a reflection of a more general ambition among the post-war English leisure class. One that sought the reinstatement of a ‘beautiful leisure,’ expressed through his highly individualistic attempt to forget ‘what he had seen’ through the erection of an architectural fantasy.

Chapter Three

The Indiscreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie: Bernard Berenson and the Profession of Memory

“The photography of all this had taken its place within the archive of his memory, archives so vast that he would never look into most of them, unless they were reopened by chance.”¹

Marcel Proust, *Jean Santeuil* (1952)

As many writers have noted, Geoffrey Scott’s association with Bernard and Mary Berenson formed the greatest influence on his argument in the *Architecture of Humanism*. An influence that is evident in both his elucidation of Italian renaissance architecture, which reflects the guiding ambitions of Mary Berenson, and his conception of ‘humanism,’ which was determined by his familiarity with the historical and rhetorical precepts of Berenson’s unique conception of connoisseurship. As the critic Kenneth Clark noted of this bond, “Berenson always said that he had written *The Architecture of Humanism* — not true, but he had certainly inspired it.”² Scott acknowledged the complexities of this debt when, writing in the preface to his *Architecture*, he publically deferred to “the friendship of Mr. Bernhard Berenson[, to whom] I owe a stimulus and encouragement which those who share it will alone appreciate.”³ Although this deferral was politically astute, like many other intimates Scott appreciated how the limits of this friendship were constantly being renegotiated.

Although it is productive to consider Scott’s *Architecture* as an extension of Berensonian connoisseurship, in both the terms of its subject matter and intellectual conception, it especially useful to consider the differences between the pair through a critical examination of two aspects of their aesthetic projects. In the first instance, Berenson and Scott bitterly disagreed over the underlying aesthetic value of architecture and its capacity to elicit a kinesthetic response in the observer. As he frequently noted, Berenson preferred the imaginative suggestion of the paintings two-dimensional ‘space composition’ over the three-dimensionality of architecture, which he considered “overly literal.” By contrast, for Scott the experience of architecture was determined by a metaphoric exchange between the physical body and the architectural space; an exchange that was “so obvious and immediately understood it presupposes a true and reliable experience.”⁴ In this way, Scott rebuked his employer’s negation of the ‘literality’ of architecture by suggesting it offered a more real, which is to say, a more conceivably authentic, aesthetic experience than painting could provide.

Moreover, Berenson was dismissive of even the painterly representation of architecture, noting in an early article on connoisseurial technique that any suggestion of using such depictions to determine the authorship of a given work was misguided. This was largely because the straight lines and right angles of architectural form meant that it was the most easily forgeable of all painterly forms, with the painter’s mechanical tracing of these lines erasing any personal characteristics. In this

way, architecture appeared to Berenson as the most technically reproducible of objects. Naturally Scott disagreed with such a disavowal and he sought to reinstate the aesthetic integrity of the ‘mistress art’ in three interconnected ways: firstly, through his writerly conception of architecture; secondly, through his advocacy of a return to classical humanist architectural principles; and finally, in his empathetically driven description of how the observer’s kinesthetic movement produced architectural space. All these assertions also evidence the unconscious concern encoded into Berensonian connoisseurship, however, reflecting an anxious unease for an even greater form of forgery than the mimicry of an artist’s hand, one associated with the inauthenticity of modern experience itself.

In the second instance, Scott and Berenson also differed in their expression of the relationship between the act of remembering and its technical facilitation. (Which is to say, in how they located the mnemonic image within a mechanics of reproduction.) In contrast to Berenson, who measured his memory against the thousands of images he had assembled in his photographic collection (cross-referenced against the recollections of his secretary), Scott described how the observer ‘wrote himself out’ into space and, in this regard, both the architectural container and his argument in *Architecture* would become an archive of these images. (One whose lack of photographic images meant his readership was forced to refer to their own imaginations.) Following his reading of Heinrich Wölfflin’s *Renaissance and Baroque* (1888), Scott considered architecture as the unconscious composite of the observer’s projected mental states, traced out in architectural form. Although he conceded these projections were subject to the observer’s psychical desires, he agreed with Berenson’s positivist interpretation of ‘humanist art’ as fundamentally “life-enhancing,” arguing that the observer’s correspondence with architecture was harmonious and bereft of any distortion.

In this way, this correspondence suggested that architecture both reaffirmed the aesthetic experience and reinvigorated the observer, which, in turn, meant the physical architectural object remained subservient to the observer’s aestheticism of it as a mnemonic image. (Suggesting at its extremity, this object would only exist in these subjective terms.) With this collapse of the three-dimensionality of renaissance architecture into the two-dimensional rhetorical ‘aspects’ described by his *Architecture*, Scott sought to negate — or at least obscure — the extent to which these images could be interchanged, or confused, within the imaginations of his readers with the same ease that Berenson failed to reshelve his own slide collection. In contrast of Scott’s literary abilities, Berenson was never able to entirely abstract the art-work within his writings and, in response, he sought to ‘value’ each work through its inclusion within his own biographic project. In these terms, the shift in Berenson’s notion of connoisseurship — turning from a “scientific” method of examining the art-work to an overtly biographic description of it — not only prefigured Scott’s final anesthetization of

architecture, but also illustrates the tensions inherent to such a process, which was suffused with unconscious doubts and mnemonic slippages.

Berenson defined his aesthetic theory of renaissance art, which depended on his principles of ‘tactile-values’ and ‘space-composition,’ in the *Florentine Painters* (1896) and *Central Italian Painters* (1897), the final two volumes of his *Italian Painters* series. As he had realized by the early-1890s, his future as an authority on renaissance painting would depend less on a continued exposition of such a theorization (which was intellectually suspect), than on the verifiability of his authorial attributions. Identifications that needed to be cross-referenced by a process that was more objective than the judgments of his famous ‘eye.’ In response, Berenson found it expedient to adopt the techniques of a “scientific connoisseurship” that sought to dispassionately examine the art-work as a material object, without any consideration of its aesthetic value, in the effort to determine the authorship of a particular artist.

The notion of ‘scientific connoisseurship’ had first been formulated by the Italian aesthete Giovanni Morelli (1816-91) in his landmark *Die Werke italienischer Meister in den Galerien von Munchen, Dresden und Berlin* (1880, translated as *Italian Masters in German Galleries: A Critical Essay on the Italian Pictures in the Galleries of Munich, Dresden, Berlin*, 1883).⁵ In this work Morelli argued that the art-work should be considered on a purely objective basis, freeing connoisseurship from the self-conscious aestheticism of such figures as Walter Pater (1839-94) and the English aesthetic movement, who had argued that art should only be considered “for art’s sake.”⁶ (In turn, Pater had stolen the memorable phrase from Théophile Gautier, who had first issued the call of “*l’art pour l’art*” to his fellow Decadents.) Morellian connoisseurship relied on a process of comparative analysis that interpreted details as unconscious clues and correlated these details against one another, with its extensive use of photography further alluding to the possibility of a mechanically reproducible memory. Following Morelli’s prompting, Berenson assembled a vast photographic archive to serve as a mnemonic guide as he compiled, checked, and verified the attributions into his famous “lists,” recognizing the value of this collection because, as he noted, his memory was “inadequate to the task of recalling every detail.”

Berenson famously broke with Morellian connoisseurship in a long essay published in 1902, “The Rudiments of Connoisseurship (A Fragment),” in which he argued that while this technique was essential to determining the authorship of an art-work, it was insufficient for his purposes as it rejected the possibility of ascribing any ‘value’ to the work under consideration. (Moreover, such a determination ran counter to Morelli’s conception of the connoisseur’s work.) Although he continued to use Morelli’s techniques, from this period onward Berenson formulated his experience of the art-work through his aesthetic appraisal of it, with this essay signaling a return to the Paterian sentiments that had informed his original decision to dedicate his life to art.

Following this shift, art not only became ‘scientifically verifiable’ for Berenson, but also, crucially, judged in the first instance for its aesthetic appeal. A judgment that resulted in a self-justifiable aestheticism that would also underpin Scott’s appeal for an “architecture restored.” (Or, essentially, for an ‘architecture for architecture’s sake.’) When he sought to explain the experience of architecture as an inherently synthetic process, viewed through the composition of a bodily aesthetic rather than any analytical understanding, Scott was illustrating his continuation of the “art of connoisseurship” that Berenson had first proposed in 1902. Moreover, Scott’s advocacy of the humanist architectural principles of the Italian renaissance depended, however superficially, on the pretense that his *Architecture* provided a historically consistent and teleologically progressive argument. (A pretense that Reginald Blomfield, amongst others, would later note faltered amidst the loquaciousness of his rhetoric.)

As both Berenson and Scott were aware, however, such an aesthetically determined experience of art laid open the question of the authenticity — not to mention the singularity — of that experience. (A questioning that Berenson could only respond to with an ever-increasingly ineffable description of that experience in biographic terms.) Berenson often stated that it was his “ideal” to live his life “dreamt-out” as a “work of art.” If the dream that pervaded the modernist epoch was that it was actually conscious of itself (as Walter Benjamin famously suggested in his “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” 1940), then Berenson’s rejection of the popular emergence of a modernist sensibility was painfully evident in his repeated desire to remain within this ‘dream.’ For the historian Mary-Ann Calo, arguing in her *Bernard Berenson and the Twentieth Century* (1994), Berenson’s self-regarding aestheticism and notion of connoisseurship can both be considered as manifestations of his latent anti-modernist sentiments. And, although his retrospection is usually discussed in reference to his oft-stated disdain for modern art (which he considered symptomatic of the pathological decline of western civilization), his antipathetic stance can also be interpreted as a form of his obsessive concern with his public image.

Unfortunately both this public conception and the “archives of memory” on which it depended were inherently fragile and his concern with their reiteration engendered a neurosis which, combined with his overt sentimentalization of the aesthetic moment, distorted Berenson’s conception of connoisseurship into an irredeemably nostalgic project. In this way, his fervent anti-modernism can also be addressed as a strategy to refocus attention on his rapidly outdated works. (As Meyer Schapiro noted, Berenson’s notion of aesthetics was already outmoded by the turn of the century.)

Given his limited literary abilities, Berenson shrewdly realized that the writing of this narrative would best be left in someone else’s capable hands and throughout his career he employed a secretary to act as a “volunteer amanuensis” by taking the detailed notes he would later require as

he immersed himself in the “aesthetic moment.” Berenson distrusted any ‘mechanical’ record, other than the photographic document he instructed technicians to take during his absence, and he petulantly refused to be recorded on film or audiotape; a peevishness that can be explained in relation to his acute understanding of narrative, which was not only central to his conception of connoisseurship, but also to its critical agency. As his numerous private secretaries — who variously included Mary Berenson, Geoffrey Scott, and Nicky Mariano — soon realized, while they recorded his observations they became the personification of the connoisseur’s professional memory. With the compliant aid of these dutiful stenographers, Berenson was able to overcome his ‘penshyness’ simply by guiding the pens of others through the dictates of his limited intellectual precepts.

A ‘True Gentleman’

By his own admission, Berenson first committed himself to a life of connoisseurship as he lounged outside a café in San Bergamo, Italy, during 1888. “Nobody . . . before us has dedicated his entire activity, his entire life, to connoisseurship,” he explained to his traveling companion Enrico Costa. “Others have taken it as a relief from politics[,] others because they were museum officials, others still because they were teaching art history. We are the first to have no idea before us, no ambition, no expectation, no thought of reward.”⁸ By the time he described that moment over six decades later, Berenson had long since come to lament the course his ambitions had charted for him, however, and despite any proclamations to the contrary his life from that moment in 1888 had immediately been subject to the material desires and financial compensation he not only sought, but also contractually demanded. (With any ‘lack of ambition’ quickly subsumed in his emerging recognition as a ‘connoisseur.’) Berenson was haunted by the duplicity of his bind to reward, which he sought to explain by dating this “turn” — from the aesthetic criticism he had been pursuing, to the connoisseurship he would personify — to this moment.

In actuality the singularity of this moment was open to debate, as he also dated his turn to a number of other moments. While in private Berenson often attributed this shift to the professional obligations that were necessary to satisfy his wife’s financial demands; a concern he typically coupled with his frustrations as a writer. “Mary has ruined my life by inducing me to write books,” he confided in 1931, “If I had not written books what would I have become? I would have become a true gentleman.”⁹ In addition to evidencing Berenson’s querulous nature, this accusation illustrates two significant points. Firstly, his equation of “true gentlemanliness” with a rejection of professional employment (“If I had not written books”) indicates the extent to which he considered the aesthetic life solely in terms of a leisurely existence. Secondly, it also indicates the extent to which he denied the impact of Mary Berenson’s editorship of his early works (“Mary has ruined my life by inducing



Bernard Berenson, 1887.

Unknown Photographer ©National Portrait Gallery, London

me to write books”). Although such revisionism was typical of Berenson, this statement further illustrates the paradox that lies at the center of his conception of connoisseurship: demonstrating the disjuncture between the leisurely and disinterested scrutiny of the art-work and the scholarly work of art-criticism.

In addition, Berenson could never alleviate his doubts that he had written the “wrong kind” of books. “I should have gone on to write the aesthetics of all humanistic art,” he complained to the woman who had ruined his life, “That and only that would have meant success.”¹⁰ As several critics have rightly noted, his presumption that he would have been capable of writing such an aesthetic history was misguided, however, and Berenson’s intellectual limitations were so well-known that even the connoisseur — in his less-sanguine moments — quietly admitted his “philosophical arguments” were largely incoherent. (Or simply wrong, as Bertrand Russell often noted.) In contrast to his almost instantly disregarded aesthetic theories, Berenson’s principal contribution to the study of renaissance art can be traced to something more mechanical than intellectual: to an insistence that the art-work needed to be examined as a material object, coupled with a truly unique ability to attribute art-works, which were drawn from his study of scientific connoisseurship.

In order to reaffirm his public status, Berenson sought to obscure the mechanics of his trade through a blizzard of biographic works. Although he complained about his lifelong inability to write an autobiography, he nonetheless managed to produce several volumes of memoirs, including his *Sketches for a Self-Portrait* (1949), three volumes of collected diaries, *Rumour and Reflection: 1941-1944* (1952); *The Passionate Sightseer: 1947-1956* (1960); *Sunset and Twilight: 1947-1958* (1963); and the aesthetic and philosophical musings of *One Year’s Reading for Fun* (1960) and *Aesthetics and History in the Visual Arts* (1948).¹¹ In spite of their sheer page count and repetitive content, Berenson did not consider any of these works “autobiographical” and he defended his “reluctance” to write such a volume on the basis of his concerns with “speaking of my wife, of Richard Horne, of Roger Fry, of John Maynard Keynes, and the whole Bloomsbury set.” In this way, he decided not to compare his “incredible achievements,” as he could nonetheless describe them, against those of these luminaries for fear he might be “considered venomous, self-absorbed, or conceited.”¹² As his concern suggests, however, he would rightly be remembered for his vindictiveness, self-absorption, and narcissism, which, in addition to his interest in art, many of his contemporaries realized extended beyond the humble bounds of art-scholarship. Indeed as such figures as Lytton Strachey and Keynes were only too keenly aware, his aesthetic and financial interests were inextricable from the Anglo-American society he represented both figuratively and literally.¹³

This expatriate society of ‘anglo-florentinos’ were firmly ensconced in the fin-de-siècle splendor of an Italianate “villadom” that was infused with a poisonous mixture of cultural snobbery and social elitism, with the comfortable furnishings and studied manners scarcely disguising the



Bernard Berenson and Mary Berenson, 1891.
Unknown Photographer ©National Portrait Gallery, London

“fierce rivalries” between bored denizens.¹⁴ Within this milieu, aesthetic doctrines were strictly policed and any slip of the tongue was a source of potential ostracism. “I became vaguely aware of Culture, not indeed as a thing of value in itself,” Logan Pearsall Smith — the American writer and Mary Berenson’s brother — later recalled, “but as bestowing a kind of distinction upon its possessors, a distinction superior in some mysterious way to that of the big game killer which had hitherto been my ambition and my dream.”¹⁵ Smith’s equation of this cultural ascension with the murderous intent that motivated both the big game hunter and the leisure class’s parlor games was prophetic, moreover, as this association of the aesthetic with the social was something Berenson relished. “Culture submits character to aesthetics, and not aesthetics to character,” he wrote of this coupling, “I am not sure that there have been many aiming so solely at culture who have aesthetically appreciated character, as I have. So culture is perhaps possible in a condition of things in which class distinctions are very great.”¹⁶

Berenson’s conception of culture was socially exclusive and his continued success depended on the market-fluctuations of such distinctions, with his “ability to know everyone of consequence” coinciding with a recognition of the aesthetic tastes of the Anglo-American leisure class during the 1890s-1920s. Like the characters from the Henry James novels they pretended to read, these ‘impoverished Europeans’ embarked on a transatlantic migration in the hope of nurturing both their appreciation of the “beautiful” in the galleries of Europe and ambitions of acquiring such works. Through the refinement of their aesthetic sensibilities these figures sought a respite from their capitalistic enterprises, sublimating the imperfections of the world through an idealization of the Italian renaissance, which they considered the culmination of cultural achievement. In this way, Italy not only beckoned as the source of almost infinite aesthetic pleasures, but also — and less idealistically — as a supply of imminently purchasable art-works. “Here at last that American desire to satiate the eye could be fulfilled,” the critic Rémy Saisselin noted, “and the ultimate experience was not so much the contemplation of beauty but its possession, and the ultimate aesthetic activity and sensation, acquisition.”¹⁷

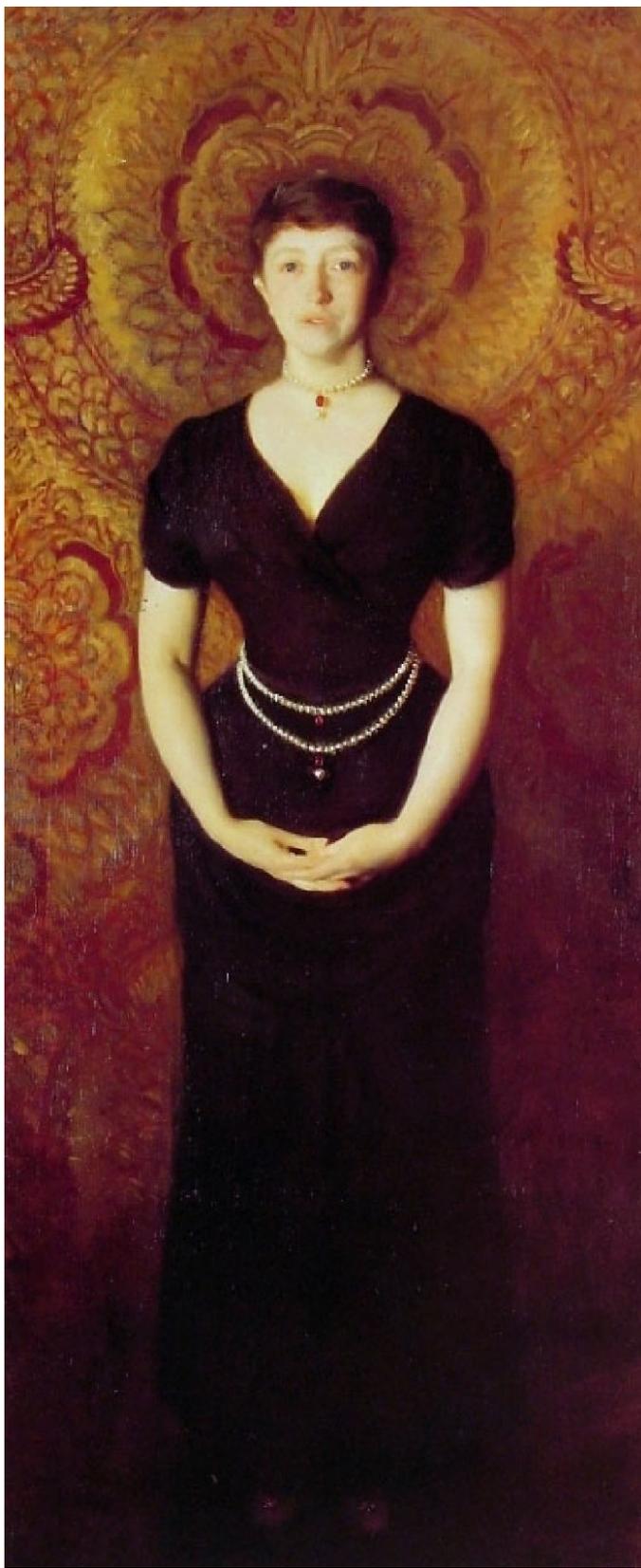
Although he possessed a uniquely American genius for self-reinvention (which appreciated the world he inhabited was composed of both ‘big-game killers’ and avaricious collectors), Berenson also realized it was only the guise of art, beauty, and indeterminate wealth — as opposed to its substantiation — that he needed to present. He had used the decade spent in London carefully, cultivating his renown by conducting guided tours of the National Gallery, London, which also provided him with a captive audience for his opinions. Despite the success of these tours, Berenson was plagued by financial trouble and he sought a method with which to translate his appreciation of the art-work into a more tangible form. (“If Bernard could not write for publication,” his student and future-wife recognized, “he could at least turn his great expertise to the far more profitable task of

aiding collectors.”¹⁸) After permanently relocating to Florence in 1900, his ambitions and social connections allowed him to begin seriously advising the pantheon of gilded age American capitalists, including William A. Clark, Charles L. Freer, George Jay Gould, Collis Huntington, J. Pierpont Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, P.A.B. Widener, Charles T. Yerkes, and — most notably — the heiress Isabella Gardner, with whom he assembled the famous collection at Fenway Court, Boston.

Berenson had first been acquainted with Gardner as an undergraduate at Harvard after being introduced by his professor, Charles Eliot Norton, who was one of the heiress’s advisors. Gardner ruled Boston society, throwing excessive parties at which she received her guests perched in a ceiling-high Mimosa tree, and was an avid patron, supporting such luminaries as James MacNeill Whistler (who painted one of her many famous portraits), Henry James, and F. Marion Crawford (who dedicated to first novel to “Mrs. Jack”).¹⁹ Following Norton’s introduction of Berenson as a “bright young genius,” Gardner had been instrumental in facilitating his early career and raising funds for his postgraduate travels to Europe in 1888-9.²⁰ The pair had fallen out after his arrival on the continent, however, as Gardner tired of his failure to write the novel he had promised (Berenson had originally emigrated under the guise of becoming a writer), together with his continual requests for financial assistance, which led her to suspend their friendship. The combination of Berenson’s rising notoriety and his desire to “make myself useful in any way I could” softened his former patron, who had begun to reconsider the terms of his usefulness, and the pair were reconciled in London during the summer of 1894.

This reunion was of vital importance. As he later recalled, as they strolled through the National Gallery one afternoon Gardner paused in front of one of the paintings and, turning to her companion, enquired whether “pictures like these could still be had?” Berenson, who had been imagining Gardner was “viewing the works as if through his own eyes,” was halted by her question and his immediate realization that this was “a fatal moment, destined to have such an effect on my career.” “*Nothing could be easier,*” he replied.²¹ “Advising about pictures is the path marked out for me,”²² he confided to Gardner, whose collection he began to assemble, with the correspondence between the pair offering “a baffling mixture of art appreciation and salesmanship, of friendship and commerce” that only ceased with her death in 1924.²³ (In this way, many Berenson scholars consider the result of their collaboration, The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum at Fenway Court, Boston, his finest achievement.²⁴) Despite its dramatic import, Berenson and Gardner’s friendship was only the most public of a number of socially and commercially beneficial relationships he pursued.

Berenson’s involvement in the art market continued to offend his pious aestheticism and he remained apprehensive about his role within it. “Poor B.B. gets so upset,” Mary Berenson explained to Gardner in 1903, “he feels like quitting art altogether and settling in some wild Western place, where connoisseurs cease from travelling and critics are at rest.” Gardner had complained about the



John Singer Sargent, *Isabella Stewart Gardner*, 1888.

relative lack of ‘opportunities’ and she had sought to characterize the art-world to their anxious client as consisting of a clique of jealous, small-minded men and women who were openly hostile to the connoisseur. (Including, but not limited to, those dealers whose prospects he had failed to attribute positively, collectors who had also sought the paintings he secured for Gardner, dealers he was too scrupulous to trade with, and, finally, by “all other living writers” on renaissance art, who were envious of his success.²⁵) As the influential Parisian dealer René Gimpel recalled of the hostility Berenson’s “calculated sweetness” engendered, “He knows the whole of society and its milieu, but everywhere he has only enemies. The hatred he expends he gets back in full measure.”²⁶

Berenson’s life consisted of “two worlds,” one intimate noted, “the magical one of the passing moment, and the unmagical one of those who had pictures to sell, or had to be wheedled into selling them, and those who had to be likewise wheedled to buy.”²⁷ The duplicity was palpable, however, with Berenson’s concern largely resting with his understanding that the public disclosure of his commercial activities would compromise his authority as a disinterested expert. (This embarrassment that was finally realized in 1926 with the disclosure of one of his secretive business dealings during a court case in Illinois.)

The malleability of Berenson’s ‘expertism’ was so well known that a number of commercial dealers and private clients depended on his pliability from the early-1890s onwards. Despite Mary Berenson’s insistence that he refused to work with ‘unscrupulous dealers,’ after more than a decade of clandestine dealings Berenson signed an exclusive secretive partnership agreement in 1906 with the most unethical of all London dealers, the Anglo-American firm Duveen Brothers managed by the notorious Joseph Duveen.²⁸ (As Colin Simpson notes in his extensive study of their partnership, *Artful Partners*, by the turn of the century Berenson had already explored similar arrangements with the dealers Colnaghis of London and Seligman of Paris, the German collector J.P. Richter, and the spuriously-named Baron Lazzaroni, the noted forger who was Italy’s “master ‘improver’ of second-rate renaissance paintings.”²⁹)

While Duveen Brothers had been established as a supplier of antiques and furnishings to the leisure classes in both New York and London, the founding partner Henry Duveen had quickly realized the potential of the expanding market for renaissance art-works, together with his own limits in dealing with such works.³⁰ “I happened to pass my active years when people were buying Italian painters,” Berenson later noted of this convergence, “and it got around that I was the least unreliable taster, and the least fallible in telling whether a painting tasted like a Botticelli, a Leonardo, a Titian, a Veronese, etc., or did not. My collaboration was found indispensable by an art broker like Duveen, and it was to his interest to help build up my reputation.”³¹

The level of concealment associated with this partnership bordered on paranoia, however, with Duveens employing a byzantine system of master ledgers, official revenue accounts, and family-

only accounts. In order to enforce this system, both the art-works being exchanged and all of the figures involved — clients, artists, dealers, staff members, couriers, and go-betweens — were assigned codenames that were religiously employed in all correspondences. (As a sleight on his persistent hypochondria, Duveen assigned Berenson the moniker ‘Doris’ after a dyspeptic character in a Broadway play.) Tantalizingly known as the ‘X-ledger,’ the secret record of the dealings between Berenson and Duveen needed to be counter-signed by both parties and was the subject of constant dispute.³² Although there was a certain degree of playfulness in this trickery, especially on the part of Duveen who was aware of his partner’s propensity to gossip, this level of secrecy was contractually agreed and — despite his eventual disclosure of the relationship — allowed Berenson to maintain his public façade as a gentleman-aesthete of independent means. In this way, it is ironic that Duveen encouraged Berenson’s pursuit of a ‘scientific connoisseurship’ during the early-1890s as a means to verify the lists and the ‘certificates of authorship’ he issued. Given these dynamics, Berenson soon realized his professional success, together with the attendant privilege it afforded him, depended on the coincidence of his cultural stature and the guarantees of authorship he provided through his practice of scientific connoisseurship: attributions which relied, in the final instance, on a professionally certifiable memory that remained subject to correction by the most mechanical of means.

The Scientific Connoisseur

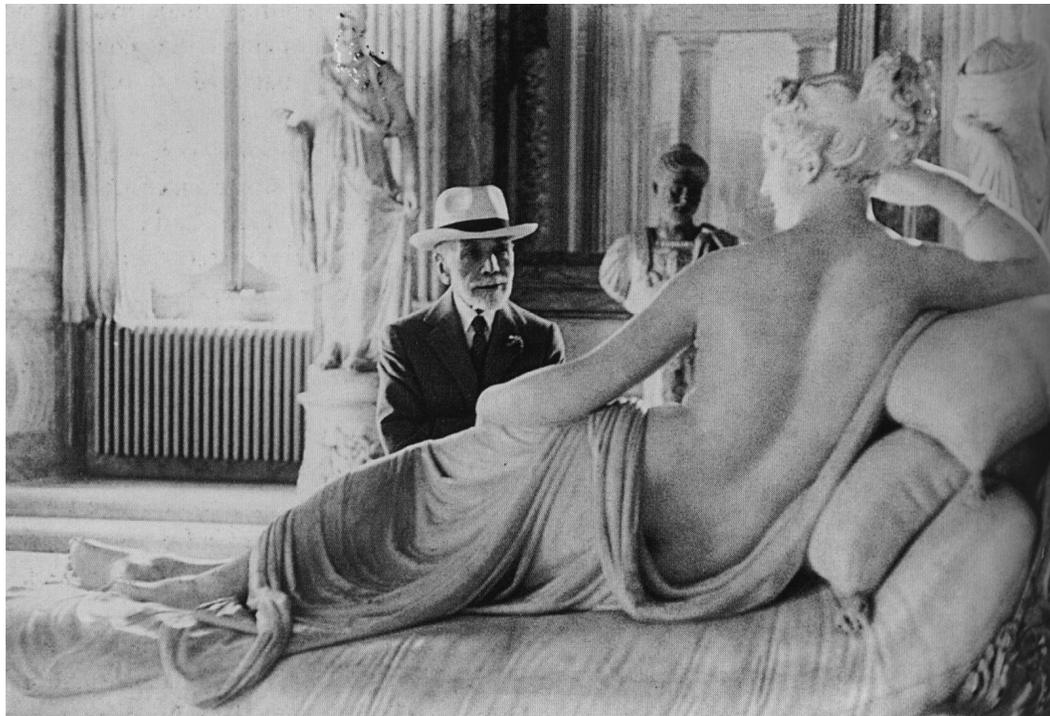
During the 1880s Berenson became increasingly frustrated with the purely aesthetic approach he had derived from his study of the English aesthete Walter Pater’s writings, including the influential *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) and novel *Marius the Epicurean* (1878), which describes a young man’s immersion in a world of aesthetic enjoyment.³³ (Berenson had initially been drawn to Pater as an alternative to the regimented moral vigor of John Ruskin, whose views were being promoted at Harvard by Norton.) Although he would continue to be “directly influenced” by Pater’s stylistic appreciation of art, Berenson soon recognized the technical limitations of such an approach, filling his copy of Pater’s *Renaissance* with complaints about the author’s “lack of exact connoisseurship.”³⁴ Berenson’s search for a technique that embodied a greater attention to detail was ended with his discovery of an article by the Italian aristocrat and amateur art-critic, Giovanni Morelli (1816-91), which was recommended by his friend Costa. After several months of negotiation, Berenson secured an audience with the “father of scientific connoisseurship” through their mutual friend Giovanni Cavalcaselle, the noted art-historian and the coauthor of *A History of Painting in Italy from the Second to the Fourteenth Century* (with J.A. Crowe, 1864-66). While Morelli politely referred remarked on the

younger man's obvious potential, Berenson realized that his adoption of Morelli's methods would enable him to be viewed as a "disciple" of the master.³⁵

Morelli had originally outlined the "technical" practice of connoisseurship in a series of pseudonymously published articles in the German journal *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* from 1874-6. His use of the absurd pseudonym — Ivan Leimolieff — not only afforded him a degree of impunity as he attacked a number of conservative historians, connoisseurs, and art-critics, but also allowed him the rhetorical conceit of drafting these articles as a dialog between Leimolieff, an untutored Russian aristocrat, and his Italian instructor, Morelli, who guides him through the principles of scientific connoisseurship. The immediate success of these articles resulted in their collection in his *Work of the Italian Masters in the Galleries of Munich, Dresden and Berlin* (1880). Like many of the professional and amateur connoisseurial texts that preceded it, Morelli's *Italian Masters* was an attempt to formulate a method that would prove virtually infallible in the attribution of art-works. And, as such, it was preoccupied with the notion of forgery: which is to say, it was concerned with the possibility of mistaking the fake for an original, or misattributing the inauthentic as authentic.

In order to minimize such possibilities, Morelli thought the art-work should be examined on a purely evidential basis, without any regard for its aesthetic value or character. In this way, the art-work constituted as the "primary document" of connoisseurship. In order to make an attribution the scientific connoisseur needed to undertake hundreds of hours of painstakingly "close observation of the forms peculiar to each master in his representation of the human figure" to acquaint themselves with the work of a given artist. It was only through such concentrated training that the "eye learnt to see correctly," he argued, and the connoisseur would be able to fully understand the importance of such apparently trivial details as earlobes, fingernails, or shapes of fingers and toes in determining an art-work.³⁶ The appreciation of these details was essential, he concluded, as it was through such "inadvertent little gestures" the painter divulged their identity, held within brushstrokes that "constituted the instances when the control of the artist, who was tied to a cultural tradition, relaxed and yielded to purely individual touches, 'which escaped without his being aware of it.'"³⁷

As Carlo Ginzburg has noted in his "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm" (1989), the most remarkable aspect of Morelli's theory is by concentrating on such unconscious details he depended on a reading of those painterly gestures that lay beyond the artist's conscious control to determine authorship; relying, in essence, on the moments when these artists literally forgot themselves.³⁸ For Ginzburg, Morelli's conception of these details as clues — together with its subsequent interpretation of these gestures in a conjecturally-determined narrative, through which the connoisseur can both ascertain the artist's identity and understand the work itself — shares an affinity with the techniques of criminology or psychoanalysis.



Bernard Berenson at the Boghese Gallery Rome, 1955.
Photograph by David Seymour

As they concentrated their gaze on the art-work till the point of literal exhaustion, the practice of Morellian technique was a process that Mary Berenson — who by 1891 had been employed as Berenson’s secretary — considered a long and arduously repetitive one. Although she recognized it was essential to “use your own eyes . . . in work like this,” she also recalled falling asleep on more than one occasion during the long hours of tedious research.³⁹ (In this sense, her comment that it would take “six or seven years” of study before she felt ready to “say anything” about art, not only reflected the studied seriousness of her mentor’s approach, but also its obsessive focus on detail.) Like a studious pathologist, Mary Berenson soon learned that such evidence was not only revealed through the painterly depiction of fingernails, but also within the substances beneath them. As the couple visited the Venetian church of Santa Maria del Carmine in 1891, she recalled how she had eagerly “washed and cleaned what turned out to be a most beautiful picture by Lotto, but which was invisible under candlegrease and dust and cobwebs when we first went to look at it.” As she scraped away at these layers of grime with the resolve — if not the care — of a forensic scientist, she noted her excitement at discovering the underlying painting that “came out inch by inch under our fingers.”⁴⁰

Berenson tested his knowledge of Morellian technique in his short work, *Lorenzo Lotto: An Essay in Constructive Art Criticism* (1891), in which he attempted to demonstrate how it would be possible to use scientific connoisseurship to “reconstruct” the career of a notoriously inconsistent painter solely through reference to their art-works, without any recourse to any supplemental documentation or complimentary references. In this ambitious essay he hoped to both elevate Morellian connoisseurship above any lingering conceptions of it as a “quack science” and also prove the preeminence of his abilities. As he noted, by employing these techniques the scientific connoisseur could achieve a level of intellectual practice relative to the physical or mathematical sciences and, in this way, his advocacy of scientific connoisseurship aspired to the possibility of an objectively determined structure for reading art. With its incorporation of unconscious gestures within an apparently objective framework, Morelli’s method was governed less by the objectives of science, as Berenson soon realized, than by the subjective gestures of the artist and the unconscious expectations, ambitions, and desires of the connoisseur.

As he acknowledged in a 1956 edition of this work, his choice of Lotto was a poor one and the accompanying attributions, together with his critical judgments regarding the influence of Alvise Vivarini (who was an exceptionally minor artist) on other artists, were inaccurate and damaging to his reputation.⁴¹ In response to criticisms of this volume, Mary Berenson had authored a series of anonymously published reviews and articles that promoted her husband’s early works, such the *Florentine Painters of the Renaissance*, as examples of the “New Art Criticism.”⁴² (As Calo rightly notes, these works enact a shift in Berenson’s conception of the art-work as an autonomous document to

an interpretation of it as a therapeutic “tonic force.” A shift that many other critics, including Saisselin and Schapiro, also argued marks the end of his usefulness as an art-critic and his emergence as a ‘picture taster.’)

The failure of *Lotto* hastened his realization of the limits of Morellian connoisseurship, which coupled with his natural inclination toward a more aesthetically determined mode of appreciation, meant from this juncture onward Berenson simply incorporated Morelli’s techniques within his own publically demonstrable conception of connoisseurship. In this way, the instrumental incorporation of this authority is evident in his addition of a chapter on connoisseurial technique, “Rudiments of Connoisseurship (A Fragment),” to the second edition of *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art*, published in 1902. While an earlier draft of this chapter had been written in 1894 as the introduction to a project on the “Methods of Constructive Criticism” (which was subsequently abandoned), Berenson argued its later inclusion was warranted because it dealt with “the now popular, even fashionable, subject of connoisseurship.”⁴³ Following this logic, it can be further suggested his own conception of connoisseurship became increasingly more popularist and less objectively determined by the turn of the century, eventually becoming indistinguishable from his persona as the ‘Sage of Settignano.’

Berenson initially voiced his dissatisfaction with scientific connoisseurship in the first edition of the *Study and Criticism of Italian Art* (1901), in which he noted these methods did little to foster an appreciation of the art-work’s aesthetic value. Writing in 1901 review of *Italian Art*, the English critic Roger Fry (1866-1934) — who was being mentored by Berenson in the finer intricacies of Morellian connoisseurship — gave voice to the skepticism he shared with many of his peers at Berenson’s suggestion that a consciously disinterested view of the art-work (as evidence) could be so easily divorced from an unconscious appreciation of it (as a vitally pleasurable object). By contrast, Fry contended any process of attribution that depended on visual evidence would be unconsciously influenced by previous aesthetic experiences and these attributions should be considered as “composites” of other earlier aesthetic judgments, which were condensed within the art-work under consideration and would lead to other aesthetically-determined sensations. “Our aesthetic experience arranges itself in a more orderly manner,” he concluded of this process, “and with the increased ease of correlating the aesthetic judgments comes an actual intensifying of our sensations. The relation of this particular picture to others and more familiar ones by the same hand gives us at once the power of bringing ourselves rapidly into sympathy with the mood of the painting.”⁴⁴

As Fry’s understanding of his mentor’s methodology suggests, by the early-1900s Berenson’s critical faculties had been subsumed within his aesthetic sympathies and his classification of various art-work had become indistinguishable from his appreciation of them. In this way, Fry argued

Berenson's principal purpose in the "Rudiments" essay was to reiterate the technical importance of using scientific connoisseurship as a technique for distinguishing between the genuine and the forged. (A distinction, Ginzburg later admitted, was not only of mutual benefit to both the critic and the dealer, but also demonstrative of the social function of the connoisseur.⁴⁵) Even as he recounted Morelli's method in this essay — stipulating that the evidential capacity of the art-work "always needed to be confirmed by connoisseurship" through a study of the "reciprocal relationship" between one work and another, which was confirmed by the work's "precise characteristics" — Berenson concluded by arguing that Morelli's failure to consider the art-work's immaterial, "spiritual," aspects ultimately resulted in a failure to address the work's aesthetic quality.⁴⁶ (A failure Berenson hastily attempted to correct in *Lotto*.) From this period onward, the ability to recognize the aesthetic quality of the art-work was the defining feature of Berensonian connoisseurship. "The Sense of Quality is indubitably the most essential equipment of a would-be connoisseur," he argued,

It is the touchstone of all his laboriously collected documentary and historical evidences of all the possible morphological tests he may be able to bear upon the work of art. But the discussion of Quality belongs to another region other than that of science. It is not concerned with the tests of authenticity which have been the object of our present study; it does not fall under the category of demonstrable things. Our task, for the present, has limited itself to the consideration of the formal and more or less measurable elements in pictures with which the Science of connoisseurship must reckon. We have not yet touched upon the Art of connoisseurship.⁴⁷

As this statement suggests, even as he reasserted the merits of his technique, Berenson suggested the principal concern of his own conception of connoisseurship would be more ethereal in definition. And for the next fifty-seven years, Berenson not only "worshiped" art as if it were "a religion," repeating this mantra with a frequency that bordered on the obsessive, but also, as his conclusion to 'Rudiments' suggests, he deliberately promoted such an exaggerated sense of 'aesthetic value' in the belief that his own connoisseurial practice was itself a type of an art-form.

Interestingly, in a 1902 review of this essay, the connoisseur Kenyon Cox (1856-1919) interpreted Berenson's recourse to an aesthetically defined 'quality' as a "welcome humanization" of what he had previously found to be a "detached and mechanical process."⁴⁸ In spite of the humanization Cox found in Berenson's descriptions of various art-works, this review also indicates the extents to which Berenson's practice would be continue to be mechanical (in its political and economic machinations), even as he increasingly asserted that his connoisseurship should be considered an art-form.

In essence, Berenson privileged the sensorial eye over the critical mind and — similarly to Scott in *Architecture* — he realized the "determination of the reciprocal relationship" between art-works, which would illustrate the quality of a given work relative to others, was the result of an inherently mnemonic process that defined these linkages and connections, gestures and unconscious

details. Unlike Scott, who was a naturally gifted writer, Berenson was a hesitant and awkward writer, with the connections and associations he attempted to make between individual art-works grating against the gracelessness of the writing itself. As Mary Berenson rightly noted, the stubbornness of his thought was matched by the laboriousness of his writing, which was not only devoid of nuance but also, crucially, of the vitality he argued art produced. In this way, Berenson was left to determine these relations through a laboriously mechanical process of comparative analysis, which was conveyed to his readers through the lavish photographic images that were included in each edition.

The Mechanical Eye

As they toured the continent from the early-1890s onwards, the Berensons began collecting photographs of the art-works they had viewed in the various museums and galleries they visited. From its inception, the responsibility of administering this archive lay with Mary Berenson and by the mid-1890s she oversaw a collection that already numbered 15,000 items and would eventually exceed 20,000 images by the turn of the century.⁴⁹ Berenson employed this archive as a “professional aid” while he compiled the lists of artists and art-works that graced his early books and, in this way, it addressed what he considered “the hitch in connoisseurship” through its archival inclusion of images from different places and historical periods, held within the serene comfort of I Tatti’s library. “For the first time in history the whole of art has become contemporaneous,” Scott noted of the archival practices inherent to such photographic collections, “The mask of time and the bars of distance at one instant broken down.”⁵⁰

By consulting these photographs, Berenson described how he was able to reassemble his professional memory of various art-works with a degree of “accuracy” that approached “a physical science,” produced through a technologically exacting process that meant connoisseurship could no longer be viably considered a “quack science.” Berenson made these remarks in his “Isochromatic Photography and Venetian Paintings” (1893), an early ‘technical paper’ that describes the reliance of connoisseurship on photography. Although “Quackery in the criticism of art is unfortunately not less common than it was” before the invention of photography, he argued, “the difference is that the quack no longer has an excuse for himself.”⁵¹ His belief in the dependability of his archive was tempered by the caprices of memory, however, and as he turned to consult these photographs as a mnemonic supplement he ignored the possibility that such images might simply come to supplant those memories.

In part, Berenson remained such an avid collector because he realized the pragmatic capacity of his collection was complimented by its symbolic value in establishing his public image as a humanist scholar. “We are living here as quietly as thee can be,” Mary Berenson wrote in description



29051

~~Sab. Angelico~~
ex Cook Colln.
Richmond (Surrey)

listed
Benozzi E ?

Madonna's draperies Benozzeseque but
child's a triple Filippesque

Same hand as
N. G. Rappo of Halcyon
Don Serrano listed Gozzoli (E.)

Is it really - if so there
it should look that
be Benozzi - Not probably

Feb. 21, 1947 Not seen much
likely Benozzi's earliest than his
known

5581. Nat. Gallery
LONDON

Annotated Photographs
Fototeca Berenson

of their domestic life in 1895. “Books, pictures, photographs, writing — a small class of students who come once a week who gather around Bernard’s table and ask questions and study photographs.”⁵² Naturally, neither this picture of domesticity, nor the collection it supplemented, was as straightforward as they first appeared. As she also remembered, several scholars who had been afforded “lending privileges” to the archive would arrive at I Tatti only to discover that the photographs they had requested for various lectures or articles had mysteriously disappeared. Not all of these occlusions were the deliberate result of her husband’s mischievous misfiling, however, but were suggestive of a more endemic concern with such projects.

