

**CHASING LEISURE:
A HERMENEUTIC OF LATE MODERNITY**

by
Stephen Robert Svenson

A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfillment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Sociology

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2015

© Stephen R. Svenson 2015

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Stephen R. Svenson

Abstract

This dissertation addresses shortcomings in the sociological study of leisure through providing a new conceptual approach for understanding human action and meaning making. It reformulates leisure as the *leisure imaginary*, the sphere in which the individualized person works out problems of identity and community. The leisure imaginary takes the Heideggerian starting point that our being is a being before death and that it is our fundamental preoccupation with death that gives life its sense of urgency. In late modernity, however, our coping mechanisms for dealing with our fear and anxiety over death have been compromised which has left people disembedded and individualized. It is the thesis of this dissertation that leisure imaginaries have arisen to fill the gap left by institutions like religion and the family that formerly provided ontological security and ontological exigence. The leisure imaginary, then, is a response not only to our being before death but to the conditions of late modernity, the anxieties and preoccupations of our time, our social imaginary or lifeworld. It is argued that the leisure imaginary allows for a stronger interpretive understanding of the late modern conditions that people encounter and their responses to these conditions. The different permutations of the leisure imaginary exemplify different ethically oriented narratives of re-embedding in the pursuit of a meaningful life. In addition, and in contrast to academic treatments of leisure today, this work argues for the value of contemplative or philosophical leisure and the need to preserve, and recreate as needed, a space for this vocation.

Acknowledgements

I have said that the dissertation as solitary project is somewhat of a lie and that any dissertation is essentially a community project. This is perhaps more the case with this dissertation than most given that the ideas developed herein were developed in dialogue with a community of colleagues, mentors, students, friends, and enemies. Additionally, without the various communities that provided emotional, financial, spiritual, and intellectual support, most especially over the last several years, this dissertation could not have been brought to its completion.

Foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor and mentor Dr. Kieran Bonner, whose radical interpretive perspective and personal example have been an inspiration. Committee member Dr. Alan Blum provided key interventions throughout the writing of the dissertation and as principal investigator of the CIHR funded *City Life and Well-Being: The Grey Zone of Health and Illness*, provided a forum for the presentation of early stages of my research as well as key funding for the major case study. Committee member Dr. Lorne Dawson in a course on the sociology of religion first encouraged the use of Charles Taylor's (2004) social imaginary in my research and provided key feedback and editing on an earlier draft of the dissertation. Dr. Bryan Smale, my internal/external examiner from Recreation and Leisure Studies shared an interest in phenomenological geography and had many excellent suggestions and readings that helped inform the work. My external examiner Dr. Paul Moore posed many excellent questions during the defence that will help to orient my work on the leisure imaginary in the future. Thanks to you all for strengthening my work.

Friends that I would like to thank who either read and discussed with me early drafts and chapters or helped with organizing, editing or formatting include (Dr.) Gordon Varney, Katharina Walton, David Knight, Bruce Fournier, Matt Mikitka, Amelia Ruby-Howard and Stephen Markan. I am greatly indebted to conversations and suggestions from friend and colleague John Faichney. Thank you to Tododjim Mali, Eileen Lyons, and Aurelio Ayala for translations from the French. I would also like to thank sympathetic and encouraging colleagues and sometimes former professors Dr. Rick Helmes-Hayes, Joe Barbera, Dr. Philip Savage, Dr. Laurence Mussio, Dr. Alex Sevigny, Dr. Augie Fleras, Pat Newcombe-Welch, Dr. Luis Aguiar, Dr. Glenda Wall, Dr. Pat Elliot, Dr. Richard Christy, Dr. Lucy Lucissano, Dr. Alex Latta, Dr. Alicia Sliwinski, Dr. David Seljak, Dr. Chad Wriglesworth, Dr. Geoff McBoyle, Dr. Geoff Wall, Dr. Daniel Scott, Dr. John

Greenwood, Dr. Debbie Chapman, Dr. John Goyder, Dr. Keith Warriner, and Dr. Suzan Ilcan for their support. I have also appreciated the support of the chairs of the various departments that I have worked in who have indulged my course innovations and the student trips to New Orleans. They include: Dr. Graham Knight, Dr. Geoffrey Rockwell, Dr. Michel Desjardins, Dr. Peter Urmetzer, and Dr. Dana Sawchuk.

Support staff at various universities and libraries were always there to boost flagging spirits and to share a joke. Thank you to Pauline Dawson, Ceylan Turkeri, Luanne McGinley, Sandra Dalpe, Jennifer Drowns, Helene O'Hara, Nancy Forde and Laurie Strome at the Dana Porter Library and Reg Thompson at the Goderich Public Library. Keith McGowan and Neville Bromley of Arts Computing at UW Larry Ford of Tim Hortons kept me in coffee on many an early morning writing session while Kayli of Queen Street Commons kept me fueled in the afternoon. Special thanks to Ilona Kosa who interceded on my behalf innumerable times and has been a light in dark times.

Comrades along the journey include Simon Chilvers, Tim Ireland, Mark Spencer, Aurelio (Hilario) Ayala, Heather Montgomery, Fanis Juma Radstake, Bryan Laursen, Brian Hoffman, David Hofmann, Julia Woodhall-Melnik, Neil Smithwick, Benjamin Waterman, Celia Huang, Amanda Bell, Roberta Hunt, Angela Andersson, Canmanie Ponambalam, Anthony Stracuzzi, Carl David (rainbow bridge) Onofrio, Kirstie Smallman, Kristi Fairholm, Margaret Bonner, Shawn Johnston, and the "French Gang" - Tododjim Mali, Gordon and Judith Varney, Eileen Lyons, Minh Quang and Noey Yvonet, Dragan and Jelena Zubac and of course their children. Brigitte von Aderkas, thanks go to you and your late mother Helga for the opportunity to write at *Ultima Thule* and for your friendship. Obodai Torto, thank you for your friendship, the distractions and your assistance. Special thanks go out to all my former students and friends who made the trek to New Orleans and worked in collaboration with me on research projects and documentary films. These folks include: Christina Kowalenko, Cory Ruf, Peter Organisciak, Chanel Chien, Melissa Rocha, Reid Betts, Tiffany Maria, Scott Temple, Anissa Vandezaande, Julia Gogoleva, Brooke Smith, Annalisa Reilly, Kristen Watpool, Blair Kelly, Blake Prokopwicz, Andre Vanpoelvoorde, Juneau Barnett, Rob St. Pierre and especially the *Apple Dumpling Gang* - Vito (the Haircut) Francone, Eric (Gruzer) Gruszewski, Ryan (the Waterboy) Moffat and the infamous Tom (the Fiddler) Wiercioch.

Friends in New Orleans who played a supporting role include J.F. 'Smitty' Smith, Thom Pepper, A.J., Zach, Dana Abbott and the Dana Abbott Band, Brad Dupuy, Bobby Payne and Donna Augustin.

Over the past several years I and my family have benefitted from the support of friends at Lincoln Road Chapel. Special thanks to Pastor Doug Martin, Pastor and friend David Knight, Tiffany Svensson, Debbie Laginskie, Jim and Janet Aston, Carol McKee and neighbours extraordinaire Lynn and Al Stager.

I would like to thank my parents Gayle Svenson and Brian Svenson and their partners John and Lola for their support and for the many different leisure experiences that populated my childhood. Finally, I would like to thank my children, Camille, Stephanie, and Nolan for their love and patience and for reminding me constantly, like our flock of backyard chickens and our vegetable gardens, of the importance of cultivation.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my ancestors: my grandfather Campbell LeBlond, my grandmother Florence Svenson, my uncle James (Jim) Williams and my aunt Phyllis Williams. It is also dedicated to my grandfather Robert A. Svenson as well as wise elders J.F. “Smitty” Smith and Ilona Kosa. All of these people have touched my life in profound ways and have much to teach about the art of living and the importance and value of doing something for its own sake.

Table of Contents

Author’s Declaration.....	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Dedication	vii
List of Figures.....	xi
Prologue	1
Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary.....	7
1.1 The Imaginary of Leisure.....	7
1.2 Dissertation Trajectory.....	11
1.3 Leisure and Death	19
1.2.1 The Need for Ritual.....	23
1.2.2 Spectatorship and Death	33
1.2.2 Leisure and Life	35
1.3 From Social Imaginary to Leisure Imaginary	39
1.3.1 The Great Disembedding: From Embeddedness to Order.....	42
1.3.2 Theory, Practice and the Social Imaginary: How Change Occurs.....	46
1.4 A Brief Sketch of the Origins of the Western Leisure Imaginary.....	49
1.4.1 The Second Enlightenment and Late Modernity	58
1.5 Late Modernity and the Leisure imaginary (Or the “Not So Great” Re-embedding).....	60
1.5.1 Late Modernity’s Inflections on the Social Imaginary.....	61
1.6 The Place of Philosophical Leisure	72
1.7 Conclusion.....	75
Chapter 2: Reflexive Interpretive Sociology and the Case Study Approach.....	80
2.1 Phenomenology and Phenomenological Data	83
2.1.1 Lived Experience Descriptions.....	86

2.1.2 Conversational Interviews	89
2.1.3 Close Observation	90
2.1.4 Experiential Descriptions in Literature and Popular Media (Popular Culture)	91
2.1.5 Phenomenological Literature	94
2.2 Hermeneutics	95
2.3 Analysis	101
2.3.1 Collaboration and Inquiry	106
2.3.2 What's Your Problem?.....	108
2.4 Problem, Mystery, and Self-Reflection in Reflexive Interpretive Sociology .	110
2.5 Reflexive Interpretive Sociology and the Case Study Approach.....	122
2.6 A Sample Case: Of Authenticity, Reflexivity, Nihilism, and Death	126
2.6.1 The Research Process	130
2.6.2 Examining the Hermeneutic Background of Tourist Theorizing.....	133
2.6.3 Analyzing Lived Experience.....	136
2.6.4 Kristi's Lived Experience Description.....	136
2.6.5 Rehabilitating the Tourist/Traveler	157
2.7 Conclusion.....	161
Chapter 3: Contested Leisure.....	167
3.1 Leisure: From Threat to Danger.....	179
3.1.1 Leisure's Enigmatic and Contested Character	182
3.2 Logos and Eros- work and play	188
3.4 Death's Illegitimate Existence and the solution of fantasy	199
3.5 Conclusion.....	222
Chapter 4 – W(h)ither Philosophical Leisure?.....	226
4.1 Fishing and Flow.....	234
4.2 The Promise and the Danger of Philosophical Leisure	249

4.3 Conclusion.....	260
Chapter 5 Theodyssey: the Leisure Imaginary of Mission Tourism	262
5.1 Background	267
5.2 Hurricane Katrina and Theodyssey	269
5.2.1 Theodic Discourses and Katrina	271
5.2.2 Mission and the Imaginary of Pilgrimage	280
5.2.3 The Leisure Imaginary of Tourism.....	290
5.2.4 Liminality, Communitas, and Play in Pilgrimage and Tourism	299
5.2.5 Pilgrim, Tourist, or Mission Tourist?	303
5.3 Volunteers, Dark Tourism, and Death	314
5.4 Conclusion.....	327
Chapter 6: Towards a Philosophical Leisure	329
6.1 The Tragedy of Leisure	333
6.2 Death and Leisure Revisited.....	339
6.3 Conclusion: Transforming the Leisure Imaginary.....	341
Epilogue.....	344
References	346
Appendix One: University of Waterloo Research Ethics Materials.....	372
Appendix Two: McMaster University Research Ethics Materials.....	382
Appendix Three: UBCO Research Ethics Materials	393

List of Figures

Figure 1 - "Free at Last"	28
Figure 2 - "The Leisure Hour"	52
Figure 3 - Caspar David Friedrich's 1822 Moonrise Over the Sea	56
Figure 4 - Brighton, Kemp Town (1834)	58
Figure 5 - Aids Educational Billboard in Malawi.....	152

Prologue

It is mid-October, 2012. The campers and trailers that habitually populate *Last Resort* in the summer are gone. The small store is open however and the owner Gloria greets me. I rent one of her small cabins for the night and she offers me an aluminum boat for the following day. I haul my gear up the trail to the small, rustic cabin and get set up. For the last 15 years of their ‘fishing lives’ my grandparents had parked their trailer here for the summer months, a temporary home where family and friends were welcomed and much fly-fishing for trout took place. It was where we shared the best of life before old age made the lifestyle too taxing for Bob and Flo. This past July, in a small, private ceremony, we buried my grandmother’s ashes on one of the lake’s islands. I get the fire roaring in the cabin’s woodstove, and after doing some reading, head to bed.

Early the next morning, before the sun has poked above the horizon, I take the boat out to the island through the rising autumn mist. Approaching the shore, I maneuver among the rocks and tie up to the gnarled root of an old poplar, exposed over time by the action of the waves. In the still morning, I walk the short distance to find the rose bush that we planted in memory of my Grandmother still alive, though the tops have been browsed a little by a visiting deer. I sit down on a log and reflect on the beauty of her life, her choice to be memorialized here at *Last Resort*, the mystery of her death, and the strange yet familiar ritual of the past summer.

Prologue

The selection of the final resting spot had taken some time. The day before the service, my aunt, cousin, and I had taken one of the small fishing boats and scouted each of the islands. The first island we looked at seemed too accessible, with beer cans and fire pits marking the island off as a site of frequent bush parties. The next island we visited seemed prone to flooding and was very difficult to access, good because it meant that it wasn't visited often, but bad because we would have to lever my increasingly frail 91 year old grandfather over the edge of a 12 foot aluminum boat and escort him down an animal trail to the small clearing. The clearing itself was pretty enough and we noted that the opening in the trees to the east meant that the morning sun would strike the place we had selected for her ashes. We deliberated, and decided that the place worked. A cross on a nearby tree commemorating a couple of fellow fishers indicated that we weren't the only ones that had determined that this was a good place.

The following afternoon, the few family members that had been invited arrived. It had been my grandparent's wish that there be no funeral and that this memorial be a more private affair. About ten of us hit the island in two ten foot aluminum boats. Grandpa was levered safely ashore and guided along the rough path to the clearing by my aunt Dianne. Cousin Shawna carried the Haida print wooden box that contained the ashes. Others carried the remaining items: a rose bush to plant in memory of my grandma, a spade for digging in the rocky soil, a bucket for watering, potting soil, a wreath made by Gloria for the occasion, and a fold out chair for my grandfather. We arrived at the site and somewhat awkwardly set about the task unsure how to proceed without an officiator.

I had the spade and offered it to my dad who worked the rocky soil. Cousin Les and I began to prepare the rose bush, freeing it from its pot and roughly scratching the root ball so that the roots could find their way into the new soil. My dad

Prologue

continued to dig. He handed off to Les while Shawna took the bag of ashes out of the Haida box. The bag had been tied with tape so that the ashes could not escape. Untying it proved to be an impossible task. Shawna noted that it was time that I made use of my new purchase. I had bought a new Buck hunting knife that morning. It sat on my hip next to that other now outdated tool, the Blackberry. It took me a second to understand what she meant, but after clueing in, I drew and opened my knife. I slowly sliced the bottom of the bag open and, following grandpa's instructions, Shawna emptied the ashes into one side of the hole. In the future, his ashes would be placed on the right of the bush. Potting soil was added in with the ash, stirred, watered, and then tamped down. Les carefully placed the rose bush in the centre of the hole and more soil was placed around it, watered, and tamped. The process was repeated until we'd filled the hole enough to replace the surface soil and moss cover.

The task completed, we stood up and tried to fill in the silence. There was some awkwardness, as we struggled for a way to proceed. My aunt helped my grandfather rise from the chair and he looked towards me with moist eyes and nodded for me to read the words he had given me earlier.

After stumbling through a few words about what a blessing it had been to have had Grandma in our lives and that this was a time of sadness but also one of gratitude and joy for us all, I read Henry Scott Holland's "Death is Nothing at All":

Death is nothing at all
I have only slipped away into the next room
I am I and you are you
Whatever we were to each other
That we are still
Call me by my old familiar name
Speak to me in the easy way you always used
Put no difference into your tone

Prologue

Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow
Laugh as we always laughed
At the little jokes we always enjoyed together
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was
Let it be spoken without effort
Without the ghost of a shadow in it
Life means all that it ever meant
It is the same as it ever was
There is absolute unbroken continuity
What is death but a negligible accident?
Why should I be out of mind
Because I am out of sight?
I am waiting for you for an interval
Somewhere very near
Just around the corner
All is well.
Nothing is past; nothing is lost
One brief moment and all will be as it was before
How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!

I opened the bible I had in my hands, the bible grandma had passed on to me on my birthday at age 10, the same bible her parents had passed on to her. I read Philippians 4:8, a call to the examined life, which she had directed me to in her dedication of the bible those many years ago. We finished with the Lord's Prayer. After several minutes of silent contemplation, we quietly filed back along the way we had come, each lost in our own thoughts.

Later that evening we gathered together and reflected on our family tradition of fly-fishing and how it had been such a huge part of our family life. We spoke of what Grandma had passed on to us through our times together. I recounted what she had shared of value with me: the hours spent with her as a child at her kitchen table

Prologue

learning how to draw and paint, the nature lessons, the natural history snippets from The Province newspaper she kept for me to cut out and paste into a scrapbook. She had continued this practice of keeping clippings for me into my PhD, where she would send me articles on cottaging (my MA thesis) or leisure...demonstrations of support, interest, and hope. We remembered her fondness for quiz shows and Mars bars and board and card games, rummoli and crazy eights in particular. We would miss her gentle wisdom. We reaffirmed a need for ritual and communion through the sharing of stories that helped make sense of her life and our lives.

To punctuate the ritual, a few of us took my grandfather out fishing the next morning. It seemed like old times, grandpa with fly rod in hand, scanning the water and directing us towards likely hiding spots for trout. He even attempted a few casts. My young son was with us, patiently holding a fly rod in anticipation as we glided quietly along the reeds. It was a perfect morning.

Looking up from the rose bush that I had fixed my eyes on while lost in these thoughts, I note satisfactorily the presence of a number of different species of birds flitting about and that the beams of the rising sun are falling on the small clearing, on the rose bush. I walk the short bit of trail back to the boat, untie it and push off. Pulling the motor to life, I soon have the boat hurtling toward the dock. It's warm in the newly risen sun. Gloria's waiting with a pot of coffee when I come in. I help myself to some coffee and we chitchat. She motions me towards a table in the centre of the store and gesturing to a scrapbook she states, "I want to show you something." I opened up the scrapbook as she continued, "You see, there are a lot of people that are resting here at the lake, and we like to keep a memoriam for them here. So if you have a special photo of your grandma and

Prologue

some words that could go with it that would be great.” Flipping through the book, I was amazed. The pages were full of family fishing pictures and obituaries of people that had had their ashes placed at or in the lake. Intimate portraits of the connection between death and leisure.

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

The life that we are given has its minutes numbered, and in addition it is given to us empty. Whether we like it or not we have to fill it on our own; that is, we have to occupy it one way or another. Thus the essence of each life lies in its occupations...When [man] he becomes aware of existence, he finds himself before a terrifying emptiness. He does not know what to do; he himself must invent his own tasks or occupations. If he could count on an infinity of time before him this would not matter very much: he could live doing whatever occurred to him, trying every imaginable occupation one after another. But – and this is the problem – life is brief and urgent; above all, it consists in rushing, and there is nothing for it but to choose one way of life to the exclusion of all others; to give up being one thing in order to be another; in short to prefer some occupations to the rest. The very fact that our languages use the word “occupation” in this sense reveals that from ancient times, perhaps from the very beginning, man has seen his life as a “space” of time, which his actions, like bodies of matter unable to penetrate one another, continue to fill.

José Ortega y Gasset, *Meditations on Hunting*

As I sit here in this tent,
thinking...
My mind seems bent.
On what or why I know not...
What is time well spent?

18 year old backpacker, *Entry in a Campground Log Book, Rotorua, New Zealand*

1.1 THE IMAGINARY OF LEISURE

In *Meditations on Hunting*, José Ortega y Gasset (1942) opens by highlighting the existential question of how to live life in the face of certain death. His answer, in the face of meaninglessness, the ‘terrifying emptiness’ that death confronts us with, is to engage

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

ourselves in activity, in short, to occupy ourselves. The passage above makes explicit the ‘thing’ we seek to bury from our awareness in various ways, the fact that our existence is finite and that this truth is terrifying. For Ortega y Gasset there are two ways of occupying one’s self. We can occupy ourselves with either work or with a vocation. Work as occupation in the obligatory sense is something to escape from. A necessary evil that provides the necessities of life, we are beholden to work. This version of work is labour, and the laborer is *animal laborans*, mere biological life. The other kind of occupation, the vocation, is pleasing to us and is entered into when we have free time, when we can exercise choice. It distinguishes us from the animal. Hunting, or fishing for that matter, when done as vocation, dramatizes this difference. The existential question of what we, as humans *do* when faced with free time, and more particularly when we feel we are exercising choice is the subject of this monograph.

What Ortega y Gasset highlights in occupation as *vocation* is something that is beyond obligatory work, something that gives pleasure and happiness, a project – another kind of life that we escape into as soon as “we discover a chink or crack in the mesh of [our] work” (1985: 27). The worker “imagines another kind of life consisting of very different occupations, in the execution of which he would not feel as if he were losing time, but on the contrary gaining it, filling it satisfactorily and as it should be filled” (25). In order to look beyond work at this imaginary, Ortega y Gasset turns to the aristocrat as the man, the avatar, who having a great deal of free time, can answer the question, “what

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

does man do when, and in the extent that, he is free to do as he pleases” (27)? He finds hunting is that occupation which fills the time of the aristocrat and, taking this as an indication of what is best in life (finding that the working classes also value the vocation of hunting highly) begins his meditations on hunting. While Ortega y Gasset’s meditation is concerned with ‘hunting down the hunt’ the present project as meditation is oriented to the hunting, or chasing down of modern leisure, a leisure that would *appear* to be bereft of the orienting focus of the Protestant notion of ‘vocation’ that animates Ortega y Gasset’s writing.

The starting point for this inquiry is not Ortega y Gasset’s hunter, who already knows the ends for which free time should be put, but instead, the 18 year old backpacker in New Zealand, who having free time, and ostensibly engaging in leisure, asks the question “what is time well spent?” The young backpacker represents the modern individual who has free time but is confused with how to use it, one for whom the choices/possibilities perhaps overwhelm. For Ortega y Gasset, writing in 1942, there appears to be a certitude that eludes the young backpacker when Ortega y Gasset writes that “the most enjoyable occupation for the normal man has always been hunting” where “both men of the middle class and poor men have usually made hunting their happiest occupation” (27). We no longer have a strong sense of what it would look like to fill out time ‘satisfactorily’ and ‘as it should be filled.’ To our late modern, urban sensibilities, the ‘normal man’ of whom Ortega y Gasset speaks, is distant though not unfamiliar, a

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

historical relic that Ortega y Gasset laments the loss of, revealing the perhaps romantic character of his philosophic quest.¹

The modern lifeworld that renders Ortega y Gasset's 'normal man' to be an anachronism has changed further, and has left people feeling paradoxically more naked and afraid but with more life options than ever before. Our modern condition is one of disembeddedness, a disembeddedness that has accelerated greatly since Ortega y Gasset wrote. With regards to this disembeddedness, Tony Blackshaw writes that our lives are "individualized, decentred, episodic, fragmented, consumerist, and sometimes magical...but always subject to uncertainty, anxiety, indecision, and change" (2010a: 93). Certainly this description of our state of being (if we are to take it as an apt characterization) has led to an even more pressing need to answer the question that began with Socrates, was reiterated by Tolstoy and emphasized in Weber's 1918 lecture, *Science as a Vocation*: "What shall we do and how should we live?" (Weber in Gerth and Mills, 1946: 9). More than ever perhaps, this is an age where that question needs a strong answer, yet we seem to be without the resources to respond with one.² While in the past

¹Albert William Levi describes Ortega y Gasset's philosophy in the following manner: Showing how subjectivity ends in the solitude and loneliness of the self, Ortega arrives finally at a position much like Heidegger's: that not my body or my thought but "my life" is the primary datum of philosophy, and that I discover "my life" as I find "my being in the world." Thus man is both free and destined; destined by his "circumstances," but free to decide what he is going to be. And this requires profound self-knowledge. To find ourselves, to be concerned, to make a direction— this is the philosophic vocation of man. *Shortest Route to Significance*, Albert William Levi in *The Saturday Review*, June 24, 1961.

² Witness the popularity of the film, *The Bucket List*, where the threat of death to the two characters in the film, leads to the frenetic consumption of experiences, a last grasp at trying to find happiness. We see in today's baby-boomers

both the nobleman and peasant knew, seemingly intuitively, what was the best way to spend their free time, today we no longer know how to use our free time well.

One of the aims of this dissertation, a meditation on our use of free time, is to try to shed some light on this confusion. Echoing Ortega y Gasset, this meditation does not come without risks because the inquirer is engaging with ideas which are “an unconquerable and dangerous jungle” and there is always the chance that the inquirer, not unlike the hunter, may come back empty-handed, that he may get lost in the thicket, or perhaps find himself misjudging the time and get caught out in the darkness.³

1.2 DISSERTATION TRAJECTORY

As implied at the end of the last section, I am attempting to deal with a complicated web of ideas in my development of the leisure imaginary. In order to better guide the reader, it will help at this juncture if I lay out a bit more of what is to be expected in the ensuing chapters. For the remainder of Chapter I, I will develop the relation of leisure to death and to our late modern conditions or our contemporary social imaginary. The quote

the same attitude. It's hard to find a retired person who does not talk about their 'bucket list' which usually consists of consumptive leisure experiences. This answer to “What should we do and how should we live?” the bucket list paradigm, is one formulation of Ortega y Gasset's actor where 'men' see their lives as “a 'space of time' which [their] actions, like bodies of matter unable to penetrate one another, continue to fill” (Ortega y Gasset, 1942: 23-24)

³ At this point the reader is aware that this dissertation is not only dealing with ideas but also with my own lived experience in relation to the development and dialogue with ideas. I am aware that this might be cause for concern and so have taken some effort to justify my approach throughout and in particular in the methodology section in the next chapter.

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

form Ortega y Gasset raises the question of how leisure can be treated differently when conceived of as a particular kind of absorption or preoccupation with the repression of the problem of death or human finitude, as contrasted with a conception of leisure as the practice of an art or vocation for engaging free time. In this way I conceive of the vocation of leisure as the art of using free time, a practice that can begin to model reflection and a reflective relation to any practice. I use Jacques Rancière's idea of the emancipated spectator, one who is also a visitor to his own action, to point to an *ideal speaker* (Blum and McHugh, 1984) for leisure, that is, a figure that represents a strong relationship to free time. This opens up the discussion for free time use as a kind of adaptation to conditions of mortality and disembeddedness that sets up the possibility of an artful relation to death and the anxieties of our age as opposed to escaping these haunting thoughts through work or the leisure imaginaries of amusement, entertainment, consumption, work-like leisure, social movements or more sinisterly, different forms of religious and ideological extremism such as Islamic jihad or the totalitarianism of Nazism, both rooted in a misplaced fear of the other.

Chapter 2, *Reflexive Interpretive Sociology and the Case Study Approach*, lays the theoretical and methodological ground of the analysis by introducing reflexive interpretive sociology and applying it to a case study of a lived experience. Some effort is taken to demonstrate the importance of anecdotal and autobiographical accounts as data that are most useful for demonstrating the idea of the leisure imaginary as it is in the analysis of the

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

lived experience descriptions and anecdotes that individual and collective leisure imaginaries are revealed. I ground this approach by beginning with an analysis of the case of a tourist experience where the normal expectations of travel get disrupted or breached. I show first how phenomenology helps us to understand the orientation of the subject. I describe the phenomenological themes of the tourist experience of the subject, Kristi. The Gadamerian hermeneutics I employ emphasizes the recovering of the tradition that makes the lived experience intelligible, or, how the phenomenon has been made intelligible through the application of different traditions of thought. It is my attempt "to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place" (Gadamer, 1975: 263). Research on tourism and sex tourism provide the hermeneutic background and condition understandings both lay and academic.

The hermeneutic exercise shines a light on the connection between our perspectives and what is allowed to be seen by virtue of that perspective. I then introduce the idea of problem as a 'deep need' or mystery. The approach of *analysis* reveals how hermeneutic understandings and the phenomenology of the subject cover over this deep need. This is the analytic element of the approach, where a Socratic questioning is employed in an attempt to recover the grounds of action and recover the deep need that is animating the action. Together, the three methodological approaches of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and analysis, demonstrate the strength of the reflexive interpretive approach in contrast to other modes of theorizing the 'tourist'. Through this exercise I develop the

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

notion that what the tourist signifies, is a weak version of the need to overcome disembeddedness. The reflexive tourist characterized by Kristi shows the possibility that the shallowness of this re-embedding can be exposed and a stronger relation developed, echoing Rancière's ideal of the emancipated spectator, although one not free of its own illusions and attractions and one also that must tolerate a degree of ambiguity and openness to questioning.

The Socratic questioning of leisure studies takes off in *Chapter 3: Contested Leisure* as I initially focus on leisure studies as a discipline, showing how its development is intimately tied up with the rise of modernity and the Enlightenment in that the promise of science is that it can be employed to manage populations and that late modern conditions favour an instrumental relation to education and knowledge as exemplified in the content of recreation and leisure studies programs. In this case it is people's leisure that requires managing and the goal of recreation and leisure studies to provide managers. Thus, less attention than should be desired is paid to the issue of philosophical contemplation or philosophical leisure in the recreation and leisure studies field. This chapter then also attempts to show how the repression of death, and anxiety over freedom, are linked to our embrace of certain forms of inquiry, for example, the unreflective inquiry of positivistic social science. I argue that modern society has been preoccupied with a 'threat of leisure' perspective, seeing free time as a potentially dangerous to the social order and therefore in need of management. I argue that the question of the 'danger' of leisure, that is the

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

problem that contemplation poses for self, has largely been ignored due to a conception of leisure as comprising a contrast between work and play or Logos and Eros, that leaves the question of contemplative or philosophical leisure silent. The dissertation then has a dual thrust, in that it engages both the problematic state of leisure studies, and our own problematic everyday relation to leisure, seeing both as rooted in the deep problem of human finitude the haunting thoughts this and our freedom evoke and the corresponding need to fly from contemplation. Leisure creates a space for us to contemplate but we shrink from this activity. I end the chapter by discussing the role of fantasy in constructing our leisure imaginaries and describe the flight to the leisure imaginary through exploring the extreme cases of Islamic jihadism and Toronto's Ford Nation.

Chapter 4, *W(h)ither Philosophical Leisure*, contrasts sharply with the end of Chapter 3 as it sets out on a quest to recover a space for philosophical leisure in our contemporary lifeworld. This is in contrast to claims by theorists such as Chris Rojek (2010) that contemplative or philosophical leisure is essentially unavailable in today's society. I work from a number of vantage points to develop this idea. First I try to show that even the episodic nature of contemporary devotional leisure practices are for many not quite as fragmented as what might appear and that in response to the fragmentation that late modernity or liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000) enforces there is much work that goes into developing a coherent life narrative with leisure as a focus and that this work as hermeneutics (Blackshaw, 2010a), implies one of the grounds on which philosophical

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

leisure can be built. I do this with self-conscious reference to my own practice of fly-fishing. I also explore the popular leisure concept *flow*, subjecting it to heavy critique and showing how its unreflective and psychologistic bent makes it potentially dangerous. I also make room for further exploration of the concept by showing how flow is a fundamental element of fly-fishing without which much of the pleasure and capacity for reflexivity inherent in fly-fishing would be lost. This prompts the question: how can one be absorbed in a reflective way? I make the argument that in part the encounter with death that is essential to both hunting and fishing and the embracing of the uncomfortable truth that one must embrace death to eat, requires reflection on action that is the basis for philosophical leisure.

Next, over and against the claims that industrial society makes contemplative or philosophical leisure virtually unattainable I call on the avatar of working class philosophical leisure Louis-Gabriel Gauny as well as his Saint-Simonian brethren who demonstrate that even in the most stifling conditions, a reflective relation to the world, the capacity for philosophical leisure, and indeed freedom, are attainable. The examples of fly fishing and Louis-Gabriel Gauny make the compelling argument that reflection is possible in modern life as well as it was in ancient Greece. The first shows how reflection can be embodied in almost any practice. The second demonstrates that with great sacrifice, time can be made to engage in philosophical leisure. The final contribution of this chapter is

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

the implication that reflection, contemplation, or philosophical leisure can introduce a healthy dose of ambiguity into the practices and meanings of leisure imaginaries.

Chapter 5, the major case study that comprises the dissertation, is a thorough examination of volunteer or ‘mission’ tourism as a leisure imaginary. *Theodyssey: The Leisure Imaginary of Mission Tourism*, examines the social imaginary that undergirds the understanding of the reasons for Hurricane Katrina and explores what people imagine about their volunteering to “help out” at the Gulf Coast post Hurricane Katrina and Rita. The chapter examines how contemporary pilgrimage has much in common with tourism as both are voluntary and seemingly reflect the modern ethos of individualism. In theory and practice the two categories of travel are largely understood to be separate. In the wake of responses to large-scale catastrophes like Hurricane Katrina, the practices of tourism and pilgrimage have become more visibly linked with a third element, that of theodicy. Using Taylor’s (2004) notion of the social imaginary, I explore the relationship among tourism, pilgrimage and theodicy through an explication of their imaginary structures, structures that make intelligible members’ travel to participate in volunteer work on the post-Katrina Gulf Coast. I utilize the notion of *theodyssey* to understand what at first glance appears to be a curious blend of pilgrimage-like and tourism-like practices. The notion of “mission tourism” is employed to describe these practices more fully. In addition to an account of the various relations to the practice that members express, for example, instrumental résumé building, the pursuit of pleasure, self-development, and service, what emerges out

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

of the analysis is a deep ambivalence over the role of pleasure in “serious” mission trips that purport to cultivate the value of the imaginary of the citizen pilgrim. The stage that is New Orleans dramatizes this ethical collision and the notion of the uncomfortable truth reasserts itself in the knowledge that pleasure and play are an integral element of “serious” volunteer and mission tourism and that reconciling pleasure and seriousness requires a reflective engagement rather than a compartmentalization or closing off of this grey zone of ambiguity. In closing out the chapter I deal with the fascination with death that the practice of mission tourism also represents and how the ritual of volunteer or mission tourism can lead towards both an embrace or retreat from *aporia*.

The final chapter, *Towards a Philosophical Leisure*, much like this introductory chapter, concludes by dramatizing the relationship between leisure and death. This time I turn to the ancient Greeks and Romans and their relation to leisure in order to render insight into our contemporary period. I find that our contemporary situation is much like the situation of the Romans, where we, like they, are deeply suspicious and uncomfortable with unstructured free time, time where we might engage in philosophical leisure or contemplation. The Greeks, in contrast, are found to be much more acquainted with philosophical leisure and its wellspring in engaging death, and call to us to create a place in our culture for the cultivation of a philosophical leisure that deals with this being before death and the difficult question of how to live an ethical life.

1.3 LEISURE AND DEATH

With the rise of modernity and the rise of science, phenomena that have perhaps traditionally had more the character of enigmas or mysteries have taken on more of an objective facticity. Birth and death are two examples of such demystified phenomena. The rise of science and its expression in medicine has converted these existential mysteries into problems to be remedied or limits to be overcome.

In *End Notes: a Symposium on Death and Dying*, theorist Alan Blum remarks on the nature of death in the modern age (March 15, 2008). Blum notes that the insertion of the physician into the negotiation of death along with a whole new language to account for this process treats death as something to be managed *medically*. In the context of medicine, death has become a barometer of health, with its expectation of life as a quantity. Nowhere is this relation to health more apparent than in the city. In thinking of the City as either sick or healthy, Blum notes that with regards to modern notions of health, the City's increasingly complex monitoring systems are aimed at reducing the Years of Life Lost (YLL). Together with the physician, the medicalization of death, and the notion of 'public health', the City has removed the process of death from the public sphere. "It has been argued that death in modern societies is a surreptitious affair: hidden, medicalized, relegated to anonymous spaces – an embarrassment" (Seaton, 2005: 182). Indeed, as Seaton writes, "more people than ever die in hospital, where many of the protocols are designed to help doctors and families fend death off rather than conduct it. Few people

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

attend the death of those they know and love” (2005: 183). I might also add that these protocols, even though designed to prolong life (death?), often lead to premature death and certainly a death without dignity.

In the months leading up to her death, my family actively struggled to be involved in the care of my grandmother. She was hospitalized initially for a fractured vertebra after a fall. The injury multiplied into successive hip fractures after repeated falls in the hospital that was supposed to be rehabilitating her. This led to a prolonged, painful, and drug addled stay. Our family was discouraged from intervening in the process of her ‘recovery’. She was in a strange place, surrounded by unfamiliar people, some of who were uncaring and treated her as an object, depersonalized. We had to advocate for better care, to create a space in the hospital where more than just her biological needs would be met. We attended to her spiritual needs, her need to play, to be entertained, to be engaged, to converse, even to take pleasure in the enjoyment of something as simple and vital as food (hospital food is not real food).

We played cribbage. We engaged her in conversation and skyped with far away relatives. We reminisced about old times. We entertained her with old movies on our laptops (1964’s *Father Goose* starring Cary Grant and Leslie Caron was her favourite). We brought in hamburgers, often the only food she would eat, to share together. We struggled against the alienating environment of the hospital, where through its institutionalization of death and dying, its bureaucratic rules and procedures, had

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

effectively acted to sever our family from my grandmother during her last days. Gadamer writes of this alienating experience of the hospital.

The real depersonalization of death reaches deeper still in the modern hospital. Alongside the loss of any public representation of what takes place, the dying and their relatives are removed from the domestic environment of the family. Death is thereby adapted to the technological business of industrial production...The prolongation of life finally becomes a prolongation of death and a fading away of the experience of the self. This process culminates in the gradual disappearance of the experience of death. The anaesthetic drugs developed by modern pharmaceuticals can completely sedate the suffering person. The artificial maintenance of the vegetative functions of the organism makes the person into a link in the chain of causal processes. Death itself becomes like an arbitral reward dependent on the decision of the doctor treating the case. At the same time all this excludes the living from attendance and participation in what is irrevocably taking place. Even the care of the soul which is proffered by the church often fails to gain admittance, and is received neither by the dying person nor by those others that are involved (1996: 62).

A few other families were in the hospital in an ongoing way but for the most part, the dying people in the ward were alone, left to exist in a haze of medication, strapped to their wheelchair or bed in a drug induced vegetative fugue; a kind of living death reinforced by the absence of a community that could recognize their humanity.



There has been a wresting of the process of death away from the community by science and by the medical profession (Aries, 1985: 324). At the same time an increasingly individualized society also removes the experience of death out of the broader community. In the move to modernity, the medieval notion of dying as a public process has been pushed out of the perceptual landscape (Blum, March 15, 2008). My grandmother's funeral was a case in point. The private character of her funeral is something that still

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

troubles me to this day as I continue to mourn the loss of the opportunity for others to mourn her in a public fashion. Our increasingly individualistic society and the effective privatization of mourning is radically dissonant with the experience of the funeral procession, where the body was paraded publicly through the town and people removed their hats in awe of the ‘majesty of death’ (Gadamer, 1996: 61). Even the funeral has gone out of vogue. For Gadamer, the source of this public ‘banishment’, is abetted by the “second Enlightenment” the “technological control of reality facilitated by the dazzling achievements of modern natural science and of modern systems of communication” that has brought on a “demythologizing of death” (1996: 61). He writes:

As regards our enlightened cultural world, it is not inappropriate to speak of an almost systematic repression of death. One need only recall how earlier rites and cultic regulations granted death a ceremonial place in the life of society and how those who were left behind were helped through such rituals to continue their lives and be reincorporated into the community. Something of this still survives today. And yet, for example, the wailing women of ancient cultures, giving dramatic expression to the sorrow of all, are certainly no longer acceptable or even thinkable to modern civilized people (1996: 65).

That the representation and experience of death has been repressed, removed or covered over by the Enlightenment project does not mean that we are not in some way engaged in its mystery or that we refuse to ‘deal’ with it. The ‘second Enlightenment’ has seemingly exacerbated this repression but has also set the stage for the return of the repression of death in two symptomatic forms, both of which are connected to the experience of leisure: ritual and spectacle.

1.2.1 The Need for Ritual

Gadamer notes that the need to engage death does not escape us as a public for we still feel the need for rituals as “even in an age of growing mass atheism such rituals are still sustained by people who are not believers, and who are, in reality, fully secularized” (1996: 65-66). The connection of leisure to death and memorialization⁴ that was highlighted in the prologue speaks to this, where the need for ritual was creatively met. At least three things are going on in this connection of people’s leisure lives to their memorialization. First, there is the affirmation of the community; second, for those that attend these rituals, there is, instead of an outright repression of death, an engagement with the mystery of death; and finally, there is the need, on the part of the person who is dead (evidenced by their wish to be interred and celebrated at their sacred site of leisure) and on the part of the people that are left behind, a need to inscribe in some way that this was a life that mattered.

I take the first point to be self-evident, that such rituals establish communal bonds. On the second point we can take Gadamer’s counsel that “as the obverse side to the

⁴ Here I might speak of photography and memorialization of the family, a community. The picture roll at my Grandparents place contained a chronicle of our fishing experiences together. See Haldrup and Larsen (2003) “The Family Gaze.”

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

repression of death, the consciousness of the living still experiences a fearfulness before the mystery of death, a shuddering before its sacredness” that require some ritual of observance (1996: 66). The ritual of the burying of the ashes and the planting of the rose bush, the service and the reading of Holland’s poem *Death is Nothing at All* was meant to reassure us all, to provide us with some relief from the terrifying and unknowable reality of death, our way of reconstructing the ‘sacred canopy’ that, as Peter Berger (1967) observed, shields us from terror, from oblivion. The small gathering of people testified to the need to have some ritual of remembrance, to say in effect, that Florence Edith Svenson’s life mattered, that her journey on this earth needed to be remembered, that her life had value and in having value somehow this reinforced that our own lives have value. On this point we can turn again to Gadamer who observes:

It is rather an irrepressible need of human nature not only to preserve the character of the dead person, which has been transformed through permanent separation, but to reconstruct it in its productive and positive form. It is changed into an ideal, and as an ideal, becomes itself unchangeable. It is difficult to say what is really taking place in this process whereby, in the final separation from someone, we come to experience their presence in a different way (1996: 67).

In the case of my grandmother, we were all engaged in preserving her character as well as preserving an ideal.⁵ We were doing (and are still doing) the hermeneutic work of

⁵ The ideal that my grandmother was transformed into or better yet, finally understood for myself is the ideal of love and in particular the love of the good, of the examined life, of the importance of ethical action as captured by Philippians 4:8: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” KJV. The writing of this dissertation can also be understood as an

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

uncovering what that ideal is. The words spoken in remembrance, the choice of a rose bush, the way we all participated in the ceremony, spoke to that ideal. Her choice to be buried at her site of leisure speaks most to the ideal, for not only was it a place that she loved, it was intimately connected with free time we had shared together, to the people that she had loved. The leisure practice of fly-fishing had become a devotional activity practiced at a particular sacred site with community members. Her choice to be buried at *Last Resort* was making an explicit recommendation of how to live a life. This suggests that increasingly our leisure practices, particularly those that have a devotional character, in part recognize the solidarity that death binds us in and are recommendations for living the good life. Nods towards paradise.



The way people meaningfully connect their leisure to death is the rule among my family and friends and not the exception. I expect this is true of most people these days. My maternal grandfather Major Campbell Leblond, a WWII veteran (a tail gunner in a Lancaster Bomber) and professional photographer, requested (and we observed) that his ashes be placed underneath a tree planted in his name at the golf course he frequented. Golf was a game he loved. An avid sportsman and outdoorsman, he and I spoke often of

extended ritual that mourns and attempts to preserve the character of those that have died, reconstructing them into an ideal.

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

fishing and hunting and of course watched golf on TV. “Cam” as he was known to his friends, always with a cigarette in one hand and a glass of scotch in the other, could be as blunt as they come and as I got older I had to get used to the idea that when I visited I would be held to account. He respected education and he didn’t suffer fools. I’d pop over to mow his lawn and after I was done, we’d sit down for a drink and he’d start his interrogation. He’d ask what I was doing with my life and I’d tell him. Sometimes the response was a grunt. At other times it was a “Why the hell would you want to do that?” I’d reply and there would be another curmudgeonly grunt, followed by the swirl of whiskey in his glass and a tip back. Cam never brought up the war in conversation, and the one time I brought it up he shut it down quick. He didn’t speak much of his work life either, but it was everywhere in the house.

There was the darkroom downstairs, where ‘Mahoodly’ the ‘little man who wasn’t there’ lived, mystifying and terrifying grandchildren for years. As kids we would peer into the dark room, fearfully, looking for him. We all thought we knew what ‘Mahoodly’ actually looked like, or at least the back of him. It seemed to our naïve eyes that Grandpa Cam had somehow managed to magically photograph him. The image adorned the walls in numerous locations around his house. The image of ‘Mahoodly’ was of a naked man jumping gleefully in the air, bare ass to the viewer as he leapt for joy in front of the darkness. A broken wagon wheel and a starfish, which if you looked closely concealed a

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

skull, were in the foreground. The caption my grandfather had written on the image was

“Free at Last.”⁶

⁶ It seems my grandfather had been fascinated by death, something no doubt reinforced by his experiences during WWII and the death of his wife Angelique. In this image, death is embraced and celebrated; an escape from suffering.

Figure 1 - "Free at Last"



Source: Campbell Leblond

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

In this image there is kind of laughing in the face of death or perhaps better, a laughing at life, a ‘kiss my ass’ attitude, Grandpa Cam’s militant irony, a response suited to a military man. The picture had represented his ironic relation to life, a constant reminder that life was a trial, perhaps even folly, and that death might very well be a merciful gift.

Several years before his death, I helped him move from his house to an apartment. He was losing his eyesight at that time and was growing increasingly frustrated. Unable to help, he finally declared in disgust, “I’m just a god damn detriment.” A few years later, he died in the hospital with my Mother at his side, she gently and lovingly reassuring him as he claimed his freedom.

At his funeral, the largest “Free at Last” photo graced his casket as per his request. While the minister was delivering the eulogy, the photo began to slide comically out of its frame – Grandpa Cam’s avatar was on the run, his last act in the world to make a satire out of the funeral.⁷ To the minister’s horror, my Mother and Aunt were doubled over in the front row in tears laughing, mom having commented “Look, he can’t wait to get the hell out of here.”

⁷ avatar

1. HINDUISM

a manifestation of a deity or released soul in bodily form on earth; an incarnate divine teacher.

2. an icon or figure representing a particular person in a computer game, Internet forum, etc. (Source: Google)



As Gadamer (1996) has noted, the desire for immortality and the need to immortalize is with us even today. This desire has not been snuffed out by modernity, but instead, with new opportunities and ways of expressing immortality perhaps is even being enhanced in late modernity. While the ‘old trails’ towards immortality may have lost their appeal, new trails are appearing. For my family, the trail that is being blazed in terms of coming to terms with death is the fishing trail.

Some days after my grandmother’s ceremony, my father reminded us that he wanted his ashes to be spread in Curry Creek, the creek where almost annually, since my brothers and I had been small children, we had camped and fished with my father and close friends. I had staggered down that creek with my three year old son on one arm the week of my grandmother’s ceremony; two years before that, on a particularly cold, rainy and creek-fishing unfriendly day, my brother and I had initiated our daughters into the family tradition. My mother has expressed her desire to have her ashes cast in her favourite fishing lake. Last fall a childhood friend and I commemorated his father’s death by going fishing at old Beaverface’s (our nickname for him) favourite fishing spot. To my surprise, two summers ago, when I wandered into the forest at one of the lakes I had fished as a child, there were at least a dozen crosses and memorials adorning the trees around the lake. These new creative practices that engage death are not limited to ‘real life’ places either.

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

The second Enlightenment has opened up new mediums and worlds where this need can be expressed, testifying to how creative we can be in meeting a need.

When a *World of Warcraft* player suffered a stroke and died in March of 2006, her guild hosted an in game memorial at her favourite fishing hole. The ‘death’ announcement below gives the details of her death and funeral for those virtual friends that played with her.

On Tuesday of February 28th Illidan lost not only a good mage, but a good person. For those that knew her, Fayejin was one of the nicest people you could ever meet. On Tuesday she suffered a stroke and passed away later that night. I am making this post basically to inform everyone that might have knew [sic] her. Also tomorrow, at 5:30 server time March, 4th. We will have an in game memorial for her so that her friends can pay their respects. We will be having it at the Frostfire Hot Springs in Winterspring, *because she loved to fish in the game (she liked the sound of water, it was calming for her)* and she loved snow.

If you would like to come show your respects please do. ☺ Thanks everyone.

We’re planning some cool stuff and we’re going to make a video of it to show her family ☺. So I would appreciate it if nobody comes to mess things up.

<http://forums.illidrama.com/showthread.php?1826-Memorial-to-Fayejin>

The funeral announcement above demonstrates the desire of a community to honour, in some manner, those that have died, with the medium that this is accomplished ancillary to the project. Here we encounter the creative use of new spaces and places opened up by technology where people can cushion the impact and terror of death through ritual observances. In these heterotopias (Foucault, 1986), the sacred ‘space’ in which the ritual is conducted is associated with what the deceased devoted her leisure to,

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

in this case fishing, which she loved, the sound of the water being calming for her. The rich connection of leisure to death is signified by the great deal of creativity in remembering those that have died. Mourners, at sometimes great effort, celebrate the life of individuals by connecting what the deceased most enjoyed in life, to death, a nod towards paradise. A more recent example of this phenomenon is that of a young man, who having lost his sister to cancer, mourned her by engaging in a pilgrimage in the immersive RPG *Skyrim*, where he gave himself a happy ending quest with his avatar returning home to a virtual house populated by his family, including an avatar of his deceased sister, alive in this virtual world.⁸

Yet another [example](#) of this creativity is exemplified by an Alabama company started by two conservation officers who came up with the idea of stuffing loved ones ashes into shotgun shells to be blasted off on annual commemorative hunting trips. As the one of the owners notes, "People have had their ashes sprinkled in rivers and the ocean, there have been ashes spread out of airplanes. If you love hunting or the outdoors, this really isn't much different" (Roney, M., September 30, 2011). The website operators suggest that any animals killed with the 'ash shot' be thoroughly cleaned.

⁸ see http://arcadesushi.com/skyrim-comforts-gamer-after-sisters-passing/?utm_source=zergnet.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=zergnet_45731

Reading this symptomatically, we see, in the absence or disappearance of a clear ritual, the creativity people employ in dealing with the terrifying. Leisure makes space for creativity and becomes an attractive way to respond to the need to engage our anxiety over death. These examples all display novel responses to our preoccupation with the spectre of death. Preoccupation with death just doesn't occur when someone dies, it is part of our being towards death. A couple of examples will help to demonstrate this.

1.2.2 Spectatorship and Death

A second symptom of our ongoing need to engage death is the popularity of viewing death and disaster. This repressed need reemerges now in the public fascination with and consumption of death and disaster as forms of news and entertainment, perhaps giving the viewer a chance to 'theorize' death. Examples of this ritual spectatorship might include the touristic viewing of sites of death and destruction epitomized in post-Katrina disaster tours and the viewing of the popular series on Spike television, *1000 Ways to Die*⁹ which appears to be tapping into a public mood¹⁰ that is at once cavalier about death but

⁹ 1000 Ways to Die is a television show that recreates [unusual deaths](#) and includes interviews with experts who describe the science behind each death. The final story of each episode, up until season three, shows actual footage of dangerous situations that almost ended in death, along with interviews with those involved, who survived. The show premiered on May 14, 2008 on [Spike](#). (Wikipedia - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1000_Ways_to_Die)

¹⁰ See article 'Surviving Disaster' taps nations' mood at http://www.boston.com/ae/tv/articles/2009/09/08/spike_tvs_surviving_disaster_taps_nations_mood/.

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

also deeply uneasy and ambivalent with regards to its mystery. Programs like *1000 Ways to Die* bring us close to death but by the same token also distance us as death in this program is something that only happens to idiots. All the deaths recreated for *1000 Ways to Die* would be candidates for the 'Darwin Award' a tongue in cheek honour. "Darwin Award winners eliminate themselves in an extraordinarily idiotic manner, thereby improving our species' chances of long-term survival" (Northcutt, retrieved December 20, 2012).

Television news of course is rife with images of death and disaster irrespective of society and culture. Seaton states that "when we consider how different societies relate to the spectacle of suffering, there is one indisputable fact: death – and especially hard, underserved, brutal and unexpected, that is 'bad', death – is a key feature of news" (2005: 183). To take this beyond the level of mere spectatorship and *schadenfreude*, and back to the importance of ritual, television news consumption of death has arguably invented new rituals around death that substitute for those rituals that have been 'banished'. The "reports of dramatic deaths are contemporary ceremonies that are universally understood – and which sometimes endow the underserved deaths of humble commoners with emotional, and even more critically, political weight" (2005: xx). One has only to think of 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, the Haitian earthquake and the more recent Japanese tsunami or Boston Bombings to see this connection between universal human values and the production and consumption of meaning. News as entertainment once again connects

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

death to the experience of leisure. Blood sports, such as the wildly popular mixed martial arts, can also be thought of in this vein, as the spectator's watch with the expectation of seeing a brutal knockout, where one of the combatants renders the other momentarily unconscious (dead). The UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) even has a cash bonus for 'knockout of the night'. Victor Turner (1985) suggests that there is a growing need in our society for liminoid spaces and times (those in-between spaces and times of play) and that media events and spectacles like the UFC, are one way of satisfying this need.

Again, reading the above symptomatically, we can infer another response to the "terrifying emptiness" here, that of the distancing from death by treating it as entertainment or information. Here then we see two sorts of responses to death, both in their own way ritualistic and collective, one more active and the other more passive: both engaging the mystery of death. What can be taken from the discussion above is that we are all, every day, haunted by death. Death is 'just around the corner' and whether or not it comes knocking today it is nevertheless part of our lives and is an abiding concern.

1.2.2 Leisure and Life

Just as the transformations wrought by the two Enlightenments have radically altered our collective responses to death, so they have also transfigured our relationship to life and leisure. Alongside the demythologizing of death there has been a concomitant demythologizing of life. Much like death, leisure has come to be increasingly understood

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

as something that needs to be managed scientifically, approached rationally, even instrumentally. Leisure studies departments arose in the 60s and 70s as part of this new understanding. Much leisure research and leisure practice in our modern world is oriented to managing, maintaining, and improving the health of individuals and the collective. Health (and leisure) becomes something that can be easily measured, for example the number of participants and number of hours engaged in physical activity or sport.

Ethical collisions in leisure come to light in debates over child obesity and video game playing, over the role of certain leisure practices in declining life expectancy, and through interventions from organizations like the *Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada* with their emphasis on a leisure 'lifestyle' that promotes physical activity and healthy eating. Leisure studies departments train professionals who specialize in leisure service delivery. The mysterious or enigmatic character of leisure would appear to be taken for granted in the version of leisure offered by state, academic, and non-profit institutions; the purveyors of the leisure imaginary of public health. In order to regasp the character of leisure, a return to a more hermeneutic approach is warranted in these conditions, one that is grounded in the lived experience of everyday actors, those who imagine and practice leisure.



For the last few years I have had the opportunity to teach several courses that are directly related to this present project on the leisure imaginary. The experience has been

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

formative for the understanding of leisure that I am putting forth here. In 2010 and 2011 I had the pleasure of teaching, *Sociology of Community* at St. Jerome's University at the University of Waterloo. As an icebreaker, I asked my students to share their thoughts on the question: 'Where do you find a sense of belonging and community?' Some answered predictably that church was where they found community and a sense of belonging. The vast majority however, referenced the importance of leisure. Some found community in sports, where they either played on a sporting team or enjoyed getting together with fellow fans to watch mixed martial arts or hockey. Some were involved in school politics, organizing events for fellow students. Others claimed the family cottage as the site of community. More than a few students (somewhat embarrassed) extolled the virtues of on-line gaming, where their 'clan' or 'guild' and participation in 'missions' provided a sense of community for them. Still others talked about the deep sense of fulfillment and belonging that 'voluntourism' had given them. Two other courses, *Sociology of Tourism* taught at the University of British Columbia Okanagan, and *Sociology of Leisure*, taught at the University of Waterloo, allowed me to test out in collaboration with students, many of the ideas about leisure contained in these pages.

In these courses, I had students render a 'lived experience description' (Van Manen, 1997) of a leisure or tourism experience. In both classes, the definition of tourism or leisure was left to their imaginings and students were encouraged to think about and describe an experience that was meaningful in relation to what they imagined leisure and

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

tourism to be. In the *Sociology of Leisure* class, they were asked to reflect on their descriptions, in effect, to theorize their descriptions of meaningful leisure, what Blackshaw (2010a) has called leisure as a *devotional* practice.¹¹ While some chafed at the task, many relished the experience. It was the first time many of them had reflected in any serious way on the meaning of leisure for their lives. And while some of the accounts were banal, many of the accounts were quite profound, some even deeply moving.

Almost all the accounts in one way or another were stories of attempts at re-embedding, of trying to connect themselves and insert themselves in some way into a meaning-full life narrative. Most devotional leisure practices as Blackshaw notes are *pointillist* in nature, experienced in episodes. The sense of community that is experienced in pointillist time, “when it does live, lives similarly, devoid of any kind of extended unity saved for that contingently imposed on immediate events” (2010a: 144). This does not stop the actor/theorist from attempting to create a unity of self and community, the imagining of a functioning whole. This theme came up very strongly for those students who had experienced a physical dislocation from their country of birth. The majority of these newcomer students gave a version of the modern pilgrimage as a lived experience description. In these accounts, they would try, mostly in vain, to fit in, to belong even for

¹¹ Blackshaw describes devotional leisure thusly “What I have in mind when I use the term leisure as a devotional practice is something like Weber’s idea of a value sphere, but also that those who commit themselves to leisure do so as a vocation: the relationship between their life and their leisure is fundamental” (2010a:142).

just a week, to return home, to the culture that they had left. Many of them found out, like Jesus on his return to Nazareth, that a prophet is not welcome in her hometown.

Settler ‘Canadians’ were no different in their aspirations to ‘connect,’ and described their experiences at the cottage, rave festival, family farm, or gaming guild as moments of connection and ‘at homeness’. Surprisingly, some people shared not just positive experiences of communal leisure, but dark struggles such as dealing with the death of a loved one or pet, or coping with devastating loneliness, mental illness, or addiction. Their responses reinforce what in part will be argued throughout this project, that in our contemporary period, the issues of leisure, meaninglessness and death are inextricably bound together and that we have moved into an age where we look to the realm of leisure for solutions not only to the problem of death but also to the problem of meaning which death evokes and articulates in the twin projects of identity and community. These relatively new projects have become important for us as meaning structures and stable communities have come under attack from the forces unleashed by modernity. A question that we might ask at this point is, “How did we get here?”