As the critic Alan J. Sekula has written of the photographic collection, the assemblage of such an archive rests on its claim to the truth of an indexical, rather than a textural, inventory.⁵³ That is, it depends on the possibility of providing a comparative — rather than explanatory — system. Clearly Berenson hoped his collection would function in such a comparative manner and, as he placed one art-work beside another in a gesture that mimicked the dual slideshows of Norton he had witnessed as an undergraduate, he hoped that through this process of juxtaposition one image would come to name the other. (Or, in the sense of the Morellian comparison of unconsciously realized details, one image would determine whether the other was an original or a forgery.) In this way, the act of scientific connoisseurship relied on the tirelessly practiced comparison of individual works, with Berenson boasting of his ability to “glance at a hundred works of art in a few minutes, taste, appreciate, rank and classify them while they are before my eyes.”⁵⁴ While the possession of such an ability would be truly remarkable, Berenson’s memory, as he conceded in less bombastic moments, was distinctly fallible.

Considered in these terms, his photographic collection acted as a vast “substitution set” in which any individual image offered the possibility of being compared, exchanged, or substituted with any other. For the collection to function, this exchangeability relied on the “rhetorical accuracy of the camera” and its promise of a relative equivalency, attributes which, as Sekula recognized, were frustrated by the nature of photography itself. A nature that remains “subject to the circumstantial character of all that is photographic.”⁵⁵ In this way, the failings of the photographic collection are intrinsic to the medium itself and the history of photography could not evolve “in a disciplined and linear manner,” as the celebrated curator John Szarkowski once noted, “but rather has grown like an untended garden, making full use of the principles of random selection, *laissez-faire*, participatory democracy, and ignorance.”⁵⁶

Berenson preferred the exclusive to the democratic, however, and he responded to such a vagarious ‘nature’ by demanding his collection was tended with the strictest rigor. “I dreaded not being able to find the books or notes or photographs he was incessantly looking for,” Nicky Mariano remembered of her experience as Berenson’s librarian. While his habit of asking for a specific work

“in a very vague way, remembering the contents of a book but not the author or the title, or clamouring for a photograph without mentioning its location,”⁵⁷ not only exasperated her nerves, but his maddeningly fragmentary memory also spoke of the diffuse memory-work of connoisseurship.

Given the complexities of remembering, there was one place in which these screen memories would always conform to a textural, rather than an indexical, form: in the realm of the connoisseur’s memory. “Among the various forms of memory there exists a ‘professional memory,’” Berenson noted of his imagistic process of remembering,

Mine is helped by the fact that essentially it does not lean on words and concepts, but on illustrations. Any article which I read and which is important to me to remember is always accompanied by illustrations, and these, as soon as I have seen them, remain in my mind together with the captions which describe them and which succinctly indicate the meaning and the importance of the article; in this way my task is greatly facilitated. All I have to do is make a note of this article, and this functions as the item of an index.⁵⁸

Although he imagined his memory was indexical, this assertion is not only contradicted by Mariano’s anecdotal account of his pawing over the stacks in the library, but also by the experience of memory itself. Which is to say, by its inherently inconsistent character and willingness to conform to narrative structure in order to make sense. Why else, Berenson once asked, would “we . . . care for mere reproductions if we had within ourselves the faculty of calling up at will perfect images?”⁵⁹ As he struggled with drafting an article, or revising his lists, he realized his memory was only too susceptible to substituting one illustration for another, or blending one memory into another, with the same accidental ease that a series of spilled photographs were liable to be misordered as they were laid out for his impatient inspection.

Berenson displayed a more nuanced understanding of the connoisseur’s use of photographic images as a mnemonic device when he devoted a chapter-length description of the topic in his late *Aesthetics and History* (1950), which offered a defense of its “necessary use” against the prejudice that he felt “still lingered” — even in the 1950s — “against photography.”⁶⁰ This bias, he argued, grew out of a general impression that the photograph could not represent an “authentic document” of the art-work. In response, Berenson defended his continued use of photographs by suggesting the art-expert should immediately “discard the notion that photography reproduces an object *as it is*” in favor of using the image for what it ‘suggests,’ rather than what it ostensibly represents. (Which is to say, he argued that the value of photography lay in its inauthenticity.) Although he considered photography an “uncertain instrument . . . at best,”⁶¹ Berenson suggested this ambiguity did not diminish its ability to aid the connoisseur’s recollection of the art-work, but rather complemented it, and he further warned connoisseurs against “recording” their own “technical notes” of the art-work — for a similar reason that he preferred to dictate his impressions of the work to his omnipresent secretary — as the connoisseur’s stated purpose was not to produce a mechanical image of the art-

work, but rather to recollect their aesthetic experience of it within the memory-work. In this way, he also recommended procuring “a photograph done by an expert operator who has no theories of his own, nor indeed any with regard to the object he is taking except a technical one.”⁶²

Despite the intrinsic problems associated with photography, Berenson concluded that it would be impossible to dispense with using such images as an instrument for connoisseurship. As he explained at length,

Memory is inadequate to the task of calling upon the detail required for comparison, and in our work comparison is everything. . . . Nor is it only a question of memory, in the sense that memory is unable to furnish the necessary details. It is a fact, of which long experience alone will fully convince one, that the photograph brings out not only details but aspects of objects that escape our notice. When the work of art is present one cannot avoid enjoying it as a whole and may even identify oneself with it to the point of self-obliteration, and thus fail to work up interest in detail, or lose the capacity for coping with it. Not so before the photograph, or rather photographs. There, training and habit turn one automatically into the scrutinizing observer and close investigator, who is not easily dazzled by some effect that the moment appeals irresistibly. . . . Nowadays I hesitate to come to a conclusion about a work of art without submitting to the leisurely scrutiny of photographs.⁶³

Although he sensibly acknowledged the limitations of memory (which “is inadequate to the task”), this passage suggests that by 1950 he imagined that the photograph offered more than a simply mnemonic use (“Nor is it *only* a question of memory”) in its exposure of those “aspects of an object” that had “escaped” the connoisseur’s attention. Such an exposure is arresting, moreover, because he also seems to suggest that the connoisseur is literally blinded (“dazzled”) in their encounter with the art-work (“to the point of self-obliteration”), with this loss of vision reinforcing his suggestion that the connoisseur would be able to recollect the aesthetic moment through a process of reviewing a photograph of the work. And, in this way, Berenson’s advocacy of photography extended beyond the mere mechanical usefulness of it as a comparative tool to become intertwined in his biographic conception of connoisseurship. Blinded within the moment of the aesthetic experience, “I am not ashamed to confess,” he conceded, “that I have more often gone astray when I have seen the work by itself and when alone, than when I have known its reproductions only.”⁶⁴

Viewed in these terms, the connoisseur sacrificed the photograph’s instrumentality to a belief in the auratic presence of the original art-work. A belief that was confirmed — rather than contradicted — by his insistence that his encounter with the photographic image was able to replicate the tactile sensations he felt while viewing the original. “I do not tire of seeing the same painting, whether in the original or in photographs,” Berenson stated of his heightened aesthetic sensibility. “Impressions are never ‘exhausted’; they are reborn freshly every time.”⁶⁵ Clearly both the photography and the painting it suggested had no value for Berenson independent of their ability to act as a mnemonic trigger. And the photographs that were collected in his archive not only assisted

the connoisseur in remembering the aesthetic moment, but also alluded to those “aspects of objects that have escaped our attention.”

While such an exchange illustrated the transit from a consciously blinded impression of the art-work to an unconsciously incorporated memory of it, the ‘truthfulness’ of these memories would be related less to a “leisurely scrutiny” of photographs, than to the convincingness of narrative. If the photograph can be thought of as both the reproduction of a detail of the art-work and an arrested “detail in time” (as Scott imagined it), then Berenson was concerned that the photograph’s duration — realized through a process measured in fractions of a second — would have historical reverberations that were potentially infinite. By arguing for the anonymousness of the photographic document (as it was recorded by a dispassionate technician), which emptied the photograph of any “content” prior to its inclusion within the biographic narrative, Berenson reinscribed the connoisseur as the primary object of this technique. Which is to say, through his conceptualization and use of the photographic archive Berenson sought to verify one image: that of himself reflected back in the thousands of images laid out before him. In this way, Berensonian connoisseurship can also be considered as a technique for the serial production of a single image, in which the photograph’s autonomous value as “evidence” was subjected to its validation by his aesthetic experience.

Moreover, with such a conception Berenson perverted the photograph’s traditional role as a “mute witness.” An authority that Henry Fox Talbot, one of the medium’s originators, first recognized in his *Pencil of Nature* (1844) when he suggested that a photograph could be called upon to provide “mute testimony” in the prosecution of criminal acts.⁶⁶ If Talbot’s suggestion named a moment when photography began to be employed in a textual — rather than an indexical — manner (as Sekula has argued), then Berenson’s use of the photographic archive firmly placed this mechanism within the demands of his often monstrous ego. “My memory is like a palimpsest,” he noted elsewhere, “it no longer has room for even one line of writing.”⁶⁷ With this offhand remark he appears to have forgotten that a palimpsest remains unusable when it is not erased, further suggesting that his famously capacious memory did not have any room to accommodate any more writing, or, it could be added, for any further images to caption his thoughts.

The Profession of Memory

Naturally, Berenson’s photographic collection was only one of a number of different avatars for his memory, with the bibliographic collection in his library providing the most obvious other example.⁶⁸ However, his dependence on this archive to the performance of connoisseurship, coupled with the shift in his conception of it from a comparative to a narrative system, illustrated the extent to which it operated as the principal mechanism for realizing his aesthetically charged connoisseurial project.

(By contrast, Scott's rhetorical assurance in his *Architecture* was accentuated — rather than contradicted — by its lack of illustrated examples, which effectively internalized architecture within his writing.) As he glanced over the photographs in his collection, Berenson hoped that the images from his professional memory would return with the force, if not the eloquence, of that other great mnemonic of the late-nineteenth century: the *mémoire involuntaire*.

The scent of Proust's madeleine had permeated European society and his notion of 'involuntary memory' had been a constant topic of conversation at I Tatti. In particular, Mary Berenson's brother Logan Pearsall Smith, who had known the writer from his time in Paris during the late-1890s, was transfixed and returned again and again to the subject. But "everyone was interested in Proust," Mariano recalled of this general fascination, with each volume of his *In Search of Lost Time* being read, reread, and circulated among the intimates as soon as they were published.⁶⁹ Moreover, Berenson was socially acquainted with the writer, who — in turn — claimed to have read some of the connoisseur's earliest publications while he worked on his translations of Ruskin's *Bible of Amiens* (1904) and *Sesames and Lilies* (1906).⁷⁰ Berenson first spoke with the "pilgrim of the night" in early 1918. "We exchanged compliments and he assured me that my books had been bread and meat to him," he explained to Mary Berenson, "I confess I often wondered while reading *Swann's Way* whether my books had not influenced him."⁷¹ Naturally Berenson's egotism clouded the possibility that Proust was displaying his mastery of the "nuanced compliment," which was so pronounced his friends invented a verb, *proustifier* ("to Proustify"), in description of the ambiguous nature of his incessant flattery.⁷²

Berenson's enjoyment of Proust was not entirely social, however, and he acknowledged the lasting influence of Proust's writings on his own appreciation of the memory-work of narrative. "I have always maintained that a novelist's best inspiration is not that which comes directly and immediately from whatever happens to him," he stated of this influence, "but is that which comes from narrated facts passing through the screen of another voice, because this way he can approach them with more freedom of imagination and less scruple as to their truth."⁷³ In this way, the screen provided by the other mediates narrative, freeing it from any lingering fidelity to truth or authenticity. And it was through such a process, as both Berenson and Proust realized, that the image could be projected out on this public screen. (Producing a 'screen memory,' to use Freud's term, which would drift in and out of focus with the uncertainty of the Proustian dream-image.)

Berenson further recognized the importance of projecting his self-image onto the memories of others when he dedicated one of his final works to rumors. As he noted of the inspiration for the wartime remembrances, *Rumor and Reflection* (1952), "According to mood and humor and leisure I put down what the gossip of the day, what conversation, what the books and papers I was reading, what my musings and daydreams stimulated me to write." These musings were almost comically detached

from the swirl of events surrounding him, however, and even as stray munitions fell into I Tatti's formal gardens he noted, "what matters is not events, but what we think about them." With those events being unable to "affect us until we begin to hear rumors, and gossip, and chatter about them."⁷⁴ Like Proust, Berenson was an incorrigible gossip who realized that as an event is broken apart and fragmented into stories, which are only partially heard, reinvented, and recycled, it not only loses its coherence, but also becomes a vestige — a rumor — of itself. In this process these events become the substance of fiction as the analytical gives way to the synthetic, the actual secedes to the anecdotal, and one image is laid over another in an accretive build-up.

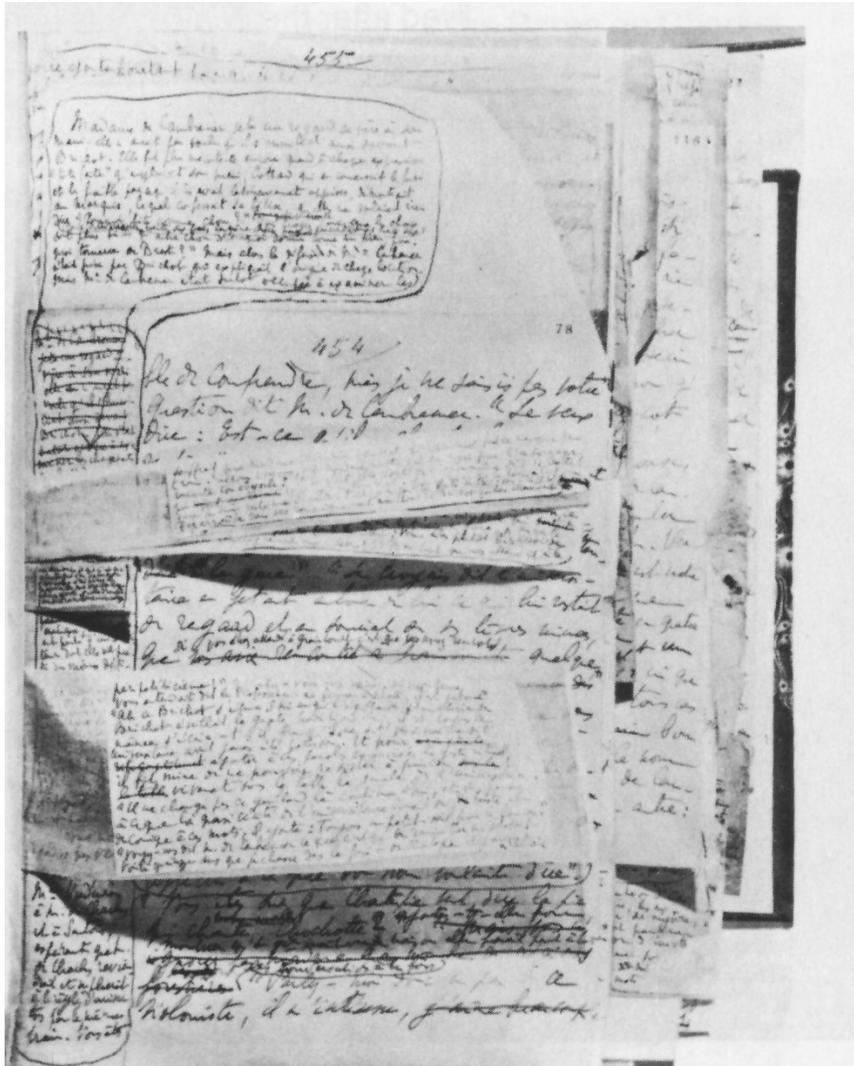
In his short biography of the writer, the critic Edmund White argued Proust's *Search* was developed through a process of writing that gradually composited images over the duration of the novel.⁷⁵ As the novel's pages drift past, the images and metaphors they carry slowly settle over one another, emulsifying into the novel's narrative and its characters. Unlike the photographs Proust studied obsessively while he wrote, these composites were not fixed, however, but were more transitive like the alchemy of memory itself. As he returned to read and reread the manuscript, Proust continued to make lengthy revisions, adding more and more details as he experimented with the chemical balances he used to develop these images, or sought new compositions through which frame them.

As Proust's characters pass through the *Search*, White argues they undergo a mitotic exchange of names and occupations, personal histories and physical characteristics, to the extent several of his characters are no longer able to even recognize themselves. "A book is a great cemetery in which one can no longer read the names on most tombs,"⁷⁶ Proust noted of this process of erosion, which he further suggests occurs with a promiscuity that is endemic to modern existence. In these terms, it is only by recognizing their own features reflected back in the screens of others that Proust that these characters can know themselves. (The potentially melancholic nature of this recognition is evident in Proust's recollection of his deceased mother, which he found "in the silence with which she was able to surround my sleep all day and which still, inert, in the habit she formed in the servants."⁷⁷)

It was not only the narrative process but also actual time itself, moreover, which was emulsified within the "slow composition" of these images. If Proust describes the memory-work as an unfixed image, subject to the ellipses of time and the malleable spatiality of subjectively, then the meanderings and deviations of his *Search* also suggest that he understood the unfixable nature of this mnemonic image meant it could never be held in a single image. In this way, the technical reproducibility of that memory, solicited here through the medium of photography, would remain pliable and subservient to the temporality of subjective narrative and reconfigured spatiality of



Jacques-Emile Blanche, *Portrait de Marcel Proust*, 1892.



Marcel Proust, annotated manuscript page, n.d.

forgetfulness: a pliability that is evident in Proust's famous description of his narrator's "waking dream" of his bedroom, which has been reconfigured by his "clumsy memory."⁷⁸

Following his reading of Proust, coupled with his advancing years, Berenson also acknowledged the deeply subjective nature of time. As he quipped, "Time, not objective Time which I do not bother about, but subjective Time, is symbolized for me by an accordion."⁷⁹ Like one of the maps from Karl Baedeker's guidebooks, this instrument was a mechanical analogy of the intellectual contraction and expansion of space. Using a playful reference to Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, further noted the speed with which time passed. In contrast to the theoretical physicist, who used the analogy of walking forward on a moving train to illustrate the relativity of time (which is condensed with hyperaccelerated forward motion), Berenson noted, "Only in traveling do I stretch [time] out, multiplying, as it were, Time by Space."⁸⁰ A prolongation that suggested time could be expanded or contracted, like an accordion, at will. Moreover, this gesture further suggests Berenson's notion of connoisseurship was also an attempt to fix time and space in the image, which could be recalled when professionally demanded.

Although he understood connoisseurship as the synthesis of a stream of mental images — of a "photography [that] had taken place within the archive of his memories" (to use Proust's description) — Berenson's obsession with the relative fidelity of his professional memory meant that his collective experience would be a parody of the process of assembling his photographic archive. While Proust wrote his great work in the knowledge that the dreamlike multiple-exposures of memory already represented a find of fictive art, then — in the final instance — it is apt that Berenson's recourse to an evidential memory bound him to the demands of commercial reward. (A memory that his legal witness regarding Duveen's sale of a forged art-work illustrated was entirely open to perjury.) If Proust's description of the *mémoire involontaire* expressed the unique logic of the Parisian *fin-de-siècle*, then the cultural nostalgia that is evident in Berenson's evocation of the past illustrates a kind of continually reinvented antipathy toward "modern experience."⁸¹ A hostility that is most apparent in his description of the 'aesthetic moment' as a passing glimpse; one that is perpetually lost and should be mourned accordingly.

Indeed, by the early-1900s Berenson was already describing his notion of connoisseurship in both antithetical terms to modern experience and a mediation on the lost past. As he later noted of this melancholy, "my century, my own, is the nineteenth,"⁸² with the irony behind his observation lying in his unwittingly acknowledgment of his intellectual arrest at this point. In this way, by the beginning of the twentieth century the practice of Berensonian connoisseurship was already indelibly marked by a form of nostalgia. An obsession with the past that Karin Stephen, Berenson's daughter-in-law and a trained Freudian psychoanalyst, viewed in terms of its exposition of melancholy — of a dwelling within the image — rather than any introspective mourning for the passing of time.⁸³

Stephen equated Berenson's public persona with a state of arrested development. "However adult and intellectual, or cultivated he may seem," she explained in her *Psycho-analysis and Medicine: a Study of the Wish to Fall Ill* (1933), "the 'conscious social personality' of the neurotic is based on a bluff."⁸⁴ A feint Berenson sought to conceal through a conspicuous mourning for the death of humanist art.

Stephen had trained with Ernst Jones, the first advocate of Freudian psychoanalysis in England, and had narrowly missed out on being analyzed by Freud himself when he decided to take on her more eminent cousin-in-law, James Strachey, as an analysand. Freud's conception of the "work of mourning," as Stephen rightly understood it, was characterized by the observer's increasing lack of interest in the external world following the traumatic loss of the beloved. (Whether an object or subject.) Freud further associated this process of detachment with a depletion of psychological energy, moreover, as their pain of loss and its associated memories will monopolize the observer's mental reserves until the point at which they can be persuaded to "sever this attachment to the object." In this way, the "work" of melancholia, as he noted in an early formulation of this process ("Melancholia," 1895), is invested in the perpetual reproduction of this image of loss; a representation the mourner no longer had the energy — or the desire — to see beyond.

"Shortly after her patient's death," Freud noted of one case-study, "there would begin in her a work of reproduction which once more brought before her eyes the scenes of illness and death. Every day she would go through each impression once more, would weep over it and console herself: at her leisure, one might say."⁸⁵ The work of mourning is a complex mechanism and it is within their dwelling within this mnemonic arrest that the melancholic discovers their inability to divorce their conscious self from the lost object, which results in an unconscious pathological identification with it. Lost within such the moment, the melancholic "may even identify with it to the point of self-obliteration," as Berenson wrote of the connoisseur's similarly obsessive review of the "work of reproduction." Turning this object over and over in their "leisurely scrutiny" of the image, the melancholic/connoisseur risks "los[ing] the capacity for coping with it,"⁸⁶ resulting in a lament that was easily perverted into a nostalgic drive. Moreover, if this excess of sentimental yearning is obviously capable of substituting the memory with a nostalgic image of it, then nostalgia can itself be thought of as a mechanism for the reproduction of memory.

Berenson directly associated his conception of the memory-work of connoisseurship with a nostalgically infused rebuttal of modernity. "Constant change," he noted, "even if for the better, is rarely welcome because of one's affection for the past! I would therefore want to extract all I could from the passing moment, as if something would be irretrievably lost if I did not gather it into memory. There it remains safe while I live."⁸⁷ As he realized elsewhere, it is the memory itself that harbors the greatest potential for the 'irretrievable loss' of aesthetic experience, and he equated his sybaritic 'longing' for the "passing moment" with an illness. Writing in a passage that seems eerily

reminiscent of Proust's narrator's longing for a final kiss goodnight, Berenson recalled how "[s]ince childhood I have seldom said goodbye to persons I was attracted to without asking myself whether I should ever see them again . . . Later I learned that this was a sybaritic attitude, in the sense that it enhanced the passing moment with ideated aspirations of longing."⁸⁸ In this way, the connoisseur's memory of the art-work was not only permeated by the multiplicity of desires they associated with it, but also a more existential mourning for the passing of that aesthetic moment. A grieving that Fry, among others, was essential to Berenson's conception of aesthetic experience.

The fidelity of Berenson's memory was further challenged by the emergence of modernity because, as several contemporaneous writers rightly noted, he was already something of an anachronistic figure by the end of the nineteenth century. (With the connoisseur stating his disdain for "art after Matisse," which, ironically, was often created by modern artists who were older than Berenson.) While his works from the 1930s onward were ostensibly concerned with the "crisis of humanity," his real concern was less general than particular, with these writings illustrating his resentment at his declining intellectual influence in the modernist era, which did not share the elitist conception of culture he symbolized.⁸⁹ This frustration is obvious in his interpretation of modern art as symptomatic of the "decline of Western civilization." Given the pervasiveness of this decline, Berenson thought it imperative to "not lose sight of the fact that we are absorbed in the study of art not in health but in disease," he noted in 1950, "in other words we are investigating the pathology of art."⁹⁰ (In reaction to the intellectual sophistication of the modernist avant-garde, he steadfastly continued to argue that art should be "life enhancing." Which is to say, rather than questioning human existence he simply reiterated the art-work should reaffirm it unconditionally.)

Berenson's later works, such as *Aesthetics and History*, which was to have been part of a larger project that outlined the progressive decline of the visual arts from the Renaissance, are filled with such anti-modernist posturing. As Calo rightly noted, his disdain largely grew out of his understanding the modern movement furnished him with a convenient target of abuse, ensuring he would remain in the public consciousness during an age that might otherwise have ignored him.⁹¹ The strategy behind this exaggerated opposition was only too obvious, with his friend Margaret Scolari Barr — who was a Trustee of the Museum of Modern Art in New York — openly teasing Berenson about his contempt for modern art. "I know you will loath the contents," she astutely noted in reference to the catalog of modern art she had enclosed with her letter, "but this loathing or this act of loathing I think gives you a certain amount of pleasure."⁹²

This pleasure was itself contradictory, however, in the sense that modern art — as it was exemplified by the distorted perspective of Cubism — was not only antithetical to his self-conception as a humanist scholar, but also, through its questioning of the observer's view-point, was a distortion of his concept of tactile-values. Such a displacement removed the connoisseur from the

center of their aesthetic world, inverting their dominance over the art-work, and Berenson railed against modern art because of its contradiction of his cherished system of tactile-values, its disruption of his sense of ideated space, and its fundamental undermining of his position as an aesthete. (A position he considered as assured as “the stability of the universe I was bred into.”⁹³) Ironically, even by the late-1910s many visitors attended Berenson’s court at I Tatti not to bask in his luminance as a famous aesthete, but rather to view this world and its ruler as a form of outmoded exhibit. There they would discover, Berenson’s classmate George Santayana noted, “a stream of distilled culture flowing over us continually in the form of soulful tourists and weary *dilettanti* who frequent this place.”⁹⁴

‘A Volunteer Amanuensis’

Given the voracity of his biographical ambition it does seem quite “incredible,” as the journalist Helen Bohn once marveled, “to learn that the legendary Berenson never allowed himself to be photographed on motion picture film, nor did permit his voice to be recorded. It is ironic that this man whose personality became a ‘work of art’ exists now only in the memories of those who knew him.”⁹⁵ However, such a degree of irony seems unlikely for a man who’s ‘very being’ can be read as an attempt to negate incongruity. While the unbridled aestheticisms of his early works speak of an adolescent naivety, the pernicious criticism of the later volumes suggests the banishment of irony from I Tatti was an essential component of Berensonian connoisseurship. Indeed by the beginning of the twentieth century, he had already spent so much time in the worlds of publicity and self-promotion that only the most calculated of his gestures could be considered sincere. With one of the most genuine of these conceits comprising his continued reluctance to have his “essence” recorded in images that were measured in frames per second, or replayable sounds. (In this way, Berenson’s reticence to be recorded can be considered a strange variation — accelerated by a factor of twenty-four times per second — of Honoré Balzac’s well-known fear that a single layer was torn from the body, peeled away like an onion skin, each time a mechanical reproduction of it was made.⁹⁶) His refusal to be stored in the time signatures of these technical media cannot be equated with a lack of his desire to be “immortalized,” however, but rather with the perceived accuracy of these reproductions: a concern for being faithfully recorded that is illustrated by his deliberate choice of media. As several acquaintances noted, the connoisseurship preferred to be remembered in “the memories of those who knew him.”

Berenson clearly understood the potential value of technology. Although his comments about the ‘professional’ use of photography further suggest he believed his inclusion of these techniques within his connoisseurial ‘art’ would mitigate the impact of the modern world’s increasing

technologization on his own anachronistic conception of it. In this way, Berenson not only verified his optical use of the eye by referencing it to a technical image of the work (the photograph), but also against his rhetorically biographic image of it as well. And it was through such a mnemonic correlation of the image to narrative, moreover, that he sought to publically certify his own ‘eye’ as the primary instrument of connoisseurship. Given this authority, the American critic John Walker suggested Berenson would “continue to be read as the best guide to the pleasures of the eye.”⁹⁷

However, the pleasure Berenson derived from the aesthetic moment meant that he loathed interrupting his own concentrated gaze to record his impressions of the art-work by taking notes. As Mary Berenson remembered of her role in this practice, her own appreciation was interjected with his instructions regarding the detailed notes she was required to take for later reference. Notation was a “habit he detested,” she recalled, largely because Berenson felt it intruded on his “absorbed raptures,” but “When he was writing . . . how eagerly he would call for those notes, and how he would rage if there were none, or they were not detailed enough.”⁹⁸ Like his instructions on the photography of art-works, the connoisseur’s aesthetic absorption demanded the presence of another figure on these expeditions who could — literally — describe his view of the work.

The presence of this secretarial figure allowed Berenson to detach himself from a conscious appreciation of the art-work. That is, as they recorded the impressions he dictated to them, this figure allowed him to dwell in the world of art — suspended from his concern that the palimpsest of his own memory would be filled with the addition of even one more line — by displacing the view before him to another record in his ‘memory.’ In this way, his secretary’s description of the art-work was less inextricable from his memory of it, than representative of it. Moreover, through their performance of this task Berenson’s secretary not only proved to be the most important avatar of his professional memory (acting as a voluntary amanuensis to be called on “when he was writing”), but also — through their self-conscious stenography of his unconsciously appreciative gestures (written during those moments in which ‘he forgot himself’) — the guardian of his biographic project. One who could bear witness to his genius. Given this dynamic, it is scarcely surprising that two figures who were central in bringing his works to publication, Mary Berenson and Mariano, were both his lovers and biographers, producing accounts in which their memories of the connoisseur conform to their annotations of the aesthetic experience.

Like Scott, Berenson appreciated the dynamics of conversation. In contrast to Scott, who sought to develop his ideas through conversation before turning them into writing, Berenson thought the act of writing down his ideas deprived them of the energy and fluidity they had in conversation. By most accounts, Berenson had the quietest of voices, which would barely rise above a whisper even when he issued an instruction or uttered a witticism. As many of his confidantes later recalled, even with the most intense concentration it was often extremely difficult — if not

impossible — to understand what he had actually said. Despite these difficulties, ‘conversation’ was a vital part of the social life at I Tatti’s social life and it was perhaps the most principal aspect of Berenson’s enshrinement as the ‘Sage of Settignano.’ Freed from the torturous phrasings and injurious transitions of his writing, Berenson was at ease in the vagarious nature of conversation. “All those who have ever frequented Bernard Berenson,” a friend remembered (neatly conflating the aging connoisseur with an institution), “know what his conversation meant — its rapid transitions from whiplash epigrams to tones of thoughtful wisdom, and its continuous references drawn from a richness of cultural, worldly and artistic experience, a knowledge of the past and of the present, of men and nations.”⁹⁹

Obviously the breadth and pace of these conversations was intended to be invigorating, intoxicating even, and Berenson threw himself into a pursuit he considered a “game of the spirit” by metering his words between beguiling parries and solemn thrusts. As his former protégé Kenneth Clark (1903-83) recalled, Berenson liked to play with his knowledge and ideas in conversation, using them as if they were “part of an inexhaustible reservoir to be drawn upon for the delight of his audience.” In this way, Clark rightly thought Berenson had “a half conscious feeling that to fix facts and ideas on a printed page was to deprive them of their life,”¹⁰⁰ as if these ideas were exhausted at the moment of their definition. Within this game, Berenson recognized that the art of conversation consisted of striking a balance between the gravity of serious pronouncement and the pleasures of charming glibness, between the solemnity of scholarship and the delicacy of a whisper, in which all that was solid melted into air. His verbal poise is best illustrated by his habit of talking in aphorisms, a conceit he had adapted from his reading of Friedrich Nietzsche. Berenson enjoyed talking in aphorisms because the form’s brevity meant that his audience could easily mistake a single utterance for an intellectual formulation, or a muted tone for increased significance. Mishearing his commentary was clearly an integral part of the act and Berenson exploited his audience’s naïve interest in retaining what he had told them. (The central aspect of which is that they retained enough of an impression to be able to recall an anecdote.¹⁰¹) In this way, the intricacies of his conversation sought to provide the briefest of pleasures, caught in the moment, like the resonances of a crystal glass lost in the aftermath of a toast.

Given these verbal gifts, it does seem astonishing that Berenson rejected the idea of these phrases being “captured” on film or acetate. Despite such protestations, however, this process of capture is exactly what the Count Umberto Morra, another long-time intimate at I Tatti, intended to do with his *Conversations with Berenson* (1965). Describing his project to “record” a series of conversations between 1931 and 1940 as the pair strolled along the Cypress allée, Morra noted that he was motivated to begin this record because “there was a danger that an entire train of [Berenson’s] thought . . . with ideas which were enunciated and ‘thought out’ in conversation before being

consigned to paper, might forever remain in that state.”¹⁰² Although this project was carried out without Berenson’s knowledge, the connoisseur could scarcely have scripted a better epithet, nor could he have hoped for a more salutary public portrait of his most intimate comments. (Not, at least, until the publication of Mariano’s *Forty Years with Berenson* the following year.)

If conversation was indeed a game, then Berenson recognized the value of playing in private. And it is through this understanding of the benefits associated with talking to an audience comprised of ‘intimates’ that his reluctance to be recorded can be uncoded. As Clark noted in his introduction to Mariano’s *Forty Years with Berenson*, the connoisseur often exhibited a wild disparity between “the brilliant, destructive performances” in public and “the wise, gentle and almost lyrical tone of his conversation when one was alone with him on a walk.” Although Clark attributed this contrast to his performative nature, coupled with his propensity to “abuse his brilliant gifts of improvisation,” given Berenson’s neurasthenic mood swings it scarcely surprising that he often failed to control his temper. Rather, as Clark also noted, this abusiveness was often unleashed in a torrent of “thundering anathemas and piled-up epithets of abuse . . . to frighten pious visitors to I Tatti.”¹⁰³ Nor is it surprising that Clark displayed such generosity toward his friend by insisting Berenson tempered the barbs of public invective with the bosom of private insight.

The mute attention of his audience appeared to be a conversational prerequisite for Berenson, moreover, providing him with a pretext to “think aloud” as he walked out the forks and diversions of his thoughts, with the silence of the companions who accompanied him meaning they were less participants in a conversation, than witnesses to his monolog. And if these figures were not quite anonymous, they were certainly interchangeable. “A tape recorder would have been better than a volunteer amanuensis,” Morra admitted, hinting at the incompleteness of the “mental notes” he took on these strolls. Yet even if he had have been able to capture these conversations on a more technically reliable format, Morra realized it would have been to no avail. “Berenson would have never been able to adapt himself to the presence of a mechanical instrument,” he conceded. “The simple idea of it would have paralyzed his talk [and] I was certain that only by keeping quiet as to my intentions would I leave it to flow forth naturally and unpremeditatedly.”¹⁰⁴ This remark suggests that Morra knew his place in the social and intellectual schema of I Tatti, recognizing it was only by staying silent and taking mental notes that he could witness the unobstructed flow of Berenson’s thoughts, spilled out — almost unconsciously — under the pretense of being unpremeditated.

Berenson’s “thinking aloud” was less of an intellectual talking-cure, than the continuation of a public monologue in which every apparently spontaneous aphorism had been rehearsed, refined, and endlessly regurgitated. A performance he acknowledging by suggesting that his “perfect audience” would consist entirely of “society ladies.” “If a woman keeps silent her company is



Mary Berenson and Bernard Berenson, Egypt, 1922.
Unknown photographer ©National Portrait Gallery, London



Bernard Berenson and Nicky Mariano, 1936
Unknown photographer ©National Portrait Gallery, London

precious,” he explained, “Those who only know how to speak intelligently speak too much; the moment comes when they drive us mad with an out-of-place observation, with an impertinent question, with an asinine interruption.”¹⁰⁵ Berenson’s misogyny aside, it is evident that the conversations in *I Tatti* were intended to be unidirectional, resulting in the hostility he displayed toward such figures as Vernon Lee, Edith Wharton, Gertrude Stein, and Martha Gellhorn, when they voiced their own opinions and refused to concede to his arguments. If a visitor failed to conform to preconceptions, or dared to “speak intelligently,” Berenson would turn and enquire in the sweetest of tones, “And now, my dear, what do you do that is *useful*?”¹⁰⁶ His insinuation, of course, being that their physical presence should be complimented by their acquiescent silence. Or, perhaps, by their conscientious ability to remember what he had told them.

Given his delight in hearing his own words repeated by others, it is scarcely surprising Berenson constantly railed against the “amnesia of women.”¹⁰⁷ Such a complaint was not only supremely ironic, given his reliance on Mary Berenson and Mariano, but also indicative of a more insidious concern that a misplaced noun, or a misfiled photograph, could result in a more culturally significant forgetfulness. In this way, the failure to remember “antecedent facts” had professional as well as biographic consequences. Berenson was unable to separate the biographic from the professional, or the narrative from the scientific, and — in the final instance — his interest in aesthetic beauty cannot be disentangled from the ugliness of his professional memory-work. An interconnection that is best illustrated, fittingly, by Mary Berenson’s description of her resignation as his secretary.

During a visit to Egypt by the Berensons in 1922, Mary Berenson noted how her advancing age (she was 58) had begun to affect her memory and she asked Mariano, who was accompanying the couple aboard for the first time, to assume her job as the principal “note-taker and rememberer.” Over the next few years Mariano would assume her other duties as the connoisseur’s secretary, publicist, editor, photographer, archivist, nurse, and lover.¹⁰⁸ Mariano’s diligence in recording Berenson’s observations immediately impressed the couple and “We [began to] call Nicky our ‘External Memory,’” Mary Berenson recalled, “in imitation of the ancient Egyptians who used to hide their souls in trees or wells for safe-keeping.”¹⁰⁹ Often it was not their souls, but rather those secrets that the ancients considered inseparable from their ‘being,’ which they chose to whisper into the hollows of trees and seal over. As Bernard and Mary Berenson recognized by the early-1920s, these were hiding-places that — even as the trees which contained these secrets were felled into pages, overrun by words, and bound into the memoirs of those who knew them best — continued to keep their memories safe, held in the spaces between sentences and misunderstandings between words.

CHAPTER FOUR

“Nothing but Sheer Nerves:” Geoffrey Scott and the Humanism of Architecture

“Every human being has his shell . . . There’s no such thing as an isolated man or woman; we’re each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. What shall we call our ‘self? Where does it begin? Where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us — and then it flows back again.”¹

Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881)

When Geoffrey Scott returned to his writing desk during the autumn of 1918 with the intention of continuing the “history of taste” he had begun with the *Architecture of Humanism*, he was struck by a frustratingly sudden attack of writer’s block. The severity of this attack was even more pronounced given his oft-stated desire to add to this history. Yet, despite these intentions, Scott’s future daughter-in-law — the writer Iris Origo — vividly recalled the scene in his study where,

“A large piece of foolscap . . . lay for many weeks upon the centre of his desk, bearing, in his fine scholar’s hand, the following words, and these only:

A HISTORY OF TASTE

Volume I

Chapter I

‘It is very difficult . . .’²

Origo’s description not only illustrated his palpable exhaustion with writing about architecture, “It is very difficult . . .,” but also the capriciousness of the “black moods” that overwhelmed Scott and left him “incapable of doing any work.” Caught within one of his “black serpent days,” he noted how his personal and professional ambitions would “merge with a vague blur to mean nothing.”³ Given this obscurantism, there was a perpetual “uncertainty as to whether he would awake, after an evening enlivened by his stories and his wit,” Origo recalled, “to a morning blackness which, for three days, would envelop the whole house in a dank mist of silence and gloom.”⁴ Despite this unpleasantness, however, the severity of these ‘attacks’ was only relative, affecting his ‘work’ to differing degrees.

Following this pattern, it is scarcely surprising that one of the most significant appearances of this “dank mist” coincided with Scott’s plans to marry Origo’s mother, the recently widowed Lady Sybil Bayard Cutting (1879-1943). By all accounts, Cutting was a beguiling character whose relative youth, beauty, and seductive manner were accented by her neurotic sensitivities. For the bored denizens of the anglo-florentino community Cutting’s arrival in 1911 had caused an immediate sensation. (From 1901-10 she had been married to William Bayard Cutting, the American socialite who had served as the Secretary to the United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James.) Like Scott, Cutting was prone to nervous distress and the “suddenness of her attacks was as disconcerting as it was inconvenient,” her daughter noted, with “sudden eclipses followed by equally sudden and complete resuscitations.”⁵

In particular, Origo was suspicious of her mother's tenuous romantic liaisons and the affect they took on her nerves. "My instinct told me that the choice was not wise," she noted of Cutting's acceptance of Scott's proposal, "and the confirmation of this came very soon."⁶ The groom was also concerned about the viability of the relationship, which had been prompted in response to his acknowledgement of society's intolerance with middle-aged homosexual relationships.⁷ Prior to this proposal, Scott had pursued a number of unsuccessful dalliances, including relationships with Nicky Mariano (who eventually replaced him as Berenson's private Secretary), Karen Stephen (Mary Berenson's daughter recognized the inappropriateness of his advances by noting "he was never the kind of person I could grow fond of"⁸), and Senda Berenson (the connoisseur's younger sister). The uncertainty of his intentions drove Scott to unwisely ask Mary Berenson for her advice on formulating this proposal. A request that not only attempted to mitigate her inevitable jealousy, safeguarding his immediate future, which was still intertwined with the Berenson's patronage, but also represented an appeal to literary style. In the full flush of emotion it appears Scott distrusted his natural facility for language and simply turned to his most trusted editor.

Ironically, at the moment she accepted his proposal, Cutting was engaged in a listless affair with Berenson. Given these circumstances, Scott, Cutting, Berenson, and Mary Berenson had all become entangled in a convoluted series of romantic triangulations — Berenson, Mary Berenson, Cutting; Berenson, Cutting, Scott; Cutting, Scott, and Mary Berenson — in which the lovers of one concern formed the slighted parties of another. These events inspired a flurry of letters between Scott and Mary Berenson that were fuelled by the ill-advised contributions of Berenson and Edith Wharton. (Cutting remained the only participant to resist the pangs of literary fervor.) In particular, Berenson reacted to his wife's jealousy with characteristic peevishness, disingenuously noting how "I feel deliciously, benevolently out of it, Mary-Geoffrey-Sybil triangle,"⁹ while adding how "any man who has Sybil after me will owe me treasures of gratitude."¹⁰ His churlishness was inspired by both a sense of disdain for his wife's inappropriate behaviour and the opportunity to ridicule Scott, who he felt had never completely deferred to his intellectual superiority. "Your heart bleeds for the little penguin escaped from under your wing," he taunted Mary Berenson, adding that this sort of union had been inevitable as Scott "has always been an aspiring little brother of the rich and well placed."¹¹

For her part Mary Berenson was understandably horrified by both Scott's proposal and his appeal for editorial advice. Given these circumstances, it is astonishing he sought to frame his decision to marry Cutting as an appeal to reason, with this proposal stemming from a desire to "reinforce the outward external intellectual and impersonal sides of my life," he explained to the incredulous Mary Berenson, which resulted from the understanding that "I have got too far involved in my emotions."¹² Mary Berenson's disdain is evident in her characterization of Cutting in a series of letters that are less a means to communicate, than a mechanism for deliberate cruelty. She despised



Lady Sybil Marjorie Cutting, 1921.

Photograph by Bassano ©National Portrait Gallery, London

Cutting's "endless chatter, self-absorption, hypochondria," she noted (without any sense of irony), before concluding, "You have chosen the greatest bore I know as your companion. It kills my love [for you] and almost killed me."¹³ Clearly all reason had been cast aside and these letters left him "profoundly miserable like nothing I have ever experienced," Scott replied.¹⁴ His concerns regarding the dissolution of his friendship with Mary Berenson, coupled with his suspicions that this impending marriage — which would be played out against a backdrop of strained nerves and neurasthenic culpability — would prove 'difficult,' left Scott on "the edge of breakdown" and unable to "stand a thing without bursting into tears."¹⁵ Literary histrionics aside, the precariousness of this situation resulted in both Mary Berenson's emotional collapse, in which she describing being "delirious with pain of body and agony of mind,"¹⁶ and Scott's nervous breakdown in late-1918.

Following the recommendation of his friend, the literary hostess Lady Ottoline Morrell (1873-1938), Scott travelled to Lausanne, Switzerland, in order to be treated in the clinic of Dr. Roger Vittoz (1863-1925), one of the period's preeminent psychologists and the author of the *Traitement des psychonévroses par la rééducation du contrôle cérébrale* (trans. *The Treatment of Neurasthenia by Teaching of Brain Control*, 1911). On arrival, he found himself immediately assured after finding the doctor "one of the most interesting men I have met." "He can tell whether you are lying or telling the truth . . . in a few months, he expects to have perfected an instrument which will report [psychical] phenomena mechanically."¹⁷ (Unfortunately desire remained technologically indecipherable and the machine remained unfinished.) Despite his renowned attention to detail, Vittoz only required a few cursory responses to diagnose Scott as a neurasthenic and prescribe a lengthy course of treatment for nervous exhaustion.