1.3 FROM SOCIAL IMAGINARY TO LEISURE IMAGINARY

The Enlightenment, coupled with the industrial revolution and new middle and working classes firmly ushered in the modern concept of leisure under which all kinds of entertainment, consumption, expression, and activity could be captured. Leisure itself has

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

become a catch all term that acts as a container for these various practices, a symbolic order. While the modern story of leisure does begin with the Enlightenment, it is in the past century and in particular the last 30 years, that leisure as a life focus and concern of western moderns has become part of the social imaginary, a constituent element of our pluralized lifeworld. The contributions of history, literature, philosophy, and sociology in attempting to comprehend this shift have left us with rich resources with which to construct an account of the development of modern leisure. This is the account of how the leisure imaginary emerged out of the social imaginary.

In broad strokes, what we find constituting this story are changes that are best described as late modern and while latent within modernity have been ushered in full throttle by Gadamer's second Enlightenment and include: 1) the rise of the consumer society; 2) the anxiety over identity and community summed up by the term *individualization*; 3) the interest in engaging otherness and questioning limits; 4) the emergence of a global theatre of action and a new public sphere oriented by the risk society; 5) the mass phenomenon of loneliness; 6) the desire for antistructure and the renewal of the carnivalesque; and 7) the ongoing assault of instrumental rationality now morphed into neoliberalism. Each of these exerts a kind of force on the meaning and practice of leisure (on what shapes our choices). Another way of saying this is that our modern social imaginary inflects in particular ways the *leisure imaginary*. For example the major case study on "mission tourism" which I develop in Chapter 5 demonstrates how

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

these “conditions” or “extensions” of the social imaginary operates in the imaginations of the social actors that participate in the practice of volunteer or mission tourism.

The idea of the leisure imaginary that I have been working with developed out of a conversation with Taylor’s (2004) concept of the social imaginary in his book *Modern Social Imaginaries* and later in *A Secular Age* (2007). Taylor notes that the social imaginary is complex as “it incorporates a sense of the normal expectations we have of each other, the kind of common understanding that allows us to carry out the collective practices that make up our social life” and that its “focus is on the way ordinary people ‘imagine’ their social surroundings” (2004: 23, 24). This definition is similar to phenomenological concepts such as the overall “structure of meaning” or the “structure of the life-world” (Schütz and Luckmann, 1973).

Working within this broad phenomenological tradition, Taylor takes pains to distinguish the social imaginary from social theory, in that the social imaginary is concerned with “the way we collectively imagine, even pretheoretically, our social life in the contemporary western world” (50) and states that “humans operated with a social imaginary long before they got involved in the business of theorizing about themselves” (2007: 173). Taylor also warns that we should not confuse the social imaginary with theory arguing that there are important differences between the two.

There are in fact several differences. I speak of “imaginary” (i) because I’m talking about the way ordinary people “imagine” their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, it is carried in images, stories legends, etc. But it is also the case that (ii) theory is often the possession of a small minority, whereas what

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

is interesting in the social imaginary is that it is shared by large groups of people, if not the whole society. Which leads to a third difference: (iii) the social imaginary is that common understanding which makes possible common practices, and a widely shared sense of legitimacy (2007: 172).

Taylor outlines how the social imaginary has undergone a transformation from a social imaginary that in medieval times was much more integrative of the individual, to a modern social imaginary, that is fractured and multiple, and that constructs the modern individual as an entity whose needs and desires are ordered by enhanced political, economic, and bureaucratic structures coming as a result of Modernity and the Enlightenment project. If the Enlightenment was an aid to modernity as a project, our second Enlightenment has contributed to the dismantling of this project.

1.3.1 The Great Disembedding: From Embeddedness to Order

According to Taylor, what signifies the move to modernity and kicks off the change in the social imaginary of the late Middle Ages of Europe is a *disembedding*, a transformation in the moral order that existed along three dimensions: social order, relation to the cosmos, and human good (2004: 62). Disembedding had profound implications for both the individual and society, in that it sets the stage for the drama under which the twin projects of identity and community unfold. For Taylor, the process of disembedding is the first stage of the transformation of the social imaginary that propels us towards secularism and

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

individualism. This commences as the project of the Enlightenment's cultural elites, concerned with the implementation of an orderly society. The project was an

attempt to make over society in a thoroughgoing way according to the demands of a Christian order, while purging it of its connection to an enchanted cosmos and removing all vestiges of the old complementarities – between spiritual and temporal, between life devoted to God and life in the world, between order and the chaos on which it draws (61).

This drive to order includes changes in the imaginary of: 1) the economy, where it moves from the idea of the management of existing resources to the promotion of social equality and mutual benefit, 2) the public sphere, where we have the rise of a common space of discourse enabled by the rise of media and that is largely seen as being extra-political, and 3) popular sovereignty, where people imagine themselves as self-governing and autonomous individuals (Taylor, 2004). A fourth change that Taylor adds on in terms of the shift in the social imaginary is the shift from an emphasis on medieval codes of honour that preserved social hierarchies and relations to an imagined social that emphasizes basic human dignity.

Hand in hand with the disembedding of people from a sacred order marched the disenchantment of the world. The Enlightenment project heralded the beginning of the process of disenchantment, or domination by Logos, where forms of collective ritual like carnivals, feasts, and festivals that celebrated the relation to a mysterious and sacred cosmos and signified Eros, came increasingly under attack by authorities. The attack on the traditions of Eros was but one example of the obliteration of the old complementarities.

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

The discourse of the Enlightenment holds to a tradition of Logos that can be traced back to ancient Greek philosophy, particularly to Aristotle. According to this tradition, the essence of man is Logos (reason and rationality), and the ideal model of man is one whose soul is governed and informed by Logos. Accordingly, the project of modernity formulated by the Enlightenment thinkers is in reality a Logos-version of modernity, in short, is Logos-modernity. Modernization, therefore, is in essence rationalization in which Logos has established its hegemony (Wang, 1996: 122).

The threads of belonging to society in a traditional manner were gradually snipped away by the scissors of an emergent Christian identity that insisted on a personal relationship with God and the disciplining of the self that was tightly bound to emerging notions of civility. This more personal relationship with god, fuelled by the Protestant reformation supplanted what before was a collective relationship, where people related to God as a society. Examples of this collective relationship to God were collective pilgrimages and festivals. Taylor notes that “collective ritual action, where the principal agents are acting on behalf of a community, which also in some way becomes involved in the action, seems to figure virtually everywhere in early religion and continues on in some ways up to our day” (53). Modern pilgrimages are but one example of how social imaginaries and their related practices are never completely extinguished by the arrival of the new, but go on often in muted fashion, relegated to the private sphere, or become banished or marginalized to approved zones – suppressed. This suppression, a constituent element of the disembedding that Taylor describes, is both cause and effect of the series of mutations in the imaginary that lead us to where we are today, individualistic, secular society.

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

The *great disembedding* created the base for a new rational/moral order, where society was no longer based on a hierarchy, dependent on one another and differing in dignity, mirroring and expressing the cosmic moral order (Taylor, 2002, pp. 94-95).

While this may not have been one of the initial intentions, the disenchantment caused a fundamental shift in society where people came to see themselves as individuals *before* seeing themselves as members of society:

[W]hat I propose here is the idea our first self-understanding was deeply embedded in society. Our essential identity was as father, son, and so on, and as a member of the tribe. Only later did we come to conceive of ourselves as free individuals first. This was not just a revolution in our neutral view of ourselves, but involved a profound change in our morals, as is always the case with identity shifts. (Taylor, 2007, pp. 50, 64-5).

The embeddedness within a community had provided people with their identities and gave them “the contextual limits to the imagination of the self – and of the social imaginary: the ways in which we are able to think or imagine the whole of society” (Taylor, 2007, pp. 62-63). An inadvertent consequence however was that people were released from their secure moorings and began to drift. I will speak more of these changes shortly but first wish to elaborate on the distinction that Taylor highlights between theory and the social imaginary.

1.3.2 Theory, Practice and the Social Imaginary: How Change Occurs

In the development of social imaginaries, there is a link between theory and practice. Imaginaries often originate in theory that becomes adopted and transformed by elites and then reflected in widespread social practices. Examples of this are the natural law philosophy of Grotius and Locke, and the related economic theorizing of Smith which exemplify that over time theory can become part of a taken for granted reality, the social imaginary.

Taylor describes two ideal types or paths in which theory is implicated in transmuting social imaginaries: 1) “a theory may inspire a new kind of activity with new practices, and in this way form the imaginary of whatever group adopts the practices,” and 2) “the change in the social imaginary comes with a reinterpretation of a practice that already existed in the old dispensation” (109-110). In this model, it would appear that these two paths are in a dialectical relationship and that the social theorist occupies a critical position vis a vis their ability to influence society. The role and responsibility of the theorist now begins to take on an added importance, and raises the issues of ideology and false consciousness. Taylor notes that in exploring a social imaginary we need to be attentive to ideology and false consciousness, warning that “what we imagine can be something new, constructive, opening new possibilities, or it can be purely fictitious, perhaps dangerously false” (183). Taylor argues that either way, there is something to be

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

gained by identifying social imaginaries. Using the example of liberal democracy as an illustration he states that

...the gain involved in identifying these social imaginaries is that they are never just ideology. They also have a constitutive function, that of making possible the practices that they make sense of and thus enable. In this sense, their falsity cannot be total; some people are engaged in democratic self-rule, even if not everyone, as our comfortable self-legitimations imagine. Like all forms of human imagination, the social imaginary can be full of self-serving fiction and suppression, but it is also an essential constituent of the real (183).

Taylor's concept of the social imaginary and its relationship to concrete practices is of most value for the present project. In addition to making room for the theorist as social actor, the notion of the interplay between ideas and practices and how this is mediated by theory, indicates a conception of the social that is malleable and allows for social change and innovation to occur. The social imaginary can at times be radically transformed through theory and practice. We see today in any large North American city, a resurgence of interest in collective rituals like carnival and festival. What moderns collectively imagine about such practices remains to be unpacked, but clearly people's engagement in such activities signals changes in the social imaginary.

Primarily, the leisure imaginary is that variant of the social imaginary that is preoccupied with the fulfillment of fantasy, of desire. In this way, Marx's dream of a communist society is a variant of the leisure imaginary. It is primarily oriented to bringing about some future condition or maintaining an image of paradise. It is the distorted aspiration for paradise, a fantasy distorted by our unaddressed fear of death and

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

our uncomfortableness with a freedom inflected by the conditions of late modernity. At the same time it is an image of self and community.

In psychoanalysis, particularly Lacanian psychoanalysis, fantasy does not only refer to an imagined 'land of the good life' pursued as a goal by the subject. Fantasy also includes an ideal image of the self as a meaningful subject. That is, fantasy gives meaning and purpose to the subject's life, and the meaning and purpose which makes life worth living is itself part of the fantasy. People don't have fantasies. They inhabit fantasy spaces of which they are a part. (Hage, 2000: 70).

Paradise is pursued with a measure of devotion. That we are attempting to reach for paradise in our 'free' time speaks to leisure's devotional character. The leisure imaginary then is that space in which we pursue, in our free time, sometimes religiously, the twin projects of identity and community, referencing the title of this manuscript, *The Leisure Imaginary: Adventures in Identity and Community*. But what of work?

Leisure scholars such as Tony Blackshaw (2010a) and Chris Rojek (2010), have noted that the world of leisure has moved on from its relationship with work. In what many commentators recognize as a post-modern, post-Fordist society, work is no longer felt to be central to the lives of individuals, local communities, or social classes. Leisure has become an ever greater site of excess, escape, transgression, resistance and change. "Rojek (2000) has written of "dark' or 'wild' leisure, and more recently (2005) of the need for an 'action analysis' of leisure, one which should be ideologically committed to a new, 'greenish' politics which values the care of the individual self, as well as the care of others and care of the environment" (Bramham and Wagg, 2011: 5).

The leisure imaginary is in constant flux and bears the imprint of the age in which we live. For example, in the classical period, it would be impossible to countenance the kinds of acquisitive, consumption-based leisure behaviour that we would recognize as leisure today. In fact, leisure as conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1915) would have been anathema to the leisure of the Greeks, who regarded contemplation, or θεωρία (theoria) as the best end of leisure. For the Greeks, contemporary consumption oriented leisure as belonging to the biological life of the animal. Likewise in our late modern era the Greek notion of philosophical leisure seems equally distant to us.

1.4 A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE ORIGINS OF THE WESTERN LEISURE IMAGINARY

What do we mean by leisure? Leisure of course has its origins in free time. Free time and its use is the data that informs this exploration, and is given urgency with the question, “What is time well spent?” This emphasis on time’s relation to leisure arguably arrived with the industrial clock when time became demarcated by the increasing demands of industrialization and thus more ‘precious’. The changed relation to time the clock enforces, marks the point in history where leisure time is identified as such and set apart.¹²

¹² See Chapter 8, *Time* in Peter Borsay’s (2006) book *A History of Leisure: The British Experience since 1500* for a thorough account of the relation of time to leisure.

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

Industrialized society and its new relation to leisure, a society managed according to the needs of an expanding new economic and political order, is highlighted by an early leisure journal. *The Leisure Hour: A Family Journal of Instruction and Recreation*, published in England from 1852 to 1905, documents the new orientation to leisure based on the needs of industrial society, where the British state felt the need to educate the new mass leisure crowd in the appropriate ways in which one should enjoy free time. *The Leisure Hour* provided instruction for the new working classes and gives us insight into ‘official’ accounts of leisure or how leisure time was to be used in particular ways to ‘improve’ the British people. The journal, even in its title emphasizes leisure as instructional, family oriented, and about *recreation* or what Aristotle termed *anapasis*. Recreation as the routinization of enjoyment serves a functionalist purpose as indicated by Kelly and Godbey when they define recreation as “voluntary non-work activity that is organized for the attainment of personal and social benefits including restoration and cohesion” (1992: 21). The journal emphasizes the importance of the re-creation of the worker (his restoration) and the reinforcement of the social order, echoes of our more contemporary concern with identity and community.

Popularly circulated images of leisure of the same period are perhaps more interesting for the more fantastic access they give to the leisure imaginary of the population of the Britain of that time. Popular art, in the form of the widely circulated images of Le Blond ovals printed using the Baxter colour printing process, display the

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

nostalgic yearnings of an urbanized population unhappy with the changes to society rapid industrialization had wrought: Dickensian poverty, poor working conditions, and pollution. The series of prints, many adapted from popular genre paintings or inspired by popular books and songs of the time, all images of leisure, were mass produced and well circulated and traded. According to Lycett and Martin, the prints were “cheap and attractive, in fact there was something for everybody – paintings for the wealthy, books and songs for the educated and cheap, pretty prints at 9/-(45p) a dozen or 10p each for scrap albums” (1994: 19). Figure 2 depicts one such popular image, titled, *The Leisure Hour*. It depicts a fisherman, taking a break from work to perhaps contemplate his children as they play with homemade boats in a tub of water. This particular print was the last new subject for the Le Blond ovals and was produced circa 1867.

Figure 2 - "The Leisure Hour"



Source: Lycett and Martin, 1994

The ovals, produced between 1853 and 1867, inscribe the leisure imaginary of the time, saturated by a nostalgia for a more idyllic period. They were widely collected and amounted to one of the first mass produced objects circulated as popular culture in England. But we have to go still further back to find the beginnings of the leisure imaginary and its roots in the *great disembedding*.

While we think of the leisure imaginary as something that has emerged only in recent times, aspirations for paradise and resistance to established orders have occurred throughout history. The Romantic Period was one such time in our history where a

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

leisure imaginary can be neatly located, a period in which contemplation was also on the ascendant. The leisure imaginary of the romantics was seen as a threat by the elites of the period. Rojek notes that

[R]omanticism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was secondary to the rationalist, empiricist, egoistic outlook...Leisure, with its time-worn associations with pleasure and freedom was welcomed as the reward for work. But an excess of leisure was feared as undermining society. Leisure was always treated as secondary. The Romantic argument that it is only through leisure that that we truly enrich ourselves and society was treated as a threat to society precisely because it encouraged a disrespect for the inflexible, time-tabled existence favoured by the ruling order. (Rojek,1995: 57).

One of the better accounts of the Romantic period and resistance to the prevailing social order is Alain Corbin's (1995) exceptional historical account of the discovery of the European seaside during the Romantic period. It allows us to see the emergence of a leisure imaginary governed by a 'passionate thinking' a thinking that is oriented to understanding self in the world. The Romantic poet Johann Goethe is emblematic of the period and wrote under the strains the new disembedding had inflicted. Becker has said of this period that Goethe was writing under a kind of neuroticism. It was a time when people. In this case the elite,

no longer knew what were the proper doses of experience. This safe dosage of life is exactly what is prescribed by traditional custom, wherein all the important decisions of life and even of its daily events are ritually marked out. Neurosis is the contriving of private obsessional ritual to replace the socially-agreed one now lost by traditional society. The customs and myths of traditional society provided a whole interpretation of the meaning of life, ready-made for the individual; all he had to do was to accept living it as true. The modern neurotic must do just this if he is to be "cured": he must welcome a living illusion (1973: 199).

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

Corbin's book, *The Lure of the Sea: Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World 1750-1840*, outlines the gradual transformation of the relation to water and the seaside according to a new aesthetic sentiment. Corbin's account allows one to see increasingly varied expressions of desire, aesthetic appreciation and the reasserting of contemplation as modes of experience. In the early steps towards admiration, the exploration of the sea-shore was a practice engaged in by the social elite for renewal and refreshment and as the source of cures (1995: 33). We can still see this orientation to cures today, though the more reflective element is not perhaps as oriented to, in the culture of the North American snowbird or in the spa culture of Europe.

The Lure of the Sea outlines models for a wide variety of leisure experience still practiced today. Corbin states that what drove the elites was a "cluster of attractions that brought together a now forgotten combination of a nostalgia for ancient times, an interest in archaeological discoveries, a desire to find the landscapes painted by Rosa and Claude Lorrain, hopes of being cured, and the sweet pleasures of holiday-making on the coastal heights or seaside strolls along headlands cooled by open seas" (155). This leisure imaginary of the elite, based in a nostalgia for ancient times, was referenced by the emulation of the Homeric epics, which were taken as models of self-(re)discovery where "the ancient texts would continue to haunt the imagination of travelers who would scrutinize the landscape with copies of Homer or Fénelon in their hands," an extension of classical tourism (156) that spoke to the need to re-embed oneself in a sacred cosmos.

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

These mythic texts recalled the image of the hero, the intrepid traveler best captured in the story of Odysseus. Goethes is said to have declared when approaching Palermo that ‘Here was the key to everything’ in that he had earned “an understanding of both the Odyssey and Claude Lorrain’s paintings” (157). This was embedding in the sense of ontological exigency, for transcendence, a time in the evolution of the leisure imaginary where philosophical leisure was seen as part of the cure. Corbin goes on to describe the evolution and variety of ways in which the shore was experienced in a wonderfully sensual account of this period. Figure 3, Friedrich’s, *Moonrise Over the Sea* and in Figure 4, *Brighton, Kemp Town* capture different sensibilities. We see reproduced in these images similar nostalgic sentiments as those expressed in the Leblond Ovals referenced in *The Leisure Hour*.

Figure 3 - Caspar David Friedrich's 1822 Moonrise Over the Sea



(Source: mystudios.com)

As indicated by Rojek (1995), this new or renewed expression of aesthetic pleasure was regarded as a threat by the agents of Logos-modernity, and measures were taken to suppress these activities. While the Romantic elites looked to the classic texts for models of existence, the new middle and working classes towards the end of the nineteenth century looked towards the elites as models. The success of industrial capitalism led to new middle and working classes with an appetite for leisure, long suppressed. The Romantic expression of the leisure imaginary of the time appealed to a broader body politic and by the middle of the nineteenth century these previously exclusive areas that

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

had been the province of Romantic elites, began to open up to the masses and new options for the expression of Eros that had been suppressed by the changes outlined by Taylor (2004), emerged. The form Eros took was vastly different from the elites and a class-based leisure was born. The railroads of the mid-nineteenth century provided access in large numbers to this less cultured group and the modern beach was born as a renewed site of revelry and the carnivalesque (Shields, 1991). This class-based leisure mimicked the earlier form of the medieval carnival albeit in a more spatially and temporally regulated and sequestered form.

Figure 4 - Brighton, Kemp Town (1834)



(Source: Corbin, 1995)

The images of leisure above depict the emerging leisure imaginary and demonstrate not only its singularity but its multiplicity. Both images depict relations to the question, what is time well spent? While one emphasizes activity, the other emphasizes contemplation and references a class distinction, a distinction that has been challenged periodically by those courageous enough to do so. We can also read the leisure imaginary symptomatically here as the solution for the neurotic of the time.

1.4.1 The Second Enlightenment and Late Modernity

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

In our contemporary period both the social imaginary and our leisure imaginary have become inflected by what Gadamer has famously called the ‘second Enlightenment’. Once again, the second Enlightenment refers to that “technological control of reality facilitated by the dazzling achievements of modern natural science and of modern systems of communication” (1996: 61). This second Enlightenment I argue has extended further the basic 4 shifts in the social imaginary that Taylor outlines, shifts that have particular consequences for how we imagine leisure. Now, according to Blackshaw we are beset by a whole new set of questions concerning leisure.

This is because questions concerning leisure and freedom (what is time well spent?) not only revolve around individualization, consumerism, and the pursuit of pleasure and happiness, but they are also concerned with a whole host of other issues – identity, community, responsibility, performativity, love, anxiety, fear, ontological security, the search for meaning, authenticity, and so on – that dominate modern life today (Blackshaw, 2010a: xii).

First, popular sovereignty has undergone a further shift to *individualization* which Blackshaw argues is “*the* shaping force in the narrative of human existence” (2010a: ix). It means that people are leading insecure and contingent lives. Second, the public sphere has been further inflected by new communications technologies that allow for a more participatory engagement but also more options for isolation and immersion. The internet has been largely responsible for this with its sub-mediums, social media and online games, blogs, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook that allow for the passive spectator to engage with the issues or entertainments of the day. McLuhan (1970) aptly coined the term ‘global theatre’ to describe this phenomenon, an upgrade on his previous term ‘global

village’, a term that failed to meaningfully capture the agency that the new medium of the internet was to extend to the social actor, who could now act on a global stage. Third, the emphasis on the economy has shifted from an emphasis on mutual benefit to an emphasis on consumption. Consumer capitalism, the society of the spectacle, and its orientation to manufactured human ‘needs’ dovetail nicely with the new culture of display that the global theatre encourages. Fourthly, the emphasis on human dignity, for many, has morphed into action where a need to actively care for the other has become part of or moral horizon.

1.5 LATE MODERNITY AND THE LEISURE IMAGINARY (OR THE “NOT SO GREAT” RE-EMBEDDING)

Demodernizing ideas and movements promise liberation from the many discontents of modernity. Again, the most economical way of describing the content of this promised liberation is to call it “home.” The demodernizing impulse, whether it looks backward into the past or forward into the future, seeks a reversal of the modern trends that have left the individual feeling “alienated” and beset with the threats of meaninglessness.

The Homeless Mind, Berger, Berger and Kellner

I want something else, to get me through this
Semi-charmed kinda life, baby, baby
I want something else, I'm not listening when you say good-bye

Semi Charmed Life – Third Eye Blind

Turning now as we are to a discussion of the social imaginary and its relationship to contemporary leisure, it is important to note that leisure theorist Chris Rojek has encouraged the use of this construct for studies of leisure. Rojek holds that “the social imaginary poses a set of metaphysical challenges about the condition of being that we

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

recognize as culture and leisure, and a set of political considerations designed to realize this condition in life experience” (2005: 191). Echoing Taylor (2007), Rojek finds that the social imaginary “is the stuff of legend, stories and images of a better life that emerge in the texture of everyday life.” He emphasizes more than Taylor that the social imaginary is a “collective resource for developing what Bromley calls ‘narratives for a new belonging’” (ibid.) Rojek’s notion of the social imaginary is in reality, the leisure imaginary, as these new narratives are acted on and developed in the sphere of leisure.

This returns us somewhat to the initial ground that I began to lay out with regards to modernity, disembeddedness and the practical need to overcome feelings of alienation or anomie through engaging in leisure practices that reinforce a sense of self and belonging. In part this project draws on the social imaginary to situate various contemporary tales of leisure as narratives for a new belonging. The form of these attempts at belonging or more exactly ‘reembedding attempts’ constitute the leisure imaginary.

1.5.1 Late Modernity’s Inflections on the Social Imaginary

In this section I will look briefly at the contributions of Anthony Giddens and Zygmunt Bauman to our understanding of late modernity. Anthony Giddens elaborates on the impacts of modernity by exploring the “consequences” of modernity. For him, the dynamism of modernity, and therefore its “consequences,” depends on three factors

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

(Giddens, 1990: 16-17): (1) the distancing of time and space; (2) the development of disembedding mechanisms, based on trust; and (3) the transformation from reflective to reflexive thinking. Distancing is the transformation of the relationships between time and space, disconnecting a space from time and, vice versa, disconnecting time from space. For example, time used to be told in relation to place, e.g. “I will meet you when the sun is just over that peak” or like a sundial. Similarly, space and place were separated with this emptying of time:

In pre-modern societies, space and place largely coincide, since the spatial dimensions of social life are, for most of the population, and in most respects, dominated by “presence”---by localized activities. The advent of modernity increasingly tears space away from place by fostering relations between “absent” others, locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction. In conditions of modernity, place becomes increasingly phantasmagoric: that is to say, locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them. What structures the locale is not simply that which is present on the scene; the “visible form” of the locale conceals the distanced relations which determine its nature (Giddens, 1990, pp. 18-19).

Distancing allows for a place to become any place, losing any relation and meaning associated with a locale’s particularities, thereby also causing disembeddedness (Giddens, 1990: 19). This insight gives rise to his definition of *disembedding* as the “lifting out” of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space (Giddens, 1990: 21). Disembedding ‘mechanisms’ facilitate the distancing of time and space. In order to function, these mechanisms, e.g. money or any other independent and abstract expert system, depend on the abstract trust of the user

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

(Giddens, 1990, pp. 26–29), making trust a fundamental and critical element of modern society and its institutions. Giddens observes that the very nature of trust in society has changed, becoming a concept based on the understanding and acceptance of ‘risk’ and contingency (Giddens, 1990: 30, 33).

Giddens understanding of modernity is that it results from a rebellion against tradition and an increase in reflective thinking. An example of this new reflective capacity is writing. Writing, and specifically the printing press, which increased the amount of literature and communication, became another means for time/space distancing and disembedding. Writing, which cuts the connections between time and space, allows for more active reflection, as it gives people perspective. This then allows them to compare what they read to what they already know. The constant reflection on and examination of new information as it relates to the old, leads to uncertainty within epistemology and following that, ontology, resulting in a fracturing relativity in the social imaginary. Giddens terms reflexive modernization (Giddens, 1990: 39).

We must remember that the promise of modernity was to create a new order that people could rely on, could trust, and that this new order had as its handmaidens, rationality and science. For Giddens, “the thesis that more knowledge about social life” (even if that knowledge is as well buttressed empirically as it could possibly be) “equals greater control over our fate is false. It is (arguably) true about the physical world, but not about the universe of social events” (43). We have changed how we relate to time and

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

place, how we trust one another and demonstrate this trust, how we regard personal interaction and people in general, how we regard the world, history, and ourselves, how we reflect, and how we are intimate with others. Most importantly for this project, Giddens observes how people are looking to *re-embed* themselves.

In response to our late modern situation of disembeddedness, Giddens asserts that we are primarily engaged in *re-embedding*, “the re-appropriation or recasting of disembedded social relations so as to pin them down (however partially or transitorily) to local conditions of time and place” (Giddens, 1990: 79–80). With this search to connect again with time and places, people look to re-embed themselves in their face-to-face interactions with abstract systems (Giddens, 1990: 87). People place their trust in an institution or abstract system through the interaction with the individual that represents it, such as a waitress at a diner, a flight attendant on a plane, or a Park Officer in a .

Giddens unpacks the connection between trust and *ontological security*, that feeling of security and “confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action” (Giddens, 1990: 92). In late modernity, ontological security needs to be continually re-established and is achieved over and against Taylor’s new malaises of modernity, alienation, meaninglessness, a “sense of impending social dissolution” (2002: 91). Ontological security of this sort can only be a band-aid solution. Giddens provides a psychological explanation of how this security is formed in the early years of an individual,

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

based on the child's ability to deal with their caregivers' absence in terms of both space and time, and the development of trustworthiness in oneself (1990: 94). The two elements of trust lead to the formation of a stable identity. He further suggests that the formation of trust, and therefore stable identity, or lack thereof, will determine the individual's reaction to the insecurity that is inherent to late modernity. He also notes that social institutions, other than caregivers can help provide trust and constancy, buttressing the individual's security through structure and order, for example the Church. We might think of devotional leisure practices as providing a similar function. One can begin to see, through Giddens's analysis of trust, the fragility of the human psyche in late modernity. In an age where institutions are unreliable and where often the only prophylactic for the protection of the self comes from those early caregivers, the presence of trauma in that caregiving environment should give us insight into the origins of more the radical projections of self and community that we see exemplified in white supremacy and radical Islam and the social roots of bipolar illness and borderline personality disorder.

One of Giddens more interesting analyses is his investigation into the transformation of intimacy into a source of ontological security and re-embedding.¹³ Berger, following Gehlen, postulates that private life has suffered as a result of the expansion of the social into public life (1973). Private life has become "deinstitutionalized"

¹³ See Dawson (2006) pp. 111–113 for a detailed examination of the fate of intimacy in late modernity.

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

while public life has become “overly institutionalized,” leading the individual turning inwards to find their own reference points of stability, thus giving birth to the self as a project (Giddens, 1990: 115) and the focus on the romantic other. Unfortunately, “the private sphere is...left weakened and amorphous, even though many of life’s prime satisfactions are to be found there because the world of ‘instrumental reason’ is intrinsically limited in terms of the values it can realise.” Echoing Taylor (1991) and Arendt (1958) Giddens finds that the relationships of the private sphere are weakened because of the rise of instrumental rationality, where people have come to judge and base their relationships on their instrumental value. Horkheimer observes an even worse scenario where “personal engagement with others “remains at best a hobby, a leisure-time trifle” (1974: 94) because people, once again judge personal engagements based on a means-end calculus. Zygmunt Bauman, has elaborated on the issues that Giddens has raised regarding our changing institutions, our attempts to reembed ourselves, and our instrumental relations to each other.

In his book, *Liquid Modernity* (2000), Bauman characterizes the development of society through the metaphor of forms: pre-modernity as solid, modernity as a search for a “more solid” solid, and late-modernity as the liquefied version of modernity. According to Bauman, the fundamental reason for the “melting” of traditional structures that defined the pre-modern world was “the wish to discover or invent solids of – for a change – *lasting* solidity, a solidity which one could trust and rely upon and which would make the world

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

predictable and therefore manageable” (2000: 3). As a result, all elements of social life came under scrutiny, condemning many institutions to *melting*, because they were “rightly or wrongly suspected of limiting the individual freedom to choose and act.” Bauman claims that this mentality has become so extensive that “radical melting” of solids has become a “permanent feature of modernity” (2000: 5-6). Out of the fractured ground of late modernity emerge the ‘zombie institutions:’ institutions that are dead yet still appear or are treated as alive, like family, class, and neighborhood (Bauman, 2000: 6).

Bauman observes that society has lost its reference points, all of which have been melted. These reference points have taken on a liquid nature: able to go around any solid obstacle, dissolve or soak into those in its way, and always ready to change since it takes too much energy to keep one distinct shape or form (Blackshaw, 2010b). For Bauman the important question to ask in this context is, “How do we respond?” Is it possible and practical to “resurrect the concepts that are simultaneously dead and alive, even if in a new form?” (2000: 8). Or, is it just better to bury these concepts (community, family, religion etc.) and start again?

He looks at the ‘avatars’ of the concepts and observes how they manifest the liquid mentality: a rise in nomadism signifying the cutting of ties to place (the opposite of the early-modern era when the goal was to force the nomads to settle) (Bauman, 2000: 13); power as illustrated through absence and the ability to escape and evade rather than presence (versus the early-modern trend to display power by a large army surrounding a

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

city) (11); the extinction of history as result of the increasing velocity of time and information, and relativity (9); rise of instantaneity illustrated by planned obsolescence and the increased velocity of time (14); and a rise in social disintegration. Bauman's view of re-embedding is a cynical one.

Nothing may change the fact that there are but motel beds, sleeping bags and analysts' couches available for re-embedding and that from now on the communities – more *postulated* than 'imagined' – may be the ephemeral artifacts of the ongoing individual play, rather than the identities' determining and defining forces (Bauman, 2000: 22).

Here Bauman references the idea of the *project of the self*, where the responsibility of creating an identity falls on the individual, no longer guided by external structures, voices, or leaders (although, given guidance with the rise of 'identity-as-a-project' specialists – psychologists, psychiatrists, life coaches etc.)¹⁴ (30). He explains that since society forced the individuals out of the structures of estates and left them to their own devices to re-embed themselves, the individuals formed themselves into the second-best thing – classes within society. As membership in these classes was based on achievement, the individuals had to be constantly on their toes, continually renewing their membership. Veblen's (1915) notion of *conspicuous consumption* speaks to how this was accomplished in one's leisure time during a time when class was ascendant. Class membership was the new

¹⁴ Kieran Bonner in his 1998 book *Power and Parenting*, details the sometimes devastating consequences of this culture of experts on the identity of parents where the experience of power inherent in parenting turns to a situation of powerlessness as the parent searches for a parental identity and practice.

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

source of embeddedness, which explains why class was so critical, as exemplified in the idea of ‘keeping up with the Joneses.’ With time, the class system has also been melted, leaving our late-modern society in a state of fluidity with vestiges of the class system and its hierarchies. This fluidity is captured nicely by the metaphor of the tourist.

In *Pilgrim to Tourist - Or a Short History of Identity* (1996: 18), Bauman explains that identity has been “redefined and reconstructed”. The ‘problem of identity’ came into being as soon as the concept of the individual came into use; the term ‘individual’ did not exist until there was a question of one’s existence, whereby the name was used to fill the empty space of uncertainty. Therefore, according to Bauman, all identity is postulated, and therefore must be continually constructed, so as to ensure its existence.

Pilgrims base their identities on the belief that the current structures will still exist in the future, using stable structures as a means to judge their progress. But with the destabilization of social structures, security and trust in the system disappeared. Having succeeded in making the world ‘pliable’ in order for it to be re-solidified, they made the world inhospitable for themselves. They tried everything they could to solidify their identities using the new structures, but the world is now sand, drifting too much to keep the imprint of their ‘lifelong journeys.’ Without anything to refer to, they lose their identities in the midst of trying to create new and pliable reference points.

This desert world gives birth to life as a tourist, as compared to one as a pilgrim. This life is totally different, one of avoiding the perils of having only one identity, one identity

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

that is stuck to you. Rather than one long journey, life becomes a series of short episodes and games, avoiding long-term commitments as there is no security in the future.

Continuous emancipation becomes the penultimate goal, and instant gratification becomes the name of the game. This is a poignant illustration of our world today, our consumer society.

In the life-game of the postmodern consumers the rules of the game keep changing in the course of playing. The sensible strategy is therefore to keep each game short... To keep the game short means to beware long-term commitments. To refuse to be 'fixed' in one way or the other. Not to get tied to the place. Not to wed one's life to one vocation only. Not to swear consistency and loyalty to anything and anybody. Not to control the future, but to refuse to mortgage it: to take care that the consequences of the game do not outlive the game itself, and to renounce responsibility for such as do. To forbid the past to bear on the present. In short, to cut the present off at both ends, to sever the present from history [i.e. traditions], to abolish time in any other form but a flat collection or an arbitrary sequence of present moments; a continuous present... No consistent and cohesive life strategy emerges from the experience which can be gathered in such a world – none remotely reminiscent of the sense of purpose and the rugged determination of the pilgrimage. Nothing emerges from that experience but certain, mostly negative, rules of the thumb: do not plan your trips too long – the shorter the trip, the greater the chance of completing it; do not get emotionally attached to people you meet at the stopover – the less you care about them, the less it will cost you to move on; do not commit yourself too strongly to people, places, causes – you cannot know how long they will last or how long you will count them worthy of your commitment... Above all, do not delay gratification, if you can help it. Whatever you are after, try to get it now, you cannot know whether the gratification you seek today will be still gratifying tomorrow (Bauman, 1996, pp. 24-25).

Bauman (2001) finds this evolution is the result of trying to protect oneself from the insecurity of the world, that continual experience of disembeddedness and the pain of being constantly uprooted. People naturally want to be embedded, and therefore search for narratives, relationships, experiences – for anything that will give meaning to their disembedded lives. Unfortunately people chafe at committing to these social structures

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

that will give meaning. As tourists, they are continually grazing, looking for new experiences, jumping from community to community. These folks value cool, weird, odd, unique and immersive experiences, and are often fully focused on their aesthetic value. Constantly on touristic escapades, the tourist is running because he fears 'home-boundedness,' but is simultaneously 'homesick' looking for places where he or she feels he or she can belong (Bauman, 1996: 30-31). I explore this binary in the detailed case study in chapter 5. Bauman, in his categories of pilgrim and tourist points to two complementary pathways for embedding oneself, one aimed at ontological security, the other, ontological exigency.

While ontological security has the flavour of the more instrumental embedding of the tourist, ontological exigence has more the character of the pilgrim as ontological exigence references the capacity for transcendence and a sense of how one fits into the overall scheme of things. From the perspective of ontological exigence the tourist ontology is a vapid one.

Being is—or should be—necessary. It is impossible that everything should be reduced to a play of successive appearances which are inconsistent with each other... or, in the words of Shakespeare, to "a tale told by an idiot." I aspire to participate in this being, in this reality—and perhaps this aspiration is already a degree of participation, however rudimentary (Marcel 1995: 15).

While the tourist as metaphor points to a 'semi-charmed' life in the pursuit of temporary moments of ontological security this is a life that doesn't really touch the world,

and flees fearfully from the deep commitments that the pilgrim embarks on in his quest for ontological exigency, to found, in Berger et al.'s (1973) sense, a metaphysical *home*.

Ontological security and ontological exigency are not mutually exclusive. In fact they may be hard to distinguish. To emphasize this point and to point to how the two might possibly be bridged through philosophical leisure, let us return for a moment to a time when people were not so inured against the vagaries of the world. I have stated in several spots how class provided a measure of embeddedness or ontological security for individuals and how leisure, for example the carnival-like leisure experienced in the seaside resorts by the working classes satisfied this need beyond work. What is implied here is that certain leisure practices were restricted by class. The philosophical leisure that figures like Goethe engaged in was not in any way part of the leisure imaginary of the working classes of the 18th and 19th centuries. Rather, it was an inaccessible dream, cordoned off ultimately by a caste-like social structure.

1.6 THE PLACE OF PHILOSOPHICAL LEISURE

Presaging the popular culture of leisure depicted in the Leblond ovals and images of carnival-like leisure of the late 19th Century, is the imagery contained in the correspondence between the organizers of a worker's movement in France. A Marxist at the time, theorist and philosopher Jacques Rancière, expected to find information on "working conditions and forms of class consciousness" when doing archival research in the

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

1970s on the Saint-Simonian worker's movement (Rancière, 2009: 19). Surprisingly, the workers, contrary to Rancière's expectations, had not narrated the expected tales of oppression or strategies and details of labour organizing, but something quite different. They had narrated tales of their own leisure. For Rancière, this recovery of workers' 1830's correspondence over how they spent their leisure time was critical for his development as a theorist. It challenged his understanding of the worker, and called him to break with the Marxist theorizing of his mentor Louis Althusser. What Rancière recognized in the correspondence was a fundamental equality of these workers with the theorist (that actor that is oft considered to be most free), where the worker was able to participate actively in the reconfiguration of space and time, work and leisure in a roughly equivalent manner to what Rancière had assumed was the privileged position of the intellectual.

These workers, who should have supplied me with information on working conditions and forms of class consciousness, provided me with something altogether different: a sense of similarity, a demonstration of equality. They too were spectators and visitors within their own class. Their activity as propagandists could not be separated from their idleness as strollers and contemplators. The simple chronicle of their leisure dictated reformulation of the established relations between *seeing*, *doing*, and *speaking*. By making themselves spectators and visitors, they disrupted the distribution of the sensible which would have it that those that work do not have time to let their steps and gazes roam at random; and that the members of a collective body do not have time to spend on the forms and insignia of individuality (2009: 19).

In this passage, Rancière points to the notion that as moderns, we inhabit leisure as a different sphere or world that is not necessarily connected in the way we might imagine to

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

the world of work and that we all, as practical theorists, orient to leisure in the context of our lives in deeply meaningful ways. But, something more here needs to be said of the character of the worker's accounts, for they are striking and have a direct bearing on the present project. Rancière tells us that

[o]ne of the two workers had just joined the Saint-Simonian community in Ménilmontant and gave his friend the timetable of his days in utopia: work and exercises during the day, games, choirs and tales during the evening. In return, his correspondent recounted the day in the countryside he had just spent with two mates enjoying a springtime Sunday (2009:18).

Our Ménilmontant commune member was Louis-Gabriel Gauny, joiner-intellectual, a carpenter who dared to reflect and write in the manner of the philosopher, a “philosophe plébéien” (Rancière in Gauny, 1983). Gauny is important for he acts as an avatar for the possibility of philosophical leisure no matter what our conditions be they medieval, modern, or late modern. In addition to the disruption of the sensible that these accounts accomplished, there is the actual character of the accounts and what is referenced by them. Both are examples of and recommendations for the communal enjoyment of leisure and its formulation as utopia in the case of the Saint-Simonian commune and a view to paradise perhaps represented by the aesthetic enjoyment of the countryside of Gauny's correspondent - Eden.¹⁵

¹⁵ A similar kind of sentiment is expressed in our understanding of Cottage Country in Ontario as “God's Country.”

In this 1830's correspondence, we see the devotional and individual character of leisure. Our leisure practices and the ways in which we speak of these practices implicitly are a recommendation of how to live a life, propositions to the question, "What should we do and how should we live?" This life expresses itself outside work. Following Rancière's methodological example, this dissertation examines the speech of contemporary social actors and their descriptions and practices of leisure, who, like the workers that gave Rancière his revelation and the images of free time use captured in the LeBlond ovals, articulate for us, the leisure imaginary.

1.7 CONCLUSION

Living in a social world that is systematically denuded of the harsh realities of birth, death, disease, violence, strife, and poverty, ever growing segments of late modern societies are losing contact with the experiences of birth, death, disease, violent strife, and poverty, ever-growing segments of late modern societies are losing contact with the experiences that have perennially imparted meaning to life and, many would argue, are the natural well-springs of religious sentiment and faith. For some people, the struggles with this impoverished social environment set off a sense of moral, psychological, and spiritual malaise that opens the door to experimenting with alternative religious worldviews and commitments. Religious innovations may offer new ways to morally ground life and provide the trust required to make life meaningful, ways that either escape or creatively adapt the social conditions of life in late modernity (Dawson, 2006: 109).

In hindsight this chapter appears to be a reiteration of the quote above. The leisure imaginary in its variations can be understood in the same vein as religious innovations. Indeed there is some overlap. For example, I started off this chapter with an anecdote of a

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

ritual created to help my family deal with the loss of my grandmother. The ritual highlighted some of the ways we attempt to deal with our fear of death. Together, in the absence of an inherited ritual, we created our own, deeply meaningful ritual that referenced a practice and a place that had gathered my family together in some kind of coherence. The poem, *Death is Nothing at All*, consoled us in its uttering, that death was something negligible, weak even, that “nothing was lost”. The devotional practice of fly-fishing, as it had since I was a child, gathered the generations together in the enigma of nature, inscribing each of us into our own separate yet connected cosmos, the perfect morning established through the communion of great grandfather and great grandson in the shared ritual of fly fishing.

The extended quotation from Ortega y Gasset that opened the chapter was employed to bring attention to the way that we are thrown into existence, and the need to compose ourselves in front of the terrifying emptiness by filling the physical and temporal space in front of us with... something. Ortega y Gasset finds that historically, the activity that men most like to fill their time with when given choice is the activity of hunting. He casts back to a time where it is imagined that people intrinsically knew the best ends to which free time should be put. I contrasted this with the contemporary actor who, while having free time, does not know to what end free time should be put. Perhaps this references the contrast between the certitude of modernity and the uncertainty of late modernity. I went on to outline how leisure and death were conjoined, by documenting a

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

variety of examples pulled from everyday life. Highlighting the notion that modernity and its disenchanting effects had effectively squashed practices and beliefs that had previously allowed humans to deal more effectively with the problem of death, two kinds of responses demonstrated how humans have adapted in order to satisfy this irrepressible need.

One set referenced how leisure opens a space for creativity and thus becomes a compelling way for people to engage anxiety over death. This set also pointed to the second Enlightenment and the new mediascape as facilitating this capacity to creatively engage death through the creation of new deeply meaningful rituals that pay homage to the person's leisure life. It is not the life of work that is referenced in these rituals. The second set of adaptations also points to the influence of the second Enlightenment, as communications technology allow for the distancing from death through its consumption as information and entertainment. Death as spectacle allows for it to be treated in a blasé kind of way, where it can be ridiculed, and even laughed at. Time is occupied by the consumption of spectacles of death and disaster.

I also introduced Blackshaw's (2010a) notion of devotional leisure, grounding it in my own experiences and showing how it can be related to engaging the terrifying emptiness. That is, that devotional leisure practices are, in the fishing cases I describe at

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

Last Resort and in the MMORPG¹⁶ *World of Warcraft*, connected to death in very explicit ways. New rituals were enacted on the holy ground where these devotional practices were expressed, filling in, so to speak, what remains unspoken in Blackshaw's theorizing, the relation of leisure to death. I also showed how devotional leisure was emphasized in the descriptions of meaningful leisure provided by students in several of the classes I have taught, once again referencing the utility of Blackshaw's concept and providing more 'empirical' evidence for the existence of devotional leisure practices and their connection to the leisure imaginary.

I went on to assert that we can trace the origins of the leisure imaginary to the advent of industrial production where leisure became a kind of reward for work and where the distinction between work and leisure became more clearly demarcated. Next I showed how the leisure imaginary emerged out of the social imaginary and connected the leisure imaginary to the concepts of ontological security and ontological exigency, both of which are inflected by late modern conditions.

I then presented Rancière's discovery of the emancipated spectator as a methodological trope that highlights the agency of actors that some theoretical formulations assume are dominated by work and to hint at the possibilities inherent and available in philosophical leisure. In my own formulation of the leisure imaginary, I

¹⁶ MMORPG – Massively multiplayer online role-playing game

Chapter 1: Leisure and the Leisure Imaginary

intend to show that at every pause, at every instant, no matter where we are located in the social structure, if we have courage, we can grasp the freedom that philosophical leisure offers rather than retreat from it.

It is easier to dance in chains Nietzsche has said. Taken methodologically, dancing, hunting and fishing have something in common. There is such an argument that the hunter can have all the will in the world but if his methods of hunting fail him, he or she will come up empty handed. Similarly, a good fly rod can be the difference between having fish for dinner and going hungry. There is something to be said for tools and techniques. i.e. chains, in that they give us some equipment for proceeding. In the next chapter I unfold a method for doing this philosophical hunting down or catching of leisure, a method that helps us to answer the question of why we flee contemplation, thinking, self-reflection, philosophical leisure, immersing ourselves instead in mundane entertainments and amusements or pursuing heroically our constructions of private or collective constructed paradises.

Chapter 2: Reflexive Interpretive Sociology and the Case Study Approach

The defeat of despair is not mainly an intellectual problem for an active organism, but a problem of self-stimulation via movement. Beyond a given point man is not helped by more “knowing,” but only by living and doing in a partly self-forgetful way. As Goethe put it, we must plunge into experience and then reflect on the meaning of it.

Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death*

The radical interpretive perspective is used because of its ability to throw light on the inextricable intertwining of theoretical interests, ethical understanding, and practical action. The key unifying thread throughout the narrative is the way the reflexive element is productive for inquiry. According to Heidegger (1977, 116), “Reflection is the courage to make the truth of our own presuppositions and the realm of our own goals into the things that most deserve to be called into question.

Kieran Bonner, *A Great Place to Raise Kids*

If the first chapter has done its job it should have served to introduce the enigmatic character of leisure and its connection to death. Leisure is now beginning to be presented as a ‘problem’ for interpretation and not an object that we can take for granted.

Traditional social science is ill equipped to deal with the problem that was developed in the first chapter a problem that renders leisure ambiguous. How do we deal with this unstable interpretive ground? We must look to an approach that can move us forward through this ambiguity without prematurely resolving it. Reflexive interpretive sociology,

or what Bonner (1997, 1998,) has developed as the *radical interpretive approach* is well-suited to this task.¹⁷

Reflexive interpretive sociology uses “a configuration of phenomenological (Berger and Kellner 1964; Berger *et al.* 1977; Garfinkel 1967), hermeneutic (Gadamer, 1975), and dialectical analytic (McHugh *et al.* 1974; Blum and McHugh 1984) methods and theories (i.e. radical interpretive sociology)” in order to understand a phenomenon (Bonner, 1997: 9).¹⁸ Reflexive interpretive sociology (RIS), extends and deepens phenomenology by settling on a particular form of hermeneutic inquiry handed down by Gadamer (2002

¹⁷ For a thorough description of reflexive interpretive sociology, i.e. the radical interpretive approach, see the Appendix in Kieran Bonner’s (1997) *A Great Place to Raise Kids*, pages 207–209. Bonner writes that “the radical (i.e., rooted) position of radical interpretive sociology is that *all* research findings are forms of interpretation and that accepting certain conclusions is a simultaneous acceptance of a way of being in the world... What has to be brought into the research project for examination are not the conclusions by themselves but the way the methods and the theorizing that generate conclusions are grounded in a way of ‘being in the world.’ The issues of ‘knowledge’ and ‘truth’ are essentially related to an examination of the options between which men [sic] must choose (Taylor, 1977: 127). This principle means that the...researcher is more than a neutral witness (detached observer), more than a sympathetic listener to the claims of everyday members (participant observer), more than an expert offering explanations about social phenomena, but is also a self-conscious theorist showing or exemplifying a ‘possible society’ Blum (1971) or ‘the agreement of an ideal community’ (Gadamer, 1975: 36)” (Bonner, 1997: 149). Bonner has also referred more recently to the radical interpretive approach as reflexive sociology.

¹⁸ The term reflexive interpretive sociology (RIS) is used in this dissertation instead of its predecessor radical interpretive sociology (RIS) in part to distance the perspective from the popular understanding of the term radical which means extreme. Within Leisure Studies in particular, radical is bound up with Marxist and neo-Marxist notions of emancipation (see Goodger, 1983 and more recently Hemingway and Parr (2000). In this vein, Hemingway and Parr (2000) write that the “truly radical potential of leisure lies not in nostalgia for an early reform movement that largely reproduced ideologies of social control and labor discipline (see, e.g., Andrew, 1981; Gleason, 1999, esp. chap. 1; Rojek, 1995; Storrman, 1991, 1993). It lies in providing access to developmental and emancipatory leisure opportunities for people disadvantaged by those and similar ideologies” (159). The notion of radical as ‘reflexive’ remains undeveloped in these interpretations. While the demands placed on the practitioner of RIS may appear to be extreme, the approach is not extreme in the political sense of the term. And, while radical of course means ‘grounded’ or ‘rooted’, grounded interpretive sociology as a moniker might confuse the perspective with Anselm and Strauss’ grounded theory and the acronym GIS with geography’s geographic information systems.

[1960]) and deepened by the dialectical turn of Blum and McHugh's (1984) analysis.

Reflexive interpretive sociology, with its attention to data and lived experience, to the art of questioning and theorizing as contributed by hermeneutics, and to the deep reflexivity of dialectical analysis, is trans-disciplinary in nature.¹⁹

In order to help make this configuration more digestible to the reader I will unpack each of these "elements" showing how they work together to provide an overall perspective. The aim is to demonstrate how reflexive interpretive sociology (the radical interpretive perspective), because of its emphasis on reflexivity, can develop a strong version of leisure by dialectically connecting the particularity of cases to the broader human condition. Towards the end of the chapter, to show how reflexive interpretive sociology works in practice I will develop an exemplary case that in addition to demonstrating the method (i.e. how reflexive interpretive sociology works in practice), highlights the problem that has been developed thus far.

¹⁹ Reflexive interpretive sociology is also distinct from Bourdieu's *reflexive sociology* which is limited in its hermeneutical understanding of phenomenon. See especially Joseph C Lewandowski's (2000) piece *Thematizing Embeddedness: Reflexive Sociology as Interpretation* which critiques this shortcoming in Bourdieu's *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*.

2.1 PHENOMENOLOGY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL DATA

Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature and meaning of our everyday experiences. Phenomenology asks, “What is this or that kind of experience like?” It differs from almost every other science in that *it attempts to gain insightful descriptions of the way we experience the world pre-reflectively, without taxonomizing, classifying, or abstracting it.* So phenomenology does not offer us the possibility of effective theory with which we can now explain and/or control the world, but rather it offers us the possibility of *plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world.*

Researching Lived Experience, Max Van Manen (1998: 9 italics mine).

Participation in the community, informal conversations with members of the community, and open-ended conversations all provide a good opportunity ...because they privilege the knower whose understanding of the truth of his/her situation is based upon reflections on lived experience. That is, they enable rather than prevent a real conversation, and it is through conversation, according to Gadamer (1975, 325-41), that understanding of the truth of the object develops.

A Great Place to Raise Kids, Kieran Bonner, (1997: 97).

From the perspective of reflexive interpretive sociology, the inquirer needs to orient him or herself strongly to the question of the meaning of the object in question and work to show how this meaning is articulated in the lifeworld. The lifeworld is the source of data, it is culture and all of its artifacts, “the life-world, the world of lived experience, is both the source and the object of phenomenological research” (Van Manen, 1998: 53). Phenomenological research is the “study of lived experience” (1998: 9) and as a consequence the research findings of this dissertation are grounded or rooted in people’s

lived experience and understanding of leisure.²⁰ For this project, there has been considerable effort directed towards generating data in addition to the unobtrusive data collected from the materials that abound in the lifeworld.

Reflexive interpretive sociology, while sharing with hermeneutics and analysis an emphasis on language, has a stronger focus on the understanding of lived experience, which connects it somewhat with other more mainstream interpretive sociological perspectives such as symbolic interactionism and social constructionism as well as research methods like ethnography and autoethnography, approaches that investigate the life-world. In life-world analysis, meaning rich data is ready at hand. My own lived experiences as well as those of others constitute part of the ‘data set’ that I use to understand the problem of leisure. In order to enter the problem or central issue that this

²⁰ In this project on leisure, it is the elucidation of the “overall structure of meaning” (Berger, Berger and Luckman, 1966) through techniques of phenomenological reduction that is exemplary of the phenomenological approach. According to Wallace and Wolf, “phenomenologist sociologists see the task of sociology as describing precisely how we see the world” and then look at how “we put together the phenomena we experience in such a way that we all construct a similar ‘everyday world’” (1995: 242). This concept of the “everyday world” is known in phenomenology as the “life-world,” the object of the study of the assumptions involved in, and the constitution of everyday knowledge (Jary and Jary, 1991: 365). Schütz applied Husserl’s phenomenology to social phenomena, especially the phenomena of everyday life, and conceived of social order as arising from “the general presumption of a common world, but without this presumption being in any way a matter of normative consensus of the kind assumed by functionalism” (Embree, 2000: 432). Harold Garfinkel extended Schütz’s phenomenological thought with ethnomethodology. “Ethnomethods,” refer to members’ methods for accomplishing reality, in that reality is deemed to be a practical accomplishment. Van Manen states that ethnomethodologists “show how people produce the facticity of the common sense reality of the world and then experience it as independent of their own production” (1998: 178), allowing one to see its socially constructed character.

dissertation engages, I opened with a prologue, admittedly a device more typical of a novel than an academic work. This is no accident as what I wish to underline is the importance of lived experience and narrative in generating an understanding. That understanding necessarily starts with the enquirer.

The term *data* as used in RIS stands in some contrast to the term as used in conventional, more positivistic social science. I want to show here how a return to etymological origins helps us to recover the meanings of words that have become “lame, limp, mute, emptied, and forgetful of their past power” (Van Manen, 1998: 58). The explication of the term ‘data’ underscores the ‘remembering’ element of this work and the importance of revisiting the meaning of terms given our forgetfulness.

Originally, “datum” means something “given” or “granted.” And there is indeed a sense in which our experience is given to us in everyday life. And yet we need to realize, of course, that experiential accounts or lived-experience descriptions – whether caught in oral or written discourse – are never identical to lived experience itself. All recollections of experiences, reflections on experiences, descriptions of experiences, taped interviews about experiences, or transcribed conversations about experiences are already transformations of those experiences (Van Manen, 1998: 54).

This statement regarding data serves to illustrate the more difficult to grasp nature of the term data as it is used in reflexive interpretive sociology, the primary distinction being that data in the sense meant here is not defined as an accurate reflection of any external reality but is a meaning given that is already under interpretive flux and difficult to capture. Van Manen states that “without this dramatic elusive element of lived meaning to our reflective attention phenomenology might not be necessary” (1998: 54). The adequacy of a

phenomenological interpretation does not hinge on the quantity of data but rather on whether the data is reflective of the intersubjective reality or life-world under examination. It is the skill or artfulness of the interpreter in developing and conveying that meaning that is on display.

For this project,²¹ data was reflective of the leisure case under investigation and of the overall problem that the project engages. Tape recorded and transcribed conversational interviews, close observations, magazine and newspaper articles, blogs, movies, novels, art, lived experience descriptions and my own lived experience are all sources of data. Again, as a nod to discovery paradigm researchers, I'll note that these sources act together to provide validity in terms of the triangulation of data sources, so that the work is broadly reflective of the life-world under investigation (Merrigan, Huston, and Johnston, 2012). I describe a few of these data sources more fully below.

2.1.1 Lived Experience Descriptions

In Chapter 1, I hinted at the narcissistic element at the root of human striving. This dissertation is itself a form of human striving and is thus not immune from a certain narcissism. I want to qualify the nature of this narcissism. In writing about the “ego-

²¹ The term *project* is closely related to the term *vocation*. In late modernity, both identity and community have become projects.

logical starting point for phenomenological research” Van Manen contextualizes the use of autobiographical material or one’s own lived experience.

My own life experiences are immediately accessible to me in a way that no one else’s are. However the phenomenologist does not want to trouble the reader with purely private, autobiographical facticities of one’s life. The revealing of private sentiments or private happenings are matters to be shared among friends perhaps, or between lovers, or in the gossip columns of life. In drawing up personal descriptions of lived experiences, the phenomenologist knows that one’s own experiences are also the possible experiences of others (Van Manen, 1997: 54).