Vittoz believed the principal symptom of neurasthenia was a "sensation of painful confusion" that resulted from the formation of "unclear, vague, and undisciplined ideas." In response he advocated a regime of progressively intense exercises that were designed to enhance the patient's powers of concentration, which would not only allow the "idea to be followed without letting the mind wander," but also — in ideal circumstances — wake them from the "dreamy, semi-conscious state of neurasthenia."¹⁸ (Ironically, he also believed the greatest impediment to recovery was the persistence of clichés, or "bad impressions," which remain "crystallized in the brain."¹⁹) Morrell had previously been treated by Vittoz and she remembered how this regime consisted of "a system of mental control and concentration," in which the doctor advocated "the habit of eliminating unnecessary thoughts and worries from one's mind through the practice of eliminating letters from words, or one number from a set of numbers."²⁰ In this way, this treatment echoed the 'letter game,' the pre-war English parlour game in which players overturned cards containing random letters in order to construct and erase words — a "word-making and word-taking" — out of the ensuing jumble.²¹



Lady Ottoline Morell, 1905.

Photograph by Cavendish Morton ©National Portrait Gallery, London

Although it is impossible to determine how closely Scott followed Vittoz's prescribed regime, given that the second volume of his history ended where it had begun — with the phrase “It is very difficult . . .” — it appears he was already adept in eliminating letters from words, and had progressed on to the subtraction of words from sentences and, perhaps, even to the erasure of ideas from his arguments.

As with his “incapacity to do work,” Scott's writers-block was more selective than it was all consuming, however, and it was during this period of recuperation that he worked on the poems he would eventually publish as *A Box of Paints* (1924) and *Poems* (1932). Works that not only illustrate his lyrical disassociation, in which he sought to free his writing from the “direct meaning” of experience, but also evidence a progressive withdrawal into the indefinite and “associative meanings” he found in literature. Despite the decades since the publication of his prize winning “The Death of Shelley” (1908), Scott's late poetry failed to show any development in terms of either technique or subject matter and it remained wedded to an archaic romanticism, which is apparent in the convoluted rhythmic structures of his 1924 poem “Wind,”

“In my garden goes a fiend
Dark and wild, whose name is Wind”

And further evident in the fatuousness of such works as “Here is Music, Dark and Still” (also published in 1924),

“Shadows creep, and sinks the sun;
On the fountain, one by one,
Every star is now afloat
Like a glow-worm on a boat.”

Scott was unusually sensitive toward this lyrical ineptitude, however, with these concerns keeping him from “truly calling myself a poet.” “The reason I shall never be able to write poetry of the sensuous-objective kind,” he further explained, is because “I have too scanty a store of remembered images.” A forgetfulness he associated with both the immediate difficulties of writing and his impoverished perception of the floating world that surrounded him. “My memory is an unsatisfactory thing,” he noted of this slippage, “most falls through its meshes — the rest of it feels very empty . . . MY emptiness is due to an extreme *dédoublement* which I habitually live — half of me dwells in semi-consciousness and only half is used in noticing.”²² Explained in these terms, Scott's description is arresting for several reasons. Firstly, his equation of the “too scanty a store” of visual memory with an emptiness of experience directly contradicts the vitalized notion of aesthetic enjoyment he offered in his *Architecture*. Secondly, his allusion to the “semi-consciousness” of critical practice, in which “only half is used in noticing,” can further be read as a perversion of Berenson's insistence that the connoisseur inhabit the art-work “as in a dream.” (Held within the temporal

suspension of the ‘aesthetic moment.’) And finally, his description of split consciousness — or “extreme *dédoublement*” — is not only inherently romantic in conception, but also archaic in the sense of the cleanliness of this division. As another of Vittoz’s patients soon noted, this splitting was less absolute than incomplete, resulting in an architecturally fragmented subjectivity as opposed to a neatly bifurcated observer.

By a strange coincidence, Vittoz’s treatment seems to have been especially conducive to writing poetry, as the experience of the Anglo-American writer Thomas Sterns Eliot (1888-1965) confirms. After his own nervous collapse in late-1921, Eliot similarly followed the recommendation of Morrell and sought refuge in Lausanne. Vittoz’s treatment successfully cured his writer’s block and, on his return to London the following year, he carried with him the completed 19-page draft of his epic *The Waste Land*.²³ Together with their love of literature, it seems both Scott and Eliot shared an appreciation of Vittoz’s regime, tempered with an understanding of the consequences implicit within Eliot’s line from “A Game of Chess,” “My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad.”²⁴ This nervous frailty is only a fragment of a larger neurotically charged dialogue in which Eliot coupled the modern subject’s existential fragility with the uselessness of their appeal to an estranged lover,

“My nerves are bad to-night. Yes bad. Stay with me.
 ‘Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.
 ‘What are you thinking of? What thinking? What.
 ‘I never know what you are thinking. Think.
 ‘I think we are in rat’s alley
 Where dead men lost their bones.”

Moreover, this state of psychical fragmentation, “My nerves are bad . . .,” further extended to a state of physical decay and the excoriation of substance, “I think we are in rat’s alley / Where dead men lost their bones.” A progressive wearing away — as opposed to a decisive *dédoublement* — that not only names the latent anxiety within the subjective experience of modernity, but also the complicated spatiality of modernity itself.

Given these circumstances, the question can be asked what form did Scott’s nerves take? Or, to be more precise, how did his famously unstable nerves illustrate the ‘humanism’ that his architectural thesis — *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* — alluded to, but, as many critics have rightly argued, failed to effectively define?

Again these questions can be framed in relation to one of Eliot’s earlier poems, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (1917), which vividly illustrates the psychological complications that separated the positivistic account of inhabitation Scott offered in his ‘history of taste,’ from the enervated forgetfulness of his biographic experience. In this poem, Prufrock is representative of early-modernist subjectivity: cultivated, shy, socially and sexually impotent, and self-conscious to the point of solipsistic isolation. As the critic J. Hillis Miller has noted, Prufrock’s extreme



T.S. Eliot, c.1950.
Unknown photographer

subjectivization enforces an “unhappy relation to time and space,” in which experience can only ever be imaginary as it is held within the “opaque room” of his consciousness.²⁵ Moreover, time itself — which needs to be figured objectively in order to remain external to this process (and provide a legible measure to experience) — is also internalized by Prufrock, who collapses the past, present, and future into the immediacy of the neurasthenic moment. Caught within this dynamic, at the moment Eliot’s protagonist attempts to externalize his experience, “Let us go then, you and I,” he is paralyzed within this solipsistic interiority and remains immobilized, “Like a patient etherised on a table.”

In contrast to Scott’s lazy romanticism, which retained a belief in the heroic potential of writing, Eliot’s poetry not only illustrated the emotive tensions within the early-modernist subject (that would be examined elsewhere by Sigmund Freud), but also the frustrations of making art out of the refuse of modernity. A state in which “each thing is broken in itself, or incomplete, and the whole collection of things has no collective order.”²⁶ In this way, the concluding line of “Prufrock,” “Till human voices wake us, and we drown,” dispels any final hope that the cultivated sensitivity, expressed through the poetic urge, could diminish the onslaught of modernity. Moreover, Eliot’s allusion to the figure of the scavenger, who attempts to assemble a singular entity out of the diverse fragments to hand, is drawn from his reading of Charles Baudelaire, who famously defined *modernité* in the paradoxical terms of being both “ephemeral, fugitive, and contingent” and “eternal and immutable.”²⁷

Held within such an “unhappy relation” to time and space, the modern figure Eliot described could only project their inner psychical state with the dissoluteness “as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen.”²⁸ However, this screen was not only constituted of the interior surfaces of architecture for Scott, but also the blank expanses of the page that followed his frustrating literary ellipse. And the diaphanous patterns his nerves cast were not only composed of his imaging of architectural history, which illustrated his “scanty store of remembered images,” but also the forgetfulness that was endemic to his reading of space. While Eliot’s recognized these ‘bad nerves’ were a complex manifestation of the subject’s interaction with an emergent modernity, Scott’s nervousness consoled itself with his retrogressive turn to an anachronism of the nineteenth-century: aesthetic connoisseurship. With this turn, his promotion of architecture as an art that would “construct, within the world as it is, a *pattern of the world*,” together with his theorization of the inhabitation of this pattern, was complicated by that least diagnostically convincing of diseases — neurasthenia — which by the time Vittoz diagnosed Scott in 1918 had been discredited in medical circles for almost two decades.

Nothing but ‘Sheer Nerves’

In his *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), Thorstein Veblen equated the “psychological inertia” of figures like Scott and Berenson with the desire to “conserve” social position and mitigate the “unwanted energy expenditure” they associated with change. Any such process involved a “degree of mental effort” on the part of the leisure class, he argued, which presupposed “some surplus of energy that is beyond that absorbed in the daily struggle for survival.”²⁹ As the historian Anson Rabinbach also noted in his *Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (1992), such concerns regarding the expenditure of mental energy — as illustrated here by Veblen (among others) — were indicative of how this period at the end of the nineteenth century was marked by an “endemic disorder of fatigue,” in which the pathology of exhaustion was not only evident in the prevalence of conditions like neurasthenia, but also the definition of the neurasthenic’s confused “panoply of symptoms” by an emerging army of experts like Vittoz, leading to the “modernism of the symptoms and the narrative of illness itself.”³⁰

In relation to this significance, the formulation of neurasthenia — as defined by the American neurologist George Miller Beard during the late-1890s — is important here for two reasons. Firstly, through his insistence that neurasthenia was an especially ‘American disease,’ Beard noted how the increased technologization of society placed an increased mental strain on its inhabitants. Secondly, with his account of the diffuse and often imaginary symptoms of neurasthenia, which the majority of his contemporaries were content to ascribe to the whimsical urges of their patients, Beard was surprisingly sympathetic to the symbolic value of hypochondria. An openness that meant he was one of the first physicians to advocate a systematic study of neuroses, giving therapeutic ‘importance’ “to what seems trivial,” which led to his work informing Sigmund Freud’s formulation of anxiety in his 1895 essay, “On the Grounds of Detaching a Particular Syndrome from Neurasthenia under the Description Anxiety-Neurosis.”

Beard first provided a clinical definition of the disease in his short article “Neurasthenia or Nervous Exhaustion,” published in 1869. This definition was then subsequently expanded on at length in *A Practical Thesis on Nervous Exhaustion (Neurasthenia): It’s Symptoms, Nature, Sequences, Treatment* (1869), which outlined the clinical treatment of the disease, and *American Nervousness: It’s Causes and Consequences: A Supplement to Nervous Exhaustion (Neurasthenia)* (1881), which discussed its etiological structure.³¹ Beard coined the term ‘neurasthenia’ from the Greek — νευρην nerve, α privative, and σθενοζ strength — and, as the name implies, he thought the condition expressed “a lack of nerve strength” that left the sufferer psychically and physically depleted.³² Following contemporaneous medical thinking, he considered the nervous system as closed and, as such, only able to contain a finite amount of nervous energy, which meant it was subject to the laws of energy conservation and

expenditure. As he famously explained in *American Nervousness*, Beard considered the nervous system analogous to an electrical device that was prone to overloading, as “even a dynamo that was capable of powering a thousand lamps would fail if another five hundred lamps were added to its circuit.”³³

As this analogy suggests, his conception of neurasthenia was effectively an amalgam of the fashionable scientific ideas of the period. In addition to his friendship with the American inventor Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931), which was expressed in such electrical analogies, Beard’s formulation was indebted to the writings of the German physicist Herman von Helmholtz (1821-94), whose theory of energy conservation also explained the irreversible decline of energy within a closed system, and the English sociologist Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), whose theories of ‘Social Darwinism’ confirmed the evolutionary precept of the disease for Beard. (In particular, the neurologist was so influenced by Spencer he penned a book, *Herbert Spencer on American Nervousness. A Scientific Coincidence*, 1883, to explain the relationship between his notion of nervousness, which was illustrative of an ‘advanced civilization,’ and Spencer’s conception of evolution.) As one contemporary recalled, Beard was simultaneously a brilliant observer of human nature, an opportunist, a charlatan, and an ineffective scientist “who did not care for hospital and laboratory work, but rather loved literary work and was at it continuously.”³⁴ Beard “made no attempt at smart writing,” moreover, and his deliberately populist *Neurasthenia* and *American Nervousness* not only sought to satisfy the public’s thirst for a ‘modern disease,’ but also the professional curiosity of the medical community, who were quick to recognize the value of determining neurasthenic symptoms in their own patients.³⁵

If neurasthenia can be considered as a critique of the impact of modernity, in which “the primary cause of neurasthenia is civilization itself,”³⁶ as Beard’s partner A.D. Rockwell concluded, then it was also an inadvertent celebration of these modernizing forces, with nervous exhaustion proving as much a product of the nineteenth century as the telegraph, steam power, elevator, and railway car.³⁷ (Inventions that all caused ‘undue stress.’) In this way, given the relative technological advancement of the United States, Beard argued neurasthenia was primarily an “American disease,” with his nationalistic assertion reflecting the commonly held view — legitimated through his reference to Spencer’s Social Darwinism — that the unique pace of American life, evident in its technological advancement, economic and social competitiveness, which placed a unique mental strain on its citizens.³⁸ This view is exemplified by a contemporaneous review to *American Nervousness* that begins by lamenting how the “log cabins and buffalo” of the American west gave way to “a city of factories.” A decline in which the “Arcadian farmer who has been lulled to sleep by the hum of his wife’s spinning wheel is awakened by the shriek of the locomotive.”³⁹ Although this account is deliberately simplistic in tone, it not only illustrates the nostalgia of Beard’s argument, which appeals to an idealised prelapsarian state, but also the operative value of neurasthenia in enacting a remove

from this accelerated society. Creating a divorce that is both literal, in the sense of Beard's suggestion of treating the disease in the "warmer climes" (facilitating the pursuit of leisure in the form of a curative treatment), and metaphoric, in the sense of the patient's withdrawal into a miasma of hypochondriacal symptoms.⁴⁰

Beard was unusually sensitive to the "trifling and unreal symptoms" his patients described, however, and he acknowledged the clinical importance of hypochondria at a time when the majority of his colleagues were skeptical of any ailments that lacked obvious physical symptoms.⁴¹ (In this regard, the Philadelphian physician Silas Weir Mitchell expressed a typical view when he noted how "The hysteric could always run away from a fire."⁴²) Aside from the nervous enervation that named the condition, neurasthenia's principal characteristic lay in the capriciousness of its symptoms, which made it seem less a medically definite disease than an "unstable mimesis of other maladies."⁴³ As Beard noted in *Nervous Exhaustion*, any compilation of these symptoms would necessarily include,

Tenderness of the Scalp.—Cerebral Irritation.—Dilated Pupils.—Sick Heartache and Various Forms of Head Pain.—Pain, Pressure, and Heaviness in the Head.—Changes in the Expression of the Eye.—Congestion of the Conjunctiva.—Disturbances of the Nerves of a Special Sense.—Neurasthenic Asthenopia.—*Musæ Volitantes*.—Noises in the Ears.—Atonic Voice.—Deficient Mental Control.—Mental Irritability.—Hopelessness.—Morbid Fears.—Astraphobia or Fear of Lighting.—Topophobia or Fear of Places.—Agrophobia or Fear of Open Places.—Claustrophobia or Fear of Closed Places.—Anthrophobia or Fear of Society.—Monophobia or Fear of being Alone.—Phobophobia or Fear of Fears.—Mysophobia or Fear of Contamination.—Pantaphobia or Fear of Everything.—Symptomatic Merely].—Morbid Fears Rarely Exist Alone.—]Flushing and Figetediness.—Frequent Blushing.—Sleeplessness.—Bad Dreams.—Insomnia.—Drowsiness.—Tenderness of the Teeth and Gums.—Nervous Dyspepsia (*Dyspepsie Asthénique*).—Deficient Thirst and Capacity for Assimilating Fluids.—Desire for Stimulants and Narcotics.—Dryness of the Skin.—Abnormalities of the Secretions.—Abnormal Dryness of the Skin, Joints, and Mucous Membranes.—Sweating Hands and Feet with Redness (Palmar Hyperidrosis).—Salivation.—Tenderness of the Spine (Spinal Irritation) and of the Whole Body (General Hyperæsthenia).—Coccyodynia.—Peculiarities of Pain in the Back.—Heaviness of the Loin and Limbs.—Shooting Pains simulating those of Ataxy.—Podalgia (Pain in the Feet).—Tremulous and Variable Pulse and Palpitation of the Heart (Irritable Heart).—Local Spasms of Muscles (Tremors).—Dysphagia (Difficulty of Swallowing).—Convulsive Movements, especially on going to Sleep.—Cramps.—Special Idiosyncrasies in regard to Food, Medicine, and external Irritants.—Sensitiveness to Weather.—Sensitiveness to Cold and Hot Water.—Sensitiveness to Changes in the Weather.—Sunstroke brings on many symptoms of Neurasthenia.—Localized Peripheral Numbness and Hyperæsthenia—A Feeling of Profound Exhaustion Unaccompanied by Positive Pain.—Ticklishness.—Vague Pains and Flying Neuralgia.—General and Local Itching (Pruritus).—General and Local Chills and Flashes of Heat.—Cold Feet and Hands.—Nervous Chills.—Sudden giving way of General or Special Functions.—Temporary Paralysis.—Diseases of Men (Involuntary Emissions, Partial or Complete, Impotence, Irritability of the Prostrate Urethra).—Diseases of Women.—Oxalates.—Urates, Phosphates, and Spermatozoa in the Urine.—Gaping and Yawning.—Appearance of Youth.—Rapid Decay and Irregularities of the Teeth.—Hemi-neurasthenia.⁴⁴



George Miller Beard, c.1880.
Unknown photographer

Despite the seeming exhaustiveness of this list, Beard noted how the neurasthenic's inventiveness, coupled with the rhetorical duplicity of these symptoms (whether imagined or real) — in which one set of symptoms were easily exchanged for another — meant that the full extent of these afflictions was “impossible” to establish.

As the historian Alex Zwerdling rightly noted in his *Impoverished Europeans: American Literary Expatriates and the Siege of London* (1998), the ‘American disease’ was epidemic during the late-1890s among the leisure class who, together with their doctors, viewed it as a mark of social distinction. Following this lead, neurasthenia underwent the transatlantic passage to Europe with all the guile of a character from one of the novels of Henry James. (Who, like many of his inventions, had been diagnosed with a case of ‘bad nerves.’) Rather than associating neurasthenia with the progress of modernity, Beard’s European rivals preferred to consider it in terms of the nervous debilitations of the ‘degenerative society’ that many of these ‘impoverished Europeans’ had emigrated to join. Principal to this point of view was Achille Adrien Proust and Gilbert Ballet’s *L'hygiène du neurasthénique* (1901, trans. ‘The Treatment of Neurasthenia,’ 1902), in which the physicians argued neurasthenia was less a “modern disease” than one that “has an undoubtedly greater frequency in the modern epoch” because of the “all-round degeneration” and “regressive evolution” of Europe’s “cultivated classes.”⁴⁵ (In this way, this work reflects the pervasive concerns with societal decline, as it was exemplified in the Decadent movement, which culminated in such works as Max Nordeau’s *Degeneration*, 1892.)

For Proust and Ballet, “life in society” drained the nervous system as it not only “exposes those who lead it” to numerous sources of excitation (“None can be more busy, it is said, than those who do nothing”), but also to the “multiple sources of fatigue” brought about by “too long and too copious meals in over-heated rooms,” “late hours,” and “insufficient sleep.” In this way, they posited it was the “wholly artificial and fictitious existence” of society, rather than the ‘mental exertions’ of Beard’s ‘brain-workers,’ which exhausted its denizens. “Nothing is so enervating, nothing so fitted to unbalance and weaken the nervous system,” they concluded, “as to be wholly taken up with the pursuit of pleasure and the satisfaction of the least elevated and least noble causes . . . neurasthenia is often the natural but regrettable penalty paid by uselessness, idleness, and vanity.”⁴⁶

With this caution against the idle vanity of society Proust is undoubtedly addressing his son, the writer Marcel Proust who was a quintessential neurasthenic. (He was also a dedicated hypochondriac who retained up to six doctors and scoured his father’s library, reading Théodule-Armand Ribot’s *Diseases of the Will*, 1884, and Paul Dubois’s *Les psychonévroses et leur traitement moral*, 1904, among others, in a search for ever more complex etiological ailments.⁴⁷) Given this familial concern, it is scarcely surprising that Proust and Ballet acknowledged the existence of the often-complicit bond between the patient and physician. Although they sought to illustrate the



Adrien Archille Proust, c.1900.
Photograph by Nadar (Gaspard-Félix Tournachon)

complications of this relationship by quoting Weir Mitchell — who argued, “nothing is more curious, nothing more sad and pitiful, than the relationship between the sick and selfish and the sound and ever-loving” — the Parisians remained more sensitive of cutting this bond than their American counterpart, who bluntly asserted the need to “morally alter as well as physically sever . . . the relationship.”⁴⁸

As the *Treatment of Neurasthenia* further suggests, Proust and Ballet not only realized the familial dimension of this complicity, but also its rhetorical character, in the sense that they acknowledged the affection the neurasthenic harbored toward the linguistic description of their illness. (With, for example, Marcel Proust habitually referring to his asthma as his *baleine longue*; a play on the phrase *de longue haleine*, a long-term love affair.) Like Beard before them, the pair was sympathetic to the neurasthenic’s exaggerations, noting how hypochondria was “rarely absent in nervous diseases” and was expressed through a “multiplicity and diversity of symptoms.”⁴⁹ This diversity posed a diagnostic challenge to the clinician, moreover, whose role lay in discerning the legible connection between these symptoms because neurasthenics “almost always give, either in speaking or in writing, an incoherent and diffuse description of their functional disorders.”⁵⁰ In this way, Proust and Ballet both reasserted the role of medical authority (in the Foucaultian sense of defining the diseased body within a clinical practice) and — through their description of this supracritical act of reading, coupled with their appreciation of the hypochondriac’s inventiveness in providing an “incoherent and diffuse” ‘character’ to their neuroses — illustrated the innate literariness of neurasthenia.

If Proust’s book can be read, however obliquely, as a missive to his son, then the English psychoanalyst Karin Stephen’s frank study of hypochondriac duplicity, *Psycho-analysis and Medicine: A Study of the Wish to Fall Ill* (1933), undoubtedly refers to her mother, Mary Berenson. (In this way, the *Wish to Fall Ill* is less interesting here for its argument, which adheres to the Freudian orthodoxy of her mentor Ernst Jones, than for its unwittingly correspondence with Proust and Ballet’s *Treatment of Neurasthenia*.) Although the “wish to fall ill” is only briefly discussed in this work, Stephen notes the centrality of this desire in the formation of the nervous character, whose combination of physical and mental ailments is not only “created with extraordinary skill,” but also stubbornly maintained. If the desire to ‘fall ill’ is a repression of vitality — in which the neurasthenic “falls ill ‘on purpose’ . . . in order *not* to know” the unconscious desires they are repressing — then Stephen concludes it would be impossible to separate the sufferer from their symptoms “until the need for them has diminished.”⁵¹ Such a diminution was entirely contrary to the mechanics of hypochondria, however, which sought to sustain this mitotic exchange of the healthy body for the diseased limb, or the substitution of one symptom for another, through a transliterate toying with what both Freud and Proust recognized as the “ideal fiction of normality.” In this way, neurasthenia, as Mary Berenson

acknowledged, offered a kind of flirting with disease that proved, “like religion, or devotion to children,” to be “only one of the escapes from ennui.”⁵²

As Bernard Strauss suggested in his medical biography, *The Maladies of Marcel Proust: Doctors and Disease in his Life* (1980), the disease’s principal value for the neurasthenic lay in the production of a ‘secondary gain.’ If the primary gain involves the “reduction or relief of tension, conflict, or other symptoms through neurotic illness,” he explained, then this secondary gain holds the “conscious advantage that the patient obtains as a result of neurotic illness, such as attention, avoidance of unpleasant situations, and release from responsibility.”⁵³ In this way, the neurasthenic’s hypochondria furnished a kind of pleasure — the love of the parent, spouse, child, or attending physician — that sated their desire for attention, while simultaneously negating the exigencies of existence (or the potential reality of disease). Naturally, this satisfaction required an ever-greater degree of invention and literary revision that sufferers such as Mary Berenson and Proust understood as a form of compulsive literariness. As the subjects of the *Treatment of Neurasthenia* and the *Wish to Fall Ill*, written by an eminent physician and a dedicated psychoanalyst, the pair were acutely aware of the limitations of speaking, or even exhibiting, these symptoms in the presence of medical authority. Instead they preferred to write them out in the comfortable isolation their illness afforded, translating their ailments and treatments, symptoms and medical eccentricities, into an endless series of letters and missives. As Proust tacitly acknowledged of this ambition to his longsuffering mother, Jeanne, “It gives me such pleasure to complain to you.”⁵⁴

Ironically, this fragile pleasure — or rather, the pleasure the neurasthenic took in their own fragility — contradicts the vitalistic conception of art that lay at the center of both Berenson’s notion of aesthetic connoisseurship and Scott’s elucidation of humanist architecture. Writing in his 1907 meditation on artistic decadence, “The Decline of Art,” Berenson sought to reiterate his belief in the “life-affirming” quality of art that he had first outlined in his *Italian Painters* series of the 1890s. If each of the arts is comprised of “ideated sensations,” he repeated, then the act of connoisseurship sought to question which ‘elements’ “produce life-enhancement?” In terms of painting, he then explained how this enhancement would stem from the work’s tactile values that elicited “ideated sensations of contact, of texture, of weight, of support, of energy, [and] union with one’s surroundings.” As his clumsy formulation of ‘life-enhancement’ suggests, Berenson considered this effect as the cumulative sum of tactile values, implied movement, and space-composition, in which the subtraction of any element ensured “by that much the art is diminished.”⁵⁵

Berenson first introduced the notion of life-enhancement in *The Florentine Painters of Renaissance* (1896) in response to criticisms that he had been unable to provide a quantitative explanation of the aesthetic pleasure he derived from the art-work. Using a discussion of Antonio del

Pollaiuolo's *The Battle of the Nudes* (1465-75), he described how his muscular response to this work produced a sensorial pleasure that was disproportionate to the physical exertions of viewing it, producing a surplus of energy, or "life-enhancement." "While under the spell of this illusion — this hyperaesthesia not brought with drugs, and not paid for with cheques on our vitality — we feel as if the elixir of life, not our own sluggish blood, were coursing through our veins."⁵⁶ In this way, he not only sought to correlate his appreciation of the work with his system of tactile values, but also sought to reinforce its supply of pleasure through the conservation of energy.

In an article on "The New Art Criticism" published in August 1895, Mary Berenson stressed the vitality of her husband's conception by incongruously suggesting the importance of viewing correctly attributed art-works — as detailed in his famous 'lists' — lay less in their intellectual appeal, than in "avoiding wasting one's time and energy or exhausting one's aesthetic capacities in the search for beauty in poor paintings incorrectly attributed to famous names."⁵⁷ Moreover, in an anonymously published review of the *Florentine Painters*, "The Philosophy of the Enjoyment of Art," she further argued his theory of 'life-enhancement' provided a general explanation of the pleasure derived from art. "It is the aim of all the arts, Mr. Berenson says, to be 'life-enhancing'; that is to say, to stimulate the healthy functioning of the organism which is the source of most of our normal pleasures."⁵⁸

As the historian Mary-Ann Calo has rightly noted, while this sense of 'stimulation' was useful to Berenson in explaining the primacy of his reception of art, he couched it in pseudo-empirical terms and his insistence on it as a fundamental principle of his notion of aesthetics was highly problematic.⁵⁹ His conception of pleasure was criticized by both Hermann Obrist, who viewed it as limited,⁶⁰ and Bertrand Russell, who thought it ill-defined and countered that pleasure lay in the satisfaction of less ethereal desires.⁶¹ (In this regard, "pleasure," as Mary Berenson conceded elsewhere, was "the feeling accompanying the attainment of the sort of life we desire, or the confirmation of a sense of capacity to attain it."⁶²) However ill formed, Berenson's positivist notion of life-enhancement did speak of the fundamental tenuousness of such an energetic balance. "The pleasure of art exists in being made conscious of a surplus of energy," Mary Berenson again noted. "Real art makes us work for our pleasure . . . But you must not be required to work too hard and exhaust all your surplus energy."⁶³ Nevertheless, the possibility of exhausting this "surplus energy," of 'working too hard,' coupled with the 'pleasure of falling ill,' continued to haunt Berenson's therapeutic conception of art, which — in spite of obvious inadequacies — was stubbornly retained in both his explanation of the connoisseur's 'communion with art' and Scott's humanist conception of architecture.

Like Scott, Berenson was physically frail, plagued by constant ill health, and suffered a number of nervous collapses. In her review of the *Florentine Painters*, Vernon Lee addressed this frailty by suggesting Berenson's system of tactile values and 'life-enhancement' should also be read as a

palliative compensation.⁶⁴ (Compensation she sought in her own practice of having her lover, Clementina Anstruther-Thomson, replicate the poses of the sculptures they viewed.⁶⁵) However acerbic, Lee's commentary was apt. Berenson was a "classic fin de siècle neurasthenic," who complained of nervous exhaustion while touring the galleries of Europe, and his vitalistic conception of art should also be read in terms of its opportunistic inclusion of a more generalized concern for the loss of aesthetic vigor. (A loss he would later seek to describe in terms of the decadence of modern art.) As such, it marked the shift toward what critics such as T.J. Jackson Lears have described a "culture of therapeutics," a beautiful leisure, in which the exigencies of reality were sublimated through an indulgence in diseases like neurasthenia and their associated recuperative treatments, which were allied, in turn, to an appreciation of the therapeutic role of art. In this way, the tendency toward nervous exhaustion — however paradoxical to the 'surplus energy' generated through viewing art — was not only incorporated within Berenson's system of aesthetics, but also actively represented by it.

This duality was also apparent in Scott's *Architecture*. In the 1924 epilogue to the second edition, Scott echoed Berenson's thoughts in stating "What we feel as 'beauty' in architecture is not a matter for logical demonstration," but rather is formed through an unconscious process that "rises to consciousness simply as 'pleasure.'" Within such a formulation the appreciation of classical architecture lay less in an intellectual conception of it (as would be advocated by Wölfflin and Wittkower, among others), which he argued tended toward the 'Academic Fallacy,' than in "rendering the creative faculty more sensitive."⁶⁶ In this way, Scott deviated from his citation of Wölfflin in the first edition, which he had employed to illustrate his agreement that architecture is the unconscious manifestation of societal desires, in order to place an even greater emphasis on the individuality of the observer in the later edition, describing a figure who is 'trained' — in the Bergsonian sense — through their intuitive reception of the art-work. However, Scott often described his own exhausted "sensitivity" toward architecture, acknowledging how the sheer physicality of many buildings overwhelmed his "great feeling for space" and exaggerated his characteristic "hopelessness and lethargy," amplifying these feelings to the point of exhaustion.

Moreover, as early as August 1906, only a few months after his introduction to the Berenson circle, Scott expressed his concern that the pursuit of the 'beautiful,' sought within the terms of the Berensonian 'aesthetic moment,' had the ability to disorientate and even frighten the observer. "The real difficulty is that the visible beauty of things had so strong a dominion that I am afraid of it," he explained (allying this fear to his nervous disposition), "under its influence I become all senses and my other faculties are overpowered." Not only are his self-conscious anxieties evident in this letter to Mary Berenson, coupled with the performative character of that 'fear' (conceived in 'sublime' terms), but also his apprehension at the unavoidability of becoming "all senses." A sensuality he rightly



John Singer Sargent, *Violet Paget (Vernon Lee)*, 1881.

understood had the capacity to overwhelm his critical faculties and leave him exposed to his repressed desires. (Resulting in an indulgence in the “visible beauty of things” that she had counseled was not always appropriate.) Concluding this letter, Scott directly related his neurasthenic pleasure in the “visible beauty of things” to the languor of disease. The unconscious perception of beauty, he noted, was “a fever which may supervene upon one’s enjoyment of the most tranquil things,” resulting in “a kind of unbearableness in the things one is most sensitive to.”⁶⁷

As the medical experts of the period suggested, such a sensory irritability not only culminated in the “inability to concentrate” (especially “in writing and thinking”⁶⁸), which was symptomatic of neurasthenia, but also necessitated a treatment that involved a withdrawal from the “visible beauty of things.” As Scott realized, such a remove was less therapeutic than unrealizable and his appreciation of becoming “all senses,” together the exhaustion it entailed, continued to be expressed in both individual and collective terms, reinforcing the notion that an escape from society, or an expatriation from the self, was impossible. “Scott has been quite ill ever since he came, unable to stir from the sofa,” Mary Berenson noted of one typical visit in September 1907. “The doctor says it is nothing definite, but sheer nerves, of course more difficult than anything.”⁶⁹ In contrast to his host, Scott appears to have exhausted the pleasures of hypochondria, however, and his ‘black serpent days’ were underpinned with “a strong streak of melancholy,” as the critic Desmond MacCarthy noted, in which his gifts as a conversationalist whose “mimicry . . . made his audience roar and rock with laughter” were barbed with an acerbic criticality.⁷⁰ Similarly, Wharton recalled how “no one could be gayer, more flashingly responsive to every appeal of life’s ironies and beauties (and for him . . . the two were always interwoven), yet under this laughing surface lay a desert of gloom and despondency.”⁷¹ Although conceived in biographic terms, Wharton’s parenthetical recognition of Scott’s reluctance to separate the beautiful from the ironic, an interdependency that was further “interwoven” with despondency, is illuminating in terms of its obvious contradiction of his argument in *Architecture*, which relies of the literality of the correspondence between the beautiful and the pleasurable.

Scott’s strained nerves also reflected the larger “world of bored villadom” that he inhabited. A world in which, as Adolus Huxley noted, he was simply one of the more interesting members of this “decayed provincial intelligentsia.”⁷² (A tediousness that is also evident in the native Florentinos jibing reference to this expatriated community of aesthetes as the *anglo-beceri*, employing the local dialect’s phrase — *becero* — for ‘boor.’) Within this world there was an appreciable “feeling of sadness in the air,” the American writer Elizabeth Hardwick also recalled, “as if something still alive with the joys of an Italian day and yet somehow faintly withered, languishing.”⁷³ Considered in these terms, the architectural significance of his desire to “fall ill” is evident in two interconnected ways. Firstly, it expressed Scott’s writerly arrest in the subject matter, signaling a ‘rendering mute’ that

effectively silenced his interest in architecture. (In this way, both the limited revisions to the 1924 second edition of *Architecture* and his article, “The Basilica of St. Peter’s” should be considered as clarifications, rather than developments, of the argument he offered in the *Architecture of Humanism*.) And secondly, the complications of this desire, which is representative of an “unbearableness in the things one is most sensitive to,” would be expressed less in an incidence of the spatial disorders several writers directly associated with the advent of modernity, than in the coincidental terms of this *anglo-florentino* society. Which is to say, it would lie — in retrogressive indolence — in those objects held closest to hand.

Like Flamingos in a Swamp

Despite his undoubted amateurism, in the introduction to his *Architecture*, Scott noted how he drew on both his professional and personal experience while writing the volume. While this assertion forms, in part, an appeal to an audience of “practitioners and enthusiasts alike,” his insistence on drawing from his limited career as a practicing architect is engaging here for two reasons. Firstly, contrary to his conception of architectural space as an art that would “humanise the void,” Scott’s own experience illustrates the extent to which he operated as an ‘arbiter of taste,’ constructing a notion of architecture through an assemblage of details and fragments that was neither complete, nor necessary tasteful, and which tended toward an aestheticized exhaustion. Secondly, this arbitration — contrasted with the activities of his partner, the English architect and landscape designer Cecil Pinsent (1884-1963) — further illustrates how his appreciation of architecture would eventually diminish in scale from the Italian landscape, to the architecture and gardens of the renaissance, and finally to ‘snug’ domesticity of objects he rejected in his *National Character of English Architecture* (1908).

Mary Berenson first introduced Scott and Pinsent to one another in 1908. The introduction was prompted by her belief the young Englishmen would make an effective partnership due to their contrasting personalities, with Scott possessing “exquisite taste” and an understanding of the “psychological effect of space” and Pinsent being more “mechanically-minded” and “good at planning things on paper.”⁷⁴ Scott recalled his initial excitement at “the romantic and juvenile idea of joining forces with another infant in order to practice an art and earn a living” so long as it “did not interfere with life with Cecil.”⁷⁵ (Their closeness was the matter of some conjecture, with both Harold Acton and Kenneth Clark believing the relationship was sexual as well as architectural.) Using Pinsent’s unpublished ‘Index of Clients’ (1955), which lists his projects from 1908-51, it appears the partnership undertook 29 commissions, of which 12 were subsequently abandoned. Of the remaining commissions: eight were described as alterations, including their renovations to I Tatti; two were new buildings, comprising the annex to I Tatti and the Villa Le Balze; four were gardens, consisting of



Cecil Pinsent, 1915.
Unknown photographer

new gardens to I Tatti, Le Balze, Cutting's Villa Medici, and a small terrace in Friesole (on Pinsent's apartment); and three were libraries, all of which were at I Tatti.⁷⁶

Scott and Pinsent both appreciated the fortuitous timing of this partnership, which solved their professional dilemmas by allowing Scott to remain in Italy with a source of income separate from the Berensons and facilitating Pinsent's escape from England. As Mary Berenson rightly calculated, their practice was formed at the right moment to take advantage of the *anglo-florentino* desire for the architectural services of a firm with distinctly Anglo-Italian sensibilities. The conflicted aesthetic interests of these expatriates was unmistakable, however, with Origio recalling, "If they lived in a Florentine *palazzo* it was at once transformed — in spite of its great stone fireplaces and brick or marble floors — into a drawing room in South Kensington: chintz curtains, framed water-colours, silver rose-bowls and library books, a fragrance of home-made scones and freshly made teas."⁷⁷ A transformation of the foreign into the familiar that, as Scott was to realize, was inescapable.

Prior to his return to Florence in 1908, Scott accepted Mary Berenson's advice that he should develop his 'natural' responsiveness toward architecture through a more rigorous understanding of the discipline by attending lectures at the Architectural Association, London, during a six-month period from 1907-8. Although there are no formal records of his attendance in the Association's 'Admissions Register,' Scott's letters from this period describe his engagement — however casually — with the faculty and its architectural programme. A familiarity that is also apparent in the obituary written by Edward Warren (a member of the Art Worker's Guild), which recalls Scott's attendance at evening lectures.⁷⁸ While the school provided "good training for those who want to be first of all architect's clerks and then small practicing architects," Scott admitted he had "no capacity for drains and ventilators" and he further bemoaned the lack of "real intellectual impetus" behind these studies.⁷⁹ Given such circumstances, he predicted an "ebbing of vitality," which meant "I ceased to exist will be a sufficient entry in my diary," as he coyly explained to Mary Berenson, who quietly conceded her ambitions and arranged alternative employment as a guide for their wealthy acquaintances.⁸⁰

In particular, during 1909 Scott travelled to France to work as an assistant to Ogden Codman (1863-1951), the Boston designer and co-author of *The Decoration of Houses* (1897) with Edith Wharton, who was preparing a book on eighteenth-century chateaux. Wharton had first befriended Codman following his design of the interior of her Newport house 'Land's End.' "This was a somewhat new departure," she recalled, "since the architects of that day looked down on house-decoration as a branch of dress-making, and left the field up to the upholsterers, who crammed every room with curtains, lambrequins, jardinières of artificial plants, wobbly velvet-covered tables littered with silver gew-gaws, and festoons of lace on mantelpieces and dressing tables."⁸¹ Her description of this professional disdain of 'house-decoration' was apt, however, and — despite his work for such

illustrious clients as John D. Rockefeller Jr. and Frederick William Vanderbilt — Codman’s application to join the American Institute of Architects was refused by Richard Holman Hunt and Charles F. McKim.

Although he initially praised his employer’s “scholarship and research,” Scott soon realized Codman’s study largely consisted of adding to his enormous collection of postcards of different chateaux, which the young Englishman was expected to organize while also anonymously drafting Codman’s book. Such duties were “an intellectual Sahara of the most boundless description,” Scott concluded, before noting how Codman was “largely ignorant of architecture, and properly speaking a decorator.”⁸² The young Englishman failed to appreciate the degree to which the decorator understood the nuances of “living in a kind of hieroglyphic world,” as their friend Wharton wrote of the society they inhabited, “where the real thing was never said or done or even thought, but only represented a set of arbitrary signs.”⁸³ A dissuasion, as Codman realized, which was codified in objects like “silver gew-gews” and “festoons of lace.” Moreover, Scott’s derision was largely self-satisfied, as his objections at Codman’s methods were based less on any scholarly concerns, than a disagreement over what constituted ‘good taste.’ (Exacerbated by his rejection of Codman’s unwanted sexual advances.) In this way, his comments ignore the extent to which he would seek to act as an ‘arbiter of taste’ in both a professional capacity through his partnership with Pinsent and, more crucially, in writerly terms, culminating with his intention that the *Architecture of Humanism* would serve as the first volume of a proposed ‘history of taste.’

In contrast to Scott’s dabbling, Pinsent began a conventional architectural education by studying at the Architectural Association during 1901-3. At the time, the Association followed a pedagogical model in which students were articulated to practices during the day and received tutelage during the evenings. As Pinsent’s colleague — the Welsh architect, Clough Williams-Ellis (who later befriended Scott) — also recalled of the pedagogical model, the school combined the congenial atmosphere of studying alongside “dozens of other men,” with an architectural rigour, exemplified in the research of “drains and ventilators” Scott detested, culminating in the execution of measured building studies. These studies were “very properly held to be an important part of a young architect’s training.” Williams-Ellis further noted, “certainly when exercised on a subject of any distinction, this enforced intimacy with its every secret of proportion, detail and construction, is a fine lesson in all the arts of building.”⁸⁴ (An attention to detail Scott later rejected as simply pedantry.)

Following the recommendation of William Wallace, to whom he had been articulated, Pinsent completed his education at the Royal Academy School of Architecture, where he studied from 1905-6 with Reginald Blomfield and Thomas Graham Jackson. These formidable figures both believed ‘reason’ was the governing principle of architecture, with Jackson arguing it was “a consequence of rational and logical development,”⁸⁵ and Blomfield agreeing “If it was not a matter based on the facts

of existence and the practical handling of realities, it would have no serious touch with humanity at all.”⁸⁶ After completing this training, Pinsent recognized that he had the choice between “plodding on in London” or “plunging into wild speculation”⁸⁷ and he used the Bannister Fletcher Bursary he had received at the Association to travel to Italy, where he was introduced to the Berensons by the English aesthetes, Mary and Edmund Houghton, in early 1907. “We have had a young architect named Pinsent, the Houghton’s ‘adopted son,’ staying here,” Mary Berenson noted on his arrival. “He seems very nice but not very exciting . . . we talked and talked and the boy listened in a kind of daze. At the end he said, ‘How very educating!’ but I wonder if he could have meant it.”⁸⁸ Despite her concerns with Pinsent’s intellectual abilities, which lingered throughout their long friendship, Mary Berenson saw an opportunity to pair the young architect with her protégé. And following their purchase of the Villa I Tatti later that year, using a loan from the banker Henry Canon (whose son Scott through Italy), the Berensons appointed the pair as the architects for the villa’s modernization, which largely consisted of the works to create Berenson’s private library. (The design for the formal gardens was undertaken during the early-1910s.)