Many of the examples and case studies that make up the dissertation are populated by my own lived experiences. This is not mere masturbation. The inclusion of all anecdotes is purposeful. I employ these “personal descriptions of lived experiences” or anecdotes as a way to enter the phenomenon or dramatize the issue or ethical collision at hand. These personal anecdotes and lived experience descriptions are also the potential stories and experiences of others that share the lifeworld. I have employed anecdotes as an aid to understanding, to assist in helping myself and the reader to come to understand the point or essence of what I am attempting to describe.²² “Anecdotes...are not to be understood as mere illustrations to ‘butter up’ or ‘make more easily digestible’ a difficult or boring text.

²² For Van Manen, anecdotes serve the following purposes in human science or phenomenological research: 1) anecdotes form a concrete counterweight to abstract theoretical thought; 2) anecdotes express a certain disdain for the alienated and alienating discourse of scholars who have difficulty showing how life and theoretical propositions are connected; 3) anecdotes may provide an account of certain teachings or doctrines which were never written down; 4) anecdotes may be encountered as concrete demonstrations of wisdom, sensitive insight, and proverbial truth; 5) anecdotes of a certain event or incident may acquire the significance of exemplary character (Van Manen, 1998: 120-121).

Anecdote can be understood as a methodological device in human science to make comprehensible some notion that easily eludes us” (Van Manen, 1998: 116). The prologue that opened up the dissertation dramatized our contemporary relation to death and the importance of leisure in grappling with the problem of human meaning that death presents us with. Similarly, in Chapter 5 where I describe my experience volunteering in cyclone/hurricane relief activities, I am also an example of the contemporary phenomenon of voluntourism or what I term ‘mission tourism’ and all the baggage this characterization comes with. It is the intersubjectively shared lifeworld that is referenced and developed in these experiences. Lived experience descriptions as anecdotes address something *particular* while really addressing the *general* or *universal* and have the power to compel, to lead us to reflect, to involve us personally, to transform, and to help us measure our own interpretive sense (Van Manen, 1998: 120-121) This relationship between the particular and the general is not just an example of the dialectical character of meaning creation but also references the hermeneutic character of reflexive interpretive sociology.

There is also the sense in which lived experience descriptions are a kind of offering, a sacrament. In a real sense, the person giving up the lived experience description is revealing their innermost world, making available the mysterious character of existence as a gift to the other, *datum*. I am grateful to those who shared or made available to me their lived experiences and it is my sincere wish that the reader understand and appreciate the risk I have taken in offering up my own very personal gifts of lived experience.

2.1.2 Conversational Interviews

Conversational interviews were another way in which lived experience was generated. These interviews allowed for an ongoing dialogue or collaborative (secondary) reflection with others about the meaning and value of leisure practices in our lives.²³

Conversational interviews operated in two ways: 1) as a means of gathering and exploring experiential narrative material as a resource for developing a rich understanding of the leisure phenomenon under investigation and 2) as a vehicle to develop a conversational relation with a partner about the meaning of the leisure experience. The research questions, while particular to each case, were disciplined by the overall research question “How do people orient to leisure in their lives?” Phenomenological questioning is “not the positing of, but rather the testing of, possibilities” and “questioning is like the opening up of meaning, not merely recreating someone else’s meaning” (Herda, 1999: 108). The majority of the interviews were recorded on tape or video tape and transcribed into Microsoft Word. There is a close methodological link between these conversational interviews and the collaborative method of McHugh et al. (1974) that I will discuss shortly.

²³ Thus, secondary reflection is one important aspect of our access to the self. It is the properly philosophical mode of reflection because, in Marcel's view, philosophy must return to concrete situations if it is to merit the name “philosophy.” These difficult reflections are “properly philosophical” insofar as they lead to a more truthful, more intimate communication with both myself and with any other person whom these reflections include (Marcel 1951a, pp. 79–80). Secondary reflection, which recoups the unity of experience, points the way toward a fuller understanding of the participation alluded to in examples of the mysterious. (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/marcel/#9>, see #7 Primary and Secondary Reflection)

2.1.3 Close Observation

One of the traditions of data collection in sociology is the practice of participant observation borrowed by sociologists from anthropology. With regards to participant observation as a method of gathering data there is some difference with its use in a phenomenological sense that can help with issues of “going native” or maintaining too much distance. Van Manen makes the distinction between “close observation” and “participant observation” as a reflection of a phenomenological orientation to research (understanding).

Close observation involves an attitude of assuming a relation that is as close as possible while retaining a hermeneutic alertness to situations that allows us to constantly step back and reflect on the meaning of those situations. It is similar to the attitude of the author who is always on the look-out for stories to tell, incidents to remember. The method of close observation requires that one be a participant and an observer at the same time, that one maintain a certain orientation of reflectivity while guarding against the more manipulative and artificial attitude that a reflective attitude tends to insert in a social situation and relation (1998: 69).

This would seem to be a tall order, a demand that one be both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’. What close observation is meant to alert one to, is the unreflexive attitude associated with participant observation. McHugh et al. (1974) argue that the participant observer has much in common with the demographer, where the participant observer is a collector of data rather than an analyst, and that by virtue of his academic authority, can enforce authenticity. The attitude of the participant observer is evident in the figure of the traveler, that cousin of the anthropologist, “a fundamentally irresponsible, uncommitted type” who wants to “see

without being seen” (141). Dauphinée (2007: 43-44) writes of the approach of anthropological participant observation that

[a]cademic authority went hand in hand with the discovery and representation of authenticity with respect to other peoples and cultures. 'Once removed from the ranks of rich hobbyists and sideshow hucksters and set up as a noble figure pursuing knowledge in a mystically foreign landscape, the anthropologist could return to popular culture, but now in the fictive form of a hero.' The authority that is conferred on authenticity is reflected in the ability to say 'I was there' – I was witness through the immersion of my body in the field environment, in the immersion of my body in the culture of the Other. This authority allows for the production of knowledge, as opposed to the dissemination of gossip or rumour. It makes knowledge out of gossip and rumour by employing the advanced technologies of scientism: observation, testable data, the photograph, the audiocassette, and other instruments of truth.

In contrast, close observation encourages the researcher to shift the focus more towards understanding or insight rather than collection and description and on the relation between the researcher and the research subject rather than the research subject as data source. Close observation was undertaken in all the examples and major case study that comprise much of the content of the dissertation.

2.1.4 Experiential Descriptions in Literature and Popular Media (Popular Culture)

Experiential descriptions in the form of novels, magazine articles, online posts, popular songs, popular films and machinima provide a third source of data for this project. Machinima, bridges the mediums of the film and the game. The “[bombing](#)” of the

[World of Warcraft funeral](#)²⁴ that I referenced in Chapter 1 is an example of this kind of text. Popular films reflect the convergence of the novel, popular, film, and game as all three factor into the production and marketing of these media. The movie *Avatar*, reflects this new marketing paradigm.²⁵ The value of these media is that as a reader, viewer, and researcher, one can benefit from the sensitivity and intuitiveness of the author who allows us access to another world. Through the film or novel “we are given the chance of living through an experience that provides us with the opportunity of gaining insight into certain aspects of the human condition” (Van Manen, 1998: 70). Popular films, much like fictional works, can be broadly divided into the epic and novel.

Our penchant for the heroic is reflected in epic films like *Star Wars*, the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and the more recent blockbuster *Avatar*. Both in terms of Academy Awards and revenue earned, epic films are the most successful genre of popular film.²⁶ Drawing on the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, the difference between the epic and the novel as literary/filmic forms is a useful distinction that is used as a resource in driving the analysis. While people may aspire to a life with an epic narrative and heroic quality in the face of death, it is the absurd character of the novel that I attempt to draw out in the case studies.

²⁴ “Bombing” is the term used by gamers in *WoW* to describe “party crashing” behaviour within the game. See <http://spir.aoir.org/index.php/spir/article/viewFile/761/350> for an academic treatment of the “bombing”.

²⁵ “Ubisoft’s *Avatar* to get 3D treatment - PlayStation Universe”. *Psu.com*. Retrieved 2009-06-04

²⁶ See Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epic_film

While the epic eschews ambiguity by actualizing a totalizing narrative, the novel embraces ambiguity and indeed promotes it. The major case in one way or another tend to show this tension between the two – the desire for the epic and heroic is disrupted by the ambiguity of the novelistic and absurd. In the case on voluntourism or mission tourism for example, the heroic aspirations and self-imaginings of activists and volunteers are at times revealed as folly.²⁷

It is literature in its varying forms (lived experience descriptions, novels) and art (films) that provide a rich textual description of the leisure imaginary. For Ricoeur, literature seeks to represent reality and there is “no discourse so fictional that it does not connect up with reality” (Ricoeur, 1991: 85). Ricoeur maintains that “the text is in a key position as a mediator of tradition and uniqueness, and thus stands in a position of potential critique of both the world and the self” (209). Science fiction texts excel at this sort of critique as “they are part and parcel of the modern lived environment” and “can find things to say about contemporary society” (Higgins, 2001:2). For example, the Hollywood movies *Avatar* and *Gamer* render insight into how popular fantasy film feeds off the fears and desires of our contemporary culture by providing an image of our heroic impulses and utopian desires. Utopian *Avatar* as I’ve stated, is structured along the lines of

²⁷ In a jettisoned case, I examined how the popularity of ‘quest-like’ games package the hero-impulse into neat commodities that can be experienced much like mini-vacations to different worlds with no connection to a grander scheme.

the epic, while our dystopian fears are brought to life in *Gamer* which emphasizes the ambiguity of the novel. For the reflexive interpretive sociologist, historical understanding is essential to challenging predefinition, and while the courting of philosophy orients one to the questioning of assumptions, it is the gift of literature, of fiction, that delivers us into alternative worlds that are at some level symptomatic of our own, allowing us to tarry for a time, and to imagine, contemplate, or theorize, different possible futures.

2.1.5 Phenomenological Literature

A final source of data is existing phenomenological literature related to this project. Van Manen states that these prior phenomenological works are “a source for us with which to dialogue,” and “enable us to reflect more deeply on the way we tend to make interpretive sense of lived experience” (Van Manen, 1998: 76). Through an emphasis on dialogue, much like that of the conversational interview, these texts allow one to recognize our interpretive limits and to move beyond our own limited interpretive sensibilities. For this project, Berger, Berger and Kellner’s *Homeless Mind* and Charles Taylor’s *Modern Social Imaginaries* and *A Secular Age*, Bakhtin’s *Epic and Novel*, Tony Blackshaw’s *Leisure*, and the works of Blum, McHugh, Bonner, Gadamer, Arendt and Plato have been particularly valuable as conversational partners.

2.2 HERMENEUTICS

For Gadamer the problem of understanding involves interpretive dialogue which includes taking up the tradition in which one finds oneself. Texts that come to us from different traditions or conversational relations may be read as possible answers to questions. To conduct a conversation, says Gadamer, means to allow oneself to be animated by the question or notion to which the partners in the conversational relation are directed (Van Manen, 1998: 180).

Hermeneutics has traditionally been defined as the theory of interpretation, and was originally the theory and method of interpreting Biblical and other difficult texts (Embree and Inwood, 2000, p. 348). What the quotation above emphasizes with regards to hermeneutics is Gadamer's dialogical approach. Gadamer's mark on this project is profound as it reflects the four main emphases in Gadamer's work: 1) the development of a hermeneutical method, 2) a dialogue with philosophy in particular the work of Plato, Aristotle, and Heidegger, 3) an engagement with literature, and 4) and emphasis on practical philosophy (Malpas, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). In this project on leisure, the conversational partners are the different discourses on leisure, which can all be read as asking about the meaning of the phenomenon, as asking a question. For Gadamer, the hermeneutic starting point is to ask after the tradition that makes the question possible, how our prejudgments (tradition) constitute understanding.

For example the "leisure society thesis" is one such way that inquiry into leisure has been structured and organized. It represents a dominant tradition or orientation in leisure studies whose emergence can be traced historically. Shaw (2000) notes some of the other

ways that inquiry into leisure has been structured by those in the ‘field’ of leisure studies, namely through its intellectual isolation from other important bodies of research like sociology, its ghettoization through lack of recognition and marginalization, the related lack of funding, and perhaps most importantly, a lack of awareness of leisure studies as a discipline compounded by a lack of relevance. A possible danger of isolation of course is an increased self-absorption that can lead to a distorted vision, where one becomes trapped in one’s own discourse due to an inability or unwillingness to engage in dialogue. In situating leisure studies, Shaw notes that the “attention to leisure first, and other issues second, may be limiting our vision and the potential application, breath [sic] and social relevance of our research” (2000: 149). Among other recommendations, Shaw suggests a shift of attention towards mass media and “the cultural symbols and images associated with violence, hatred, fantasy, meaning or ideology” rather than “worrying about whether our research promotes or defends the value of leisure” (150). I elaborate on these issues in leisure studies in Chapter 3.

Another way inquiry is structured is at the epistemological level. Paradigms of knowing (discovery, interpretive and critical), have all in very specific ways structured inquiry into leisure, with the discovery paradigm with its social psychological and survey approaches dominating the field. The hermeneutic acknowledgment of epistemological bias grounds a critical analysis of society. Habermas has pointed out that two features of hermeneutics have been vital. First it “reminds the social sciences of problems that arise

from the symbolic prestructuring of their subject matter,” and second, it “undermines objectivist understandings of the natural sciences” (Jary and Jary, 1991: 209). Hermeneutics calls attention to the way paradigms of knowing, perspectives, help us to construct a world and our objects of study. To know, for reflexive interpretive sociology, is not just to have knowledge of our objects of study, but to understand the perspective that makes the knowledge of that object possible (Bonner, 1997). Situated as Bonner and Habermas have indicated, hermeneutics is *radically* reflexive.²⁸

What this radical reflexivity orients one to is that epistemological paradigms, like the oft-contrarian theorists that operate within their orbits, speak past each other, oftentimes enraptured by their own interpretive circles originating in divergent starting points. An example of this is a class that I taught on contemporary theory where I and a group of students attempt to make sense of a theoretical argument arising out of Flyvbjerg’s (2001) book *Making Social Science Matter*, where the author and his interlocutors continually appear to be starting from different positions and speaking past each other. These divergent starting points are referenced in the notion of the *hermeneutic circle*, which explains why “we can recognize and generalize a particular view only because we interpret instances of it, but can only understand a particular act or artifact with reference to the world that produced it” (Jary and Jary, 1991: 208). Put another way,

²⁸ See Melvin Pollner’s (1991) article, Left of Ethnomethodology: the Rise and Decline of Radical Reflexivity.

The circularity of interpretation concerns the relation of parts to the whole: the interpretation of each part is dependent on the interpretation of the whole. But interpretation is circular in a stronger sense: if every interpretation is itself based on interpretation, then the circle of interpretation, *even if it is not vicious*, cannot be escaped (Bohman, 1999: 378, emphasis mine).

The problem of the hermeneutic circle in part accounts for why theorists and everyday theorists misunderstand and have a hard time speaking with each other and otherwise remain wedded to their own discursive interpretations, be they positivist or critical (following the 'scientific' paradigms of knowing), or the everyday interpretations of social actors. This interpretation of the hermeneutic circle follows what Heidegger and Gadamer have taught us - they make the 'radical' claim that hermeneutics is not just the method of the human sciences but *universal* (389), i.e. that it is what we all *do*. The *vicious* character of the hermeneutic circle resides in the tenacity with which we hold on to our own versions of events, speech or relation to the world, that which we defend as our ground, a vicious attitude that privileges our own discourses over a dialogue with the *other*. The vicious aspect not only discloses the unrelenting character of the hermeneutic circle but displays how our egos are intimately bound up with our ways of knowing, our conflicting perspectives making it difficult to speak to each other. This highlights the importance of dialogue and dialectic as approaches to understanding over and against and the difficulty in attaining a fusion of horizons, a common world of action and meaning. For Gadamerian hermeneutics the *other* plays a crucial role in our own self understandings. For Gadamer,

the other is the source or ground by which the self comes to understand itself...the other serves as the occasion for an act of understanding that would otherwise be impossible. That is, the understanding enacted in the hermeneutic encounter is

grounded in the being of the other, and not in the prior cognitional activity of the subject (Taylor, 2012: 176).

Once again, we define ourselves, our motives, our action, our being, over and against a difference, i.e. the other. For Gadamer the opportunity for genuine understanding arises in the encounter with and dialogue with the other. I take my cue from this insight in that what grounds this project is the hermeneutic emphases of dialogue and dialectic first implicit in Heidegger's notion of the ontological 'thrownness' of being-toward-death (the hermeneutic circle that effectively structures this project and renders its intelligibility), and available methodologically in Gadamer's hermeneutics and the example of Plato's Socratic dialogues. Additionally, Aristotle's and Gadamer's concern with *phronesis* or practical wisdom are of interest for developing the problem of leisure, helping to engage the question: to the extent that our time is free, "what is time well spent?"²⁹ My own understanding of leisure and the dissertation has reflected the truth of the hermeneutic circle as my understanding of the 'whole', that is leisure, becomes informed by the parts (cases), and in turn the cases informed by the whole. The understanding of leisure that has and will continue to be disclosed here in these pages has been developed in this way, dialectically.

²⁹ The interest in privileging a Gadamerian understanding of *phronesis* over a Nietzschean/Foucauldian understanding will be made clear in the concluding chapter.

In the next chapter I will make some progress in recovering the interpretive ground on which leisure studies is constructed, its paradigm. Hermeneutically this means I need to recover a historical understanding of leisure and the development of leisure studies, showing how the lifeworld of “Leisure Studies” has inflected inquiry into the topic of leisure, constituting the object, leisure, so that it is related to in an instrumental and positivist manner. Likewise, in the case studies I develop, I recover the various prejudgments or hermeneutic circles that structure thinking and action. In the sample case in this chapter I show how inquiry into ‘sex’ tourism has been shaped by different intellectual fashions and paradigms. In the major case, I explicate the imaginary structure that allows for the emergence and understanding of mission tourism as a practice.³⁰



The materials that I use for analysis can be collected and understood as texts. It is the analysis of texts that allows for insights into the lived experience of individuals and the formulation of the individual “life-world” and shared “life-world.” Seeing social life as a text raises some issues. Van Manen cautions that “the idea of text introduces the notion of multiple, or even conflicting interpretations...and the question arises whose reading, whose

³⁰ I have employed a similar approach in a forthcoming book chapter for UBC press. In *The Social Imaginary of Redneck Okanagan Whiteness* (2015 forthcoming) I explicate the hermeneutic circle, the redneck leisure imaginary that guides the thinking and action of some ‘redneck’ Okanaganites.

interpretation is the correct one” (Van Manen, 1998: 38). This has been one of the generally weak criticisms of interpretive sociology and hermeneutics from the post-modernist perspective, which tends to celebrate subjectivity and relativism over intersubjectivity. The concepts of “intersubjectivity” and “life-world” can help us overcome the essentially solipsistic post-modern critique. “The existence of intersubjectivity, since it need make no claims to objectivism, counteracts such doctrines as solipsism, relativism, and incommensurability, all of which suggest barriers to working agreements on knowledge” (Jary and Jary, 1991: 250). As Bonner has stated, “we are not locked within separate and mutually exclusive life-worlds because language is the ‘the web to whose threads’ these life-worlds cling” (1997: 66). The ethical character of inquiry is highlighted by the third element of *Reflexive Interpretive Sociology*, dialectical analysis.

2.3 ANALYSIS

It is the oriented ethical character of *Analysis* that gives reflexive interpretive sociology power and thrust, its *chutzpah* if you will. The dialectical turn of Blum and McHugh (1984), as a final component of the reflexive interpretive approach, directs the enquirer to take responsibility for the choice of inquiry and ethical implications of one’s approach – to be responsible for one’s own talk. Understanding is a moral and ethical undertaking and in this sense the project becomes evaluative of ways of knowing, and argues that some ways of knowing are stronger than others. Following this approach, this inquiry, which asks into the meaning of leisure, raises deeper issues of fundamental

ontology, and what in general a good relation to leisure and by extension, inquiry, might look like. It attempts to exemplify the value of the reflexive interpretive approach not just for inquiry or theorizing but for living life. In this way Blum and McHugh and *Analysis* exemplify Heidegger's notion of 'passionate thinking' most readily identified in the approach of Hannah Arendt, whose passionate pursuit of understanding and thinking characterizes her work. For her, Heidegger's gift was this articulation of thinking.

I have said that people followed the rumor about Heidegger in order to learn thinking. What was experienced was that thinking as pure activity—and this means impelled neither by the thirst for knowledge nor by the drive for cognition—can become a passion which not so much rules and oppresses all other capacities and gifts, as it orders them and prevails through them. We are so accustomed to the old opposition of reason versus passion, spirit versus life, that the idea of a passionate thinking, in which thinking and aliveness become one, takes us somewhat aback (Arendt, 1978: 295-98).

For Arendt, passionate thinking, what we might also label *philosophical leisure* is the condition of being. There is no end for philosophical leisure, only the quest, a passionate desire to understand, ontological exigence undistilled.

This passionate thinking, which rises out of the simple fact of being-born-in-the-world and now 'thinks recallingly and responsively the meaning that reigns in everything that is' (*Gelassenheit*, 1959, p. 15), can no more have a final goal—cognition or knowledge—than can life itself. The end of life is death, but man does not live for death's sake, but because he is a living being; and he does not think for the sake of any result whatever, but because he is a 'thinking, that is, a musing being' (Arendt, 1978: 295-98).

Like Arendt's work, Blum and McHugh's *Analysis* takes as its phenomenological starting point a "Heideggerian rather than Husserlian inspection of foundations" (Sharrock and Anderson, 1986: 111) and exemplifies the practice of passionate thinking. The

problem of *being in the world* is foregrounded, emphasizing that social practices, theorizing included, are inextricably bound up with the problem of self and community in the face of a finite existence. This prompts Sharrock and Anderson to observe that

“Analysis” sees ethnomethodology and other types of sociology as misrepresenting as theoretical and empirical problems what are in fact problems of community and authority, of seeking sounder sociological investigations when what is needed is a reconstruction of the whole form of intellectual life, of pursuing methodological objectives when an authentic relationship with others is what should be sought (Sharrock and Anderson, 1986: 111).

This approach, which exhibits passionate thinking, is disarming as it speaks to little in the canon of social science at the contemporary university that one can connect to.³¹ *Analysis* then can appear as a radical and daunting task. To be stirred by analysis is one thing. To grasp what analysis is trying to accomplish is another. To *do* analysis is another matter entirely. This does not mean of course that the task is not worthwhile, only that a different sort of commitment be made, a commitment to the *in and of itself* of theorizing. Blum and McHugh’s “discovery” of the Greeks and the re-introduction of the Greeks into sociology is fundamental to the approach and reflects an interest in strong scholarship, the interrogation of tradition, and a commitment to passionate thinking. Reflexive interpretive sociology is not unlike the approaches of Hannah Arendt and Georg Gadamer

³¹ Liberal arts institutions are much more amenable to this kind of approach as they are still defended somewhat as spaces in which the instrumental attitude of modern life is to be resisted and an attitude of wonder cultivated.

and is reflected in the contemporary work of Blum (2003, 2011) and Bonner (2011, 2012) in North America, and Raffel in Europe (2004, 2013).

To do research on a topic of concern...the theorist formulates his or her interest as a problem and then develops a Socratic dialogue with this problem (and directly and indirectly with those who already have developed an approach to the problem)...The theorist is interested in the reflexive character of his or her own inquiry. To theorize means that one orients oneself to that which makes it possible to be so oriented in the first place. Thus theorizing is a kind of moral education: the theorist must show how any theorizing is an example of its own orientation to the Good, the good of theorizing (Van Manen, 1998: 179).

As theorizing is a way of showing how we “are in the world,” analysis is not neutral, that is by virtue of the theoretical attitude expressed by the inquirer his or her “beingness” is revealed. A concrete example of this is the theoretical/practical attitude promoted by theorizing people as networks, embodied in network analysis, currently a widely popular form of inquiry inspired by the rise of the internet and social networks that inadequately conceptualizes culture and human agency (Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994: 1413). While the rise of the network has revitalized sociology and the sociology of community as a ‘useful tool’, one might ask after the kind of actor and community such an approach imagines. To see people not as individuals embedded in communities but as nodes in a network has certain implications.

The moral educative thrust of Analysis asks of the theorist and his or her realm of inquiry if the mode of being is *Good* and this extends reflexively to the inquirer in that the inquirers approach or intentionality towards the object of study demonstrates a mode of being as well and that this is always an ethical and moral stance. The project of theorizing

cannot be divorced from the ethical demands required of reflexivity, that is, to make assessments. This position of judgment has the potential to be abused. A counterbalance to this is found in the moral imperative handed down by Gadamer to give strong readings to texts. This 'balancing act' is reflected most notably in Bonner's (1997, 1998) work in this tradition. Gadamer's counsel to give work/action a strong reading, to practice a hermeneutic of trust (not a naive faith as has been implied by some critics), guards against misreading and misrepresenting the work/actions of others and is a practical as well as a theoretical concern that demonstrates the intertwining of theorizing and practical action.

While the early work of McHugh et al. tends towards an almost militant judgment,³² there is a later emphasis on trying to recover the good that is expressed in the theorist/researcher's interest, thus, Analysis is much more than a method, it is moral education for the theorist/researcher. This moral education has its model in Plato's Socratic dialogues. Analysis, in its transmission, privileges the teacher-student relation, acknowledging that the production of knowledge or insight is always collaborative and dialogical. Analysis makes this relation explicit. That is, Analysis does not forget that which its knowledge is founded on, i.e., what came before, those that have laid the ground for the current speech or theorizing. A literature review can be an example of this deeper acknowledgment if we cast it as more than an opportunity to cover the literature so that

³² See especially the *Travel* essay in McHugh et al.'s (1984), *On the Beginning of Social Inquiry*.

one can find a novel jumping off point or topic to exploit. It is a deeper engagement, a collaboration that generates insight into the deep interest of concern.

2.3.1 Collaboration and Inquiry

Collaboration was ongoing throughout this project. Collaboration took the form of responses to my work at conferences, comments on my work by committee members through the comprehensive exams and proposal defence, ongoing discussions about the meaning of leisure with key informants who after being interviewed initially wanted to continue the dialogue, and conversations with friends. Patton (1990) describes this type of arrangement as a kind of “triangulation through multiple analysts” as a way of establishing validity (468). However, a strong notion of collaboration goes much further than ensuring positivistic notions of validity.

There are many formal and informal ways that researchers or authors seek collaborative assistance in their writing. The research group or seminar circle is a formal way for convening and gathering the interpretive insights of others to a research text. But there are also less formal ways of testing one’s work – such as sharing the text with advisers, consultants, reviewers, colleagues and friends. Whether formal or informal, what one seeks in a conversational relation with others is a common orientation to the notion of the phenomenon that one is studying. Gadamer (1975) describes the method of a conversational relation as “the art of testing” (p. 330). And the art of testing consists in the art of questioning – meaning “to lay open, to place in the open” the subject matter of the conversation (Van Manen, 1998: 100).

This art of questioning references the notion of ‘datum as offering’ discussed earlier in that what is offered in questioning is an openness or availability not only to the question but to the question asker. In this way, collaboration mirrors questioning. Collaboration

with committee members, comprehensive examiners, friends, colleagues, and especially students served to deepen the work. As alters to my ego, (McHugh et. al., 1974) their continued questions and provocations strengthened the analysis methodologically and theoretically, allowing me in turns to see the limits of my interpretations.

McHugh et al.'s (1974) *On the Beginning of Social Inquiry* pioneered this method of analysis more easily understood perhaps as a form of *deep* collaboration. Analysis, in this regard, is not predicated on the discovery of an external truth but on the foundation or grounds that allow for speakers to understand the social phenomena about which they speak.

It is not finding something in the world, or making sense of some puzzling datum, or answering an interesting question, or locating a phenomenon worthy of study, or resolving a long-standing disagreement or any other essentially empirical procedure. To *analyse* is instead to address the possibility of any finding, puzzle, sense, resolution, answer, interest, location, phenomenon, etcetera, etcetera. Analysis is concerned with the grounds of whatever is said—the foundations that make what is said possible, sensible, conceivable. (1974:2).

In analysis, one attempts to take into account the fundamental, seemingly unconscious assumptions or auspices which allow one to write/speak. The problem is that when one speaks (writes) one often forgets the grounds that allowed them to do so. This is because there is the possibility that we can get “caught up in the activity of formulation” (1974: 3). Analysis remedies this by having collaborators, or, alters, “remind [first speakers] of that which [they] have to forget in order to speak” (1974: 4). The model of this relationship is “an ego who speaks and thereby denies his auspices and an alter who

formulates the auspices ego forgets by speaking” (1974: 7) and clearly shows the influence of the structure of Plato’s Socratic dialogues. McHugh et al. explain that having the ego and alter together is the “method for being able to produce an analysis which is reflexive, which addresses its own possibilities, and yet is at the same time speakable, do-able, distinct from chatter, a denial of nihilism” (1974: 4).

The dissertation is limited with regards to the method of collaboration recommended by McHugh et al. in that the dissertation is required to be an original, solely authored work. The dissertation as solitary contribution is always somewhat of a lie and forgets the communal nature of any undertaking. That is to say that as much as one wants to believe that a dissertation is a solitary project, it is thoroughly social. The requirement to claim authorship does make the sort of collaboration engaged in by myself different than that recommended by McHugh, Foss, Raffel, and Blum (1974), a weaker version. But, it must be acknowledged that while the writing contained herein is my own, the deep problem I am engaging has been developed in collaboration, and the writing and rewriting has been informed by the ongoing provocation by committee members and theorist interlocutors (friends, enemies, and strangers).

2.3.2 What’s Your Problem?

Blum and McHugh (1984) further developed analysis to deal with the self-reflective character of theorizing by introducing the notion of a *problem*. Analysis points us to the

reconfiguration of social phenomenon as referencing a *deep need* or problem. Bonner (1998: 20) notes that “we tend to think of a problem as that which requires a solution which in turn eliminates the problem.” This way of conceiving of a problem is a legacy of the enlightenment and the concomitant emphasis on the virtues of *techne* (technological solution) and *episteme* (science) over the virtue of *phronesis* (practical wisdom). This is an important distinction for the present project as I do not purport to propose solutions to a particular ‘problem’, rather, my aim is to develop a stronger understanding and stronger relation to the *problem* or *deep need*.

Bonner (1998) exemplifies this approach in his book *Power and Parenting* which understands the desire to be a parent as bound up with the deep need for a sense of potency.

What if the idea of a problem was conceived not as something to be eliminated, an irritation, but as referencing, in Blum and McHugh’s terms (1984: 1-10; 113-51) ‘a deep need’? Then the inquirer’s or actor’s relation to the problem might not be one of elimination but of development.... The direction of inquiry into this problem would involve reconstructing practices which would be measured by the actor’s development in relation to this need. (1998: 12).

With regards to the modern problem of fear of death, anxiety over our freedom, and the deep need to re-embed oneself (as referenced by the illnesses of homelessness, disenchantment, and identity crises, where solutions are sought in leisure time), it is readily apparent that the need (to re-embed oneself) points not just to the individual but to the individual’s relation to community, and thus the community itself. The *leisure imaginary* is

the fantasy space in which we see people working out this problem within the structure of the lifeworld –our cultural backdrop, our social imaginary.

Any problem, in the Blum and McHugh sense, is not only a problem for the individual but a communal and analytic problem. The kind of inquiry permitted by the discovery or positivist paradigm tends towards disenchantment, with its aspiration for universal laws of human behaviour. Phenomenology and hermeneutics return some of the enchanting character to inquiry and analysis the passion. One might say that re-establishing a measure of ‘enchantment’ into things is as much a function of language and perspective as it is of material conditions. Perhaps this can be made clearer by shifting away from the term ‘problem’ with all its baggage and turning towards a term that better expresses or perhaps orients the enquirer in his relationship to any topic that the reflexive interpretive sociologist wishes to engage – that of *mystery*.

2.4 PROBLEM, MYSTERY, AND SELF-REFLECTION IN REFLEXIVE INTERPRETIVE SOCIOLOGY

The existential philosophy of Gabriel Marcel and in particular his dyadic signposts for self-reflection (problem–mystery, primary reflection–secondary reflection) provide an interpretive structure that can orient reflexive interpretive inquiry in a way that is perhaps both more accessible and less esoteric than the analytic approach offered by Blum and McHugh (1984). Similar to Blum and McHugh’s formulation, Marcel notes that, “a

problem is something which I meet, which I find completely before me, but which I can therefore lay siege to and reduce” while a *mystery* is instead “something in which I am myself involved, and it can therefore only be thought of as a sphere where the distinction between what is in me and what is before me loses its meaning and initial validity” (Marcel, 1949: 117). Van Manen (1998) attests to the rigorous thinking required of this approach.

So, to believe in the power of thinking is also to acknowledge that it is the complexity and mystery of life that calls for thinking in the first place. Human life needs knowledge, reflection, and thought to make it knowable to itself, including its complex and ultimately mysterious character (17).

Catherine R. Cowell elaborates on Marcel’s distinctions between problem and mystery when she critiques the “mechanistic distortion” that symbolic interactionism forces on subjectivity by reducing it to an objective process (1972: 2). Indeed, the tendency to objectivism even in purportedly ‘interpretive’ social sciences is once again something that Blum and McHugh’s reconceptualization of ‘problem’ as ‘deep need’ and Marcel’s casting of ‘problem’ as ‘mystery’ attempt to overcome. In speaking of Marcel’s distinctions between problem and mystery and connecting it to our understanding of an object, Gallagher writes that Marcel’s distinction between problem and mystery hinges on what Marcel means by “object.” For Marcel, “a problem...is an inquiry which is set on foot in respect to an object which the self apprehends in an exterior way,” while a mystery “is a question in which I am caught up” (1962: 31-32). There are four main distinctions

between problem and mystery that I, drawing on Gallagher, develop below and connect to reflexive interpretive sociology.

1) The first thing that distinguishes a problem from a mystery is that a problem is objectifiable while a mystery is not. This objectification has a distorting effect as the grounds that authorize the abstraction are forgotten. A mystery on the other hand, because it is not exteriorized, does not undergo this distortion. This mirrors precisely the relation to knowledge production embraced by RIS. Knowledge is knowledge of self and community in understanding the mystery (deep need or question in which I am caught up). Here we can revisit the notion of data once again. Gallagher writes

[t]here are data which in their very nature cannot be set over against myself, for the reason that as data they involve myself. If I ask “what is being?” can I regard being as an object which is drawn across my path? No – for being as datum, includes me: in order to conceive being as datum, I must conceive of it as including me. I cannot get outside of being in order to ask questions about it in a purely external way. The attempt to isolate what is before me from what is in me breaks down completely here (1962: 32).

Once again, there are some important human questions that cannot be grappled with using traditional sociological methods that rely on objectification and by default then are left unaddressed. Birth, death, human finitude, and being, are not problems to be solved but mysteries to be engaged.³³

³³ Freedom is another example of something that while important in a deeply human sense is something that cannot be transformed into an object of study. “Freedom involves the self- it is the self; the more an act is free, the more it is *mine* in an absolute sense (Gallagher, 1962: 35).

2) Secondly, a problem can be solved. It has an end. Inquiry may eventually come to an end. In contrast, the mystery is not solvable. It is not merely a problem for which a solution has remained beyond one's reach or whose limits have not yet been overcome due to constraints of time, money, data, or technology. The virtues of *episteme* and *techne* are of no use to us here and the proper mode of thought is reflexive as "the question continually renews itself: there is never a stage reached when further thought is not always necessary" (Cowell, 1972: 3). This references Gadamer's and Plato's emphasis on the art of questioning in the never exhausted pursuit of hermeneutic truth and stands in contrast to the production paradigm of the modern lifeworld that guides our thinking about what a problem is and maintains vainly that all things are reducible to problems that can be solved through scientific and technical means (See Bonner, 1998: 21). As for mysteries, the best we can do is to locate ourselves within them (Gallagher, 1962: 37).

3) Thirdly, problem as objectifiable creates an experience of it that while making verifiability possible leads to a reductive distortion of the interest. For example, in Kieran Bonner's 1997 book *A Great Place to Raise Kids*, the drive to verifiability disappears the phenomenon of the deep interest in raising children in a rural environment by equating it with safety (safety is objectifiable through crime statistics). The deep interest in parenting

in a rural setting is objectified through the use of objectively measurable data.³⁴ The lived experience of parenting in the rural setting has its beingness stripped from it. An object, Marcel notes, is simply there for anyone, while the subjective data of mystery involve the necessity of unverifiability as between viewing or experiencing subjects. “The conclusion is that no “objectively valid” judgment bearing on being is possible. A system of ontology which pretends to impose itself with the impersonal objectivity of scientific knowledge is ruled out” (Gallagher, 1962: 39).

4) Finally, the mode in which the question is asked lends a further distinction between problem and mystery. While problems are approached with a mood of curiosity with the goal sought being the production of some new knowledge (for example a cure for cancer), questions that pertain to mysteries are asked in a mood of wonder or astonishment, the proper attitude of the philosopher. “There may be wonderment even in the mysteries involving feelings of failure, gloom, or despair” writes Cowell (1972: 3). These emotions or feelings are only given their significance against the backdrop of human finitude.

Whatever the emotional concomitants, what is constant in all experiences of mystery is the implicit awareness of my own finitude. The knowledge of mystery is sacred knowledge because it reveals this finitude. But it is not gloomy knowledge, for who says that it is not the greatest joy to acknowledge one’s creaturehood? Perhaps we

³⁴ I want to note that just because a problem is not solvable, does not mean that it is a mystery. Cancer for example is a health problem that has not been solved. It is an objective problem that with time, research, money may yet be solved.

might even say that creaturehood can only be truly acknowledged with joy, for gloom itself represents a kind of refusal or rebellion (Gallagher, 1962: 40).

The possibility that acknowledging one's creaturehood could be "the greatest joy" points to an analysis that leaves the realm of the objective to examine the ontological, and this requires a different kind of reflection, a "pensee pensante, whose essence is to be the pursuit of reality, a chase which does not lose sight of but never catches up with its object" (41). Once again we have the hunt. Here we see the hunt as equivalent with the mystery and we also now see the hunt as something that is in search of itself. Here we see the close association between hermeneutics in the way that Blackshaw (2010a) has used it to describe devotional leisure practices, the hunt, and the etymological kinship between vocation and mystery. Ortega y Gasset once again unfolds this relationship.

...[M]an painfully submerged in his work or obligatory occupations, projects beyond them, imagines another kind of life consisting of very different occupations, in the execution of which he would not feel as if he were losing time, but, on the contrary, gaining it, filling it satisfactorily as it should be filled. Opposite a life which annihilates itself and fails – a life of work – he erects the plan of a life successful in itself – a life of delight and happiness. While obligatory occupations feel like foreign impositions, to those others we feel ourselves called by an intimate little voice that proclaims them from the innermost secret folds of our depths. This most strange phenomenon whereby we call on ourselves to do specific things is the "vocation." (Ortega y Gasset, 1972: 25).

Vocation brings together here two Fourteenth Century medieval notions of mystery captured in the Latin *mysterium*, meaning "secret rite, secret worship; a secret thing" or the Greek *mysterion* meaning "secret rite or doctrine," and the medieval Latin *misterium*, meaning "handicraft, trade or art" (Harper, Online Etymology Dictionary). This notion

of vocation is both familiar and strange to our ears because in one sense we recognize that it is something that one is drawn to as ‘career’ on one hand, but at the same time in our secularity we reject the spiritual significance of the term. In medieval times a ‘man’s’ occupation was referred to as his mystery, i.e. “That man’s mystery is joinery.” Vocation as mystery was in this sense man’s calling, his way of worship, his way of being in the world that showed a kind of mastery. Ortega y Gasset makes the distinction between occupation as vocation/mystery and occupation as labour.

Laborious activities are performed, not out of any esteem for them, but rather for the result that follows them, but we give ourselves to vocational occupations for the pleasure of them, without concern for the subsequent profit. For that reason we want them never to end. We would like to eternalize, to perennialize them. And, really, once absorbed in a pleasurable activity, we catch a starry glimpse of eternity (26).

Here we see the ideal of vocation as mystery, that space where what is before us and what is within us falls away and we are aware of something greater, what the Ancient Greeks referred to as the eternal, that which lies beyond our world as perceived.



Marcel’s distinction between problem and mystery leads directly to another distinction, the distinction between primary and secondary reflection. While science aspires to thinking that is detached and technical in addressing solvable problems, mysteries are approached differently with reflection that is participatory and involved. Primary reflection separates humans from their immediate situation in setting up the world of objects, it separates the subject from the world. The paradigm for this is of course

modern science. In contrast, secondary reflection recognizes the “insufficiency of the categories which make primary reflection possible” and “resizes the unity of... participated existence, which has been dichotomized by primary reflection” (42).³⁵ Secondary reflection is integrative and is the proper mode for engaging mystery. “Roughly, we can say that where primary reflection tends to dissolve the unity of experience which is first put before it, the function of secondary reflection is essentially recuperative; it reconquers that unity” (Marcel 1951: 83). *Self-Reflection in the Arts and Sciences* proposes the ideal of self-reflection as speech “that understands itself (which understands what it shows)” (1984:4). The opposite of such speech is unreflective speech, speech that “might universalize itself by treating its particular recommendation – its prescription – as if it were natural or self-evident” (1984: 4). Traditional social science would be an example of such speech. Self-reflection, put another way “is the ideal discourse developed by consciousness about its relation to the lifeworld through its use of that very world” (35). Self-reflection and secondary reflection have the aim of bringing

³⁵ Note the similarity to Blum and McHugh’s formulation of self-reflection: Self-reflection upon the relationship of consciousness to life is not identical to consciousness as in ‘consciousness of this fact,’ because it is oriented by the ‘subjective interest’ to ‘overthrow the existing state of things.’ In our terms, self-reflection reviews, reformulates, and recollects the relationship between consciousness and life not by being ‘conscious of this fact’ (of this relationship) but by reconstructing or laying the grounds of this relationship in the life-world (Blum and McHugh 1984: 35).

one into greater contact with the self, for the problem (in the Blum and McHugh sense) or mystery (in Marcel's sense), is something that the inquirer is intimately bound up in.

In contemporary society it would appear that we have lost the taste or lack the courage to engage mystery, to practice philosophical leisure. We misrecognize mysteries as problems as a way of distancing ourselves, but they return to haunt us.³⁶ Our deep need for ontological exigence, for transcendence, keeps returning. But instead of developing this deep need, engaging this mystery, we deceive ourselves with ready at hand solutions that often do not satisfy and in many cases make the problem worse. The denial of death and our escape from freedom through deceptions of our own construction have consequences. The false paradises of war, totalitarianism, consumerism, racism, etc., are a few of these ways we escape at the collective level. We would do well to think about the casualties and costs of chasing paradise or becoming a functional automaton. Reflexive interpretive sociology, as a configuration of phenomenology, hermeneutics and dialectical analysis, can help us to avoid this self-deception or at the very least alert us to its operation, countenance uncomfortable truths, and refocus us on mystery. Self-deception and its casualties/costs is a theme that emerges out of the examples and major case study.

I have formulated strong leisure so far in a few ways. I have hinted towards the emancipatory power in practicing philosophical leisure, which I will develop further in

³⁶ Social theorists may be especially guilty here.

Chapter Four. Blackshaw's (2010a) strong reading is to see leisure emerging as a hermeneutic space where people engage in devotional activities that give their lives sense and meaning, allowing them to re-embed themselves. People seek solutions to the problem of being in the lifeworld. Marcel writes "that there is a line of thinking that ought to be pursued on the basis of a meditation on what man is becoming in a world where the death of God is proclaimed" (1973: 44). This of course is somewhat of the task here. Once, before the great disembedding, that is, the rise of modernity, religion embedded us in the cosmos. Now, for the most part, we are without religions' safe harbour and even if we do have it, it does not anchor our ship in the same way that it once did. The modernization and secularization of the world hasn't eclipsed the need for safe harbour, for a place that we can sail out from with a sense of security and confidence. It has made it more difficult to satisfy, closed off avenues to its satisfaction, and in some cases, perhaps many, killed the desire or the ability to satisfy the need or appeal. Many perhaps most of us still have the deep need or interior desire or appeal, perhaps indicated in the enthusiasm with which we approach devotional leisure. This need, what Marcel calls *ontological exigence* is a demand for "some level of coherence in the cosmos and for some understanding of our place and role within this coherence. It is the combination of wonder and the attendant desire, not to understand the entire cosmos, but to understand something of one's own place in it" (Treanor, 2010). A more secular, perhaps derivative

version of this concept is Giddens' (1991) *ontological security* which speaks to a more blasé and functionalist re-embedding.

Marcel uses the notion of 'heresy' to help us understand what has happened to this need in modern secular society. The atheist as heretic is the social actor that shows us the fine distinctions in types of atheism. Using the distinction between *professed atheism* and *lived atheism*, he observes that professed atheism "sometimes can be characterized by an exigence that is not at all alien to any genuine religion" (Marcel 1973: 44). Here we might imagine one that professes to be an atheist but yet is moved to intervene in the world, to move beyond one's self. Marcel uses the example of the father who lives a life of labour for his children as enacting some measure of transcendence in this regard. Other, perhaps stronger examples might be the activist engaged in stopping climate change or the mission tourist headed to the latest disaster to lend a hand. In contrast, lived atheism is essentially a "mode of existence where everything is subordinated to a kind of individual self-interest or the satisfaction of the appetites," where there is a kind of "asphyxiation of the conscience" (173). The retiree, a snowbird who flees south every winter to enjoy leisure while his elderly parents languish in a hospital or old age home dependent on the care of strangers, would appear to be an example of this orientation. For Marcel, lived atheism "where it is at the basis of a satisfied and sated world more and more delivered up to the technological which ends by functioning for itself alone (no longer dependent on a higher will which uses it for an authentically spiritual end)...can only open the way to...*despair*"

(Marcel 1973: 44 emphasis mine). In fact, for Marcel, this is the path to death, the life of the zombie. For Marcel, the quest for ontological exigency through technological means, i.e. the promise of modernity and ontological security, is doomed. What gives life its richness and meaning is the presence, even the beauty, of death, that our being is toward death - *Sein-zum-Tode*. Modernity in contrast sees death as something to be overcome. Philosophical leisure (again practiced in the right way), that is, leisure devoted to a passionate thinking directed to one's being-in-the-world, provides a way out of what appears to be a zero-sum game.



Leisure time as free time as I have tried to show, is the space in which we have the opportunity to inscribe ourselves in the cosmos through our practices, where we stand in relation to our being before death. There is a mystery that we are engaged in, a deep need we are attempting to satisfy. In medieval times that need was satisfied by the vocation and its embeddedness in a cosmology that understood life as part of a great chain of being. The problem or mystery of the deep need for embeddedness is available in not only others' lived experiences and narratives of leisure, but our own, making what is mutually recognizable about leisure imaginaries, mutually recognizable. In late modernity not only do people suffer from a state of anxiety over death and a fear of freedom but they also suffer from a host of other malaises that have been unexpectedly unleashed - alienation, anomie, instrumental rationality, the problems of self and community as exemplified in the

quest for authenticity – all of which require our energies to address. As has been intimated, we most often address these problems in our leisure time. I have also emphasized, following Rancière, and to a lesser degree Ortega y Gasset, that we are all in some sense free to pursue our individual leisure imaginaries. These leisure imaginaries or trajectories are both individual and collective and are conditioned by the age in which we live, conditioned by the anxieties and preoccupations of our time, our culture, our social imaginary. The different permutations of the leisure imaginary exemplify different ethically oriented narratives of re-embedding. Here the leisure imaginary is the space of the mysterious where people (myself as self-conscious theorist included) engage in the project of (re)embedding and at times flirt with philosophical leisure. I develop these ideas through brief and a more extended case study.

2.5 REFLEXIVE INTERPRETIVE SOCIOLOGY AND THE CASE STUDY APPROACH

Flyvbjerg (2001) argues convincingly that the balance between case studies and large samples is currently biased in favour of the latter in social science. While these large random samples draw attention to demographic movements and general patterns, they lack depth. Case studies develop the complexity and richness of phenomenon and show the way(s) a collective deals with particular problems. What is developed here is the problem or mystery of leisure and how the collective, in various ways, deals with the

problem or mystery of the deep need for meaning in a world that makes, for the social actor, and the collective, the establishment of stable meanings difficult if not impossible. The experience of anxiety exacerbated by disembeddedness and the desire to reembed oneself through leisure is the deep phenomenon of interest. Free time is understood as the vehicle for accomplishing this. It is the space in which we can either escape from or embrace mystery or ambiguity. Here, cases serve as critical occasions for bringing to view collective 'mystery' or 'problem' solving and its invariably ethical character. For Blum

case studies...re-presents images of such collective problem-solving, but only when the example is questioned in order to make manifest in its vertigo, only when the questioning makes demands upon itself, striving to see in its representation of the detail of a specific situation of action, the web of social indeterminacy by which it is exercised and which its various intended solutions seek to resolve (2003: 13).

Good cases dissolve into, or at least flirt with, ambiguity. This is also one of the goals of this work.

The cases themselves are examined hermeneutically, each providing an opportunity to explore the particularity and universality of the leisure imaginary. Cases sprung from my journey in the academy and everyday life. They were often initially conceived while doing coursework and were further developed as papers for conferences and chapters for books. All of the cases speak to the universal character of leisure as an object oriented to in dealing with the problem or anxiety that death and late modern conditions provoke, more about which will be discussed in Chapter 4. The cases reference the desire to avoid

suffering through the construction of an earthly paradise in one's free time, often the end game of the leisure imaginary.

Flyvbjerg's (2001) typology of cases is helpful for determining what makes a strong case. This dissertation is populated by essentially two kinds of cases. The positing of the *leisure imaginary* indicates that what I am moving towards in the selection of my cases is an overall paradigm that a renewed leisure studies might be constructed upon.³⁷

The cases that populate the dissertation are there to demonstrate the strength of the formulation of the leisure imaginary as a metaphor or paradigm for understanding contemporary leisure practices. The leisure imaginary, as unfolded in this project is *the* overall paradigmatic case whose purpose is to “develop a metaphor or establish a school for the domain which the case concerns” (79). One aim of this dissertation is to rehabilitate our thinking about leisure through employing the metaphor of the leisure imaginary.

The other kind of case that populates this dissertation are *extreme* or ‘edge’ cases. Flyvbjerg holds that these cases are important because they are “well suited for getting a

³⁷ As a methodological note Giddens states that “Research which is geared primarily to hermeneutic problems may be of generalized importance in so far as it serves to elucidate the nature of agent's knowledge-ability, and thereby their reasons for action, across a wide range of action-contexts. Pieces of ethnographic research like...say, the traditional small scale community research of fieldwork anthropology – are not in themselves generalizing studies. But they can in easily become such if carried out in some numbers. , so that judgments of their typicality can be made” (Giddens in Flyvbjerg, 2001:74).

point across in an especially dramatic way” (78). In some cases, the extreme and paradigmatic overlap. One example of this is Foucault’s *Panopticon* which not only functions as an extreme example but became a metaphor for a way of thinking and researching. The *leisure imaginary* it is hoped, will fulfill a similar function.

So then, again briefly in terms of reflexive interpretive sociology, there can be seen to be three distinct but related techniques or approaches, a configuration that is brought to bear on each case. Phenomenology helps us to understand lived experience and connect it to a lifeworld. Hermeneutics helps us to understand how inquiry has been prestructured by a tradition or traditions and to challenge this prestructuring, providing a vantage point and source of insight. Finally, Analysis exemplifies passionate thinking brought to bear on a problem or deep need, and evaluates and exposes the various relations to the deep need or problem in the dialogic manner of Socrates, that exhausting Athenian gadfly and embracer of ambiguity.

As a way of showing how a case is analyzed according to the reflexive interpretive sociological approach, I turn to an extreme case or example that dramatizes our problematic, the avoidance of suffering, of despair, through the leisure imaginary. The sample case below not only demonstrates the reflexive interpretive approach, but also underlines this problem in a provocative way.

2.6 A SAMPLE CASE: OF AUTHENTICITY, REFLEXIVITY, NIHILISM, AND DEATH

"What is love? What is creation? What is longing?
What is a star?" -- so asks the Last Man, and
blinks.

The earth has become small, and on it hops the
Last Man, who makes everything small. His
species is ineradicable as the flea; the Last Man
lives longest.

"We have discovered happiness" -- say the Last
Men, and they blink.

**

They have left the regions where it is hard to live;
for they need warmth. One still loves one's
neighbor and rubs against him; for one needs
warmth.

Turning ill and being distrustful, they consider
sinful: they walk warily. He is a fool who still
stumbles over stones or men!

A little poison now and then: that makes for
pleasant dreams. And much poison at the end for a
pleasant death.

One still works, for work is a pastime. But one is
careful lest the pastime should hurt one.

One no longer becomes poor or rich; both are too
burdensome. Who still wants to rule? Who still
wants to obey? Both are too burdensome.

No shepherd, and one herd! Everyone wants the
same; everyone is the same: he who feels
differently goes voluntarily into the madhouse.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*

Goodbye Göteborg

The countries we depart will manage without us.
The Swedes will rise tomorrow, brush their teeth,
and go about their business. Beneath
the hiss of the street-sweeper's rotary brush
the footstep-peppered cobbles will resume
their ancient shine; the citizens will seethe
at the dingy crosswalks and ruthlessly keep
appointments made before our small hiatus.

We meant nothing. We were less to Sweden
than a scratch on crystal. Their lovely English
was a pose, a veneer applied by television.
Like the thin ice of their eyes, it will be broken.
Behind our backs, all over Europe, men
are picking up and carrying their languages,
barbaric fossils, in their mouths. It is
as if they relish our oblivion.³⁸

John Updike

**

The tourist as metaphor for modern humanity would
seem to stress the herd instinct, conformity and
determinism in our collective lives.

Dean MacCannell

**

Being a tourist must be a pretty miserable existence.
In a whole range of contexts tourists are portrayed as
second class citizens...local residents at destinations
appear to think that the activities of tourists are
fatuous lazy and plain 'dumb'. Similarly in the
academic study of tourism, tourists have been
represented in an overwhelmingly negative light.

Scott McCabe

**

"Travel broadens the mind, but makes it shallow.
Staying in one place narrows the mind but makes it
deep." *The Wizard of Christchurch*, 1988.

³⁸ In an alternate version, the last line is "It is if they relish our absence from this Eden."

Within the developed world and undeveloping world, tourism has become a widely shared experience, an identifiable (and perhaps theoretically vexing) form of leisure. Throughout history, travel and tourism have taken different forms, the most recently recognized and widely lamented being mass tourism. The social scientists have decried mass tourism as unsustainable both environmentally and socially (Butler, 1980; Wall, 1992; Urry, 1990, 2002) but it continues under the force of economics and is linked in the contemporary to what Urry has called the “tourist gaze.” The tourist actor in these social scientific approaches is absent and it has been left to theorists to flesh out just what the tourist is. The theorist is alternately fascinated and repulsed by tourism and the tourist. Sometimes, the tourist is lionized by the theorist, for the most part he is maligned. The notion of the over-determined, unreflective, mass tourist is what both the tourist and the theorist is haunted by. This explication of an extreme case takes as its aim, a dialogical engagement with theorists talk on tourists which then attempts to intervene in the debate among theorists through the introduction of a reflexive lived-experience description of a tourist/traveler. This reflexive engagement desires not to solve the problem of the tourist but to develop a stronger relation to what the tourist is imagined to be.



Kristi and I had once worked together running wilderness trips for at-risk youth, sent to us for both punishment and therapy. For many, one of the conditions of their probation was this intervention. We each had various degrees of being at-home with working with this population. If there was one thing that had characterized our relationship as it evolved in the context of working with youth at risk, it was reflective engagement. At times this reflection was painful. We questioned our motives. These kids looked up to us as role models but we had little in common with them and could never be the mentor many of them desired, our commitment to them hampered by the constraints of a six day wilderness trip.

Kristi and I challenged each other. I wondered at how someone from her background (solidly middle class, her parents both professionals) could understand or really know the experience of the kids we were charged with. What was the bourgeoisie doing with the proletariat? Why was she doing it? None of the poverty, abuse, lack of love, divorces, or family violence had been part of her life world. In many ways I felt she was a tourist, a voyeur, an interloper that could never truly know the culture she was visiting. At worst she was a colonialist, imposing her middle class values, engaging in a kind of *noblesse oblige* or worse, slumming it. I suspected myself of being a tourist as well.

Years later, after a backpacking trip in Africa, Kristi visited me in Waterloo and related a tale that was as bizarre to me as it was for her. It had been several years since Kristi and I had worked together but the intimacy of our wilderness experience with

young people had cemented our friendship and we fell into easy conversation. Kristi told me about what I saw initially as ‘sex tourism like’ activities undertaken by young educated white females in Malawi, Africa. I call it sex tourism as that is what initially sprung to mind when she described what she had witnessed. I had been taking some courses in the geography of tourism at the time and so had been primed in this direction somewhat. I was intrigued by her description of these women “chugging” into Cape McClear, Malawi and sleeping with local men “like a train.” It seemed fantastical to me as the threat of HIV in Africa is very high and it is well known that condom use is not encouraged or appreciated. What was also intriguing was the fact that it was women instead of men that were pursuing the sexual experience abroad. This was in contrast to the media attention and literature that had covered men’s participation in so called “sex tourism.” The seemingly bizarre nature of the experience (as referenced by our pious condemnation) and the telling of her tale encouraged me to increase reflexive thought on my own tourist experiences. This is a theme that has occupied me personally and academically for some years now, an endeavour to make sense of my own and others leisure and tourism experiences and distill the hidden meaning behind them. I asked Kristi to furnish me with a lived experience description of the phenomenon so that I could do some analysis. She agreed and furnished me with a very interesting account. What follows is an explication of Kristi’s account, an example of the application of the reflexive interpretive approach.

2.6.1 The Research Process

Reflexive interpretive sociology demands of the researcher that the research process itself be reflexive. One is impelled to undertake phenomenological “bracketing” which acknowledges my own participation in the research project, my assumptions and presuppositions as well as the assumptions of the theoretical positions brought to bear on the object of inquiry or experience. After introducing the lived experience description, I will examine the positions of MacCannell and Boorstin as representing the polar opposites of a theoretical spectrum on tourist experiences. I will also hold up to scrutiny Pruitt and Lafont’s (1995) description of the female sex tourist experience to demonstrate how gender is constructed in their text and to show that gender can act as a distraction from deeper issues. To my knowledge, the plethora of qualitative analyses of the “sex tourism” phenomenon, have not adopted or have only hinted at a phenomenological point of view. Additionally, there has been much published on the phenomenon of sex tourism, most of which has concentrated on the male as the consumer of these “products.” However there has been far less published on the phenomenon of female sex tourism, even though there are increasing numbers of studies that devote their attention to female tourists seeking romance or other sexual encounters (Opperman, 1998: 3).

The preoccupation with romance tourism can be read as an attempt in the literature to show female sex tourism as qualitatively different from male sex tourism. Gunther (1998) has argued that these differences are minimal. I am inclined to agree with him on

this point. What the few lines above speak to is the process of bracketing. This process of bracketing helps the phenomenologist to “come to terms with...assumptions, not in order to forget them again but rather to hold them deliberately at bay and even to turn this knowledge against itself as it were, thereby exposing its shallow or concealing character” (Van Manen, 1990: 47). Bracketing alerts us to how knowledge is coloured by a perspective, be it feminist, interpretivist, Marxist or positivist for example. In the characterization of the phenomenon of so-called “romance tourism” by Pruitt and Lafont (1995), we see an attempt to colour a phenomenon in a particular way, in this case as the negotiation of intersubjective meaning. This meaning for white middle-class women is “romance.” Gunther in adopting more of a Marxist position analyzes the exchange between romance tourist and local as coloured by power relations.

An integral element of phenomenological reflection is the thematic analysis of the lived-experience description or experiential anecdote that we can use in the dialogue with other phenomenological works. Phenomenological themes are essentially the structures of experience, theme then is that form of capturing the phenomenon one is trying to understand” (87). In interpreting data, I utilize Van Manen’s “selective reading approach” to discern those “statements or phrases that seem particularly essential or revealing about

the phenomenon or experience being described” (93). Themes are then developed out of the analysis of these statements or phrases.³⁹

The next component of the reflexive interpretive approach is the hermeneutic exercise of bringing the experience into understanding by consulting phenomenological or phenomenologically related literature on the topic of tourism. I will enter into dialogue primarily with Cohen’s (1979) “A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences” and the essay “Travel” by McHugh, Raffel Foss and Blum as well as Bauman’s concept of the *tourist syndrome* (2003). Several other pieces will also contribute to the dialogic process.

According to Van Manen, these prior phenomenological works are “a source for us with which to dialogue,” enabling us “to reflect more deeply on the way we tend to make interpretive sense of lived experience,” and allowing us “to see our limits and “to transcend the limits of our interpretive sensibilities” (1990: 75–76).

³⁹ In developing themes out of the textual data, the use of lifeworld existentials in guiding the analysis is key. There are four existentials that are helpful as guides through the research process and are reflective of the life-world.

“The four fundamental existentials of spatiality, corporeality, temporality, and relationality may be seen to belong to the existential ground by way of which all human beings experience the world, although not all in the same modality of course. In the phenomenological literature these four categories can be considered as belonging to the fundamental structure of the life-world... This is not difficult to understand, since about any experience we can ask the fundamental questions that correspond to these four life-world existentials. Therefore spatiality, corporeality, temporality, and relationality are productive categories for the process of phenomenological question posing, reflecting and writing” (1998: 102).

Finally, the Analytic stage is where we examine the ethical collisions that emerge out of the analysis of the lived experience description and different theorizations in relation to the problem we have developed.

2.6.2 Examining the Hermeneutic Background of Tourist Theorizing

Much of the theoretical talk about tourists is focused on motivation. Several theorists have theorised about the possible motivations of tourists. Daniel Boorstin lamented the loss of the traveller and the rise of the tourist, considering the tourist as shallow, savouring 'pseudo-events' and arguing that tourists want "superficial, contrived experiences" (Cohen, 1996: 90).

We go more and more where we expect to go. We get money back guarantees that we will see what we expect to see. Anyway, we go more and more not to go at all but only to take pictures. Like the rest of our experience, travel becomes a tautology. The more strenuously and self-consciously we work at enlarging our experience, the more pervasive the tautology becomes. Whether we seek models of greatness, or experiences elsewhere on the earth, we look into a mirror and see only ourselves (Boorstin, 1961: 117).

This interpretation of the tourist as narcissist was challenged in the 1970's by Dean MacCannell. He posited a much more flattering view of the tourist's motives. Instead of savouring the oncoming taste of a pseudo-event, the tourist entering a remote village in a developing nation might be concerned with encountering the 'authentic,' (MacCannell, 1989) where the "tourist is a kind of contemporary pilgrim seeking authenticity in other 'times' and other 'places' away from the person's everyday life" (Urry, 1990: 8).

Unfortunately, MacCannell's tourist is destined to be fooled by the false fronts of the tourist establishments and therefore any attempt at an authentic relationship to people and place will be thwarted by cynical locals and tourist establishments seeking to separate the tourist from the coins in his wallet. He will never get back stage. Despite MacCannell's concern with the 'nobility' of the tourist, not unlike Boorstin's gullible mass tourist hordes, his tourists are dominated by the structures of tourism. MacCannell's conception also holds up the tourist as a kind of noble seeker who is thwarted by the "false fronts" of the tourist establishment in his/her quest for authenticity (9). By essentializing the tourist in these ways, he denied the tourist the capacity of reflective engagement, where the tourist is continually led into a trap, a dead end. There is no exit from the world of the tourist. Moore adds to the notion of the 'tourist trap' when he notes that authenticity may not be the end of tourism; rather people may engage in tourism in order to participate in their own culture's version of ecumenical myths (1985: 639). With regards to MacCannell's and Boorstin's theories, there appears here a compulsion towards bipolar theorizing, where the tourist subject experiences alternately demonization and idealization. The end result is that the tourist is reduced by MacCannell (1976) and Boorstin (1961) to a cultural dupe. This tension around the meaning of the tourist frames the debates about the tourist and points to something deeper going on in the culture.

Erik Cohen attempts to rescue the tourist from her predicament through the use of a "phenomenology of touristic experiences" which imbues the tourist with some agency by

emphasizing the tourist's intentionality. Following MacCannell's noble call, the tourist was conceived of as a modern pilgrim. Cohen's typology "relates to different points of continuum of privately constructed 'worlds' of individual travelers ranging between the opposite poles ...of modern tourism on the one hand and that of the pilgrimage on the other" (1996: 94). These poles are analagous to those of Boorstin's and MacCannell's conceptions of the tourist discussed earlier. Cohen's modes of touristic experiences are ranked "so that they span the spectrum between the experience of the traveler in pursuit of 'mere' pleasure in the strange and the novel, to that of the modern pilgrim in quest of meaning at somebody else's centre (Ibid). The recreational mode, the diversionary mode, the experiential mode, the experimental mode, and the existential mode are the five modes Cohen arrived at. However as MacCannell notes in a later piece, these kinds of typologies themselves limited the understanding of the tourist as actor as "researchers continued to follow the tourists, coming up with typologies and dynamic models that fit tourist behavior perhaps all too well" (2001: 23). The danger of typologies then, phenomenological or otherwise, is that they limited our understanding of the tourist by inadvertently channeling tourist agency and experience into "silent" categories. John Urry's intervention of the gaze was one metaphor that attempted to restore the agency that had been denied the tourist through its numerous academic characterizations and iterations.

2.6.3 Analyzing Lived Experience

Urry states that “tourism research should involve the examination of texts, not only written texts but also maps, landscapes, paintings, films, townscapes, TV programs, brochures and so on.... Thus, social research significantly consists of interpreting texts” (quoted in Veal, 1997: 238, 239). An examination of tourist talk might serve to highlight and sharpen some of the issues that are at stake. I bring in the voice of the everyday member, in this case Kristi, a traveler or tourist, as a way of intervening in the debate among these theorists.

In analyzing Kristi’s experiential anecdote in dialogue with phenomenological works, three themes are developed. One concentrates on the female (sex) tourist in Malawi as representing the tourist on a quest for authenticity. The second theme recognizes Kristi’s own reflexive understanding of the tourist experience. The final theme attempts to come to terms with understanding the sexual activities in light of the AIDS scare and points to nihilism as something that may underlie the tourists’ actions at a deeper level. The analytic thrust of reflexive interpretive inquiry attempts to come to terms with understanding the sexual activities in light of the AIDS scare (death) in relation to the problem that the tourist poses/symptomizes for the theorist.

2.6.4 Kristi’s Lived Experience Description

Africa. Sunsets. Veld. Music. Smiles. Sadness. Confusion. And the adjectives could go on and on. I passed through a continent purely as a stranger and as a tourist.

I shiver to use that word. There is a perception among 'travelers' that if you don't have a backpack, if you sleep in local guesthouses, if you sleep with local men and smoke local pot, then somehow you transcend the label of 'tourist'. How many times did fellow backpackers turn to me in indignation and sigh, "Don't these people know? I'm not rich; I'm just as poor as they are! They have no concept of a daily budget."

Hmmmm... those people. I wonder what those people would do with a \$20 US daily budget... I wonder. So I passed through Africa as a tourist, reminded every day how my backpack cost more than what most people make in 6 months and my plane ticket was a 5-year salary. I tried to smile and shrug annoyances off and to not drown in my guilt. Mostly, I just tried to survive the inherent dangers and to not change TOO much. And, really, I don't think I have changed much at all. I left the continent in all its splendor and chaos, arrived back home, fell immediately into a job and now my pictures just lay on the shelf with the pictures I never look at from Europe, Taiwan, Malaysia....all tokens of my privilege... But enough of this soap box. Time to get off and stretch my legs and walk you through a story.

I was travelling in Malawi with a Scottish lass named Helen. We got along famously and had already survived the advances of pilots who 'rescued' us, multiple car breakdowns, a couple of swindles and one robbery. We arrived in Blantyre to stay in a hostel that managed to charge astronomical prices for a bed, beer and some spaghetti. Helen and I managed a couple of drinks and tried to act enthusiastic and interested in the latest peace Corp volunteer's assessment of why African men don't like to wear condoms. Theory after theory was broached until it was determined that condoms diminish feeling and men on the whole don't like that. In Africa, men hold more power than women (on a societal whole) and therefore tend to call the shots, as it were, a bit more. Discussion ended with this delightful conclusion and Helen and I decided to leave the next day.

Early morning found us in a rickety VW van packed with other backpackers. We sang loudly most of the way until another Canadian in the bus found his "Spirit of the West" tape and he and I monopolized the singing space for the rest of the ride. We took over in the name of nostalgia. We pulled into Cape McClear late that night and found a room, lay on our beds and passed out.

Next day, Helen and I signed up for diving (told you we were tourists!). This required a commitment to one place for at least two weeks and Helen and I signed our commitment to the team.

Cape McClear. Funny place. Africa is divided into social structures primarily by the colour of skin. The basic categorization is the lighter your skin colour; the more chances for political positions, invitations to parties, better job opportunities and higher wages. It also dictates who you get to have sex with. Cape McClear managed to challenge the trend and as soon as Helen and I walked into the local bar, beautiful black men with dreadlocks approached us. "Wanna try local?" was the rallying call. Polite refusal. 35% of Malawi's population are orphans due to AIDS. Those kinds of stats are something you don't fuck with, literally.

However, these thoughts didn't seem to enter the minds of the young women who entered the village and left with a few more notches on their belt. I wanted to shake them and scream, "Are you mad? Do you know what you are doing here?!" But somehow, among the tittering laughter and clinking of beer glasses, that would have been the wrong thing to say. You see, we were all supposed to be having a good time, a time that couldn't be had back home, something exotic and interesting. The scary part about that was, in seeing the train of women that chugged through a little town like Cape McClear, exotic doesn't always mean better, nice or even safe.

My initial reading of the lived-experience description shouted “sex-tourism” so this is where phenomenological bracketing started. The reaction of most people to the idea of sex tourism is that it is deviant, sordid. This was my initial reaction as well. Sex tourism however, is not a deviance and not readily differentiable from regular tourism – it is consistent with the norms of behaviour and has in common that both are liminal activities outside the domain of regular behaviour (Ryan and Kinder, 1996). Indeed sex tourism is a “form of behaviour that is consistent with the motivations that underlie much of tourism” which includes “satisfaction of needs of social companionship, fantasy fulfillment, family bonding, the search for something new and opportunities for relaxation” (1996: 507).

To further complicate or perhaps more correctly to clear up matters, research has shown that so-called ‘sex tourists’, do not readily identify themselves as such (Gunther, 1998; Kleiber and Wilke, 1995; Pruitt and Lafont, 1995). For Pruitt and Lafont the intimate relations between host and guest in their study of female tourists and male Rastafarian beach boys in Jamaica are a form of “romance tourism”. Discussing the type of relationships that constitute romance tourism, Pruitt and Lafont state in essentialist fashion that “the fact that it is women rather than men traveling in pursuit of relationships is central to their nature” (1995: 433). They maintain that “gender is constitutive of the relationship, not ancillary to it” where “the actors place an emphasis on courtship rather than the exchange of sex for money” (Ibid). Gunther (1998) finds that the men in his study of sex tourism also emphasize courtship and romance, and reject the label of sex

tourist. It is questionable then if gender really is constitutive of the relationship in terms of the interaction being romance tourism or sex tourism. Preoccupation with whether or not interaction between host and guest is sex tourism or romance tourism may inhibit an understanding of a deeper phenomenon that is occurring. Given that Pruitt and Lafont were full participant observers in their study we might be able to better see their argument in terms of a rationalization for their own behaviour. It could be the appearance of attempting to make something more “noble” than it actually is, an attempt at “showing” that their own experiences are authentic and/or “good.”

The common operational definition of sex tourists adopted by academics is of “tourists who have sex with natives in exchange for money or goods” (Gunther, 1998: 74). We can broaden this definition by pointing out that these goods or money, do not have to be immediately received on completion of the interaction. In his research it was plain to Gunther that “a more lasting or permanent relationship with western tourists is an extremely attractive perspective [sic] for many women living in the target countries of sex tourism” (1995: 74). The same can be said of “native” men and female western tourists. Pruitt and Lafont provide an account from some Jamaican men on Sunrise Beach in Jamaica that would seem to demonstrate the shallowness of romance tourism and that strengthen the idea that economic rewards do not necessarily have to come immediately for the interaction to be defined as sex tourism.

....It was slow day, not many tourists were in town and none had ventured to Sunrise Beach that day. The guys were chatting about how slow things were.

“Nothing’s going on. No Money is flowing.” Scoogie complained.

“That’s right. Nothing is happening around here. I just want to get me a white-woman and get out of here. Go to America and make a real money,” said Driver.

“Yeah, you have to link up with a white-woman and get her to fall in love with you if you want a break...” “Yeah man, you have to hook up with a white-woman. I mean look at Decker, Jah Red, Collin, even Punkie. All gone foreign since just since this last year,” said Scoogie...”
(Pruitt and Lafont, 1995: 49).

By looking at the interaction with a white woman as an investment, immediate economic rewards are tempered by the hope that greater rewards will follow if the native can get the “white-woman” to fall in love.

Karch and Dann in their study of beach boys and female tourists in Barbados show a different dimension of the female tourist/beach boy relationship that smacks of nothing close to romance tourism. One of their informants, when asked which cultural group is the most readily disposed to sexual liaisons answers: “The French Canadian, man. Dem girls does come down here ‘specially for fun and games. Dem girls does boast to their friends back home of the sweet foopin’ we guys does give dem. Then you find their friends does want to come down too to taste some of the action” (Karch and Dann, 1996: 175).

Besides demonstrating a different motivation for female guest – host sexual interactions other than romance, i.e. that of “a good foopin’,” this also implies a varying predisposition to sexual activity based on the cultural origin or leisure imaginary of the tourist. In this case it appears that it is cultural origin and not gender that is constitutive of

the form of the relationship. The larger point here is that we cannot reduce human behaviour or motivations to one restrictive category like gender, as has been suggested by Pruitt and Lafont. Gunther argues that there is a real danger in this type of reductionism.

By idealizing sex tourists as romanticists who travel in pursuit of emotional relationships, one may easily overlook the fact that these romanticists use and reproduce sex tourism as a social institution. Likewise, by demonizing sex tourists as moral monsters who ruthlessly try to satisfy their sexual desires, one may unwittingly encourage tourists who do not see themselves in that way to overlook their real involvement in the tourist-oriented sex industry (1998: 80).

As we have seen in the preliminary analysis of this phenomenon, motivations are difficult to pigeonhole and are more diverse than at first expected. Phenomenology reveals a diversity of lifeworlds. Phenomenological analysis of female (sex) tourist experiences in Malawi reinforce this notion. The unfolding of the hermeneutic background of inquiry now gives way to the analysis of the text in more detail in terms of three themes: authenticity, reflexivity, and nihilism. Here, I apply Van Manen's selective reading approach.

1) Authenticity - "Wanna Try Local?"

This first theme explores the behaviour and experiences of female tourists as recounted by Kristi, as a semi-participant and as an observer.

1) *"Don't these people know? I'm not rich; I'm just as poor as they are!"*

2) *There is a perception among 'travelers' that if you don a backpack, if you sleep in local guesthouses, if you sleep with local men and smoke local pot, then somehow you transcend the label of 'tourist'.*

3) "*Wanna try local?*"

These three sentences combine to indicate an interesting motivation for the international female tourist to have sex with local men. Sentence one demonstrates that many tourists that travel in Malawi want to see themselves as the same as the people who live in Malawi. They chafe at being treated differently and as being identified as tourists. The label of tourist is a negative one, something to be transcended. The second sentence states a possible reason for female tourists sleeping with local men as part of a 'native' or 'authentic' experience that also includes among others, smoking local pot and sleeping in local guest houses. These tourists seem to feel that this will allow them to transcend the label of tourist, again which they regard as negative. This on its own would seem fairly weak as a reason for the sexual activities but when placed alongside the third sentence it becomes more plausible. *Wanna try local?* acknowledges the understanding between the actors that it is a "local" native experience that is being offered. Not just a "good foopin" not merely romance, but "local," the opportunity to transcend the label of tourist.

Bauman states:

You may go hundreds and thousands of miles, in order to find yourself in cosily familiar surroundings, comfortably secure because familiar, with a few 'local touches' sprinkled over it to justify the expenditure. Powerful minds are working on that, trying to strike the right balance between security of the familiar and adventure of the strange. Success or failure of the tourist industry hangs on that balance. The right proportion of genuine or pretended 'otherness', source of pleasurable experience of novelty, challenge and adventure, and reassuring familiarity, source of the security feeling, that's the name of the tourist game these days (2010: 213).

The idea of necessity permeates this experience. There is this need for the tourist to show to others that the experience is somehow ‘authentic’. The survival needs of the local man require him to be inauthentic, a strange contradiction. *“I walked into the bar, beautiful black men with dreadlocks approached us.”* Rastafarian culture as ‘branding’. In several studies of the “beach boy” culture in Barbados and more notably Gambia, authors have noted that these men who ‘court’ foreign women, adopt the style in appearance and language of the Rastafarian movement (Brown, 1992, p. 364). So the “local” acts out of necessity, the need to be able to transcend his current existence, to travel, to become “modern” to join with the white folk in their adventures in late modernity, their own subjective pursuit of paradise. The Rastafarian male archetype, an object of the affections of female tourists, is for many so-called Rastafarians, a role that is enacted for economic or social gain. This challenges the notion of authenticity. His ticket is the female tourist. The female tourist is disenchanted with her modernity and so through travel and intimate encounters with the other seeks authenticity.

Seen in the light of the explications on gender and the brief phenomenological analysis of Kristi’s text it is apparent that there are many diverse motivations and experiences for (sex) tourism. This is in accord with Cohen’s phenomenological typology of tourist experiences. However it now appears that Cohen’s typology is not exhaustive, perhaps because in large measure it is founded on MacCannell’s theory. In terms of sex tourism it is readily apparent that the typology has similar explanatory value.

For example, Quebecoise in search of a “good foopin” clearly falls into the recreational mode of touristic experience. Here there is no real commitment to an alternate centre just a hedonistic rush, the tourist is more or less framed by her centre of origin. But, perhaps some of the women in this case, the ones that attempt to form longer, more permanent relationships, could be seen to be at the other end of the spectrum, the existential mode. Here the tourist is “fully committed to an ‘elective’ spiritual centre, i.e. one external to the mainstream of his [sic] native society and culture” (Cohen, 1996: 100). In this case however, the tourist woman does not have to move to the new centre of her Rastaman, although this is an option. She may choose to live in two worlds: the world of her everyday life which is devoid of deeper meaning, and the world of her elective centre, in this case Jamaica and her Rastaman where she returns for spiritual sustenance (101). The Rastaman as an “own personal Jesus” is another alternative as the woman can take what personifies her spiritual centre with her, a notion that is very congenial to the “authentic” Rastaman – a paradise built for two.

Analysis of the lived-experience description indicates that the tourist experiences described by Kristi can best be seen to fall in the middle of the continuum, the experiential mode of touristic experience. Here people who are unable to lead an authentic life at home strive to “recapture meaning by a vicarious, essentially aesthetic experience of the authenticity of the life of others” (Cohen, 1996: 98). In this mode, the main problem for the tourist is to tell for sure that the experience is authentic. Perhaps sex with a local in this

case is a sign for the tourist that the whole African experience is authentic. MacCannell states that “authentic experiences are believed to be available only to those moderns who try to break the bonds of their everyday existence and begin to “live” (MacCannell, 1976: 159). The possible cost of authenticity for those moderns who “break the bonds of their everyday existence”, i.e. “try local,” is perhaps infection with HIV – at that time in the 90s a veritable dance with death. This is a point I will return to later. Further insight into the type of tourist that inhabits Kristi’s lived experience description is given by Jay Vogt’s description of the “Wanderer,” the young backpacker typical of Kristi’s account. Vogt states:

When exposed to strangers constantly over a long period of time, the wanderer learns how to make relationships of the road. He learns to accept the transient situations and make the best of them. Soon, he becomes accustomed to making friendships quickly, *enjoying someone intensely*, and then breaking off with little sorrow (emphasis added) (1978: 33).

This description of Vogt’s resonates with our late modern condition or what Bauman (2000) has described as *liquid modernity*, where relationships are more or less ‘relationships of the road’ or what he has called the phenomenon of liquid love. Nietzsche captures the late modern tenor, the instrumentality of liquid love (Bauman, 2003) in his characterization of the *Last Men*, “one still loves one's neighbor and rubs against him; for one needs warmth” (1976: 3).

What this description does is link the mode of travel and youth of the traveller with Cohen’s experiential mode of touristic experience, a relation to the other that obliterates

the other's creaturehood as they are but a source of momentary warmth. In Kristi's account we can see the touristic experience as harbouring elements of delusion. Having an intense personal experience, in this case engaging in intimate relations with a local, while a symbol to others that they have transcended the label of 'tourist', is also a symbol to oneself that they have achieved authenticity. To the reflexive observer, much is being suspended here and the tourist is participating in a delusion of her own creation.

2) Reflexivity - Kristi: The Reflexive Tourist

The tourist gaze is analogous to Foucault's medical gaze, the gaze of any observer, the gaze of the tourist, to "view a set of different scenes, of landscapes or townscapes which are out of the ordinary" (Urry, 1990: 1). According to this formulation, the tourist gaze can be accounted for, it drives demand and suppliers are quick to provide a product, with the willingness of host countries and destinations, many of these in developing countries, to court tourism as a solution to economic problems. Cheap accommodation and food, the perceived availability of exotic entertainment and people, scenic experiences and the purchase of commodities for consumption could all be cursory reasons for travel. Urry incorporates a notion of reflexivity in this tourist gaze – he notes it as "the ability to reflect upon and judge aesthetically between different natures, places and societies, both now and in the past" (1996: 145). This aesthetic reflexivity, or ability to choose between pleasurable options, is a limited version of agency and free will that serves to reify these concepts in

terms of consumer choice where freedom is understood as freedom to choose. This is mirrored in Urry's more recent concept of tourism reflexivity, "the set of disciplines, procedures, and criteria that enable each [and every?] place to monitor, evaluate and develop its tourism potential with in the emerging patterns of global tourism" (2002: 142). Urry appears to award to the tourism site/place a stronger power to act than its more easily manipulated visitor. This meets well with MacCannell's (2001) criticism that Urry, instead of emancipating the tourist from the determinist trap, only enmeshes her deeper. The tourist is destined to epitomize the consumer fantasy. A much stronger treatment of tourist reflexivity is provided for by McHugh et al. (1974). Unfortunately, in their need to position the tourist/traveler (they conflate the two) as a particular kind of unreflexive actor, paralleling the practices of logical positivists and ethnographers, they neglect the opportunity (although they do hint at the potential) to demonstrate how the tourist could be reflexive beyond the aesthetic reflexivity that Urry touts.

How does one intervene in this debate? McCabe (2005) has argued that there has not been enough reflective attention given to how the everyday member constructs and situates themselves as 'tourists'. While there has been much published on the phenomenon of tourism, few studies have adopted a phenomenological approach. According to Dann and Cohen, the phenomenological orientation of Schütz, Simmel, and McHugh, Raffel, Foss and Blum has for the most part been overlooked by tourism researchers (1996: 310). These theorists emphasize "the philosophic dimensions of meaning by adopting an initial

micro-approach, focusing on the individual in society” but have found little to no application (Ibid.). The ‘light’ phenomenology of Erik Cohen is the exception to this rule, having provided us with a widely cited “phenomenology of touristic experiences.”

The writer of the lived experience description or anecdote, as a reflexive observer of the (sex) tourist phenomenon quite possibly points to a further mode of touristic experience beyond Cohen’s typology. One is immediately cued to this awareness as Kristi informs us that she “passed through a continent purely as a *stranger* and a *tourist*.” She “shivers” to use the word “tourist” acknowledging her distaste for the term, a distaste only made stronger by the fact that she recognizes that smoking local pot and sleeping with local men does not allow one to transcend the tourist label. What is interesting about the words she uses to describe herself is that she uses both ‘stranger’ and ‘tourist.’ In McHugh, Raffel, Foss and Blum’s (1972) essay *Travel in On the Beginning of Social Inquiry*, which they speak of the *traveller* (in this case a synonym for tourist) and the *stranger*, Kristi more fits the profile of the stranger. For McHugh, Raffel, Foss and Blum, the “stranger” and the “traveller” are anything but the same. Travel for these authors, is “to make anywhere noticeable, to notice that one is in a community without being responsible to it” (1974, p. 139). The main distinction that they draw between the traveller (tourist) and the stranger is that the traveller is exempt from analytic work (p. 140). So here we can see that it is reflexivity that is the differentiator, a reflexivity that Kristi demonstrates that she possesses by her ability to expose the shallowness behind the assumption that sleeping with local

men will help one to transcend the tourist label. She, unlike the tourists she describes is not exempt from analytic work.

Travel is mindless in so far as it exempts its participants from analytic work – it is to be exclusively passive, empty, and without resource... It avoids the pathos of indigenous cultural poverty and deprivation by having been chosen. The traveler chooses to be deprived...He [sic] ‘shares’ his emptiness with the natives, but he is not indigenous in that he cannot, like the stranger, embark on an analytic programme to make anywhere somewhere by authorising some relation between self and place such that he makes reference to a source, to a relation which serves to ground anywhere (p. 140).

The quotation above shows that by acknowledging that she is a tourist Kristi serves to find a relation with which she may ground anywhere. It also underscores the problem of an unthinking relation to action, where immersion in travel is understood to be an instantiation. Being able to see that one *is* a tourist is painful but freeing at the same time. “Being seen even as a tourist is to make possible some kind of discussion of who is who and what is what: to consider what one is doing, to acknowledge that what one’s eyes see is partly produced by who one is” (p. 141). While the tourist or traveller avoids this type of thinking because of its implicit examination of self, the stranger embraces it. Cohen’s reliance on phenomenological categories glosses this distinction. Kristi seems to be asking the question, “What is time well spent?” She recognizes that she “hasn’t changed much at all” and questions the value of even going on the trip.

3) Nihilism and the Late Modern Subject

One way of understanding the activities of tourist backpackers is to see their actions as attempts to transcend the tourist label as Boorstin's 'pseudo-event,' where "isolated from the host environment and the local people, the mass tourist travels in guided groups and finds pleasure in inauthentic contrived attractions, gullibly enjoying the 'pseudo-events' and disregarding the 'real' world outside" (Urry, 1990: 7). It would appear that even contact with the host environment and local people can still result in a 'pseudo-event.' In this perhaps there is a new mode that goes beyond Boorstin's conceptualization of tourists as willing participants in 'pseudo-events'. This new mode of touristic experience is framed by nihilism.

The theme of self-annihilation, of nihilism – the pursuit of love in the wasteland, reflects my incredulity that a tourist would knowingly sleep with someone who they knew was quite likely HIV positive, while having the knowledge that condom use is frowned on in these countries. There is no mistaking that these people know the risks yet they are willing to take them. As one traveller commented in an online forum: : "Please note that HIV/AIDS is rampant in Malawi and people are dropping like flies; it's a complete disaster. If you have to have the African experience, be very very careful. Rather, avoid it" (Lonely Planet Website, 1999). Educational billboards like the one pictured below warning Malawians to change their behaviour also litter the countryside. One somehow expects that cultural traditions mitigate against locals changing their behaviour, but what of the tourist?

Figure 5 - Aids Educational Billboard in Malawi



<http://www.familypractice.msu.edu/Africa/Africa.htm>

Reflecting on the idea that the activities of these social actors is related to their showing that they are *not* tourists, I am struck by the feeling that there is something else at work here. It seems that a fleeting effervescent experience, like a drug, in the case of these western female tourists, a tryst with the perceived “other” is worth the risk.

However, these thoughts didn't seem to enter the minds of the young women who entered the village and left with a few more notches on their belt. I wanted to shake them and scream, “Are you mad? Do you know what you are doing here?!” But somehow, among the tittering laughter and clinking of beer glasses, that would have been the wrong thing to say. You see, we were all supposed to be having a good time, a time that couldn't be had back home, something exotic and interesting. The scary part about that was, in seeing the train of women that chugged through a little town like Cape McClear, exotic doesn't always mean better, nice or even safe.

Even when death stares us in the face as in the example of the billboard, we refuse to acknowledge it. We often ignore the signs and reality of death. And yes, as Kristi states, we are “mad.” Returning again to the inauthenticity of the exchange between the tourist

and the local we can begin to see this as the activity of a nihilistic actor, one that is in denial of the madness that has possessed them. One can make the argument that there are equal parts madness on both sides of the exchange. One might say that the 'self' presented to the tourist by the local, in this case, the "Rastafarian look," is inauthentic. But even this adopted pseudo-self is stronger than the tourist's self, as the pseudo-self is at least acknowledged as a tool, a tool for achieving economic rewards. As a tool it is a necessity. The local man acts out of necessity, a stronger other than the tourist is oriented to. The tourist strives to deny her true self (at the very least she is a stranger) and so chooses oblivion. McHugh et al. capture this mode of being. "We can think of a world populated exclusively by tourists and such a world is a purely peopled society: barely awake, irresponsible, uncommitted, babbling. In a word, nihilistic" (1974: 147).

Babbling, is exemplified in tourist talk as well as touristic practice. An example of this type of talk again is the tourist who states, "**can't they see that I'm just as poor as they are?**" This sentence is mere babble, noise, devoid of reflexivity, as this talk reflects an inability or unwillingness to acknowledge some fundamental differences. "The traveller does not want to use incidents such as these to reflect on the nature of travel but rather as matters of regret" (148). Here the tourist is regretting the instances where they are treated differently, for monetary gain. McHugh et al maintain that the traveller seeks relief (ontological security) rather than understanding (ontological exigency). Why would the tourist in this case deny the difference in economic standing? Why deny understanding?

The incident where the tourist is asked for money is an opportunity to reflect but the tourist does not do so. While “concrete travel does give occasion to reflect, to avoid oblivion,” when the occasion occurs to reflect on the nature of travel, the traveller does not attempt to formulate “because it requires him to see his trip as grounded in self, which he does not want to recognize” (145). Groundless talk, like groundless action is devoid of meaning and devoid of responsibility. Travel, as action, “stands to the social as speech to language. Its groundlessness is the equivalent of talk without a referent. The very thing of interest about being a tourist is that one knows he/she is in a community of language but not of it, being only a looker” (147). There is a deliberate avoidance or escape from responsibility here. McHugh et. al. summarize this phenomenon of the irresponsibility of the traveler/tourist of grounding our talk as an expression of modern social theory.

Travel, as an activity which reifies change as movement, self as site, development as encounter, and suffering as pain, is a most conspicuous expression of modern social theory. What is more radically the mark of modernity than the pain of everyday endeavour, and what theory is more modern than the kind which achieves the reification of life’s suffering as the existence of pain? (1974: 153).

The avoidance of suffering through its reification as pain to be avoided is a theme here. Given this context, it is perhaps easier to understand why an educated white woman, or man for that matter, would risk contracting AIDS, because in essence “nothing really matters.” Is it that the individual is so alienated from her society, from self, that risking death is perhaps no different than choosing life? To be modern is to be a tourist, to be able to move from place to place, confusing self with site. This is the mode of being.

The tourist creeps closer to nihilism and self-annihilation in that their relation to life becomes reduced to the functionalized pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain.

In this *extreme* case I have demonstrated that by “bracketing” preconceived notions and assumptions, notably assumptions of gender and of the tourist, one can suspend his/her belief and come to a deeper understanding of a complex phenomenon. Initially, Cohen’s typology of tourist experiences seems to bring more understanding to a complex experience than other approaches but is itself limited by its imposition of categories on the tourist eliding what is more essential to the phenomenon. By emphasizing that the individual is part of a shared lifeworld we are able to start to ask different questions in our research and to ask these questions from a stronger base, one that is grounded in lived experience. In this case, it is the existence of a strong reflexivity, a reflexivity that questions one’s actions, assumptions and the way of being of self and other. Both the everyday theorist, Kristi and the theorists McHugh et al. engage in this kind of reflexive theorizing which is once again asking the Socratic question “What should we do and how should we live?” What the figure of Kristi embodies is a different kind of reflexivity. She is not taken in by the illusion of authenticity. I return to the quotation from Bonner that started this chapter.

The radical interpretive perspective is used because of its ability to throw light on the inextricable intertwining of theoretical interests, ethical understanding, and practical action. The key unifying thread throughout the narrative is the way the reflexive element is productive for inquiry. According to Heidegger (1977, 116), “Reflection is the courage to make the truth of our own presuppositions and the realm of our own goals into the things that most deserve to be called into question.” (Bonner, 1997: 9).

The reflexivity that is important for inquiry is the reflexivity that requires us to suffer (to engage the mystery) rather than to find a cure for the pain (solve the problem). The suffering that questioning the “truth of our own suppositions” and the “realm of our own goals” induces is a shared suffering, a choice that both theorist and lay theorist can choose to escape from or resist. It is an orientation to theorizing that embraces *aporia*. Reflection, contemplation, reflexivity, is painful, but having the courage to suffer this pain can bring insight. This is the power of radical interpretive sociology better understood as *reflexive* interpretive sociology – it always endeavours to return us to the examined life.

Bonner, drawing on the insights of Charles Taylor notes that “the examined life, while it does not guarantee a successful prosecution of human science inquiry, is nonetheless the best prophylactic with regard to the danger of being taken in by illusions built into a culture” (2006: 25). This, the Socratic dictum that the unexamined life is not worth living can now be interpreted to mean that knowledge seeking and self-questioning are intertwined, especially with regard to ethical action, and that inquiry needs to be dialectically reflexive if it is to adequately take the pervasive ethical element into account. So how can one apply this reflexive move to one’s own inquiry? This case then has so far I hope, demonstrated a way of doing inquiry that connects minute social interactions, in quite specific particular contexts, to deep philosophical and abiding human issues, to bridging the universal and the particular.

2.6.5 Rehabilitating the Tourist/Traveler

In this chapter I have tried to show the various ways the tourist has been theorized. Given that this work attempts to deal with issues of cure versus healing, pain versus suffering, perhaps a strong way of thinking about tourism and the tourist is as symptoms or syndromes. Zygmunt Bauman speaks of the tourist syndrome as a metaphor for contemporary life.

When speaking of the ‘tourists’ or ‘tourism’ as metaphors of contemporary life, I have in mind certain aspects of the tourist condition and/or experience – like being in a place temporarily and knowing it, not belonging to the place, not locked into the local life ‘for better or worse’. That condition is shared with the modality of ordinary daily life, with the way we are all ‘inserted’ in the company of others everywhere – in places where we live or work; not only during the summer holidays, but seven days a week, all year round, year by year. It is that characteristic of contemporary life to which I primarily refer when speaking of *the tourist syndrome* (Bauman in Franklin, 2003: 207).

Being inserted temporarily, he explains, allows people to have loose ties with places and people, to refuse engagement and active communication because they ‘presume’ temporariness, hallmarks of his theory of liquid modernity I described in Chapter 1. So even if the place – social, physical or geographical, might have had the potential to become home, the individual, out of habit, chooses to experience it as a tourist would – without strings attached. No rules, no engagement, no responsibility, no commitment. A life that is only meant for the relentless consumption of experiences, similar to what might be contained in the notions of YOLO and the ‘bucket list.’

Bauman explores the consequences of this change, and explains the notion of community substitute as a phenomenon that makes the “real thing yet more absent”

(Franklin, 2003: 214). He shows that the desire for community is real, but since it is not available, people settle for substitutes instead. These substitutes, as “instant cures,” exacerbate the problem of disembeddedness.

With regards to the tourist, a valuable distinction that Bauman makes is the distinction between desire and wish. Desire, he explains, must be “planted and cultivated, tended to and groomed; it takes time and effort to tune and hone it” (210). This ritual type of travel, as when all of Paris empties on August 1 to go to the coast, is planned meticulously ahead of time, dreamed about, almost taking on the mantle of a tradition. In contrast, wish is the result of an instantaneous impulse, where you want something you never knew you wanted before: “People who stroll through the shopping mall with that sweet music in the background, this enchanting and intoxicating array of colours and smells – are not seeking objects, but sensations: They are pining for an adventure, they covet to be seduced” (212). Here we again have a version of Nietzsche’s *Last Man*, a sensation seeker, a grazer of human experience, in search of the poison that will keep him in a pleasant dream state.

On one hand, while one can become lost in the fantasy of being a tourist, on the other hand there is also the opportunity to engage the problem of being a tourist, which Kristi has demonstrated in her reflexive anecdote. Is this not also a potential outcome of travel as Kristi’s talk has demonstrated? This reflexive choice points to a different difference

that travel can make, one that Peter Berger pointed to in 1963 with his discussion of culture shock and its relation to the development of a sociological consciousness (reflexivity).

With the shock may (denoting possibility) go not only disapproval or disgust but a sense of excitement of any first travel abroad. The experience of sociological discovery could be described as “culture shock” minus geographical displacement. In other words the sociologist travels at home with shocking results....Yet we would not want to imply that sociological discoveries are always or even usually outrageous to moral sentiment. Not at all, what they have in common with exploration in distant lands, however, is the sudden illumination of new and unsuspected facets of human existence in society. This is the excitement and...the humanistic justification of sociology (Berger, 1963: 23-24).

For Berger, in contrast to McHugh et al.’s formulation, the prototype of the reflexive sociologist *is* the traveller. This begs the question, is the tourist just a degraded form? Also, is Berger’s understanding of the traveller perhaps an anachronistic one? His writing is 50 years old. Or, have we been too hard on the poor tourist? Why might we be inclined to be so hard on this heroic avatar?

Recently there has been an attempt to rehabilitate the tourist. MacCannell (2011, 2012), long a booster of the tourist has discussed the “ethical stake in tourism” where he theorizes that an engagement with Otherness is the abiding concern of the tourist and chastises tourism researchers for inadequate theorizing and a reliance on solipsistic empirical studies. Allan Blum (2007) and Zygmunt Bauman (2005) have both attempted to accomplish this rehabilitation through the revival of the “traveler,” recovering the stronger notion of the traveler that is referenced by the Berger quote. Instead of pillorying the traveler/tourist, they seem to have developed a sympathy.

The problem of the tourist has captivated the imagination of the theorist since Boorstin's lamentation of the decline of the traveler and the rise of the tourist. Tourist typologies, and tourist related concepts such as 'authenticity' (MacCannell, 1976) and the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990, 2002) have been employed to account for the phenomenon of the tourist and at times to rehabilitate her. I have begun here to try to account for this theoretical interest in the topic of the tourist as referencing the deep need of theorist both lay and professional, to grapple with the spectre of despair. In doing this I have started by employing a variety of different usage that is reflective of this deep interest. In Kristi's talk, we see the unreflective tourist as an example of Nietzsche's *Last Men*. "We have invented happiness,' say the last men, and they blink. They have left the regions where it is hard to live; for they need warmth. One still loves one's neighbor and rubs against him; for one needs warmth" (Nietzsche, 1976: 4).

Is the tourist either a scapegoat or sacrificial lamb that allows for the projection of the deep fears of the lay theorist and theorist, in this case the deep fear of nihilism? In the *Travel* essay, theorists, McHugh, Blum, Foss and Raffel (1974: 137-153) do violence to the notion of the tourist as a way of exorcising the demons of positivism and nihilism which, in their formulation, haunt social inquiry. Not unlike Kristi's interpretation and indeed my own, there is a sort of piety to these accounts that begs questioning. Theorists are not exempt from the temptations of the heroic path. Might we as theorists be giving ourselves

over to that need to designate an *other* and in the manner described by Becker and Burke, turn it into a scapegoat?

2.7 CONCLUSION

One of the problems that the relation of the everyday theorist, Kristi, to the tourist raises for inquiry, is the problem of piety. *Piety*, according to *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language*, is "devotion to religious duties and practices" while to be *pious* means "having or showing religious devotion; zealous in the performance of religious obligations" (1964: 1358, 1366). The example of the crucifixion of the tourist, as seen in the pronouncements of Boorstin where his is essentially a pious classist argument against mass consumption, is something that underscores a need for the theorist to have certitude, to be righteous. The tourist is perhaps acting as the projection screen for the deep fears of both the everyday and academic theorist, one of which is the deep fear of being an inauthentic human being, the other perhaps the fear of inauthentic or weak scholarship where the measure of good scholarship would seem to be the ability of one group to destroy the argument of the other. There is something instructive about Zygmunt Bauman's description of the relation of the tourist to the vagabond in this regard:

[T]he vagabond is the tourist's alter ego – just as the destitute is the alter ego of the rich, the savage the alter ego of the civilized, or the stranger the alter ego of the native. Being an alter ego means to serve as a rubbish bin into which all ineffable premonitions, unspoken fears, secret self-deprecations and guilts too awesome to be thought of are dumped; to be an alter ego means to serve as a public exposition of the innermost private, as an inner demon to be publicly exorcized, an effigy in which all

that which cannot be suppressed may be burnt. The alter ego is the dark and sinister backcloth against which the purified ego may shine (Bauman, 1998: 93).

The 'sex' tourists as understood by Kristi, appear to operate in a moral vacuum, their embrace of pleasure and denial of death indicating an impiety that one might find offensive. From the analysis that I have conducted here with the assist of the work of Bauman and McHugh et al. it seems that that the tourist is best understood as representing Nietzsche's *Last Men*, engaged in passive nihilism. Kristi appears to be both fascinated and repelled by the tourists' behaviour, horrified at being a tourist and the implications of that mode of being. I suggest that the idea of the tourist provides a similar function for the everyday member as represented by the reflexivity of Kristi and the sociologist/theorist.⁴⁰ The tourist serves as either sacrificial lamb or scapegoat, representing paradoxically the collective's highest aims, as well as our deepest fears. At one end of the spectrum of nihilism we can see the tourist as representing the passive type. At the other end, active nihilism, we have the overly pious fanatic committing acts of evil. Both are human tendencies. Piety taken to the extreme is analogous to the kind of terrorist acts that have become an ongoing concern in recent years, most committed by alienated madmen. Slavoj Zizek has perceptively picked up on these themes.

⁴⁰ Note that McHugh et al. acknowledge that they are taking the piss out of the tourist in order to pillory positivism and ethnography as unreflective inquiry. Alan Blum (personal communication) has noted that the "Travel" essay was from a militant period in the development of Analysis and the tone of the work indicates this militant attitude.

Long ago Friedrich Nietzsche perceived how Western civilization was moving in the direction of the Last Man, an apathetic creature with no great passion or commitment. Unable to dream, tired of life, he takes no risks, seeking only comfort and security: “A little poison now and then: that makes for pleasant dreams. And much poison at the end, for a pleasant death. They have their little pleasures for the day, and their little pleasures for the night, but they have a regard for health. ‘We have discovered happiness,’ say the Last Men, and they blink.” It may appear that the split between the permissive First World and the fundamentalist reaction to it runs more and more along the lines of the opposition between leading a long satisfying life full of material and cultural wealth and dedicating one’s life to some transcendent cause. Is this antagonism not the one between what Nietzsche called “passive” and “active” nihilism? We in the West are the Nietzschean Last Men, immersed in stupid daily pleasures, while the Muslim radicals are ready to risk everything, engaged in the struggle up to their self-destruction (Zizek, September 3, 2014).

This opposition, this dialectic is present not just between the First World and the fundamentalist reaction to it, but in the western leisure imaginary. In bipolar fashion many of us swing between passive and active nihilism. On one hand we desperately look for a cause, a reason to be. On the other we put off the question of being by seeking contentment and safety, by immersing ourselves, “in stupid daily pleasures” (Zizek, September 3, 2014).

So methodologically then, how can we guard against this tendency towards piety (a deep need?) that delivers certitude and a purified ego but obscures our vision and weakens our theorizing? How also, as self-conscious theorists can we avoid relating to the academic world and the world in general, instrumentally, as a means to and end providing only comfort and security? How can we do the best philosophical leisure? We need to be careful that we make a distinction between the kind of criticism of the tourist undertaken by Kristi and the criticism of the tourist undertaken by McHugh et. al. (1974). Is there a difference? The similarity is in the reflexive move that each makes and in the willingness to engage the

ambiguity of social life. One might be confused at first with the approach of Blum and McHugh as its militant irony can be off-putting and seem overly pious, similar perhaps to the sentiments expressed by Kristi. However, this would be a mistake as we see that there is nothing prescriptive in their intervention in the way that analysis is done, nothing resolute other than to question the resoluteness of their interlocutors.

The *Travel* essay is not about the tourist per se, but rather the form of inquiry that we can discover in the metaphor of the tourist. In the figure of the tourist we see one end of the two poles of nihilism. This is the passive nihilism of the tourist, but also the nihilism of those forms of inquiry that are analogous to tourism, for example, the forms of inquiry ascendant at the time of McHugh et al.'s writing, participant observation and positivistic social science. However one must also guard against the tendency towards piety which in its most perverted form finds its avatar in the jihadist or the white supremacist.

The problem of piety as developed here points to the need to practice a resolute irresoluteness that we can find in the analytic work of Allan Blum and Peter McHugh. Like these analysts, we can turn to the example of Socrates as a guide. In trying to emulate the power of the dialectic in writing⁴¹ we can attempt to construct an analogue of the oral tradition, privileging dialogue over discourse.

⁴¹ For Hannah Arendt, thinking and understanding are accomplished through the writing process. She states in an [interview](#), "I'd say the most important thing for me is to understand. For me, writing is part of this process of understanding. Writing is an integral part of the process of understanding...I see myself as somewhat of an onlooker."

The action of thinking as it first collects and then disperses in an effort to re-collect the covered over is what we orient to in writing; writing seeks to evoke a sense of the achievement of the covered over; writing seeks to preserve a 'sense' of this tension without degenerating into surrealism. Such dialectical or analytic writing attempts to preserve in its very organization the Socratic methods of the *aporia* (the disillusion of the security of the hypothesis by transforming it into pathlessness), the *elenchus* (the sense of Socratic irony which in attempting to differentiate between chatter and meaning treats works as icons of language), and *anamnesis* (the effort to reconstruct and reorganize resonances which have become alienated from the idea). The Socratic dialogue is then preserved in speech as a movement which evokes the tension and irregularity of the contest within the soul idealized as true thinking (McHugh et al, 1974: 19).

Reflexive interpretive inquiry argues that an oriented and directed research project should contribute not just to knowledge, but to understanding and wisdom or insight. The decision to employ phenomenological, hermeneutic and dialectical analytic methods moves the research in a direction that resists modern and traditional forms of inquiry and thought. By approaching leisure through reflexive interpretive sociology, it means that I have made problematic the traditional way of doing social science that demands clear (perhaps overly pious?) answers. In doing this I must understand my own tendencies towards piety, my own 'madness' if you will. This work does and does not clarify, and it does not allow the theorist to rest. In particular, the analytic element of this work instead tries to create the *aporia* through obscuring the path and embracing a sense of Socratic irony. This analytic thrust is best exemplified in the work of Allan Blum and Peter

Do I see myself as influential? No, I want to understand. If others understand in the same way I've understood that gives me a sense of satisfaction, like being among equals" (Arendt, October 28, 1964).

McHugh, with the centripetal character of inquiry and dismembering character of laughter found in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin being another example. It thus reconstructs an understanding that is not resolute, nor melancholically detached, but ever questioning, ever engaging the mystery. It is passionate thinking directed towards the ambiguity of the human condition.

Chapter 3: Contested Leisure

The villager had no problem of free time. He knew what to do with whatever amount he had. But no one, least of all himself, quite knew what to do with the worker's free time, primarily because no one grasped what he had become.

Sebastian De Grazia, *Of Time, Work and Leisure*

In Chapter 1, I attempted to lay out a broad context for this inquiry and to begin to demonstrate the power of the metaphor of the leisure imaginary for a hermeneutic understanding of leisure, an understanding that attempts to grasp 'what we have become'. Chapter 2 admittedly was a bit of a detour as I took 'time out' to explain my methodological approach. Now I wish to return to the mystery of leisure and the leisure imaginary. There are practical reasons for the use of the leisure imaginary as a concept. Leisure scholarship is in crisis and in need of an overhaul. Much has been written recently with regards to the "leisure society thesis" as a guiding assumption or narrative upon which leisure studies departments were built and function, the ongoing debate about the place of the leisure society thesis underscoring the problems in leisure scholarship.

Leisure studies is charged with promulgating weak and/or outdated approaches to the study of leisure, leisure studies departments are criticized for their inability to attract students, and leisure scholars are insecure about their status as practitioner's in a legitimate discipline or area of study (Blackshaw, 2010a; Rojek, 2010 and 2011; Veal, 2011; Aitchison, 2011). As a consequence, leisure's star, it is argued, has been on the wane. Tony Blackshaw speculates that for students, leisure studies has 'lost its lustre' because of a

disconnect between students' lived experience and leisure theory something that was apparent in the lived experience descriptions of my students which spoke to a different understanding of leisure than that promoted by mainstream academic textbooks, that of a hermeneutic space.

...the truth is that the idea of 'leisure' no longer burns brightly in the lives of students, because it does not have an overarching narrative of sufficient power, simplicity and wide appeal to compete with the other lures of lives made to the measure of *individualization*, which today is *the* shaping force in the narrative of human existence (Blackshaw, 2010a: viii).

There is great irony in this statement in that for youth, the sphere of leisure, free time, has become *the* arena in which young people find self-definition, express themselves, and where they live out their dreams. That is, that the project of identity for the young is "leisure led" (White et al., 2013).

In the 60's and 70's something was compelling enough about *leisure* for specialized departments to be set up in Canada, the United States, Australasia, United Kingdom and other western European countries like France. The promise of the leisure society meant that there would need to be a professional class that could help manage the public's use of this free time. This of course is one of the main reasons for the 'management' focus of leisure studies departments. This has arguably led to the impoverishment of theory in leisure studies departments and leisure studies in general as functionalist and social psychological perspectives, those most adaptable to a management focus, were adopted. Deem agrees when she states that the leisure studies tradition has suffered from being "largely atheoretical" and "sees and researches leisure as though it were a male or unisex

phenomenon, which utilizes large scale surveys and often separates leisure from its wider context” (Deem, 1986: 8). This lack of theoretical capacity has led to the current crisis in leisure scholarship and if one reads between the lines in the debate and in particular, responses to Chris Rojek’s (2010) criticism of the ‘discipline’, a kind of ‘theory envy’. Leisure scholars are now vigorously attempting to hunt down leisure as attested by the statement from the 2012 World Leisure Congress which indicates that perhaps this perfunctory justification of the present project is not as banal as expected and in fact is part of the central problem developed in these pages.

Playing host to the 2012 World Leisure Congress, Rimini has accepted the challenge of and committed itself to **repositioning and interpreting the meaning of "Leisure"**, in light of the changes that are influencing our lifestyle in an ever faster and dynamic way.

This **Mission** belongs not only to the Congress but also to the destiny of the country hosting the 2012 edition: in fact the very concept of *otium* (Latin for leisure) originated in Italy. Moreover, in Italy, Rimini is precisely the place that has for decades been the symbol of *otium*'s new borders.

The **Vision** that the city wants to pursue is in tune with the area hosting the event: from 2012 onwards, anyone who talks about new leisure will have to mention the events in Rimini. In media language, the basic idea is: **"after the 2012 WL Congress, leisure will never be the same again"**.

http://www.riminiworldleisure.com/pagine/cong_presentazione2012.php?strChaLan=ENG

Just as Socrates and Glaucon engaged in the hunt for justice in *The Republic*, realizing that it must be something constantly recovered and reclaimed, lay people and leisure scholars are beginning to wake up to the notion that something called “leisure” needs to be recovered and reclaimed. Leisure appears now much like a valuable treasure

that has somehow slipped through our fingers and that we are now scrambling to find. Another way of saying the above is that there appears to be a need among leisure scholars to revisit the grounds of their “discipline,” if it can be called such, and to understand what leisure means in the contemporary period. There would appear to be enough despair about the field that if engaged reflectively might be very productive for a revitalized study of leisure. Indeed, there is a very serious *mission* to retheorize leisure that seems to be taking on crisis proportions. This inquirer is sympathetic to this mission, although would quibble with the term *lifestyle* used by the World Leisure Congress in its 2012 statement and would replace it with the term *human condition*.⁴² Understanding the meaning and place of leisure in our contemporary times, what leisure *is*, goes hand in hand with understanding our human condition.

The place to undertake this recovery, on the surface, would appear to be academic Recreation and Leisure Studies departments. I made this assumption towards the end of my master’s research on recreational cottaging and its relation to city life (a project that presaged this one) and was surprised when investigating departments in which to do my PhD, when a respected member of the University of Waterloo’s Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies told me that if I was looking to do theoretical work on leisure, their department really wasn’t the place. This seemed at the time, to my naïve ears, improbable.

⁴² Interestingly, the theme of this year’s (2014) World Leisure Congress is *Leisure and the Human Condition*.

But now of course with an understanding of how the field arrived on the scene it makes perfect sense. The problem of our retreat from contemplation, from theorizing, from philosophical leisure we find in the academy as well as in everyday life. And why wouldn't we, when the academy experiences the same pressures, strains, and stresses that the rest of society experiences.⁴³



While leisure has been important enough to justify the creation of academic departments for the study of leisure, for reasons outlined below they are ironically less well equipped to engage in theorizing about leisure. I experienced this first hand when I taught a third year course on the Sociology of Leisure which was subscribed to by students from the Recreation and Leisure Studies Department as well as Sociology and other disciplines at the University of Waterloo. While many students embraced the introduction of sociological theorizing and the free play of ideas and found it refreshing, many resisted. I was initially mystified at the oft repeated, frustration laced, refrain from Recreation and Leisure Studies students, "How does this apply to service delivery?" until I realized that many students in the Recreation and Leisure Studies in the Faculty of Applied Health Studies were expecting and receiving an applied education. This was what

⁴³ I don't mean to say that the retreat from theorizing is not part of the general retreat from theorizing going on in other academic departments for example sociology. Rather it is the irony inherent in a field oriented to studying leisure that makes little space for philosophical leisure that is of almost comic importance.

students were oriented to. This reaction to the disorienting character of theorizing should not have been surprising given modernity's influence on the social sciences.

The number one problem of modern social science has from the beginning been modernity itself. I mean that historically unprecedented amalgam of new practices and institutional forms (science, technology, industrial production, urbanization); of new ways of living (individualism, secularization, instrumental rationality); and of new forms of malaise (alienation, meaninglessness, a sense of impending social dissolution) (Taylor, 2002).

In the climate described by Taylor above, it is no wonder some rejected the push to philosophical reflection as I was only making more complicated their already complicated lives and reminding them of what was gnawing at them, the malaises of modernity – alienation, meaninglessness, and the threat of social dissolution. They were at university for stability, a degree that would keep these forces at length. How dare I, a sessional instructor from outside their department disrupt their ecosystem, an ecosystem that was sustained in part by the modern gift of instrumental rationality? Instrumental rationality made it difficult to maintain a sustained conversation about or even question the nature of leisure, part of a broader malaise in the university.

In particular, the increasingly instrumental approach to knowledge displayed by students is symptomatic of a broader trend that is dismantling the liberal arts tradition of scholarship and replacing it with university education as applied knowledge or job training. Recreation and Leisure Studies departments were in part founded on these newer 'educational' grounds (applied knowledge and job training) and are in tension with the liberal arts tradition. These departments may have more easily adapted to this changing

milieu and perhaps have contributed to the overall decline of the university as a place of free thought, of philosophical reflection, and its replacement with an emphasis and understanding of education as the business of job training.

In this context, the sense of inferiority that leisure studies scholars feel and the academic snobbery that some leisure studies scholars assert comes from outside their “discipline,” may in some sense be deserved, as the environment that these scholars inhabit, their medium, massage scholarship in particular ways. These programs have been oriented by the ‘leisure society thesis’ which imagined a society “which is at least culturally, and probably economically, focussed on leisure, the equivalent of industrial society or agrarian society” (Veal, 2009: 3). This leisure imagining was grounded in the opposition to or overcoming of work as something that conditioned absolutely *men’s* lives. The excitement over a future explosion in free time, meant that the leisure society was held out as the new, this worldly paradise by leisure scholars. Waring (2008: 96) notes that “this positive impression of leisure led many theorists from the 1960s onwards to prophesise (sic) about a future ‘leisure society’”. Chris Rojek highlights the importance of the leisure society thesis for scholarship.

My reasons for looking again at the leisure society thesis are not nostalgic but analytical, particularly with the issue of the institutionalised study of leisure today in university settings. To put it bluntly, nothing before or since has been as successful in capturing the public imagination...A social life organised around leisure had been discussed since the days of Aristotle. But it was only in the 1960s and 1970s, at the height of leisure society thesis, that this ceased to be confined to the elite and became a real, general, prospect for society at large. The growth of leisure studies in the university system and the expansion of resources for departments/schools of leisure and recreation, occurred on the coat tails of the leisure society thesis (2010: 277).

The appeal of the leisure society thesis was such that arguments for private and public funding for resources to handle the increase in free time and the threat it possessed were easily made. One example are the calls from psychologists like John Neulinger for more private and public resources for leisure counselling, “a professional service directed to providing individuals with guidance, either with respect to how to use their free time in more fulfilling ways or to provide positive responses to the chronic absence or relative infrequency of leisure experience” (Rojek, 2009: 28). The link between the leisure society thesis and the rise of recreation and leisure studies departments in the service of turning out professionals for managing leisure has arguably led to an approach to leisure studies that is instrumental, fractured, and intellectually impoverished. Chris Rojek elaborates.