Unsurprisingly these renovations were a disaster. With the pair undertaking the initial alterations with such lassitude Mary Berenson described them as “the Artichokes,” or “the Infirm” in reference to Scott’s constant illnesses, and the connoisseur’s friends openly referred to the villa as “Berenson’s folly.” While they were concerned with Pinsent’s “slow pace” and “lack of restraint in spending their money,” the Berensons were especially alarmed by his “unsure sense of style,” consigning the young architect to “sorting out the plumbing, directing the workmen, and doing all the drawings.” Berenson demanded a “perfection of physical surroundings,” his wife recalled, and Scott was expected to anticipate these “exacting standards” by selecting “the drapes, door handles, and other furnishings,” composing their arrangement, and supervising the hanging of art-works in order to ensure the correct “appreciation of space.”⁸⁹ In contrast to the relative austerity of the villa’s exterior, the interior of I Tatti was “impressive not so much for the size of rooms as for the way in which they were furnished,” Nicky Mariano recalled of Scott’s arrangement, “with antique *credenze* and *cassoni*, comfortable chairs, Italian Renaissance paintings and sculptures mixed with Oriental sculpture and objets d’art. I had never seen anything like it before and it struck me as both fascinating and awe-inspiring.”⁹⁰ In addition to this selecting and arranging, Scott’s principal involvement was the design for the fake eighteenth-century *salottino*, inspired by François de Cuvilliers’s rococo design for the Amalienburg (executed 1734-9), the hunting lodge at the Nymphenburg Palace, Munich. The ostentatious decoration of Scott’s design — with clashing ‘apple-green and pink’ moldings — inspired revulsion rather than awe, however, with Clark considering the *salottino* a “ridiculous parody” and it remained “something of an embarrassment” until the Berensons finally commissioned Pinsent to remodel the *salottino* as the ‘French Library’ in the late-1940s.⁹¹

Although both partners were “all lazy and idle,” Scott’s habitual idleness especially distressed his mentor, who — after noting Pinsent had finally complained to her about his partner’s work habits — thought “it was about the time when Geoffrey’s eyes were opened to see that he wasn’t doing his share of the work. . . . Geoffrey practically doesn’t work at all!”⁹² (By this juncture, Berenson had become so distressed by these delays to the completion of his library, which arrested work on his next book, that he suffered a nervous collapse and withdrew to the French Riviera to recuperate.⁹³) Scott’s laziness was not simply a symbolic remove from work, in the sense that Veblen and Schapiro understood it as a precondition for a life of beautiful leisure, or a refusal to work, in the terms of Paul Lafargue’s famous caution against the “madness of the love of work” (as expressed in his “Right to be Lazy,” 1898). Rather it was a kind of indulgence in the suspension of decision, an idleness that Veblen associated with an existential disengagement from the “struggle for existence,” in addition to producing a renunciation of architectural practice. In this regard, Mary Berenson was sympathetic to the strains placed on Scott, recognizing how he became “a dreadful wreck when his nerves go to pieces,” and her exasperated account of the renovations to I Tatti not only illustrates her protégé’s maintenance of an amateur interest in architecture, in which he steadfastly remained “no keener to be a professional,” but also the clear division of responsibilities between the two young Englishmen. In this way, her initial optimism regarding their partnership gave way to the concerns that were apparent during the first conversation they shared about architecture, in which Scott’s “main interest lay with how many holidays there are as an architect.”⁹⁴

Despite these failings, in 1911 the Berensons recommended the ‘Infirm’ to their friend Charles Augustus Strong (1862-1940), the expatriate American philosopher, patron of George Santayana (with whom he founded the Harvard Philosophical Club in the late 1800s), and author of such weighty tomes as *The Origin of Consciousness: An Attempt to Conceive of the Mind as a Product of Evolution* (1918) and *Essays in Critical Realism* (1920). Strong commissioned the pair to design the Villa Le Balze on a site adjacent to Cutting’s Villa Medici in Florence. Although it is an architecturally undistinguished small-scale villa, executed with conventional materials and spatial arrangement, Scott praised the work as “a great success, a sort of romantic, ascetic place, full of light and space, with a very exquisite vaulting and stone work everywhere — a general sense of ease and tranquility.”⁹⁵ By contrast, Strong was not only annoyed by the typical cost overruns and time delays, but also underwhelmed by the final design, complaining to the Berensons about the villa’s relative architectural modesty. With a typical lack of diplomacy, the couple blamed Pinsent for the difficulties, however, with Berenson noting how he “couldn’t recommend Cecil for any similar except as a *pis aller* to a swindling incompetent Italian.”⁹⁶ By contrast, Mary Berenson’s account of Scott’s role was distinctly more flattering as she noted her “surprise to find him so conscientious and thorough.”⁹⁷

Given his proclivities, it is not surprising that Scott's principal contribution to the project was expressed in literary rather than architectural terms, with his poem "Triton" — later published in his collection *A Box of Paints* (1924) — offering a playful rebuke of the stone statue of the Greek god that forms the centerpiece of the villa's grotto, directly facing the formal entrance to the garden from the villa. As he wrote,

"Old Triton by a marble sea
Was set in ages gone,
A fishy tale of stone had he
And blew his clarion:
He had no use of symmetry —
They put him there for fun.

His ocean was of four foot span
From rim to moulded rim,
All hemmed about in formal plan
By hedges tall and trim;
A hidden stream to Triton ran,
And bubbled out of him."⁹⁸

However facile, this poem is interesting for a multitude of reasons, illustrating both the underlying frivolity of Scott and Pinsent's practice, together with their complicated relationship with Strong, who is conflated with a garden ornament, "He had no use of symmetry — / They put him there for fun." (Scott further ridiculed his client's seriousness in a caricature drawn during the works.⁹⁹) Moreover, through his allusion to Triton's constricted domain, "His ocean was of four foot span," and the formality of their garden design, "All hemmed about in formal plan / By hedges tall and trim," Scott further suggested how the significance of the Villas I Tatti and Le Balze would lie less in their modest architectural design, than in the dynamics that were expressed in the spatial relationships they assumed with their conjoined gardens.

Following renaissance precedent, the formal gardens the 'Infirm' executed at I Tatti and Le Balze were both conceived as volumetric extensions — natural rooms — of the villas that opened out onto them. In this way, these gardens acted as transitory, or intermediary, terms between the architecture of the villa and the unregulated nature of the landscape beyond. In his sole article, *'Giardini all'italiana, con I fioriti che più vi si adattano,'* published in the journal *Modern Gardens in the Italian Style* in 1931, Pinsent stressed the importance of this principle of compartmentalization, in which the successive progression from one 'room' to another was articulated through differences in treatment, materials, and planting. "The individual parts of the modern private garden should be small rather than large," he explained,

"in harmony with modern life which tends to be more intimate than it was in the past . . . the garden must give us the impression that the house is out in the open air and its various aspects must reveal themselves one by one so that throughout one experience a varied series

of impressions, rather than taking everything in the one place. The passageways through the various parts should be sufficiently wide to allow a fleeting glimpse and to stimulate the curiosity of those passing by. The best example of this is . . . the Villa Gamberaia. Having walked around the garden, which is quite small in area, one goes away with the impression of having spent more time there and of having discovered more levels than there are in reality.”¹⁰⁰

His assertion that these ‘modern’ gardens should create “a varied series of impressions” through “fleeting glimpses” and “wide pathways” is fascinating as it alludes to both the ‘opening out’ of the villa (“in the open air”), while also remaining spatially intimate and engaging (“stimulating curiosity”). For Pinsent, the historical complexity of such designs was exemplified in the Villa Gamberaia, which had first entered the leisure-class’s consciousness through the images published in Charles Latham’s “The Gardens of Italy” (serialized in *Country Life* during 1905). The fashion for renaissance gardens had originally been inspired by Charles Pratt’s *Italian Gardens* (1894), which outlines the design principles of this approach to nature, and were popularized by a rush of subsequent works, including Latham’s *Gardens of Italy*, Inigo Triggs’s *The Art of Garden Design in Italy* (1906), George Sitwell’s *On the Making of Gardens* (1909), and — most immediately to the Berenson circle — Wharton’s *Italian Villas and their Gardens* (1903), which grew out of her friendship with Lee who directed the writer to various examples.¹⁰¹ (Following this trend, another of Berenson’s protégés, the American critic John Walker, added to this tradition with his *A Guide to Villas and Gardens in Italy*, 1938.)

Following the demise of his partnership with Scott during 1915-6, Pinsent realized his subsequent success as a garden designer would depend on his combination of the renaissance tradition with the formal ‘intimacy’ of English garden design.¹⁰² In this way, he acknowledged the influence of both the revival in English formal garden design that was inspired by Blomfield’s *Formal Garden in England* (1892), which argued for an austerity in keeping with his stoic classicism, and the Arts and Crafts’s garden tradition, which sought a naturalism in materials and a humility in scale, as exemplified by John Dando Sedding’s *Garden-craft: Old and New* (1891, with a frontispiece by W.R. Lethaby). Blomfield and Sedding both thought architects should design gardens and Pinsent was exposed to their ideas on nature in detail when he worked for C.E. Mallows during 1907-8. At this time Mallows was a leading figure in the garden movement, whose work was admired by Gertrude Jekyll (who included examples in her *Gardens for Small Country Houses*, 1911), and stressed the importance of bringing the “character of the house into the garden to obtain unity of effect.”¹⁰³

If the garden at Le Balze consciously turns the observer’s gaze inward, signaled by the statues of famous philosophers that adorn each compartment, then the garden at the Villa I Tatti suggests a different form of ‘unified effect’ (or spatialized confinement), with the *cypress allée* — the linear avenue along which Berenson took his daily stroll — offering a greater explanation of this purpose than the formally planned *giardino all’italiana*. Although these tree-lined avenues are a



Geoffrey Scott and Cecil Pinsent, Entrance to the Formal Garden, Villa Le Blaze, n.d.

convention of renaissance gardens, like the other appurtenances of Berenson's persona their role was defined in more biographic than symbolic terms, with a number of intimates — including Nicky Mariano, Umberto Morra, and Walker — noting how they furnished the connoisseur with a captive audience during these walks. In this way, while Clark querulously noted Berenson's dislike of the “imitation baroque garden [built] under Pinsent's influence,”¹⁰⁴ the connoisseur appreciated how this design “understood my wants better than I did,”¹⁰⁵ providing a linearity that not only gave direction to his peripatetic monologues, but also forced his companion's attention onto their host at the expense of allowing the ‘fleeting glimpses’ Pinsent had celebrated in his description of the Villa Gamberaia's gardens.

In contrast to Pinsent, Scott's knowledge of nature was almost comically uninformed, with his inability to distinguish even the most well known plants constantly frustrating his friend. (His ignorance also angered Cutting during the planning of the formal gardens at the Villa Medici, which were completed by Pinsent, and amused his lover, Vita Sackville-West, whose famous garden at Sissinghurst Castle formed the backdrop to their romantic trysts.) Despite his practical inadequacies, Scott recognized the spatial significance of the renaissance garden as a kind of naturalized architectural extension that opened out onto the landscape beyond, offering “room for one's imagination to expand in.”¹⁰⁶ In his *Architecture*, however, he further alluded to a more conflicted admiration for the natural, which he celebrated for its resistance — or otherness — to a process of objectification. Although he opposed the predilection towards nature by such critics as Ruskin and Morris, who viewed “the artificial or the formal less worthy than the natural,”¹⁰⁷ Scott could not resist such a poetic conception, falling prey to the ‘natural fallacy’ and remaining indifferent to his own suggestion that the representation of “natural facts” remained a matter for painting.

Interestingly, instead of referring to the English picturesque tradition, as exemplified in the works of such figures as Richard Payne Knight and Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown (1716-83), Scott argues the picturesque was a Renaissance invention, with the term *pittoresco* referring to the “qualities that suggest a painting.” In contrast to architecture, which sought to express “Order and Proportion” (and was subsequently constricted by this rationality), “nature lacks coherence” and is “not humanised” because it “bears no relation to the human ‘act of vision’.”¹⁰⁸ In architectural terms, he argued the baroque came closest to reconciling the ‘strangeness’ of nature with the classicism of architecture through its “intellectualisation” of the picturesque. “The baroque is not afraid to startle and arrest,” he concluded. “Like Nature, it is fantastic, unexpected, varied and grotesque.” Unlike nature, however the baroque — in Scott's terms — would “remain subject to the laws of scale and composition.”¹⁰⁹

As this commentary suggests, such a lack of formal cohesion provided a kind of release and Scott retained a strong, almost primitivist, relation to the landscape, which is apparent in his



Cecil Pinsent and Geoffrey Scott, Formal Garden at I Tatti, n.d.



Bernard Berenson and Nicky Mariano walking along the Cypress Allée, c. 1950.

Proustian evocation of childhood walks on Hampstead Heath, London. “The whole place had curious magical properties [and] an intensely poetic character,” he recalled, that “revived not the memory but the actual sensation . . . a complete dream-world of childhood flashed into self-consciousness.”¹¹⁰ In this way, it is entirely apt these ‘flashes’ occurred in natural rather than architectural terms, as Scott’s conception of nature was not only intrinsically poetic, but also palliative in effect. Fascinatingly, the landscape “proved to be” the only thing that could comfort his sensitive nerves as nature “asks for no active responses, suggests nothing, and waits patiently without obtruding itself.”¹¹¹ In these terms, this aestheticization of nature afforded the writer a less intellectually threatening — or sensorially “unbearable” — engagement than that offered by architecture: one in which the psychological import of nature, embodied in the sublime potential of the Italian landscape, or the sexual encounter within the grounds of an English country house, was returned to a kind of domestication. And Scott’s aesthetic conception of nature remained innately poetic, inverting Pinsent’s principle of extending the garden “out in the open air” by returning its focus to the social intrigues within, further confirming how his conception of architecture would largely remain an affair of interiors, in which the strange and fantastic threat of nature would pale in comparison to the barbarity of social convention.

Interestingly, Berenson interpreted Scott’s abandonment of architectural practice as another example of his dilettantism. Given his understanding of the etymological origin of ‘dilettante,’ which is derived from the Italian *dilattare* — to “‘take delight,’ especially in the arts” — Berenson’s use of the term in characterizing Scott is intriguing. “A dilettante is someone who cannot put up with boredom,” he explained elsewhere, associating such laboriousness with the industry of connoisseurship,

“And work whatever involves moments of the most funereal boredom which one must have the strength to overcome in order to reach the happiness of a result. The dilettante is unable to do this — so he never gets any farther than the fragment, the crumb — he lacks any ties between the subjects of his delight, so his delights result as whim rather than experience. Dilettantes do not follow any regular path, but leap from one thing to another like flamingos in a swamp.”¹¹²

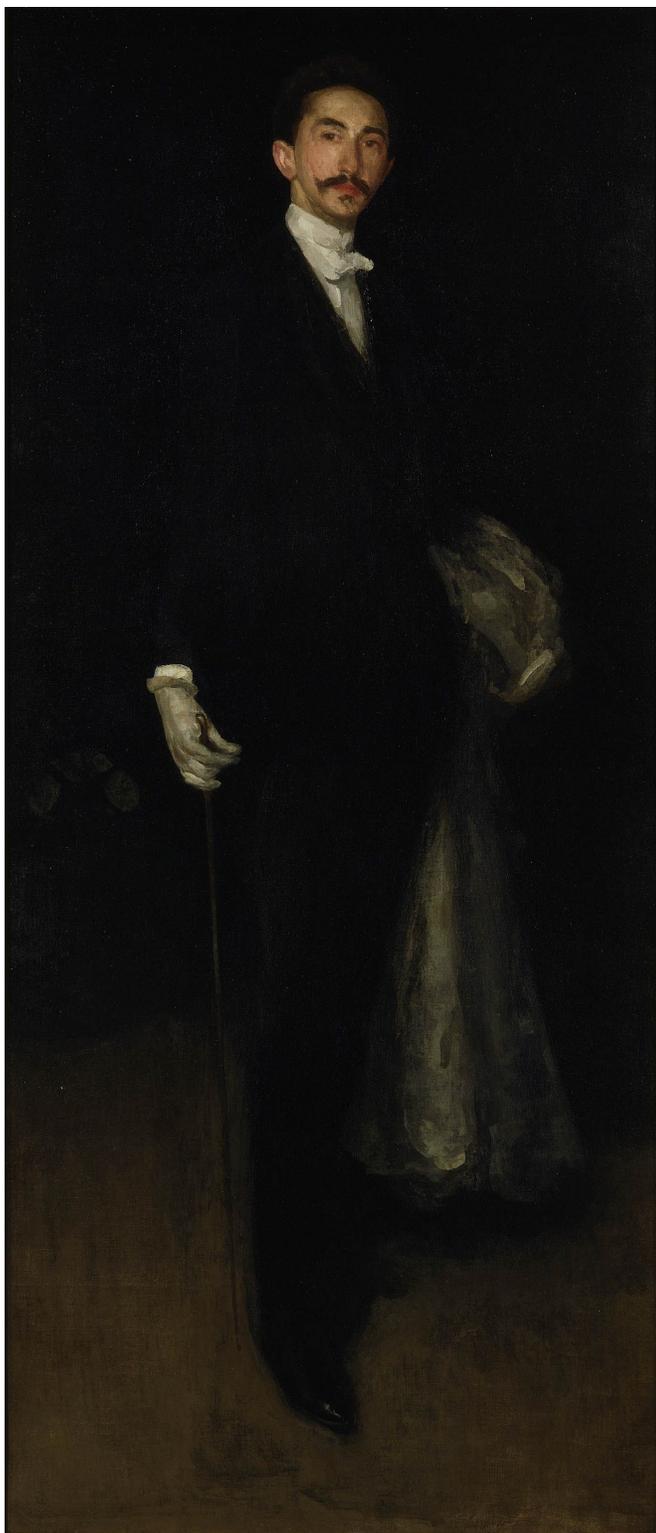
By contrast, the connoisseur celebrated the “countless hours” he spent examining an art-work in determining its authorship. Berenson was being disingenuous in this rambling definition for several reasons, however, as he not only realized how it divested him from a financial interest in the “happiness of a result,” but also how this “funereal boredom” enacted a symbolic remove from work (as described by Veblen in his conception of the leisure-class). In this way, this tediousness was coincidental with a life spent “floating lazily in casual enthusiasms,” as his friend and fellow expatriate, the philosopher George Santayana, recalled of their luxurious existence.¹¹³ Moreover, if Berenson associated the dilettante’s whimsicality with a delight in the fragmentary, evocatively

described as a “leap from one thing to another like flamingos in a swamp,” then such a ‘delight’ not only illustrated a critical lassitude (and professional neglect), but also spoke of a form of decadence. In this way, Berenson’s characterization alludes to a conception of decay that simultaneously viewed it as both virtuous, in the sense of its aesthetic merits (like Scott, Berenson overvalued such romantic conceptions), and dangerous, in the sense that it veered toward an irrecoverable decline.

If Berenson and Scott’s conception of humanism included both the field of humanistic knowledge, emblemized in renaissance scholarship, and the observer’s empathetic projection into the representative space of the art-work (as Scott also suggested in his description of the metaphoric exchange with architecture), then — in these terms — this notion of humanism also incorporated a mode of decadence, which was evident in their over-aestheticization of the observer’s reception of the work. In this way, such a conception not only appealed to an indulgence, in the terms of its sensual delay, but also marks this appeal in terms of a decay, or enervation, that could be familiarized in poetic terms. If decadence was figured as a kind of perversion (in Berenson’s description of the fragmentary delight), or distortion (as in Scott’s elucidation of the biological fallacy), moreover, then the pair conceived of this perversity in benign and impotent terms — illustrated by the asinine jibes of Scott’s poetry — rather than as a threatening and destructive force.

As Mary Berenson noted of such an accommodation, “We discussed the meaning of the word ‘decadent,’” before eventually concluding “that it means a person who takes hold of important things by the handle of personal sensations, like Whistler, who, commanding a gun-boat in S. America during a rebellion, decided to join the party that had the best view of the Valparaiso as the ships were manoeuvring, or a man who becomes Catholic because he likes the smell of incense or the look of vestments.”¹¹⁴ While this definition is, in part, taunts Berenson — who was considering a conversion to Catholicism to ‘better understand art’ — her evocation of these “personal sensations” illustrates how their conception of decadence was overtly aesthetic (seeking the “best view of the Valparaiso” or appreciate the “smell of incense”), together with the mediative role of the object — the incense, vestments, or view — in the observer’s formulation of experience. In this way, the evocation of these sensations (figured here again in sensualized terms) would not be experiential, but also — in the sense of its employment of fragments and crumbs in the manufacture of delight — objective. And the strain of creating “ties between the subjects of his delight” would lie less in their sensorial reception of the object, than in the narrative competency — and sustained effort — required to tie those whimsical fragments together in a legible form.

“I’ve a great respect for *things*,” Madame Merle — the European courtier in Henry James’s *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) — explained of such a delicate process of objectification, in which “one’s house, one’s furniture, one’s garments, the books one reads, the company one keeps . . . are all expressive.” Such an expressiveness depended on both a kind of consensual legibility, of being able



James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Arrangement in Black and Gold: Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fézensac*, 1891-92.

to read the “hieroglyphics” of this floating world (as Wharton noted of this symbolic confusion), together with the observer’s ability to maintain a relative independence from the object. “When you’ve lived as long as I you’ll see that every human being has his shell and that you must take that shell into account,” Merle concluded of this action,

“By the shell I mean the whole envelope of circumstances. There’s no such thing as an isolated man or woman; we’re each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. What shall we call our ‘self’? Where does it begin? Where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us — and then it flows back again.”¹¹⁵

With this description, Merle not only alluded to the implications of society, who registered the symbolic value of this “envelope of circumstances” (“There’s no such thing as isolated man or woman”), but also to a proto-modern concern with the fragmented limits of subjectivity (“What shall we call our ‘self?’”). In contrast to Scott, who preferred to describe his unreliable memory in terms of an “extreme *dédoublement*” that suggested this spilt was reconcilable, Merle’s account of the sensation of overflowing — or seepage — referred to a more injurious inability to distinguish the boundaries between the object and self. (“Where does it begin? Where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us — and then it flows back again.”) An indeterminacy, or enervating confusion, that not only spoke of a perverse reliance on these objects, which were assembled as “some cluster of appurtenances,” but also to the innate perversity of such objects.

The tenuous nature of this dynamic was best exemplified in the French writer J.K. Husymans’s Decadent classic *À rebours* (1884), in which its protagonist, Des Esseintes, effects an escape from the “stresses of society” by withdrawing from a world that had “fallen into idiocy or filthy pleasures [and] was perishing in the degeneracy of its members, whose faculties grew more debased with each succeeding generation.”¹¹⁶ The character of Des Esseintes was famously based on the Parisian dandy, Robert de Montesquiou (1855-1921), whose poetry Berenson applauded and who also provided the inspiration for the Baron de Chalus in Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*, and was immortalised by the American painter James MacNeill Whistler in his portrait, *Arrangement in Black and Gold: Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac* (1892). (Fascinatingly, Logan Pearsall Smith, Mary Berenson’s brother, substituted for Montesquiou during the “interminable process of painting” this portrait, as Whistler required a stand-in who could maintain an “aristocratic pose” with a heavy fur coat draped over one arm.¹¹⁷) Even among the indulgences of *fin-de-siècle* society, Montesquiou’s self-absorption was so renowned one wit quipped, “One expects more of a dead man” after the posthumous publication of his *Les Pas effacés: Mémoires* failed to scandalize the Parisian *demi-monde*.¹¹⁸

In addition to his writings, Montesquiou indulged his aestheticism by decorating the interior of his apartment with eccentrically themes, furnishing these rooms — as the writer Stéphane Mallarmé recalled — like a monastery cell, a yacht cabin, and a cathedral, complete with a Louis XIV

pulpit, stalls, and an altar railing.¹¹⁹ Following this inspiration, Huysmans's protagonist withdraws to a similarly decadent interiority in which he sought to evoke "all the sensations of a long voyage" and the "pleasure of moving from place to place" through a series of adventures that took place within rooms "manifestly contrived for the definite enjoyment of a life of cloistered and learned leisure. In fact it appeared to him a futile waste of energy to travel when, he believed, imagination was perfectly competent to fill the place of the vulgar reality of prosaic facts."¹²⁰ Within such flamboyant architectural conceptions, not only the furnishings and finishes but also the inhabitants, who were shielded from "vulgar reality" by this interiorized "envelope of circumstances," were transformed into luxurious objects. As Merle's account suggests, the definition of this 'shield' was less than absolute, however, and the fragility of this process of objectification was further illustrated by another object Mallarmé recalled seeing in Montesquiou's apartment, the "unfortunate remains" of a gilded tortoise shell.

These remains were reanimated in *À rebours* when Des Esseintes purchases a tortoise — the symbol of the Parisian *flâneur's* resistance to the speed of modernity — in order to have its shell "glazed over with gold" and "encrusted with precious stones." While this decoration was intended to compliment the aesthetic composition of the interior, accenting the "iridescent gleams" and "silvery glints" of an Oriental carpet as the tortoise crawled across it, this gesture not only objectifies the animal, turning the natural into the artificial, but also proves fatal as the weight of this ornamentation proves too much to bear, with Des Esseintes's pet "obstinately declining to make the smallest effort towards locomotion" before finally succumbing to the "dazzling splendor imposed on it."¹²¹ If this tortoise offers a kind of symbolic resistance to, or arrested acceptance of, the vulgar realities of modernity, then the elaborate process of objectification Des Esseintes inflicts on it negates that resistance, with these jewels not only ornamenting this failure, but also causing a corporeal distress that fatally exhausts the animal.

This convergence between the objective and symptomatic, amplified by the "dazzling splendor" of these fantastical interiors, is further illustrated by the continued strain Des Esseintes's aestheticization places on his impoverished nervous system. While his initial withdrawal was prompted by being "overwhelmed with an immense fatigue" in society, Huysman's "wild and gloomy fantasy" concludes with Des Esseintes's nervous collapse, in which he capitulates to that most ornamental of ailments, neurasthenia, suffering from a "nervous irritability" that results in "atrocious pains," "neuralgic agonies," "fits of nausea," a "dry and hacking nervous cough," and "hot, gassy eructations."¹²² In this diseased collapse, these symptoms become objects, or perverse ornaments, which further confuse the observer's relation to their "envelope of circumstances," complicating the overflow (or projection) of the self out into those objects, which are reincorporated back into the through a process of subjective identification.

This diseased inability to affect a separation between the object and self was also illustrated in more immediate terms by Mariano's description of Scott's new wife amidst the opulent surroundings of the Villa Medici. (In the convoluted sexual politics of I Tatti, Mariano and Cutting were both unwittingly considered rivals for the affections of Scott *and* Berenson.) "I found the house exquisitely furnished," she recalled of this introduction,

"almost too much for my apprehensive eyes. For I could not help hearing Bolshevism knocking at the door and felt as if people living in such refinement of luxury must be struck with blindness. Lady Sybil Scott I found stretched out by the open fire, with a lovely silken coverlet spread over her legs, looking incredibly fragile and elegant in a capricious and original way. I was fascinated by her delicate hands and the beautiful rings she wore with the stones turned inwards towards the palms of the hand."¹²³

In this way, both Cutting's neurotic sensitivities and elegant physical fragility, "stretched out by the open fire" and draped with a "lovely silken coverlet," were accommodated within the louche surroundings furnished by her husband, Scott. Not only is Mariano's visual apprehension at the exquisite furnishings obvious ("almost too much for my apprehensive eyes"), but also her description of the reflection of this wealth and privilege as 'blinding' resonates more in terms of a sensorial overload, of succumbing to a 'dazzling splendor,' than to any impending political upheaval (the 'knocking Bolshevism' at the door). In contrast to her recollection of the Villa I Tatti, in which she found the assemblage of antique furniture, renaissance art, oriental sculptures, and objet d'art "fascinating and awe inspiring," Mariano's account of the domesticity that encompasses Cutting is distinctly more unsettling.

In this regard, one detail lingers, with Mariano noting how Cutting wore her rings "with the stones turned into the palms." An eccentric gesture that not only suggests a protection of these precious objects, the "beautiful rings" ornamenting her "delicate hands," but also a wan reluctance to be completely incorporated within this composition, caught by the reflected light of the "open fire." In this way, Cutting's rings represent both the most luxurious and intimate of objects, whose relative proximity to the body reaffirmed — however temporarily — the distinction between the self and this envelope of circumstances. (Offering a resistance that neither the furnishings, nor her silken coverlet, were liable to provide.) Unlike Des Esseintes's unfortunate pet, Cutting inverted this ornamental shell, turning these jewels inwards in a gesture that suggests both a sheltering from these external objects and a protection against the repressed desires within. Set in these terms, the 'dazzling splendor' of Scott's decorated interior alludes to a kind of baroque excessiveness that is antithetical to the proportioned and ordered space he celebrated in his *Architecture*, or even the sense of "ease and tranquillity" he boasted the neighboring Villa Le Balze imparted. By contrast, this interior not only recollects his affront at Codman's tasteless and overcrowded decoration, but also Huysmans's description of Des Esseintes's ornamentation of his tortoise, in which the aesthete rejected "too

civilised, too familiar” jewels in favor of “more startling and uncommon sorts,” before finally settling on a combination comprising “some real, some artificial” elements that sought to “produce a harmony, at once fascinating and disconcerting.”¹²⁴ Read in these terms, if decadence can be considered as a form of heightened (or overly aestheticized) artificiality, which runs “against nature,” then Scott’s “elegant and capricious” inclusion of the natural within the artificial — and with it the transit from the animate to the inanimate, together with the absorption of the disconcerting within the familiar — could only create a grotesque, which, like the baroque, gave voice spoke to the irrational.

Geoffrey Scott and the ‘Humanism’ of Architecture

At the conclusion to his 1914 edition of *Architecture*, Scott again reiterated his conception of how architecture was ‘humanized’ through the observer’s psychosomatic inhabitation of space, with their “transcription of the body’s states into forms of buildings” not only constituting the “unique pleasure” of the “architectural art,” but also “presupposing a true and reliable experience.”¹²⁵ For Scott, the veracity of this exchange was most apparent in renaissance architecture, which he had argued throughout the volume gave a tangible form to an architectural ideal by “constructing, within the world as it is, a *pattern of the world*.”¹²⁶ In this way, this externalized ‘patterning’ was defined through the observer’s projection of their “emotive states” (or *einfiilung*), which expressed an “our instinctual craving for order,” as “order is the pattern of the human mind.” With this unconscious order finding an analogue in the “intelligible” and “coherent” nature of architectural space, resulting in a subjective experience he argues “satisfies the desire of the mind” and “humanizes architecture.”¹²⁷ (As the neurasthenic collapses of Scott and Eliot suggest, however, this humanization was infinitely more complex and fragmentary than he allowed in the *Architecture of Humanism*.) The sense of order, proportion, and spatiality he read in renaissance architecture was conceived in relation to a system of rules and conventions that, however pliable in the hands of renaissance architects, was often explained in dispassionate — almost technical — terms in the renaissance architectural treatises Scott admired.

Naturally any such an explanation was antithetical to his own aesthetic concerns and, by contrast, he sought to provide a more definite description of the observer’s reactions to the art-work, rather than any explanation of the work itself. “The crisis in creative art,” he noted in his concluding section, “Art and Thought,” revealed “the need[,] the desire . . . for a more exact analysis of aesthetic experience.”¹²⁸ An exactitude he briefly suggested might be found in a “metaphysic of ‘Creative Evolution.’” Although unstated, Scott is obviously referring to Henri Bergson’s *Creative Evolution* (1907), in which the philosopher introduced the notion of *élan vital*, or the unconscious creative

impulse of society, rather than any evolutionary account of the development of architecture, which he had earlier rejected as the ‘biological fallacy.’ Scott’s understanding of Bergson’s work was indebted to his discussions with Karin Stephen, who had recently published her article, “What Bergson means by Interpenetration” (1912), and was in the process of writing her longer study, *The Misuse of the Mind: A Study of Bergson’s Attack on Intellectualism*, which was eventually published — with a brief preface by the philosopher — in 1922. As the historian John MacArthur has recently noted, however, Scott’s reference to Bergson’s notions of the *durée* and *élan vital* was not only brief, but also essentially ornamental, as it reaffirmed his conception of the observer’s animate movement through architectural space that he had drawn from Wölfflin and German empathy theory, rather than generating any substantive intellectual revision of these notions.¹²⁹

In this way, this reference to ‘metaphysics’ illustrated Scott’s ambition of qualifying his aestheticism with a more objective and “exact analysis,” an awareness that was similarly apparent in Berenson’s use of Morellian scientific connoisseurship and Lee’s recourse to German empathy theory two decades earlier. His allusion to Bergson is only a passing reference, however, and his desire to correlate an orderly “human mind” with an equally rational architecture led Scott to suggest that the “modern science of psychology” afforded “the only means by which such an analysis can profitably be obtained.” As he noted,

“Without the acutely developed self-consciousness which that science implies, the final problems of criticism could neither be formulated nor attacked. For the problems of criticism rest, in the last resort, not on the external work of art objectively described, but on the character of our reaction to it — since it is this, and this alone, which determines its quality. Beauty, although by a natural instinct we make it a property of external things, is but a value of our own sensations. Of these the proper science is psychology.”¹³⁰

Within the terms of this neo-Kantian assertion, Scott not only reaffirms the primacy of the subjective experience of architecture, which is defined through “the character of our reaction” to the art-work (rather than any external or objective qualities of that work), but also his endemic belief that “beauty” — or taste — “is but a value of our own sensations.” In this way, Scott subtly shifted the emphasis of this understanding from a psychosomatic conception of architectural space to a psychically invested inhabitation of it, embedded in memory and desire, which marked a shift from such theorists as Wölfflin, who had written to Lee to clarify that he thought any understanding of the art-work was primarily based on a physical response, rather than a psychical recollection.¹³¹ As she noted, Lee was appreciative of Wölfflin’s clarification, as she appreciated that while “psychology teaches us that experience is subject to the memory,”¹³² this memory is itself subject to a series of slips and lapses that expressed a less orderly “pattern of the mind” than Scott allowed.

Despite his insistence that psychology offered the appropriate scientific methodology to provide both a more detailed explanation of the observer’s psychical investment in space, Scott

pointedly omitted any reference to this “proper science” in the 1924 edition of *Architecture*. A deletion that, following the events of the intervening decade, can be attributed to two concerns. Firstly, it acknowledged how the psychosomatic explanation of the observer’s reception of the art-work, as expressed in Berenson’s notion of tactile-values and Lee’s exaggerated mimicry, had become progressively antiquated. (In contrast to such retrogressive sentiments, the Wölfflian inflicted theories offered by Siegfried Giedion in *Space, Time, Architecture*, 1941, and Pevsner in his *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, 1936, and *Outline of European Architecture*, 1943, would be substantiated less by aesthetics, or science, than by their progressive understanding of how the historian’s “backward look” could transform contemporary existence.) Secondly, the ‘propriety’ of psychology, as Scott understood the science in terms of the pseudo-empiricist conceptions of William James (as mediated by Berenson) and Bergson (as discussed with Stephen), had been disassembled — if not actively perverted — by the psychoanalytical theories of Freud: ideas that Scott, like Berenson, considered specious.

Although psychology and psychoanalysis have distinct traditions, as Jacques Derrida has neatly surmised there is no psychology after psychoanalysis. (Which is to say, in the “psychoanalytical age there is no psychology” as there is no aspect of that science which remains untouched by Freudianism.¹³³) In this way, Freud’s psychoanalytical conception of modern subjectivity — framed through his consideration of neurasthenia, the dream-work, and the psychical mechanism of forgetfulness — is not only vital here for the obvious complications it offers to Scott’s explanation of the “true and reliable experience” of architecture (and of reality itself), but also for its illustration of the transition from the connoisseurial observer, as personified by Scott and Berenson, to the fragmented modern subject. Read in these terms, Scott’s *Architecture* can be considered a kind of mnemonic, which describes “man’s life as a creature who sees and remembers what he has seen,” and an illustration of the movement toward what Mark Jarzombek has memorably described as “the psychologization of modernity.”¹³⁴ A psychologization based on the modernization of such anachronistic conditions as neurasthenia.

In his 1895 essay, “On the Grounds of Detaching a Particular Syndrome from Neurasthenia under the Description Anxiety-Neurosis,” Freud described how he derived his conception of anxiety from a reading of Beard’s account of nervous exhaustion. As he noted, this paper constituted a deliberate attempt to distinguish an “anxiety neurosis” from Beard’s broad definition of neurasthenia, which Freud considered overly vague and riddled with “pseudo-neurasthenias.” (“It is difficult to make any statement of general validity about neurasthenia,” he admitted, “so long as we use that name to cover all the things which Beard included under it.”¹³⁵) As Freud interpreted the condition, neurasthenia was itself a symptom of proto-modernity, signaling — as it can be understood through the works of Scott and Berenson — the uneasy emergence of modern subjectivity. In contrast to

other psychical conditions such as hysteria, which originated in a single physical event, Freud argued anxiety was characterized by a sense of impending physical threat that was reified through the serial “accumulation of *somatic* excitement.” While the “*affect* of anxiety” is externalized in “a danger *approaching from outside*,” he explained, the “*neurosis* of anxiety . . . *reacts against a source of excitation which is internal*,” repressing those ungovernable desires while simultaneously projecting “*an analogous source of excitation which is external*.”¹³⁶ Viewed within the machinations of this mechanism, the disorderliness of the mind — together with the duplicitousness of the experience of those external excitations (or objects) — is obvious. Interestingly, while he noted neurasthenia was characterized by an “impoverishment of excitation” that was antipathetic to the anxious accumulation of excitement, Freud also suggested as the “precipitating cause” of both conditions “lies in the somatic field instead of the psychical one,”¹³⁷ neurasthenia and anxiety were often less distinct as clinical entities than coincidental. With the neurasthenic’s “becoming all nerves” providing a catalyst for the “unhappy relation to time and place” of the anxious modern subject.

Like Beard, Freud was unduly receptive to his patient’s hypochondria, which he recognized formed a kind of protective shield — a “wish to fall ill” — against the provocations of the external world and the emergence of internal desires, while also engendering a singular forgetfulness that meant the symptoms manifested simply “succeeded the symptoms of some other neuroses.”¹³⁸ (A cumulative succession that prefigured his later formulation of the screen-memory, in which the substitution of one memory with another was neither absolute nor legible, but rather superimposed and confused.) In this way, Freud argued none of these symptoms were “false,” but rather — like metaphors — constituted a progressively enervating allusion to something else. An allusion that further suggested, by extension, the manner in which such a “vague and uncertain” neurasthenic reading of architectural space — as offered by Scott’s anesthetized “dream of space” in his *Architecture of Humanism* — would not only tied to a hypochondriac “panoply of symptoms,” but also associated with an endemic forgetfulness. These neurasthenics live in “state of perpetual absentmindedness,” Proust and Ballet concluded of this process, with these “hypochondriacal preoccupations” resulting in a “power of recalling past events [that] is defective, because they are unable to sustain the mental effort necessitated by the search for the forgotten incident.”¹³⁹

Intriguingly, the most sensible formulation of this ‘dream’ is not found in Scott’s writings, which are typically elusive in defining this ambition, but rather in Berenson’s solitary work on architecture, “A Word for Renaissance Churches” (1892). (A reference that further illustrates how the *Architecture of Humanism* was conceived in relation to — and should be considered as an extension of — Berenson’s aesthetic project.) In this article Berenson persistently restates his conviction that the “principal aim” of renaissance architecture was to manifest “perfect space, proportion, and order.”¹⁴⁰ In this ambition, these architects, as he continues,

“strove to produce an effect that would make one on entering a church feel the existence of a space as a positive fact, instead of a mere negation of solidity; as a material, not a void; and, beyond this, as a material capable of being shaped in the subtlest fashion. The moment you enter such a church as the Madonna della Consolazione at Todi — the best, although far from perfect, realization of the Renaissance ideal — you feel the as if you had cut loose from gravitation, and as if you took flight not only from the material universe, but also from all that is your conscious self.”¹⁴¹

Although he subsequently noted this nascent formulation was “crudely stated, undeveloped, and incomplete”¹⁴² — especially in comparison to the refined definition of “space composition” he offered in his works on renaissance painting — the influence of Berenson’s brief “Word for Renaissance Churches” on Scott’s *Architecture* is evident in several ways. Firstly, in this description Berenson describes architectural space as a “positive fact” and subtly malleable “material” that is animated by inhabitation. For Scott, “The architect models in space as a sculptor in clay,” “He designs his space as a work of art” and, through an appeal to movement, “excites a certain mood in those who enter it.”¹⁴³ (Moreover, this formulation also acknowledges Wölfflin’s use of the same metaphor in explaining how the “hard, brittle stuff” of renaissance architecture “suddenly turned supple and soft” in the baroque, assuming the formal characteristics which “almost reminds us of clay.”¹⁴⁴)

Secondly, Berenson also considered this excitation transmigrative, “as if you took flight not only from the material universe, but also from your conscious self,” with such an aesthetic idealization of architecture enacting a divorce from reality. In this way, his insistence on this “perfect effect of space” allowed Berenson to further assert renaissance architecture was almost solely concentrated “upon the interior.”¹⁴⁵ A primacy that would only be implied, rather than implicitly stated, by Scott. Thirdly, in this article Berenson sought to “deal with architecture from the point of view of the aesthetic spectator,” who was able to “enjoy it with the acuteness of a physical sensation,” retain “the remembrance of it,” and, “in reviving his emotion in tranquility,” sought to gain “a glimpse into the cause of his pleasure.”¹⁴⁶ In these terms, he not only prefigured the aesthetic impulse of Scott’s *Architecture*, but also dictated how the observer’s acknowledgment of this “ideal of space,” which reflected their “understanding of this law governing Italian architecture,” was a necessary precondition for their appreciation of renaissance architecture. Finally, in addition to dictating his methodology for the connoisseurship of architecture, Berenson’s contention that the Church of the Madonna della Consolazione provides “the realization of the beautiful dream of space”¹⁴⁷ haunted Scott’s conception of an aesthetically idealized architecture.

In his seminal *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), Freud famously posited that such dreams constituted the primary object of the human unconscious. Although he acknowledged these dreams were typically a hastily arranged “conglomerate of psychic formations,” he argued the nonsensicality

of these formations could be disassembled through the process of interpretation and traced back to a pathological intent in the analysand's memory.¹⁴⁸ Despite these pathological impulses, Freud believed the dream was only able to represent desired images, however, with these emerging representations — which he likened to the development of a photograph — manifesting an imaginary potential through the presentation of a “state of affairs such as I might wish to exist.” In this way, the “*content of a dream*” represents both the “*fulfilment of a wish*” and an attempt to realize this fictitious state by creating a “pattern of the world” within the material world.¹⁴⁹

Freud recognized the intrinsic positivism of this formulation, however, and he attempted to negate potential criticisms by suggesting the dream's latent content was distorted through the process of its conscious manifestation, with this representation evidencing a “means of disguise,” or “screen,” which the unconscious formed as a barrier between itself and the conscious material world.¹⁵⁰ Although the dream was ostensibly able to draw from any memories from the flow of the unconscious, it not only assumed a certain deliberateness in the selection of that material — “there are no indifferent dream stimuli, and therefore no guileless dreams,”¹⁵¹ he noted — but also needed to conform to the dictates of a representational legibility. That is, as these “dream-thoughts” (or desires) emerge they are translated by the dream-work into visual images, which are then projected onto the barrier between the conscious and unconscious, cast “as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen.”

This screen was only a filament, however, a ‘thin film’ that the observer sought to drape over their body — like a silken coverlet, or an ornamented tortoise shell — in order to shield against the provocations of the material world. As the French psychoanalyst and writer Jean-Bertrand Pontalis has subsequently argued, Freud's conception of the dream-work falsely posits the possibility of “being able to reach that mythical place where nothing is disjointed, where the real is imaginary and the imaginary real.” And it is in the sustenance of this illusion, as he further argues, reconceptualising the Freudian dream-work, that “the dream strives for permanence, for a suspension of the wish and not for the achievement of a satisfaction; in this case, the object of the wish would be the *wish itself*.”¹⁵² That is, instead of manifesting these unconscious desires, the dream-work acts to suspend these ambitions within the precarious interiority of the dream, held — as it were — within the passing moment of a beautiful leisure. In this way, the subject's relation to the material object seeks a kind of psychological preservation of the self through the negotiation of these desires, with the taxing nature of this exchange doubly illustrating the efforts of attempting to fulfill an “imaginary potential” and adhere to a conscious legibility. And Freud's conception of the dream-work encompasses both the pliancy of objects, which are “supple and soft . . . like clay,” and the fundamental mischievousness of the dreamer's unconscious.¹⁵³ Such a “beautiful dream of space” was not only capable of expressing desire, however, but also — as Freud's colleague Sándor Ferencsi (1873-1933)

famously noted in his conceptualization of psychological trauma (following his analysis of first world war veterans) — evincing the return of the real.

In his *Being a Character: Psychoanalysis and Self Experience* (1992), the psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas outlined an alternate formulation of psychological object-relations in which the dream object is molded by unconscious in a form that allows it to be ‘dreamt-out,’ or returned, into the material world. In this way, these objects constitute a kind of “dream furniture” that simultaneously aids the subject’s unconscious utilization of these details in constructing reality, while also endowing these objects with further “psychical meaning” through this rhetorical exchange. (Substantiating the hieroglyphic world of objects Wharton described decades earlier.) Moreover, such a use of objects not only evidences the subject’s attempts to live within the terms of their “own biographic significance,” enclosed in a “cluster of appurtenances,” but also the manner in which they are constantly reminded of the vital role of these objects in this signifying exchange. A vitality that is exaggerated by the relative substitutability of these often trivial objects.

Moreover, this exchange between the object of the dream and the “environment that plays upon the self” occurs within an “intermediary space,” an interstitial void in which these “objects, like words,” constitute “compromise-formations” that lie — necessarily undeveloped — between their actual qualities and the unconscious desire in an attempt to sate both “the instinctual need for representation” and the subject’s “pleasure of the object’s actuality.”¹⁵⁴ In this way, Bollas argues that the subject’s existential condition — or subjectivity — is illustrated both through the dream-work’s manifestation of latent desires and the process of objectifying space, created through an “aesthetic that seeks . . . to discover objects that conjugate into meaning-laden experience.”¹⁵⁵ If the subject’s admiration, or love, for the object is inseparable from their destruction urges toward it, which forces a split between benign or malevolent conceptions of the object, however, then the conjugation Bollas describes is not only marked by an innate opportunism in the selection of these appurtenances, but also a profound ambivalence toward their signification. An ambivalence that embodies a series of dualities — tasteful and tasteless, interested and disinterested, absorbed and distracted, malevolent and benevolent, enervated and vitalistic — that not only speaks of the subject’s duplicitous relationship with the object world (or architectural interior), but also the emergence of modernity itself. An epoch that Baudelaire noted, was simultaneously “ephemeral and contingent,” “eternal and immutable.”