"Leisure" has given way to "Sports Studies" (with its simplistic headline message of health and positive competition), "Tourist Studies" (which unites globalisation and mobility with social conscience) and "Event Management" (which proselytises a do-it-yourself approach to leisure and furnishes a moral legitimation that the "can do" attitude is not only personally empowering, it can make free time a weapon in the arsenal of solving the world's problems). For students of leisure, the results of the gradual submergence of the thesis in public life have been serious. The discipline has suffered a relative decline... leisure studies is left with an identity crisis of major proportions: it is embarrassed about where it has come from (the promise of a shorter working week, early retirement, and well-funded activities for all), and it has not generated a new idea, one big enough to put leisure back on the agenda of public debate and make student enrolments in the subject expand (2010: 277).

The dismantling of leisure into ‘little workshops’ (event management, sports studies, recreation studies, tourism studies) as problematic and leading to an ‘identity crisis’ for leisure studies, mirrors the fractured character and compartmentalized nature of contemporary life, our pluralized lifeworld. The embarrassment of which Rojek writes has

its origins in the weak formulation and then cooption of the leisure society thesis, where Veal finds that with regards to the leisure society thesis, the “relevant literature is lacking in definitional precision and is marked by inconsistencies and contradictions” (2011: 222). This shortfall makes understandable Bramham’s observation that “Leisure Studies has rarely had the confidence to voice its own independent detached vision of ‘the leisure society’ or make a strong case for the intrinsic value of leisure scholarship and research” (Bramham in Veal, 2011: 22). Rojek’s analysis as well as the debate around the leisure society thesis, seems to demonstrate that leisure studies was established on ground not conducive to reflexive inquiry. In short, leisure studies departments, by virtue of their ‘disciplinary’ history, are poorly equipped to undertake philosophical leisure. It is in this context that we can begin to understand the urgency of the ‘mission’ of the *World Leisure Congress 2012*.

A lack of theoretical confidence, a kind of ‘theory envy’ engendered by the cooption of leisure studies by leisure professionals and consumer capitalism, legacies of the leisure society thesis, has contributed to the decline in the academy’s ability to understand the place, purpose, and meaning of leisure. A radical recovery is in order, a recovery that is perhaps better undertaken outside recreation and leisure studies departments.

Sociologists like Chris Rojek and Tony Blackshaw are leading the charge in this regard and are calling for these new approaches. Notably, they are British. Arguably, sociology in North America has been hampered in its ability to understand leisure given its binding to a rational empiricism that looks at leisure from the point of view of structural constraint forged along the lines of social class, gender, and race or through the lens of Talcott

Parsons' structural functionalism or social psychology. The leisure society thesis and older sociological approaches (functionalism, Marxism) "no longer constitute an overarching narrative(s) of sufficient power, simplicity and wide appeal to compete with the recent changes in modernity, which means that they are getting further and further removed from the social reality in which contemporary leisure is experienced" (Blackshaw: 2010a: 71). In the quest for a reinvigorated leisure studies, the problem of the weak narrative of the leisure society thesis is compounded by the application of outdated paradigms of understanding.

North American sociology, with its social-psychological and functionalist leanings in the states, its critical Marxist tradition in Canada, and the marginalization of theorizing in both countries, is in particular hampered in its ability to imagine new approaches. All the best new theorizing about leisure (see Rojek, 2009; Blackshaw, 2010a) would appear to emerge out of Europe, where studies of leisure are not compartmentalized in applied learning silos like recreation and leisure studies departments. Another way to understand this is to see that North American approaches and methods used to formulate research programmes have hollowed out the subject and lead to the compromising of our theoretical imaginations. Blackshaw notes that what matters most in a revitalized approach to leisure studies, is the "mindset with which we approach the study of leisure, which will help us better understand what it means for individuals and society today" (2010a: xv). Blackshaw advocates a hermeneutic approach. Unfortunately, the space that would help to give rise to the hermeneutic approach, the appropriate mindset for engaging

the topic of leisure, is the very thing that appears to be under attack. The university is increasingly compromised by the logic imposed by the needs of a capitalist, consumerist, and thoroughgoing instrumental way of life. However, this is not the whole story. That is, there is much more afoot in the way of resistance to new approaches to the study of leisure than outdated theory, lack of confidence, the grip of consumer capitalism or the ‘domination’ of leisure scholarship by recreation and leisure studies departments. As the discussion of death and its connection to leisure that introduced this chapter points to, there is something lurking beneath the marginalization of theory, a bias against contemplation, the *vita contemplativa*, what the Greeks called *theoria* (θεωρία) in society at large and in our institutions of higher learning, a deep ambivalence towards reflection in general that exemplifies our contemporary human condition.

Arguably the suppression/repression of *theoria* (θεωρία) in the very places where we would think it privileged is part and parcel of that ‘thing’ that eats at our existential core, is exacerbated by late modern conditions, and shows up in resistance to reflective approaches to understanding both in the academy and in everyday life. There is a more fundamental problem that haunts and distorts the promise of leisure and leisure studies. It’s not the problem of balancing work and play. Nor is it the tension between *Logos* and *Eros*, where leisure as *Eros* is regarded as a potential threat and understood as something that needs to be managed first by the medieval Church, later, the state (as in Britain’s *The Leisure Hour* journal) and finally in our contemporary period by forces of consumer capitalism. Both these approaches to understanding leisure I will visit presently. Both gloss

the deeper problem that leisure raises.⁴⁴ As Heidegger has shown us, the antipathy towards theorising, to θεωρία, to contemplation, is rooted in our most fundamental anxiety, our anxiety over death, and our deep need to repress it as a fundamental fact of life.⁴⁵

According to Sartre, the complementary anxiety that we harbour is our anxiety over freedom (Morris, 2006: 116). This demonstrates that on our existential voyage as moderns we are continually trapped between the gnawing terror of death, the *Scylla*, and the terror that issues from freedom, that is, the threat of the loss of self, the threat of swirling in the hermeneutic vortex in the *Charybdis* of late modernity. Most of us run from these twin terrors, buying our sanity by throwing ourselves into various projects, work or some mission to give our lives meaning and purpose, losing ourselves in entertainment and amusement or turning others into projection screens for our dis-ease, the sad preoccupations of Nietzsche's last men.

⁴⁴ I will develop these ways of understanding leisure, the surficial ethical collisions of work/play or Logos/Eros, that cover over the stronger ethical collision between freedom and despair further in this and the next chapter.

⁴⁵ The Greek letter *theta* Θ, in classical Athens was used as an abbreviation for *thanatos* or death. Note that there is some subtle distinguishing to be made between theorising and contemplation which will be discussed later.

3.1 LEISURE: FROM THREAT TO DANGER

threat (n) – a suggestion that something unpleasant or violent will happen, especially if a particular action or order is not followed.

danger (n) – the possibility of harm or death to someone. (Cambridge Dictionary Online)

The result of our unlimited, unorganized, unled, and uncontrolled leisure is the gravest danger to which any nation was ever exposed. *This is the great threat of leisure* that we may now see: the fruition of such conditions in the lack of self-restraint as evidenced by the waves of crime with which we are deluged. (Cutten, 1926: 96; emphasis added).

Cartman: I use fear to manipulate people to do my bidding.

Bart Simpson: Uh, isn't that like terrorism?

Cartman: Dude, it's not like terrorism! It *is* terrorism!

South Park

“There are no dangerous thoughts; thinking it-self is dangerous.”

— *Hannah Arendt*

Much has been written about leisure’s threat to civilization. Cutten, writing in 1926 in his book, *The Threat of Leisure* represents the generation of scholars that gave birth to the leisure society thesis. He sees the increase in leisure time not as a boon but as a potential disruption in need of managing, as the great unwashed come to be in possession of free time. Instead of seeing leisure as a space in which we engage in projects of identity and community as is arguably the case in contemporary society, Cutten imagines leisure as the devil’s playground where all manner of mayhem might erupt, where “idle hands are the devil’s tools.” His paranoia concerns the youth of North America as he sees that the “young man or young woman not only has leisure, but has sufficient money to make the worst of it, if he is so inclined” (1926: 96). This subclass of morons that makes the worst of

leisure is a threat. This moronic leisure, a leisure culture of morons, is seen as threatening the fabric of society. What will the great unwashed do with money and time? No good apparently.

The term 'threat' is derived from the Old English term *preat* meaning 'crowd' or 'troop' (etymonline.com). 'Danger' has just as interesting a lineage being derived from the 13th Century Anglo-French *daunger* "power, power to harm, mastery, control" with its more modern sense of "risk, peril" (from being in control of something or someone else) emerging into English in the late 14th Century.⁴⁶ Leisure is seen as a potentially corrupting influence, perhaps not unlike the corrupting influence the leisure of Socrates was seen to have had on the Greek youth of the Athenian state, a threat to an established order. The "misuse" of leisure time in both situations was imagined as a threat to an established order and perhaps to civilization itself.

Cutten's work is emblematic of a vanguard of leisure researchers and theorists of all political persuasions who imagined leisure as governed by the contest between Logos and Eros, where life forces (Eros) are channeled appropriately by the law, the state, or God (Logos). On the one hand the paternal state and its agents (recreation and leisure studies practitioners for example) saw leisure as something that needed to be managed. On the

⁴⁶ *Fear*, in part from the Latin *periculum* (trial, risk, danger) has a very close etymological association with the term *danger* but not with the term *threat*. It is interesting to note that Socrates during his trial was not afraid of the outcome because he had conquered his fear of death.

other hand there were those theorists who lauded the potentially revolutionary possibilities in leisure, highlighting its erotic and transgressive character. One group had a decidedly dystopian view of leisure, while the other a more utopian view. This conflict can be traced back to the Roman problem of leisure where the banishment of leisure from the public sphere and unease with what was understood to be *otium Graecum* (Greek leisure seen as undirected and wasteful) led to a prejudice against the unorganized use of free time and the concomitant provision and use of amusements like the games (bread and circuses) to beguile and manage the population.⁴⁷

For this project, which focuses on the choices we make in leisure from a hermeneutic and admittedly more existentialist perspective, the stronger way to think of leisure is not as a threat but a danger. The danger of leisure conjures something different. It is the danger to the self, the threat of losing control, of a loss of mastery, of a flirtation with meaninglessness. Masochism and sadomasochism at the interpersonal level and totalitarianism at the collective level as Fromm (1941) has shown are responses to this attendant loss of control. Free time, unoccupied, always invites us to ask greater questions, destabilizing questions that we shy away from both at the individual and collective levels. It is dangerous in this existential sense. While leisure as free time introduces the possibility

⁴⁷ A contemporary example of the phenomenon of 'bread and circuses' is the UFC where gladiators fight to the near death as good employees for 'Uncle Dana' the President of the UFC. In addition to entertaining legion of fans, the fighters also demonstrate how to be good employees by religiously thanking the company publicly, most notably in post-fight press conferences, for the privilege of fighting in the organization (having their brains scrambled).

of freedom, this freedom has the possibility of introducing the terror of existence. The danger of leisure is that while it can free us from repression it risks plunging us into despair and so we allow our thinking to be hijacked. This is why Arendt can say, “There are no dangerous thoughts; thinking itself is dangerous” (1971: 435).

3.1.1 Leisure’s Enigmatic and Contested Character

Leisure is contested, because there are conflicting understandings of what leisure is as an object of study. Enigmatic because in making trouble for the concept of leisure, we release it from its moorings and reintroduce its mysterious character. The reader in fact, may even be a little frustrated at this point in that I have been operating without a clear definition of what leisure *is*. Our “leisurely” stroll has been oriented to the variety of ways that leisure is oriented to, in the idiom of Lacan, its *symbolic order*. This attempt at re-thinking and re-searching, this ‘hunting down’ of leisure is important.

It has been argued that it is extremely difficult to integrate classical and modern conceptions and practices of leisure. Even though in his book *Capitalism and Leisure Theory*, Rojek notes that a historical perspective is “the best defence against imagining that leisure relations are either unique to a specific period or common to all times” (1985:23) he takes as his historical analogue, not the classical Greeks and their notion of leisure as *skholē*, but the Middle Ages and the mass leisure form, *carnival*. This is no oversight on Rojek’s part, but quite simply reflects what he regarded at the time as the seemingly unbridgeable chasm between classical and modern conceptions of leisure. This chasm is created through

the intervention of history, where for Rojek “leisure shapes and is shaped by, history and the interplay of social interests” (1985: 18), which for Rojek means that the story of leisure is informed by relations of class and power, the human preoccupation with emulation, and changes in communications media.⁴⁸ Something as distant as Greek *skholē* would appear to have little relation to our contemporary situation in this framework. This would be a mistake however. Rojek’s early work then would appear to favour more of a ‘threat of leisure’ approach, and not a ‘danger of leisure’ approach, even though Rojek in his later work favours the latter as exemplified in his admittedly difficult book *Decentring Leisure* (1995). In this author’s opinion, the choosing of any arbitrary point in our history as good for looking either forward or backwards at leisure is too relativist. While we always engage a phenomenon *en medias ras*, a more specific historical perspective, one that

⁴⁸ Science historian James Burke’s interesting back story of the invention of the printing press serves to make this point. “There was a fortune to be made out of pilgrims all right, and if something had not gone disastrously wrong with similar profit making plans by certain German gents (Gutenberg) to sell trinkets and these special mirrors and such to tourists at the centenary fair at the holy city of Aachen, the disaster being that they got the date of the fair wrong by one year, the fella whose mistake it was wouldn’t have had to think up an alternative way of making money to pay his partners back the money he had borrowed from them for the ill-fated venture in the first place.

This idiot with the world’s worst sense of timing was a goldsmith from Mainz and when in 1439, the full horror of his financial predicament became known to him, he hurriedly told his partners not to worry, they’d make a million a different way out of another great idea he’d been thinking about, a goldmine of an idea, so secret that each partner couldn’t pass it on to his heirs when he died.

Well it was, a gold mine, and one of the greatest secrets in western history as it turned out because at one stroke, it was to solve everybody’s problem. Lawyers, bankers, bureaucrats, merchants, everybody. And it was also to take away that extraordinary memory of theirs, forever. (Burke, *Printing Transforms Knowledge*)

focuses on the Greeks and Romans, is needed as it shows how subtle changes in the way we imagine leisure in our western social imaginary have occurred – we are positioned in a *western* civilization. As I have already indicated, one way of getting around this task is to look at how various theorists have described leisure.

One of the more popular ways to discuss leisure and its history is to see it in terms of the playing out of the tensions between Logos and Eros and work and play, a reflection of binary distinctions that we typically use to organize our thought. What can be said with some certainty I think, is that what we understand by the term *leisure* has shifted, shifted to the point that we no longer recognize leisure's connection to contemplation or *theoria* – philosophical leisure, one of the modes of the Greek version of leisure, σχολή – *skholē*.

The meanings of σχολή and its derivatives range from leisure and inaction to opportunity for action, to taking one's time, as well as rest, idleness and laziness. Its opposite, ασχολία, stands for lack of σχολή, for occupation, business. Both terms appear frequently in the Socratic corpus and colour the philosopher's portrait. Usually σχολή signifies the possession of free time and the consequent psychological state that are necessary for the *vita contemplativa*. Thanks to it, Socrates can discuss whenever and wherever he wishes or to transfer his long discourses to another day. Hence, leisure is the precondition for philosophical theory and action, and therefore a precondition for the εὖ πράττειν, the well-doing that leads to ἀρετή and to εὐδαιμονία, to virtue and happiness. Leisure becomes closely connected with the notions of freedom, particularly the freedom to think and act philosophically, and with self-sufficiency in regard to one's material needs. (Zafiropolous, 2009: 33).

Both the Roman version of leisure, *otium*, the Greek notion of leisure *skholē* appear to be constructed in opposition to its other *askholia*, or in the Latin, *negotium*. The Romans, those great preservers and transformers of Greek culture, while appearing to adhere to the distinctions of Greek leisure born of the negation (leisure/absence of leisure)

also appear to have inverted the moral conditions attached to each. For the Romans, from an ethical and moral imperative, *negotium* seems to be preferable to *otium*, where in ancient Greece *skholē* is seen to be a morally superior condition. To put this more simply, for the Greeks the condition to be overcome was the absence of leisure whereas for the Romans the condition to be overcome was the presence of leisure and how to turn it into busyness. This, as Sadleir writes, has something to do with the conditions under which each term was conceived.

...*otium* probably had its origins as a military term indicating the opposite not of labor but of war. The time for *otium* was the winter, when fighting was not possible. Any of the activities associated with the winter, then, such as tending to one's patrimony, were seen as the fruits of *otium*. In at least one passage of the *Georgics* for example, Virgil represents the life of the farmer as one of *otium*. Active public life was also a form of *otium*. Andre argues, in fact that *otium* in the positive sense continued to be associated in the minds of the Romans with joyous work. However, in its negative sense of idleness, *otium* was associated with the Greeks. Thus the Romans carefully distinguished *otium negotiosum* (busy *otium*) from *otium Graecum*, or *otium otiosum*, an uncontrolled form of leisure. A strong work ethic prevailed among the early Romans and a dominant theme in the writings of Cato the Elder was the struggle against the wasting of time. For example, study for its own sake, study without a practical goal, was suspect (2004: 33).

It seems clear that the Romans were very suspicious of the Greek influence of leisure, of any time that smacked of not being occupied productively and so effectively marginalized the leisure of the Greeks in Roman life, or, turned it into a caricature. Evidence for the caricaturization of leisure can be seen in Petronius's *Satyricon*, where he uses a form of Menippean satire to call into question the behaviour of the main characters, Encolpius a former gladiator, and his friend Ascyltos, who foolishly pursue romantically a

young male slave, Giton. The book catalogues all manner of sexual escapades and is widely considered to be a critique of the Roman society of the time; “an often-cruel parody about how the Roman agrarian republic of old had degenerated into a wealth-obsessed, empty society of wannabe new elites, flush with money, and both obsessed with and bored with sex” (Hanson, August 27, 2013). Here, the ‘threat of leisure’ is highlighted. Free time undirected towards worthwhile pursuits is suspicious and at times laughable. Dare et al. note that “unlike the Greek city-state, the demands of the Roman empire required a stoic sense of duty, which precluded the contemplative life” (1988: xviii). The Roman prejudice against leisure is to a degree something that we have inherited and has much to do with the form of social organization we inhabit. Versions of leisure emerge from different forms of social organization connected to the particular mode of communication in use. Classical Greece was and is understood as inflected by the oral tradition. This, combined with the formation of the city state, Athens, led to the emergence of a culture that “privileged the life and movement of dialectic” which “opposed the establishment of a finished system of dogma” in contrast to the written tradition ascendant in imperialist Rome (Innis, 2007: 79). In contrast, the Ancient Greeks highlighted the oral tradition as a path to resistance. In *Phaedrus* Socrates points to the danger writing posed to the spirit of true thinking and its capacity to resist the dogmatic tendencies inherent in the written word.

I cannot help feeling, Phaedrus, that writing is unfortunately like painting; for the creations of the painter have the attitude of life, and yet if you ask them a question, they preserve a solemn silence, and the same may be said of speeches. You would

Chapter 3: Contested Leisure

imagine that they had intelligence, but if you want to know anything and put a question to one of them, the speaker always gives one unvarying answer.

The Socratic dialogues aimed to preserve the dialectic in writing, and as I have pointed out in Chapter 2, this is a feature of the kind of writing and analysis embraced by Reflexive Interpretive Sociology, in that it resists dogma while at the same time embracing ambiguity. This Socratic approach seeks to create the *aporia* and exemplifies the examined life.



A review of the modern etymological roots of the term leisure gives us more insight into leisure's history. It is defined as 'opportunity to do something' or 'time at one's disposal' and has been around since the thirteenth century deriving from the old French *leisir* (Fr. *loisir*) meaning "permission, leisure, spare time." There is a close affinity with the Latin term *licere*, or license, "to be permitted." This of course references the relation to occupation, *negotium*, as described earlier, where to be at leisure requires permission, either moral or institutional and that it occupies a subordinate position with regards to its place in the hierarchy of human 'good'. Once again, *Negotium* comes first in the hierarchy and *otium* is derivative and in some ways not fully distinguishable from *negotium*. Thus, in the Roman configuration, leisure is oriented to as a reward for work or occupation while at the same time is a state of being occupied. According to the [Online Etymological Dictionary](#), the "u" in leisure first appeared in the sixteenth century "probably on analogy

of words like *pleasure*” (Harper, 2014). This provides us with additional insight into the change in the idea of leisure from contemplation (philosophical leisure) to an understanding of leisure as pleasure to be taken in relation to work. In contrast to classical Greece, leisure’s modern standing is in subordination to occupation or work and is more closely associated with a notion of play or amusement. The tension between work and play is mirrored in the relation of Logos to Eros.

3.2 LOGOS AND EROS- WORK AND PLAY

The Logos is a substantiation of an intellectual property or power of God, the creator, who is stationed outside the world and brings the world into existence by his own personal fiat. The Greek gods are stationed inside the world; they are descended from Heaven and Earth, the two greatest and most exalted parts of the universe; and they are generated acts by the mighty power of Eros, who likewise belongs within the world as an all engendering physical force. (Jaeger in Innis, 1950: 64).

Just as Alfred North Whitehead claimed that the ‘safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato” (Cumming in Plato, 1956: vii), one might consider that the prodigious literature on leisure is likewise, whether we are aware of this or not, an ongoing dialogue with the leisure imaginary of classical Greece which venerated philosophical leisure. Even Chris Rojek (2010) has come around to this realization and has abandoned the view that the difference between contemporary leisure and the leisure of classical Greece is an unbridgeable chasm. Henri Lefebvre, in *The Production of Space*, holds that the struggle between Logos and Eros

is the great dialectic of history (1991). Certainly this dialectic has inflected not only leisure but our interpretations of leisure, as it might be argued that we are moving from a more logocentric, threat of leisure paradigm to a more erotic one that privileges the hermeneutic danger of leisure perspective. Leisure has been conceptualised with regards to this tension between Logos and Eros and how this is managed in any historical period. This is implicit in the way of looking at leisure as threat and danger. Leisure as threat is the threat of unbridled Eros and its need to be organized. It would seem that the oral tradition of the Greeks channeled the power of Eros, whilst Roman civilization under the power of the written word, channeled the power of Logos. Thus we see different emphases on Logos and Eros in the classical period, medieval period, modern period, and late modern or post-modern period. The trajectory is one of the integration of Logos and Eros in earlier periods, particularly in classical Greece, the fracture of this integration and the marginalization of Eros in the modern period, and the return of repressed or marginalized Eros in the late modern or post-modern period, in part due to the advent of the second Enlightenment.

According to Wang, the project of modernity formulated by Enlightenment thinkers such as Hugo Grotius, John Locke, and Adam Smith, has been an ordering exercise, in accord with *Logos*; it “is in reality a Logos-version of modernity, in short, is *Logos-modernity*” (1996: 122). Other thinkers, while critical of the discourse of Logos-modernity, essentially embrace this version of modernity and include Voltaire, Durkheim, Weber, and to a lesser degree Karl Marx. Leisure theorists have emphasized that Logos-

modernity is only one of two modernities that can be identified, the other being *Eros-modernity*. The theorists one might regard as emphasizing or championing *Eros-modernity* include Rousseau, Freud, Marcuse, Lefebvres, and Mikhail Bakhtin. Wang notes that “while Logos-version of modernity focuses on the issue of how irrational and non-rational factors (Eros) have been subdued by agents and mechanisms of reason and rationality, Eros-version of modernity relates to the issue of how these irrational and non-rational factors (Eros) have been licensed to approved domains in order that they can be released and gratified” (1996: 121). It makes sense then that social theorists like Marcuse have been the ones to have taken the pulse of *Eros-modernity* and in turn have oriented to leisure as an area of study.

Rojek (1995) refers to this discursive tension between Logos modernity and Eros modernity as Modernity 1 and Modernity 2, whereby in Modernity 1, mechanisms of regulation, for example the Protestant Ethic, operate to channel leisure into particular leisure forms that reinforce an ordered society. Modernity 2, or what we might refer to as late modernity in contrast “emphasizes change, flux, de-differentiation and metamorphosis” as well as “a more poetic emphasis upon phenomenology and experience” (1995: 79). We can see this tension between Logos and Eros, Modernity 1 and Modernity 2 represented in the figures of Appollo and Dionysus as described by Nietzsche (1979) and Rojek (1995). Wang notes that the problem with the primacy of Logos-modernity is that it “fails to recognize the Eros aspect of modernity, fails to give sufficient attention to the

carnavalesque, play, romantic, or Dionysian aspects of modernity, and consequently fails to give enough significance to the studies of entertainment, play, leisure, and tourism” (Wang, 1996: 124). It has been a long-standing gripe of tourism and leisure researchers that, much like Rodney Dangerfield (and initially Bakhtin) they ‘don’t get no respect’. To admit to a fellow academic or lay-person that one is a scholar of leisure is to invite a bewildered look. The prejudice against Eros is arguably part of the reason that recreation and leisure studies departments have taken on a more professional and managerial focus in their research and training (as opposed to the cultivation) of young scholars. The agents of Logos-modernity, it can be argued, have made it their business to mute the contributions of the agents of Eros-modernity in part because of the potentially revolutionary implications. Examples of this include the suppression of the *Canterbury Tales* from general circulation and public sanctions for extolling the virtues of the book (Mann in Chaucer, 2003: xvii), as well as the neglect and initial marginalization of Bakhtin’s doctoral thesis *Rabelais and His World* through the denial of Bakhtin’s doctorate (Holquist in Bakhtin, 1984:20). That these works have been at one time censored says something about the particular political and social climate that Logos modernity, as the dominant aspect of the social imaginary, asserts. So the leisure imaginary then can be understood as that more erotic element of the social imaginary. The dominance of Logos modernity can be discerned in the recent predilection of theorists to subordinate the world of leisure to the world of work in their theorizing.



Certainly there is an inverse relationship between work and classical leisure – a relationship that is clarified by the importance a culture places upon one over the other (Dare et. al, 1987: xx).

What distinguishes human “species being” from the being of other species is our distinctive labouring activity: This Marx regards as the free, self-aware, and creative transformation of nature in accord with human needs. But under capitalism, work is degraded. Most workers lack any opportunity for artistic or intellectual development; far from allowing workers to affirm or to augment their essential human powers, work under capitalism is forced labour to which the worker goes each day like a prisoner condemned, a mere drudgery which “mortifies the body and ruins the mind” (Bartky, 1990:34).

As I have shown, the Greeks and the Romans had different understandings of leisure and its value in relation to occupation. Arguably, the Romans emphasized the importance of leisure as a form of work or busyness while the Greeks privileged philosophical reflection. These interpretations have certainly spilled over into the theorizing of scholars of work and leisure. The above quote from Bartky is a typical example of the way the relationship between work and leisure has been imagined by leisure scholars in the Marxist tradition. If work for many is “mere drudgery which mortifies the body and ruins the mind,” then this definitely has implications for time spent not at work, and while work is a central human activity, in the context of Marx’s analysis it can also be seen as a social problem. Marx holds that it is capitalism that perverts work and turns it into something tyrannical. He himself wrote a great deal about leisure though he didn’t formally call it such, and posited that it was the forces of capitalism that perverted the “species being” of the worker and alienated him from self and others. Work for Marx, should be a creative

act appropriated by the individual who performs it. Marx believed that within the organizing principle of communism, society would be so organized so as to free up a space for leisure.

In communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, production as a whole is regulated by society, thus making it possible for me to do one thing today and another thing tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, in accordance with my inclination, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic (Marx in Haworth, 1984: 327).

The utopian communist society that Marx imagined has not materialized.

According to the neo-Marxist model, we do have the experience of leisure, but it is truncated and without form and as implied by Marxist theorists, work always creeps into and saturates the remainder of life. Joseph Pieper opines that while work may lead to material wealth it can also lead to the poverty of the mind, stating that “the binding to the working-process can have its root in the inner poverty of the person: the proletarian is one whose life is fully satisfied by the working-process itself because this space has been shrunken from within, and because meaningful action that is not work is no longer possible or even imaginable” (Pieper, 1998: 43). Along this same theme, James W. Rinehart in, the *The Tyranny of Work* writes that while

[w]ork can offer a sense of accomplishment or meaninglessness; it can be a source of pride or shame. And an activity that consumes such a large portion of time cannot help but spill over into non-work spheres of life. How people work affects the way in which they spend their time away from work, for it places constraints on the enjoyment of “free time” and conditions the overall mode of adjustment to life (1996: 1).

Work as it is understood here is the prime area in which someone's cultural fitness can be expressed and that conditions the individual fully. Not only does work and the work "mentality" place constraints on the enjoyment of "free-time," it also conditions what may be enjoyed in this free time. Rinehart writes that "the sheer amount of time spent at work means that leisure pursuits can only be truncated experiences geared to and constrained by the rhythms of work. Work is a precisely scheduled activity; it goes on uninterrupted" (1996: 155). Contrasting this with leisure, Rinehart continues that "leisure must be enjoyed in small batches; it must be put aside until the end of another round of "productive" activity" (1996: 155). According to Shumaker, work has become the social centre of modern life in that members see work as "their only voice for communicating their cultural fitness and achieving social validation" (75). Linder, in the *Harried Leisure Class*, notes that "compulsive work" becomes a substitution for compulsory work and "that a still greater number of people, perhaps, are work maniacs, who try to keep haunting, disturbing thoughts at a distance" (1970: 135). Another way of accomplishing the same goal of being "busy" is through consumption. Arguably, leisure has become a mode of consumption that "like heroic work, flags one cultural valuation," where instead of creating opportunities for rejuvenation, it actually comes to resemble strenuous forms of work such as that exemplified by those that train and run marathons, prompting concern from mental health professionals "about the growing problem of leisure burnout, wherein leisure pursuits exacerbate already existing conditions of work burnout" (Shumaker, 2001: 75). Working out, volunteering,

online gaming, even shopping, all of these if pursued to an extreme can be more work than work.

Our consumer culture is often decried as the capitalist's solution to occupying people's free time productively to keeping them tethered to the economy. Hannah Arendt, the philosopher of the public sphere, provides perhaps the strongest critique of the new consumer culture first identified by Veblen. In agreement with the positions of Dare et al and Pieper, for Hannah Arendt, the condition of modern leisure amounts to a problematic labor-play dichotomy that excludes other societally healthy options; it recalls the Roman 'problem' of leisure: their deep suspicion of idleness, of contemplation, of the *passionate thinking* that exemplifies Arendt's work.

Whatever we do, we are supposed to do for the sake of "making a living"; such is the verdict of society...to level down all serious activities to the sake of making a living is manifest in present-day labour theories, which almost unanimously define labour as the opposite of play. As a result all serious activities, irrespective of their fruits, are called labor, and every activity which is not necessary either for the life of the individual or for the life process of society is subsumed under playfulness (1958:127).

Arendt critiques the theorizing of leisure as being informed too much by the agents of the Logos-modernity perspective. For Arendt, it is problematic that leisure activities such as art are understood to simply provide basic functions for society (as the playing of tennis does for the individual), that is, they resemble work in the 'labouring' rather than the more erotic 'making' sense of the word. The consumer society that Arendt criticizes shows that we live in a society of labourers, where the 'unfortunate' emancipation of the worker has led to "the ideals of homo faber, the fabricator of the world, which are

permanence, stability, and durability” being sacrificed “to abundance, the ideal of the animal laborans” (126). Hers is a critique of the Rise of the Social Realm, where leisure has been degraded to the simple fulfillment of consumer pleasure as the primary function of society. We see these critiques in the hypnotizing effects Debord (1994) describes in *Society of the Spectacle*, the consumerist aesthetic reflexivity of Urry’s (2002) *The Tourist Gaze*, and the conspicuous but ultimately individualistic consumption of Veblen’s *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. All depict and critique a form of leisure that the Greeks would not recognize at all or would derivatively classify as *paidia* (amusements) and *anapasis* (recreation).⁴⁹ As Arendt points out, these lesser leisure types are not really leisure time in the classical sense, “time that is in which we are free from all cares and necessities left over from the life process and therefore free for the world and its culture. Rather they are “left-over time which is still biological in nature, left over after labor and sleep have received their due” (1966: 205).

To be clear Arendt does recognize the need for amusement and recreation. She states that “we all stand in need of entertainment and amusement in some form or other, because we are all subject to life’s great cycle, and it is sheer hypocrisy or social snobbery to deny that we can be amused and entertained by exactly the same things which amuse and entertain the masses of our fellow men” (1966: 206). Arendt echoes the earlier sentiments

⁴⁹ Paidia was the Greek goddess of amusement and play.

of Aristotle that amusements or entertainment are necessary, but elaborates on their limits in the modern context.

Entertainment, like labour and sleep is irrevocably part of the biological life process. And biological life is always, whether labouring or at rest, whether engaged in consumption or in the passive reception of amusement, a metabolism feeding on things by devouring them. The commodities the entertainment industry offers up are not “things,” cultural objects, whose excellence is measured by their ability to withstand the life process and become permanent appurtenances of the world, and they should not be judged according to these standards; nor are they values which exist to be used and exchanged; they are consumer goods, destined to be used up, just like other consumer goods. (Hannah Arendt *Between Past and Future*, 1966: 205-206).

The problem for Arendt comes in when leisure becomes dominated by the realm of necessity (for Arendt the public and private sphere in modern society are both oriented to necessity) so that there is no time left over for true leisure. “Culture is being threatened when all worldly objects and things, produced by the present or the past, are treated as mere functions for the life process of society” (1966: 208). The deep issue is how our relation to the world gets transformed by this ethos of aesthetic consumption. Two examples of this are the aesthetic taste of the Philistine that makes a fetish out of improving their home (the imaginary of the backyard paradise), and the reduction of social issues for aesthetic consumption through the process of spectacularization by the mass media. For example, street scenes of impoverishment, whether viewed through the bus window while on vacation or through the window of the television or computer “become grist for the cultural producers’ mill, not, as Deutsche and Ryan (1984) point out, in the muckraking reformist style of the late nineteenth century, but as a quaint and swirling backdrop (as in

Blade Runner) upon which no social commentary is to be made” (Harvey, 1990: 337). The aestheticization of poverty for example is problematic as it is created as an object of consumption; “it moves out of our field of social vision’, except as a passive depiction of otherness, alienation and contingency within the human condition” (ibid). The television news as entertainment in this case is responsible.

In contrast to the work of neo-Marxists on leisure, Arendt, like Pieper take less of a deterministic view of work’s relation to leisure. Pieper, while using Marxism as a foil against which to develop his ideas, seeks to ‘forestall Marxism’s totalizing claim on work” (Austenfeld, 2000: 374). Pieper cautions that leisure is far from being for the sake of work even though it can have the effect of rejuvenating one for work.

The simple “break” from work – the kind that lasts an hour, or the kind that lasts a week or longer – is part and parcel of daily working life. It is something that has been built into the whole working process, a part of the schedule. The “break” is there for the sake of work. It is supposed to provide “new strength” for “new work,” as the word “refreshment” indicates: one is refreshed for work through being refreshed from work...Now leisure is not there for the sake of work, no matter how much new strength the one who resumes working may gain from it; leisure in our sense is not justified by providing bodily renewal or even mental refreshment to lend new vigour to further work – although it does indeed bring such things! (Pieper, 1998: 34).

Pieper’s assertion that leisure is the basis of culture and not a compensatory reward for work, is closer to both Arendt’s and the Greek’s notion of leisure. The need to continually justify the taking of leisure is problematic – that we be accountable to others and demonstrate that we are spending our free time ‘well’ – whatever that means. At the same time, the Marxist notion that work so dominates the lives of people that they cannot

imagine leisure, is quite simply, another way that we justify the putting aside of philosophical leisure. In our contemporary period, it is not work, but leisure that accounts for who we are: how we imagine ourselves, our identities and our communities. There is a decline in the primacy of work as an emphasis in the imagination of individuals, and what has replaced it is a kind of paradisiacal, or sometimes utopian, dreaming. The idea of “spheres of life” recalls again the notion of life-world. I have tried to demonstrate that the life-world of leisure is one that is dominated by a variety of experiences, and that work, in its labouring sense, would seem to be logically excluded from this world as much as possible.

3.4 DEATH’S ILLEGITIMATE EXISTENCE AND THE SOLUTION OF FANTASY

For Lacan...fantasy is the very existence of a space in which the subject aspires to attain the ideal and in doing so stages its very existence. To put it differently, it is the space where subjects give their lives a meaning and in doing so give a meaning to their very being, to themselves (Hage, 1996: 485).

Rancière (2009) has shown us that what we do in our leisure time is fundamental to how we understand and think of ourselves, and that there is a fundamental equality that we all share in this regard. No matter what our conditions, or how we are positioned, in our free time we imagine and act as though we are free and can fashion our own worlds. We are all, inescapably, spectators and contemplators of our lives (Rancière, 2010). We have been set free from the shackles of the old medieval order, disembedded from a stable

sense of the world and the cosmos then promised a more stable world established on supposedly rational principles that never materialized and appears headed towards dissolution. This has led to an even greater emphasis on the need for meaning and a shift onto the individual to be responsible for creating that meaning. As Taylor notes “once society no longer has a sacred structure, once social arrangements and modes of action are no longer grounded in the order of things, they are essentially up for grabs” (Taylor, 1991: 5). Free time, leisure, is the space where we pursue what is “up for grabs.” What is up for grabs is the meaning and purpose of life. As Blackshaw states:

In the liquid modern world we live in, which is founded first and foremost on freedom, leisure moves steadily into its position as the principal driving force underpinning the human goal of satisfying our hunger for meaning and the thirst for giving our lives a purpose. This is the job leisure was always cut out for, since it is that distinct realm of human activity which perhaps more than any other provides us with the thrill of the search for something and the exhilaration of its discovery. But...it had to wait a long time, until the last few decades of the twentieth century to be precise, to secure this function, which was hitherto occupied by work (2010a: 20).

The contemporary situation ups the ante for late moderns. A world that is ‘up for grabs’ is both an exhilarating and frightening prospect. The hard questions of meaning and purpose continually slap us in the face in this situation, and we dare not think too long on this or the darkness of meaningless and purposeless, despair, might creep in. The free time that leisure is predicated on opens up a space for contemplation, *theoria*, philosophical leisure. The *theoria*, or philosophical contemplation of the Greeks, with its relation to the proper functioning of the polis, the rule by philosopher Kings imagined in Plato’s utopian *Republic*, became absorbed into the private sphere during Roman times as private religious

contemplation.⁵⁰ For years this has been the case. Modernity and then late modernity, released contemplation from its religious capture and in our secular age, in our freedom from the old order, has left us without a space or a culture that would help us to employ this practice. But, there is a more pressing reason for the absence of contemplation in our lives beyond our late modern conditions. Contemplation always opens up the potential danger of falling into despair. Freedom then, always risks the possibility of despair. Another way of saying this is that we are haunted by despair. Gabriel Marcel captures this nicely.

...how can we help seeing the obvious fact that we live in a world which seems for many reasons stopped up, and that despair lies in wait at every instant...On the physical level, by the very fact of the advances of nuclear physics and the way in which they are exploited, the human race risks being exterminated at any moment; on the spiritual level, each one of us risks succumbing at any moment to the attacks of a nihilism which swells around us like a poisonous vapor (Marcel, 1967: 278).⁵¹

The threat of physical and spiritual death on an individual and mass scale haunts us, the more so because of the illusion that modernity has provided us with the capacity to overcome all kinds of limitations, even death. The truth of the matter is that we can and

⁵⁰ See especially Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* and Dare et al. for accounts of this transition.

⁵¹ The break in this quote contains the words "but also that we have the duty of fighting against this temptation." The quote goes on to state, "There are no more pressing obligations I am convinced, for anyone who strives to understand our time, than gathering together, mobilizing if you like, the beneficial powers which alone are able to combat this sort of infection, and that first by submitting it to a precise diagnosis."

do *help seeing the obvious fact* of our deaths; we do run away from or attempt to escape the despair that the fear of death and anxiety over freedom invites.

One extreme example of this reaction is that posited by futurist Ray Kurzweil (Kurzweil and Grossman, 2010), who, in his book, *Transcend: Nine Steps to Living Well Forever* tells us that science will soon provide us with the tools to allow us to live forever, we only have to survive long enough (and be rich enough) for them to be realized. Kurzweil and his followers project themselves into the future and posit that death is simply another limit that can be overcome with science. They conveniently sidestep death's facticity, never allowing the spectre of death to create that sense of loss or better yet, an *aporia*. Even still, it is the threat of death that powers Kurzweil's quest and gives his quest (to conquer death through the application of technology) meaning. Heidegger speaks of this anxiety for our beingness as the hermeneutic of existence.

We are factually (*faktisch*) thrown into existence as finite beings, in a world that we will never fully master. Chronically insecure about anything, yet tormentingly sure of its mortality, human facticity seeks ways to cope, to make do. This anxiety for our own being is for Heidegger the source and sting of understanding. Overwhelmed by existence and confronted with our mortality, we project ourselves in ways of intelligibility and reason that help us keep things in check for a while. Every mode of understanding is related to this concernedness of our facticity or our 'being there' (*Dasein*) in this overwhelming world (Grondin in Boundas, 2007: 404).

We exercise our interpretive capacities to manage the disturbing knowledge of our own finiteness in an overwhelming world we can never master but have been taught we can. This is the hubris of the architects of modernity, that we could master the world through the application of reason. Heidegger's repressed hermeneutic of existence is

always operating in the background. Modern life situates despair as a condition that must be avoided at all costs, but yet, our contemporary situation, *vis a vis* freedom, continually throws despair in our faces. The world overwhelms us at every turn. We have many modern ways of 'keeping things in check,' of imbuing our lives with meaning in the face of the terror of death and the audacity of our freedom. The outright denial of death that technological utopianism offers is one such vision but there are many others. Berger et al. (1973) argues that these modern ways have not been nearly as successful as the religious interpretations and practices that previously satisfied this need.

In one way or another, religion made meaningful even the most painful experiences of the human condition, whether caused by natural or by social agents. Modern society has threatened the plausibility of religious theodicies, but it has not removed the experiences that call for them. Human beings continue to be stricken by sickness and death; they continue to experience social injustice and deprivation. The various secular creeds and ideologies that have arisen in the modern era have been singularly unsuccessful in providing satisfactory theodicies. It is important to understand the additional burden to modernity implicit in this. Modernity has accomplished many far-reaching transformations, but it has not fundamentally changed the finitude, fragility and mortality of the human condition. What it has accomplished is to seriously weaken those definitions of reality that previously made that human condition easier to bear. This has produced an anguish all its own, and one that we are inclined to think adds urgency and weight to the other discontents we have mentioned (185).

Death anxiety is compounded in modernity due to our literal and figurative disembedding from the social and cosmic orders. In the past, our fears were charmed by a whole repertoire of cultural imaginings (the social imaginary).

Each culture has its own way of coping with the problem of death. For those societies in which the process of individuation has progressed but little, the end of individual existence is less of a problem since the experience of individual existence itself is less developed. Death is not yet conceived as being basically different from life. Cultures

in which we find a higher development of individuation have treated death according to their social and psychological structure (Fromm, 1941: 270-271).

Christianity promised life after death, Judaism, the resurrection of the dead. The Greeks had the shadowy world of Hades to comfort them. More than that however the Greeks had rituals and meditative practices that steeled them against the paralyzing fear of death. The ritual of the Eleusian Mystery⁵² and the steadying hand of philosophy helped the mystai and the theorist on their way to conquering their fear of death. In modernity, these charmers, ritual and belief, have been radically weakened. We will never be quite so comfortably embedded as we once were and must continually act to reembed ourselves, a major distraction from philosophical leisure. We are, ironically, limited in our resources for dealing with death and freedom precisely in an age when these resources are most needed.

Our own era simply denies death and with it one fundamental aspect of life. Instead of allowing the awareness of death and suffering to become one the strongest incentives for life, the basis for human solidarity, and an experience without which joy and enthusiasm lack intensity and depth, the individual is forced to repress it... Thus the fear of death lives an illegitimate existence among us. It remains alive in spite of the attempt to deny it, but being repressed it remains sterile. It is one source of the flatness of other experiences, of the restlessness pervading life (Fromm, 1941: 271).

⁵² The Eleusian Mystery cults had their root in the myth of Demeter. For more on the Greek Mystery cults see Will Durant's *The Life of Greece*, vol. 2 of *The Story of Civilization*, Simon and Schuster, 1966, 188-92. It should also be noted that Plato's philosophy, particularly the contemplative aspects was influenced by the Greek mystery cults and the meditative practice of the pilgrimage.

What fundamentally sets human beings apart from animals is that we have to cope with the consciousness of our own finiteness (Becker, 1973). Every culture has its way of managing the anxiety that knowledge of our own finitude provokes. For Peter Berger and company (1973) and Erich Fromm (1941), modernity has exacerbated death anxiety through the process of individuation, the gradual disembedding from social structures and belief systems that provided a stable sense of the self and one's place in society and the cosmos. This has compromised our ability to cope while we still require solutions. Religious theodicy has been and is still in some sense one path to dealing with this anxiety but cognitive schema on their own would seem for most to be inadequate to this task. Rituals have experienced a decline as well and so we invent new ones (as I demonstrated in Chapter 1). We still see the need for ritual, of some bodily, emotive, communal experience such as produced in the *mystai* (initiates) in Greek Mystery cults. Our rituals aren't generally consciously oriented to coming to terms with death, rather, as part of the "okay world" (Berger, 1963: 146) they, along with routines and institutions, and our social roles, shield us from and organize the terror before us. Our rites and rituals don't engage the terror of existence head-on unlike the Greek mystery cults.

The rites enabled the *mystai* to share Demeter's suffering. Her cult showed that there was no life without death. Seeds had to be buried in the depths of the earth before they could bring forth life-giving food, so Demeter, goddess of grain, was also a mistress of the underworld. The Mystery would force initiates to face up to their own mortality, experience the terror of death, and learn to accept it as an integral part of life (Armstrong, 2010: 55).

Bodily, emotive experience was important in these rituals. The harrowing ritual of the Mystery, in attempting to bring people closer to the state of death, helped them to conquer their fear of death. Armstrong (2010) holds that the Mysteries allowed people to live creatively with their mortality and that Plato's philosophy was influenced by his experience of the Mysteries. The dialogue itself had a ritual like, emotional experience that was essential to the philosophical experience (2010: 67-68). Here we can see how philosophy, apart from its root in wonder at the world, was understood and conceived as being preparation for death and how, as practiced during Plato's time, philosophy as dialogue, can be conceived as a ritual that encounters death. Socrates, through dialogue, continually led his interlocutors to the *aporia*, which literally means, 'without passage'. The *aporia*'s close kinship to death is reflected in Plato's pronouncement in the *Phaedo* that "Those that practice philosophy in the *right* way are in training for dying and fear death least of all men" (emphasis added).⁵³

The decline in the plausibility of religious theodicies, the lack of a precise analogue for the ritual of the Mystery, and the marginalization of philosophy, have encouraged us more often than not, to grasp at facsimiles for these practices that "solve" the *aporia* that death presents us with, rather than engage us in a working through of it.⁵⁴ These solutions

⁵³ The question of what it looks like to practice philosophy in the right way is a question that this dissertation attempts to address.

⁵⁴ Perhaps the only equivalent of the harrowing but bracing experience of the Mystery today is undertaking a PhD in radical interpretive sociology.

or ‘instant cures’ do not solve the problem but often exacerbate it. We repress death through allying ourselves with causes or broad social movements, like fascism, or through our amusements and entertainment. Devotional leisure practices perhaps dimly recognize this repression of death and in a sense may strive to recognize our fundamental solidarity in this regard.⁵⁵ They are one way of dealing with the fundamental condition of restless anxiety in front of the abyss. As I have stated, this anxiety is exacerbated in contemporary times where we grapple with the freedom that modernity ushered in.

Modernity has indeed been liberating. It has liberated human beings from the narrow controls of family, clan, tribe or small community. It has opened up for the individual previously unheard-of options and avenues of mobility. It has provided enormous power, both in the control of nature and in the management of human affairs. However, these liberations have had a high price (Berger, Berger and Kellner, 1973: 195).

Modernity set us on a new path, but over time this path has become less clear, less sure, and less desirable. Certitude has given way to disquiet as identity and community and a basic trust in the world, have become things that we have to constantly reestablish. Our contemporary situation is known by many names. Berger, Berger and Kellner (1973) refer to it as *homelessness* in their book *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*, Zygmunt Bauman (2000) as *liquid modernity* in his book of the same title, and David Harvey (1990) introduced us to the term *postmodernity* in his book, *The*

⁵⁵ The writing of this dissertation can be interpreted as such a devotional practice.

Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change. The most widespread and perhaps correct way of talking about this contemporary social condition is that it is an extension of modernity, *late modernity* (Giddens, 1991, 1994; Bauman, 2000; Beck, 1992, 1994; Lash, 1990, 1994; Dawson, 2006), characterized by the privatization of life, time-space compression, distancing, and now the information revolution, what I have described earlier as Gadamer's second enlightenment.

The hallmark of late modernity is the condition of being disembedded from the old social order and the complementary drive to reembed oneself. It is a condition of limbo, of fallenness, of alienation, of anomie, of disenchantment, of swirling helplessly, of aloneness and the all-consuming need for ontological security, or ontological exigency, often located in a paradise of our own vain imagining. Once again we can use the metaphor of chains but this time not in a methodological sense but an ontological one. We have lost the old chains, and we now find ourselves in need of new ones, for as I've mentioned previously, it is easier to dance in chains (Nietzsche, 1913: 140). The old chains, imposed by the old order that made sense of life and death and our march through time, have been shattered and so we create new ones, so that we might not be so lonely in our dancing, that we may have something as a guide, that the dance might be easier. These chains of our own construction are forged in the fires of late modernity and like

carnival beads hang around our necks as symbols of the journey.⁵⁶ We wrestle as individuals with the fundamental ambiguity of our existence. Some of us are equipped for this. While the artist is well prepared to deal with ambiguity, to be artful in relation to human finitude, the majority of us cover over our anxiety, for example, through acquiring status and consuming experiences, turning to the “assurance and approval [we] find in...private or social relations, by success in business, by any number of distractions, by ‘having fun,’ ‘making contacts,’ ‘going places’” (Fromm, 1965: 155). These are nothing but blythe reassurances, crude substitutes for the ontological security we have lost. We find the baby boomers preoccupied with checking off their ‘bucket list’ and the hipster who yells YOLO! both indicating the performance/consumption of some new experience, both amounting to whistling in the dark. As a mature student in one of my classes stated in her term paper, the baby boomers are a “generation with a bucket list.” The ‘bucket list’ has become the new *raison d’être* of anyone with an eye on the clock. Which is just about everyone. The bucket list compels people to think about what they would like to do before they die without reflecting on death itself. Rebecca Mead writing in *The New Yorker* suggests that we need to ‘kick’ the bucket list.

This is the YOLO-ization of cultural experience, whereby the pursuit of fleeting novelty is granted greater value than a patient dedication to an enduring attention—an attention which might ultimately enlarge the self, and not just pad one’s experiential résumé. The notion of the bucket list legitimizes this diminished conception of the value of repeated exposure to art and culture. Rather, it privileges a restless

⁵⁶ Note that devotional leisure practices have moved from collective experiences to individual experiences.

consumption, a hungry appetite for the new. I've seen Stonehenge. Next?" (September 11, 2014).

How do we do this? How do we “kick the bucket” list? Much like Mead, Fromm admonishes us that, “whistling in the dark does not bring light... Aloneness, fear, and bewilderment remain; people cannot stand it forever” (1965: 155). We stumble about, running from ambiguity in two directions. We either immerse ourselves in the trivial, skimming the surface of life and mistaking the mundane for the extraordinary, or like Don Quixote, we engage in heroic projects, often stubbornly denying the possibility that we may be tilting at windmills.



Leisure is the sphere in which we can choose to either confront or flee our fear and anxiety. Today, the sphere of leisure provides the key function of imbuing life with meaning where the “most important category in modern life...is no longer what we have to do” (read: necessity), “but what we want to do” (read: freedom) and where life is “about people trying to find out what matters most to them, and then to do it – especially in their free time” (Blackshaw 2010a: xii). What Blackshaw refers to here is the potential for leisure to have a devotional character. But devotional to what end? A devotion to the self or something more?

I have started to point to the great possibility in leisure as lying in its potential to reengage our fear of death and our anxiety regarding our freedom and to develop less

distorted relations to both. This is the background understanding that remains unspoken in Blackshaw's (2010a) work on devotional leisure, the hermeneutic of existence. In pursuing this understanding, we can ask the fundamental question, "What do people do when at leisure, when they have free time?" in an attempt to get at our human condition, understanding in part that what orients leisure is a striving to come to terms with the anxiety of death and the threat of meaninglessness. In leisure we can have the courage to ask the questions: *What is time well spent?*; *What should we do and how should we live?*; and *What would a good charmer for my fears look like?* The danger of leisure for the modern in this context is that free time can lead to too much thinking, too much deliberation over how one should live and what life is worth and thus lead to despair. How we relate to despair, what we do with despair, how we transform it, is key. Unfortunately we do this mostly in unsatisfactory ways.

On one hand, we can run from despair, from the suffering that might lead to enlightenment or acceptance, and turn instead to unproductive fictions and discourses of denial bound up in solipsist or totalitarian projects. On the other, we can be courageous and confront death and the meaninglessness that it represents thereby recognizing our fundamental solidarity as human beings. In modernity we escape from freedom (an honest countenancing of death that liberates) in the way that Fromm (1945) outlines by turning to the regulating mechanisms of sadism, masochism, or sadomasochism at the personal level and totalitarianism at the level of the collective. In late modernity the leisure imaginary points us towards other more creative options for dealing with death and

freedom but also exacerbates our neuroses. To contrast this once again with how we escaped in the past we can turn again to Becker, who proclaims that “man lives contradictions, for better or worse, in some kind of cultural project in a given historical period” (1973: 198). Our great contradiction is that perhaps for the first time in history, many of us have leisure, but are without the resources to use it well.

Goethe wrote...precisely at the time when the individual lost the protective cover of traditional society and daily life became a problem for him. He no longer knew what were the proper doses of experience. This safe dosage of life is exactly what is prescribed by traditional custom, wherein all the important decisions of life and even its daily events are ritually marked out. Neurosis is the contriving of private obsessional ritual to replace the socially-agreed one now lost by the demise of the traditional society. The customs and myths of traditional society provided a whole interpretation of the meaning of life, ready-made for the individual; all he had to do was to accept living it as true. The modern neurotic must do just this if he is to be “cured”: he must welcome a living illusion.

Again and again history has shown us that the cure, the illusion we embrace, is worse than the affliction. Becker states in this regard that “the briefest explanation of all the evil that men have wreaked themselves and upon their world since the beginnings of time... would not be in terms of man’s animal heredity, his instincts and his evolution: it would be simply in *the toll that his pretense of sanity takes*, as he tries to deny his true condition” (1997: 29, 30). Our denial of death and the corresponding escape from freedom often launch us into the pursuit of personal and collective visions of paradise that give shape and meaning to our existence. On one hand these paradises can have the character of the mundane, the simple seeking of comfort that Nietzsche referred to, an engagement in the trivial. We might see this orientation

reflected in the figure of the tourist. Perhaps the more dangerous relation to death and freedom is reflected in the figure of the pilgrim wherein, aspiring to the heroic, to grasp vainly for a sense of cosmic specialness, for magic, we inadvertently bring evil into the world. This has been the path that we have taken throughout history and continue to this day, the locus of strife. From time to time we see this sharply delineated in our culture, particularly in violent acts. A recent case that exemplifies the visitation of evil as a phenomenon are the Boston Marathon bombings where alienated youth embedded themselves into a fantastical narrative of heroism, sacrifice and redemption, their leisure imaginary.

The Boston Bombers, The Tsarnaev brothers, arguably created their own private Utopia through the internet, living a “second life” among the American people, immersed in their own limited worlds. Much of the discourse around the brothers’ motives has focused on their alienation from American culture and in particular the older brother’s inability to feel at home. He’s quoted as saying "I don't have a single American friend, I don't understand them" (Pilkington et al., Sunday 21, April, 2013). In the wake of the bombings, the bombers’ Uncle, Ruslan Sarni, in response to the question, “What do you think provoked this?” replied angrily, “Being losers...hatred towards those that were able to settle themselves. These are the only reasons that I can imagine of...Anything else, anything else to do with religion, with Islam, it’s a fraud, it’s a fake” (NBC video, Cahill, April 19, 2013). Ruslan Sarni seems to be indicating that the brothers were acting with what Sartre calls ‘bad faith’, pretending that something is necessary (jihad), while in fact it

is voluntary.⁵⁷ What is striking about the Tsarnaev brothers is how they exemplify the privatization of meaning, that hallmark of late modernity. Katagiri notes that North American culture is characterized by two tendencies, the collapse of community consciousness and the earnest search for alternative communities (1992: 63). The privatization of meaning burdens us with the task of constructing individual meanings – communal framings are absent and death itself becomes an individual project of meaning (Turley, 2005: 70). In this absence of community, the Tsarnaev brothers created their own made up of the paradisiacal imaginings of Islamic Jihad in which they were the heroes bringing death to the infidels and securing their place in the afterlife.

I wrote earlier of the Tsarnaev brothers and the bombing as their leisure imaginary. This, to some readers, may have seemed strange to apparently juxtapose leisure with a violent act like terrorism. It's not strange and it's not a juxtaposition. Rojek (1999), in discussing serial killing as leisure, notes that it requires "high levels of mental preparation and fantasy work" [often] involving strangers as potential victims and that this preoccupation with fantasy and mental preparation is "concentrated in the sphere of leisure" (29). This extreme case of leisure points us towards what it has in common with more everyday leisure imaginings, our leisure imaginary, the projecting of ourselves into

⁵⁷ See Berger's (1963) compelling description of Sartre's 'bad faith' and Heidegger's 'Das Man' in *Invitation to Sociology*, pages 142-150.

an egoistic fantasy. Analysts of the Boston bombings have suggested that “the actions of the Tsarnaev brothers has more in common with alienated and unhappy "school shooters" – caught up in their own narcissistic drama – “than typical Islamist extremists” (Cahill, April 19, 2013). Leisure, free time bent to the will of our imaginations, need not end in such morbid, ‘deviant’ or destructive outcomes as those of serial killing or terrorism, but massaged by our fear of death and anxiety over freedom and fueled by a narcissism directed to an aspiration for a paradise of own distorted imagining, certainly can. This again, is the leisure imaginary, that space where with our pretense of sanity we become lost in the fantasy worlds of our own creation.

Our capacity to think has also been maimed by instrumental rationality where a means-end calculus has crept into almost all aspects of life, from our most personal relationships to our community politics. It is one explanation as to why a Rob Ford the ‘clown prince’ of Toronto, can come to power as Mayor and hold onto it despite behavior more fitting of a medieval court jester during carnival. Here, politics, instead of being an arena in which to demonstrate excellence (Arendt, 1958), is reduced to housekeeping as exemplified in Ford’s promise to save taxpayers money, the cliché of “stop the gravy train.” Ford’s reliance on the ‘drunken stupor’ makes a caricature out of ‘bad faith’ but in doing so shows us the folly of our investment in illusions. Anais Nin reminds us that “the caricature aspect of life appears whenever the drunkenness of illusion wears off” (Nin in Becker, 1973: 188). The Rob Ford travesty shows the fatal flaw that is the instrumental rationality

of Ford Nation, and should remind us that we are all prone to over intoxication.⁵⁸ Ford's Mayoralty it would seem, like life as Becker has observed, "becomes possible only in a continual alcoholic stupor" (1973: 189). We all rely on some form of alcohol to help us navigate the highway of life. Consumed in large enough quantities it legitimates self-absorption and provides us with a convenient alibi.

Ford's megalomania is a reflection of our own, he is not merely a caricature. He is our modern avatar of self-centredness and narcissism coming home to roost. Ford's inability to admit his insanity is our inability. His denial is our denial. That is why many of us can continue to support a Mayor Ford. At a primordial level we identify with him, not only with his narcissism, but with how that narcissism is manifested, his 'heroism' in 'standing up' to 'downtown Toronto elites'. Our basic narcissism is tied to this "heroic impulse," the way we project ourselves into the future as warriors in the cause of some grand symbolic fantasy of our own or someone else's concoction. The degree to which we are conscious of this fact is the measure of our self-reflection. "Reflection is the courage to make the truth of our own presuppositions and the realm of our own goals into the things that most deserve to be called into question"⁵⁹ (Heidegger, 1977: 116). We lack

⁵⁸ Bonner (2009) and Plato's laws, have developed different relations to alcohol other than the notion of the 'drunken stupor'.

⁵⁹ Heidegger notes in Appendix 1, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, that this reflection is not necessary for all and even less so accomplishable and that the absence of reflection is often what is needed during stages of achieving and moving forward. Reflection can have an apparently paralysing character.

courage. We run away from reflection. Why, because true reflection causes us to come face to face with the question of being, and the question of being, stripped of the artifices of culture, is terrifying.

We are surrounded by darkness on all sides as we rush through our brief span of life toward inevitable death. The agonized question "Why?" that almost every man feels at some moment or other as he becomes conscious of his condition is quickly stifled by the cliché answers that society has available (Berger, 1963: 147).

These clichés are ready at hand and function autonomically like the in and out of our breathing. As clichés, they give us more than answers; they propel us on certain trajectories that answer to our need to be special or our need to just not think. Each of us arranges our world symbolically to craft the heroic tales that sublimate our inner conflict. We can "disguise our struggle by piling up figures in a bank book to reflect privately our sense of heroic worth. Or by having only a little better home in the neighborhood, a bigger car, brighter children" (Becker, 1973: 4).⁶⁰ Kenneth Burke captures the link between our use of symbols and the heroic impulse in his description of humans as "the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal, inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative), separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order), and rotten with perfection" (Burke, 1966: 16).

⁶⁰ Our limited capacity for Socratic irony is problematic.

Our separation from nature is evidenced by our capacity to shape our own worlds with language and our ability to use technology (of which language is a type). Our symbol systems rely on negation to orient us in space and time and to the other, i.e. there is good and bad, right and wrong and these inhere in objects and subjects. Finally, through the orienting principle of the negative, our dualistic organizing cognitive structure, we aspire to be something greater than we are and realise this in our imagined heroic actions which are oriented towards a notion of perfection. Through the formulations of the actor by Berger, Fromm, Becker, and Burke we can see the impetus for heroism and how great evil is realized, as we organize our efforts against some unsuspecting foil, who unwittingly acts as the guarantor of our sanity.

To admit our insanity, is a starting point. Many, perhaps most, will never embark on that starting point, which is the path of the philosopher, to “know that we do not know”, to suffer ambiguity, to embrace the *aporia*, to commit to self-examination or self-reflection. We lack the courage for self-reflection. And so, we continue to purchase our sanity at the expense of others and at the expense of ourselves. Instead of pursuing the desire to know we stifle the desire to know, snuffing out the first flames of freedom as soon as they erupt from the embers. Refusing to embark on the journey has consequences. The fear of death is the fear of loss, a paralyzing fear. In not confronting our fears we act on them unconsciously, and leave them open to exploitation like strings to be manipulated by an invisible puppeteer. To address this, to cut the strings of the puppeteer, is to perhaps leave oneself aimlessly adrift in a sea of meaningless, to be naked and alone, to encounter

freedom. This is not satisfactory either, so we also have the endless distractions to comfort us.

Leisure opens up a space where we can dream of utopias that do not rely on the scapegoating and hating of others, and instead channel our fear and anxiety and the need to exorcise it through heroism or distraction in more productive directions like the preservation of the environment, or securing universal human rights, both examples from Becker (1973) for how the collective might deal less damagingly with its fear and anxiety. Even escaping into amusement and play might be preferable to an escape into heroism. We can immerse ourselves in amusement and play and in consumption as ways of coping with our fundamental anxiety and continue to whistle in the dark. But this is only the life of the zombie, the embracing of a living death.

In response to our fundamental anxiety towards death we can take the recommendation of Holland to treat death as ‘nothing at all’. Evidence suggests that this is not an approach that satisfies. Alternatively, we can treat death as a loss, as if something valuable has been stolen, become militant, perhaps even finding someone to blame. A third way is to recognize that while death cannot be cured (Kurzweil is in denial), or like a stolen object, returned, the fear and anxiety over death can be healed. This is the recommendation of Becker (1973), following Socrates and Plato, to “practice dying,” to take the path of the cosmic hero. This practice, the path of $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\iota\alpha$ (*theoria*), is one option, but one not taken up by the vast majority and perhaps in the modern age, a path actively discouraged. In leisure we have the choice in how we deal with that anxiety inducing

Tolstoyan question that contemplation of death invites and our individualized culture burdens us with: what should we do and how should we live?

In our contemporary period, 'the new realm of meaning,' leisure, is there for us to explore our existential situation. Devotional leisure practices would appear to draw us closer to acknowledging our being in the world as being towards death. Devotional leisure practices, are opportunities for engaging our fear and anxiety over death and the encounter with freedom and sometimes where we acknowledge our basic human solidarity. In their strongest form devotional leisure practice points us towards the possibility for philosophical leisure and its power to heal.

Death then helps us recognize healing as analogous to what Socrates called the second sailing; what the best sailors at sea in a storm can do when they realize that they have to rely on their own human resources rather than external or magical intervention (Bernadete 1989). In the absence of cure, we turn to healing, for it is the human way, second best. This might mean that we have death and something more: the capacity for healing, the capacity to laugh (or better, to be artful) (Blum, 2011: 24).

With modernity, our dis-ease, instead of being cured, was magnified and a raging epidemic produced. Our new practices and ways of living have left us impoverished with regards to places and spaces in which we can find purpose and so we have alienation, we have meaninglessness, we have anxiety, we live the malaise. The price we have paid for that which we mistake for freedom is a high one, and has us scurrying for succor like rats fleeing a sinking ship. We crave purpose and meaning or deny the need for purpose and meaning. Some of us strive to recreate the heroic dimension to life that was lost in the move to modernity (Taylor, 1991:4), while others absorb themselves in trivialities, lest they

Chapter 3: Contested Leisure

be required to think. Sadly, in our *brave new world* we increasingly do this alone, demonstrating that individualism, that hallmark of modernity and freedom, has a dark side, “a centring on the self, which both flattens and narrows our lives, makes them poorer in meaning, and less concerned with others or society” (1991: 4). The problem of how to heal this epidemic is the problem of late modernity.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 1, I showed how the primordial need to repress death is abetted by our modern science and technology. This same science and technology allows the repression of death to return in myriad ways, from the collective observation of media spectacles of death and disaster and blood sports to the participation in funeral rituals made possible by new virtual digital spaces. While these help to tame our fear of death and anxiety over our freedom, they often do so in less than satisfactory ways. In addition, the chapter began to highlight how late modernity has made us increasingly reflexive about the risks we face and has introduced new anxieties, questions such as “Who am I?” and “Where do I belong?” reflecting our contemporary concerns with identity and community.

Chapter 2 introduced a method for dealing with the difficult problematic of the meaning of leisure in our contemporary times and sought to introduce the problem of contemporary leisure through a case study. Its method is dialogic, open-ended and oriented to engaging and embracing ambiguity, to assisting one in walking through a dark and perplexing wood.

Chapter 3 attempted to show how the repression of death, and anxiety over freedom, are also linked to our repression of certain forms of leisure, particularly contemplative or philosophical leisure. We can imagine that Socrates and Glaucon if they were around today, instead of speaking about justice, could easily be speaking about philosophical leisure and our need to pursue rather than escape from it. Part of the reason

that we have such a hard time doing this is that we have become unacquainted with the method for doing philosophical leisure for, practicing philosophy (and perhaps sociology) in the *right* way, as exemplified in the dialogical practice of Socrates. As much as we have escaped from philosophical leisure, philosophical leisure has escaped us in that the spaces in which we might pursue it have become atrophied. The dissertation then has a dual thrust, in that it engages both the problematic state of leisure studies, and our own problematic everyday relation to leisure, seeing both as rooted in the deep problem of human finitude. Leisure creates a space for us to contemplate but we shrink from this activity. The reasons for this are addressed in this dissertation while the dissertation itself attempts to recover a way of doing the leisure that can transform this problem.

In the next chapter, after first developing a strong version of leisure, one that I associate with philosophical leisure, and demonstrating how it is still available in the lifeworld. The leisure imaginary provides opportunities to both pursue and escape contemplation or *theoria*. As I have shown, particularly in this chapter, the term leisure is ambiguous. Leisure then, to borrow an idiom from Blum (2001:7), “is the fundamental ambiguity which its name and connotations arouse in collective life.” This is the symbolic order of leisure. The various strands of the *leisure imaginary* then, are the myriad courses of action directed to solve the problems of such ambiguity, that is, answers to the question, “To what end should free time be put?” Leisure is both symbolic order and imaginative

structure, a locus of collectivization and a catalyst of problem solving. Philosophical leisure as one possibility within the leisure imaginary is encountered in the next chapter.

Socrates second sailing embraces the journey as one that seeks not safety and reassurance (*terra firma*) but instead the art of searching which is in part the art of living a virtuous life, where we are required to ‘think on things,’ to embrace the *aporia*.⁶¹ Free time as leisure gives us this opportunity. How do we recover a space for philosophical leisure? For the inquiry contained in the next chapter, the apt metaphor again is the hunt.

Socrates: The time then has arrived, Glaucon, when, like huntsmen, we should surround the cover, and look sharp that justice does not steal away, and pass out of sight and escape us; for beyond a doubt she is somewhere in this country: watch therefore and strive to catch a sight of her, and if you see her first, let me know.

Glaucon: Would that I could! But you should regard me rather as a follower who has just eyes enough to, see what you show him--that is about as much as I am good for.

Socrates: Offer up a prayer with me and follow.

Glaucon: I will, but you must show me the way.

Socrates: Here is no path, I said, and the wood is dark and perplexing; still we must push on.

⁶¹ “think on things” is a reference to Philippians 4:8: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. It was a favourite biblical quote of my Grandmother’s and one she pointed me to often. Incidentally, this verse from the King James Bible has lost its original meaning as in more recent translations it appears more as wish fulfillment and has been coopted by the ‘prosperity gospel’ in such books as the *4:8 Principle* by Newberry.

Chapter 3: Contested Leisure

For the huntsman in pursuit of philosophical leisure today, the wood is darker and more perplexing than ever.

Chapter 4 – W(h)ither Philosophical Leisure?

Will we too, collapse as a society from not knowing how to use as leisure the free time made available by peace and prosperity, avoiding the difficult issues to immerse ourselves in work, amusement, and diversion? (Hemingway, 1988: 182).

A weird time in which we are alive. We can travel anywhere we want, even to other planets. And for what? To sit day after day, declining in morale and hope.
— Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*

The greatest hazard of all, losing one's self, can occur very quietly in the world, as if it were nothing at all. No other loss can occur so quietly; any other loss - an arm, a leg, five dollars, a wife, etc. - is sure to be noticed.
— Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*

The notion of the trip is a funny thing. Life can be understood this way. Even the most mundane tasks seem to be given the aura of something greater with the appellation of *trip*, a 'getting away' temporarily from what previously occupied one. From the 'shopping trip' to the 'trip to the loo' to the 'bad trip,' to the 'pleasure trip', there are always trips to be had. In between trips, in that pause, if they are eventful, we tell stories about our trips. If you string enough trips together they become one long journey, episodes in a life. As I have pointed out earlier life for the tourist is experienced in episodes and it is in the breaking up of life into episodes that the tourist makes life bearable. But episodes unconnected to any larger story are sterile. In the episodes I cull from my lived experience my intent is to weave some kind of story, to achieve some kind of hermeneutic wholeness for myself and for the dissertation. It is dissertation as hermeneutics and devotional leisure.

Chapter 4: W(h)ither Philosophical Leisure

The months leading up to my grandmother's death were filled with trips. Trips to the hospital. Trips to the pharmacy. Trips to the grocery store. My grandfather was my usual companion on these trips. Through the years we had been on a lot of trips together. Sometimes my grandfather and I, after a shopping trip or a trip to visit Grandma, would eat together in the dining room at his care facility and he would tell stories.

My grandfather is a great story teller. I've never tired of his stories of growing up in Vancouver and Steveston, of life on the farm, and of hunting and fishing trips. It doesn't matter how often I hear them, there is pleasure to be taken in how alive Grandpa becomes in the telling. I love hearing about how as a child trick or treating one Halloween in Steveston, my grandfather and his friends egged a man's house after a bucket of water had been dumped on them by some crotchety old 'geezer'. It's always amusing to hear things that you can't imagine your grandfather doing. His stories of life on the farm stuck with me most and were often instructive. I learned how the best response to a horse that had sunk its teeth into your shoulder was a 2' x 4' placed firmly between its eyes. The story of how the neighbour shot deer for the family when my grandfather broke his leg one winter underscored the importance of neighbourliness, as did the stories of farmers getting together to help each other with the fall harvest.

The drama of birth and death and our relationship with animals populated many of the stories of life on the farm. There was the hallowed birth of Cimarron, a horse my grandmother trained and I later rode as a child. Playing cowboys and Indians as an

adolescent, my Dad, blindfolded, with scratches on his face and his arms tied behind his back, was trotted home by Cimarron after some play on nearby Rose Swanson mountain got a little too authentic. Several winters, dad, riding Cimarron, hauled my brothers and me around on a rope on our cross-country skis. At 12 years old, I went out one cold December morning, to feed the horses some hay to find the horse dead from old age. Too big to bury, Cimarron was picked up by the people from McCleod's By-Products, the nearby animal rendering plant, an ignominious end to such a magnificent animal.

There too was the legend of Kimmie, a black lab who was buried under a peach tree my Grandparents planted in her honour after her dog days were over. A fantastic bird dog and a pleasure to hunt with, legend had it that Kimmie learned the hard way not to raid the hen house for eggs when she bit into a 'bad' egg that Grandma had artfully concocted by blowing out the interior and replacing it with tabasco sauce.

Stories of hunting and fishing trips were the most captivating as they were full of adventure - the thrill of the pursuit and conquest of the prey, and more often, the struggle against the elements. The classic conflict narrative of man against nature. With the hunting and fishing stories there was a real continuity and connection with these experiences as we had our own hunting and fishing stories that we had lived together. Implicitly we knew that there would be future stories that our own children would tell. One evening in the care home's dining room when we were reminiscing at dinner,

Grandpa confided to me, “You know Stephen, the best times I ever had in my life were with you kids fishing up at *Last Resort*.”

These tales bear some resemblance to the tales revealed in the correspondence of the workers that Rancière discovered while looking for forms of working class consciousness. Their importance derives from them being tales of leisure. For Rancière, the 1830s correspondence signaled a state of emancipation that he had not anticipated. In our own time, these tales while not signaling emancipation in the same way, signal our need to re-embed ourselves in some kind of meaningful way and in darker ways might signal our enslavement, as leisure offers us up opportunities for a flight from thought.

During my early teen years, my brothers and I spent half of our summers with my grandparents in their trailer at *Last Resort*. It was a special place, a place of refuge and of love, all the more so for us boys, who at the time were undergoing the disorienting effects of our parents’ divorce. The movie of our lives at that time could have been called *A Lake Centres It*. Like the boys in Robert Redford’s movie *A River Runs Through It*, my brothers and I were raised on fly fishing.⁶² I was so enraptured with fishing, that as a small boy I had even written to the TV show *Thrill of a Lifetime*, requesting that my grandpa and I go fishing with Red Fisher on *The Red Fisher Show*. Grandma helped me write the letter.

⁶² In his [review of the film](#), Roger Ebert comments that “at the end of the film you are left with the feeling that if every life needs some kind of centre, flyfishing might just provide as good a one as any.”

Robert and Florence, or Bob and Flo as they were known to friends, cultivated my interest in fishing for trout, the pursuit of knowledge, and a love and respect for nature.

Grandma taught me the art of relaxing in a boat – the trout might not always be biting so better take a good book with you. You should also have on hand a pair of binoculars. *Last Resort* was home to a great many raptors: red-tailed hawks, great horned owls, ospreys and bald eagles; as well as loons, ducks and other waterfowl and beavers, muskrats, and deer. Fishing is often slow and when it is so, it provides a golden opportunity to observe wildlife. Sometimes we'd row into the lagoon at the north end of the lake and observe the red-wing blackbirds among the bulrushes, often just sitting quietly listening to their calls. There was a bald eagle nest on the lake that sported a couple of young eagles annually. Throughout the season we'd observe their growth. Mom and Dad eagle would bring fish and ducklings, mostly stolen from ospreys that had deftly scooped them from the water. One year we even witnessed a 'first-flight'. We were always amazed when we could witness an osprey dive into the lake at full speed and emerge with a trout equal to itself in size, watch a deer and its fawns wandering the shore at dusk, or spot a loon, making its way calmly among the waves with a loon chick on its back. To a kid, it was a place of magic, miracles, and wonder. Paradise.

My grandfather taught me how to cast, how to retrieve the line so that it emulated the movements of an insect, how to set the hook, and how to play the fish. He showed me how to tie knots and perhaps, even more importantly, tie flies, that we might better

match whatever insect was hatching on the lake at the time. Ring-necked pheasant tail feathers were a prized commodity as they were the main feather we used to tie the trout slaying 'six-pack', a fly that was particularly effective. Fortunately, pheasants were plentiful on the rural property my family shared with my grandparents. They could be obtained by shotgun, by foraging, or by collision with a motorcycle, as I found out one warm summer day when speeding up Knob Hill road on my Honda CM400T. We learned together, from long hours of engagement, the habits of the lake: its insect hatches, its seasonal hotspots, and how to get the hell off the lake in a hurry if a storm came up (you point the boat towards shore, open up the throttle and speed like a bullet for it). *Last Resort* was a school of life like no other. What took place there was the kind of experiential learning that people pay big money for now. The most tranquil, reflective times were spent during early summer evenings when the lake was like glass, disturbed only by trout dimpling the surface as they sucked down emerging insects. It was on such an evening that I landed *the* rainbow trout.

The sun was setting past the low hills. On a day where there had not been much action, the warm summer air and the quiet calm of the lake encouraged us to stay on and enjoy the evening. My brother Jim and I were fishing from one 12 foot aluminum boat, while Grandpa fished 70 feet away in another. I had tied on a 52 Buick, a green fly that resembles a scud, a small shrimp-like crustacean that populated the lake and gave the trout a delicious red flesh. We were just about to pull up anchor and head home, when I casted within two feet of the reeds where the creek exited the

lake. I let the line sink for a moment and then began the slow retrieve that emulated the crawling movement of a scud.

All of a sudden the line tightened and the largest trout I had ever seen leapt from the water. My reel screamed as line flew off. The fish jumped twice, its long silver body outlined against the reeds. Each time it flew through the air, my heart leapt into my throat. I imagined the beast throwing the barbless hook that made landing a rainbow trout extra challenging. The trout continued to move along the reeds, peeling off line, and then, abruptly, turned towards us and deeper water. I screamed excitedly to my brother to haul up the heavy concrete anchor as I hurriedly reeled in line. For the first time ever, Jim did it with ease. Still reeling frantically, I held my breath as I waited to see if the fish had outstripped me and thrown the hook. As the line came taut, I breathed a sigh of relief. The fish, feeling me on the other end of the line reacted violently, tearing down into the depths, ripping out more line. At Grandpa's prodding, Jim raised the boat engine and used the oars to maneuver us into deeper water. For the next 45 minutes, I was completely absorbed in my contest with the fish. It seemed to circle the boat forever. Each time I brought the fish closer to the surface, it would dive down again, peeling out line and then moving in that slow circle. My arm was beginning to tire when finally, mercifully, the fish delivered itself to the net my brother had deftly placed underneath it. It was dark now.

In the denouement of the evening's rush, we marveled at the battle and the fish, each of us exhilarated in our own way. We left the fish in the water for a bit, trying to determine if our prize was a spawner thus requiring its release. The fight it had given had indicated that it wasn't but we wanted to make sure. Part of me was hoping that it was egg bound. Grandpa's flashlight revealed a beast over two feet long – fat, silvery and beautiful. The next step was the kill. It felt precipitous. The fish and I had shared something magical that had spread out like the rings of a trout's surfacing to wash over each of us. Each had played a part. The killing of this fish was going to

be different than all the other fish I had killed before. It was the largest trout any of us had caught at Last Resort. The feat had been accomplished at dusk and on a fly rod with four pound test line and a barbless hook – no mean feat. The fight the trout had given, and the way I had played the fish, had been poetry; a communion that had completely absorbed me. For close to an hour all that there had been in the universe was the fish and me. My reflexes functioned autonomically. Everything my experience and what Grandpa had taught me crystallized in that all absorbing contest. It was beautiful.

The stillness that had enveloped us now took on a somber, mournful character. Grandpa reminded me that it was dark and that we shouldn't keep Grandma waiting. Should I let the fish go? I weighed my options. I rationalized that after such a long and grueling fight the fish would likely not survive. I had my brother raise the fish from the water and into the boat. With mixed emotions, I raised an old hammer handle, bringing it down on the fish. After a few chilling 'whacks', it lay lifeless in the bottom of the boat.

To this day I am haunted by the decision to kill that trout, but I've resigned to think of the killing as being part of the proper order of things, you know, that old Disney 'circle of life' bullshit. Through the years I've done a lot and thought a lot about fishing. At one time it had the character of a calling, or perhaps an addiction. It was a leisure practice that had given shape and meaning to my life, in Blackshaw's terminology, a *devotional activity*. After high school, in that ritual reminiscent of the Romantic period's Grand Tour, I took a year off to travel. Such was fishing's stature in my life, that I made it my mission to cycle through New Zealand, sampling the country's lakes and streams with my fly rod, bringing

along my fly-tying equipment so I could match whatever exotic insects the trout were feeding on. Later, working as a park ranger in the backcountry of the Okanagan Valley, I would end each day with the ritual of some quiet, solitary fly-casting before retiring to my tent or cabin. What was it about fishing that I found so compelling that I would devote so much time to it?

4.1 FISHING AND FLOW

At university in an introductory leisure studies class, I had an opportunity to explore the enigma of fly-fishing more fully when Ron McCarville of the University of Waterloo's Recreation and Leisure studies introduced the class to Csíkszentmihályi's concept of *flow*. Here was a concept that finally seemed to capture the phenomenon that I had experienced the evening I caught *the* fish.⁶³ Nakamura and Csíkszentmihályi (2001: 90) identify the following six factors as encompassing an experience of flow.

- Intense and focused concentration on what one is doing in the present moment
- Merging of action and awareness

⁶³ At the first Immersive Worlds conference held at Brock University in 2007, the keynote speaker was Mihail Csikszentmihalyi, who according to a grad student I met at the conference who had worked with him told me that the correct pronunciation of his last name was "Chicks send me high."

- Loss of reflective self-consciousness (i.e., loss of awareness of the self as a social actor)
- A sense that one can control one's actions; that is, a sense that one can in principle deal with the situation because one knows how to respond to whatever happens next
- Distortion of temporal experience (typically, a sense that time has passed faster than normal)
- Experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding, such that often the end goal is just an excuse for the process.

Indeed the concept of flow seems to capture the experience of catching the fish completely: *The fight the trout had given, and the way I had played the fish, had been poetry; a communion that had completely absorbed me. For close to an hour all that there had been in the universe was the fish and me. My reflexes functioned autonomically. Everything my experience and what Grandpa had taught me crystallized in that all absorbing contest. It was beautiful.* Sitting in the classroom and hearing about flow for the first time and seeing how it seemed to account for my experience of fishing, I was hooked.

Part of me knew that in fishing and hooking onto a large trout I could recreate that experience of flow, of being lost in the moment. Sitting in McCarville's class, I also recognized that there was a specialness to my fishing experience that 'flow' could not account for. The psychological concept of flow was bereft of a sense of meaning and context. There was a 'flowing outwards' that went on with fishing rather than the *single-minded immersion* implied by 'flow'. The lifeworld in some sense gets reduced to a pleasurable sensation. Rojek (2010) states that without a discussion of the lifeworld or

lebenswelt in which flow is located, flow is a “facile concept” and I would add potentially dangerous, as it reduces human beings to automatons. He then goes on to highlight the dangerous implications of reducing human experience to the psychological concept of flow, showing how flow and its related concept of *peak experience* contribute to distorted analysis as the ends of action are not taken into account. He drives this point home with the example of the infamous Nazi Adolph Eichmann’s execution of the Jews.

It is a reprehensible truth that the Nazis experienced ‘flow’ in the programme of Jewish extermination (Bauman 1989). From Arendt’s (1963) account of the trial of Adolf Eichmann for crimes against humanity, we know that Eichmann derived a powerful sense of work satisfaction and life justification by making the Nazi death trains carrying Jewish prisoners to the annihilation centres run on time (Rojek, 2010: 112).

This unreflective relation to our actions as exemplified in Eichmann’s relation to killing Jews, his ‘flow’ experience, Arendt (1963) has famously described in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* as the *banality of evil*. Much has been made of this phrase and much debate has ensued over the meaning of it. For this author the key to understanding the phrase “banality of evil” is to think about it in terms of the phenomenon of absorption/submersion. In the case of Eichmann, his absorption/submersion into Nazi ideology, an ideology that allowed him to belong, also references an unthinking relation to his actions, an act of bad faith. Eichmann is unable to avoid the uncomfortable truth that he is killing people through being a “joiner.” Berkowitz (July 7, 2013) writes that

[T]he insight of “Eichmann in Jerusalem” is not that Eichmann was just following orders, but that Eichmann was a “joiner.” In his own words, Eichmann feared “to live a leaderless and difficult individual life,” in which “I would receive no directives from anybody.” Arendt insisted that Eichmann’s professed fidelity to the Nazi cause “did

not mean merely to stress the extent to which he was under orders, and ready to obey them; he meant to show what an 'idealist' he had always been." An "idealist," as she used the word, is an ideologue, someone who will sacrifice his own moral convictions when they come in conflict with the "idea" of the movement that gives life meaning. Evil was transformed from a Satanic temptation into a test of self-sacrifice, and Eichmann justified the evil he knowingly committed as a heroic burden demanded by his idealism.

One of our great fears, as Erich Fromm has also pointed out, is that we fear to live a *difficult and leaderless life*. In the face of death and anxiety over our freedom, we need to be oriented and occupied. Eichmann became immersed in the fascist narrative provided by Nazism which allowed him to become unreflectively absorbed, relieving him of the difficulty of being an individual, the difficulty of independent thought, allowing him to be absorbed in his own heroic fantasy.

Temporary flow experiences have become highly sought after by individuals as they offer temporary embeddedness, absorption, immersion – micro states of ontological security. This is *not* Marcel's ontological exigency, as ontological exigence "is not reducible to some psychological state, mood, or attitude a person *has*; it is rather a movement of the human spirit that is inseparable from being human" (Keen, 1984: 105). We don't generally make the kinds of theoretical connections I am making here between flow and ontological security and exigency as in this day and age flow's importance comes from its potential to be packaged and commodified. Flow experiences have become an interest of not only the state and the academy, but business as well. An entire video game industry appears to worship the concept of 'flow'.

At the first *Immersive Worlds* conference in 2007, the sponsor, a local gaming software developer, had brought in Csiztenmihalyi precisely to speak about flow and relate it to how computer gaming could become a more immersive, flow experience. At the second *Immersive Worlds* conference in 2009, the fascination with flow had not abated. At this conference, theorizing around mechanisms for accomplishing ‘flow experience’ were beginning to shift from an emphasis on creating visually stunning virtual environments (what I describe in one of this dissertation’s many jettisoned chapters as ViEWs, virtual immersive worlds) to an understanding of how the use of narrative in video games could accomplish the same task of embedding the individual, rendering a ‘flow’ experience. One of the working propositions at the conference was that a good story could on its own provide adequate opportunity for people to experience flow. The Eichmann example points to this possibility. Games need not require a visually stunning environment or frenetic interaction/stimulation to generate flow for the player. Maria Bustillos, writing in *The New Yorker* noted that “modern video games are showing signs of morphing into other, still more subtle and complicated forms; among other things, they’re becoming an increasingly sophisticated vehicle for storytelling” (March 19, 2013).

This shouldn’t be a huge revelation. When we come to think of it, storytelling has always been the primary way that we have lost ourselves, paradoxically finding ourselves. From Homer’s *Odyssey*, to the epic poem *Beowulf*, to the story of *Exodus* in the Bible, to the Ojibway/Anishinabe creation story of *Turtle Island*, stories have been used to teach us

about who we are, embed us in a history and culture, or like the ‘hero’ in Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, send us on a quest. It is no wonder that stories have become increasingly important to the gaming industry and have begun to migrate now from films to video games, both genres often being planned simultaneously, examples including the films *AVATAR* and *Lord of the Rings*.

Increasingly, video games, like an epic, short novel or film, allow us this temporary embedding in another intense reality. More often than not we are the main character in the game story, where we engage in a brief flirtation with a leisure imaginary in which we are the heroes of some simple narrative of sacrifice and redemption. Many first person shooters or quest type games operate on the hero–quest narrative and are an attractive way to temporarily escape mundane realities.⁶⁴ Immersion in a temporary heroic reality is available through the extension of the self into an avatar in an RPG or, the identification with the heroic character of a film or novel like the character Frodo from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, a brave pilgrim caught in a grand struggle of good against evil who holds

⁶⁴ I am not suggesting that video games are responsible for creating jihadists, terrorists, or other violent actors. There was much speculation that World of Warcraft was responsible for the violent actions of Anders Breivik. Breivik played World of Warcraft for approximately 7 hours a day the year before the attack. According to [Al Arabiya News](#), “The years’ worth of playing ‘World of Warcraft’ allowed him to cut off social contact, helping him prepare for the attacks, he said. But he added the game-playing was ‘pure entertainment. It doesn’t have anything to do with July 22.’ He apparently used *WoW* and *Modern Warfare 2* as tools. *WoW* was a convenient excuse not to be more social. Peckham ([April 12, 2012](#)) in writing about Ander Breivik’s manifesto that “Breivik says [*WoW*] helps ‘justify isolation’ and adds that ‘people will understand somewhat why you are not answering your phone over long periods.’ Note, importantly, that Breivik is advising the use of stereotypes about video games as a way to justify social isolation, indicating his intelligent, cynical view of the game. This was someone who used video games for sinister purposes, not someone used *by* them.” This didn’t stop some stores from [removing](#) the games from store shelves.

the fate of Middle Earth in his hands. Globalization has opened up real world analogues that satisfy this need for simple narratives and heroism that we find in fiction, and are especially attractive to those struggling with the search for identity and community exacerbated in late modernity. The terrorist organization ISIS has become an attractive life option for young Muslims in Britain and other parts of the world – a way to escape a mundane and perhaps oppressive reality and swap it for something they feel is meaningful, so that one doesn't have to live a *leaderless and difficult individual life*. This is a game with higher stakes however as evidenced by the continuous bombardment of media images and stories of so-called Islamic extremists either being killed or killing. The seductiveness of jihadism is highlighted in the quotation below.

“One minute you are trying to pay bills, the next you're running around Syria with a machine gun,” said [Ghaffar Hussain](#), the managing director of the Quilliam Foundation, a British research group that seeks to tackle religious extremism. “Many young British Muslims are confused about their identity, and they buy into a narrow framework that can explain events. Jihadists hand them a simplistic narrative of good versus evil. They give them camaraderie and certainty. ISIS makes them feel part of a grand struggle” (Cohen, August 25, 2014).

An example of the context that contributes to an individual becoming swept up in ISIS is Australian citizen and now ISIS Lieutenant Mohammad Ali Baryalei. Before embracing radical Islam and travelling to Syria to take a position in the Islamic State, Baryalei “once patrolled the sidewalk outside the Love Machine club, his basso voice luring customers in, his muscle keeping the unwanted out...his was a world of prostitutes, drugs, gangs, and gambling” (Perlez, September 26, 2014). The backstory on Baryalei

resonates with the issues of identity confusion raised by Hussain above. At age 7, Baryalei and his family were assigned to a refugee centre in a “desolate” area of western Sydney.

The young boy had a tumultuous relationship with an abusive father, suffered from bouts of depression as a teenager and performed poorly during a brief stint at a well-to-do Roman Catholic secondary school, the ABC report said. He eventually graduated from a government high school and drifted to Kings Cross, where the clubs and brothels are largely controlled by owners of Middle Eastern origin (Perlez, September 26, 2014).

Another, less radical example once again, is the volunteer or mission tourist, who goes off on a temporary vacation to ‘save’ the populace of an area left devastated after a hurricane, tornado, tsunami, or flood. The mechanics underlying the terrorist and mission tourist are very similar. Both act to ‘centre’ a life through an act of heroism. Even the mission tourist may not be exempt from creating collateral damage. In the context of the recent rise in terrorism as a life strategy, Roger Ebert’s suggestion that “if every life needs some kind of centre, fly-fishing might just provide as good a one as any,” is an understatement.

To take us back to the formulation of leisure as flow experience, it appears to be the simplicity and elegance of the concept that makes it so attractive. When applied to angling, however, it comes up short in capturing angling’s essence because of what it excludes or perhaps, what the practice of angling resists. While the act of catching a fish mimics the intensity and all absorbing character of ‘flow’, the majority of the experience is missed: the quiet, the anticipation, the sights and smells of nature and most of all the contemplative character of the act. Kingwell writes that “every fisherman is familiar with the combination of quiet and frenzy of his sport [where] long bouts of waiting give way

without warning to bursts of adrenalized excitement” (2003: 177). With sport fishing, ‘adrenalized excitement’ takes a backseat most of the time. For Sir Izaak Walton, the writer of the famous treatise on fishing, *The Compleat Angler*, which first appeared in 1655, angling is the activity of man par excellence and is essentially a religious act of contemplation, teaching patience and grace, and allowing one to commune with God’s creatures. We might ask what it is about the practice of fishing so that it comes to resemble contemplation or philosophical leisure. What is its affinity? An answer can be discerned in *Piscator’s* reply to *Venator*, his primary interlocutor in *The Compleat Angler*.

The question is rather, whether you be capable of learning it? For angling is somewhat like poetry, men are born to be so: I mean, with inclinations to it, though both may be heightened by discourse and practice: but he that hopes to be a good angler, must not only bring an inquiring, searching, observing wit, but he must bring a large measure of hope and patience, and a love and propensity to the art itself; but having once got and practiced it, then doubt not but angling will prove to be so pleasant, that it will prove to be like a virtue, a reward to itself (Walton, 1988: 39).

The pious quote above emphasizes the qualities of wonder, hope, and patience and their affinity with the practice of fishing or perhaps more aptly, the art of angling. It is little wonder that my grandmother and fishing fit so well together and why she chose to be buried at *Last Resort*. For me, she exemplified Walton’s good angler, an almost perfect avatar of angling: patient, hopeful, contemplative and loving with a reverence for the natural world. She had found that it was fishing, understood and practiced the right way that was a good in and of itself and something worth sharing, worth passing on, worth creating a community around. One might say that she had mastered the art of living and

this expressed itself through fishing. We see this same relation to leisure reflected in Josef Pieper's (1952: 41) definition of leisure:

Leisure is a form of silence of that silence which is the prerequisite of reality: only the silent hear and those who do not remain silent do not hear. Silence as it is used in this context, does not mean 'dumb ness' or 'noiselessness'; it means more nearly that the soul's power to 'answer' to the reality of the world is let undisturbed. For leisure is a receptive attitude of mind, a contemplative attitude, and it is not only the *occasion* but also the *capacity* for steeping oneself in the whole of creation (emphasis mine).

In this day and age it might be argued that we can't find silence. Fishing is that space in which we might discover it and thus rediscover and develop the capacity for contemplation, for philosophical leisure. Contemplation is that act which most closely approximates death and in the silence that death approximates, we develop the capacity for reflection. Angling, in this regard, is the gift that keeps on giving. It is both the occasion and the capacity for philosophical leisure.

The art of angling, like Socratic philosophy, would not be the art of angling without its dance with death. Remembering Plato's proclamation in *Phaedo* that "those who practice philosophy in the right way are in training for dying and they fear death least of all men," I wish to dwell here for a while. Death and angling. Angling and death. Angling for death? This is angling as philosophical practice. Let's recall the story of the killing of the 'hallowed' trout. The scene is reminiscent of José Ortega y Gasset's (1942) description of the final kill of hunting (of which fishing is the same species). Hunting and angling would not be hunting and angling if not for the act of killing.

At this point we arrive at the terminus, the goal of hunting itself. And although this goal or final scene is sometimes the capture of the animal, it's most frequent and natural form is the death of the beast. Death, especially "caused" death, murder, is or should be a terrifying thing. The hunter does not just come and go, working hard in valleys and on cliffs, urging on his dogs; rather, in the last analysis, he kills. The hunter is a death dealer (Ortega y Gasset, 1942: 96).

Phenomenologically, one can ask the question of any object of investigation, "What can we take away from the phenomenon we are investigating such that it no longer has its essential character?" The essence of the phenomenon is revealed in this way. In Ortega y Gasset's description of hunting there is one thing that is essential to hunting without which it ceases to be hunting.

Death is essential because without it there is no authentic hunting: the killing of the animal is the natural end of the hunt and the goal of hunting itself, *not* of the hunter. The hunter seeks this death because it is no less than the sign of the reality for the whole hunting process. To sum up, one does not hunt in order to kill; on the contrary, one kills in order to have hunted. If one were to present the sportsman with the death of the animal as a gift he would refuse it (1942: 96-97).

Here the encounter with death is not subsumed under a 'flow' experience as it might be in the Adolph Eichmann example or even in the beheading of a foreign journalist or aid worker by a member of ISIS enraptured in some fantastic narrative of sacrifice and redemption. Death is foregrounded. There is a deliberate and perhaps painful movement towards countenancing death. There is a clear choice to kill or not kill. There are no politics, there is only the pure brutal fact of the kill. In this way the hunter or fisher takes possession of death. The hunter (or fisher) brushes up against ambiguity in the act of killing and has to ask the question, 'Is what I am doing, right?' This is a thought-full relation to death. One confronts death, and has to come to terms with its uncanny

character if only for a moment, recognizing the uncomfortable truth that part of what is entailed in eating meat is the killing of a living thing.

The relation between hunting or fishing and contemplation is similar, where contemplation, the philosophical leisure of Socrates and Platonic philosophy which always asks ‘how can we act well?’ is itself a way of becoming self-possessed in the face of death. Like the ritual experience of the Eleusinian Mysteries, Plato’s philosophy “helped people to live creatively with their own mortality” (Armstrong, 2009:67). Hunting and fishing as imagined by Ortega y Gasset has something to offer us in these late modern times; a strong way for us to live creatively with our own mortality, a way, an analogue that does not escape or avoid the question of death. Philosopher Mark Kingwell, in his book *Catch and Release: Trout Fishing and the Meaning of Life* has observed:

Those of us who eat fish regularly should not shy away from the ethical choices we have made in so doing. There are ethical-purist anglers who, like reformed hunters count themselves satisfied with a strike on their line, surrendering the need to even catch the fish. But this strikes most other anglers, myself included, as rather poor sport. If we are going to take joy in fishing, and sometimes killing them, we can’t be so shy. And so the morality of angling seems to me to finally swing back the other way. From the point of view of honesty and integrity, fishing is actually superior to eating fish without knowing how to dress tackle, cast, set, and play the tasty trout into your creel. One of the deep joys of fishing is this little return to primitive competence, the satisfying jolt of *killing for food*, and seeing death up close (Kingwell, 2003: 174).

In the killing of a fish caught for sport, we have an encounter with freedom and death in rarified form. The reflective pause that is required at the moment of killing requires us to engage with both death and freedom. In this species of choice, the ethical dimension is highlighted, setting it apart from the choice of the consumer. In the killing of the fish, in

that final act, there is no question that we are ultimately responsible. There is no strong alibi for our actions, no audience cheering us along. We cannot escape into the excuse that we need the fish for food because we quite obviously don't. We freely *choose* to end the fish's life and we must countenance at least in some small way, the terrifying aspects of both death and freedom at that moment. There are few experiences in late modernity that require us to tread the boundary between death and freedom in this manner.

What I have tried to do with this account of fishing is to provide a model of a leisure time activity that comes close to the idea of contemplation, of philosophical leisure, once again, in Socratic terms, the examined life. The act of killing a fish as essential to angling renders us a glimpse into what is required of a strong philosophical leisure, a reflection on the ends of action in relation to the good of that action. How do we reach a state where there is conscious reflection on action and not just an autonomic response such as what we might find in a flow experience? Where we might ask: Should I kill this fish? Should I shoot this deer? What is time well spent? What should we do and how should we live? What allows one to do good philosophy or good action is to master our fears. Where and when do we cultivate this capacity, this courage? Is there a time and a space in which we learn how to use free time well, to pursue philosophical leisure? What would that space look like?

Now, it's all well and good to talk about philosophical leisure as an end of free time, but didn't philosophical leisure as an end die with the Greeks? Aren't we being a little

pious in expecting that philosophical leisure is even something that we should strive for in our contemporary period? Don't we have enough to worry about in terms of dealing with the precariousness of life: meeting economic necessity, raising resilient children, finding and keeping a job, getting an education, divorcing, remarrying etc.? With the exception of that increasingly rare bird, the tenured faculty member, we simply do not have the time to engage in such an unproductive, elitist pastime. In this context we can understand Rojek when he explains that the notion of leisure as "connected to free time forms and practices that are of intrinsic worth" is a "deeply troubled perspective on leisure that became more aggravating as successive generations struggled to democratize the distribution of free time and the allocation of scarce resources for licit enjoyment" (Rojek, 2010: 93). Rojek argues that in presenting leisure as a state of mind, that these "visionary" views found in the work of Pieper (1952) and DeGrazia (1962), are unrealistic in relation to the "exigencies of modern industrial society" (95).

[I]ndustrial society places the burden of paid labour upon the majority. In doing so it condemns the common man and woman to the distraction of earning a living. This state of distraction allows for free time but it does not supply the wherewithal for leisure. Free time is colonized by organized amusement and consumption. Most people do not have the time to devote themselves to a life of contemplation, reflection, and fellowship. True leisure is therefore scant in industrial society (Rojek, 2010: 94)

This position in part describes the reticence of many scholars, for example Veal (1987) and Rojek (1995) to entertain in their theorizing (with the exception of stating its irrelevance), classical Greek notions of leisure. Rojek argues that while writers such as Pieper and DeGrazia, both sympathetic to the Greeks, allowed us to look at leisure in an

era where work was central, its “false view of leisure as pure voluntarism” must be set aside for an understanding of leisure that instead of asserting that we are *free* takes into account that “in leisure we are differently *positioned*” (2010: 72). Even though we are differently positioned, we still have the choices the leisure imaginary lays before us and something more, not voluntarism but commitment. Rojek speaks to this tension between leisure as voluntaristic and leisure as positioned, when he states in his discussion of ‘dark’ or ‘mephitic’ leisure that “there is something about the culture of leisure, the culture of having free choice, which leads some people to make choices in a direction that is morally reprehensible” (Rojek in Blackshaw, 2012: 33). I hope that I have implied, in slight disagreement with Rojek, that freedom is also one of the choices in leisure but one not often taken, perhaps because it is a different kind of choice connected to either a special kind of commitment that requires a great deal of cultivation and effort, or, is an act of resistance. We have to be careful that the sociological ‘fact’ of being *positioned*, isn’t just another article of bad faith.

The truth is that we don’t actively create the time or the space for contemplation, *theoria*, philosophical leisure. At the same time, it is apparent that the time and space for philosophical leisure are under attack. For those of us that haven’t been convinced that philosophical leisure is a waste of time, or worse, dangerous, we can use the alibi that we don’t have time and we’d be perfectly understood. However, there have been those exemplary figures throughout history that have demonstrated that no matter what our

circumstances, time and space can be created for the theoretical life. These examples turn Rojek's assertion on its head. One such exemplary figure is Louis-Gabriel Gauny.

4.2 THE PROMISE AND THE DANGER OF PHILOSOPHICAL LEISURE

Sometimes it's hard to understand,
all the sick things that happen to a man.

Hellwood ~*Ten Commandments*, Chainsaw of Life

In his book *The Nights of Labour: The Worker's Dream in Nineteenth Century France* (1981), Jacques Rancière explores the life and writing of Louis-Gabriel Gauny and his fellow workers in the Saint-Simonian community to which they belonged, a community that ironically devoted themselves to the very things that Rojek would argue that they could not have, lives of "contemplation, reflection, and fellowship" (2010: 94). These men claim for themselves the nights normally set aside for rest and in this space that they've created, "prepare and dream and already live the impossible: the suspension of the ancestral hierarchy subordinating those dedicated to manual labour to those who have been given the privilege of thinking" (Rancière, 1981: 8).

Gauny's example contradicts a Marxist understanding, where consciousness is produced by a man's social location or position in the superstructure and thus without revolution he cannot be free. People can resist, exercise choice and with great effort, claim freedom, expressing their individuality from the great mass. This of course was the 'great

surprise' that so captured Rancière's imagination. Louis-Gabriel Gauny, the joiner⁶⁵ intellectual, together with others of his Saint-Simonian community, decided to after the long working day, compose songs, recite poetry, and write in the manner of the philosopher, and thereby seize for themselves the equality that they had believed they were denied. Rancière writes of one of these occasions.

[T]o change one's life: turning the world upside down begins around the evening hour when normal workers should be tasting the peaceful sleep of people whose work scarcely calls for thinking. This particular evening in October 1839, for example—at 8:00 P.M. to be exact—our characters would be meeting at tailor Martin Rose's place to start a workers' journal. Vinçard, maker of measures, composes songs for the little party (*goguette*). He has invited Gauny the joiner, whose taciturn disposition prefers to express itself in vengeful couplets. Ponty the cesspool-cleaner, a poet too, would definitely not be there. That bohemian has deliberately chosen to work at night. But the joiner can inform him of the results in one of those letters of his that he recopies around midnight after several rough drafts – letters in which he writes of their ravaged childhood years and their lost lives, of plebeian fevers and those other forms of existence beyond death, which may be beginning at this very moment in the attempt to put off as long as possible the entry into sleep, which will repair the powers of the servile machine (Rancière, 1981: vii-viii).

I want to underscore the important fact that these workers *chose* to write, to recite poetry, to compose songs, to do philosophy. These 'workers,' with great sacrifice and effort, *chose* something different for themselves and in doing so upset what Rancière describes as the *distribution of the sensible* (2004). Davis (2010) articulates the importance of these acts.

...the workers who, without any particular training or socially accredited aesthetic expertise, compose[d] and sang songs at the barriers which were as good as those to

⁶⁵ Joiner in the sense used here refers to the occupation of joinery. Gauny layed parquet flooring, he was a "parqueteur."

be heard in any bourgeois salon and, in so doing, transgressed the established political order by showing that they were not necessarily destined for a life of manual labour,...these workers who chose to consume their nights with writing proved that 'proletarian workers should be treated as beings to whom several lives [are] owed.' *The very fact of their producing intellectual (aesthetic, literary, or philosophical) work disturbed the established division of labour within the culture, demonstrated that it was arbitrary and therefore changeable.* (2010: 53, emphasis mine).

This demonstration of equality, this reconfiguration of the division of labour through furtive nights of philosophical and artistic work, put the lie to established social order, that almost in caste like manner ordained that people were destined for one thing and that the labouring classes could be no more than the labouring classes as this was the 'natural' order of things. Professional historians have noted that Louis-Gabriel Gauny and his contemporaries were exceptional (Davis, 2010: 161). Given this apparent exceptionalism, we might ask to what end we need refer to them at all. For example, what does the exceptional figure of Gauny cut for us as a proposed analogue of being in our contemporary world, distant as it is from our conditions of existence? What is his relevance today? As a way of examining these questions perhaps we can trace Gauny's exceptionalism a little. One thing is certain, Saint-Simonianism played a key role in Gauny's story, providing a framework, an imaginary, that put together technological advancement, religious mysticism, and social reform in order to address what Saint-Simon considered to be an unfinished French Revolution and a technological route to the establishment of heaven on earth (2010: 55). However, it was not Gauny's embracing of

Saint-Simonianism, but his ‘conversion experience’, that arguably gave him permission to think, to do something different with his life than what the superstructure had ordained.

The important thing was perhaps not the belief but the initiation which allowed him to enter the circle of those who break the rule imposed by Plato on artisans by deciding to do something *other* than their work, by venturing onto ground reserved for others. This was not initially a matter of wealth but rather of thought, of inaugurating a different form of sociability: this friendship, or *philia*, which the practice of philosophy presupposes (2010: 56).

This connection of thought to sociability is important. But, as much as thinking is a conversation that the soul has with itself (Plato, *Theaetetus*), the internal dialogue of thought is mirrored in the external dialogue with others in the spirit of friendship. The social relations of workers were fundamentally changed in the Saint-Simonian community through this renewed emphasis on friendship. No longer were they alienated from each other and their philosophical and aesthetic work was their own. However, this is not the whole story, as it perhaps gives too much credit to the Saint-Simonian community for Gauny’s own contribution. After all, there were many Saint-Simonians but not many Louis-Gabriel Gaunys.

Gauny’s conversion experience did not mean that Gauny bought Saint-Simonianism ‘whole-hog’ so to speak. Much in Gauny’s writing suggests that he had reservations towards the order (Rancière, 1981). These reservations perhaps speak to his commitment to philosophical questioning. I also wish to not paint a too utopian picture of the experience of these worker-intellectuals. Davis (2010: 57) notes that the psychological strain on worker-intellectuals was oftentimes severe, where “the sense of conflicted self-

understanding and the feelings of being ‘out of place’ which it engendered, led, in some notorious cases, to melancholia, indeed to suicide.” This condition of metaphysical homelessness that many of Gauny’s companions experienced is not altogether different from the experience of many people today. The leisure imaginary provides many of us with a solution to this problem which is why philosophical leisure is not often found within it and is in reality, anathema to the leisure imaginary. With the Saint-Simonians we see the *aporia* implicit in philosophical leisure often lost to utopian dreaming and pursuits, to the leisure imaginary. In his preface to *The Nights of Labour*, Rancière references this and other afflictions that had befallen his beloved Saint-Simonians.

Nights of studying, nights of boozing. Long days of hard labour prolonged to hear the message of the apostles or lessons from the instructors of the people, to learn, or dream, or debate or write. Sunday mornings anticipated, to head out into the country together and catch the break of day. Such follies some will survive well enough, ending up as entrepreneurs or senators for life, and not necessarily traitors. Others will die of them. They will endure the suicide of impossible aspirations, the languor of assassinated revolutions, the consumptive mists of exile in the north, the plagues of that Egypt where they will seek the “female messiah” or the malaria of that Texas where they will try to build Icaria. Most of them however, will spend their lives in anonymity, out of which will emerge an occasional name: a worker-poet or a strike leader, the organizer of an ephemeral association or the editor of a journal that quickly disappears (1981: 8).

In all of this, it is not the Saint-Simonian order’s pursuit of utopia but Gauny’s folly, what appears to the outside observer as a stubborn Quixotism in his pursuit of the impossible dream of theorizing, that captures both Rancière’s and my own imagination. Gauny, is able to handle his disembedding from the social order, a disembedding that has driven others mad, even to suicide. Indeed, it appears he thrives in it, an example perhaps

of Becker's cosmic hero. Rather than wait for the communist society that Marx and Engels would forecast in 1845 in the *German Ideology*, a communist utopia where "society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner," Gauny in a prescient act that both predicts and critiques Marx's intervention and then moves past it, decides to live that future promised communist utopia, in the here and now.

Gauny's self-emancipating decision to write actualizes Marx's humanist, egalitarian, vision of a life in which work fulfills rather than alienates, even as it rejects the procrastinating temporality of that vision by insisting that the time to live it is now. The decision to live Marx's dream in the present, to behave as though the leisure to think, to which he is entitled as anyone else, had already been accorded to him, presupposed more than a little tenacious self-belief. Where does such life-changing and world-changing confidence come from? (Davis, 2010: 161).

Indeed, where does this world-changing confidence, this courage, come from? No doubt some of this confidence, and Gauny's resilience, comes from his acquaintance with death. There is more than a hint that his experiences as a child had steeled him against the suffocating fear of death. His writing appears to have countenanced death. This close acquaintance with death is hinted at in his copied letters where "he writes of their ravaged childhood years and their lost lives, of plebeian fevers and those other forms of existence beyond death..." (Rancière, 1981: viii). His 'accident of birth' filled him with rage as he entered his teen years where he was forced into apprenticeship and denied the learning that he felt should have been his.

When I became an adolescent, circumstances plunged me into a world turned upside down. Tormented by the convulsion, my heart was seized with regular fits of rage.... I came to know vengeance as I underwent the miseries and humiliations of a monotonous novitiate. I was in revolt. My flesh trembled, my eyes were wild. I was ferocious (Gauny in Rancière, 1981: 52).

When seen in the context of the trials and the chains of the apprenticeship, what Saint-Simonianism offered must have looked like a choice between liberty and death. The awful conditions that the apprentice had to endure, were meant to crush the weak in malicious and cruel fashion and to leave the survivors as brutes, as automatons, what Marcel has called the functionalised person, “the man in whom the sense of the ontological—the sense of being, is lacking, or, to speak more correctly, the man who has lost awareness of this sense” (Marcel, 1995: 9). J.P. Gilland provides a brutal first-person account of these apprenticeships and their effects.

I have seen some poor children, feeling completely desperate and accursed, who preferred death to such an existence. They gave themselves to it readily and departed this life without regret at the very age when it should have been so beautiful. Some have perished from all sorts of abusive treatment. Fear of the punishments to which they were subjected every day absorbed their thinking even in the delirium of fever ...Others turned into thieves ... yes, thieves! Not because of the lure of larceny or the need to survive, as everyone is tempted to believe, but simply to escape the harshness of their plight. And the thing that condemns those who reduced them to that state and allows them no justification is the fact that those children, locked up like vagrants and treated as such, preferred prison to the workshop even when promised pardon and indulgence in the future (Gilland in Ranciere, 1981: 53).

Gauny survives this apprenticeship, his own Eleusinian Mystery, to come out on the other side, unbeaten and angry. To be given new life for Gauny must have been a gift that he felt he could not waste, as in his act of defiance, he overcomes “the fate linking the

possibility of cultivating one's soul and the necessity of selling one's body with accidents of birth" (Rancière, 1981: 52). His initiation into Saint-Simonianism, provides the opportunity for him to realize his desire for redemption. It fires his commitment to an Arendtian desire to understand, and has him heed the Socratic call to live the examined life. These elements are reflected in his philosophy. Gauny's philosophy is oriented by both his working class experience of survival and the appreciation for life and liberty that comes from being deprived of it. For Gauny "every material detail of our life has a toll in terms of servitude and freedom: food, clothing, shoes, lighting" (1983: 18). His philosophy is oriented to achieving ontological exigency as it is perhaps for all philosophers.

"Economic" solutions are those that bring humanity back to its destiny and oblige him to respect the universe which he is a part of, therefore the murder of animals is a crime. Following Gleises' principle in his work, *Thalysie*,⁶⁶ Gauny recommends a meat free diet, as the consumption of meat, spicy dishes and strong drink causes redness of the face and creates a physical torpor, unacceptable to the lover of the statuary who is also the athlete of emancipation (Rancière in Gauny, 1983: 16)⁶⁷

This evidence of his ethical relation to life, his capacity to "think on things," we see in this brief account of his philosophy, his immersion in a cosmic order where animals are respected and the love of aesthetics and pursuit of a life well lived is of paramount

⁶⁶ Gleises is a French philosopher, one of the first to promote vegetarianism as a way of living a balanced life

⁶⁷ Translation and note on Gleises provided by Tododjim Mali.

importance, so much so that any form of consumption that takes away from the capacity to think (meat, spicy dishes, strong drink) is avoided.



Gauny, as Rancière's alter ego, is channeled when Rancière writes in *Le Philosophe Plébicien*:

There is no point waiting for a future in which one could enjoy the leisure of being at once a shepherd, then a fisherman, then a hunter and then at the end of the day a critical thinker. It is best to start the day by thinking critically about hunting. Now is the time to conquer for ourselves inside and against the tyranny of work, the body and soul of a philosophical leisure. (Rancière in Gauny, 1983 : 17)⁶⁸

Both Gauny and Rancière exemplify a call to action and the highest end to which free time can be put. They answer the question: "What is time well spent?" Gauny's uncompromising stand is remarkable. To live as if Marx's utopian vision was already here during a time when working conditions were stultifying is exceptional. While Gauny had the alibi of work that would perhaps rightly exempt him from taking leisure as he saw fit, western moderns in our contemporary period do not have that luxury. We are burdened with leisure, the leisure imaginary describes all the ways that we adjust that burden. The body and soul of philosophical leisure is not won over from the demands of work but from the demands of the leisure imaginary. We have a choice here. We can treat the feat of

⁶⁸ This translation is a collaborative effort between myself and my two French friends, Tododjim Mali and Aurelio Ayala.

Gauny and his ilk as exceptional, a historical anomaly that we observe perhaps nodding our heads in approval or even silently cheering from the side lines in spectator fashion or we can treat Gauny as an inspiration, an avatar of the possible in leisure, a hero worth following. As Davis writes of Gauny,

Such is the suggestive singularity of his undertaking that we are invited to regard it not as a set of choices to be contemplated with dispassionate analytic interest but rather as an incitement and an invitation to follow...in our own individual way...to pursue with application [our] own autonomous intellectual-aesthetic-political path (2010: 161).

The exemplary life of Gauny and the writings of Rancière are calls to intellectual, political, and aesthetic exploration, to a passionate thinking, to philosophical leisure – that best of all leisures that Gauny demonstrates is always ready at hand but rarely courted. Gauny has thrown down the gauntlet. What Gauny teaches us is that the leisure to think is always available to us, and that if we but open our eyes we will find the gauntlet of philosophical leisure has been thrown down in front of us. But our eyes increasingly pass over it. Gauny was always aware that it existed. It teased him and beckoned to him until finally, Saint-Simonianism granted him access. What Louis-Gabriel Gauny and his companions also teach us is that there is a cost to taking up the gauntlet of philosophical leisure and in late modernity we perhaps have good reason to let it lie.