In these terms, ambivalence was one of the characteristics that defined modern subjectivity, with Freud framing his explanation of the “Psychical Mechanism of Forgetfulness” through a biographic anecdote that illustrated this duality. During a summer vacation to Dubrovnik, Freud noted his unusual concern at being unable to remember the name of the artist who had painted a

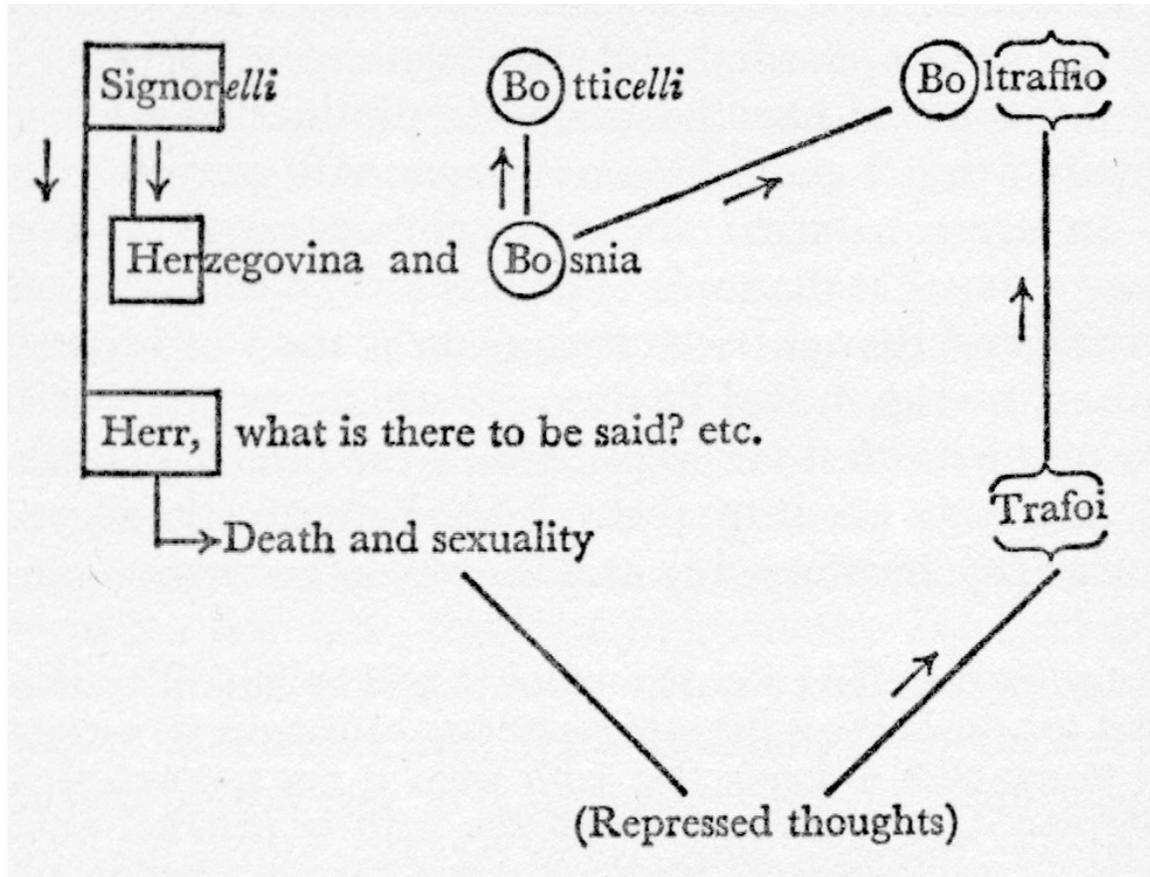
series of biblically-themed frescoes (depicting ‘Armageddon’ and the ‘Last Judgment’), which he had seen on an earlier excursion to Orvieto, Italy. After exerting all of his “powers of recollection,” he described how in spite of his continued inability to recall this artist, he was able to visualize the smallest, most trivial, details and “conjure up the pictures with greater sensory vividness than is usual.”¹⁵⁶ To his obvious relief, a bypassing “cultivated Italian” supplied the psychoanalyst with the identity of the painter, Luca Signorelli (1445-1523), which immediately corrected Freud’s “lapse of memory” and “soon my ultra-clear memory of the master’s features, as depicted in his portrait, faded away.”¹⁵⁷

Using this example, Freud explained how the “phenomenon of forgetfulness” was one of the most prominent psychopathologies affecting everyday life, which also included jokes, puns, and slips of the tongue, with the “specific irritation” associated with forgetting proper nouns — or *nomina propria* — resulting in an “continuous unpleasure” that had two grating effects. Firstly, this displeasure worked against conscious efforts to recall these names, with even “concentrated attention prov[ing] powerless.” Secondly, a process of substitution further frustrated this mnemonic recollection. “In the place of one name,” he noted of this process, “another name promptly appears, which we recognize as incorrect and reject, but which persists in coming back.” A persistence that further suggested how this substitutive process was more insidious than the simple exchange of one name for another,

“instead of a substituted name, we find in our memory a single letter or syllable, which we recognize as parts of the name we are in search of. We say, for instance, ‘It begins with a ‘B.’” if we finally succeed . . . in discovering what the name is, we find in the great majority of cases that it does not begin with a ‘B’ and does not in fact contain the letter ‘B’ at all.”¹⁵⁸

Indeed, Freud was so frustrated by this unconscious alphabetical exchange he ensured his readers would be able to both follow his account, and share his frustrations, by including a diagram that illustrated his confusion of syllables, geographic locations, and garbled translation of German and Italian phrases.

Using this diagram, he describes how the apparent superficiality of these confusions — whether proper nouns, symptoms, or “words-taken” or “words-made” (as in the English parlor game) — further illustrates their facilitation of this process of forgetting. Despite their apparent triviality these “superficial associations” evince the psychical mechanism of repression, which not only results in the substitutive frustrations of *nomina propria*, but also “the formation of obsessional thoughts and paranoid paramnesias.” With the “faithfulness of a given impression” relying on a capricious mix of various elements, including the “strength of the initial mnemonic impression,” “the interest directed to it at the time,” and the “interest that is *now* directed to its reawakening.”¹⁵⁹ This explanation is arresting as it is an early formulation of Freud’s notion of screen-memories that he



Sigmund Freud, 'The Physical Mechanism of Forgetfulness,' 1898.

would develop in a seminal article written the following year and which would define, through this consideration of forgetfulness, the modern conception of memory.

Formed through the residues of memory, these screen-memories appear at the moment they are recalled, rather than the moment they enter memory, and — as such — they show “no concern for historical accuracy.”¹⁶⁰ Instead of adhering to fidelity of experience, “what is recorded as a mnemonic image is not the relevant experience,” Freud noted, but “another psychical element closely associated with the objectionable one,” with this displacement working to “fix important impressions by establishing reproducible mnemonic images.” The memory is again associated with a reproducible photographic process, but one in which these images are overlaid over one another — like the works of the English eugenicist Francis Galton that Freud references — until they form indistinct composites in which the “ultra-clear memory” of one memory not only fails to “fade away,” but also simply blends into a mnemonic coagulation. As he concludes, these screen-memories are “compromise-formations” that, like hypochondriacal symptom, illustrate how “people often construct such things unconsciously — almost like works of fiction.”¹⁶¹ As the psychoanalyst Adam Phillips has noted of these constructions, Freud’s allusion to these mnemonic “works of fiction” implies that there is an art — in addition to a certain artfulness — to forgetting.¹⁶²

Although he accepted Scott’s *Architecture of Humanism* was “a clever thesis on the principle of architectural criticism,” the critic Reginald Blomfield rightly concluded its “view of architectural history was vague and uncertain,” if not deliberately neglectful. An uncertainty that not only resulted in “arbitrary and dogmatic conclusions,” but also illustrated the writer’s tendency to “be misled by his own eloquence.” As the worst excesses of his poetry suggest, Scott sought refuge in the “associative meanings” of writing that he considered separate to the “direct meanings” of architecture, which Clough Williams-Ellis thought he expressed through his “great feeling for space,” or Mary Berenson noted in his understanding of the “psychological effect of space.” Blomfield did not simply object to the loquaciousness of Scott’s writing, however, but also to the analogy at the center of his account of the inhabitation of space, in which “*We transcribe ourselves into terms of architecture.*” As he had previously noted (in a discussion of the theories of Lee), Blomfield considered such ‘anthropomorphism’ absurd and he criticized the extent to which Scott “gives an actual objective existence to what is after all only metaphor and description.”¹⁶³ This criticism is apt, however, as it not only illustrates how Scott’s conception of architecture was tied to this analogical expression of the observer’s empathetic projection into space, governed by “metaphor and description,” and the extent to which his “too scanty store of remembered images” resulted in a lax history and supplemented the “unclear, vague, and undisciplined ideas” of his neurasthenic reading of architectural space.

Read in these terms, the writer’s block that arrested Scott when he attempted to add to his “history of taste” in 1918 evinced a moment when he became aware of the self-consciousness of his

“dream of space.” One in which the encroachment of the modern epoch finally exhausted his ambition of restoring an idealized humanist conception of architecture. While the *Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* was undoubtedly concerned with describing such architecture, this attention — as Scott stated on numerous occasions — remained subject to his aesthetic predilections. And in his argument’s most ambivalent moments, when its “idealized image” came into contact with the “real object,” architecture became merely symptomatic of a more-pervasive aesthetic poverty that haunted both Scott and Berenson.

Under Vittoz’s direction, Scott had trained his mind to eliminate letters from words, and maybe even images from dreams, in the hope of erasing “unwanted thoughts and ideas,” however his “nervous exhaustibility” meant that he no longer had the psychical energy to substitute other images in their place. Scott’s neurasthenia can also be interpreted as a metaphor. Another, politer, way of referring to the boredom he felt with a subject once he had exteriorized his emotions toward it. In this way, his neurasthenic conception of architecture was not only antithetical to the taciturn conservatism of Blomfield, or the watchful moralism of Ruskin, but also lay — like a veil of ether — over the furnishings of the Villa Medici, forming a diaphanous shield between the inert subject and the “refinement of luxury” that surrounded him. Although he toyed with a couple of other architectural topics, including his “revisions” to the second edition of the *Architecture of Humanism* and his short work on the “Basilica of St. Peter’s,” it can be argued by 1918 Scott had essentially exhausted his aesthetic imagination of architecture.

Scott’s *Architecture* is truly unique, however, if not for its introduction of an empathetic notion of “space” into Anglo-American discourse, which had already occurred in the works of Lee and would eventually arrive in a more architecturally convincing form with Giedion’s *Space, Time and Architecture* in 1941, then for its particularly connoisseurial view of architecture. In this way, this work not only represents a rhetorically self-conscious image of architecture, immersed in an idealized conception of the Italian renaissance, but also — with its exposition of the observer’s “writing-out” of the self in to space — a moment in which that subjective projection began to fracture. Resulting in a fragmentation that Freud and Eliot, among many others, read as symptomatic of modern subjectivity, illustrating a condition in which the excoriation of physical substance, “where dead men lost their bones,” was concomitant with a state of psychical fragmentation, in which the unconscious was punctured by the “things one is most sensitive to.” Like the hypochondrial symptoms the neurasthenic used to describe their disease, Geoffrey Scott’s *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* offers an unwitting — which is to say, an unconscious — reminder of the ambivalence inherent to inhabiting space. And its “aesthetic observer,” like its author, remained resigned to their paralysis at the center of space, insensate like “a patient etherized upon a table,” or a large piece of almost blank foolscap immobilized at the center of a desk.

Epilogue: A Veil of Ether

“Space, rolling and revolving between him and his native health possessed and wielded the powers we generally ascribe to time. . . . Space, like time, engenders forgetfulness; but it does so by setting us bodily free from our surroundings and giving us back our primitive, unattached state.”¹

Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain* (1924)

In his *Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990), the critic Terry Eagleton noted the importance of recalling how the notion of aesthetics was initially conceived of as a discourse on the human body. Following this reminder, he then describes a conception of the aesthetic that depends less on a notion of the ‘artistic,’ conceived in terms of an ‘aesthetic experience,’ or the “rarefied domain of conceptual thought,” than on the “whole region of human perception and sensation.”² With this assertion Eagleton is attempting to counter Immanuel Kant’s insistence in the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (1790) that the aesthetic should be considered exclusively in terms of its manifesting of intellectual cognition. For Kant the conception of ‘beauty’ resided within the observer’s intellectual apperception of the art-work, rather than any intrinsic material properties of that object, and the pleasure derived from an aesthetic enjoyment of beauty — or the capacity for ‘taste’ — enhanced the observer’s imaginative capabilities.³ (In this way, the aesthetic judgment is essential for Kant as it is the only term capable of mediating between the principle of cognition and the moral imperative, as they were explained in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781, and *Critique of Practical Reason*, 1788.)

By contrast, Eagleton argues that the “distinction which the term ‘aesthetic’ initially enforces in the mid-eighteenth century is not one between ‘art’ and ‘life,’” but rather between “the material and the immaterial: between things and thoughts, sensations and ideas.” By insisting on the essential function the physical body plays in determining those distinctions between the material and immaterial, sensational and intellectual, and actual and imaginary, Eagleton not alludes to the intrinsic vitality and corporeal fragility of that body, but also to the impossibility of remaining ‘disinterested’ from the illogical mechanisms of desire. It is at this juncture he defers to the writings of Sigmund Freud. “Human life is aesthetic for Freud,” Eagleton notes, “in so far as it is all about intense bodily sensations and baroque imaginings, inherently signficatory and symbolic, inseparable from figure and fantasy.” Such an existence is intrinsically tenuous for Freud and Eagleton, however, as it is “at least as much catastrophe as triumph.”⁴ A catastrophe that not only represents the final fragmentation of the humanist observer — as it was self-consciously exemplified by such aesthetes as Geoffrey Scott and Bernard Berenson — but also the coincidental emergence of modern subjectivity as it was described by Freud.

In his *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), Freud famously noted how the intent of the dream-work — the primary object of the unconscious (and of psychoanalysis itself) — was to manifest a “*wish-*

fulfillment.” Which is to say, its ambition lay with satiating desire. Following the mechanized slaughter of the first world war, however, Freud noted in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) that he now considered the subject’s ability to insulate himself against the traumatic resonances of modernity of even greater psychical significance than the positive reception of experience. “Protection against stimuli is an almost more important function for the living organism than the reception of stimuli,” Freud explained, with this preventative impulse occurring at the physical extremities of the body. In this way, the ‘pleasure principle’ acts as a shield against the potentially negative excesses of experiential reception, with the modern subject, “suspended in the middle of an external world charged with the most powerful energies,” liable to mortal injury “if it wasn’t protected from these forces by a protective layer.”⁵ It appears that by the early-1900s this protective shield was already as frail and diaphanous as the veil of ether, which lay, as T.S. Eliot offered in “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (1917), over the anaesthetized modern subject.

In these terms, Berenson’s recourse to the dream of a life “spent in art” and Scott’s appeal to an absent humanism in his *Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* (1914) can both be read as intrinsically nostalgic and anti-modernist. And the attendant pleasures of this ‘beautiful leisure’ — the “cluster of appurtenances” comprised of language, clothes, objects, furniture, and architecture — can further be interpreted as both an attempt to reify the observer (at the moment of their dissolution into subjectivity) and an effort to reinforce this fragile protective layer.

Ironically, it was exactly such a sensitivity to experience that Scott argued defined the “ideal observer” of architecture: a nebulous figure he came closest to describing with any clarity in his final work, “The Basilica of St. Peter’s,” published in *Country Life* in 1926-7. In effect this article is a belated footnote to *Architecture*, which argued the “problem of St. Peter’s” represented the “zenith of humanist architecture” due to its relationship of the church’s internal spatial dynamics and the intellectually and “physically aware” body of the observer.⁶ (A correspondence that depended on a notion of clarity that was less assured than Scott suggested.) Ironically, this article is less concerned with a description of the internal spatial dynamism, than it is with illustrating the extravagant visual drama of viewing St. Peter’s. Which is to say, it reaffirms the criticism that Scott’s principal intellectual concern lay “with aspects, not things.” “[L]ook up and see the vista to the dome,” he noted to his readers,

“The Pantheon is added to the ‘Temple of the Conchord,’ Maderna’s nave to Michelangelo’s cross, the porticoes to the nave, the piazza to the porticoes; and all these elements, strung on a single axis, remain a whole by a force of dramatic consistency. The two climaxes are the space under the dome, and the space around the obelisk; so, whether you move east or west, you end on a tremendous affirmation — a kind of demonstrated proof.”⁷

Once again, this “demonstrable proof” is correlated to a sympathetic observer, a veritable connoisseur of architecture, and his historical account of the central architectural element of this

composition, the basilica's dome — which extends from Donato Bramante's original design in 1506, to Michelangelo's redesign in 1587, and the eventual completion by Giacomo della Porta in 1590 — is easily subsumed within the singularity of Scott's 'view.'

In order to frame this account, Scott introduced this 'problem' by recalling the reaction of Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-59), the noted English politician and historian, on first seeing the dome. "Lord Macaulay, wandering, once, in St. Peter's, was so powerfully affected by the size and influence of the basilica that he burst (so he has recorded) into tears." Despite his initial criticism of this outburst — both for its public demonstration ("He should have controlled his feeling. St. Peter's is a public place, about as populous as Trafalgar Square, and much better lighted") and misguided motivations ("His tears should have been those of anger and vexation. St. Peter's should have appeared to him as tawdry, pagan and monotonous") — Scott arrived at the "irresistible conclusion Lord Macaulay showed excellent judgment and a proper sensibility." A sensorial judgment that further suggested, "Macaulay was the ideal spectator for St. Peter's."⁸

Ironically, Scott's exaltation of Macaulay's tearfulness based on both a critical dissuasion, as he admitted the historian "had no special aptitude for judging architecture," and an intellectual abandonment, in which his knowledge of "grandiloquent history" was overwhelmed by the subjective aesthetic experience, culminating in Macaulay's emotional dissolve in response to St. Peter's. Such a sense of overriding emotiveness was not only consistent within Scott's conception of architecture that extended from the *National Character of English Architecture* (1908) to the *Architecture of Humanism* (1914; revised 1924) and the "Basilica of St. Peter's," but also illustrative of the complicated nature of the psychical vitalization he sought in the experience of architecture. An experience he acknowledged could only remain subject to "a kind of unbearableness in the things one is most sensitive to."⁹

Two years after the publication of the "Basilica of St. Peters," Geoffrey Scott after succumbing to a bout of pneumonia he had contracted on the transatlantic voyage to New York. Although his death at 45 was relatively sudden, the fragile state of his nerves — exaggerated by his flagrant hypochondria — meant that the majority of his associates treated the news of his demise with a degree of resignation. Writing in an obituary published in the *RIBA Journal* (9 November 1929), the architect Edward Warren described Scott's death as an "irreplaceable loss . . . to architectural literature," before astutely noting how his principal contribution to architecture lay in the past (both figuratively and literally), with his refutation of the critical misconceptions (or 'fallacies') of nineteenth-century criticism. Although he praised Scott's "sympathetic interest" in architecture, Warren slyly concluded by noting how his "acute and discriminating observation" of Italian renaissance architecture was nonetheless subservient to its role in illustrating these fallacies,

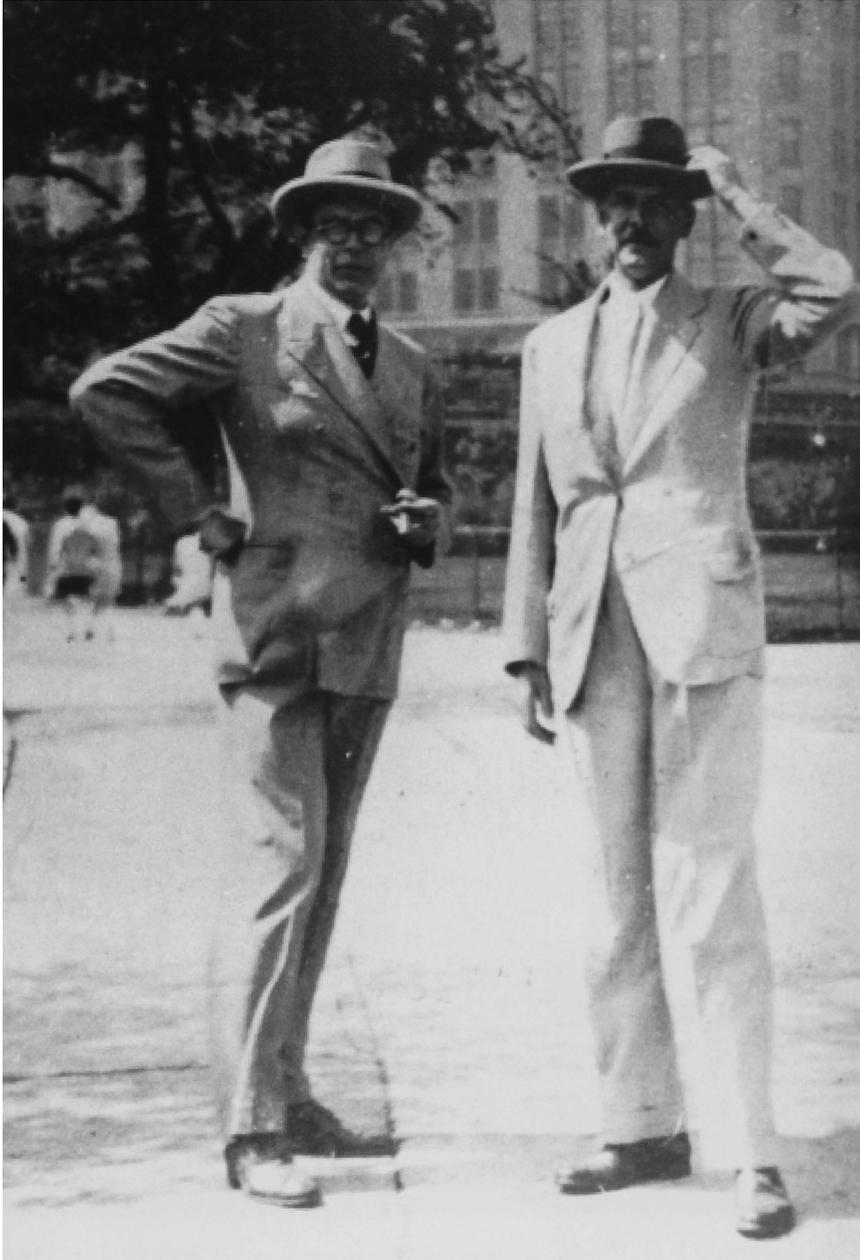
rather than constituting a critical study in itself.¹⁰ (A usefulness several other contemporaneous critics, including Blomfield and Lethaby, also noted.)

This underlying ambivalence was also evident in an anonymously penned obituary in *The Builder* (30 August 1929). After acknowledging Scott's *Architecture* was "a thoughtful and original work which has won for itself an acknowledged place in the literature of architectural criticism," this obituary rightly noted how the impact of this work was "jeopardised" by its publication in the months immediately before the outbreak of the first world war.¹¹ A reduced impact that was not only illustrative of the fatal caprices of history and the decimation of the leisure class, but also the increasing irrelevance of Scott's aestheticized conception of the humanist observer. In this regard, Virginia Woolf's incisive biographic account of Scott is especially apt as it couples his habitual indifference with a passing professional relevance. As she noted in her diary,

"Scott was tall, and dark and [with] the distinguished face of failure; reminded me of Bernard Holland and other 'brilliant' young men, who remain 'brilliant' and young well into their 40ties and never do anything to prove it . . . He is dead in New York and all those papers about Boswell . . . what will become of them; and that life that was to have made him immortal will never be written! and he remains the brilliant young man for ever."¹²

Woolf's characterization is stunning both for her description of his intellectual arrest, in which "he remains the brilliant young man for ever," and the dissolute nature of that brilliance, which is possessed of both the "distinguished face of failure" and a latent inability to "do anything to prove it." (Although she conceded Scott was a "very clever man," she also recognized that he bore "some grudge against me as the member of a circle he somehow neglected but was not part of." An enmity that was returned in kind.)

Moreover, Woolf's description concludes with a reference to Scott's final unfinished work, "that life that was to have made him immortal will never be written!" the editorship of "all those papers about Boswell." In 1927 Scott had immigrated to the United States in order to edit the collected papers of James Boswell, the eighteenth-century writer and biographer of Samuel Johnson (*The Life of Samuel Jackson*, 1791).¹³ These papers had been discovered by chance during the mid-1920s and purchased by the American collector Ralph H. Islam, who recognized the commercial value of this hoard, which not only included the manuscripts of his famous biography, but also Boswell's diaries and travel journals describing literary life in eighteenth-century London and his Grand Tours of the continent. Given his sympathies, Scott was "passionately involved" with this task, excitedly noting his absorption in the "huge amount of . . . deciphering, transcribing, correcting typescript, classifying — all of which is very tranquilizing."¹⁴ As he realized, this role marked a return to the editorial duties he had first undertaken with Mary Berenson on her husband's torturous manuscripts, providing another opportunity to rewrite history. (Continuing the revisionism he practiced in both the *Portrait of Zélide*, which had aroused Islam's offer of employment, and the *Architecture of*



Geoffrey Scott and Cecil Pinsent, New York City, August 1926
Unknown photographer

Humanism.) In this way, Scott's editorship not only represented a characteristically critical disassociation, which is evident in his haphazard biographic 'correction,' but also his final withdrawal into language (the first 'tranquilizing' comfort), which can be further interpreted as a disavowal of modernity. A refutation that is most evident in his objections to the Americanized spelling of the typed manuscripts that led Scott to scream, "I make the dictionary" at his startled assistants.¹⁵

Despite his desire to return to these papers following a brief visit to London in July 1929, the fragility of Scott's health was soon exposed after disembarking and he admitted himself to the Rockefeller Institute Hospital, New York. Ten days later, on the morning of 14 August 1929, Scott succumbed to a form of pneumonia the attending physician admitted had "no known treatment." Despite this medical indeterminacy, however, "a full recovery from this particular strain of pneumonia would usually be expected in most other cases," as this doctor explained to his family, although such a recovery "largely depended on the recuperative powers of the patient[, which] in this case [were] not sufficient."¹⁶ It is precisely this lack, moreover, figured as an inability to bear "the things one is most sensitive to" (in both professional and personal terms), which illustrates the significance of Scott's *Architecture of Humanism*.

As numerous writers have suggested, the fin-de-siècle period 1880-1920 evinced a "culture of therapeutics" that not only resulted in such 'diseases of modernity' as neurasthenia, but also a number of critical descriptions of this diseased fallibility, including Charlotte Perkins Gilman's seminal "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892) and Thomas Mann's epic *The Magic Mountain* (1924). If Gilman's work describes the medical incarceration that was often prescribed during the period, reflected in her heroine's capture within the "florid arabesques" of this "repellant, almost revolting" surface covering ("One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin"), then Mann's *bildungsroman* describes a more luxurious — if no less pernicious — form of confinement within the "atmosphere of death and amusement" he found while visiting a fashionable Swiss sanatorium. (Mann wisely refused the invitation to remain indefinitely in order to convalesce from a mild cold.) With its plush furnishings and elaborate menus, Mann's sanatorium was indistinguishable from the exclusive clinic that treated Scott, T.S. Eliot, and Ottoline Morrell for neurasthenia. In these terms, these writers all shared an understanding of how "the unfavourable influence exerted upon a man's personal life by the times in which he lives may even extend to his physical organism."¹⁷ An extension that illustrated the fallibility of the human body, language, and architecture in compensating for — as opposed to merely accommodating — the nervous strains endemic to modern life.

Caught within this diseased state, time has no legible dimension. And the medically incarcerated body was less capable of registering the passage of time than the architecture which encased it. "Space, rolling and revolving between him and his native health possessed and wielded

the powers we generally ascribe to time,” Mann noted of this subjection to the indeterminate spatiality of disease. In this way, “space, like time, engenders forgetfulness,” he concluded, “setting us bodily free from our surroundings and giving us back our primitive, unattached state.”¹⁸ However, this forgetfulness was not simply associated with the primitivism of a terminal decline, in which it became impossible to remember, but also to the progressive forgetfulness — the misplacing of one phrase for another, or mistaking certain historical periods — that marked the psychopathologies of everyday life for Freud, together with the burgeoning inability to forget. If the prolonged therapeutic internment of Mann’s protagonist can be read as both coincidental and indulgent, in the sense that it was medically indefensible and afforded the writer the opportunity for a leisurely meditation on the decline of European society, then Scott’s nervous sensitivity can be considered as an illustration of the precariousness of inhabiting that imaginary space. One marked by the profligate confusions of hypochondria and neurasthenia that were being supplanted by the emergent realities of modernity, fragmenting the subject within.

Read in these terms Scott’s biographic vulnerability, figured as a lack of “sufficient powers” in the face of what he was “most sensitive to,” was not only symptomatic of the ‘humanism’ he left undefined in his titular *Architecture of Humanism*, but also illustrative of the capricious delicacy — in both physical and psychical terms — of the subjective experience of architecture. In the final instance, his frustratingly incomplete history describes a humanism, which must be considered in both its literary terms and profound spatial illiteracy. One that is characterized less by an intellectual or diegetic coherence, than the simple coughs and splutterings, wheezes and apologies, of those illnesses that lie at the existential center of modern subjective experience — whether permanent or transitory, real or imaginary.

Endnotes to Introduction

¹ Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities* 1, trans. Sophie Wilkins (New York: Knopf, 1996), 392.

² Geoffrey Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* (London: Constable, 1914), 222, 213; emphasis in original, 227.

³ Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*. London: Butterworth, 1960), 67. In the first section of this work, Banham traces the emergence of this notion of empathy in Charles Blanc's *Éléments et Théorie de l'Architecture*, 1902, and Paul Gaudet's *Grammaire des Arts de Dessin*, 1867, which he further argues resulted in the design works of Mies Van der Rohe and Le Corbusier after 1923.

⁴ David Watkin, foreword to *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* by Geoffrey Scott (London: Architectural Press, 1980), ix.

⁵ Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (1949; reprint, New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), 1,3,1. In contrast to Ruskin and Scott, Wittkower argues renaissance architecture was "conceived as an image or mirror of a pre-ordained mathematical harmony of the universe."

Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, 1. In this way, "space is ordered according to immutable metric laws" and renaissance architects "saw no contradiction between objective proportions and subjective perception. On the contrary, they found that the objective laws of metric harmony were equally valid for the individuals percipient's space experience. It was this discovery that confirmed the trust of Renaissance artists in the validity of objective proportions despite the fact, as we all know, the aspects of objects changes as the beholder moves about in space." Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, 26. As the critic Alina Payne has noted, this relation of architectural form to mathematically determined ratios allowed Wittkower to associate these formal expressions with an objective rather than a subjective definition. Alina A. Payne, "Rudolf Wittkower and Architectural Principles in the Age of Modernism," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53 (1994): 328-9.

⁶ Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, nt. 1, 1. Wittkower is referencing the second edition of Scott's *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* (1924), 162. His disdain is even more contemptuous given that he had already informed his readers that the footnotes to his work "may be left unread without disadvantages to the main argument."

⁷ Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, xi. See also Kenneth Clark, "Humanism and Architecture," review of *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* by Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Review* 107 (February 1951): 65-9.

⁸ Payne, "Rudolf Wittkower": 327, 337. For Payne, Wittkower's purpose is twofold. Firstly, he offers a theory of renaissance architecture that is based on four essential themes: the notion of symbolism; formal appropriation; development of architectural typologies; and the process of commensuration. Secondly, he hoped to refute the "formalist strategies" of Ruskin and Scott by arguing against "a hedonist appreciation of architecture that privileges the sensuous aesthetic reception by the viewer and projects it back upon the architect's intention." Payne, "Rudolf Wittkower," 325.

⁹ Banham, *Theory and Design*, 67.

¹⁰ Banham, *Theory and Design*, 45.

¹¹ Anthony Vidler, "Histories of the Immediate Present: Inventing Architectural Modernism," PhD diss., Delft, 2005: 209. As Vidler notes of this influence, "Postmodernism might be said to have demonstrated a profound disdain for history in favor of an a-historical *myth*. Its ascriptions of "humanism" to the Renaissance were, after all, little more than the worn-out shards of mandarin connoisseurs from Bernard Berenson to Geoffrey Scott, the very end-game of the Renaissance revival, the Renaissance itself a fabrication based on mid-19th century myths of glorious Italy from Jules Michelet to Jacob Burckhardt." On the pervasiveness of Scott's history see also David Watkin, foreword to *The Architecture of Humanism*, and *The Rise of Architectural History* (London: Architectural Press, 1980).

¹² Colin Rowe, "The Present Urban Predicament," *As I Was Saying: Recollections and Miscellaneous Essays* 3, ed. Alexander Caragonne (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1996), 165-220.

- ¹³ Rowe, "Present Urban Predicament," 216. As Rowe concludes, "Is it possible that the critical use of this term has inhibited the production of the things itself?"
- ¹⁴ Mary Berenson, diary entry, 1 June 1894. Unless otherwise noted, all correspondence and diary entries refer to items housed in the Berenson archive, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Villa I Tatti, Florence, Italy.
- ¹⁵ Mary Berenson, diary entry, late-February 1894.
- ¹⁶ Rowe, "Present Urban Predicament," 219-20.
- ¹⁷ Vernon Lee, introduction to *Art and Man: Essays and Fragments* by Clementina Anstruther-Thomson (London: John Lane, 1924), 5.
- ¹⁸ Siegfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941), 5.
- ¹⁹ W.R. Lethaby, "Town Tidying," *Form in Civilization; Collected Papers on Art and Labour* (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), 17. Reginald Blomfield, *Architecture of the Renaissance in England* (London: Bell & Sons, 1897), 399-400.
- ²⁰ W.R. Lethaby, "Art and Workmanship," *Form and Civilisation*, 209.
- ²¹ Reginald Blomfield, *The Mistress Art* (London: E. Arnold, 1908), 43.
- ²² Geoffrey Scott, *The National Character of English Architecture: The Chancellor's Essay* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1908), 2.
- ²³ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 5-8.
- ²⁴ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 1 May 1908.
- ²⁵ Meyer Schapiro, "Mr Berenson's Values," *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society* (New York: George Braziller, 1994), 222.
- ²⁶ Mary Berenson, letter to Senda Berenson, 8 June 1926.
- ²⁷ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 247.
- ²⁸ Adam Phillips, *On Flirtation: Psychoanalytical Essays on the Uncommitted Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), xx.
- ²⁹ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 4.
- ³⁰ Geoffrey Scott, epilogue to *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* (second edition; London: Constable, 1924), 185-6.
- ³¹ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 210.
- ³² Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 213.
- ³³ Berenson, letter to Mary Berenson, 11 October 1890.
- ³⁴ Berenson, letter to Mary Berenson, 5 September 1929.
- ³⁵ Bernard Berenson, "Rudiments of Connoisseurship (A Fragment)," *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art (Second Series)* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1902), 147-8.
- ³⁶ Allan J. Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (winter 1986): 3-64.
- ³⁷ Sekula, "Body and the Archive," 17.
- ³⁸ As Eliot wrote,
 "But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:
 Would it have been worth while
 If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
 And turning toward the window, should say:
 'That is not at all,
 That is not what I meant, at all.'"
- T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," *Prufrock and Other Observations* (London: The Egoist, 1917), lines 105-10.
- ³⁹ Achille Adrien Proust and Gilbert Ballet, *The Treatment of Neurasthenia*, trans. Peter Campbell Smith (London: Kimpton, 1902), 21, 22, 23.
- ⁴⁰ Mary Berenson, diary entry, 5 February 1892; citation paraphrased for clarity.
- ⁴¹ Mary Berenson, diary entry, 13 May 1895.
- ⁴² Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 23 August 1906.
- ⁴³ Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 16 February, 1907.

- ⁴⁴ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 240, citation slightly altered.
- ⁴⁵ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 235.
- ⁴⁶ Freud, "Screen Memories" (1899), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 3, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974), 307, 315-6.
- ⁴⁷ Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain* (1924; reprint, London: Vintage, 1999), 34.
- ⁴⁸ Geoffrey Scott, "The Basilica of St Peter's," *Country Life* 60 (1926); 1000-1.
- ⁴⁹ See *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 2001), 801, 1125.
- ⁵⁰ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992) 41.
- ⁵¹ Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 8.

Endnotes to Chapter One — 'Aspects not Things: Geoffrey Scott's View of History'

- ¹ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 24 April 1908.
- ² See Giovanni Battista Piranesi, "Avanzi degli Edifici di Pesto," vol. 15 of *Opere di Giovanni Battista Piranesi* (Paris: Firmin Didot Freres, 1835-1839). On the contemporaneous influence of Piranesi's etchings in English aesthetic circles, see John Wilton-Ely, *Piranesi, Paestum and Soane* (London: Azimuth, 2002). For a general history of Paestum see J.G. Pedley, *Paestum: Greeks and Roman in Southern Italy*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990).
- ³ John Ruskin, "The Lamp of Power," in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849; reprint, Kent: Allen, 1880), 231. In order, Ruskin's 'lamps' comprise: Sacrifice, Truth, Power, Beauty, Life, Memory and Obedience.
- ⁴ On Horace Walpole and the Grand Tourists, see: Jeremy Black, *The British and the Grand Tour* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003); Jason M. Kelly, *The Society of Dilettanti: Archaeology and Identity in the British Enlightenment* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2009); and Bruce Redford, *Dilettanti: The Antic and the Antique in Eighteenth-century England* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008).
- ⁵ Scott describes Shelley's drowning in the Mediterranean's "molten seas" in his epic narrative poem, *"The Death of Shelley": The Newdigate Poem, 1906* (London: Blackwell, 1906). As he writes of that seascape,
- "There is a sea no wanderer may find,
Nor sail thereto its distant freight may bring,
About a margins of the world it lies,
Beyond the sunrise and the sunseting,
Serene and clear: no storm may arise,
No footfall of the wind
May stir its peace; only upon the air
Echoes are heard, and whispers by the shore,
With low refrain returning evermore,
And Music makes her tranquil dwelling there."
- Scott, *Death of Shelley*, n.p. Despite his success in winning the annual Newdigate Poetry Prize, Scott hoped that the "Death of Shelley" would eventually come to be seen as the first instance in a larger body of work. In this way, he would describe the nascent style of this work to his friend John Maynard Keynes as an example of "the depths to which the human spirit will sink for the sake of twenty-one pounds." Scott, letter to John Maynard Keynes, spring 1906.
- ⁶ Recent scholarship has suggested that the human and animal figures in these etchings were added by Piranesi's son, Giovanni, who had escaped his fathers debtors by fleeing to Paris with the engravings. I am indebted to Stephen Astley, the Drawings Curator of Sir John Soane's Museum, Lincoln Inn's Field's, for his discussion of these etchings, which are housed in the museum's Picture Gallery.

⁷ See Sigmund Freud, “Civilization and Its Discontents” (1930), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud* 21, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), 59-148. In particular, during his discussion of the process of “mental preservation” Freud noted, “Since we overcame the error of supposed that the forgetting we are familiar with signified a destruction of the memory-trace . . . we have been inclined to take the opposite view, that in mental life nothing which has been formed can perish—that everything is somehow preserved and that in suitable circumstances . . . it can once more be brought back to light.” Freud, “Civilization and Its Discontents,” 75-8.

⁸ On the Freudian dynamic of forgetting see Adam Phillips, “Freud and the Uses of Forgetting,” in *On Flirtation: Psychoanalytical Essays on the Uncommitted Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 22-38.

⁹ Henry W. Canon had charged Mary Berenson with finding “a young student, a thoughtful, clean mind” to serve as his son’s traveling companion. Canon, letter to Mary Berenson, 1 March 1906. While Scott was undoubtedly considerate, the content of many of those thoughts was not exactly what Canon had envisaged. In addition to providing the luxury he craved at another’s expense, the tour also afforded Scott with the opportunity of gaining the counsel of Algar Thorold, a friend of Bernard Berenson, who had successfully maintained a bifurcated life as both a dutiful family man and an openly frank homosexual. (Like many prominent English homosexuals at the turn of the century, Scott was justifiably concerned with the possibility of being prosecuted for “immoral activities.”)

¹⁰ Karl Baedeker, *Deutschland* (Coblenz: Baedeker, 1827). As cited in Edward Mendelson, “Baedeker’s Universe,” in *Yale Review* 74 (1985): 386-403.

¹¹ Karl Baedeker was heavily indebted to the precedents of the English publisher John Murray in the formation of his guides. Baedeker maintained a cordial correspondence with Murray and adopted his system of numbered routes, description of each guide as a “handbook,” and colored leather covers, which Baedeker issued with his instantly recognizable blood-red covers. As Mendelson notes, the relationship between the publishers only soured after Karl Baedeker’s death when Ernst Baedeker ignored his father’s agreement with Murray and published the Baedeker *Guide to London* (1878). Mendelson, “Baedeker’s Universe,” 392.

¹² See, in particular, Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Kunst der Renaissance in Italien* (1898, trans. “The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy”), and Johann Winckelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1755, trans. “Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture”), *Anmerkungen über die Baukunst der Alten* (1762, trans. “Remarks on the Architecture of the Ancients”), and *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1764, trans. “History of Ancient Art”).

¹³ This exactitude is borne out in a famous anecdote. While visiting Milan Cathedral in 1847, Baedeker was observed bending down seen every few steps as he climbed the staircase to view the buildings decorative carvings. In actuality, he was setting a pea at twenty-step intervals to ensure his readers were given the correct number of the stairs required to reach the rooftop. (The strategic value of Baedeker’s guides was later illustrated when the German Luftwaffe bombed five picturesque English towns that had been chosen using the *Guide to Britain*.)

¹⁴ Karl Baedeker, *Italy: I. Southern Italy and Sicily: With Excursions to Sardinia, Malta, and Corfu* (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1903), 199-200.

¹⁵ Stendhal’s reaction was so pronounced that contemporary visitors who have a similar reaction are still said to suffer “stendhalismo.” Stendhal [pseud. Marie-Henri Beyle], *The Private Diaries of Stendhal (Marie-Henri Beyle)*, trans. and ed. Robert Sage (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1954). As the writer’s diary further suggests, the unending stream of attendants and guides who required tipping equally overwhelmed him. See also, Stendhal, *Rome, Naples et Florence, en 1817* (Paris, Delaunay, Pelicier, 1817); trans. *Rome, Naples, and Florence in 1817: Sketches of the present state of society, manners, arts, literature, in these celebrated cities* (London: H. Colburn, 1818).

¹⁶ Forster had also parodied the literary confusion of the “Baedeker parentheses” — in which the guide sought to combine poetic suggestion and practical counsel — in his earlier *Where Angels Fear to*

Tread (1905; reprint, London: Bantam, 2004). In this work one of the characters admits he could never read the aside, “The view from the Rocca (small gratuity) is best at sunset,” without being overcome by emotion. Forster, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, 32. Humor aside, Forster’s parody perfectly illustrates the uneasy convergence of the poetic and pragmatic in every guidebook. A paradox he further explored in his own travel writings: *Alexandria: A History and Guide* (1922); *Pharos and Pharillon (A Novelist’s Sketchbook of Alexandria Through the Ages)* (1923); and *The Hill of Devi* (1953).

¹⁷ Marcel Proust, *Swann’s Way*, vol. 1. of *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, revised D.J. Enright (1913; reprint, London: Vintage, 2002), 469-1.

¹⁸ Proust, *Swann’s Way*, 510.

¹⁹ As Bernard Berenson’s Private Secretary later recalled, “Everyone was interested in Proust” and the volumes of his *Search* were eagerly were circulated among the denizens of I Tatti. Nicky Mariano, *Forty Years With Berenson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 104.

²⁰ Geoffrey Scott, letter to John Scott, 29 June 1912. Scott was describing the sensation of traveling to Rome with his client, Charles Augustus Strong, in a powerful 100-horse power automobile. Scott was advising Strong on his attempts to purchase land from a Roman convent. A voyage that was ultimately unsuccessful as, in spite of Scott’s assurances to the contrary, the Mother Superior remained concerned the land would fall into the hands of Freemasons. Strong later purchased a plot opposite the Villa Medici, Fiesole, Florence, on which Scott and Cecil Pinsent would eventually construct his Villa Le Balze (1911).

²¹ Ironically Burckhardt was a reluctant rail traveler who — like his contemporary Karl Baedeker — did not believe that the public’s ability to visit various museums or works equated to an increased understanding of art. “People of today,” he noted in 1873, “sacrifice, if they must, all their own particular literature and culture in favor of ‘night-through trains.’” (Burckhardt considered the modern era as “an age of express trains.”) See Peter Gay, introduction to Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. SGC Middlemore (1878; reprint, New York: Modern Library, 2002), xiv. As Gay also noted, in spite of the wide-ranging scope of his study, Burckhardt “traveled chiefly in his mind.”

²² In 1909 Scott turned down an offer from the publisher John Murray to write a series of six biographic portraits of famous artists on the basis that it would be “a sort of decocted popular biography interspersed with general reflections.” Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 9 February 1909. As he wrote of another frustrated writer in his literary *Portrait of Zélide*, “In the projects that really interested his ambition he wanted encouragement and praise: the cold douche of criticism he could administer himself.” Geoffrey Scott, *Portrait of Zélide* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1925), 127.

²³ Wharton considered Scott “a traveller after my own heart,” Edith Wharton, letter to Mary Berenson, 20 May 1913. The pair’s shared interests “led to many delightful pilgrimages,” she later recalled, and “whenever I went to stay with the Berensons we used to go off on architectural excursions and garden hunts, to Sienna, Montepulciano and all through Tuscany and Umbria . . . There are people who, wherever they go, attract droll adventures, little lurking picturesquenesses of incident. Geoffrey was one of them, and all our excursions were spangled with laughter.” Edith Wharton, *A Backward Glance* (1933, reprint; New York: Touchstone, 1998), 328. On Wharton’s travel habits see Hermione Lee, *Edith Wharton* (London: Chatto, 2007) and Ruth Bernard Yeazell, “Self-Made Man,” review of *Edith Wharton* by Hermione Lee, *London Review of Books* (5 April 2007): 15-8.

²⁴ In particular, see Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).

²⁵ Geoffrey Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* (London: Constable, 1914), vii. As his works subtitle further suggests, Scott believed that the appropriate way to address opinion and nurture architectural taste was to enact a shift from “a priori aesthetics” to a “history of taste,” and consequently from that history on to an overarching “history of ideas.”

²⁶ W.R. Lethaby, “Architecture and Modern Life” (1917). Address to the Royal Institute of Architects as published in *Form in Civilization: Collected papers on Art and Labour* (1922; reprint, London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 82.

- ²⁷ Geoffrey Scott, *The National Character of English Architecture: The Chancellor's Essay* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1908), 7. Uniquely among the visual arts, Scott argued that architecture was best able to evidence this character because its “focus of preferences, of instincts and national capacities” were only capable of assuming “a visible form” in architecture.
- ²⁸ Scott, *National Character*, 2. Scott would subsequently interpret this discontinuity with a genealogical reading of ‘evolutionary progress’ in architecture.
- ²⁹ Scott, *National Character*, 34-6.
- ³⁰ Reginald Blomfield, *The Touchstone of Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), 84-5. In actuality, it can be suggested that his predecessor George Gilbert Scott (1811-78) came closest to offering a convincing argument that High Victorian Gothic was a true ‘native’ style when he clad his Midland Grand Hotel at St. Pancras Station (1868-74) with twelve different types of red brick, each of which registered a subtly different tone when doused by rain. With such a choice of materials, the architect not only acknowledged the national obsession with the weather, but also actively celebrated it as only an Englishman could.
- ³¹ Scott, *National Character*, 44.
- ³² Ruskin, “The Lamp of Memory,” 178, 178, 178–79.
- ³³ Ruskin, “Aphorism 30,” *Seven Lamps*, 186-7.
- ³⁴ Henry James, “Chester,” *Cathedrals and Castles* (London: Penguin, 2009), 1–2. Originally published in *Portraits of Places* (London: MacMillan, 1883). James believed English architecture was a physical manifestation of social convention, for “Nowhere else does the degree of one’s respectability involve such solid consequences.”
- ³⁵ Scott, *National Character*, 4-5. Rather, Scott suggests that science is fundamentally unable to judge art, but is only really useful for “setting up a more exact standard of connoisseurship.”
- ³⁶ Scott, *National Character*, 2.
- ³⁷ Scott, *National Character*, 9.
- ³⁸ Although Scott accepted this intricacy was structurally redundant, in works such as his beloved King’s College Chapel at Cambridge (completed 1547), he excused such superfluity because it engendered a symbolism that was indefatigable, with “all its detail [unable to] be grasped by the unconscious.” Scott, *National Character*, 29.
- ³⁹ Scott, *National Character*, 33.
- ⁴⁰ Scott, *National Character*, 31.
- ⁴¹ Scott, *National Character*, 33.
- ⁴² Ruskin, “The Lamp of Memory,” 178. “[A]nd the latter in some sort includes the former, and is mightier in its reality: it is well to have, not only what men have thought and felt, but what their hands have handled, and their strength wrought, and their eyes beheld, all of the days of their life.”
- ⁴³ Scott, *National Character*, 31. Scott further suggests the least authentic examples of a keep — the fashionable “ruins” that were erected across eighteenth-century country estates (“within sight of Doric temple and bowling green”) — constitute the “necessary dignity” of English architecture, providing “the effete, if aristocratic, descendant” of the manor houses from which they were viewed. “This was a notable instance,” he notes, “of the continuity which, beneath all their changes, underlay English architecture and English politics.”
- ⁴⁴ Scott, *National Character*, 6.
- ⁴⁵ Scott, *National Character*, 37.
- ⁴⁶ Scott, *National Character*, 5-6. Ironically, Scott’s formulation of the consistency of these preferences, which alludes to a sense of one expression logically following the other, adheres to a genealogical reading that he would later term the ‘biological fallacy.’
- ⁴⁷ Reginald Blomfield, *Architecture of the Renaissance in England* (London: Bell & Sons, 1897), 399-400. Scott’s argument on temperament is heavily indebted to Reginald Blomfield, “Design and Temperament,” *The Mistress Art* (London: E. Arnold. 1908), 41-78.
- ⁴⁸ WR Lethaby, “Town Tidying” (1916). Address to the Arts and Crafts Society as published in Lethaby, *Form in Civilization*, 17. Lethaby’s vernacular parochialism reflected a contemporaneous

idolization of a sense of ‘Englishness,’ which was closer to a mythical conception of Albion than it was to the industrial realities of late-Victorian Britain. In this way, his own “dreaminess” illustrated the reemergence of ‘Albionism’ during the late-1890s. This trend was first sparked by an increased interest in the works of the romantic William Blake (1757-1827) during the early years of the century, and rekindled by Alfred Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King* (1859-84), which combined the myths of Albion with a moralistic conception of Arthurian chivalry. (Such a romantic conceit had been so popular during the Victorian period that Prince Albert, Queen Victoria’s consort, famously commissioned a series of murals that celebrated the mythic Court of King Arthur in the fire-damaged House of Lords.)

⁴⁹ Reginald Blomfield, “W.R. Lethaby, An Impression and a Tribute,” in *RIBA Journal* 39, no. 8 (1932): 7. Horsley, Lethaby, Newton, Macartney, and Prior all worked in the office of Norman Shaw before founding the Art-Worker’s Guild in 1884. During the following year, Lewis Day, Henry Holiday (1839-1927), Basil Champneys (1842-1935), Beresford Pite (1861–1934), and C.F.A. Voysey (1857-1941), joined the Guild. See John Brandon-Jones, “W.R. Lethaby and the Art-Workers Guild,” in *W.R. Lethaby, 1857-1931: Architecture, Design and Education*, eds. Sylvia Backemeyer and Theresa Gronberg (London: Lund Humphries, 1984), 24-31.

⁵⁰ Hermann Muthesisus, as cited in Nikolaus Pevsner, *Academies of Art, Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 265. The original quotation is from Muthesisus, *Die Krisis im Kunstgewerbe* (1901), 63. On Lethaby’s pedagogical philosophies see: Theresa Gronberg, “William Richard Lethaby and the Central School of Arts and Crafts,” in *W.R. Lethaby*, 14-23, and John Kay, “W.R. Lethaby and the Central School,” in *W.R. Lethaby*, 45-52.

⁵¹ Blomfield, “Tribute,” 3.

⁵² Blomfield, “Tribute,” 6.

⁵³ Blomfield, “Tribute,” 6.

⁵⁴ Blomfield, “Tribute,” 4.

⁵⁵ Blomfield’s “Tribute” was the first of several commemorative addresses that all refer to Lethaby’s unflinching naïve sense of optimism.

⁵⁶ W.R. Lethaby, *LCC Technical Education Gazette* 2 no. 23 (Sept, 1896): 159-160. As he noted, “The special business of the [Central School of Arts and Crafts] will be the industrial application of decorative design, and students will be expected to concentrate their studies on the several branches of the industries in which they are engaged.”

⁵⁷ Halsey Ricardo, as cited in E. Wood, “The School of the Arts and Crafts,” *Architectural Review* 2 (1897): 242.

⁵⁸ W.R. Lethaby, “Art and Workmanship,” in *Form and Civilisation*, 209. Lethaby’s use of culinary metaphors illustrate the influence of William Morris, who often remarked how much he valued cooking and used it as an analogy for design.

⁵⁹ The original letter to *The Times* is reproduced in *Architecture: a profession, or an art?*, eds. Richard Norman Shaw and Thomas Graham Jackson (London: John Murray, 1892). The vast majority of architects associated with the gothic revival, including William Butterfield (1814-1900), Arthur Heygate Macmurdo (1851-1942), John Dando Sedding (1838-91), and Ashton Webb (1849-1930), signed the letter. Although he cosigned this letter and the volume also includes his contribution, “The Builder’s Art and the Craftsman,” Lethaby later reversed his insistence that architecture was an art and coauthored RIBA’s first national syllabus in 1907.

⁶⁰ Blomfield, “Tribute,” 4. In particular, Blomfield is referring to Morris’s utopian fantasy, *News from Nowhere* (1890; reprint, Bideford: Green, 1990). On this work see also R.J. Hildebrand, “News from Nowhere and William Morris’s Aesthetics of Unreflectiveness: Pleasurable Habits,” *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 54 no. 1 (2011): 3-27.

⁶¹ Lethaby, *Form in Civilisation*, 12.

⁶² Blomfield, “Tribute,” 9.

⁶³ W.R. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism, and Myth* (London: Percival, 1891; reprint, London: Architectural Press, 1975), 32. Given the crude poetry of this vision, it is unsurprising that so many

critics pointed out the architect's uneasy convergence of cold mathematical formula and utilitarian endeavor with a world of tennis flannels and garden teas.

⁶⁴ Lethaby's other completed projects are: Avon Tyrell House, Christchurch, Hampshire (1892); The Hurst, Four Oaks, Birmingham (1894; since demolished); Eagle Insurance Offices, central Birmingham (1900); Melsetter House, Gatehouse, Lodge and Chapel, Hoy, Orkney (1900); and High Coxlease House, Lyndhurst, Hampshire (1902).

⁶⁵ Lethaby considered Webb — whose “austere simplicity and dignified reticence” was reflected in both his personality and architecture — to be the ideal of what an architect should be. See Blomfield, “A Tribute,” 4.

⁶⁶ Burne-Jones's designs for the *Angeli Laudantes* and accompanying *Angeli Ministrantes* were originally conceived for a pair of stained-glass lancet windows in the South Choir at Salisbury Cathedral and later reworked in both glass and textile form in several different applications. The woven tapestry versions of these designs were purchased by the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1898. On the history of these tapestries see Linda Parry, *William Morris Textiles* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1983), 112, 186.

⁶⁷ Blomfield specifically discusses Morris's works in “The Craftsman,” in *The Mistress Art*, 93.

⁶⁸ Randell Wells, as cited in “W.R. Lethaby,” 78. In this way, the convergence of the designer and craftsman that Lethaby sought was most easily managed on a smaller more immediate scale, such the furniture pieces he designed and built for Kenton & Co during the early-1890s.

⁶⁹ W.R. Lethaby, as cited in *Friends of a Lifetime—Letters to Sydney Carlyle Cockerell*, ed. Viola Meynell (London: Hart-Davis, 1956), 204.

⁷⁰ Charles H. Reilly, *Representative British Architects of the Present Day* (London: Batsford, 1931), 57-8. On the contemporaneous influence of Blomfield, see also Robert Macleod, *Style and Society: Architectural Ideology in Britain, 1835-1914* (London: RIBA Publications, 1971), 97-101.

⁷¹ Blomfield, *Mistress Art*, i.

⁷² Blomfield, *Mistress Art*, 10.

⁷³ Blomfield, *Mistress Art*, ii.

⁷⁴ Blomfield, *Mistress Art*, 26.

⁷⁵ Blomfield, *Mistress Art*, 16-17. Blomfield would later similarly critique Scott's conception of his renaissance architecture in Reginald Blomfield, “Architecture of Humanism,” in *Modernismus* (London: MacMillan, 1934), 16-32.

⁷⁶ Blomfield, *Mistress Art*, 7. Blomfield specifically objected to the dream-like sensuality of pre-raphaelite painting, in which the softness of line, abundance of detail, intense colors, and complicated composition he considered both a moral affront and an undue influence on architecture.

⁷⁷ “Architecture stands on a rather different footing from the other arts, in that its development is largely determined by considerations external to the art itself.” Blomfield, *Mistress Art*, 33.

⁷⁸ Blomfield, *Mistress Art*, 11.

⁷⁹ Blomfield, *Mistress Art*, 42, 46. As he further argues, it is the specificity of an architectural appeal to the “deeper roots in human nature” that allows it to “justify its place among the arts.”

⁸⁰ Blomfield, *Mistress Art*, 43.

⁸¹ Blomfield, *Mistress Art*, 156.

⁸² Blomfield, *Mistress Art*, 156-7.

⁸³ Webb and Thornycroft were both notable figures within the Imperial War Graves Commission. In recognition of his achievements, Webb served as the President of the Royal Institute of British Architects (1902-4) and acting-President of the Royal Academy (1919-24). He also received the RIBA Gold Medal for Architecture in 1905 and was the inaugural recipient of the American Institute of Architects Gold Medal in 1907. Thornycroft's initial success followed the award of the 1876 RA Gold Medal for his sculpture, *Warrior Bearing a Wounded Youth*. His reanimation of classical sculpture during the late-1870s to early-1880s was termed ‘New Sculpture’ by his friend, the critic Edmund Gosse. Ironically, the poet Siegfried Sassoon was Thornycroft's nephew. See Terry Friedman ed., *The Alliance*

of *Sculpture and Architecture* (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 1993), and Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

⁸⁴ Blomfield only designed the ceremonial entrance to the Tyne Cot cemetery, which was designed by Herbert Baker (1862-1946) who was awarded a Knighthood and the 1927 RIBA Gold Medal for Architecture for the project. Despite the significance of the Menin Gate commission to his career, Blomfield is better known for his remodeling of London's Regent Street, which was originally laid out by the Regency architect John Nash, and his design for the National Electricity Grid pylon that have a ubiquitous presence throughout Britain.

⁸⁵ W.R. Lethaby, "Memorials of the Fallen: Service or Sacrifice?," *Hibbert Journal* (1919), n.p. Reprinted in *Form and Civilisation*, 46-52. The intention of this article is neatly summarized in its closing line, "The people asked for houses and we have given them [memorial] stones."

⁸⁶ Scott, *National Character*, 16.

⁸⁷ Scott, *National Character*, 32.

⁸⁸ Scott, *National Character*, 39-40. For Scott, Wren's adoption of an Italian 'style' was inherently perverted as it was — as he considered it — 'climatically inappropriate.' He further found the subsequent works of such architects as Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736) and John Vanbrugh (1663-1726) to be an aberration of Wren's example.

⁸⁹ The critical importance of the National Trust lay in their expansion of the remit of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, which was focused on buildings, to include the larger urban, rural, and socio-political environment. For a comprehensive history of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty see Merlin Waterson, *The National Trust: The First Hundred Years* (London: BBC Books, 1994).

⁹⁰ Scott, *National Character*, 45.

⁹¹ C. Hussey, "The Making of *Country Life*," in *Country Life* 136 (1967): 55. See also David Watkin, *The Rise of Architectural History* (London: Architectural Press, 1980), 104.

⁹² *Country Life Illustrated 1* (1897): 22.

⁹³ *Country Life Illustrated 1*: 20. This caption reads: "Among all the countries of Great Britain there are few shires more famous for princely mansions and quaint old houses of the long-lineaged English gentlemen than that of Warwick. Standing among great elms, in which for generations countless rooks have accustomed to make their homes, they lift their many-windowed walls and battlements over old-world gardens to end in high gables and twisted chimneys where doves flutter and coo in the sunshine. Mailed knights have dwelt within their walls, fugitives in troubled times have fled to their secret chambers, cavaliers have knocked at their oaken doors, and the merest flight of fancy almost enables one to hear the laughter of gentlemen with clouded canes and dames in powder and patrols rising from the alleys of their well-hidden gardens.

About seven miles from Warwick, and within a short mile of the high road thence to Birmingham, all amid the silent woods, its grey walls and timber gables reflected in a lake-like moat, stands the old hall of Baddesley Clinton. Its aspect carries you back hundreds of years. You will readily, if so disposed, conjure up an old-world history when you look at it, and if you have any antiquarian interest — and who has not at least a twinge of it? — you can easily forget for the first time that you are living in the twentieth century."

⁹⁴ Geoffrey Scott, "The Basilica of St Peter's," *Country Life* 60 (1926): 1000-6, and *Country Life* 61 (1927): 16-23.

⁹⁵ Scott, *National Character*, 44. Scott is quoting from William Morris, "The Decorative Arts: Their Relation to Modern Life and Progress" (London: Ellis and White, 1878).

⁹⁶ John Ruskin, *Poetry of Architecture; or the Architecture of the Nations of Europe considered in its Association with Natural Scenery and National Character* (1837; reprint, Orpington: G. Allen, 1892), 26.

⁹⁷ Scott also noted that the book "lacks fervour, through fervent passages always succumb on revision. But I may perhaps get in a little more conviction which will come with a better subject." Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 4 March 1908.

⁹⁸ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 1 May 1908.

⁹⁹ See Vernon Lee, *The Beautiful: An Introduction to Psychological Aesthetics* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 14–21.

Endnotes to Chapter Two — ‘A Beautiful Leisure’: Flirting with Taste in *The Architecture of Humanism*

¹ E.M. Forster, *A Room with a View* (1908; reprint, London: Penguin, 2002), 110.

² Scott’s aestheticism was evident from his adolescence, when — during a school debate about Rudyard Kipling’s works — he sought to argue how “the present age is not characterized by good taste.” *The Meteor* (3 December 1901), n.p. One of his fellow students later noted how “His wit [was] astonishingly mature for a boy . . . he was the only person I met while at school who seemed to care seriously about any kind of beauty except that of words.” J.H. Simpson, *A Schoolmaster’s Harvest* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), 56-9. On this history see Richard Maxwell Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott and the Berenson Circle: Literary and Aesthetic Life in the Early 20th Century* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 13-4.

³ Meyer Schapiro, “Mr Berenson’s Values” (1961) in *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society* (New York: George Braziller, 1994), 209. Similarly the journalist Meryle Secrest also noted, “What caught the popular imagination, and made Berenson a myth in his own lifetime, was the image of the aesthete and scholar, disinterestingly pursuing excellence in a world of chaos, dedicating a lifetime to Beauty and Art.” Meryle Secrest, *Being Bernard Berenson: A Biography* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), 3.

⁴ Mary Berenson, letter to Senda Berenson, 8 June 1926. She had previously noted that this arduousness was largely a conceit as she acknowledged, “I am hard at work, but not too hard.” Mary Berenson, letter to Hannah Whittall Smith, 4 September 1891.

⁵ Vernon Lee, *The Beautiful: An Introduction to Psychological Aesthetics* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 138. Conversely, Lee’s own romanticism is evident in her travel narratives *Renaissance Fancies and Studies* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1895) and *Genius Loci: Notes on Place* (London: Grant Richards, 1899).

⁶ Maurice Baring, *Lost Lectures; Or, the Fruits of Experience* (London: Kennikat Press, 1932), 69. As Lee noted of her aesthetic studies, “I go constantly to the Galleries [to] compare pictures one with another and more the impression that different pictures make on me — I study the arrangement of planes and values, the placing of the figures in real space, the pressure of buildings on the ground, the grouping of figures, the balance and movement of lines, the living qualities, light, shade, and colour . . . I simply feel in unity with myself on entirely aesthetic lines — as if I had found something satisfying after long wanderings and that it brought me increasing vitality.” Vernon Lee, letter to Maya Mackenzie, 14 May 1905. As cited in Burdett Gardner, *The Lesbian Imagination (Victorian Style): A Psychological Study of “Vernon Lee”* (New York: Garland, 1987), 302-3. Moreover, Lee’s pointedly diligent aestheticism was often noted. “Vernon Lee is English of the English,” Bernard Shaw noted, “I take off my hat to the old guard of Victorian cosmopolitan intellectualism, and salute her the noblest Briton of them all.” Bernard Shaw, rev. of Vernon Lee, “*Satan the Waster*,” *The Nation* (September 1920), n.p. As cited in Peter Gunn, *Vernon Lee: Violet Paget* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 3.

⁷ Forster, *Room with a View*, 110.

⁸ Berenson’s offense at this politest of rejections was typical. When the art historian Frederick Hartt, who had studied with Schapiro at Columbia University, visited I Tatti during the late-1930s he was dumbstruck by the ferocity of Berenson’s attack on his former advisor. “I leaned later that this was standard operating procedure,” Hartt recalled, “This was what he would subject a neophyte to when he came into the presence.” Meryle Secrest, *Being Bernard Berenson: A Biography* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), 367. In response, Schapiro took offence at the connoisseur’s self-declared Anglo-Saxon heritage, quipping that Berenson’s “ancestors were the first Rabbis on the Mayflower.” Schapiro, as cited in Secrest, *Being Bernard Berenson*, 395.

⁹ This intellectual failure is neatly described in Berenson's response to Schapiro's question regarding why he never revised the *Florentine Painters of the Renaissance* (1896). "My boy, that book is a literary classic," he quipped, "I have no right to tamper with it." It is precisely this reluctance to 'tamper' that mitigated any further intellectual development, moreover, with Berenson's "thinking on art shows little advancement after the brilliant essays and books written in the 1890s," as Schapiro concludes. "On theoretical matters, he was already behind the others after 1900," with certain phrases such as 'ideated sensations,' 'life enhancements,' and 'tactical values' failing to evolve in meaning and becoming "personal clichés." Shapiro, "Mr Berenson's Values," 214, 212. Schapiro further objected to Berenson's dismissal of modern art, moreover, rightly noting that his former "eyed it most often with hostility for contradicting much of his own thinking and being." Schapiro, "Mr Berenson's Values," 220.

¹⁰ Schapiro, "Mr Berenson's Values," 223. In this way, Berenson's definition of 'culture' reflected the continued influence Walter Pater, who argued that the 'enjoyment' of one conception of aesthetic beauty simply leads on to the next. A conceit that Schapiro notes fails to appreciate the complexities of human existence and, as a result, tends toward an empty and sterile conception of that existence.

¹¹ Schapiro, "Mr Berenson's Values," 222.

¹² Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* ed. Martha Banta (1899; reprint Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007), 3, 16.

¹³ Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 20, 33.

¹⁴ Veblen further considered laziness a subversion of the teleological progress of human evolution. The influence of the Social-Darwinist theories of Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner on Veblen's thought is obvious and he persistently employed such formulations as the human struggle for existence, the necessity of selective adaptability, and the forcefulness of determinant expression. For example, in his framing of the social conservatism inherent within the institutions of the leisure class Veblen begins, "The life of man in society, just like the life of other species, is a struggle for existence, and therefore is a process of selective adaption. The evolution of social structure has been a process of natural selection of institutions [relying on] the fittest habits of thought and a process of enforced adaptation of individuals to an environment which has progressively changed." Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 125.

¹⁵ Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 28, 29, 29.

¹⁶ Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 51, 50.

¹⁷ Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 53, 67. Elsewhere, Veblen laments the "unfortunate" everyday use of the term 'waste,' which he notes is generally depreciatory. By contrast, he argues waste constitutes a form of non-productive over-expenditure of resources and, as such, should be considered as legitimate as any other form of over-expenditure. In these terms, being wasteful is being productive. Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 75.

¹⁸ Veblen explains this transition from the utilitarian to the beautiful by using the example of two silver serving spoons: one that is hand-wrought, which "gratifies our taste, or sense of the beautiful"; and a machine-stamped example, which "has no useful office beyond a brute efficiency" of use. (Later, he references Ruskin and Morris to further argue the "visible imperfections of the hand-wrought good" carries the traces of the craftsman who made it, ensuring it is considered more beautiful than a machine-made equivalent.) This example is "typical," moreover, in that it illustrates how the judgment of taste is not concerned with the 'truthfulness' of the object (in terms of its usability), but rather its symbolic representation of value (which is illustrative of its non-usability). In this way, Veblen notes how the leisure class 'dictates' taste through a "largely unconscious" process of selection and excessive consumption, bringing about the "ruling taste" (as Siegfried Giedion would subsequently term it). Veblen, 87, 107. On this point see also Siegfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948); and Joanna Merwood-Salisbury, "On Luxury," *AA Files* 58 (2009): 20-7.

¹⁹ Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 107, 127, 137. The retrospective nature of his argument was roundly criticized, most notably by Theodor Adorno who criticized Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class*

on the basis of his nostalgic desire to return to a past golden age, anti-intellectualism, and reactionary inability to recognize the possibility of future social change. Theodor W. Adorno, "Veblen's Attack on Culture," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 9, no. 3 (1941): 389-413. On Veblen, see also John Dos Passos, *The Bitter Drink: A Biography of Thorstein Veblen* (San Francisco: Sherwood and Katharine Grover, 1939).

Interestingly, Veblen frames the leisure class's aversion to social change in terms of unwanted energy expenditure. "Any innovation calls for a greater expenditure of nervous energy in making the necessary adjustment . . . The process of readjustment of the accepted theory of life involves a degree of mental effort — a more or less protracted and laborious effort to find and keep one's bearings under the altered circumstances. This process requires a certain expenditure of energy, and so presumes, for its successful accomplishment, some surplus of energy that is beyond that absorbed in the daily struggle for survival." Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 134-5.

²⁰ In particular, Berenson engaged in a long-lasting feud with the critic Roger Fry, who he felt had failed to give due credit to the influence of his ideas. Their quarrel remained unresolved and contributed to his hatred of the English art-world, which was further exacerbated with the marriage of his stepdaughter Karin Costelloe to the psychoanalyst Adrian Stephen, the brother of Virginia Woolf. (Woolf herself was typically dismissive of her sister-in-law, noting how she "reminded me of one of our lost dogs.") See Barbara Strachey, *Remarkable Relations* (London: Gollancz, 1980), 208, 270, 284.

²¹ Despite this appendage, Schapiro notes how "there are no important traces of Riegl's ideas in his own writings." Schapiro, "Mr Berenson's Values," 213.

²² Elizabeth Hardwick, "Living in Italy: Reflections on Bernard Berenson," in *A View of My own Life* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux, 1962), 203-14. During 1951 Hardwick traveled through Italy with her husband, the poet Robert Lowell. "When we mailed a letter of introduction to him, [Berenson] accepted it as a bizarre formality because, of course, he who saw everyone was willing and happy to see yet another. One was never tempted to think it was ennui or triviality that produced this state of addiction; the absorbing inclination seemed to be a simple fear of missing someone, almost as if these countless visitors and travellers had a secret the exile pitifully wished to discover."

²³ Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott*, 5.

²⁴ Mary Berenson, unpublished *Life of Ray Strachey*, n.p. As cited in Strachey, *Remarkable Relations*, 235.

²⁵ Scott eventually pursued a romantic liaison with Karin Costelloe, who — he noted — "inspired [in him] a passion he'd never been able to express before." Costelloe was decidedly less enthused by his advances, however, which she rightly interpreted as a form of "perverted misogyny" in which he was drawn to her more masculine qualities. Mary Berenson, letter to Bernard Berenson, 25 March, 1912.

²⁶ Mary Berenson, letter to Hannah Whittall Smith, 23 March 1906.

²⁷ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Duncan Grant, 24 March 1906.

²⁸ Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott*, 6. In addition to recording the churches, art galleries, and landscapes they visited, Keynes's letters also emphasize Mary Berenson's uncontrollable appetite and Scott's self-consciously expressive aestheticism. By contrast to Scott, Keynes was relatively open about his homosexuality. In addition to Strachey, he was also involved with the painter Duncan Grant and kept a diary from 1901-15 that dutifully listed his homosexual liaisons, indexing his partners by initials (GLS for Strachey, for example), description ("Lift boy of Vauxhall, 1911"), and sexual activity (cryptically categorized by C, A, and W). See Evan Zimroth, "The Sex Diaries of John Maynard Keynes," *The Economist* (28 January 2008): n.p. Keynes's diaries are included as the appendix, "A Key for the Prurient," in Donald Edward Moggridge, *Maynard Keynes: An Economist's Biography* (London: Routledge, 1992).

²⁹ Mary Berenson destroyed the original letter, the contents of which are described in Scott's explanation of the ensuing controversy to Keynes, winter 1907.

³⁰ John Maynard Keynes, letter to Strachey, 2 April 1906.

³¹ Lytton Strachey, letter to Duncan Grant, 18 June 1907.

- ³² Mary Berenson, letter to Bernard Berenson, 13 April 1909. “Geoffrey’s [homosexuality] was more serious,” she had previously noted, “I took the line that such affections might well be beautiful and inspiring in youth, but become dotty and disgusting if men pursued them into middle age.” Mary Berenson, letter to Berenson, 5 August 1906.
- ³³ Mary Berenson, letters to Alys Russell, 25 and 28 April 1930.
- ³⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978), 23.
- ³⁵ Strachey, *Remarkable Relations*, 172. As Berenson described them, these grievances included: how it “stole time” from the true appreciation of beauty; forced him to confront his lack of discipline in arranging arguments; and above all denied his nature as a talker, who best appreciated an audience of the “adolescent-minded, such as society women, who would encourage and respond without opposing the flow of [his] ideas.”
- ³⁶ Mary Berenson, letter to her family, 27 December 1914.
- ³⁷ Mary Berenson, letter to Alys Russell, 26 May 1930.
- ³⁸ See Strachey, 170-1. Mary Berenson had initially hoped Berenson’s tutelage would allow her to be recognized as “one of the most important people in my own profession, as well as one of the most interesting women to cultured people.” Mary Berenson, letter to Whittall Smith, 14 September 1894.
- ³⁹ Scott’s “philosophy” and Mary Berenson’s response to are both outlined in her letter to Ray Costelloe, 4 October 1906.
- ⁴⁰ Mary Berenson, dairy entry, 17 March 1928.
- ⁴¹ Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, mid-April 1914. This letter specifically responds to her suggestion that he modify the manuscript of *Architecture* prior to publication in order to make it more readable.
- ⁴² Mary Berenson, letter to Keynes, 16 April 1908.
- ⁴³ Strachey, *Remarkable Relations*, 231.
- ⁴⁴ On the Berensons’s fractious marriage see Strachey, *Remarkable Relations*, 76-103.
- ⁴⁵ Mary Costelloe [Berenson] first met Berenson in 1890 and was immediately overcome with the “young genius.” As her mother, Hannah Whittall Smith, noted, Berenson was “considered by those who know him to be one of the rising men of the world. He has devoted himself especially to pictures, and seems to know *everything* about *every* picture that has ever been painted.” Hannah Whittall Smith, as cited in Strachey, *Remarkable Relations*, 110-111.
- ⁴⁶ See Mary-Ann Calo, *Bernard Berenson and the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 46-55.
- ⁴⁷ Mary Berenson, letter to Ray and Karin Costelloe, 30 March 1897.
- ⁴⁸ Jephson was a friend of the American socialite Isabella Gardner, who was one of Berenson’s most important clients. “Mr Mounteney Jephson came to tea,” Mary Berenson gushed. “He told us about his exploration with Stanley, a whole year in the jungle, lost, 5 months in prison under sentence of death with Emin Pasha. It was fascinating to hear him talk.” Mary Berenson, diary entry, 19 November 1900.
- ⁴⁹ As Alys Russell stated, “thee may fall in love with [Mary Berenson] all thee likes, but I *shall* be mad if she converts thee to Nietzsche.” Alys Russell, letter to Bertrand Russell. As cited in Strachey, *Remarkable Relations*, 142. Despite her protestations, however, Mary Berenson kept Russell abreast of her correspondence with Alys Russell, ridiculing her sister’s intellectual and romantic naivety. On his part, Russell was deeply skeptical of the opulence surrounding I Tatti. “Returned yesterday from Florence,” he noted in 1903. “The atmosphere of art and luxury was rather trying to me, and at first I couldn’t understand why I liked B.B., but gradually got to like to him again.” Eventually he came to despise the entire family, noting how “[c]uriosity with them is a raging passion — what with others lust or drunkenness or morphia might be. They will do anything to satisfy their curiosity.” Strachey, *Remarkable Relations*, 213, 263.
- ⁵⁰ Strachey, *Remarkable Relations*, 178.
- ⁵¹ Scott, *Portrait*, 152. On the complex dynamics of epistolary correspondence see Mary A Favret, *Romantic Correspondence: Women, Politics and the Fiction of Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 1993) and Elizabeth MacArthur, *Extravagant Narratives: Closure and Dynamics in the Epistolary Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

⁵² Sigmund Freud, “Thoughts for the Times on War and Death” (1915), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 14, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974), 273-302.

⁵³ Scott wrote an estimated 200 love letters to Sackville-West. Their relationship is discussed in: David Cannadine, “Portrait of More Than a Marriage: Harold Nicolson and Vita Sackville-West Revisited,” *Aspects of Aristocracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994): 210-42; Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott*, 228-9; Victoria Glendinning: *Vita: The Life of Vita Sackville-West* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983); and Nigel Nicolson, *The Portrait of a Marriage* (New York: Athenaeum, 1973).

⁵⁴ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Sackville-West, 28 October 1923.

⁵⁵ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Sackville-West, 18 February 1924.

⁵⁶ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Sackville-West, 2 September 1924.

⁵⁷ Nicolson, *Portrait of a Marriage*, 223.

⁵⁸ Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1922) and *Portraits in Miniature and Other Essays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1931). On Strachey, see Michael Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey: A Critical Biography* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).

⁵⁹ Scott, *Portrait*, 9, 16. “What is clear,” he noted, “is that this man and this woman, widely separated in age, obsessed each other. The attraction was between two minds, bewilderingly akin. To each the self-conscious analysis of every pulse and instant of life, or every problem and situation, was as necessary as a vice.” Scott, *Portrait*, 133. Ironically, Cutting recommended Scott explore the works of Zélide after discovering her writing while she recuperated from a nervous collapse brought about by her strained relationship with Scott.

⁶⁰ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 11 March 1925.

⁶¹ Mary Berenson, diary entry, 1 November 1895.

⁶² See Adam Phillips, *On Flirtation: Psychoanalytical Essays on the Uncommitted Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994). Phillips not only considers flirtation essential because it is “a way of doing things,” but also — crucially — because it is a pleasure.

⁶³ Geoffrey Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* (London: Constable, 1914), 247.

⁶⁴ Bernard Berenson, *Aesthetics and History* (London: Constable, 1950), 58, 103.

⁶⁵ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 37. He is specifically referring to: Fra Giocondo’s publication of the first illustrated edition of Vitruvius’s treatise in 1511; Leon Battista Alberti, *De re aedificatoria* (1452; collectively published, 1485); Andrea Palladio, *Quattro libri dell’architettura* (1570); and Sebastiano Serlio, *L’Architettura* (1537-51).

⁶⁶ Filareté [pseud. *Antonio di Piero Averlino*], *Filareté’s Treatise on Architecture, Being the Treatise by Antonio di Piero Averlino, Known as Filareté*, trans. John R. Spencer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965). *Filareté’s Treatise* is divided into three books: the essential theory of architecture, which encompasses the “origin of measure” and role of the architect; the “construction of a city,” which places this constructional theory into practice; and the lessons of the ancients, which describe the “antique practice” that is “almost lost and forgotten today.” Written between 1461-4, the *Treatise* was “read aloud” to Piero de Medici in order to school the patron on architecture through its descriptions of the design of Sforzinda (an ideal city) and Plusiapolis (its port). As Spencer notes in his translator’s introduction, these fictive constructions illustrate Filareté’s conception of ideal architecture.

⁶⁷ Filareté, *Treatise*, 12. Filareté acknowledged that “Vitruvius, among others, wrote a worthy treatise on [architecture, as did] Batista Alberti.” As Spencer notes, both of these works would have been available to Filareté in Latin manuscript.

⁶⁸ Filareté, *Treatise*, 15, 16. Similarly, “When a man is in love,” he continues, “he is never concerned with the expense,” nor is he “sorry for the time spent [or] is he bored.” In this context, the architect only makes architecture for two reasons — utility and fame.

⁶⁹ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 244-7.

⁷⁰ Phillips, *On Flirtation*, xx.

⁷¹ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 1. Scott is citing from Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture. Collected by Sir Henry Wotton from the Best Authors and Examples* (London: John Bill, 1624), n.p. Wotton was an Elizabethan writer and diplomat, who served as Ambassador to the Court of Venice and the Provost of Eton College. In addition to his familiarity with Wotton's *Elements*, Scott also had access to the specifics of the writer's through Logan Pearsall Smith, Mary Berenson's brother, who had published the writer's collected letters in 1907. "Wotton was the most widely cultivated Englishman of his time," Smith noted, "the first English collector of Italian pictures, [who] brought from Italy, where he lived many years, the refined taste in art and architecture, the varied culture of antiquity and the Renaissance, which was then only to be derived from Italian Sources." Logan Pearsall Smith, preface, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), iii. For an account of this biography see also Logan Pearsall Smith, *Unforgotten Years* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1939), 216-23.

⁷² Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 2, 3.

⁷³ Scott, *The National Character of English Architecture: The Chancellor's Essay* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1908), 3-4. Scott also associated an informed historical explanation of these manifestations as both academic pedantry and a positivist urge to historical delineation. See Scott, *Architecture*, 130-1.

⁷⁴ Henrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance and Baroque*, trans. Kathrin Simon (Fontana Library: New York, 1964), 78. This belief in the 'embeddedness' of history in architecture is a reflection of the prevailing historicist concerns of the nineteenth century. A period the historian Stephen Kern has noted "was in every case the Century of History." Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 61. In this way, figures as diverse as "Auguste Comte, Hegel, Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and Karl Marx shared the idea that philosophies, nations, social systems, or living forms became what they are as a result of progressive transformations in time, that any present form contains vestiges of all that has gone before." Kern, 51.

⁷⁵ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 4.

⁷⁶ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 1 n.1. Scott is referring to Henry Wotton's *Elements of Architecture* (1624; reprint, Farnborough: Gregg, 1969). On Wotton see: Edward Chaney: *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations since the Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 2000); Logan Pearsall Smith, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907); and Adolphus William Ward, *Sir Henry Wotton: A Biographical Sketch* (London: Constable, 1898).

⁷⁷ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 9, 8, 34.

⁷⁸ William Richard Lethaby, "The Renaissance — Architecture of Rhetoric and Architecture of First Principles," *Architecture; An Introduction to the History and Theory of the Art of the Building* (1911; reprint, London: Oxford University Press, 1955), 229-36.

⁷⁹ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 9, 23, 20.

⁸⁰ Scott, *National Character*, 34-6.

⁸¹ Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (London: Butterworth, 1960), 67.

⁸² Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 15, 10, 18.

⁸³ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 17-8. Scott further explored this 'puzzle' in his final architectural work, "The Basilica of St Peter's," *Country Life* 60 (1926); 1000-6, and *Country Life* 61 (1927); 16-23.

⁸⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 43 n.1. As such, 'taste' is a receptive capacity that arises in response to experience and Kant argues it is necessary to analyze judgments of taste "in order to discover what is required to call an object beautiful." Pluhar's translation of Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790) is also an annotated revised correction of the first English translations: *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.H. Bernard (London: MacMillan & Co., 1892), on which Scott's reading of Kant, mediated through Berenson, would largely have been based.

⁸⁵ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 33, 29, 11-12. Viewed in these limited aesthetic terms, Scott's *Architecture* depended on an appeal to a less-complicated, more primitive, humanist figure than the proto-modernist observer of the 1910s. Although he states that was not his intention to

‘superimpose’ renaissance architectural ideals on the contemporary period, Scott’s advocacy of classical principles, proportions, and compositional laws, illustrate his anti-modernist tendencies, with this prelapsarian impulse enacting a temporal collapse in which critical misread the applicability of one period, the renaissance, to another, the early-modernist period of the 1910s-20s.

⁸⁶ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 12-3, 35, 36.

⁸⁷ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 39, 41, 93, 76-7. Scott is using the definition of this fallacy, moreover, as a mechanism to argue against the romantic criticism of the renaissance — exemplified by such critics as W.R. Lethaby — that regarded it as “an architecture of boredom,” which was “insufficiently invested with the glamour of the unknown.” “Its highest inspiration was good taste, it was an architect’s architecture,” Lethaby argued, “There are things in nature a dewy morning, a snowy peak, a clear stream—which are ever and again more wonderful than we had remembered. A true work of art always had something of this surprising freshness; but the Renaissance as a whole lacked the spirit of life. Gothic art witnesses to a nation in training, hunters, craftsmen, athletes; the Renaissance is the art of scholars, courtiers, and the connoisseurship of middlemen.” Lethaby, *Architecture*, 232-3.

⁸⁸ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 52. In particular, Scott explains the influence of this ‘imaginary past’ in terms of the “cult of medievalism” and Gothic revivalist period, which were exemplified in Horace Walpole’s Strawberry Hill. See Scott, *Architecture*, 46-7.

⁸⁹ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 54-5.

⁹⁰ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 57, 59.

⁹¹ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 61-62.

⁹² Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 62.

⁹³ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 63-4.

⁹⁴ William Richard Lethaby, as cited in *Friends of a Lifetime-Letters to Sydney Carlyle Cockerell*, ed. Viola Meynell (London: Hart-Davis, 1956), 204.

⁹⁵ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 95-6.

⁹⁶ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 105, 113, 110.

⁹⁷ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 115-6. Scott is specifically rebuking Lethaby’s criticism of renaissance architecture. As he rightly noted, Lethaby’s emphasis on the value of construction methodologies in his *Architecture* (1911) lead to his assertion that the gothic period represented the apex of structural expressiveness. In addition to his minimization of the renaissance, Scott was further at odds with Lethaby’s suggestion that the period’s “great gift” was its “scientific spirit,” which further contradicted his own contention that the measured forms of its architecture deferred “constructional facts to aesthetic effect.” Scott, 98.

⁹⁸ John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice* (London: George Allen, 1851-3), as cited in Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 121.

⁹⁹ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 130-1, 132-34.

¹⁰⁰ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 162-3.

¹⁰¹ Charles Moore, *The Character of Renaissance Art* (London: MacMillan, 1905), as cited in Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 123-4. Moore characterized renaissance architecture as being “at the service of [a] luxurious and immoral life” and a ministrations of a “sensuous pleasure and mundane pride.” Scott cites Moore’s characterization and an example of Ruskin’s moral influence. It should be noted that Scott was only four years removed from his earlier *National Character of English Architecture* (1908), which advocated the uniqueness of a national style, and this shift – as the historian David Watkin has rightly argued — to the humanist “universality” of the renaissance is largely attributable to the influence of the Berensons. On this point, see Watkins, foreword to *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* by Geoffrey Scott (London: Architectural Press, 1980).

¹⁰² See Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 143-45. Scott is citing from Leopold von Ranke, *Ecclesiastical and Political History of the Popes during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 3. vols., trans. E. Foster (1840; trans. London, G. Bell and sons, 1896). Von Ranke (1795–1886) is considered the father of the German objective historical tradition, which advocates the accumulation of facts and details as a

form of preparatory research and scholarly training. Ranke viewed the representation of power – in political, diplomatic, and institutional terms — as a manifestation of historical determinism (or divine will). By contrast, Scott described popes Pius II, Leo X, and Julius II – who were enormously influential in political terms – as “cultivated enthusiasts” of renaissance art, who were “informed in their aesthetic opinions and sensitive in their tastes.” Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 23-4.

¹⁰³ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 165-6.

¹⁰⁴ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 168-9.

¹⁰⁵ Clough Williams Ellis, as cited in A.C. Foster, “The Architectural Aesthetic of Geoffrey Scott” (B.A. Thesis, Cambridge University, 1974), 14. See also David Watkin, *The Rise of Architectural History* (London: Architectural Press, 1980), 116. Williams-Ellis had impeccable social connections, publishing *Architecture* (1920) with the journalist John Strachey (who was also his father-in-law), and *Britain and the Beast* (1937) with his friend John Maynard Keynes.

¹⁰⁶ Scott, epilogue, 185-6.

¹⁰⁷ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 210.

¹⁰⁸ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 210-11.

¹⁰⁹ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 213; emphasis in original.

¹¹⁰ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 213.

¹¹¹ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 238.

¹¹² Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 240, citation slightly altered.

¹¹³ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 213-4 n. 1. Lipps first articulated his notion of empathy in *Raumaesthetik und Geometrisch-optische Täuschung* (Leipzig: J.A. Barth, 1897), before expanding on it in *Von der Form der ästhetischen Apeception* (Halle an der Saare: Max Niemeyer, 1902) and *Ästhetik. Psychologie des Schönen und der Kunst* (Leipzig: Theodor Voss, 1923). On the historic context and development of Lipps’s notion of empathy see Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou, *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893* (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994). As Mallgrave and Ikononou note, Lipps effectively reintroduced the concept of empathy to artistic practice at the end of the nineteenth century: a period that was concomitant with the development of architectural realism and the Jugendstil movement.