One of the great ironies of the Saint-Simonian worker's emancipation is that in overcoming alienation in the Marxist sense, many working class Saint-Simonians flirted with Durkheimian anomie. There is something that is troubling about Davis's

pronouncement, that we have to follow in our “own individual way” our own “autonomous-aesthetic-political path” (Ibid.). In Gauny’s time this path was well known. It was simply seen to be barred to the vast majority of people. There was no need to hunt down philosophical leisure. For Rancière writing in the late 70’s “the body and soul of a philosophical leisure” was to be conquered “for ourselves inside and against the tyranny of work” (1983: 17). What was to be sought, was philosophical leisure. In late modernity we are more isolated and alone than ever and the threats to identity and community constant. It might be argued that we live in a continuous state of anomie. If leisure time now is the space in which we seek to embed ourselves in the cosmos, to reduce anomie, why would we choose to embrace philosophical leisure? In Gauny’s time the worker’s dream was equality, freedom. In late modernity in our disembedded state we do not dream of freedom but instead dream of becoming embedded, of belonging, of recapturing that solidity that we imagined we had in medieval times and that modernity was supposed to guarantee.

In our age, the body and soul of philosophical leisure is not to be conquered inside and against the tyranny of work but instead against the tyranny of the leisure imaginary that compels us in our need to embed ourselves to either not think too deeply and direct our energies towards mundane entertainments and amusements or to pursue privately constructed paradises. To follow Gauny’s example, to carve a path in “in our own individual way” is incredibly daunting and dangerous, in that we flirt with losing

ourselves. This is why we are dominated by consumerism and sometimes by foolish quests and useless battles. This is also why there is a need to hunt down the fate of philosophical leisure in the dark and dense wood that is late modernity. For our own individual sake and for the sake of future generations, we need to be able to see the forest for the trees, to be able to recapture the idea and value of philosophical leisure.

We now have the examples of Louis-Gabriel Gauny and the art of angling as examples of philosophical leisure. The former shows us that philosophical leisure can be won in any circumstance, the latter provides an example of a setting in which philosophical leisure (albeit subtly) is preserved in our present day.

4.3 CONCLUSION

There are many leisure imaginaries emerging out of our modern social imaginary, all oriented towards a reckoning with the world and our place in it. Though there are many examples which I could explicate as a major case, in the next chapter, I deal with one case that clearly demonstrates the possibilities of the leisure imaginary I foreshadowed earlier in this dissertation.

Recently, in the wake of responses to large-scale catastrophes like Hurricane Katrina, the practices of tourism and pilgrimage have become more visibly linked with a third element, that of theodicy. This chapter explores the relationship among tourism, pilgrimage and theodicy through an explication of their imaginary structures, structures

that make intelligible members' travel to participate in volunteer work on the post-Katrina Gulf Coast. I utilize the notion of theodyssey to understand what at first glance appears to be a curious blend of pilgrimage-like and tourism-like practices. The notion of "mission tourism" is employed to describe these practices more fully. In addition to issues of authenticity and care for the self and other that this practice raises, it raises the problem of 'mission,' of needing to see oneself as on a mission. To problematize or otherwise intervene in the leisure imaginary of *Theodyssey*, I explore the tension between pleasure and seriousness and our uncomfortableness with this ethical collision.

Chapter 5 Theodyssey: the Leisure Imaginary of Mission Tourism

“There’s nothing more dangerous than some asshole who thinks he’s on a holy mission.”

Dean – Supernatural, Season 4 *It’s the Great Pumpkin*, Sam Winchester

The great perplexity of our time, the churning of our age, is that the youth have sensed--for better or for worse--a great social-historical truth: that just as there are useless self-sacrifices in unjust wars, so too is there an ignoble heroics of whole societies: it can be the viciously destructive heroics of Hitler's Germany or the plain debasing and silly heroics of the acquisition and display of consumer goods, the piling up of money and privileges that now characterizes whole ways of life, capitalist and Soviet.

Ernest Becker, *Denial of Death*

As an 18-year-old on an extended backpacking trip to the South Pacific, New Zealand and Australia, I had many experiences that transformed my relation to the world and my own self-understanding. At the time, I was trying to come to terms with the death of a childhood friend Mark. He had been someone whom I admired for his courage in the face of adversity. He had developed epilepsy when he was 16 due to a head injury suffered in a car crash but didn't let his epilepsy affect his goals and dreams, one of which was to travel extensively on the kind of backpacking trip that has become a rite of passage for many youth today. Growing up in the beautiful Okanagan Valley in British Columbia, we both felt limited by our rather homogeneous culture and wanted to stretch our wings. Mark left for Australia in December of 1987. I had planned to meet up with him a few months later once I had earned enough money. En route to Australia, he stopped off in Hawaii for a few weeks of sun and fun. He had a seizure while surfing at Waikiki, and drowned.

Dream of better lives the kind which never hate
(We should see) Trapped in a state of imaginary
grace
(We should know better) I made a pilgrimage to
save this human's race
(We should see) Never comprehending a race
that's long gone by

(Let's stop the world) I'll stop the world and melt
with you
(Let's stop the world) You've seen the difference
and it's getting better all the time
And there's nothing you and I won't do
(Let's stop the world) I'll stop the world and melt
with you

Modern English, *I Melt with You*

When I first heard the news, I was devastated. It nearly derailed my own travel plans, but within a week, I had resolved to see the trip through, though my focus had been radically altered. I adopted an ascetic, almost severe attitude as I cycled through New Zealand and backpacked through Australia, mostly alone, with the exception of the camaraderie I found on the road and people that I shared experiences with for brief periods of time. I embraced adversity, bad weather, temporary homelessness, and physical discomfort, with a quiet resolve. Throughout the trip, Mark's death was never far from my thoughts. I was exercised by its absurdity. I couldn't understand how God (if he existed) could allow something so senseless to happen. It threw into question my own youthful feelings of immortality, my aspirations, my sense of who I was to become. In a sense, Mark's death structured my trip, a structuring that was to have an impact on the kinds of things I experienced and the kinds of experiences I sought.

The trip also forced me to become open in a way that I had not been before. Without the familiarity of my own culture, friends and family, I had to forge new social relationships, often with people whom I would never have taken up with at home, the homeless, people of different races and sexual orientations and sexual identities. The practical and symbolic structuring of the trip led me to become sensitized to others who had adopted a seeker/pilgrim orientation to their life as a journey. I found out quickly that many of my fellow travelers had their own story of trouble, a loss, suffering, or a struggle with meaninglessness that their journey in some way was helping them to make sense of.

One of the most gratifying and seemingly transformative events on the New Zealand leg of my trip was the experience of participating in relief work after [Cyclone Bola](#) had ravaged the east coast of New Zealand's North Island. At the time of the cyclone, I was staying in a youth hostel in Rotorua. An appeal for volunteer relief workers was broadcast over the television network and I and a group of other backpackers, transported by a local friend Kerry's old red Datsun, headed to Gisborne,

the largest city in the area. My particular group was assigned to Tolaga Bay, a small Maori community about 45 kilometres from Gisborne, and the place where Cyclone Bola had hit hardest.

The relief work was simple but physical. We shoveled out mud and silt filled houses, tore out water soaked walls, and lugged out damaged furnishings. I received a permanent tattoo when I dropped an old gearbox on my knee while I was cleaning out a shed, splitting it open. Silt got inside the wound, creating a permanent souvenir. During the evenings we ate with the Maoris of Tolaga Bay and fellow volunteers, spent time hanging out at the beach, went exploring the area with a young Maori 'guide', and played with the children at the [Marae](#) (holy Maori meeting grounds). Our nights were spent in the Marae with people who had lost their homes in the cyclone. Being allowed to live and sleep at the Marae was a rare thing for pakeha (whites). White volunteers and Maoris ate, worked, slept and endured the snore filled nights together.

*At the end of the week as we were packing up to leave, I distributed some Canada Flag pins (that I had brought on the trip for just such an occasion) to some of the Maori women and children I had befriended. Judging from the women's and children's reactions, this gesture was not taken lightly, and they demonstrated openly their joy with hugs and prayer. For the most part during my stay, the men had been more aloof, so I was a little startled when a large Maori man approached me and asked shyly in a thick kiwi brogue, **"Hey Bro, me and the men would like some of dem pins as well – issat cool Bro?"** I obliged, he stuck a pin in his woolen hat, and we chit-chatted for a while. He thanked me finally, and presented me with the largest bag of marijuana I had ever seen. Driving away from Tolaga Bay with smoke billowing from the beat up old red Datsun, I was high, both from the experience at Tolaga Bay and the smoke from the herb that my fellow travelers were*

busy smoking. I was saturated by the feeling that I had taken part in something deep and profound.

The intimate time shared with those whom I had regarded as fundamentally other seemed almost magical. I recaptured some of this feeling on other occasions during my sojourn in Oceania where I found communion with people of different backgrounds, people who were often on the margins of society. We came together at youth hostels, hitchhiking or cycling from point A to B, and at the homes of people living alternative lifestyles, where there was openness to sharing lives for a brief but intense period.

Nearly 20 years later, in the spring of 2007, in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, I once again had the opportunity to travel and engage in volunteer relief work activities. A friend of mine at a local church had been down to the Gulf Coast to help out with the initial clean up after Katrina and his Church was organizing another trip, this time to provide support to rebuilding efforts.

In many ways the experience of volunteering at the Gulf Coast mirrored the experience at Tolaga Bay nearly two decades prior. For a week, I worked and slept in open quarters with people I either did not know at all or with whom I only had a passing acquaintance. The members of my group shared our lives for that brief time and in that space not only with each other and with volunteers from across the United States and beyond, but also with the local people. Our group formed a close bond with one woman, an African-American grandmother whose house had been damaged by the Hurricane. Sandra, whose house our group worked on and who we grew very close to, raised our spirits with her infectious joyousness and hopefulness. In our time off, we hung out at the camp, took little trips to view devastated areas, partied in the French Quarter of New Orleans with Sandra one evening, and attended a full-gospel church with her one Sunday.

The volunteer experience was overwhelmingly positive for our group. We developed feelings of togetherness in part coming from working together for Sandra. We also connected with other volunteers, particularly a young volunteer from Belgium whom we ‘adopted’ into our group. We transcended some of the boundaries within our group, primarily those of status and age, where younger members of the church developed a more relaxed familiarity with older members.

Alongside talk of the service we were doing in the name of God for our fellow ‘man’, there were those among us who spoke of the experience as a kind of therapy. As one fellow stated, “this is a chance to focus on someone else’s problems and put your own into perspective.” Others talked of the personal growth that was taking place. There were those, particularly single young women, who played up the romantic aspect, where part of the attraction of the trip was the titillating possibility of “meeting someone.” Young men talked about relishing the experience of adventure and the physicality of the work.

There were also struggles. Some struggled in an ongoing way with understanding why Katrina had happened in the first place. Others struggled with the guilt of behaving like ‘tourists’. The members of our groups were handed a final struggle when two weeks after we returned from the Gulf Coast, we got the horrible news that our friend Sandra had been shot in the very house we had helped to rebuild, the victim of a murder suicide. Losing a friend that had been so important to our mission in such a senseless manner was an irony that was almost too much and reopened the breach that some of us had sought to repair with our volunteer labour.

I have opened this chapter with an experiential description in order to provide examples of the kinds of practices and meanings that the chapter considers and which are

emblematic of a difficult to articulate form of travel. They should be immediately understandable to we “moderns” who participate in travel, particularly those of us who orient towards travel as a special category of meaningful activity. In part, these experiences highlight those travels that are imagined as part of a spiritual journey that can originate in a major life event, for example the death of a close friend or the destruction of a coastline or city, and which force a striving to comprehend consistent with a breach or rupture in the fabric of one’s reality. These kinds of travels are also imagined as opportunities for service, pleasure, romance, adventure, and self-development. As such, these travels contain both religious and secular elements and when formulated as a broad social practice, can be understood as a new form of travel – volunteer or *mission tourism*.

The experiential description above shows how social actors respond to and make creative use of ineffable tragedies. Solidarity and a temporary sense of community is created. *Losing a friend that had been so important to our mission in such a senseless manner was an irony that was almost too much and reopened the breach that some of us had sought to repair with our volunteer labour.* In the end however, each of us has to deal with the uncomfortable truth of our own and others inevitable death.

5.1 BACKGROUND

In addition to the “mission” trip I took to the Gulf Coast in 2007, since 2008, I have lead groups of students to New Orleans during the university reading week on volunteer

or service-learning trips to the Lower Ninth Ward. Originally we partnered with *Common Ground Relief*, a non-profit operating in the Lower Ninth Ward, ground zero for the devastation that hit the city and the site of a spectacular levee breach. The first year, operating out of McMaster University, we acted as media support and brought down video cameras provided by the McMaster Communications and Multimedia Department in order to create promotional material for Common Ground. We were given access to locals, volunteers, and activists to record their perspectives on the disaster. In subsequent years students and I volunteered doing gutting and painting, house deconstruction, rebuilding, and finally wetland restoration. On several of these years, Mardi Gras coincided with reading week, providing both an impetus for students to travel to New Orleans and demonstrating explicitly the connection between the pursuit of pleasure and volunteering. Students on these trips incorporated the volunteer experience into courses I was teaching at the time like sociology of tourism, sociology of community, news analysis, and especially qualitative research methods, where they conducted qualitative research on volunteer tourism. Hundreds of hours of data and video have been collected over a period of over five years. Two documentary films have been produced out of this material. *Disaster Tours* (2010) is in use in WLU's SY101 online introduction to sociology course and in the University of Calgary's Community-Engaged Learning program where it is employed to teach reflexivity in relation to service learning trips to New Orleans. *Conflicting Prescriptions* (2009) was shown at the 2009 Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association annual conference in New Orleans. The

following case study is a sustained reflection on these collected materials as well as other data in the form of media. Appendices 1, 2, and 3 contain the forms and questionnaires from the various institutions that authorized the collection of data.

5.2 HURRICANE KATRINA AND THEODYSSEY

In our contemporary world, travel continues to undergo transformation. Tourism, a modern mode of travel, has been variously characterized as participation in a pseudo-event (Boorstin, 1961), a quest for authenticity or the sacred (MacCannell, 1976; Graburn (1977), and a form of pleasurable consumption (Urry, 2002). Contemporary pilgrimage has much in common with tourism as both are voluntary and seemingly reflect the modern ethos of individualism. In theory and practice the two categories of travel are largely understood to be separate. Recently, in the wake of responses to large-scale catastrophes like Hurricane Katrina, the practices of tourism and pilgrimage have become more visibly linked with a third element, that of theodicy. Using Taylor's (2004) concept of the social imaginary, this chapter explores the relationship among tourism, pilgrimage and theodicy through an explication of their imaginary structures, structures that make intelligible members' travel to participate in volunteer work on the post-Katrina Gulf Coast. I utilize the notion of theodyssey to understand what at first glance appears to be a curious blend of pilgrimage-like and tourism-like meanings and practices, what I call the leisure imaginary of theodyssey.

As an exemplary case, mission or volunteer tourism does several things. It further develops the connection between the social imaginary and leisure imaginary while at the same time rehabilitating the place of pleasure in serious activity. It also makes explicit the connection to death and the identity and community building work that is part of the metaphor of “rebuilding.”



For months, Hurricane Katrina commanded the collective gaze of North Americans and to a lesser degree the world. People everywhere, were instantaneously made aware of developments as they unfolded, remaining riveted for hours to their televisions. The mass media ensured that the spectacle of Katrina was diffused across a wide range of boundaries such as class, nationality and gender, boundaries that in earlier times were less permeable or were not part of our symbolic order. This direct and equal access to “experience” as Taylor (2004) has noted, is integral to the shaping of our modern social imaginaries. Hurricane Katrina, like the Kennedy assassination, like the death of Princess Diana, was an event that happened simultaneously for millions of people. For months people were brought together as a nation and as a North American continent in the collective participation of the viewing of the spectacle of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. From this collective involvement a public dialogue over the reasons for Katrina sprang forth easily. The theodic element, borne of myths, stories, and legends, was being invoked.

5.2.1 Theodic Discourses and Katrina

The immediacy of access provided by the direct access society ensured that people were saturated with both religious and secular discourses on the “reasons” for Hurricane Katrina. As images of the devastation were beamed around the world, people everywhere and especially in North America, where coverage was ongoing and where the impact of Katrina was felt and imagined most acutely, wanted and expected answers. How could this happen? Why? New Orleans became both the focus and the locus for the emergence of theodicies that could account for the destruction that Katrina had wrought.

There were two main related theodic discourses that emerged from Christian America, generated in response to the problem of natural evil that Hurricane Katrina presented: Augustinian and Irenaean. Both link Katrina to the existence of free will and posit that a world where human beings exercise free choice and can undergo moral development requires the presence of the natural evil that was Katrina. This emphasis on moral development and its relation to external rewards and punishment is implicit in the term “theodicy” which combines the Greek words *god* and *justice*. The main theodic solution to the problem of evil, highlighted in the media (and that might be considered “predictably” American), concerned the notion that Hurricane Katrina was sent by God as punishment for the sins of the people of America and in particular New Orleans. This solution was already well established in the public imagination before Katrina hit. For example, Reverend Bill Shanks, the pastor of New Covenant Fellowship of New Orleans, had for years,

warned people that unless Christians in New Orleans took a strong stand against such things as local abortion clinics, the yearly Mardi Gras celebrations, and the annual event known as "Southern Decadence" -- an annual six-day "gay pride" event scheduled to be hosted by the city this week -- God's judgment would be felt (quoted in [Brown](#) and Martin, 2005).

The Augustinian version of the free will theodicy that Shanks promulgated was particularly easy to apply to Katrina's destruction of New Orleans. The cataclysmic, biblical flooding of the city, combined with its "moral ills," rendered it tailor-made for this punitive interpretation. Even before the hurricane had landed, an imaginative structure was already in place to impart meaning. Others besides Shanks drew the same conclusions and disseminated the same theodicy discourse of punishment for sins. Reverend [Dwight McKissic](#), senior pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas stated:

'New Orleans flaunts sin in a way that no other places do. They call it the Big Easy. There are 10 abortion clinics in Louisiana; five of those are in New Orleans. They have a Southern Decadence parade every year and they call it gay pride. When you study Scripture, it's not out of the boundaries of God to punish a nation for sin and because of sin. When I look at our country, at what's happening, and what's happening in New Orleans in particular, it's not beyond the realm of possibility.'
(quoted in Crawford, 2005)

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, it seemed that Reverend Shanks' prophecies had come true, and in his speeches after Katrina, he emphasized that God's righteous judgment had been handed down.

'New Orleans now is abortion free. New Orleans now is Mardi Gras free. New Orleans now is free of Southern Decadence and the sodomites, the witchcraft workers, false religion -- it's free of all of those things now... God simply, I believe, in His mercy purged all of that stuff out of there -- and now we're going to start over again.' (quoted in [Brown](#) and Martin, 2005).

These conservative religious leaders had given voice to a strong theodicy, strong in its simplicity, and in its consonance with much of the Christian and secular public's imagining of New Orleans as 'decadent'. For this section of the population, mostly on the Christian right, New Orleans had been punished by God, "purged" of evil, of "sodomites", and was now ripe as a place to "start over again." The fact that 'sin central', the French Quarter of New Orleans, had largely been spared, was conveniently missing from the rhetoric of Shanks. This fact also seemed to escape the notice of the group "Repent America" when they claim that Katrina had put an end to "Southern Decadence", a gay pride festival held annually in the New Orleans French Quarter:

'Southern Decadence' has a history of filling the French Quarter section of the city with drunken homosexuals engaging in sex acts in the public streets and bars. Last year, a local pastor sent video footage of sex acts being performed in front of police to the mayor, city council, and the media. City officials simply ignored the footage and continued to welcome and praise the weeklong celebration as being an "exciting event." *However, Hurricane Katrina has put an end to the annual celebration of sin* (emphasis mine) (Repent America, 2005).

Repent America's director Michael Marcavage goes on to admonish the public: "We must help and pray for those ravaged by this disaster, but let us not forget that the citizens of New Orleans tolerated and welcomed the wickedness in their city for so long...May this act of God cause us all to think about what we tolerate in our city limits, and bring us trembling before the throne of Almighty God" (Repent America, 2005). Marcavage legitimates the destruction of New Orleans as a collective punishment of its citizens for their culpability in tolerating evil in their city. However, his analysis ignores the

important empirical fact that the French Quarter largely escaped being damaged by the Hurricane. Perhaps a visit to the French Quarter would have given Mr. Marcavage pause. There he may have encountered people like Gail Henke, a 53 year old resident of the French Quarter who shortly after the Hurricane, celebrated the Quarter's survival by enjoying a vodka and cranberry juice at a Bourbon Street bar proclaiming "You know what? There's a reason why we're called the Saints... I'm not a religious fanatic. But God has saved us" (Associated Press and Knight Ridder Newspapers, 2005). Obviously, the fact that the French Quarter was left largely untouched by Katrina did not stop the Christian right from trumpeting the rhetoric of victory over evil and proclaiming that the wicked had been punished, an indication that this theodicy resonated with much of the population. However this was not the only theodicy that captured the public imagination. The doctrine of punishment for sins explicit in the Augustinian theodicy and widely circulated in the media, stood alongside a more subtle and less publicized imagining, that of Katrina as an opportunity to demonstrate God's grace.

This interpretation offered up for the Christian the opportunity for spiritual growth and the demonstration of virtue. In line with this thinking, Reverend Jim Kelley interprets Hurricane Katrina in this almost antipodal way. He, along with many moderate Christians did not understand Hurricane Katrina as evidence of God's wrath against a wicked people, but instead, echoing people like the French Quarter's Gail Henke, as evidence of God's mercy and grace.

‘Imagine what would have happened if [New Orleans] had taken a direct hit...The levee did not break until after the storm was clear and the winds had died down and the rescue workers were able to get out.’ Had the levee given way during the hurricane, he says, ‘untold thousands of people’ would have been killed.

‘It’s a terrible *tragedy* (emphasis mine),’ Kelley says of the devastation in and around New Orleans, “and we still don’t know the scope of it -- but the evidences of God’s mercy are there. We rejoice in the fact that He has got the whole world in His hands, including the city of New Orleans.’

‘When we get to the end of this story,’ he says, ‘the last paragraph is going to be a testimony to the greatness and glory of our God, who is able to do all things well, and able to provide every need.’
(quoted in [Brown](#) and Martin, 2005)

In contrast to Shanks and McKissic, Kelley interprets Hurricane Katrina as not as a punishment but a *tragedy*, not as a sign of God’s wrath but of God’s mercy, and, of hope. The subtext that underlies his words is the idea that from the tragedy of the hurricane emerges the opportunity to demonstrate God’s glory. McKissic’s framing of the event allows him to see Katrina as part of the ongoing story of humanity’s overcoming of suffering, where the natural evil of Katrina references John Hicks, Irenaean inspired “vale of soul making” theodicy (Stewart, 1998).

In this Irenaean configuration, Hicks holds that overcoming natural evil presents an opportunity for spiritual growth where “God’s purpose is to lead us from mere biological life...to a qualitatively improved spiritual life” (1998: 220). Thus for more liberal Christians, those likely animated by an Irenaean interpretation of Katrina, the hurricane presented an opportunity to form the soul through demonstrating the virtues of “trust

(faith), generosity, kindness, the agape aspect of love, prudence, unselfishness" (Hicks, 1983: 48). Ted Olsen, a writer for *Christianity Today*, clearly articulates this Irenaean imagining of Katrina with these eloquent words that account for the unprecedented amount of money that was raised for hurricane relief by Christian groups. "We give because of who we are: people created in the image of God to give, for giving is an act of love. We were made to give. And one of the beautiful outcomes of Katrina's terrible devastation is that Americans have shared in this blessing, this common grace" (November, 2005). Hicks's "vale of soul making" theodicy is more difficult to detect in the mainstream reporting on Hurricane Katrina but is strongly represented in the Christian press as the above example indicates. It seems that the "vale of soul making" theodicy was largely subsumed by a media focus on the more secular issues of social justice and social change, as the images displayed on the screen demonstrated that extreme poverty and racism were acute social problems, a message that was trumpeted by celebrities like Oprah Winfrey and Brad Pitt, celebrities who in addition to contributing funds, flocked to the Gulf Coast for the photo op and to participate in the spectacle. There was also a secular focus on the 'causes' of the disaster as well, as many blamed U.S. Government inaction on the levees and climate change for the destruction.

In the clear absence of any clearly human caused disaster, such as the human error that eventuated in the Exxon Valdez oil spill, people generally turn to imaginaries such as theodicies. In the case of Hurricane Katrina, both human and supernatural causes for the

disaster were invoked. A kind of secular theodicy arose where blame was attached to the US government for its inaction with regards to repairing the levees and for failing to cut carbon emissions, many people linking Hurricane Katrina to global warming. Quoting popular fiction writer Michael Crichton, one commentator observed that the environmentalist constructs nature as an Eden that humankind gradually befouls, where nature moves “from a state of grace, to a fall from grace into a state of pollution as a result from eating from the tree of knowledge, and as a result of our actions there is a judgment day coming for us all” (Crichton in Goldberg, 2005). This interpretation eerily mirrors the Augustinian theodicy and highlights the need in our culture to almost ritually designate a scapegoat. This characterization of environmentalist logic rings true and perhaps demonstrates how deeply theodicies, and the Augustinian theodicy in particular are embedded in the modern western social imaginary. Post-disaster, these theodicies slipped easily from the tongues of politicians.

In the American political realm, one which is unapologetically tied to religion, the Mayor of New Orleans, African American Ray Nagin, has relied on both Augustinian and Irenaean interpretations of Hurricane Katrina in his public communications. The Augustinian theodicy was referenced in his widely criticized “Chocolate City [speech](#)” commemorating the birthday of Martin Luther King, where he stated that Katrina had smashed New Orleans because God was angry not only with America but with black America in particular:

And as we think about rebuilding New Orleans, surely God is mad at America, he's sending hurricane after hurricane after hurricane and it's destroying and putting stress on this country. Surely he's not approving of us being in Iraq under false pretense. But surely he's upset at black America, also. We're not taking care of ourselves. We're not taking care of our women. And we're not taking care of our children when you have a community where 70 percent of its children are being born to one parent. (The Times Picayune, January 17, 2006).

While the media focused on the blaming element of his speech, on the “wake up call” to America and black America in particular, immediately understandable as Augustinian in its focus, there was also embedded in the speech a notion of caring for the other. There is a call to Americans to care for themselves, for women, and for children. While not part of the media attention this notion of care is important as it references the less severe Irenaean solution to the problem of Katrina, a solution badly needed. This notion of care is more evident in a publicized email where the Augustinian interpretation of the Katrina disaster is not used and where the power of faith-based institutions is called on. In an email Nagin writes:

the churches, synagogues, mosques and other religious institutions are the foundation for many people's lives here. I do not make decisions for my city based on faith. Rather my faith gives me the capacity to continue *hoping*, *striving*, and *working* to rebuild New Orleans...I just want to plead with everyone. These are extraordinary circumstances. If there was ever a time for us to come together as neighbors, as friends, this is that time (Varney, 2005; emphasis mine).

Here we see a different discourse from Nagin, one more in line with an Irenaean solution to the problem of evil and one clearly targeted to a local as opposed to national audience. The cynic might argue that Nagin appears to adopt different discursive strategies depending on the population he is addressing. Both Augustinian and Irenaean theodicies as expressed in the rhetoric of Church leaders and politicians are also meant to provide an

explanation for Hurricane Katrina that is consonant with shared worldviews, the collective social imaginary. Irenaean and Augustinian sentiments are routinely invoked as part of the cleanup and rebuilding process where they encourage the melding of spirituality with collective action. It can be added that Christian relief work was authorized by two sometimes conflicting desires that emerged out of these theodicies: 1) a desire to “clean up” evil, and perhaps to fix and teach, an Augustinian orientation, and 2) a desire to serve and to develop spiritually, an Irenaean orientation. I do not want to maintain that people hold on to these as separate understandings, rather, in much the same way as the Augustinian and Irenaean theodicies are both part of Nagin’s imaginary, they are also part of the imaginary of the everyday actor. They provide an overall imaginary, one composed of Augustinian, Irenaean and secular theodicies, which allow the public to interpret the disaster and act. In addition to the amazing amount of donations, one of the surprising outcomes of Hurricane Katrina was the unprecedented way in which Christians in particular, from all over North America and beyond, heeded the call of these theodic imaginings, and traveled great distances to assist in the cleanup and rebuilding of the post-Katrina Gulf Coast. Travels under these circumstances are extraordinary and testify to something beyond what these theodicies activated. Also, the ethic of care for the other which we can trace to the rise of the notion of basic human rights is part of this backdrop. Obviously, the imaginary of theodicy is only part of the leisure imaginary of theodyssey. The imaginaries of mission as pilgrimage and tourism provide additional meaning structures for the practice of volunteer or mission tourism to the post-Katrina Gulf Coast.

5.2.2 Mission and the Imaginary of Pilgrimage

As I have already outlined, any disaster brings into play the imaginary of theodicy – that defense of God’s goodness that can take many forms, but that with regards to Christian interpretations for the reasons for Hurricane Katrina, was primarily Augustinian and/or Irenaean. The story of Hurricane Katrina was and is in many ways a story of re-imagining how society responds to a major crisis. Many observers were surprised that while State and National organizations were relatively slow to act in addressing Hurricane Katrina, faith-based organizations acted immediately to provide living space for victims, manpower for cleanup and rebuilding, and large amounts of funding. For example, the Washington Post’s list of the top ten private charities involved with Katrina relief included six faith-based organizations of which the two largest contributors, the Salvation Army and Catholic Charities USA, raised \$336 million and \$142.2 million respectively. As of February 2006, faith based organizations were in control of a majority of the remaining funds for hurricane relief (Salmon and Smith, 2006). In addition to donating funds, many people affiliated with faith based organizations donated their time and labor to the relief efforts. Faith-based organizations in the disaster area immediately set up missions to service the survivors. Churches in areas not affected, some as far away as Canada, connected with these faith based organizations and mounted mission trips. A tremendous flow of volunteer resources and manpower made its way to the Gulf Coast in the weeks and months after Hurricane Katrina. What was it in addition to the imaginary of theodicy that inspired this large scale movement of people to deliver aid? What additional

imaginaries animated this practice? My goal in this section of the chapter is to sketch the imaginaries that propelled both Christians and non-Christians to go beyond monetary donations, and to donate their skills, time, and labour to the task of cleaning up and rebuilding the post-Katrina Gulf Coast, to undertake what in Christian and secular terms was a *mission*.

Three definitions of mission are particularly germane to this discussion. I draw them from the online American Heritage Dictionary. First, mission can be understood as “a group of persons sent by a church to carry on religious work, esp. evangelization in foreign lands, and often to establish schools, hospitals, etc.” A second definition is mission as *rescue mission*, for example “a shelter operated by a church or other organization offering food, lodging, and other assistance to needy persons.” One last relevant definition is of mission as “an assigned or self-imposed duty or task; calling; vocation” ([Random House, 1997](#)).

These three definitions of mission correspond directly to the way missions to the post-Katrina Gulf Coast were constructed: 1) the mission is at the outset authorized by the church with the purpose of undertaking a special spiritual task; 2) the receiving mission shelter becomes the primary destination of the volunteer and locus of mission activities, a sacralized liminal space, and 3) existentially, many Christians that participate in the mission are felt to have been “called” or make the journey out of a sense of duty. Most dictionary

definitions of mission, relate mission to vocation, highlighting its deeply meaningful, devotional character.

Practically, the opportunities for Christian mission in the context of Hurricane Katrina are managed by the church of origin, where the church of origin becomes responsible for the ‘sending’ of the group, organizing the trip (making contacts, booking flights, providing funds) and the receiving church or religious agency, which structures the experience (organizes work parties, supplies food and lodging, provides leisure opportunities). The modern structure of mission mirrors the structure of modern pilgrimage.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines pilgrimage in two ways:

- 1). A journey to a sacred place or shrine and
- 2) A long journey or search, especially one of exalted purpose or moral significance.”

The journey to the post-Katrina Gulf Coast for the Christian volunteer was one of ‘exalted purpose’ and had high ‘moral significance’. Both provided a religious context for the journey. The idea of service or “good works” is central here as it is one of the principal elements of Christian praxis. The media also plays a role in creating the imaginary of modern mission as pilgrimage by constructing particular sites as sacred. Given the extensive media coverage of Katrina and the recognizability of the cities and landmarks that were affected, the City of New Orleans with the icons of the Superdome, Ninth Ward, and the French Quarter, took on an even more mythical and exalted status as these sites became sacralized, through being continually bathed in the media spotlight. In this

way, they enter the imaginary of pilgrimage as sacred sites. The journey to a sacred site that is infused with exalted status forms part of the symbolic order of pilgrimage.

Anthropologist of pilgrimage, Victor Turner, alerts us to other relevant elements.

For Turner, modern pilgrimages, “unlike the mindless collective migrations familiar in ancient and medieval times, are *voluntary* and *individual*. Each is a personal act, following a personal decision, and resulting in a wide range of significant personal experience...” (1973: 198; emphasis mine). This change in pilgrimage form references the “great disembedding” and the move towards individualization that was discussed earlier. However, this is not the complete story of modern pilgrimage, as in the case of mission tourism, pilgrimage retains or perhaps reasserts some of its collective “medieval” ritual function. Vestiges of the old notion of ritual pilgrimage can be seen imbricated with the new. Here, the involvement of the Church further demonstrates the affinity between Christian mission in the context of Katrina and old and new forms of pilgrimage. Turner’s perhaps slightly too dismissive rendering of medieval pilgrimage as “mindless,” glosses over something important medieval pilgrimages accomplished. As a form of collective ritual, they served to embed people in community, while at the same time connecting them with the transcendent. This references the medieval function of pilgrimage, part of the older, latent social imaginary. The more modern version of pilgrimage indicates a different mode of belonging. Turner and Turner emphasize that modern pilgrims are “offered liberation from profane social structures...in order to

intensify the pilgrim's attachment to his own religion..." (1978: 9). The voluntary and individual nature of modern pilgrimage is productive of a different sort of community experience, what he calls *communitas*, what might be better understood as a temporary state of communion which is not fixed to place, in the sense that a community is and that therefore departs with medieval notions. Earlier forms of pilgrimage emphasized the collective nature of the pilgrimage where participants went on the pilgrimage as representatives of place-bound communities, which reinforced and strengthened the communities of origin. The same can be said somewhat of mission tourism to the post-Katrina Gulf Coast. In addition to modern and medieval orientations to community elements, mission tourism contains the ritual structure of pilgrimage as it follows precisely the model of pilgrimage put forward by Turner. Turner's model is based on the ritual process outlined in van Gennep's (1960) *The Rites of Passage* which highlights the three stages: separation, liminality, and incorporation which can be seen in the structure of modern mission tourism. Church members traveled to the Gulf Coast as a group and as representatives of the Church who sponsored them. They take part in a liminal experience, a liberation from the structures of the church and everyday life. Upon returning, the group shares their experiences with the church in a ritual of return.

Theologian Emanuel Katongole, in a July 2007 article in *Christianity Today*, echoes the claim that I have made regarding the modern equivalency of mission with pilgrimage. This perhaps indicates the practice's wider cultural resonance as part of the new leisure

imaginary of theodyssey. In stating, with regards to missions, that “we need to learn another model – mission as pilgrimage,” he references both the literal and metaphorical structure of pilgrimage as a journey.

“Paul says that “we are ambassadors of God’s reconciliation, God is appealing through us,” he is inviting us into a journey into a new kind of community...In revelation, John sees people drawn from all languages and tribes and nations: an unprecedented congregation. Living on three continents has deepened my understanding of the church as such a congregation; at the same time it has heightened my sense of Christian life as a journey and what it means to live as a pilgrim, a resident alien (cited in Crouch, 2007: 34).

Certainly here we can see in Katongole’s talk, the notion of the modern Christian individual and his solitary relationship with God, the product of the great disembedding discussed by Taylor (2004). What is also present in Katongole’s talk is a reinterpretation of mission that reconstructs ideas of community away from the tribal and national and towards the global. This redefinition of mission by Katongole, represents the form of theorizing described by Taylor whereby a practice is reinterpreted. Katongole’s theorizing would appear to be authorized on the basis of his experiencing of the practice, demonstrating how his theorizing is developed dialectically. The “new” theory of mission as pilgrimage emerges from practice and fertilizes the social with new possibilities, a leisure imaginary. Katongole’s practical and theoretical encounter with mission as pilgrimage allows him to conclude that “pilgrimage is a particular form of journeying that involves a number of elements, including encounter, reflection, transformation, and the readiness to be drawn into a new sense of community with those different from us” (39). Katongole also indirectly sanctions an Irenaean relation to mission and rejects the Augustinian one

when he states that “mission as pilgrimage is about transformation. It’s not about fixing...” (38).

Through sharing simple collective experiences, Katongole sees the mission form of pilgrimage as being able to break down barriers between cultures and create mutual understanding, a stance that echoes Taylor’s (2004) purpose in writing *Modern Social Imaginaries* and plays on the humanitarian thrust of the basic human dignity embedded in *care for the other*. Katongole indirectly references Turner’s notions of pilgrimage, liminality, and the relation to *communitas*. For Katongole, transformation is understood to be brought about through communing with people that are different and emphasizing simple collective rituals, reminiscent of medieval ritual practices such as feasting. He uses an imaginary encounter between Africans and Americans to illustrate.

“Most Africans see America through Hollywood or through the news about the war in Iraq. *These Americans*, people think, *they are a war-loving people*. But if they are able to connect with real individuals and to eat and drink with them, a new journey of mutual transformation might begin. There is a Rwandan proverb, “Unless you hear the mouth eating, you cannot hear the mouth crying.” You have to begin by eating together. Then you begin to realize that the dividing wall has been broken down, and we are no longer strangers.

Students who went on volunteer trips with me often romanticized this aspect of their contact with locals and the temporary intense togetherness they experienced.

Some of us had the chance to really form personal connections with locals and long-term volunteers. Even though many of the relationships that we built were temporary we all took something away from them. The most impactful relationships that were formed however were with the group that we travelled with as most of our time was

spent with these people. We grew together as a group, had the chance to share connections and hear first-hand stories from people who endured the hurricane and were able to re-group and support each other through the good and bad.

On my most recent trip to New Orleans a former student who was down with me for the third time, in a moment of reflection stated that the primary reason he was on the trip was to recapture those feelings of intense togetherness and bonding that he had experienced on previous trips. All of the students that I have gone down with have created their own Facebook and google groups where they share pictures and stories, commemorate the experience and on the anniversary of the trip often post comments and well-wishes in the group. The emotional “charge” that volunteers get is apparent in the talk of students. One student, Kerry, speaks of the emotionally chargedness, but also the potentially reflexive and absurd character of interacting with locals when he talks of his experience in New Orleans.

I have never been to ...a working class black family in the heart of the American South. That's a pretty extreme intercultural experience for me...It was intense, but it was hilarious and wonderful and so educational. Sometimes you are made to face certain stereotypes you hold you know...and also deal with awkwardness. Peter and I, could you imagine any more politically correct, inoffensive, white, middle-class kids from southern Ontario, you know, in a former Black Panther's house in a working class black neighbourhood in New Orleans...and...like there is a certain absurdity to that because obviously we're a fish out of water and it's funny I think for them too for Malik and his family. They know we're fish out of water and they know it's an

awkward experience and we are just trying to meet in the middle, we're trying to have this dialogue...

It is apparent that pilgrimage is being imagined not only as a powerful way to transform the individual, but as a way of transforming the social. It is the ritual aspect of pilgrimage that opens up opportunities for fellowship and for building community – one of the primary functions of ritual put forward by Turner (1969). The notion of incorporating intimate rituals (like eating together) in creating belonging, meets notions of a global community. This new sense of belonging that Katongole envisions is different than the sense of belonging that was and is enabled by the direct access society. The new sense of belonging is built on the interpersonal ties that age old ritual fosters among individuals and then transplants this bonding mechanism into a global context. The result is a more personal sense of belonging to a common humanity, Falk's (2009) notion of the *citizen pilgrim*. A new emphasis on the ritual function of mission, reimagines mission as pilgrimage and as community builder. It does this in part through rehabilitating older forms of collective ritual behaviour. Ritual acts of eating and working together with diverse others in a liminal environment confer an aura of sacredness on the experience that breaks down barriers among people from diverse backgrounds. While Katongole theorizes mission as pilgrimage as a new paradigm, what is clear is that this “new” form of mission as pilgrimage was already embedded in the social imaginary awaiting the theorist to make it explicit. Certainly, the voluntary and individual as well as collective emphasis on the journey, the creation of community with radically different others, and personal

transformation, all elements of the new pilgrimage imaginary, are and have been around for some time. Mission as pilgrimage is recognizable in the experiences of the young backpacker in New Zealand, the church group doing relief work on the post-Katrina Gulf Coast, and secular volunteers that have accompanied me on subsequent trips to New Orleans to do rebuilding and wetland restoration work. The paradox here is that while the backpacking experience is widely considered to be secular tourism, the relief work at the Gulf Coast is understood to be mission or pilgrimage. In practice, and psychological and social outcome, they can often be equivalent while appearing to be two sides of the same leisure imaginary. Both would also appear to avoid the uncomfortable question of death through subsuming oneself in a common humanity.

Hurricane Katrina presented the Christian (and the unwitting secular hero), particularly one oriented to the Irenaean theodicy, with an ideal opportunity for spiritual growth and increased attachment to the Christian religion through engaging two elements that are central to the Christian faith: the idea of worshipping god through service to one's fellows, and personal development. The focus on these two elements in the liminal environment that the post-Katrina Gulf Coast provided, resonates with Edith and Victor Turner's description of the pilgrim as "one who divests himself of the mundane concomitants of religion – which become entangled with its practice in the local situation – to confront, in a special "far" milieu, the basic elements and structures of his faith in their unshielded virgin radiance" (1978: 15). In fact mission trips have always had an affinity

with both pilgrimage and tourism in that they require travel to a liminal space. I will discuss the importance of liminality later, but for now it is enough to remind the reader that the pilgrimage process put forward by Turner is based on a ritual, van Gennep's (1977: 21) *rite de passage* where people go through three phases: separation, liminality, and finally incorporation. Tourist travel resembles a watered down secular version of this ritual process with its complementary stages of anticipation, realization, and finally, remembrance. I want to go on now to explore how this new imagining of mission as pilgrimage both converges and diverges from imaginings and practices of tourism.

5.2.3 The Leisure Imaginary of Tourism

As was outlined in Chapter 2, modern tourism has been characterized negatively as superficial (Boorstin, 1961) and ultimately nihilistic (McHugh et al., 1974), or in more positive language as a quest for authenticity (MacCannell, 1989 [1976]) or as a sacred journey (Graburn, 1977). Theorists differ over the degree to which they distinguish between the two modes of travel. The purported difference between the two forms has been most often articulated in debates over tourist motivation. For example, Boorstin regards the tourist as shallow, savouring 'pseudo-events' and argues that tourists want "superficial, contrived experiences" (Cohen, 1979: 179). Likewise, Turner and Ash (1976) lament the arrival of the 'Golden Hordes', those hedonistic mass tourists who have dashed the hope of tourism ever acting as an agent of cross-cultural understanding. In the wake

of these scathing criticisms, MacCannell (1989 [1976]) attempted to restore some agency and nobility to the tourist through arguing an almost antipodal perspective. For MacCannell, the tourist (perhaps especially one engaged in relief work on the post-Katrina Gulf Coast) is concerned with encountering the 'authentic,' where she is "a kind of contemporary pilgrim seeking authenticity in other 'times' and other 'places' away from [her] everyday life" (Urry, 1990: 8). MacCannell's original understanding of tourism implicates a Marxist notion of alienation and an attempt to overcome it, arguably a weak attempt. Similarly, Graburn conceives tourism as the modern quest for the sacred and claims that "for Westerners who value individualism, self-reliance, and the work ethic, tourism is the best kind of life for it is sacred in the sense of being exciting, renewing, and inherently self-fulfilling" (1977: 28). Given Taylor's discussion of the alienating aspects of modern individualism, this orientation to tourism might indicate a way for the tourist to steady his/her own identity in a modern/post-modern world that seeks to strip away all distinctions, a search for an Other.

MacCannell points out that "self-discovery through a complex and sometimes arduous search for an Absolute Other is a basic theme of our civilization, a theme supporting an enormous literature: Odysseus, Aeneas, the Diaspora, Chaucer, Christopher Columbus...Mao's Long March" (1989: 5). These mythic texts recall the image of the hero, the intrepid traveler best captured in the story of Odysseus. These journeys of self-

discovery, odysseys, have an equivalency with the imaginary of pilgrimage that I have developed so far. Odysseus means pilgrim.

Homer...sets the tone of this heroic pilgrimage, most obviously in the *Odyssey*, the great epic poem about Odysseus, the wayfarer, the pilgrim (that is what his name means), as he make his homeward way from ruined Troy to Ithaca. His wilderness is a wilderness of sea and islands (the "wine-dark sea", presided over by unfriendly Poseidon, but still within the providence of Zeus), through which he makes his way, beset by peril, trials and temptation, hungering for home (Crouse, 1986).

Particularly in terms of the Greek idea of development captured in the story of Odysseus, and the idea of Christian transformation, there is strong complementarity between this notion of travel or tourism and the notion of pilgrimage. For MacCannell and Graburn, the tourist cast in this mould *is* the modern pilgrim. For those mission tourists oriented to notions of authenticity, post-Katrina New Orleans in particular was a perfect place to encounter Otherness in the chaos that had been wrought, with numerous pilgrimage sites available and taking on an added aura of authenticity due to the cataclysm. Ample opportunity was also present for those that wished to test themselves physically in this heroic landscape through physically demanding volunteering such as gutting houses or doing soil remediation. For those less adventurous or physically capable souls, tour operators provided appropriate fare.

Very soon after the Hurricane hit, travel agencies began to offer 'disaster tours' after observing the fascination many exhibited with gazing on the destruction. On January 4, 2006, Gray Lines New Orleans started offering a "Hurricane Katrina: America's Worst Catastrophe!" [tour](#) (Mowbray, 2005). The appeal to the notion of authenticity and

adventure is illustrated in one of the selling points of “America’s Worst Catastrophe” where the tourist gets to “Drive past an actual levee that “breached” and see the resulting devastation that displaced hundreds of thousands of U.S. residents” (ibid.). While on the surface this kind of tourism may appear bizarre and perhaps unethical, it has a long history. ‘Dark Tourism,’ as this form of tourism has been coined, consists of “the phenomenon which encompasses the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites” (Foley and Lennon, 1996: 198). In addition to highlighting the power of authenticity as a motivating concept, this tourism initiative by Gray-Line underscores the role of the media in sacralizing New Orleans and in particular the Superdome and Ninth Ward. The continuous broadcasting of the drama of human suffering and heroism in these two locations elevated the disaster to almost mythic status – “America’s Worst Catastrophe”.

Taylor’s work on the social imaginary cautions us against dismissing the power of myth, as the social imaginary “is carried in images, stories, and legends” (23). In agreement with this notion of the power of myth, anthropologist Alexander Moore argues that people engage in tourism in order to participate in their own culture’s version of ecumenical myths (1985: 639). People bring with them on their journey a “repertoire of imaginings” or fantasies that constitute the leisure imaginary of theodyssey. Ecumenical myths, as one kind of imagining, are part of the tourist’s cultural luggage. One such ecumenical myth embedded in the modern western and particularly North American

tourist imaginary, is the myth of romance, both in its more archaic elevation of the “hero” who demonstrates courage in the face of adversity, to the consumer imagining of romance, entertained by women mostly, that emphasizes the fantasy aspect of meeting someone on a trip and/or of encountering a hero – Prince Charming. The imaginary of romance has seeped deep into the tourist imaginary through myths, stories and legends, widely circulated in our popular culture through various media such as literature, television, and movies. The idea of the romantic hero hearkens back to the travails of Homer’s Odysseus and his encounter with Otherness as I pointed to earlier with Goethe’s observation at Palermo where everything made sense. In a more contemporary mode, romance novels and films provide for romantic encounters of a personal and erotic nature with ‘others’ situated to fulfill dreamlike fantasies. Examples are Harlequin Romances that are often set in exotic travel locations, as well as feature films, like the Hollywood blockbuster *Titanic* and the “fling on a train” of *Before Sunrise*. Berland captures the more negative and individualistic sense of this romantic element of the leisure imaginary when she observes the behaviour of couples on holiday in Barbados:

‘the couple’ is the overwhelmingly dominant construct in travel...Romantic love is defined and shaped predominantly by a specific spectrum of mutual narcissism and comfortable pragmatism intensified by social and economic sanctions. The touristic experience is an attempt to reclaim a particular, more natural definition of the romantic; away from the banality of the everyday, the environment provides and licences a more sensual dimension within the social formula of mutual dependency. The southern touristic experience is an intensified interval of pleasure, in which scenic backdrop and romance provide reciprocal legitimations for each other (1988: 8).

What is striking is the degree to which individual fulfillment (romance) is seen to reside in the experience of the exotic. This move towards individual fulfillment in the erotic/exotic signals another element of the tourist or tourism imaginary (Svenson and Ruf, 2011; Salazar, 2012) – the pursuit of pleasure as one of the ends of tourism. For John Urry, tourists derive pleasure from viewing extraordinary sights that they would not encounter in everyday life; this orientation towards viewing is the “tourist gaze,” the “romantic gaze” of which is one component (1990, 2002). Imagined pleasures are intimately tied to the construction of the gaze.

Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos, which construct and reinforce that gaze (2002: 3).

While the quest for authenticity and the pursuit of pleasure may seem like contradictory motivations and are often partitioned by theorists such as MacCannell, they are not mutually exclusive. Cohen in his examination of the phenomenological modes of tourist experiences, makes room in the tourist imaginary for essentially all tourist experience and motivations. His modes of touristic experiences are ranked “so that they span the spectrum between the experience of the traveler in pursuit of ‘mere’ pleasure in the strange and the novel, to that of the modern pilgrim in quest for meaning at somebody else’s centre” (1979: 180). His recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental and existential modes relate “to different points of continuum of privately constructed ‘worlds’ of individual travelers ranging between the opposite poles ...of modern tourism on the

one hand and that of the pilgrimage on the other” (Ibid). These poles are in some ways analagous to those of Urry’s tourist that emphasizes the consumption of pleasure and MacCannell’s conception of the tourist as seeking the ‘authentic’. What is noteworthy about Cohen’s typology is that he acknowledges that the tourist can, in fact inhabit more than one mode on a trip or that different trips can be undertaken with different modes. Cohen’s typology shows the multiple dimensions of tourism experience that begin to indicate the complexity of the tourist imaginary that can appear to make tourism everything and nothing. Given the overwhelming nature of Cohen’s claim of continuum, returning to more basic binary distinctions can help restore some footing here.

Urry demonstrates this approach when he states that “tourism results from the basic binary division between the ordinary/everyday and the extraordinary” (2002: 12). This attention to the extraordinary highlights the ways in which volunteering after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita was imagined with regards to this binary. Certainly, with regards to relief activities, the promise of once-in-a-lifetime, extraordinary experience was recognized as something that could capture people’s imagination and move them to action. Appeals for volunteers came across all kinds of media, particularly television. More intimate and personal requests for aid were communicated through interpersonal connections and affiliations with organizations like the church.

While notions of mission and service were overt in the appeals, particularly those that were broadcast through the Church, notions of tourism were also used, referencing the

tourist imaginary. Some of these appeals explicitly used touristic values as a way of enticing volunteers to come and help out, as exemplified in an email I received from a friend who knew of my interest in volunteering at the Gulf Coast. The email, with the header “an invitation to vacation on the Gulf in a Rita-mangled town,” invited volunteers/vacationers to come and help out with the cleanup of Hurricane Rita, which had been largely overshadowed by the mass media focus on Katrina. It highlighted a “once in a lifetime vacation” where one could have “close proximity to the beach, 3 hot meals a day, a laundry service, and hot showers” (Judith Varney, personal communication, May 23, 2006). The emphasis on the “once in a lifetime” indicates the intersubjective cultural knowledge the author of the appeal holds in understanding that people are seeking the extraordinary and that volunteering to help clean up after a hurricane could provide that extraordinary experience. This focus on experiencing the extraordinary, the “once in a life time”, has become an increasing preoccupation of western moderns. Urry argues that once again, the mass media has had a profound effect on our experience and want of the extraordinary.

The universal availability of the predominantly visual media in advanced western societies has resulted in a massive upward shift in the level of what is ‘ordinary’ and hence what people view as ‘extraordinary’. Moreover to the extent to which it is true that the media has ushered in a ‘three minute’ culture, so this is also likely to encourage people to switch forms and sites of pleasures. It is almost certain that people will gain relatively less satisfaction from continuing to do what they, or more particularly their family, have always done. Thus holidays have become less to do with the reinforcing of collective memories and experiences, and more to do with immediate pleasure (Urry, 2002: 92).

Before I go on to further develop this emphasis on the extraordinary and its distinction from the everyday as part of the tourist imaginary, I wish to point to another

way in which we could say the leisure imaginary of theodyssey is shaped or inflected, through the taken for granted modern assumption of movement.

Urry suggests that society as an object of research has become outdated as a conceptual category and that researchers need to shift their focus from the study of society to the study of mobilities, be they physical, imaginative or virtual (2000: 1). Urry argues that “these diverse mobilities ...imaginative travel, movements of images and information, virtuality, and physical movement, are reconstructing the ‘social as society’ into ‘the social as mobility’” (2). The explosion, mobility, and accessibility of media and the increased circulation of objects and images - the direct access society, has contributed to the primacy of movement as a category of investigation and of understanding. Tourism has become a widely recognized and largely shared experience of mobility, a readily identifiable (but theoretically vexing) form of leisure. In this vein, it is apparent that tourism, particularly in the western developed world, is *the* mobility of interest both from the point of view of the theorist and of the everyday theorist, and is important for understanding the modern human condition.

To be a tourist is a taken for granted expectation that has transformed our experience of the everyday. Picard (1996) argues that there has been a routinization of touristic sensibilities in everyday life and that as a culture we are more routinely mobile - i.e. we live in a touristic culture. Echoing Taylor’s depiction of the relationship between practices and the social imaginary, widespread practices of mobility have participated in

the construction of the leisure imaginary of theodyssey. What is important to highlight here is that touristic culture is more than physical travel, it is also, “the preparation of people to see other places as objects of tourism and the preparation of those people and places to be seen” (Franklin and Crang, 2001: 10). The most prolific example of this phenomenon is New Zealand’s marketing of itself as the ‘[Home of Middle-earth](#)’ after the popularity of the *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* movie franchises. The romance of the ‘quest’ which is the literary and filmic trope in Tolkien’s books has been married to the spectacular New Zealand landscape. People make the pilgrimage to New Zealand to experience not just New Zealand but the romance and fantasy of Tolkien’s Middle-earth. This expectation of movement, to see and experience something different or extraordinary in a far off place, is one of the ways we collectively imagine being in society, and is constitutive of the touristic component of the leisure imaginary of theodyssey. People are oriented, through the expectation of travel, to participating in a globalized fantasy culture.

5.2.4 Liminality, Communitas, and Play in Pilgrimage and Tourism

Comparing the distinctions – the everyday and the extraordinary and the profane and the sacred – shows how tourism and pilgrimage are closely related structurally. What fundamentally structures this form arguably, is the ritual process of van Gennep’s (1960) *rite de passage*, the most important component of which is the act of passing into and abiding for a time in a liminal space. Turner’s followers were content to demonstrate the

processual equivalency of pilgrimage and tourism and strove to demonstrate how they provided similar functions in modern society. For Turnerians, the basic distinction between the historical experience of liminality in the context of pilgrimage and the modern variant was the kind of liminality experienced. Turner and his followers essentially argued that the major change in liminality was between full liminality and “liminoidity,” which references modern leisure phenomena and modern pilgrimage. These forms have features resembling those of liminality but because they are oriented to voluntarily rather than being part of an obligatory social mechanism that marks transitions, they are considered liminoid (Turner, 1978: 253-4). This voluntary aspect of liminoidity (really just a diminished form of liminality) references a wide array of experiences and unifies pilgrimage and tourism both as liminoid experiences.⁶⁹ For example, Moore (1980) following Turner’s model, attempted to demonstrate that modern touristic sites, like Disneyland, provided the same essential structures and opportunity for the experience of liminality and transcendence that could be found within religious pilgrimage. According to this model, religious ritual in traditional society and ludic (playful) tourism in modern society have an equivalent function and form. This allows Moore to conclude, perhaps cynically, that “At a time when some proclaim that God is dead, North Americans

⁶⁹ In practice however theorists rarely use the term liminoidity as distinct from liminality.

may take comfort in the truth that Mickey Mouse reigns at the baroque capital of the Magic Kingdom and that Walt Disney is his prophet” (1980: 216).

Erik Cohen takes issue with this interpretation of ritual and liminality in tourism, as he argues that this configuration erases the “distinctive quality of secular “recreational” tourism as against religious ritual or pilgrimage – which, in turn, derives from a crucial difference between secular modernity and traditional society based on a religious world-view” (1985: 296). Thus for Cohen, “man living in a secularized world...the recreational tourist strives to recapture and re-enact playfully the sense of enchantment of the encounter with some transcending Reality, even as he ‘knows’ that according to his own world view such a reality does not , in fact, exist” (299). This kind of serious “recreational” play that Cohen casts as the recreational mode of tourism, indicates a consumer reflexivity with regards to pleasure and play that Urry highlights in his recognition of the ‘post-tourist’.

...the post-tourist is aware of change and delights in the multitude of choice: ‘Now he [sic] wants to behold something sacred; now something beautiful, to lift him and make him finer; and now something just different, because he’s bored’ (Feifer, 1985: 269). The post-tourist is freed from the constraints of ‘high-culture’ on the one hand, and the untrammelled pursuit of the ‘pleasure principle’ on the other. He or she can move easily from one to the other and indeed can gain pleasure from the contrasts between the two. The world is a stage and the post-tourist can delight in the multitude of games to be played (Urry, 2002).

What Urry fully references in this quotation is Cohen’s idea of the “play at Reality” that his recreational tourist engages in, where the engagement with a transcending reality is only played at. In addition to the previous complaint, Cohen asserts that tourism conceived of

as analogous to pilgrimage in structure and process (i.e. Moore 1980), is flawed because the secular ritual of tourism does not contain a full-fledged ritual process in that the final component of the *rite de passage*, reintegration, is missing. “Mickey Mouse may recreate but does not effect communion with transcendence...” (1985: 302). While the individual engaging in this sort of tourism may come back refreshed, they do not return from their journey with the existential state of rapture or exaltation of the pilgrim, and do not experience the change in status that the pilgrim experiences (Cohen, 1992: 53).