¹¹⁴ Reginald Blomfield, *The Mistress Art* (London, E. Arnold), 118, and “The Architecture of Humanism,” *Modernismus* (London: MacMillan, 1934), 21-5.

¹¹⁵ Scott is referring to the explanation and bibliography of Vernon Lee [pseud. Violet Paget] and Clementina Anstruther-Thomson, *Beauty and Ugliness and Other Studies in Psychological Aesthetics* (London: John Lane, 1912), and Vernon Lee, *The Beautiful: An Introduction to Psychological Aesthetics* (Cambridge University Press, 1913). *Beauty and Ugliness* is a collection of Lee’s writings on aesthetics from 1897-1912, including the 1897 essay ‘Beauty and Ugliness,’ which effectively introduced a Lippsean notion of empathy to the English art-world. This introduction was limited, however, and – as Mark Jarzombek has noted — Lipps’s work was subsequently popularized in English with the publication of *The Foundations of Aesthetics*, eds. C.K. Ogden, I.A. Richards, and James Wood (London: Allen & Unwin, 1922). See Jarzombek, “De-Scripting the Language of Looking: Wölfflin and the History of Aesthetic Experimentalism,” *Assemblage* 23 (1994): 28-69. As Jarzombek rightly notes, this notion of empathy theory assumed a wider architectural readership with the publication of Siegfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941); and Nikolaus Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture* (London: J. Murray, 1943).

¹¹⁶ Bertrand Russell and Nicky Mariano, as cited in Burdett Gardner, *The Lesbian Imagination (Victorian Style): A Psychological Study of “Vernon Lee”* (New York: Garland, 1987), 59, 56.

¹¹⁷ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 13 October 1913.

¹¹⁸ Lee, *The Beautiful*, 101, 66-7. This work is a lengthy reworking of her 1897 essay, “Beauty and Ugliness,” and was written — in part — to address her famous dispute with Berenson regarding the originality of his system of tactile values. Although she never directly names Berenson, Lee is clearly referring to her old adversary when she noted how the connoisseur’s “aesthetic emotiveness” could lead them to mistake the authorship of certain art-works. Lee, *The Beautiful*, 142-6.

¹¹⁹ Bernard Berenson, *The Florentine Painters* (1896) and *The Central Italian Painters* (1897), as collected and reprinted in Bernard Berenson, *The Italian Painters of the Renaissance* (London: Phaidon, 1952). In particular, the *Florentine Painters* volume is the most essential of Berenson's 'four bibles' as it is concerned with the work he considered the pre-eminent artistic expression of the Italian renaissance — the paintings of the Florentine school, which were "an art formed by great personalities [that had] grappled with the problems of the highest interest." Berenson, *Florentine Painters*, 39.

¹²⁰ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 214.

¹²¹ Blomfield, *Modernismus*, 23.

¹²² Although Hildebrand had previously written the "Problem of Form" with Conrad Fiedler, his own theories went beyond Fiedler's strict formalism by drawing on a contemporaneous and primarily-Lippsean theory of empathy. See Mallgrave and Ikonomou, 37. On the relationship between Fiedler and Hildebrand, see pages 29-39.

¹²³ Mary Berenson, diary entry, 1 June 1894. Typically, it had also aroused Berenson's "innervate dislike" of German theorists and his complaints that its vocabulary was "almost purely Teutonic," which made any discussion of "an abstract problem . . . as good as impossible." Mary Berenson, diary entry, 1 June 1894. Earlier that year, Mary Berenson noted how Berenson had been "swallowing hundreds of pages of German rubbish on art," to the point where he shouted, "Jesus, how I loathe the Germans." Mary Berenson, diary entry, February 1874.

¹²⁴ Berenson considered 'symbols' as "mere conveyances" of meaning. Berenson, *Florentine Painters*, 40, 41.

¹²⁵ Berenson, *Central Italian Painters*, 120.

¹²⁶ Hildebrand, "The problem of form in the arts," 239.

¹²⁷ Berenson, *Central Italian Painters*, 120, 121, 120.

¹²⁸ Berenson, *Florentine Painters*, 42-3.

¹²⁹ Berenson, *Central Italian Painters*, 120, 121.

¹³⁰ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 226, 228. Similarly Berenson had previously noted, "In such pictures how freely one breathes, as if a load has just been lifted from one's breast; how refreshed, now noble, how potent one feels."

¹³¹ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 229.

¹³² Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 215-7, 215.

¹³³ Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 209; emphasis in original.

¹³⁴ Derrida, "White Mythology," 231 nt. 35.

¹³⁵ Derrida, "White Mythology," 209. On the precariousness of this balance see also Derrida, "From Restricted to General Economy," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

¹³⁶ Scott, epilogue (1924), 186.

¹³⁷ Scott, epilogue (1924), 185-6.

¹³⁸ Scott, epilogue (1924), 189.

¹³⁹ Scott, epilogue (1924), 185.

¹⁴⁰ Only the 'American edition,' edited by Henry Hope Reed and published in 1960 as part of the "Classical American Series in Art and Architecture" is illustrated. Even then, these illustrations are predominantly of canonical buildings in the American classical school. As such, these illustrations are indicative of the connoisseurial project of Hope Reed's "Classical America" society. Responding to the question of "Why is it possible to have an American edition?," Hope Reed argues that the persistence of the classical architecture of what he terms the "American Renaissance" (1880s-1930) reflected the democratization of American society. Echoing the aesthetes of the early twentieth century, Hope Reed writes of the imperative of planning "for a future which will be largely classical in the visual arts, for the classical tradition will continue to be the main artistic current of Western civilization." See Henry Hope Reed, foreword to the self-described "American edition" of Geoffrey

Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1960), vii-xiii.

¹⁴¹ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 24 August 1922.

¹⁴² Geoffrey Scott, letter to Alfred Rutherston, 11 September 1923.

¹⁴³ Scott, epilogue (1924), 188-9.

¹⁴⁴ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, mid-April 1914.

¹⁴⁵ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 8 August 1914.

¹⁴⁶ Dunn, 141-3. See also Berenson, letter to Barrett Wendell, 8 December 1915.

¹⁴⁷ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 242.

¹⁴⁸ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 3 August 1914.

¹⁴⁹ Edith Wharton, "The Architecture of Humanism," review of *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* by Geoffrey Scott, *Times Literary Supplement* (25 June 1914): n.p. Republished in *The Uncollected Critical Writings*, ed. Frederick Wegener (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 130-4. Other critics were less generous, however, noting that they found his explanation of empathetic-projection into architectural space "confusing." See, for example, J.L. Ball, untitled review *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* by Geoffrey Scott, *RIBA Journal* 22 (1914): 3-6; and Anon., untitled review *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* by Geoffrey Scott, *The Builder* 108 (1915): 25-26. The most sustained of the relatively review by a contemporary of Scott occurs in Reginald Blomfield, "The Architecture of Humanism," in *Modernismus*, 16-32. "Scott's *Architecture of Humanism* was a clever thesis on the principle of architectural criticism," Blomfield noted, "leading to the conclusion that the right moment of architecture is Humanism, and that the finest expression of Humanism was the Baroque, but he did not define Humanism; his view of architectural history was vague and uncertain, and though there are brilliant passages in the essay his conclusions to me seem arbitrary and dogmatic." Blomfield, *Modernismus*, 16.

¹⁵⁰ See David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

¹⁵¹ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 51, 61, 63. Certain key figures were resistant to this prevailing historicism, in which both the present and future were overwhelmed in significance by the past. For example, in his *Use and Abuse of History* (1874), Friedrich Nietzsche argued that such an obsessive deference to history — which he figured as a "malignant historical fever" — obstructed the individual's will to power and right to action. (An obstruction he further addressed in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 1885).

¹⁵² Gertrude Stein, *Picasso* (London: Batsford, 1938), 11. On the relation of visual confusion of Cubism to the sensory annihilation of the first world war see Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975); Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space*; Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); and Kenneth Silver, *Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Grade and the First World War, 1914-1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). Surprisingly, despite their divergent views of modern art, Berenson and Stein were close and she acknowledged "his moments of exquisite creative perception that completely expressed themselves." Gertrude Stein, unpublished manuscript notebooks. As quoted in Samuels, *Bernard Berenson: The Making of A Legend*, 61.

¹⁵³ Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 2000), 1. While "displacing many such spatial fears to the realm of psychoanalysis," Vidler continues, modernism was subject to the endemic fears of the metropolis, forming "its notions of abstraction under the sign of neurasthenia and agoraphobia . . . Space, in these various iterations, has been increasingly defined as a product of subjective projection and interjection, as opposed to a stable field of objects and bodies."

¹⁵⁴ Clough Williams-Ellis, *Architect Errant: The Autobiography of Clough Williams-Ellis* (London: Constable, 1971), 192-3. As Williams-Ellis noted, "Geoffrey Scott, author of the *Portrait of Zélide* and — most importantly to me — *The Architecture of Humanism*, still, I think, the best book of architectural

criticism yet written, was an incomparable guide. I had first met him when contriving a little classical pavilion for him out of an old coach-house at the end of the garden of a Regent's Park house that I had already 'classicised' for a mutual friend. He had been an attaché in Rome during the Kaisers war and knew Italy well. From his Italian home, the Villa Medici near Florence, he conducted us on a memorable tour, showing us the most notable towns, churches, houses and gardens within a day's drive and taking us to see Bernard Berenson's library that he had planned." As David Watkin has rightly argued, however, Williams-Ellis's exaltation of Scott's *Architecture* can be read in terms of its importance to the intellectual validation of his nostalgic and highly eccentric rendering of classical architecture. See Watkin, foreword, xxv.

Williams-Ellis was a prolific writer and memoirist, whose works include: *The Architect* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1929); *Architecture Errant: The Autobiography of Clough Williams Ellis* (1971); and *Around the World in Ninety Years* (Portmeirion: Golden Dragon Books, 1978). On the biography of Williams-Ellis, see also, Richard Haslam, *Clough Williams-Ellis* (London: Academy Editions, 1996) and Amabel Williams-Ellis, *Clough Williams-Ellis: A Portrait in Words* (Portmeirion: Golden Dragon Books, 1981). For a divergent view of the architect's cultivated aesthetic sensibility, see Stefan Szczelkun, *The Conspiracy of Good Taste: William Morris, Cecil Sharp, Clough Williams-Ellis and the Repression of Working Class Culture in the 20th Century* (London: Working Press, 1993).

¹⁵⁵ Clough Williams-Ellis with Amabel Williams-Ellis, *The Tank Corps* (London: George Newnes, 1919), 6. Ironically, this volume is one a series of 'military histories' commissioned and published by *Country Life* in an attempt to make sense of the conflict for the periodical's readers.

¹⁵⁶ Williams-Ellis, *Architecture Errant*, 6: ellipses in original. As he noted in full, "I grieve for the destruction of lovely buildings and the spoiling by war of beautiful places almost throughout the world. The fate of limitless . . . the mind winces, a full inventory would be intolerable. But what we do know is that on every single say of the long years of war, beauty was somewhere extinguished as indiscriminately and as finally as the human lives to whose destruction this massacre of loveliness was merely a hideous accompaniment."

¹⁵⁷ Williams-Ellis discussed the impulses behind this revisionist project in his *Pontmerion: The Place and its Meaning* (1963; revised 1973). As he elsewhere noted of this inspiration, "I was saddened to find so many people missing the interest and enjoyment to be gained from an appreciation of architecture, landscape, design, the use of colour, and perspectives." Williams-Ellis, *Around the World in Ninety Years*, 95-6.

Endnotes to Chapter Three — The Indiscreet Charms of the Bourgeoisie: Bernard Berenson and the Profession of Memory

¹ Marcel Proust, *Jean Santeuil*, trans. Gerald Hopkins (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1955), 241.

² Kenneth Clark, as cited in David Watkin, foreword to *The Architecture of Humanism* by Geoffrey Scott (London: Architectural Press, 1980), xxi. Watkin also notes that Clark was influenced by Scott's work as he wrote *The Gothic Revival: A Study in the History of Taste* (London: Constable, 1928).

³ Geoffrey Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* (London: Constable, 1914), ix.

⁴ Geoffrey Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* (London: Constable, 1914), 215.

⁵ Ivan Lermolieff (pseud. Giovanni Morelli), *Die Werke italienischer Meister in den Galerien von Munchen, Dresden und Berlin* (1880). Translated as Giovanni Morelli, *Italian Masters in German Galleries: A Critical Essay on the Italian Pictures in the Galleries of Munich, Dresden, Berlin*, trans. Louise M. Richter (London: Bell and Sons, 1883). This work was then expanded and revised in 1890 as the two volume *Kunstkeritische Studien: Giovanni Morelli, vol. 1, Kunstkeritische studien über italienische malerei: die galerien Borghese und Doria Panfili in Rom* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1890); and vol 2., *Kunstkeritische studien über italienische malerei: die galerien zu München und Dresden* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1891). This work was

translated as Morelli, *Italian Painters; Critical Studies of their Works*, trans. Constance Jocelyn Foulkes (London: J. Murray, 1892-93); all citations are from this volume.

⁶ The aesthetic movement was comprised of a loose group of aesthetes in late-Victorian England from 1868-1901. These figures were deeply influenced by the essays of Walter Pater in which he argued life should follow an aesthetic ideal. As such, the movement rejected John Ruskin and Matthew Arnold's utilitarian conception of art as inherently moral and didactic and argued, in response, that art only needed to be beautiful. In this way, these aesthetes sought a "cult of beauty" in which the arts would provide sensuous pleasure and life could be lived as art. The various members of this movement included the writers, Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) and Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909), who were both influenced by the French Symbolists, and the artists, James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82). See Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic Movement* (London: Phaidon, 1996).

⁷ Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt and trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 253-264.

⁸ Bernard Berenson, *Sketches for a Self-Portrait* (New York: Pantheon, 1949), 51. Berenson paid tribute to his "special friend" and fellow connoisseur Costa in the *Venetian Painters of the Renaissance*.

⁹ Umberto Morra, *Conversations with Berenson*, trans. Florence Hammond (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 42.

¹⁰ Bernard Berenson, letter to Mary Berenson, 5 September 1929. Berenson's self-dissuasion is further evident in his description of the revisions to *The Central Italian Painters* that continued this letter. It was a "difficult task and a painful experience," he complained, "The man who wrote them should not have let himself be led astray into picture-fancying and expertizing. . . . I weep within me when I am ranked with the successful of my time. No, far from it. I am a case for arrested development."

¹¹ Berenson published a number of autobiographic volumes before this death, including: *Aesthetics and History in the Visual Arts* (New York: Pantheon, 1948); *Sketch for a Self-Portrait* (New York: Pantheon, 1949); and *Rumour and Reflection, 1941-1944* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952). In addition, his posthumous autobiographic publications include: *One Year's Reading for Fun: 1942* (New York: Knopf, 1960); *The Passionate Sightseer: From the Diaries, 1947 to 1956* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1960); and *Sunset and Twilight: From the Diaries of 1947-1958*, ed. Nicky Mariano (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963). See also, ed. Hannah Kiel, *The Bernard Berenson Treasury, A Selection from the Works, Unpublished Writings, Letters, Diaries, and Journals: 1887-1958* (London: Methuen, 1964). Finally, both Nicky Mariano's *Forty years with Berenson* (New York, Knopf, 1966) and Sylvia Sprigge's *Berenson: A Biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960) should also be considered as iterations of Berenson's autobiography.

¹² Berenson, *Sunset and Twilight*, 208.

¹³ On Berenson's dealings within the art-world see Ernest Samuels, *Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Connoisseur* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1979); Ernest Samuels with Jayne Newcomer Samuels, *Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Legend* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1987); Rémy G. Saisselin, "I Tatti, or Sublimating Sales," in *Bricabracomania: The Bourgeois and the Bibelot*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985); and René Gimpel, *Diary of an Art Dealer*, trans. John Rosenberg (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1966). On Berenson's surreptitious partnership with the English art-dealer Joseph Duveen see Colin Simpson, *Artful Partners: The Secret Association of Bernard Berenson and Joseph Duveen* (London: Bodley Head, 1987); and S.N. Behrman, *Duveen* (New York: Random House, 1952).

¹⁴ William Rothstein, *Men and Memories: 1872-1938*, ed. Mary Lago (Columbia: University of Minnesota Press, 1978), 151. In 1907 Rothstein had been commissioned to paint the portrait of Berenson that hangs in the entrance to I Tatti. As he notably wrote of the social environment at I Tatti: "The palatial rooms in which the scholar-aesthetes lived, their massive Italian furniture, their primitives, their bronzes, wood-carvings and Venetian stuffs which one was expected to appraise, wearied me. Everyone lived among these princely things which, for all their beauty, seemed as an

enamelled and bewigged mistress in the house of a young man. The atmosphere in these vast apartments seemed heavy with intrigue.” Rothstein, 151.

¹⁵ Logan Pearsall Smith, *Unforgotten Years*, (Boston: Little & Brown, 1939), 138. As he later noted in the same volume, Smith’s biography of Henry Wotton inspired “another kind of hunting,” separate from the blood sports of the leisure class, which “occupied a good deal of my English leisure — the hunting of manuscripts of literary interest in English archives and old English country houses.” Smith, 216.

¹⁶ Bernard Berenson, letter to Mary Berenson, 11 October 1890.

¹⁷ Saisselin, “Sublimating Sales,” 131.

¹⁸ Mary Berenson, unattributed letter as cited and discussed in Samuels, *Bernard Berenson*, 159. In addition to Samuels, Secrest and Sprigge also attribute Berenson’s involvement in the art market to the financial pressures exerted by Mary Berenson’s exorbitant spending and the cost of maintaining I Tatti. There is, however, a further reason for Mary Berenson’s frustration with her husband’s inability to “write for publication.” As Simpson noted in his *Artful Partners*, there is more than ample evidence to support a view that Mary Berenson was largely responsible for Berenson’s early publications and she published a number of articles — including “The New and Old Art Criticism,” *Nineteenth Century Magazine* (May 1894), and “New Art Criticism,” in *Atlantic Monthly Magazine* (August 1895) — in defense of his theories of “scientific connoisseurship.” In this way, her frustrations with his failure to capitalize on her investment are obvious.

¹⁹ Gardner’s hedonism is evident in her oft-stated motto, “*C’est mon plaisir*.” See Morris Carter, *Isabella Stewart Gardner and Fenway Court* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1925).

²⁰ Although Gardner did not personally contribute to Berenson’s stipend, she suggested to her friends that they should. Berenson was in need of financial assistance because his application for a Harvard scholarship had been denied following Charles Eliot Norton’s refusal to endorse his former student.

²¹ Berenson, *Sunset and Twilight*, 487. On Berenson’s role in the assembling of Gardner’s collection see Morris Carter, *Isabella Stewart Gardner and Fenway Court* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 1940); Hilliard T. Goldfarb, *Isabella Stewart Gardner: The Woman and the Myth* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 1994); and *The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum: A Companion Guide and History* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 1995).

²² Bernard Berenson, letter to Isabella Gardner, early 1903. As cited in Meyer Schapiro, “Mr. Berenson’s Values,” *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society (Selected Papers Vol. IV)* (New York: George Braziller, 1994), 209. Although these acquaintances were extremely influential, Berenson persistently sought to disparage their affect on his career. “Social ‘contacts’ have had little to do with either my formation or my career,” he explained to Kenneth Clark (who was planning to write a book on Berenson as the “New Winckelmann”). “At all events they have had next to no influence on my work, on my thought, my writing.” Berenson, *Sunset and Twilight*, 348-349.

²³ Sprigge, *Berenson*, 120. See also, *The Letters of Bernard Berenson and Isabella Stewart Gardner, 1887-1924: With Correspondence by Mary Berenson*, ed. Rollin van Hadley (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987).

²⁴ Phillip Hendry, *Catalogue of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 1931): v, vi, ix.

²⁵ Mary Berenson, undated letter to Isabella Gardner, as cited in Sprigge, *Berenson*, 205. See also, Secrest, *Berenson*, 208. Mary Berenson handled the correspondence between Berenson and Gardner when he became too disillusioned to deal with business issues.

²⁶ René Gimpel, *Diary of an Art Dealer*, trans. John Rosenberg (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1966), 63.

²⁷ Sprigge, *Berenson*, 149.

²⁸ Joseph Duveen was notorious for good reason. Following a Machiavellian takeover in 1919, he assumed control of the family firm and not only knowingly sold forged renaissance paintings, several of which he commissioned, but also instructed his restorers to scrape the varnish off many paintings

in order to give the works a more appealing gloss finish. In addition, he was also responsible for personally damaging the restoration work being undertaken on the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum. Duveen was knighted in 1919 and donated an eponymous gallery extension to the Tate Gallery in 1926, eventually securing a Trusteeship of the National Gallery in 1929 after satisfying several political favors. He was subsequently made Baron Duveen of Millbank in 1933 following his purchase of the known forgeries in the Prince of Wales's art collection, several of which he had originally sold to the Prince. These works were subsequently sold to American clients. See S.N. Behrman, *Duveen* (New York: Random House, 1952) and Meryle Secrest, *Duveen: A Life in Art* (New York: Knopf, 2004).

²⁹ Simpson, *Artful Partners*, 2. For an account of Berenson's doubts with dealing with the art market see Sprigge, "The Reverse of the Medal," *Berenson*, 182-195. "Relative to the millions of dollars which changed hands in the Duveen organization," Sprigge argues, "Berenson's retainer was not excessive. The rub is in the 10 per cent. A lesser man than Berenson might have been tempted into giving a noble attribution which would bring in the 10 per cent, when no such attribution or a lesser one would be a dead loss." Sprigge, *Berenson*, 209.

³⁰ Following their agreement Duveen immediately began to ship paintings to I Tatti for Berenson's appraisal. As Sprigge recalled, "Those who knew 'I Tatti' before the 1914 war remembered seeing the long corridor between the main and garden entrance stacked with these paintings and panels, queuing up as it were for examination. *These were now the choices of his profession.*" Sprigge, *Berenson*, 208; emphasis in the original. Berenson often boasted about his ability to "glance at a hundred works of art in a few minutes, taste, appreciate, rank and classify them while they are before my eyes." Berenson, *Sketches for a Self-Portrait*, 171. In this way, the purportedly serious act of connoisseurship was also a kind of parlor game, or "conóshing" as he called it.

³¹ Berenson, *Sunset and Twilight*, 229-230.

³² Berenson's contractual share of the profits was enormous and he earned \$8,370,000 between 1911-37. The Duveen-Berenson ledger is kept in the Duveen archive, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and was first opened to scholars in 2002.

³³ Berenson first read Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* (1878) in 1885 and was immediately taken with its description of a young man's immersion into the world of aesthetic pleasures. This work served to temper the regimented moral vigor of John Ruskin, whose work was being promoted at Harvard by Norton and insisted on the moral value of art. Berenson refused to accept any such "moralistic" interpretation of an art-work and Pater's substantiated this argument. (Similarly, Scott would also refute Ruskin's position was the "Moral Fallacy.") Unsurprisingly Pater's sensualist views were not appreciated in the conservative-Protestant New England circles in which Berenson was educated. "I don't like the book," William James noted to Berenson (who had loaned his professor a copy), "it makes me feel as if I were sitting in a hot bath." Samuels, 37. On Ruskin's influence on turn-of-the-century America see Roger Stein, *Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

When he revisited *Marius the Epicurean* in 1944, Berenson was again struck by the profound affect it had on his thinking. "Its direct influence on me was no doubt great," he noted, "Still, no outside influence would have affected me so deeply, persuasively, and permanently if the comment of my spirit had not been in the same direction." Berenson, *One Years Reading for Fun*, 106. Clearly Berenson thought *Marius* reaffirmed his desire to live his life as an art-work and it appeared "as valuable as ever for its suggestiveness, its stimulus, its specific quality of quiet, restful intellectuality." And the hedonistic aestheticism it advocated was infinitely preferable when it was compared to the criticism of "the German-minded," such as Hildebrand, Lipps, and Lee, "who insist, like so many children with their toys and first watches, on smashing the object he is treating to see how it works." Berenson, *One Years Reading for Fun*, 133.

³⁴ Mary Berenson, "Life of Bernard Berenson," unpublished manuscript (September 1891), 1. Berenson archive, The Harvard Center for Renaissance Studies, Villa I Tatti, Florence, Italy.

³⁵ As Ernst Samuels has noted, this meeting was a turning point in Berenson's career and cemented his decision to abandon his dream of becoming a writer to pursue a career as a connoisseur. Samuels, 86. For a chronological account of the relationship between Berenson, Cavalcaselle, and Morelli see Samuels, "Disciple of Morelli," *Making of a Connoisseur*, 97-105.

³⁶ See Richard Wollheim, "Giovanni Morelli and the Origins of Scientific Connoisseurship," *On Art and the Mind: Essays and Lectures* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 177-201; and Edgar Wind, *Art and Anarchy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1985).

³⁷ Morelli, *Italian Masters*, 71.

³⁸ Carlo Ginzburg, "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm," *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 101. In this article, Ginzburg connects the intellectual strategies of the connoisseur (Morelli), detective (Arthur Conan Doyle), and psychoanalyst (Sigmund Freud) to one another through a discussion of their shared reliance on "unconscious" clues. He then further argues these strategies suggest a "conjectural paradigm" that could be employed as a historical method.

³⁹ Mary Berenson, letter to Hannah Whittall Smith, 12 September 1891.

⁴⁰ Mary Berenson, letter to Hannah Whittall Smith, 10 October 1891.

⁴¹ Kenneth Clark noted to Berenson that Lotto's stylistic inconsistencies made him a dubious choice for demonstrating the techniques of scientific connoisseurship. Kenneth Clark, *Moments of Vision* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), 115-6. By contrast, Mary-Ann Calo reads *Lotto* as a "kind of self-portrait." See Mary Ann Calo, *Bernard Berenson and the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 39-46.

⁴² See Mary Berenson, "The New Art Criticism," in *Atlantic Monthly* 76 (August 1895): 263-70; and "The Philosophy of Enjoyment of Art," review *The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance* by Bernard Berenson, *Atlantic Monthly* 77 (June 1896): 844-8. Although other contemporaneous reviews associated Berenson's work with a "new criticism," this association was not always favorable and often illuminated the inconsistencies in his technique. On this criticism see Anon., "The Fine Arts," review of *Lorenzo Lotto* by Bernard Berenson, *Critic* 12 (12 January 1895): 38-9; Anon., "Modern Connoisseurship," review of *Lorenzo Lotto* by Bernard Berenson, *Nation* 24 (24 January 1895): 76-7; Anon., "Reconstructive Criticism," review of *Lorenzo Lotto* by Bernard Berenson, *Atlantic Monthly* 75 (April 1895): 556-9; and Anon., "The New Art-Criticism," review of *Venetian Painters of the Renaissance; The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance* and *Lorenzo Lotto* by Bernard Berenson, *Quarterly Review* 184 (October 1896): 454-76. These articles all document the shift in Berenson's conception of the artwork from a consideration of it as an autonomous "document" (in the Morellian sense), to an interpretation of art as a therapeutic "tonic force." See Calo, "Defining Berenson's Modernism," *Berenson*, 29-84. As several other critics note, this shift signals the end of Berenson's usefulness as an art-critic and his emergence as an "arbiter of taste."

⁴³ Bernard Berenson, preface to *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art* (Second Series), (London: George Bell & Sons, 1902), vii.

⁴⁴ Roger Fry, "Fine Arts," review of *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art* by Bernard Berenson, *Antheneum* (16 November 1901): 668-9.

⁴⁵ Ginzburg, "Clues," 109. Ginzburg makes this connection in relation to the 'foundation text' of connoisseurship: Giulio Mancini, *Alcune considerazioni appartenenti all'apittura come di diletto di un gentiluomo nobile e come introduzione a quello si deve dire* (1617-21). This work was written for "gentleman dilettantes" as an aid in the attribution of artworks and identification of forgeries. Interestingly, the Berensons were acquainted with a number of Europe's most noted "art restorers," including Luigi Cavenaghi, the Baron Lazzaroni, and Ricardo Nobile, who pointedly mentions Berenson in his *Gentle Art of Faking: A History of the Methods of Producing Imitations and Spurious Works of Art from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Seeley, 1922). In addition, Berenson was also a close friend of the most infamous and prolific "restorer" of all, Icilio Frederico Joni, the author of the *Affairs of a Painter* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936). In his *Artful Partners*, Simpson noted how Berenson often commissioned Joni to produce copies of artworks that were smuggled out of Italy to supply

American clients. Joni was not only an expert forger, however, but also quixotically patriotic, which explains the confusions associated with several of the works he passed on to Berenson.

⁴⁶ Berenson, "Rudiments," 116, 133, 123.

⁴⁷ Berenson, "Rudiments," 147-8. From this point onward, Berenson insisted that a definition of aesthetic "quality" lay outside the capabilities of scientific connoisseurship. And his criticism of the "scientific evaluation" of art served two purposes: firstly, it exonerated his attributions from any contradictory 'proof' of their authorship; and secondly, it further reaffirmed the art of connoisseurship. "Chemical tests do not prove anything," he quipped, "they test colors as one would human blood . . . probing it by chance." Morra, 27.

⁴⁸ Kenyon Cox, "Books on Art," review of *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art (Second Series)* by rev. of Bernard Berenson, *The Nation* (6 November 1902): 364. In a review written two years later, Cox again argued that Berenson would only become "a distinct force in criticism" if he learned to "subordinate the connoisseur to the critic." (A subordination that never occurred.) Kenyon Cox, "Berenson's Florentine Drawings," review of *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters* by Bernard Berenson, *The Nation* (6 August 1903): 117.

⁴⁹ Barbara Strachey and Jayne Samuels, eds., Mary Berenson; *A Self Portrait from Her Letters and Diaries* (London: V. Gollancz, 1983), 168.

⁵⁰ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 250.

⁵¹ Bernard Berenson, "Isochromatic Photography and Venetian Pictures," *The Nation* 57 (9 November 1893): 346, 347.

⁵² Mary Berenson, letter to Gertrude Hitz Burton, 3 March 1895.

⁵³ Allan J. Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (winter 1986): 3-64. For Sekula the photographic collection bears the traces of origins in late-nineteenth-century criminal archives. In this way, the *Service d'identification* of Alphonse Bertillon and Francis Galton's eugenicist "criminal composites" exemplified the emergence of 'shadow archives': collections that not only encompassed the terrain of social categories, but also indexed individual subjects within that terrain. This anthropomorphic identification was allied with a eugenic conception of national decline, which was prevalent during this period. On this point see also Robert Nye, *Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern France: The Medical Concept of National Decline* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); and T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon, 1981).

⁵⁴ Berenson, *Sketches for a Self-Portrait*, 171.

⁵⁵ Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," 17.

⁵⁶ John Szarkowski, *Looking At Photographs: 100 Pictures from the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1973), 11.

⁵⁷ Mariano, *Forty Years*, 17, 2.

⁵⁸ Morra, *Conversations*, 248.

⁵⁹ Berenson, *Central Italian Painters*, 81.

⁶⁰ Berenson, "Photography," *Aesthetics and History* (London: Constable, 1950), 190.

⁶¹ Berenson, "Photography," 193.

⁶² Berenson, "Photography," 192.

⁶³ Berenson, "Photography," 193.

⁶⁴ Berenson, "Photography," 193.

⁶⁵ Morra, 105. Implicit within the inexhaustibility of these impressions is the notion that the connoisseur's own physical exhaustion was a form of deferral, which came on "as a nervous state — almost in order to make way for other more urgent interests."

⁶⁶ Henry Fox Talbot, *Pencil of Nature* (1844), n.p. As cited in Sekula, 6. In this way, Talbot proposed that "should a thief . . . purloin the treasures — if the mute testimony of the picture were to be produced against him in court — it would certainly be evidence of a novel kind." And it with this "mute testimony," Sekula noted, "Talbot lays claim to a new legalistic truth, the truth of an *indexical* rather than a *textural* inventory."

⁶⁷ Morra, *Conversations*, 62.

⁶⁸ Berenson's understanding of his bibliographic and photographic collections as avatars for his memory is illustrated by his habit of referring to I Tatti as "a library with rooms attached." Berenson, *Sketches for a Self-Portrait*, 167. In this way, his villa served as an architectural realization of the motto that adorns its formal entrance, "*Nil Dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere / Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena*" (There is no greater pleasure than to have a quiet sanctuary well-stocked with learned instruction). On several occasions, moreover, Berenson even called on his library as a 'mute witness.' Writing in response to an article that had favorably compared André Malraux's art historical project to his own, Berenson seethed, "as a matter of fact my curiosity has led me farther afield than Malraux," he noted. "Whatever has been found dating from the earliest period to the art of today, I am acquainted with. The library at I Tatti is my witness." Berenson, *Sunset and Twilight*, 494. On the contentious relationship between Berenson and Malraux see Bernard Halda, *Berenson et André Malraux* (Paris: Lettres Modernes, 1964.)

⁶⁹ Mariano, *Forty Years* 104. Smith had lived in Montparnasse during the late-1890s and was a well-known habitué of the café-society, befriending the American painter, James MacNeill Whistler, who was painting his famous portrait, *Arrangement in Black and Gold: Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac* (1891-2). For a further account of this connection see also Secret, *Berenson*, 74.

⁷⁰ Proust later referred to these translations as a "voluntary servitude." See John Ruskin, *La Bible d'Amiens*, trans. and intro. Marcel Proust (Paris: Mercure de France, 1904); *Sésame et les lys* trans. and intro. Marcel Proust (Paris: Mercure de France, 1906). Proust also completed an obituary, "John Ruskin," in *Chronique des arts et la curiosité* (27 January 1900): n.p.

⁷¹ Bernard Berenson, letter to Mary Berenson, 22 January 1918. For a further account of the meeting between Berenson and Proust see Samuels, 133-4. Berenson was a "legendary figure" in Parisian society and Proust knew his work from a series of articles that were published in *La Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, which he had read as he wrote on Ruskin. See Jean-Yves Tadie, *Marcel Proust: A Life*, trans. Euan Cameron (New York: Penguin, 2000), 323. This interest culminates in Proust's comment that "I would very much like to know Berenson," or, more pointedly, the details of how Berenson had acquired his fortune.

⁷² Berenson later noted that found Proust "dirty, untidy, with a voice like a peacock. And his conversation — like his writing — consisted of "interminable explanations of why he could not stay longer, or could not be seen more often (walking back and forth in Place Vendôme). He was eaten alive by snobbery." Morra, *Conversations*, 89.

⁷³ Morra, *Conversations*, 152.

⁷⁴ Berenson, *Rumor and Reflection*, x-xi.

⁷⁵ Edmund White, *Marcel Proust* (New York: Lipper/Viking, 1999), 109.

⁷⁶ White, *Marcel Proust*, 113.

⁷⁷ Marcel Proust, letter to Montesquiou, September 1905, as cited in Marcel Proust, *The Letters of Marcel Proust*, trans. Mina Curtiss (New York: Random House, 1949), 134. Ironically, this process of Proustian accretion was also illustrated by the writer's death, as the artist Paul Helleu — who had been commissioned to produce a 'death etching' — noted of Proust's "horrible, but how handsome" corpse. "You can't imagine how beautiful it is the corpse of a man who hasn't eaten for such a long time," he noted, "everything superfluous is dissolved away." As quoted René Gimpel, *Diary of an Art Dealer*, trans. John Rosenberg (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1966), 195.

For Carter, Proust anticipated this autobiographic "loss of substance" in the novelist character, Bergotte, in his *Search*. "The bulk of his thought had long since passed from his brain into his books," Proust wrote, "He had grown thin, as though they had extracted from him by a surgical operation." Proust, *The Guermantes Way*, vol. 3 of *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. C.K. Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, revised D.J. Enright (1920; reprint, London: Vintage, 2002), 447. See also Carter, *Proust*, nt. 167, 921. In this way, this stripping-away regenerated the productive process and Proust's own state of emaciation, however tragic, was only one of mortal bone and gristle, not artistic substance: a rejuvenation one mourner immediately recognized. Paying his final respects to the

Proust family, Jean Cocteau found his attentions repeatedly drawn to the pile of notebooks that still lay by the writer's bed. "That pile of paper on his left was still alive," he later wrote, "like watches ticking on the wrists of dead soldiers." Francis Steegmuller, *Cocteau: A Biography* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), 296. Cited in Carter, *Proust*, 809. For an account of Proust's death see Céleste Albaret, *Monsieur Proust*, 343-62.

⁷⁸ As this famous description offers: "It is true that, when morning drew near, I would long have settled the brief uncertainty of my waking dream; I would know in what room I was actually lying, would have reconstructed it around me in the darkness, and-fixing my bearings by memory alone, or with the assistance of a feeble glimmer of light at the foot of which I placed the curtains and the window-would have reconstructed it complete and furnished, as an architect and an upholsterer might do, keeping the original plan of the doors and windows; would have replaced the mirrors and set the chest-of-drawers on its accustomed site. But scarcely had daylight itself-and no longer the gleam from a last, dying ember on a brass curtain-rod which I had mistaken for daylight-traced across the darkness, as with a stroke of chalk across a blackboard, its white, correcting ray, than the window, with its curtains, would leave the frame of the doorway in which I had erroneously placed it, while, to make room for it, the writing-table, which my memory had clumsily installed where the window ought to be, would hurry off at full speed, thrusting before it the fireplace and sweeping aside the wall of the passage; a little courtyard would occupy the place where, a moment earlier, my dressing-room had lain, and the dwelling-place which I had built for myself in the darkness would have gone to join all those other dwellings glimpsed in the whirlpool of awakening, put to flight by that pale sign traced above my window-curtains by the uplifted forefinger of dawn." Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*, vol 1. of *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, revised D.J. Enright (London: Vintage, 2002), 223-4.

⁷⁹ Morra, *Conversations*, 64. "Whether I am working or idle, time always passes very swiftly for me. Only in traveling do I stretch it out, multiplying, as it were, Time by Space. And who knows whether or not, through the modern theories which make a single essence of Time and Space, there may be an objective reality behind this subjective interpretation." Morra, *Conversations*, 76.

⁸⁰ Morra, *Conversations*, 76.

⁸¹ If Proust's dream in the *Search* is a self-awakening at the same moment it is a falling back into sleep, then Berenson's image of a life "dreamt-out" as a work of art is, by contrast, a self-conscious somnambulism: a daydream that recasts reality as illusion, fact as narrative, and action as a cultivated inaction.

⁸² Berenson, *Sunset and Twilight*, 102.

⁸³ Freud provided his classic exposition of the "mourning-work" in "Mourning and Melancholy" (1917), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 14 (1914-6), ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974), 243-258. Freud had been fascinated by the psychical affects of grief and its perversion in melancholy since the mid 1890s, see also: Freud, "Draft G. Melancholia" (7 January 1895), *Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, trans. and ed. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1985), 98-105; Freud, "Studies in Hysteria" (1895), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 2 (1892-5), ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974), 162; and "Work of Mourning" in Jean Laplanche and J-B Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Hogarth Press, 1973), 485-6.

⁸⁴ Karin Stephen, *Psycho-analysis and Medicine: a Study of the Wish to Fall Ill* (Cambridge, 1933), 62.

⁸⁵ Freud, "Studies in Hysteria," 162.

⁸⁶ Berenson, "Photography," 193.

⁸⁷ Berenson, *Sketches for a Self-Portrait*, 161-162.

⁸⁸ Berenson, *Sketches for a Self-Portrait*, 161.

⁸⁹ See Calo, *Berenson*, 120-2. Interestingly, Calo also attributes the change in Berenson's public image to world war one. In the period during the inter-war years, the general sense of mass poverty was at odds with Berenson's unchecked consumption, which both publicly and politically insensitive. As

Elizabeth Hardwick rightly noted of Berenson's subsequent post-world war two rejuvenation: "Post-war prosperity meant an unexpected sweetening of his public image. His possessions, his worldliness, his aestheticism seemed in a frightened, inflationary world, at the least harmless and, at best, admirably eternal and shrewd. In the depression decade before the war, his villa, I Tatti, with its splendid library, its pictures . . . might have been though exorbitantly self-centered." Elizabeth Hardwick, "Living in Italy: Reflections on Bernard Berenson," in *Partisan Review* 27 (Winter 1960): 75.

⁹⁰ Berenson, *Aesthetics and History*, 230-231. Berenson considered modernism an aesthetically- incompetent distortion of reality. "Art as art, not art for art, must be life-enhancing," he concluded. "Art tends to prefer subject matter which does not defeat this purpose. It wants to represent people made better, healthier, happier, more graceful, more distinguished, nobler, more heroic than we, not the opposite." Berenson, *Aesthetics and History*, 188.

⁹¹ Calo, *Berenson*, 116.

⁹² Margaret Scolari Barr, letter to Bernard Berenson, mid-1948. As cited in Calo, 117.

⁹³ Berenson, *Rumor and Reflection*, 80. As he noted in this blatant reinvention of his past: "The fact is that, as a youth and young man, I was so convinced of the stability of the universe I was bred into, and accepted it as a matter of course, that no dissatisfaction of mine, no crying need of change, no projected reforms could remotely touch it."

⁹⁴ George Santayana, letter to Mrs. Frederick Winslow, 6 December 1912, in *Letters of George Santayana*, ed. Daniel Cory (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), 121.

⁹⁵ Helen Bohn, "'Homage to B.B.,' a description of Kenneth Clark's Special on Bernard Berenson, The Legendary 20th Century Art Savant," *TV Guide*: n.p., n.d.

⁹⁶ "According to Balzac's theory," Paul Nadar remembered, "all physical bodies are made up entirely of ghostlike images, an infinite number of leaflike skins laid one on top of another. Since Balzac believed man was incapable of making something material from an apparition, from something impalpable—that is, something from nothing—he concluded that every time someone had his photograph taken, one of the spectral layers was removed from the body and transferred to the photograph. Repeated exposures entailed the unavoidable loss of subsequent layers, that is, the very essence of life." Nadar (Felix Tourachon), "My Life as a Photographer," trans. Thomas Repensek, in *October* 5 (summer 1978): 9. As Eduardo Cadava noted of this citation in his *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), "For Balzac, photography is another name for the production of ghostly images. Or, as Benjamin would have it, the ghost is the residue of technological production." Cadava, n.14, 137. In this way, Berensonian connoisseurship can also be considered as a residue of the mechanisms of technical reproducibility.

⁹⁷ John Walker, introduction to Bernard Berenson, *The Bernard Berenson Treasury: A Selection from the Works, Unpublished Writings, Letters, Diaries, and Journals: 1887-1958*, ed. Hanna Kiel (London: Methuen, 1964), 13.

⁹⁸ Mary Berenson, "Life of Bernard Berenson," n.p.

⁹⁹ Morra, *Conversations*, vii-viii.

¹⁰⁰ Kenneth Clark, "Bernard Berenson," *Burlington Magazine* 102 (September 1960): 381-6, 385.

¹⁰¹ As Walter Benjamin recognized, "It has seldom been realized that the listener's naïve relationship to the storyteller is controlled by his interest in retaining what he is told." Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), 97.

¹⁰² Morra, *Conversations*, viii.

¹⁰³ Kenneth Clark, introduction *Forty Years with Berenson* by Nicky Mariano (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), xiii. Clark also noted his skepticism regarding Mariano's suggestion that Berenson was delighted when someone responded to his invective. Clark was no stranger to the animosity Berenson's "little Court" bred and he remembered the dissatisfaction shown when he decided to return to England and pursue his own career. On the acrimonious break between Clark and Berenson, see Sprigg, *Berenson*, 331-3.

¹⁰⁴ Morra, *Conversations*, x.

¹⁰⁵ Morra, *Conversations*, 38.

¹⁰⁶ Secret, *Berenson*, 9; emphasis in original. Naturally, several of his guests found Berenson's inquisitions deeply offensive. For example, the American writer Martha Gellhorn (1908-98) remembered the barrage of "impertinent questions," which began with "Why did Hemmingway leave you?" "It was none of his business," she told Secret, and "I put him down rather sharply." See Secret, "High Walls," *Berenson*, 1-16.

¹⁰⁷ As Mary Berenson remembered of this process, her husband's comments were clearly meant to instruct the members of this audience. "The way she talked was really wonderful," Mary Berenson recalled of the Countess Hortense Serristori (one of Berenson's fashionable companions from St. Moritz), "In a way it was all [Berenson's] training, his very ideas, in fact, but put into French with such admirable clearness and comprehension they startled him. She is certainly the most brilliant woman I know. He was delighted . . ." Mary Berenson, letter to Hannah Whittall Smith, 14 June 1904. Berenson considered the "amnesia of women," "a physiological phenomenon which is not lack of memory but real innocence: complete ignorance with respect to antecedent facts, and almost always with respect to an entire relationship with a man." Morra, *Conversations*, 128-9.

¹⁰⁸ With typical manipulateness, Mary Berenson designated her own professional and emotional replacement. Mariano was not only "more capable," as she acknowledged, but with the resignation of her symbolic functions as wife and secretary, she was finally be able to abandon herself to a life of — albeit incapacitated — leisure.

¹⁰⁹ Mary Berenson, letter to Ray Strachey and Karin Stephen, 17 March 1922. Only two months later, she further noted in her diary that the Berensons already considered Mariano so essential they had made a substantive investment in "good Brazilian stock" so she would be "provided for if we die suddenly." Mary Berenson, diary entry, 24 May 1922. Eight years later, she again restated the value of her decision. "Nicky is extremely accurate and painstaking," she noted, "so that I feel I am doing no wrong to Bernard in making her my substitute and shuffling off what had become a real burden to me." Mary Berenson, letter to Hannah Whittall Smith, 21 February 1930.

Endnotes to Chapter Four — "Nothing but Sheer Nerves:" Geoffrey Scott and the Humanism of Architecture

¹ Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside, 1963), 172.

² Iris Origo, *Images and Shadows: Part of a Life* (London: John Murray, 1970), 104.

³ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 29 February 1926.

⁴ Origo, *Images and Shadows*, 103. Similarly, Edith Wharton recalled of Scott, "no one could be gayer, more flashingly responsive to every appeal of life's ironies and beauties (and for him . . . the two were always interwoven), yet under this laughing surface lay a desert of gloom and despondency." Edith Wharton, *A Backward Glance: An Autobiography* (1933; reprint, New York: Touchstone, 1998), 375.

⁵ Origo, *Images and Shadows*, 107. Origo's biographer was less generous, however, noting how Cutting's hypochondria was habitual and "No one could outdo Sybil where neuroses were concerned, and she spent more and more time in bed on one pretext or another." Caroline Moorhead, *Iris Origo: Marchesa of Val d'Orvia* (London, John Murray, 2000), 32.

⁶ Origo, *Images and Shadows*, 103. Her acuity was further recognized by Mary Berenson, who noted "I had a talk with Iris who observes everything," . . . and thought 'Mummy's insight into things is not always clear!'" Mary Berenson, letter to Bernard Berenson, 1 January 1918. Following her divorce from Scott in 1926, Cutting married the English writer Percy Lubbock in 1926, which concluded the Berensons's friendship with Lubbock.

⁷ Mary Berenson had previously counseled Scott "that such affections might be well and beautiful and inspiring in youth, but become dotty and disgusting if men persisted in them into middle age." Mary Berenson, letter to Bernard Berenson, 5 August 1906.

⁸ Karin Stephen, letter to Mary Berenson, 2 June 1912.

⁹ Bernard Berenson, letter to Mary Berenson, 24 December 1917.

- ¹⁰ Mary Berenson, diary entry, 26 December 1917.
- ¹¹ Bernard Berenson, letter to Mary Berenson, 9 January 1918.
- ¹² Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 2 January 1918.
- ¹³ Mary Berenson, letter to Geoffrey Scott, 16 April 1918. Berenson had described the expression in Cutting's eyes "at the moment of sexual crisis." Edith Wharton also voiced her disapproval of Scott's marriage to that "well-meaning waste of unintelligence," in addition to her concerns for the "profoundly tragic affect" it would have on her friend Mary Berenson's nerves. Wharton, letter to Mary Berenson, 15 February 1918.
- ¹⁴ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 22 February 1918.
- ¹⁵ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 26 February 1918. In this letter Scott came to the realization that his affection for Mary Berenson was a "profounder matter than my fondness for Sybil."
- ¹⁶ Barbara Strachey, *Remarkable Relations: The Story of the Pearsall Smith Women* (New York: Universe Books, 1982), 279-80. Mary Berenson retreated to Paris where she developed a number of ailments before succumbing to a "full-scale nervous breakdown."
- ¹⁷ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Nicky Mariano, 6 June 1919.
- ¹⁸ Roger Vittoz, *Traitement des psychonévroses par la rééducation du contrôle cérébrale* (Paris: Baillière, 1911); trans. H.B. Brooke, *Treatment of Neurasthenia by Teaching of Brain Control* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1911), 6, 7, 56; citation slightly paraphrased, 8.
- ¹⁹ Vittoz, *Treatment of Neurasthenia*, 91. As he noted, "The cliché generally disappears as soon as the patient realizes that it is only due to a past impression for which no further reason exists. It may, however, be so deeply impressed on the brain that it cannot so easily be got rid of." Vittoz, 93-4; italics in original.
- ²⁰ Ottoline Morrell, *Ottoline, the Early Memoirs of Lady Ottoline Morrell*, ed. Robert Gathorne-Hardy (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 237. Scott had first met Morrell through Logan Pearsall Smith, who was close friends with Philip Morrell, the writer's husband, and harbored a misplaced romantic attraction to Morrell herself.
- ²¹ Morrell, *Ottoline*, 90 nt. 1. "The game was played with squares of card, each with a letter on it," Morell's editor noted. "[In] the commonest form the letters, having been out face downwards, were turned up in turn by the players, and the first to claim a word in the ensuing jumble took it; it was allowed by changing with additions a word already taken, to claim it from another player. This game, 'word-making and word-taking,' was regularly played in country houses, at least until the end of the 1914-18 war — particularly on Sundays in the many houses where cards were not allowed."
- ²² Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 1 November, 1923.
- ²³ Eliot had been introduced to Morell by Bertrand Russell, his tutor at Harvard and Mary Berenson's brother in law. As Eliot returned from Switzerland he showed a draft to Ezra Pound as he passed through Paris and *The Waste Land* was published by the *Criterion* journal in London later that year. It was subsequently republished in book-form by Boni and Liveright, Leonard and Virginia Woolf's publishing house.
- ²⁴ T.S. Eliot, "A Game of Chess," *The Waste Land* (London: Boni and Liveright, 1922), line 111. Collected and reprinted *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1940), 31.
- ²⁵ J. Hillis Miller, "T.S. Eliot," *Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth-Century Writers* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1965), 131-90. "Prufrock" illustrates both the influence of the French symbolists, in its sensuality of language and description of base detail, and Eliot's characteristic use of fragmentation, which reflects the disparate experience of modernity.
- ²⁶ Miller, "T.S. Eliot," 144. For Miller, *The Waste Land* is "a structure of fragments," as he writes, in which "there are bits of scenes from all times and places, broken quotations, parodies, 'fragments' shored against ruins in the manner of a cubist collage. Like so much other twentieth-century art 'The Waste Land' works by the abrupt juxtaposition, without connectives, of jagged pieces from diverse contexts. The meaning emerges from the clash of adjacent images . . . These poems are filled with

broken things packed side by side, close but not touching, each detached from the context that would complete it.” Miller, “T.S. Eliot,” 145.

²⁷ Charles Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life,” *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, ed. and trans. Jonathan Mayne (New York: Da Capo Press, 1964), 13.

²⁸ T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” *Prufrock and Other Observations* (London: The Egoist, 1917), lines 105-10. As Eliot writes,

But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
‘That is not at all,
That is not what I meant, at all.’

For Miller, Prufrock’s appeal to a prospective lover constitutes an attempt to “force the moment to crisis,” further illustrating the fragmentary and existential incomprehensibility of language. Miller, “T.S. Eliot,” 148.

²⁹ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (1899: reprint Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 127, 134-5. Veblen found this conservatism both socially regressive, in that it perpetuated the “existing maladjustment of institutions,” and retrogressive, in that it favored the “reversion to a somewhat archaic scheme of life.” Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 137.

³⁰ Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 3-4, 160. As Rabinbach concludes, the “paradoxical relationship between energy and entropy is at the core of the nineteenth-century revolution in modernity: on the one side is a stable and productivist universe of original and indestructible force, and on the other an irreversible system of decay and decline and deterioration. Progress and decline were incorporated in the new physics of the age as antitheses ... The powerful and protean world of work, production, and performance set against the decredend order of fatigue, exhaustion, and decline.” See Rabinbach, *Human Motor*, 66-8.

³¹ George M. Beard, “Neurasthenia or Nervous Exhaustion,” *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 3 (1869): 245-59; *A Practical Thesis on Nervous Exhaustion (Neurasthenia): It’s Symptoms, Nature, Sequences, Treatment*, ed. A. D. Rockwell, (New York: E.B. Treat, 1869); and *American Nervousness: It’s Causes and Consequences: A Supplement to Nervous Exhaustion (Neurasthenia)*, (New York: Putnam, 1881). As George W. Johnston noted the term appeared in *Dunglison’s Dictionary* in 1833, “side by side with its German equivalent, *Nervenschwache*,” and could be traced back to an 1814 medical dictionary and the work of a Milanese Professor, Giovanni Gianini, in the early-1800s. George W. Johnston, as cited in Francis B. Bishop, “Nervousness,” *Transactions of the Medical Society of the District of Columbia*, 1897: 379-80. On Beard’s influence see Charles E. Rosenberg, “The Place of George M. Beard in Nineteenth Century Psychiatry,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 36 (1962): 248.

³² Beard, *Practical Treatise*, 8.

³³ Beard, *American Nervousness*, 98. Beard collaborated with his friend Thomas Alva Edison on a number of scientifically dubious projects and, as Charles E. Rosenberg has noted, his writing often employs electrical analogies to describe neurasthenia. See, for example, Beard, *American Nervousness*, 10, 12, 42.

³⁴ Charles L. Dana, “Dr. George M. Beard: A Sketch of His Life and Work, with Some Personal Reminiscences,” *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry* 10 (1923): 427, 428. The capriciousness of Beard’s scientific approach is exemplified by his practice of electrotherapy, which began with his inheritance of the necessary equipment. “He believed in electricity,” Dana noted, “but when one day his battery didn’t work, he continued his application with dead electrodes and discovered psychotherapeutics.” Dana, “Beard,” 429.

³⁵ F.P. Gosling, *Before Freud: Neurasthenia and the American Medical Community, 1870—1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 16-17. See also, Rosenberg, “Beard”: 245. The expediency of

Beard's disease was obvious, however, and many of his contemporaries considered the neurologist a charlatan. In particular, Edward C. Spitzka — one of the cofounders of the New York Neurological Society with Beard — thought he was the medical equivalent of the showman Phineas Taylor Barnum, noting in an 1881 review of *American Nervousness* that the work was not “worth the ink with which it is printed, much less the paper on which this is done.” See Edward C. Spitzka's comments on Beard in the *St. Louis Clinical Record* 7 (1880): 93, and his review of *American Nervousness* (1880) by George Beard in the *St. Louis Clinical Record* 8 (1881): 122.

³⁶ A.D. Rockwell, ‘Some Causes and Characteristics of Neurasthenia,’ *New York Medical Journal* 58 (1893): 590. As cited in Gosling, *Before Freud*, 13.

³⁷ Beard, *American Nervousness*, 96.

³⁸ See Beard, *American Nervousness*, 293, 338-9, 344-6; and Rosenberg, *Beard*, 254. For a general overview of this point, see Norman Dain, “Insanity: Changing concepts in the United States” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1961), 160-75.

³⁹ Henry M. Lyman, ‘Nervous Disorders in America,’ *Dial* 2 (1881): 81-82. As cited in Gosling, *Before Freud*, 6.

⁴⁰ Beard, *Neurasthenia*, 240-3.

⁴¹ Beard, *Neurasthenia*, 26. Beard viewed hypochondria as a form of biographic affirmation that allowed both an intimate knowledge of the patient's “whole personality” and an interpretation of their “psychosis, conflicts, and maladjustments.” See Dana, 434.

⁴² S. Weir Mitchell, *Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System, Especially in Women* (Philadelphia: Henry C. Lea, 1881), 21, 29.

⁴³ Rabinbach, *Human Motor*, 88.

⁴⁴ Beard, *Neurasthenia*, 38.

⁴⁵ Proust and Ballet, *The Treatment of Neurasthenia*, trans. Peter Campbell Smith (London: Kimpton, 1902), *Treatment of Neurasthenia*, 5.

⁴⁶ Proust and Ballet, *Treatment of Neurasthenia*, 21, 22, 23.

⁴⁷ On Proust's inspirations for *Treatment of Neurasthenia* see Bernard Strauss, *The Maladies of Marcel Proust: Doctors and Disease in his Life*, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980), 83; and Rabinbach, *Human Motor*, 73. As André Malraux suggested, Proust experienced “love, jealousy, and vanity” quite literally as illnesses and his fascination the medical profession led to a “plan to write a book about doctors.” The *Search* is flush with medical references. For example, “Medicine being a compendium of the successive and contradictory mistakes of medical practitioners, when we summon the wisest of them to our aid, the chances that we may be relying on a scientific truth the error of which will be recognized in a few year's time.” Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time: Vol. I: The Way by Swann's*, ed. Christopher Prendergast, trans. Lydia Davis (London: Penguin, 2003), 137. And “The mistakes made by doctors are innumerable. They err habitually on the side of optimism as to treatment, of pessimism as to outcome.” Proust, *In Search of Lost Time: Vol. II: In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower*, ed. Christopher Prendergast, trans. James Grieve (London: Penguin, 2003), 32.

⁴⁸ Silas Weir Mitchell, *Fat and Blood* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1884), 40-1. As cited in Proust and Ballet, *Treatment of Neurasthenia*, 74. Mitchell's famous rest-cure was a combination of complete isolation, enforced bed-rest, a milk diet, and occasional doses of faradic electricity. This treatment was famously criticized by the writer Charlotte Gilman-Perkins, who described her own incarceration by Mitchell in “The Yellow Wallpaper,” *The New England Magazine* 11 no. 5 (January 1892): n.p.

⁴⁹ Proust and Ballet, *Treatment of Neurasthenia*, 55, 5.

⁵⁰ Proust and Ballet, *Treatment of Neurasthenia*, 33.

⁵¹ Karin Stephen, *Psycho-analysis and Medicine: a Study of the Wish to Fall Ill* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), 4, 58-9, 5.

⁵² Mary Berenson, diary entry, 5 February 1892; citation paraphrased.

⁵³ Strauss, *Maladies of Marcel Proust*, 87.

⁵⁴ Proust, letter to Jeanne Proust, 23 September 1904. As cited in Strauss, *Maladies of Marcel Proust*, 25. As Strauss notes, these letters not only constitute the “detailed case history of an illness,” but also

allowed Proust to employ his illnesses for specific purposes, such as avoiding unwanted visitors and allowing him to write with the minimum of disturbance.

⁵⁵ Bernard Berenson, "The Decline of Art" (1907), *The Italian Painters of the Renaissance* (London: Phaidon, 1952), 199.

⁵⁶ Bernard Berenson, "The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance" (1896), *The Italian Painters of the Renaissance* (London: Phaidon, 1952), 61.

⁵⁷ Mary Logan (Mary Berenson), "The New Art Criticism," *Atlantic Monthly* 76 (August 1895): 263-70.

⁵⁸ Mary Berenson, "The Philosophy of Enjoyment of Art," anonymously published review of *The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance* by Bernard Berenson, *Atlantic Monthly* 77 (June 1896): 847.

⁵⁹ Mary-Ann Calo, *Bernard Berenson and the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 56-69. For Calo, while Mary Berenson considered this concept of life-enhancement as the satisfaction of a quasi-intellectual debate, the connoisseur considered it the realization of "maximum sensation for minimal effort." The difference in their interpretations is evident, Calo states, when Costelloe's references to Raphael are juxtaposed against Berenson's discussion in *The Florentine Painters*, where he argues that the viewer "exhausts" themselves trying to take in Cimabue because of the obscurity of his figure's masses and positions. Thus we strain more than we would in viewing the actual objects, temporarily diminishing our capacity for art. Berenson, *Florentine Painters*, 44. See also Calo, *Berenson*, n. 82, 200-1.

⁶⁰ Mary Berenson had a brief affair with Obrist, which prompted the sculptor to suggest she had stolen his ideas and incorporated them into *The Florentine Painters* (1895), suspicions that Berenson insisted were "ungrounded." On this controversy see, Barbara Strachey and Jayne Samuels eds., *Mary Berenson; A Self Portrait from Her Letters and Diaries* (London: V. Gollancz, 1983), 174. Obrist considered Berenson an impatient and arrogant critic, who was too quick to discard any theories that did not affirm his own. Obrist was interested in the content of art, rather than its formal qualities, and he remained dismissive of Berenson's uncompromising formalism. (These differences, as Calo and Samuels have separately argued, meant that Obrist's advice would have been of limited use when Mary Berenson asked him in 1895 to assist in the "fine-tuning" of Berenson's aesthetic theorizations. See also Calo, *Berenson*, 46-55.

⁶¹ Similarly, the historian Rémy G. Saisselin argued that the satisfaction of commercial desire was the foundation of Berenson's aesthetic theories. See Saisselin, "I Tatti; or, Sublimating Sales," *Bricabracomania: The Bourgeois and the Bibelot* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985). See also Calo, *Berenson*, n. 98, 202.

⁶² Mary Berenson, diary entry, 14 September 1895.

⁶³ Mary Berenson, diary entry, 13 May 1895.

⁶⁴ Vernon Lee, "New Books," review of *The Florentine Painters* by Bernard Berenson, *Mind* 5 (1896): 271. Following this argument, Calo argued, "One of the things Berenson sought in art was a vigorous sense of the life he was unable to experience in his daily reality. The work of art became for him a magical device capable of producing the physical sensations he craved, without expending the effort they typically required." Calo, *Berenson*, n. 90, 202.

⁶⁵ The ridiculousness of the couple's aesthetic experiments is obvious in an account by Ethyl Smyth, who accompanied Lee and Antruster-Thomson on a visit to the Vatican Galleries. "Vernon suddenly said: 'Kit! Show us that bust!' Kit's proceedings were remarkable; in dead silence she advanced, then retreated, shaded her eyes, and finally ejaculated: 'Look at that Johnny! How he sings. . . how he sings!' Various technical details were then pointed out as proving their contention, though Vernon considered these as less important than the 'singing' quality discovered by her friend." Ethyl Smyth, *What Happened Next* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1940), 157. As cited in John MacArthur, *Geoffrey Scott, the Baroque, and the Picturesque*, unpublished manuscript, 4-5.

⁶⁶ Geoffrey Scott, epilogue to *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* (London: Constable, 1924), 185-6: citation altered slightly.

⁶⁷ Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 23 August 1906.

⁶⁸ Beard, *Nervous Exhaustion*, 47.

⁶⁹ Mary Berenson, diary entry, 26 September 1907.

⁷⁰ Desmond MacCarthy, Obituary of Geoffrey Scott, *Manchester Guardian* (15 August, 1929), n.p. As cited in David Watkins, introduction to *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste* by Geoffrey Scott (London: Architectural Press, 1980), xvii.

⁷¹ Edith Wharton, *A Backward Glance: An Autobiography* (1933; reprint, New York: Touchstone, 1998), 375.

⁷² Aldous Huxley, *Letters of Aldous Huxley* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 196.

⁷³ Elizabeth Hardwick, "Living in Italy: Reflections on Bernard Berenson," *A View of My own Life* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1962), 203-14. Interestingly, Hardwick equated Berenson's sullenness less to a sense of ennui than to his monstrous ego. "When we mailed a letter of introduction to him," she noted, "he accepted it as a bizarre formality because, of course, he who saw everyone was willing and happy to see yet another. One was never tempted to think it was ennui or triviality that produced this state of addiction; the absorbing inclination seemed to be a simple fear of missing someone, almost as if these countless visitors and travellers had a secret the exile pitifully wished to discover." Hardwick, "Living in Italy," 204.

⁷⁴ Mary Berenson, letter to her family, 28 January 1913. Berenson was less graciously inclined to Pinsent, who she characterized in the same letter as "a human eel-monkey [who] slips out of your grasp and chatters in a tree, so to speak."

⁷⁵ Richard Maxwell Dunn, "The Villa I Tatti: The Firm and The Infirm," *Geoffrey Scott and the Berenson Circle: Literary and Aesthetic Life in the Early 20th Century* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 80-1.

⁷⁶ See Cecil Pinsent, "List of Clients: 1908-51," included as Appendix C in Ethne Clark, "Cecil Pinsent: Architecture and Landscape Design," M.Phil diss. (De Montfort University, 2001), 113-25. On the partnership between Scott and Pinsent see: Richard Maxwell Dunn, "The Villa I Tatti: The Firm and The Infirm," *Geoffrey Scott*, 79-90; and Richard Maxwell Dunn, "An Architectural Partnership: C. Pinsent and G. Scott," in *Cecil Pinsent and his Gardens in Tuscany*, Marcello Fantoni, Heidi Flores, and John Pfordresher eds. (Florence, Edifir, 1996), 52-71.

⁷⁷ Origo, *Images and Shadows*, 127-8. As Origo notes, quoting from Mr. Beebe in Forster's *A Room with a View* for comic effect, "They are, of course, not all equally [resident,] some are here for trade, for example. Origo, *Images and Shadows*, 127-8. As a child, Pinsent was Origo's closest friend and she recognized her affection for him when she asked his family for his slide-ruler as a *memento mori*.

⁷⁸ While Pinsent studied at the Architectural Association from 1901-3, Watkin disputes Edward Warren's claim in his obituary of Scott (*RIBA Journal* 37, 1929: 25) that he also attended the AA. While this claim is also made by Dunn in his biography of Scott, Watkin bases his dissension on a thorough review of the Student's Admissions Books at the AA. (Scott's attendance of the Association is the matter of some conjecture; with the historian David Watkin rightly noting that there is no formal record of his enrolment.)

⁷⁹ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, mid-December, 1907

⁸⁰ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 15 January, 1908.

⁸¹ Wharton, *A Backward Glance*, 67. Codman also furnished Wharton's New York townhouse. On his career see: Florence Codman, *The Clever Young Boston Architect* (Augusta: KJ Litho, 1970); Lamia Doumato, Ogden Codman Jr. (Monticello: Vance Biographies, 1989); and Pauline C. Metcalf ed., *Ogden Codman and the Decoration of Houses* (Boston: Athenaeum, 1988).

⁸² See Scott, letters to Mary Berenson, 10 July, 11 July, 5 August, 1909. Codman preferred to acquire postcards rather than visiting the châteaux they described and he was further limited, Scott noted, by his refusal to stay anywhere other than few hotels in France. Following the substantial inheritance he received following his wife's death, Codman abandoned any pretence of professionalism and retired to the palatial luxury of his Château de Grègy.

⁸³ Edith Wharton, "The Age of Innocence," in *New York Novels: The House of Mirth; The Custom of the Country; The Age of Innocence* (New York: Modern Library, 1998), 722.

⁸⁴ Clough Williams-Ellis, *Architecture Errant: The Autobiography of Clough Williams Ellis* (London: Constable, 1971), 117.

- ⁸⁵ T.J. Jackson, *Reason in Architecture* (London: John Murray, 1906), viii.
- ⁸⁶ Reginald Blomfield, 'On Architecture,' *RIBA Journal* 12 (25 February 1905): 237-54.
- ⁸⁷ As Pinsent later recalled, it was a question of remaining in London and working as an assistant draughtsman, or emigrating into the unknown. "It was a choice between plodding on in London," he noted to his brother, "or plunging into . . . a wild speculation. As you know, I plunged, and from a point of view of living a full life have never regretted it." Cecil Pinsent, letter to Basil Pinsent, 14 March 1935. As cited in Clarke, "Cecil Pinsent," 54.
- ⁸⁸ Mary Berenson, letter to Hannah Whitall Smith, 16 January 1907.
- ⁸⁹ Mary Berenson, letter to Hannah Whitall Smith, 21 November 1909. On Scott's role and the division of duties, see also Dunn, "An Architectural Partnership," 50.
- ⁹⁰ Nicky Mariano, *Forty Years With Berenson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 42.
- ⁹¹ Kenneth Clark, *Looking at Pictures* (London: John Murray, 1960), 75. See also, William Weaver, *A Legacy of Excellence: The Story of Villa I Tatti* (New York: Harry Abrams, 1997), 101.
- ⁹² Mary Berenson, letter to Alys Russell and Logan Pearsall Smith, 7 October 1911; letter to Karin Costelloe, 19 April 1912. Berenson also noted that Scott, when under pressure, "becomes a dreadful wreck, . . . and when his nerves go to pieces, everything is difficult for him."
- ⁹³ See Ernest Samuels, *Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Connoisseur* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1979), 116.
- ⁹⁴ Mary Berenson, diary entry, 13 August 1907.
- ⁹⁵ Scott, letter to Jessie Scott, 20 September, 1913.
- ⁹⁶ Mary Berenson, letter to Geoffrey Scott, 23 October 1913.
- ⁹⁷ Mary Berenson, letter to her family, 2 February 1913.
- ⁹⁸ Geoffrey Scott, *A Box of Paints* (London: self-published, 1924), 35-6. Triton is the son of Poseidon and Amphitrite, to whom he acts as herald to (hence the conch shell).
- ⁹⁹ Scott further ridiculed Strong's seriousness with a caricature he drew during the works on le Balze, which has an asinine caption that reads, "The legs of Charles Augustus Strong / With difficulty move along, / Unless digestion, books, and weather / Combine to help them on together. / The Earth, for comfort on his knees, / Should slant precisely five degrees, / But, more important than the rest, / HIS TROUSERS SHOULD BE HUNG NOT PRESSED!"
- ¹⁰⁰ Cecil Pinsent, 'Giardini all'italiana, con i fioriti che più vi si adattano,' *Il Giardino Fiorito* (June 1931): 69-73. As cited in Clark, "Cecil Pinsent," 46.
- ¹⁰¹ As Wharton noted of Lee's facilitation of this work, "Miss Paget [Lee] has such a prodigious list of villas for me to see here and is taking so much trouble to arrange expeditions . . . Her long familiarity with the Italian countryside, and the wide circle of her Italian friendships, made it easy for her to guide me to all the right places and put me in relation with people would could enable me to visit them." Edith Wharton, letter to Sally Norton, 17 March 1903. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. As cited in Clark, "Cecil Pinsent," 60.
- ¹⁰² See Ethne Clarke, 'A Biography of Cecil Ross Pinsent, 1884-1963,' *Garden History* 26 no. 2 (Winter, 1998); 176-191, and Marcello Fantoni, Heidi Flores, and John Pfordresher eds., *Cecil Pinsent and his Gardens in Tuscany* (Florence, Edifir, 1996).
- ¹⁰³ C.E. Mallows and F.W. Lacey, "Design for Proposed Municipal Offices, Bournemouth," in *The Builder* 89 no. 32: 617-20. See also Clarke, "Cecil Pinsent," 23-7, 38; and Gertrude Jekyll and Lawrence Weaver, *Gardens for Small Country Houses* (London: Country Life, 1911).
- ¹⁰⁴ Kenneth Clark, *Another Part of the Wood* (London: John Murray, 1974), 163. Clark also criticized the lack of windows in I Tatti's libraries, which foreclosed any view of the landscape beyond in order to concentrate the scholar's attention on the texts at hand.
- ¹⁰⁵ Bernard Berenson, *Sketches for a Self-Portrait*, (New York: Pantheon, 1949), 168. Despite his protestations at its formal aspects, Berenson noted how Pinsent "understood my wants better than I did" by provided him with a garden that "now after many years I love it as much as one can love any object or complex of objects not human."
- ¹⁰⁶ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 1 May 1908.

¹⁰⁷ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 72.

¹⁰⁸ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 79-80, 238.

¹⁰⁹ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 86-7.

¹¹⁰ Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, mid-November 1909.

¹¹¹ Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 16 February 1907.

¹¹² Umberto Morra, *Conversations with Berenson*, trans. Florence Hammond (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 171-2. For Berenson the terms “dilettante” and “dandy” were interchangeable as pejoratives.

¹¹³ George Santayana, ‘The Idler and his Works,’ *Saturday Review* (New York, May 15, 1954). As cited in Sylvia Sprigge, *Berenson: A Biography*, (Cambridge: Riverside, 1960), 265.

¹¹⁴ Mary Berenson, diary entry, 5 March 1898.

¹¹⁵ Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside, 1963), 172.

¹¹⁶ J.K. Husymans, *Against the Grain (A Rebours)* (New York: Dover, 1969), 64.

¹¹⁷ Logan Pearsall Smith, *Unforgotten Years* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1939), 186-90. As he admitted, “I was pleased to oblige the great painter, I was delighted to enjoy his company and watch him paint; but the task was one of the most arduous I have ever undertaken.” Smith, *Unforgotten Years*, 186-7.

¹¹⁸ William A. Carter, *Marcel Proust: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), nt. 114, 918. On their relationship see also George D. Painter, *Marcel Proust, The Later Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964), 346; and Edmund White, *Marcel Proust* (New York: Lipper / Viking, 1999), 152.

¹¹⁹ Edmund White, *Marcel Proust* (New York: Lipper / Viking, 1999), 59. In 1883, Montesquiou was visited by the poet Stéphane Mallarmé who, in turn, passed on his description of the decadent surroundings to his friend Husymans. “It was late at night when the poet was shown over the house, and the only illumination came from a few scattered candelabra; yet in the flickering light Mallarmé observed that the door-bell was in fact a sacring-bell, that one room was furnished as a monastery cell and another as the cabin of a yacht, and that the third contained a Louis Quinze pulpit, three or four cathedral stalls, and a strip of altar railing. He was shown, too, a sled picturesquely placed on a snow-white bearskin, a library of rare books in suitably coloured bindings, and the remains of an unfortunate tortoise whose shell had been coated with gold paint. According to Montesquiou writing many years later in his memoirs, the sight of these marvels left Mallarmé speechless with amazement. ‘He went away,’ records Montesquiou, ‘in a state of silent exaltation . . . I do not doubt therefore that it was in the most admiring, sympathetic and sincere good faith that he retailed to Huysmans what he had seen during the few moments he spent in Ali-Baba's Cave.’” Robert Baldick, *The Life of J.-K. Huysmans* (1955; New York: Dedalus, 2006), 122-3.

¹²⁰ Huysmans, *Against the Grain*, 20. Des Essenites further sought to resist this vulgarity through the connoisseurship of perfume, in which “a natural aptitude supplemented by an erudite education” allowed the aesthete to magnify such olfactory sensations and combine them “into a whole that constitutes a work of art.” Huysmans, *Against the Grain*, 106.

¹²¹ Huysmans, *Against the Grain*, 40-2, 43, 48-9.

¹²² Huysmans, *Against the Grain*, 64, 25, 81.

¹²³ Nicky Mariano, *Forty Years with Berenson* (New York: Knopf, 1966), 15-6. Mariano’s description of Cutting’s immersion in a “refinement of luxury” is also echoed Eliot’s description of the female protagonist in his “A Game of Chess,” who is often read as a counterpart to J. Alfred Prufrock and is similarly engaged in a romantic appeal to an distracted other:

“The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,

From satin cases poured in rich profusion;
 In vials of ivory and coloured glass
 Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
 Unguent, powdered or liquid — troubled, confused
 And drowned in the sense of odours; stirred by the air
 That freshened from the window, these ascended
 In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,
 Flung their smoke into the laquearia,
 Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.”

The role of furnishings and, in particular, the reflectiveness of blinding luxury — with a “burnished throne,” “glitter of jewels,” and “satin cases” — is obvious. In addition, Eliot also refers to an olfactory overwhelming, a “drowning in the sense of odors,” which emanates “in rich profusion” from a series of “strange synthetic perfumes” that are not only “Unguent, powdered or liquid,” but also result in a state of being “troubled, confused.” TS Eliot, “A Game of Chess,” *The Wasteland* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1922), lines 77-89.

¹²⁴ Husymans, *Against the Grain*, 41.

¹²⁵ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 215-7, 215.

¹²⁶ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 240, citation slightly altered.

¹²⁷ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 235.

¹²⁸ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 235.

¹²⁹ John MacArthur, *Geoffrey Scott, the Baroque, and the Picturesque*, unpublished manuscript, 13-4. As MacArthur rightly notes, “What Scott might have taken from Stephen’s lessons in Bergson would have supported the concept of motor-images as a cause of affects, which he already knew from Lee, Lipps and Wölfflin. It would also have been relevant to the split between the first three humanist values of sensory perception and ‘coherence’, which required conceptualisation. This pairing of perception and cognition, body and mind is not an unfamiliar one, but in Scott’s exposition it has some of the character of Bergson’s insistence of the undifferentiatedness of the *durée* and the differentiating character of thought. . . . Like Bergson, Scott supposes that we have the world twice, conceptual thought and a logical understanding of phenomena being a useful analysis, but one that remains an abstraction, which should not be mistaken for the facts of the continuous undifferentiated change of the *durée*.” For a chronological, rather than content-based, account of Scott and Stephen’s “long philosophical discussions into the night” see Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott*, 34.

¹³⁰ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 254-5.

¹³¹ Vernon Lee, “Empathy,” in *The Beautiful: An Introduction to Psychological Aesthetics* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 61-69.

¹³² Vernon Lee, “Æsthetic Irradiation and Purification,” in *The Beautiful*, 147-52.

¹³³ Jacques Derrida, *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, Pascale-Anne Brault & Michael Naas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), 12.

¹³⁴ See Mark Jarzombek, *The Psychologizing of Modernity: Art, Architecture, and History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

¹³⁵ Sigmund Freud, “On the Grounds of Detaching a Particular Syndrome from Neurasthenia under the Description Anxiety-Neurosis” (1895), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 3, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974), 90. As Strachey notes, this article was the insistence Freud used the term “anxiety neurosis” in an expanded articulation. This disorder, which is the first of the neuroses, could be detached from the panoply of neurasthenic symptoms “because all of its components can be grouped around the chief symptom of anxiety, because each one of them has a definite relationship to anxiety.” Freud eventually defined three types of anxiety neuroses: objective anxiety, which is based on a real physical threat; neurotic anxiety, in which there is a conscious sense of being overwhelmed by irrational unconscious desires; and moral anxiety, which results from the transgression of social codes and its associated sense of shame and guilt.

- ¹³⁶ Freud, "On the Grounds of Detaching," 114, 112; italics in original.
- ¹³⁷ Freud, "On the Grounds of Detaching," 114.
- ¹³⁸ Freud, "On the Grounds of Detaching," 104.
- ¹³⁹ Proust and Ballet, *Treatment of Neurasthenia*, 54.
- ¹⁴⁰ See Bernard Berenson, "A Word for Renaissance Churches," *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1902), 64, see also, 66, 69. This article was written in response to Ruskin's criticism of renaissance church architecture on the basis that it was insufficiently "religious." By contrast, Berenson reduced the intellectual drive of renaissance architecture to a "central problem": the aesthetic resolution of supporting an arched dome over the plan of a Greek cross. See Berenson, "A Word for Renaissance Churches," 68-9.
- ¹⁴¹ Berenson, "A Word for Renaissance Churches," 69.
- ¹⁴² Berenson, preface to *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art*, vi.
- ¹⁴³ Scott, *Architecture of Humanism*, 227.
- ¹⁴⁴ Henrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance and Baroque*, trans. Kathrin Simon (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967), 46.
- ¹⁴⁵ Berenson, "A Word for Renaissance Churches," 71.
- ¹⁴⁶ Berenson, preface to *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art*, v.
- ¹⁴⁷ Berenson, "A Word for Renaissance Churches," 75-6, 70.
- ¹⁴⁸ Sigmund Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams" (1900), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 5, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974), 160, 162. Freud recognized the significance of this work, later noting in 1931 that it constituted "the most important of all the discoveries it has been my good fortune to make. Insight such as this falls to ones lot once in a lifetime." Freud, forward to "Interpretation of Dreams," 149.
- ¹⁴⁹ Freud, "Interpretation of Dreams," 173; emphasis in original. In these terms, the psychoanalytic interpretation involved the reproduction and translation of the dream's meaning to the analysand. As such, it constitutes, as the analyst J.-B. Pontalis, memorably noted, "a truce, a *delightful complicity*" between these two figures. J.-B. Pontalis, "Between the Dream as Object and the Dream-Text," *Frontiers in Psychoanalysis: Between the Dream and Psychic Pain*, trans. Catherine Cullen and Philip Cullen (New York: International Universities Press, 1981), 34; emphasis in original.
- ¹⁵⁰ Freud, "Interpretation of Dreams," 190. "If I now declare that wish-fulfilment is the meaning of every dream," he noted, "so that there can be no other dreams other than wish dreams, I know beforehand that I shall meet with the most emphatic contradiction. My critics will object." Freud, "Interpretation of Dreams," 185.
- ¹⁵¹ Freud, "Interpretation of Dreams," 218.
- ¹⁵² Pontalis, "Between the Dream as Object and the Dream-Text," 38, 36; emphasis in original.
- ¹⁵³ Pontalis, "Between the Dream as Object and the Dream-Text," 40.
- ¹⁵⁴ Christopher Bollas, *Being a Character: Psychoanalysis and Self Experience* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1992), 4, 18, 17.
- ¹⁵⁵ Bollas, *Being a Character*, 65.
- ¹⁵⁶ Sigmund Freud, "The Psychological Mechanism of Forgetfulness" (1898), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 3, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974), 290-1. As Strachey notes, Freud is drawing attention here to an observation that when a memory is repressed, an unusually vivid image often appears in the conscious, which is not the repressed memory itself, but an image that is closely related to the repressed memory. The following year, Freud called this phenomena "Screen Memories" in his 1899 paper of the same name, and in one of his last papers, "Constructions in Analysis" (1937), he related these images vividness to hallucinations. In all of these examples, Freud specifically uses the German, *überdeutlich*, which Strachey translates as "ultra-clear."
- ¹⁵⁷ Freud, "Psychical Mechanism of Forgetfulness," 291. He subsequently notes that this Italian's resolution of his forgetfulness provides "a good example of the efficacy of psychoanalytical therapy,

which aims at correcting the repressions and displacements and which removes the symptoms by reinstating the genuine psychological object.” Freud, “Psychical Mechanism of Forgetfulness,” 295.

¹⁵⁸ Freud, “Psychical Mechanism of Forgetfulness,” 297, 289.

¹⁵⁹ Freud, “Psychical Mechanism of Forgetfulness,” 295, 296.

¹⁶⁰ Sigmund Freud, “Screen Memories,” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 3, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974), 320, 322.

¹⁶¹ Freud, “Screen Memories,” 307, 315-6. Interestingly, Freud had concluded his account of the “mechanism of forgetfulness” by alluding to the usefulness of this absentmindedness, noting how his misplacing of address card he needed to make a reluctant visit expressed “the same intention [that] had been operative as my curiously modified act of forgetting.” Freud, “Psychical Mechanism of Forgetfulness,” 297.

¹⁶² Adam Phillips, “Freud and the Uses of Forgetting,” *On Flirtation: Psychoanalytical Essays on the Uncommitted Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 31. In addition, Phillips further notes that Freud’s formulation of the psychological defenses — repression, repetition, transference, and sublimation — provide a “repertoire of forms of forgetting.” Phillips, “Freud and the Uses of Forgetting,” 24-5. On the architectural significance of forgetting see also Adrian Forty, introduction to *The Art of Forgetting*, eds. Adrian Forty and Susanne Kuchler (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 1-18.

¹⁶³ Blomfield considered Scott’s *Architecture* a “lucid and convincing exposure of the fallacies that made so much of nineteenth-century criticism of architecture worthless[, which] establishes architecture in its rightful place as an art sovereign and complete in itself.” Blomfield, *Modernism*, London: MacMillan, 1934), 16, 25.

Endnotes to Epilogue — A Veil of Ether

¹ Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain* (1924; reprint, London: Vintage, 1999), 4.

² Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (London: Blackwell, 1990), 13. On this work see: T.C. Lord, “A Paradigm Case of Polemical History: Terry Eagleton’s *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*,” *Clio* 22 no. 4 (Fort Wayne, Texas: Clio, 1993): 337, and L. van der Watt, “A Critical Appraisal of Terry Eagleton’s Notion of the Aesthetic,” *Art Criticism* 17 no. 2 (Stony Brook, New York: State University of New York at Stony Brook Press, 2002): 106-15.

³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987). On an explanation of Kant’s philosophic dynamics, see Fiona Hughes, *Kant’s Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (Continuum, London: 2010).

⁴ Terry Eagleton, “The Name of the Father,” *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, 262-78. For Eagleton, Freud’s conception of art does not exist within an autonomous privileged realm — as *l’art pour l’art* — but rather “is continuous with the libidinal processes which go to make up daily life.”

⁵ Sigmund Freud, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” (1920), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 18 (1920-2), ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974), 30, 32.

⁶ Geoffrey Scott, “The Basilica of St Peter’s,” *Country Life* 60 (1926): 1000-6, and *Country Life* 61 (1927): 16-23. In particular, Scott noted how the period in which Bramante worked (approx. 1474-1514) exemplified the renaissance’s creative fervor. This was a period in which “[h]umanism was at its zenith,” he argued, “In architecture this meant to depend for all effect on purely abstract form, clear immediately to the intelligence, yet related to the movement and physical awareness of the body.” Scott, “Basilica of St. Peter’s”: 1003-4. If the ‘humanizing’ aspect of renaissance architecture culminated in the work of Bramante, which were “[e]xercises in the poetry of architecture,” he subsequently concluded, then — by contrast — Michelangelo’s baroque additions to St. Peter’s “sought to stress the energetic rather than the static physical implications in architectural form.” Scott, 18. Resulting in an architectural energetics that was both more vitalizing than Bramante’s explorations and more enervating.

⁷ Scott, "Basilica of St. Peter's": 23.

⁸ Scott, "Basilica of St. Peter's": 1000.

⁹ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 23 August 1906.

¹⁰ Edward Warren, obituary of Geoffrey Scott, *RIBA Journal* 37 (9 November 1929): 25. This obituary reads, in full, "By the death of Geoffrey Scott, architectural literature has sustained a severe, and indeed irreparable loss, in the removal of a supremely acute and highly developed intelligence trained in the observation, study, and practice of architecture, not in the narrow sense of mere professional preparation, but in that sympathetic interest and attraction, and, therefore, to a predominant degree, educated, in the highest sense, by acute and discriminating observation.

His personal bias in architectural study was towards the various forms of the Italian Renaissance, confirmed and stimulated by his long residence in Italy, and his careful and scholarly study of its manifestations in that country were largely devoted to confutation of prevalent nineteenth century criticisms of that manner."

¹¹ Anon., obituary of Geoffrey Scott, *The Builder* (30 August 1929): 337.

¹² Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf* 2, ed. Anne Oliver Bell (New York: Harcourt, 1979), 36. Woolf also noted to Vita Sackville-West, "And now I see Geoffrey Scott is dead, at my age — no a year younger. Do you mind? Does it bring back the afternoon when the Salvation Army called, and the mews where he almost strangled you when you were late, and the scene in the dorm? I didn't like him; at least I didn't trust him for some reason." Woolf, letter to Vita Sackville West, 15 August 1929. As cited in Richard Maxwell Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott and the Berenson Circle: Literary and Aesthetic Life in the Early 20th Century* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 300. Scott's closest confidante, Mary Berenson, received the news of his death in a letter from Wharton. "Both Nicky [Mariano] and I cannot help a feeling of relief at the passing of this tormented soul," she wrote to her husband. "For we don't believe that any amount of success would change the inner makings of that man." Mary Berenson, letter to Bernard Berenson, late-August 1929.

¹³ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Christopher Hibbert (New York: Penguin Classics, 1986).

¹⁴ Geoffrey Scott, letter to Mary Berenson, 13 December 1927. Despite this stated enthusiasm, the Boswell scholar Frederick Pottle remembered Scott "spent an equal amount of time losing at cards to Colonel Islam, his employer." Pottle, as cited in Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott*, 295. For her part, Mary Berenson was notably ungracious in recalling the final instances she met Scott during his penultimate visit to England. "Both visits," she remarked, "were eminently unsatisfactory and marked the end of our friendship." Mary Berenson, diary entry, 3 November 1928. Moreover, in her final letter to Berenson — written shortly before her death in 1944 — she not only apologized for "the different so-called love affairs" she had embarked on, but also especially noted, "The one I chiefly regret is Geoffrey, because it gave you so much annoyance and inconvenience, and was so full of absurdity in itself. Mary Berenson, letter to Bernard Berenson, 22 May 1944.

¹⁵ Scott was characteristically disdainful of the United States, which he considered vulgar, unsophisticated and barbarous. As his secretary, Margaret Ross, later recalled "he disliked anything American [and] would casually remark 'Before I came among the barbarians.'" Margaret Ross, interview with James Clifford, as cited in Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott*, 292. Similarly, although he received "very great pleasure from [the] clear directness" of the architecture of Manhattan, noting how he found the expressive modernity of New York City "very stimulating," he peevishly concluded that these works were simply a feat of human engineering and devoid of any intrinsic aesthetic merit.

¹⁶ Dr. Simon Flexner, letter to Dorothy Scott, 3 September 1929. As cited in Dunn, *Geoffrey Scott*, 315.

¹⁷ Mann, *The Magic Mountain*, 34. If Gilman's protagonist is imprisoned within the surface, then Mann's anti-hero is submerged within the pervasive interiority of this comfortable object world. See Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper," *The New England Magazine* 11 no. 5 (January 1892): n.p.; and "Why I Wrote *The Yellow Wallpaper*," *The Forerunner* (October 1913): n.p. On medical readings of Gilman's work see: Martha J. Cutter, "The Writer as Doctor: New Models of Medical Discourse in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Later Fictions," *Literature and Medicine* 20 (Fall 2001): 151–

182; Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1980), *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); and Paula A. Treichler, "Escaping the Sentence: Diagnosis and Discourse in 'The Yellow Wallpaper,'" *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* (1984): 61-75.

¹⁸ Mann, *The Magic Mountain*, 4.

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