In making a seemingly important distinction between tourism (play) and pilgrimage in terms of the ritual process outlined by Turner (1969), Cohen in a sense repeats the pattern of previous theorists like Boorstin and MacCannell by theoretically segregating the recreational or playful from more ‘serious’ modes of travel – in this case, pilgrimage. However, and quite obviously, playful, pleasurable activities can and do take place on a ‘serious’ endeavour like pilgrimage. In Cohen’s constellation of tourism and play, the presence or absence of play is seen to be the determining factor as to whether something is tourism or pilgrimage. In practice however, tourism as play and serious pilgrimage, have no choice but to inhabit the same liminal space. Even historically they have not been segregated on the pilgrimage trail, a fact that the Turners (1978) noted. The imaginary of tourism is filled with the notion of play and pleasure. The leisure imaginary of theodyssey, steeped as it is in notions of pilgrimage, makes room for the pleasure and play of tourism. Mission tourism is animated by both the pilgrim and tourist

imaginary, in what the actor, as both pilgrim and tourist, imagine themselves as participating in when they undertake this practice.

5.2.5 Pilgrim, Tourist, or Mission Tourist?

Both tourists and Christian travelers enjoy travel for rest and recreation. The differences between them lie in their attitudes, aims and expectations.

For the tourist recreational travel is an end in itself. For the Christian traveler recreational travel is a means to an end. The tourist approaches travel with a carefree attitude knowing that they are escaping from the cares of daily life. The Christian traveler approaches travel with a prayerful attitude knowing that they are seeking God's will in their life. The tourist aims to rest before returning refreshed to the daily grind. The Christian traveler aims to enter God's rest. The tourist expects to gain physical strength. The Christian traveler expects to grow spiritually.

Whenever Christians engage in recreational travel they have the choice of going on their journey as a tourist or a Christian traveler. Both choices are valid and both offer rewards. Sometimes we all need to get away from it all as a tourist. Sometimes we all need to seek God as a Christian traveler remembering that all Christians are pilgrims on God's earth.

(<http://www.christian-travelers-guides.com/culture/pilgrim/tourist.html>)

This Christian travel website echoes the work of Cohen (1985) in attempting to make a distinction between the Christian traveler (pilgrim) and the tourist, primarily based on the relation of the traveler to recreation as an end. Cohen argues that structurally speaking, “modern tourism...is rooted in two dialectically opposed deep cultural themes, the Center and the Other; it developed from the original contrary movements of pilgrimage and travel” (1992: 48). The post-Katrina Gulf Coast offered the fantasy of an existential centre of Christian rebirth, but also the fantasies of novelty and of chaos – Otherness. In this configuration, the mission tourist moves paradoxically towards and

away from the centers of his or her culture and society. Both are imagined possibilities. The pilgrim and tourist then, are not quite as conceptually different as they are often theorized to be. Both are existential possibilities open to the individual that are compatible. While Cohen (1992) has explicated in detail his version of “travel-tourism”, he left unmapped its sister concept, first introduced by MacCannell, of “pilgrimage-tourism.” MacCannell’s earlier version of pilgrimage-tourism, focused on the idea of tourism as a modern pilgrimage and, largely in response to critics like Boorstin (1961) and Turner and Ash (1976), downplayed the less serious aspects of the enterprise such as pleasure and play. As discussed, Cohen emphasizes the importance of play but segregates it from pilgrimage by associating it with tourism. The notion of mission tourism that I have been developing here is one that takes as its point of departure the imaginary of pilgrimage, and at the same time recognizes that the playful elements of the tourist imaginary are also embedded in the practice, recalling the Turner’s aphorism, “A tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist” (Turner and Turner, 1978: 20).

The tourist that Turner and Turner are speaking of is not the tourist of MacCannell or Graburn, or even Cohen’s recreational tourist who “plays at Reality.” The tourist that they have in mind is more in line with Urry’s playful, pleasure-seeking tourist. Cohen would appear not to recall the Turner’s aphorism when he regards the presence of recreation (play) in the context of pilgrimage to be a threat to the existential experience of pilgrims. He argues, citing the Turners, that “the exuberance and exaltation manifested by

ordinary pilgrims at important pilgrimage centers witness that their experience frequently possesses an existential quality, even if this may become *diluted by routinization and by recreational or other accompanying activities* (Turner and Turner 1978: 36-37)” (Cohen, 1992: 53; emphasis mine). Cohen goes on to assert that “there is an important difference in the institutionalized expectations between the experience of the pilgrim and that of tourism: the pilgrimage is traditionally expected to provoke religious “rapture” or “exaltation.” Tourism, however, is expected to give mere pleasure and enjoyment, derived from the novelty and change provided by the destination” (ibid.).

Cohen seems to take on this institutional mindset when he goes on to argue that the existential quality of pilgrimage is diluted not only by routinization but by *recreational activities*, or play, where religious rapture or exaltation is compromised. His analysis leaves out one of the major concepts in Turner’s work, that of *communitas*, (which can be loosely equated with rapture or exaltation) its relation to recreation, and its importance for pilgrimage. Most peculiarly, nowhere, in the two pages of the Turner’s work that Cohen (1992) cites (1978, pages 36-37) does it state that recreation acts as a diluting force on “the exuberance and exaltation” that represents the existential quality of the experience, what the Turners understand to be the experience of *communitas*. In fact, the Turners would appear to indicate the opposite.

[E]ven when people bury themselves in anonymous crowds on beaches they are seeking an almost sacred, often symbolic mode of *communitas*, generally unavailable to them in the structured life of the office, the shop floor, or the mine. Even when

intellectuals, Thoreau-like, seek the wilderness in personal solitude, they are seeking the material multiplicity of nature, a life source (Turner and Turner, 1978: 20).

Instead of being counterposed to the goals of pilgrimage, the possibilities of play can be understood to contribute to the pilgrimage experience, a point that the Turner's infer but leave undeveloped. Cohen at the least misinterprets the Turner's (1978) work, as nowhere does it appear in the text that the recreational component acts as a barrier to realization of the ecstatic, or *communitas*. Turner and Turner in developing more fully what constitutes pilgrimage in the modern sense, state:

Those who journey to pray together also play together in the secular interludes between religious activities; sightseeing to places of secular interest is one common form of "play" associated with pilgrimage. Anthropologists have learned that it is necessary to study the total field of a great ceremony, the non-ritualized factors surrounding it, as well as the liturgical or symbolic action. If one applies this method to the study of pilgrimage, one finds that *play and solemnity are equally present*. Indeed, it is the ludic component that so excited the wrath of many Christian critics of pilgrimage and perhaps prepared the way for the virtual abolition of pilgrimage in Protestant lands (1978: 37; emphasis mine).

The above passage clearly highlights the importance of the integration of play *with* pilgrimage, a point that the Turner's highlight again when they link play with *communitas*: "Pilgrimage devotion, the market, and the fair are all connected with voluntary, contractual activities (the religious promise, of striking a bargain, the penny ride on the merry go-round), and with a measure of joyful, "ludic" *communitas*...[which]

extends even to the religious activities proper, for comradeship is a feature of pilgrimage travel” (1978: 37).⁷⁰

On the surface, it might appear that Cohen’s interpretation of Turner’s work downplays the role of play as part of pilgrimage in order to bolster his own argument, a common intellectual tactic. Perhaps his exclusive focus on tourism led him to neglect the comparative of pilgrimage. Alternatively, he may not have heeded the Turner’s admonition to “study the total field” and instead fell victim to the academic fallback of armchair theorizing. Cohen, however, had done extensive ethnographic work in Thailand prior to his work on tourism and play (see Cohen, 1982). To be fair to Cohen, there may be something else at work here, part of our religious Judeo-Christian imaginary, linked to the Augustinian theodicy and the vengeful God of the Old Testament. While the Turners recognize that pilgrimage and recreation (the play of tourism) actually work together to produce ecstasy or *communitas*, it would appear that many theorists, both of the academic and everyday variety, do not. While the quotation from *Christian Travelers* and the theoretical work of Cohen (1985, 1992) do not decry the pleasurable aspects of travel, they point to a need to segregate tourism and pilgrimage, as if they should be kept cognitively, spatially, and temporally separated so that the one does

⁷⁰ Clearly Cohen missed the mark here.

not contaminate the other. Both Cohen and the folks at the *Christian Traveler* would appear to be animated by a religious imaginary that partitions pleasure from religious experience represented by such things as the Protestant ethic and the story of Moses' punishment of the revelry he found his people engaged in when he descended from Mt. Sinai with the laws of God. This perhaps indicates that at the levels of everyday and academic theorizing, some directions that have been taken in distinguishing pilgrimage from tourism may be unconscious efforts at repressing Judean-Christian guilt over the experience of pleasure. The pleasure experienced in mission tourism comes then to represent the return of the repressed.



Graburn notes that “[f]or traditional societies the rewards of pilgrimages were accumulated grace and moral leadership in the home community. The rewards of modern tourism are phrased in terms of values we now hold up for worship: mental and physical health, social status, and diverse, exotic experiences” (1977: 28). Mission tourists, as emissaries of their churches, perform a collective ritual function for the church, speaking to the traditional medieval function of pilgrimage. Presumably, in addition to the pleasurable experiences that they consume as mission tourists, participants also receive grace and

increased status in the church. The imaginary of theodyssey would appear to allow the authorization of both.⁷¹

Throughout history, the social imaginary has changed the way religion has been practiced and understood. Taylor notes that in early religion “we primarily relate to God as a society” (2004: 53). For some time now, the modern social imaginary has moved us away from this collective experience towards a more individual relationship with God. He notes that “collective ritual action, where the principal agents are acting on behalf of a community, which also in its own way becomes involved in the action, seems to figure virtually everywhere in early religion and continues on in some ways up to our day” (ibid.). Mission tourism would seem to be one of the ways that collective ritual action has reasserted itself, though the relation to early religion may be harder to detect given that the experience is addressing other needs such as self-development and status acquisition. However, Taylor goes on to say that collective ritual action will occupy an important place “as long as people live in an ‘enchanted’ world – a world of spirits and forces, prior to

⁷¹ I have attempted to add something to Taylor’s notion of the social imaginary (the development of the leisure imaginary) by offering up a new concept of mission tourism which emerges out of the leisure imaginary of theodyssey. In the context of the post-Katrina Gulf Coast, the social imaginary of theodyssey references the socially constructed nature of human experience and action as it is framed in the context of what I have described as *mission tourism*. Mission tourism as I have developed it here, points to a new form of institutionalized travel or mass tourism that can have profound transformative, psychological, social, and economic effects: for the traveler, for the host community, and for the traveler’s community of origin. The real consequences of the imaginary of theodyssey are indicated by its translation into an emerging theory and practice that has transformative and revitalizing effects reflecting the experiences of both pilgrimage and tourism.

what we moderns, following Weber, call disenchantment” (53). Perhaps then, mission tourism can also be understood to be a hearkening to the older social imaginary of late medieval times, when elements of play were incorporated in collective religious ritual and there was a magical quality to existence. Certainly medieval pilgrimage and mission tourism privilege both pleasure and community and in fact combine them to create collective effervescence and *communitas* – communion. Labouring together (walking or working), drinking together, eating together and laughing together in a liminal space, are all part of the collective experience of medieval pilgrims and mission tourists.

In the realm of the leisure imaginary, we find increasing evidence of an effort to reimagine the social, where older forms of belonging reassert themselves, indicating that they have not been banished altogether from our collective memory. The rise in popularity of community and neighborhood festivals is one such indication of this trend, mission tourism is perhaps another. The social imaginary of theodyssey perhaps posits a desire on the part of people or, better yet, a hope, that we can roll back the disenchantment.

The experiential anecdote that opened this chapter points to a phenomenon that has not been well accounted for in modern Western society. What I have attempted to do here is to show how the related imaginaries of theodicy, pilgrimage and tourism and their associated practices, can be activated by the imaginary of theodyssey, which references a pleasurable journey that taken for the purposes of understanding the vagaries of life, and

the evil, and the chaos in the world. These kinds of journeys appear to have a healing power and to be productive of faith, where through a liminal, transformative communitas experience, individuals and collectives can experience the transcendent. One derivation of this imaginary of theodyssey is mission tourism which implies the inclusion of playful and pleasurable secular aspects of travel with more serious religious elements.

On a practical level, mission tourism offers the promise of making a tangible difference not only in their own lives and in the collective life of their sponsoring church communities, but in the lives of individuals and communities that they serve. Marvin Olasky, conservative media critic, has argued in his recent book *The Politics of Disaster: Katrina, Big Government, and A New Strategy for Future Crises* (2006), that with regards to disaster relief, big government doesn't work and that a new paradigm of responding to national crises has emerged, where private and faith-based groups have stepped in to fill the void. If such claims are accurate then it can be argued that this paradigm shift is in part due to the attraction of theodyssey and its fulfillment in mission tourism. Given such pronouncements, it is important that work be done to establish the forms and functions of mission tourism as well as its attendant meanings. One possible point of departure (among many others) is from the perspective of the vitality of church and faith-based organizations. How the emerging form of mission tourism and the apparent contradictions within it is handled is vitally important, and calls for a reexamination of the role of pleasure and play in religious experience. Developing a healthy relation to pleasure

and play would seem to be productive of a healthy church community of which successful mission tourism trips are symbolic. The leisure imaginary of theodyssey describes a symbolic structure allowing mission tourism to be a successful church revitalization movement. However, there are imaginings within theodyssey that can be less helpful, particularly the Augustinian theodicy and the Protestant ethic that militate against the kinds of practices that the pleasurable aspects of mission tourism exemplify. As Taylor (2004) has demonstrated in his account of the attacks on the medieval carnival and festival, the modern history of the Church has in part been one of hostility towards pleasure and play.

Individuals and churches, as I, along with Katongole (2007), have suggested, are already engaging in mission as pilgrimage. Christians and their church leaders, however, are ambivalent about practices in mission as pilgrimage that privilege play and pleasure, practices that hearken back to a more celebratory period of Christianity, before the great disembedding of the late Middle-Ages. The continued success of mission tourism will depend on negotiations within the imaginary of theodyssey that can resolve the apparent contradictions between pilgrimage and tourism; balance and understanding is required at both theological and practical levels that can reduce the dissonance. This will require an ongoing reimagining. With this in mind, Church leaders should heed the Turner's cautioning to take due care in responding to this dissonance: "...those who are concerned with church renewal should proceed carefully, for their pruning may hack away the very

roots of religious devotion, rather than the dead wood they are intending to destroy” (1978: 29). A similar warning could be made to theorists regarding theorizing, that due care should be taken in the pruning of concepts, otherwise something vital to understanding can be unwittingly cut off. A cousin of mission tourism, dark tourism and volunteer inflected disaster tourism, can more easily handle the tensions between seriousness and play than mission tourism.

5.3 VOLUNTEERS, DARK TOURISM, AND DEATH

so if you call, I will answer
and if you fall, I'll pick you up
and if you court this disaster
I'll point you home

But I'm warning you, don't ever do
those crazy, messed-up things that you do
If you ever do,
I promise you I'll be the first to crucify you
Now it's time to prove that you've come back
here to rebuild
Rebuild...

Bare Naked Ladies, *Call and Answer*

Urry describes tourism as a late-modern social development in which Western subjects travel to look upon extraordinary sights in “places [that] are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydream and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses than those customarily encountered” (Urry, 1990: 3). It is counterintuitive to consider viewing sites of catastrophic death to be a “pleasurable” activity – sites of destruction or violence do not connote the light-hearted, hedonistic “fun” that is typically associated with vacationing. However, sites that are objects of dark tourism are extraordinary examples of events of destruction or persistent human suffering that do not normally figure into the daily experience of the constituents of the Western middle-class. Hence, we can use Urry’s definition of tourism to explain the appeal of visiting sites of disaster: the pleasure that tourists derive from viewing sites of disaster emanates both from the *novelty* of observing

sites of exceptional suffering (suffering that is abnormal in its intensity and/or its scale) and intensity of the emotions that those sites tend to inspire.

Urry notes that the escalating influence of electronic media onto Western society has significantly influenced tourist behaviour. Urry, like Malcolm and Foley, identifies how electronic media are influential venues for making tourists aware of what destinations one could possibly visit. Urry theorizes that persistent exposure to shocking or fantastical images through visual media has radically altered how individuals experience everyday life and hence, has shifted the types of experiences from which tourists seek to derive pleasure. Traditional tourist destinations do not provide sufficient stimulation or “thrill” for generations of viewers who were weaned on video games, violent films, and twenty-four hour cable news – experiences that, for much of the North American middle-class, have become constitutive of “everyday living”. Hence, media cause tourists to seek out increasingly startling and immersing experiences to be the objects of sightseeing.

In our hyper-mediatized age, news media communicate expose images of violent and natural disasters often before the crisis has abated, before any renewal has occurred (Bates and Ahmed 2007: 189). These images “offer sensory impressions and convey emotions that heighten the mediated confrontation with death and destruction” (ibid. 191). Television networks, newspapers, and internet news outlets featured coverage of Hurricane Katrina that provided harrowing images of the windstorm, the flooding and the physical destruction that resulted from the August 29th hurricane. Obviously, images of

newly homeless New Orleans residents, flooded homes, wind-stripped buildings incites strong emotions for viewers, particularly because they depict a real natural disaster in the United States. The reporting, particular in the initial hours and days after the Hurricane's touchdown, often presented explicit images of physical destruction and human suffering without providing contextual information to ground the interpretation of the viewer (192). The articulation of these images constructs a hierarchical relationship between the subject/viewer (who is presumably watching from a safe location and thus, occupies a privileged position) and victim/object. The lack of deep, subtle explanation of the historical context of the specificity of the situation, and the absence of the locals' testimonies functions to dehumanize the victims (192, 198).

The discourse surrounding disaster tourism to New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward reflects the cynicism towards viewing "crass", decontextualized reportage of Hurricane Katrina. A sign visible in front of the Non-profit, Common Ground Relief's operations houses admonishes tourists for voyeuristically peering out of bus and car windows to observe the remnants of destruction: "Tourist: Shame On You, Driving By Without Stopping, Paying To See My Pain. 1600+ died here." This "in your face" statement quite clearly articulates the tension surrounding the image of the tourist, who can be imagined on one hand as 'shameful' in their behaviour, while on the other hand holding out the possibility of being converted to a different kind of tourist, one that serves the interests of the community.

Figure 6: “Shame On YOU”



Photo Credit: Rita Tourkova

The sign implies that the tourist is committing a voyeuristic, exploitative act by viewing the wounds of the Lower Ninth Ward without contributing to its redevelopment, or at very least having a dialogue with residents and local volunteers. The sign also implies that there are also more “authentic”, productive, and humane ways to experience post-Katrina New Orleans and that “disaster” tourism is an ethically contested terrain.

Tourist activity in the postmodern era is multifarious, consisting of much more than the sightseeing and beach vacations that represent two of the most conventional models of Western tourist practices. To an increasing lot of travelers, these conventional

forms represent excessively commercial, “inauthentic” cultural practices. Consequently, significant numbers of Western vacationers have sought “alternative” tourist experiences to avoid or symbolically reject conventional tourism. They seek vacations that offer deep self-reflection, interaction with a community of others (locals or other tourists), and the opportunity to undertake volunteer work in underprivileged communities located at or surrounding their destination. Hence, for many tourists, it is simply not satisfying enough to “gaze upon” sites of death and destruction; sites of natural disaster draw tourists looking to aid in the redevelopment process.

Germane to our discussion is a relatively nascent form of tourism, volunteer tourism. The descriptor “volunteer tourist” refers to an individual “who for various reasons, volunteers in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve the aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments, or research into aspects of society or environment” (Wearing, 2001). Volunteer holidays range from a few days to many months in duration and draw participants from diverse segments of the population. Volunteers to sites of disasters or communities that suffer enduring hardship include healthcare practitioners, lawyers, and social workers, engineers, skilled and unskilled labourers, and students. Participants often view volunteer tourism as a high-minded or noble form of travel when contrasted to allegedly more consumptive, diversionary forms of conventional tourism (Mustonen, 2005: 164).

Volunteer tourist activities regularly qualify as instantiations of dark tourism. Volunteer tourists frequent locations that have experienced natural disasters or suffer deprivation – horrific occurrences that are volunteer tourism’s *raison d’être*. Volunteer tourists, who often work side-by-side with local community-based organizations, are granted privileged access to communities that have suffered disasters or other hardships. Consequently, a volunteer tourist’s exposure to the physical and social remnants of disaster is more immersive and more explicit than that of tourists who have come only to cursorily gaze upon poverty or destruction.

It is counterintuitive to regard unpaid, physically strenuous voluntary work as an appealing leisure activity. Urry, through his explication of the relationship between postmodernity and tourism, provides scholarly insight into how we can conceptualize volunteer tourism as both an act of labour *and* a source of pleasure. Urry describes the process of dedifferentiation, the blending of formerly discrete societal categories, a key tenet of postmodern theory: “Postmodernism involves a dissolving of the boundaries, not only between high and low cultures, but also between different cultural forms, such as tourism, art, education, photography, television, music, sport, shopping and architecture” (Urry 74). Pertinent to our discussion is the breaking down of the conceptual binaries between work and play, and daily life and tourism.

Urry’s conception of tourist pleasure assumes a binary between a tedious daily life and the out-of-the-ordinary pleasures that one consumes (or aims to consume) on

vacation. It has evolved from the notion that menial labour, whether manual or bureaucratic, dominates people's quotidian activities – by implication, the doldrums of daily life cause workers to want to engage in relaxation, sightseeing, and diversionary play in beautiful or fascinating environments. However, this conceptual model of a quotidian life – one of physically grueling work punctuated by rejuvenating holidays – is dependent on the outmoded class structure of the Industrial West. As a result of the West's post-WWII transformation from an industrial economy to a post-Fordist one, relatively few workers occupy blue-collar jobs. The bulk of the North American workforce, from salaried professionals to minimum-wage labourers, fills a diverse array of service sector jobs. Doing manual labour in a disaster zone, for many, provides the novelty that tourists allegedly crave.

In one sense, volunteer tourism is a function of the tenet of postmodernity that deems any activity as a potential object of tourist fancy. However, we must consider also consider volunteer tourism, and dark tourism generally, as a *reaction* to postmodernity. It represents a concerted effort to rectify the existential angst individuals suffer as a result of the collapse of the popular belief in objective, enduring moral truth, a hallmark of postmodernity. Zygmunt Bauman dedicates his 1992 volume *Intimations of Postmodernity* to describing the postmodern “state-of-mind”, a state of mind that is, as Bauman laments, “marked above all by its all-deriding, all-eroding, all-dissolving destructiveness” (Bauman viii). Postmodernity is the heir of Modernity's tendency to doubt and ultimately,

deconstruct superstitious, primeval ontologies, social structures, and theories about human social life (ibid. xiii). However, unlike modernity, postmodernity is not characterized by a collective move to erect and universalize social structures and moral philosophies to fill the void created by the dissolution of premodern mindsets (ibid. ix). Postmodernism perpetuates this process of critical deconstruction, putting into question the human ability to ascertain reason, and by extension, invalidates Modernist grand narratives, ontologies that purport to explain the totality of human social relations.

The resulting discursive environment features a noisy plurality of ideologies and lifestyles, no one occupying a position of absolute authority. The condition of generalized cynicism causes citizens of Western democracies to be dubious of governing institutions, like Church and State; accordingly, states less often make pronouncements on how to live a moral life: “With societies (institutionalized as nation-states) losing interest in the promotion of cultural uniformity and renouncing their role as spokesmen of universal reason, agents face ethical confusion and lack of clarity of moral choices as a permanent condition” (Bauman 1992 xxii). Thus, secular agents are left to fashion individualized codes of ethics, their senses of morality having no ostensible basis in any natural law. This moral indeterminacy, Bauman writes, renders the individual in a state of solipsistic fear, a fear that the individual must resolve on his own (ibid. xviii).

We can conceptualize volunteer tourism as an attempt to allay the existential vertigo of the postmodern “state-of-mind”, and a site for volunteers to experience the moral

fulfillment and interpersonal connectedness that is allegedly absent from everyday life. Like premodern pilgrimage, it is an instantiation of travel to a location that is the object of collective meaning-making, and acts as a site for self-reflection.

Volunteer tourists have myriad motivation for serving devastated communities; often, the individual participant has several reasons for volunteering taking part in reconstruction efforts. Volunteers often claim that a humanitarian catalyzed their desire to help out in poor or disaster-stricken areas. In the context of New Orleans, sentiments of sympathy for those people who have suffered as a result of Hurricane Katrina play an instrumental role in compelling people to volunteer. The initial, striking media images of New Orleans's ravaged communities aroused feelings of profound sorrow and, consequently, sympathy for the victims in receptive viewers – enough so that many of the sought to assist in the relief effort that occurred in the days, weeks, and months following Hurricane Katrina.

However, we cannot claim that 'being a good citizen' is the sole motivation for tourists to volunteer in poor or under-serviced areas, nor can we deem this act to be purely altruistic. My interviewees' claims about their motivations for volunteering suggest that individuals seldom partake in volunteer tourism for purely disinterested purposes. Consistent with the academic discourse surrounding volunteer tourism, people narrate their volunteer experiences as being heavily-related, even instrumental, to their processes of self-development and self-actualization (Mustonen, 2005: 170).

I spoke at length with one volunteer who claimed that her sympathy for the victims of Hurricane Katrina was the catalytic motivation for her to travel from Illinois to New Orleans to aid in the relief effort. She stated that her desire to help the residents of the Lower Ninth Ward was the deciding factor that compelled her to volunteer in New Orleans. However, she inferred that her volunteering stint in New Orleans's Lower Ninth Ward gave her ample opportunity for self-reflection.

Personally, it's my personal development that keeps me down here. I've been working on some stuff for about nine months and that's shifted too...I came down to help people...And I'm doing that...and I've done that...but I also found that there was stuff I needed to work on. So I've been really doing that. So that's been a real focus for me.

The theme of personal development and healing was an oft repeated mantra among the mission tourists and volunteer tourists we interviewed, indicating a fundamentally different relation to disaster than that imagined by Lennon and Foley's dark tourism. For many of these individuals, it appeared that everyday life was the catastrophe and somehow paradoxically, the opportunity to do something meaningful provided the catalyst for the journey to the Lower 9th Ward. Another volunteer underscores this point in this way when describing the deep issue that the volunteer journey was helping her to engage:

...essentially the issue is worthlessness and being worthy as a person and if you are never forced to depend on yourself where do you develop that from. You know? And so of course you know of course when you're at home you can still develop that. But for me I knew that's what I needed to do to force myself into a place where that kind of healing can begin. So that's where this has been kind of a process of breaking down all the barriers, kind of seeing what's really going on inside, getting to the core...and then once you see that core it's like wow, wow,

this has been affecting my life for however long like 27 years. So now I can actually build from this and build out and be whole and be healthy. . . and it's mine.

In addition to benefitting the local community, interviewees were clear that they participated in the rebuilding of New Orleans's Lower Ninth Ward for the purposes of their own individual self-development and/or spiritual healing. Community development of a different source was also realized by church volunteers. The impact on faith communities, particularly those located in the Northern United States is clear. As one church member stated:

It's a, you know, it's, it's really helped pull us together, we're a, we're, we have not just, within our own congregation we have all the, when we come down here, we, we have all these experiences together and then, so a silly one, we go back, we all hug each other now up North. [laughter] Sounds funny.

Ironically, the community being served most strongly by this church's participation is not the Lower 9th Ward but the church community itself. The ward's residents have long been dispersed, and for a variety of reasons and despite strong efforts, have not returned in the numbers imagined, while northern congregations have found new life in the celebration of disaster, death and recovery that defines the volunteer's Lower Ninth Ward.

One can clearly see the implications of theorizing with the background of care for self and other in mind, particularly around the usage obtained from volunteers. It is not strictly the case that "secular agents are left to fashion individualized codes of ethics" where

there is a lack of moral choice that “renders the individual in a state of solipsistic fear, a fear that the individual must resolve on his own” (Bauman, 1992, xii, xviii). The social actor, contrary to Bauman’s intimations, does have resources. There are pathways laid out as part of the leisure imaginary for dealing with moral and ethical ambiguity. For the young woman from Chicago, the action of volunteering is bound up with both orientations. She “came down to help people” but found that “there was stuff [she] needed to work on,” her own personal development. This ‘development’ work is exemplary of the problem of community and identity and is oriented by care for both the self and other. Ironically, for this social actor both a stable identity and sense of community would seem to be difficult to accomplish at home. Her capacity to accomplish a sense of self is predicated on being away. In another segment of the interview I conducted with this young woman she attempts to articulate her problematic relation to home.

The thing is...that...how do I explain it...is that...for me at home I have a really tight network. It was a really broad network like, I have a great support system of friends and family. I'm part of the swing dancing scene and that's a ton of people and you know so it's ...and you can do development and personal work of course...but this [speaking about the Katrina volunteering experience] throws you into a totally, like totally different environment where you have survive on your own. It really forces you to focus in because that's a lot of distractions for me... [at home] I get really wrapped into going out or going dancing or going out with people. I just spend too much time focusing out you know.

This interviewee seems to be more at home with herself in post-Katrina New Orleans than back in Chicago, where she has “all kinds of positive messages” from the outside that don’t do her any good because “[she doesn’t] ultimately believe them.” This need to be away from home seems to be a recommendation for contemporary leisure.

Approximately two years after the interview was conducted I telephoned the woman after she had returned back to her suburban life in Chicago. We chatted about her experience of coming back and the feelings of deep dissatisfaction she had had with her life back at home. She was very much looking forward though to her participation in a college program on urban agriculture that she was heading to in the fall. She raises the question of the problematic nature of home and its relation to a sense of self and community.

Katrina was a condition that created an aporia that forced her to reconsider grounding assumptions about self and community just as Katrina has done theoretically in terms of our grounding assumptions about the place of seriousness and play in any human endeavour.

It begs the question, why is it that an opportunity for aporia happens not at home but away instead? Taylor, picking up on Victor Turner’s elucidation of *communitas*, approaches the problem when he bemoans the suppression of carnival-like moments from everyday life, moments that provided an anti-structure that was and is functional for the reconstitution of selves and communities. He writes that “all codes need to be countervailed, sometimes even swamped in their negation, on pain of rigidity, enervation,

the atrophy of social cohesion, blindness, perhaps ultimately self-destruction” (2007: 50).

We still have a sense of the need for anti-structure in our daily lives though this need is muted.

We still feel the need to ‘get away from it all’, to cut out and ‘recharge our batteries’, away, on holiday, outside our usual roles. There are certainly carnival –type moments: public holidays, football matches – here like their predecessors, hovering on the brink, sometimes over the brink of violence. *Communitas* breaks out in moments of exceptional danger or bereavement, as with the crowds mourning Princess Di (ibid.)

Opportunities for anti-structure in modernity arguably emerge from the suppression of Eros in Logos-modernity, the suppression of a deep need and the relegation of that need to the margins. It is counterintuitive that we can’t feel at home at home but there is something to this as has been discussed. Perhaps we are looking in the wrong places. Perhaps the social imaginary has out paddled the theorist and we have to hurry to catch up. Anti-structure and *aporia* is available, and here, is tied to movement. This is a movement however that we should be able to enact while in place.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Paradoxically, a dark tourism that incorporates volunteer tourism and mission tourism in its understanding demonstrates that it is not the commodification of death and disaster that indicates anxiety over the project of modernity. Rather it is the fractured post-modern character of everyday life that gives death and disaster their poignancy as opportunities to reassert the modernist promise. The disaster tours that sprung up after

Hurricane Katrina, in their many versions, provide an exemplary case of the "grey zone" of dark tourism. Discourses around tourism and the tourist (the tourist as healer vs. defiler, tourism as rejuvenator vs. destroyer) as they surface in the mass media and in interviews with residents and visitors (tourists, activists, wanderers, pilgrims) to the Lower Ninth Ward, reflect age old ethical tensions over the place of pleasure and its relation to health and death in the city. The devastation of Hurricane Katrina and the responses of 'dark tourists' speak not just to a fascination with death but to hopes and dreams of healing, rejuvenation, and reconciliation with the project of modernity. Volunteer tourism, mission tourism, as well as more conventional "disaster" tourism in post-Katrina New Orleans, all in some way exemplify the need for the actor and communities to "come to terms" with a catastrophic breach not necessarily originating in the devastation of the City. These breaches in reality, or as Giddens (1991: 131) calls them, "fateful moments," at the same time, can create the conditions for an aporia and provide a space for self-reflection.

Chapter 6: Towards a Philosophical Leisure

Doctor, my eyes have seen the years
And the slow parade of fears without crying
Now I want to understand

I have done all that I could
To see the evil and the good without hiding
You must help me if you can

Doctor, my eyes
And tell me what is wrong
Was I unwise to leave them open for so long?

Jackson Browne, *Doctor My Eyes*

Like children, you are haunted with a
fear that when the soul leaves the body, the wind
may really blow her away and scatter her;
especially if a man should happen to die in a
great storm and not when the sky is calm.

Cebes answered with a smile: Then
Socrates, you must argue us out of our fears –
and yet, strictly speaking, they are not our fears,
but there is a child within us to whom death is a
sort of hobgoblin: him too we must persuade not
to be afraid when he is alone in the dark.

Socrates said: Let the voice of the
charmer be applied daily until you have charmed
away the fear.

And where shall we find a good charmer
of our fears, Socrates, when you are gone?

Plato, *Phaedo*

It is time to bring this hunt to an end. Long have I been on the path. My eyes are tired of peering into the darkness and wish to rest. I am aware that this small adventure has raised more questions than it has generated answers. This is as it should be and simply acknowledges my own limits in addressing the enigmatic character of leisure. It is not the end however. There will be other hunting trips. My meditation on leisure will continue, as it constitutes my own project of re-embedding and a coming to terms with my own mortality, my own unique trajectory within the leisure imaginary, a vain quest or, perhaps, a [fool's errand](#) to fashion an epic tale out of the fragmentary, novelistic, and oft

absurd episodes of a contemporary life. While I am hardly alone in this quest, I am reflexively aware that it constitutes a quest.

In these pages I have made a case for a new way of thinking about leisure, a way of thinking about leisure that provides some understanding of what orients and animates us in our use of free time. I have named this metaphor the *leisure imaginary* and have proposed that it can become a paradigmatic way for us to understand the uses and abuses of free time in our late modern society. In this way, it is a hermeneutic that sheds light on the relationship between self and community. The leisure imaginary, is both individual and collective but in both cases serves the overall purpose of legitimating our use of free time. The leisure imaginary, as an aspect of the life-world, is conditioned by the age in which we live. It is conditioned by the anxieties and preoccupations of our time, our western social imaginary of late modernity. The different trajectories of the leisure imaginary exemplify various ethically oriented collections of practiced stories aimed at a re-embedding, the effort to attain a coherent sense of the self by grounding it in various identities, communities, and narratives. At the same time the leisure imaginary also helps us by ‘cutting in’ at fateful moments to take our place in our dance with the spectre of death. Late modernity can be likened to a ‘great storm’ in that the winds of change seem to be whipping at us constantly. Because of this, the leisure imaginary has little time for what I have called philosophical leisure, as the lack of stability exacerbates our sometimes solipsistic fear. And so, even when we encounter those moments that call ourselves into

question, we retreat to the safe harbour of the leisure imaginary. Philosophical leisure however has a way of insisting.

The leisure imaginary, as I have tried to demonstrate, is also the space of the mysterious where people (myself as self-conscious theorist included), while in addition to engaging in the project of re-embedding, at times flirt with philosophical leisure. Philosophical leisure is in tension with the leisure imaginary as philosophical leisure demands that *we think what we are doing* as opposed to being the *escape from thinking* that is most constitutive of the leisure imaginary. The great tragedy in late modernity is that we have venerated free time and pushed it to the forefront of our lives in terms of our expectations for it, and yet we do not know how to use it well or, like Augustus Caesar, we learn its value too late. Seneca in his essay *The Shortness of Life* tells the story of busy Romans like Augustus,

who seek *otium* not for itself but because they are fed up with *negotium*, who crawl up through a thousand indignities to the crowning dignity only to find that they have toiled for an inscription on a tomb. They cry out that they have been fools, and would henceforth live in leisure but too late. All the great ones, like Augustus, long for leisure, acclaim it, and prefer it to all their blessings. They can answer the prayers of mankind, but their own prayer is for leisure (De Grazia, 1962: 21).

Augustus sought out leisure not for itself but over and against work, postponing its realization until it was too late. His experience is echoed in the leisure imaginary of baby-boomers, what we might describe as *Freedom 55: The Leisure Imaginary of Retirement*. This imaginary recalls Simmel's (1971) *miser* and discloses a distorted relationship to time epitomized in the lives of many baby-boomers who bought into the slick marketing of the

financial industry and traded their freedom for comfort in retirement, where they now spend their time frantically filling their ‘bucket lists’. This imaginary underlines that in our times, it is not just work that takes us away from leisure, but recreation and amusement. This ‘lost time’ is a tragedy, for the capacity to engage in philosophical leisure is needed as much now as ever. Indeed the fate of self and society is bound up with our use of free time. The marked rise in apocalyptic films⁷²(Queenan, 2015), and books like Jane Jacobs (2005), *Dark Age Ahead* signal that there is an anxiety that we are approaching the fate of the Roman Empire, a fate that was bound up with their inability to use leisure well. This anxiety is echoed in the question asked by De Grazia (1964) and reiterated by Hemingway (1988), “Will we too, collapse as a society from not knowing how to use as leisure the free time made available by peace and prosperity, avoiding the difficult issues to immerse ourselves in work, amusement, and diversion?” (1988: 182). These symptoms indicate that there is a desire for some sort of redemption from our conditions, a call that leisure might answer.

⁷² The last few years have seen a marked increase in films with apocalyptic themes. Queenan writes that “Last year, there was a tsunami of dystopian films, including [The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1](#), [Dawn of the Planet of the Apes](#), [Divergent](#), [The Maze Runner](#), [Robocop](#), [The Purge: Anarchy](#), [Snowpiercer](#), [The Rover](#), [Automata](#) and [The Giver](#). This record-breaking plethora of dystopian motion pictures – not all of which were of the highest artistic quality – arrived fast on the heels of [Elysium](#), [The Purge](#), [The Hunger Games: Catching Fire](#) and [Oblivion](#), released the year before, which themselves followed [Looper](#), [Cloud Atlas](#), [Dredd](#), [Total Recall](#) and the original [Hunger Games](#), all of which lit up the screen in 2012. The message in all these films is identical: we have seen the future. And it looks bad.”

6.1 THE TRAGEDY OF LEISURE

It is supposed that the first recorded instance of the term *otium*, originally a military concept for the opposite of war (Sadlek, 2004) was found in a recovered fragment of the Roman playwright Ennius' lost *Iphigenia*. Ennius' version is an adaptation of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*, a Greek tragedy about the Greek king and army general Agamemnon who is trying to decide whether to sacrifice his daughter in order to gain favorable winds for a voyage to the Trojan city of Troy. In Ennius' Roman version, there is an additional scene in which Ennius imagines Agamemnon's soldiers at Aulis, waiting in the camp for war. The soldier's chorus highlights the pain of being at idle leisure, of *otium otiosum*, caught in a kind of purgatory, a 'no-man's land' between being at war and being at home. These soldiers are neither at *war*, nor are they otherwise engaged with busy leisure, *otium negotiosum*, joyous, independent labour, the kind of leisure they would be engaged in at home. Though they are Greek soldiers, they, under Ennius' pen, behave as Romans. Unlike the Greeks of Euripides, they are not at home with idle leisure.

*Otio qui nescit uti . . .
plus negoti habet quam cum est negotium in
negotio ;
nam cui quod agat institutumst non ullo negotio
id agit, id studet, ibi mentem atque animum delectat
suum:
otioso in otio animus nescit quid velit
Hoc idem est ; em neque domi nunc nos nee militiae
sumus;
imus hue, hinc illuc; cum illuc ventum est, ire illinc
Iubet.
Incerte errat animus, praeterpropter vitam vivitur.*
(Rolfé, 1927: 390)

He who does not know how to use leisure . . .
has more of work than when there is work in work.
For to whom a task has been set, he does the work,
desires it, and delights his own mind and
intellect:
in leisure, a mind does not know what it wants.
The same is true (of us); we are neither at home or
in the battlefield;
we go here and there, and wherever there is a
movement, we are there too.
The mind wanders unsure, except in that life is
lived.⁷³
(Erasmio, 2004: 20)

The speech of the chorus of soldiers above, captures our contemporary situation with regards to leisure. We are, most of us, exceedingly uncomfortable with a leisure that has no end, pejoratively, *otium Graecum*. *Otium Graecum* is not Greek *skholē* however. Part of the discomfort of the soldiers' lack of busyness is because they are now forced to reflect, an attribute of *skholē*. I have argued that the retreat from reflection implicit in the retreat from the fear of death, is part of what organizes the leisure imaginary. As it is for us, being at leisure no doubt was uncomfortable for these soldiers as it placed the soldiers in a position where they had time to contemplate their impending deaths.

⁷³ Another translation: The one who does not know how to handle leisure, when he has leisure, has more work when he's at leisure than he has when he's working. For when a task has been set out for someone to do, he does it with no work, he's eager to do it, and in doing it he delights his mind and his soul. But when he's in leisurely leisure, his soul is troubled and does not know what it wants. That's just the bind we are in. Look we are neither at peace or at war now. We go over here, we go over there, then over there. When we've gone over there, we want to go somewhere else. Our minds wander in uncertainty. We're only half alive. (Moore, 2012: 91)

[M]en are truly sorry creatures because they have made death conscious. They can see evil in anything that wounds them, causes ill health, or even deprives them of pleasure. Consciousness means that they have to be preoccupied with evil even in the absence of any immediate danger. Their lives become a meditation on evil and a planned venture for controlling it and forestalling it. The result is one of the great tragedies of human existence, what we might call the need to ‘fetishize evil’, to locate the threat to life in some special places where it can be placated and controlled. It is tragic precisely because it is sometimes very arbitrary: men make fantasies about evil, see it in the wrong places, and destroy themselves and others by uselessly thrashing about (Becker, 1975: 128).

Like the Roman soldiers we flee from undirected leisure as this form of leisure can lead to contemplation and, as we have seen, contemplation moves us towards suffering which as sensual beings we generally seek to avoid. As Jackson Browne implies in his song *Doctor My Eyes*, persisting in trying to understand, engaging one’s fears, and allowing *aporia* to guide the coming to terms with uncomfortable truths, can have a price. We have also heard about the price paid by Saint-Simonians disembedded by their pursuit of philosophical leisure. Jackson Browne’s appeal to the doctor is much like Cebes’ appeal to Socrates for a ‘good charmer’ for our fears.

We lack a “good charmer” for our fears and so turn to weaker alternatives. These substitutes are found within the leisure imaginary. One such substitute, as Becker has pointed out is to go to war against some great evil. Here we have the jihadist, the white supremacist, and perhaps even the vindictive ex, three seemingly atypical musketeers all dipping into the shallow pool of heroic meaning and partaking of the security, confidence, piety and exigence that irrationally hating some other provides. Becker has argued that this is the path for many if not most of us and so recommends less damaging ‘causes’ or

missions like the protection of the environment for the productive expression of this deep need. So, in the absence of knowing how to use leisure well, a leisure that helps us to think what we do, going to war for some cause is one substitute. The leisure imaginary in this regard is that fantasy space in which we exorcise our demons and paradoxically create new ones.

Certainly, like Ennius' soldiers, we can go and die in war for some transcendent cause and achieve a sort of dark ontological exigence, Nietzsche's active nihilism. This is one extreme of the leisure imaginary. At the other extreme is the functionalised existence of the automaton, ontologically secure, but existentially barren, a place where we learn "to fashion an immediate life-world of regularised activities that is comforting" and "not to question certain aspects of our social systems too closely, and to deflect the fears invoked by the risks with which we choose to live by distracting ourselves with technologically sophisticated entertainments and the consumption of luxury goods" (Dawson, 2006: 111). Here even the concept of devotion is cheapened as our leisure practices, according to Blackshaw (2010a: 144) practised devotionally, are solipsistic and connected only to pointillist time, fitting well Gidden's model of temporary ontological security. The ancient Greeks did not confuse leisure in this way.

The Greeks in addition to leisure and work did also recognize cognate spheres of *paidia* (amusements) and *anapasis* (recreation) with *paidia* as diversion and *anapasis* as a renewal for work (Dare et al, 1998: xvii); what the Romans would recognize as *otium* and

our contemporary culture would recognize as *leisure* (a leisure bereft of the Greek sense imparted in *skholē* and more associated with the Latin, *otium*). Aristotle in the *Politics* discusses the place of amusement and recreation in relation to leisure, where he answers the question posed by the 18 year old backpacker, “what is time well spent?” or better still “what ought we to do when at leisure?”

Clearly we ought not to be amusing ourselves, for then amusement would be the end of life. But if this is inconceivable, and amusement is needed more amid serious occupations than at other times (for he who is hard at work has need of relaxation, and amusement gives relaxation, whereas occupation is always accompanied with exertion and effort), we should introduce amusements only at suitable times, and they should be our medicines, for the emotion which they create in the soul is a relaxation, and from the pleasure we obtain rest. But leisure of itself gives pleasure and happiness and enjoyment of life, which are experienced, not by the busy man, but by those who have leisure. For he who is occupied has in view some end which he has not attained; but happiness is an end, since all men deem it to be accompanied with pleasure and not with pain. (Aristotle, *Politics*).

There are several items of note in this passage. First, leisure is not a state of busyness. Second, amusement is not equated with leisure. Finally, the notion of medicine is interesting as it speaks to the interventionist role that amusement and recreation is accorded. As Arendt understood, they are important for the life process but they are not leisure. Leisure as philosophical contemplation emerged during the time of the Greeks but its erotic element was subdued by demands of an empire induced Logos, starting with the Romans, exacerbated by the Enlightenment, and continuing through history. In accord with Logos, Ennius’ Roman soldiers seek *otium negotium*, the busy leisure they can find at home. Likewise, in our devotional leisure practices, we seek not philosophical leisure or

skholē but misrecognize work-like leisure (think ‘working out’), amusement and recreation as leisure. We seem not to have recovered the sense of leisure the Greeks imparted to us and have adopted the Roman relation to leisure of the soldiers waiting in camp. Jocelyn (1967: 333–334) states that it would be better to translate the first thirteen words of the soldiers chorus thusly: “the man who has no job to do and does not know how to employ the resulting leisure has more difficulty than when there is a difficult job at hand.”

This is our other deep problem, we no longer know how to employ the resulting leisure we have in the manner that *skholē* would require, perhaps because like Ennius’ soldiers we are in a constant state of disembeddedness and this is what demands our energies. We share with these soldiers our homelessness, and our need to go to war. In late modernity we have been set upon the twin projects of identity and community. As Berger et al. (1973) have pointed out, in our disembedded condition, we suffer from a metaphysical homelessness and are continually engaged in acts of re-embedding. A pause in this game, reminds us of the pointlessness of the game and our lack of stability encouraging us to redouble our efforts in absorbing ourselves in our amusements, living out Nietzsche’s passive nihilism. Like our lost soldiers, “we go over here, we go over there, then over there. When we’ve gone over there, we want to go somewhere else. Our minds wander in uncertainty. We’re only half alive” (Moore, 2012: 91).

6.2 DEATH AND LEISURE REVISITED

The integral relationship between leisure and death is perhaps nowhere better articulated than in the *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*. With regards to the end of leisure and the importance of mastering our fear of death, Plato perhaps gives us our strongest direction in the *Apology*. Socrates, in response to the charge of impiety, argues that instead of the death penalty, he deserves as a reward for his service to the people of Athens, free meals in the Prytaneum to the end of his days.

What then do I deserve to pay or to suffer for having determined not to spend my life in ease? I neglected the things which most men value, such as wealth, and family interests, and military commands, and public oratory, and all the civic appointments, and social clubs, and political factions that there are in Athens; for I thought I was really too honest a man to preserve my life if I engaged in these affairs. So I did not go where I should have done no good either to you or to myself. *I went, instead to each one of you privately to do him, as I say, the greatest of benefits, and tried to persuade him not to think of his affairs until he had thought of himself and tried to make himself as good and wise as possible, nor to think of the affairs of Athens until he had thought of Athens herself; and to care for other things in the same manner.* And what do I deserve for such a life? Something good, Athenians, if I am really to propose what I deserve; and something good which it would be suitable for me to receive, then what is a suitable reward to be given to a poor benefactor who requires leisure to exhort you? There is no reward, Athenians, so suitable for him as receiving free meals in the Prytaneum (Plato, 1956: 43 *italics mine*).

In this section of dialogue we have an articulation of leisure's highest end, that of the improvement not only of the self but of the community, in this case, the City State of Athens. Socrates, the so-called 'Athenian gadfly', argues leisure's end (he requires leisure to exhort the people of Athens), contemplation in the service of the community, the Athenian *polis*. It is only because he has mastered his fear of death that Socrates can so effectively exhort the population of Athens.

Socrates capacity to subdue his and his companions' anxiety over his impending death allows him the freedom to contemplate right action (Bonner, 2011). When Crito comes to his cell and attempts to convince him to escape with all manner of apparently sound reasons, from the shame that he would bring on his friends for not accepting their help in escaping, to leaving his children without a father, Socrates conquers Crito's and his own anxiety through dialogue, through "thinking what he is doing". This capacity is absent in Ennius' soldiers. By taking the leisure to 'think on things', Socrates is able to act in a truly free way, a way that is governed by ethical choice and that points to the fact that philosophical leisure is always here before us, in the present. Socrates is also the figure that we can look to as an example of how to charm our fears and to begin to live a life of freedom.

Cultivating awareness of our death leads to disillusionment, loss of character armor, and a conscious choice to abide in the face of terror. The existential hero who follows this way of self-analysis differs from the average person in knowing that he/she is obsessed. Instead of hiding within the illusions of character, he sees his impotence and vulnerability. The disillusioned hero rejects the standardized heroics of mass culture in favor of cosmic heroism in which there is real joy in throwing off the chains of uncritical, self-defeating dependency and discovering new possibilities of choice and action and new forms of courage and endurance. Living with the voluntary consciousness of death, the heroic individual can choose to despair or to make a Kierkegaardian leap and trust in the "sacrosanct vitality of the cosmos," in the unknown god of life whose mysterious purpose is expressed in the overwhelming drama of cosmic evolution (Keen in Becker, 1973: xiv-xv).

In our contemporary culture, it seems that the contexts in which we might cultivate a conscious awareness of how our fear of death shapes our lives have eroded. As the examples of Louis-Gabriel Gauny and Socrates demonstrate, one of the contexts is *philia* or

friendship and the enabling power of friendship that creates a community space for a philosophical leisure that is synonymous with the conquering of our fear of death. Then, it is dialogue with others in this context, that is, the practice of philosophy *the right way*, so that we might lose our fear of death, that enables us to see ourselves, the world, and our actions within it with clearer eyes. We might recall Socrates' advice to Cebes in *Phaedo*, to find, once Socrates had gone, a new charmer for fears. Socrates answer to Cebes and to us is to find the charmer amongst ourselves, which is to say, to make a space to talk together, to contemplate through dialogue, through thinking, the conditions and direction of action. As the example of Gauny has shown us, this is not that far-fetched. Why not, as Gauny exemplified and Rancière suggests, start the day thinking critically about whatever action we might be taking, and conquer for ourselves and others, inside and against the tyranny of the leisure imaginary, 'the body and soul of a philosophical leisure'.

6.3 CONCLUSION: TRANSFORMING THE LEISURE IMAGINARY

Today, even the spaces in which philosophical leisure should be nurtured are under attack. I have shown that the spaces where it can still be pursued, for example recreation and leisure studies departments and the liberal arts university, are under siege by instrumental rationality bound up with a nascent neo-liberal client-based education model that orients to education as a for profit enterprise and the outcome job training. All this is

happening in an environment where ironically there are fewer jobs than ever. The other part of the story as I have shown is that in late modernity, we have the added burden of frantically pursuing the twin projects of identity and community. It would appear that for many of us we are too busy stabilizing our worlds and attaining a sense of self and community to worry about bigger issues like our own mortality and the health of our communities. This is undoubtedly part of the reason for our inaction on the biggest environmental threat of our time, climate change.

Yet, the courage to engage in philosophical leisure has not been extinguished, even if the spaces in which it might be pursued have been diminished in some ways. In this monograph for example, Kristi's reflexive engagement with the problem of being a tourist and her acknowledgment of the stranger shows that travel can hold within it an opportunity for *aporia* and not just devolve into a consumer experience. Likewise, mission tourists wrestle with the contradictory experiences of seriousness and play that call into question their pious objectives. It is the embrace of ambiguity, fateful moments that crop up in the leisure imaginary, that are opportunities for philosophical leisure both for the theorist and the practical actor. I have developed and am developing this perspective further in publications and chapters that for the constraints of time and space could not be incorporated here. For example, in a forthcoming chapter for UBC press on whiteness, I disrupt the racist leisure imaginary of the Okanagan redneck through the use of Schütz's (1945) archetypal *homecomer*, the experience of redneck whiteness for me being both a

theoretical and practical concern. Elsewhere, I have begun to explore virtual immersive worlds as an example of the leisure imaginary of pleasure and addiction, and in a related project am examining how the leisure imaginary of the festival can provide a space for dialogue and reconciliation. The approach I have laid out in these pages can help us both to understand and ground how leisure imaginaries operate and to intervene, to transform them through theorizing. While these imaginaries can often be places of despair, they are also spaces of hope where at fateful moments we can realize the impossible dream of philosophical leisure. Perhaps the best way for any of us to get primed for this quest is to go fishing. We should sit silently, pausing in Socratic fashion to embrace the uncomfortable truth, that whether we are looking out in wonder at mysterious dark waters, or in a fateful moment killing a fish for food, we truly do not know.

Epilogue

One evening this past fall, my son, Nolan and I went fishing in one of the lagoons beside the Grand river in Kitchener-Waterloo. After digging worms in the garden after supper we jumped in the van and after driving for 15 minutes arrived at our destination. I wasn't expecting much as this was the Grand river in the middle of the city, but my son was excited as we are typically successful at catching fish. We walked down to the lagoon and found a small stretch of beach next to another father with a son of roughly the same age. After exchanging the customary small talk, we began to fish.

Up to this point in my fishing adventures with Nolan, I had done the majority of the work. I would bait the hook. I would cast the line. If Nolan caught something, I would help him reel the fish in, remove the hook from its mouth and throw the fish back. My son would always protest the throwing back part. On rare occasions, I would kill the fish, and we would eat it the same day or the next. This evening I switched things up. He was going to do the work. I worked with my son, going over the art of casting a spin rod. Even at 5 years old, he picked it up quickly, and after a couple of casts had caught a rock bass. He wanted to keep the fish of course, but we threw it back as it was too small. A short time later he hooked into something bigger, as evidenced by the short bursts of line being pulled out and the little screams erupting from both him and the reel. Now we both got excited! After a few moments, he had landed his first nice sized large-mouth bass.

The other fisherman and his son came over quickly to view the prize. The man's son asked, "Are you going to throw it back?" The boy's father looked at me with a knowing smile, "Nope that one's a keeper." I pulled my hammer handle out of my fishing bag and handed it to my little fisher. "Do you want to kill the fish?" I asked. He nodded a little apprehensively and I instructed him on how to do it. The fateful moment arrived and after hesitating, he gave the fish as good a whack as a five year old can. I added a few more

Epilogue

for good measure and the fish was dead. We fished unsuccessfully for another 20 minutes and then packed up. My son carried his fish proudly towards the van. As we walked up the hill, I asked him what he thought about catching the “big” fish. He replied, “It was fun to catch the fish Dad, but I was kind of sad to kill it.”

When we got home my daughters Camille and Stephanie were surprised that we had managed to catch something so big in the lagoon. We gutted the fish and I gave a short fish biology lesson. Examining the contents of the bass’s stomach, we found two small crayfish. I filleted and cooked the fish which we then ate together as a family. It was delicious.

References

- Aitchison, C. C. (2011). *Gender and Tourism: Social , Cultural, and Spatial Perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Arendt, H. (1958). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Arendt, H. (October 28, 1964) *Zur Person*. Season 1, Episode 17. Retrieved October 30, 2014. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsoImQfVsO4>.
- Arendt, H. (1971). Thinking and Moral Considerations. *Social Research* 38(3), 435.
- Arendt, H. (1978). *Martin Heidegger at Eighty*. In M. Murray, (Ed.), *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy* (295–98, 303). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Aries, P. (1985). *The Hour of Our Death*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Aristotle. *Politics*. The Internet Classics Archive. Available at: <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.html>
- Armstrong, K. (2010). *The Case for God*. Toronto: Vintage Canada.
- Associated Press and Knight Ridder Newspapers. (August 31, 2005). “French Quarter luckier than the rest of the city.” Retrieved April 10, 2007 from *The Seattle Times*: http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2002456668_katrinafrench30.html.
- Austenfeld, T. (2000). Josef Pieper’s Contemplative Assent to the World. *Modern Age*, 42(4), 372–382.

References

- Bakhtin, M. M. (1984). *Rabelais and his World* (Vol. 341). Indiana University Press.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (2010). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (Vol. 1). University of Texas Press.
- Bartky, S. L. (1990). *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*. New York: Random House.
- Bates, B. R., & Ahmed, R. (2007). Disaster Pornography: Hurricanes, Voyeurism, and the Home Television Viewer. In R. S. Swan & K. A. Bates (Eds.), *Through the Eye of Katrina: Social Justice in the United States* (pp.187-202). Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.
- Baumann, Z. (1992). *Intimations of Post-Modernity*. London: Routledge.
- Bauman, Z. (1996). From Pilgrim to Tourist - Or a Short History of Identity. In S. Hall, & P. D. Gay, (Eds.). *Questions of Cultural Identity* (pp. 18-35). London: Sage Publications.
- Bauman, Z. (1998). *Globalisation: The Human Consequences*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2001). *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Baumann, Z. (2003). *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds*. London: Polity Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2005). *Liquid Life*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

References

- Beck, U. (1992). *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage.
- Beck, U., Giddens, A. and S. Lash. (1994). *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*. London: Blackwell.
- Becker, E. (1973). *Denial of Death*. New York: Simon and Shuster.
- Benjamin, W. (1968). *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken.
- Berger P. (1963). *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanist Perspective*. New York: Doubleday.
- Berger, P. L. (2011) [1967]. *The sacred canopy: Elements of a sociological theory of religion*. Open Road Media.
- Berger, P., Berger, B. and H. Kellner. (1973). *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*. New York: Random House.
- Berger, P. and T. Luckmann. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise its the Sociology of Knowledge*. Garden City, New York: Anchor Books.
- Berkowitz R. (July 7, 2013). Misreading 'Eichmann in Jerusalem'. Retrieved August 26, 2014 from *The New York Times*:
http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/07/07/misreading-hannah-arendts-eichmann-in-jerusalem/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0
- Berland, J. (1988). Travelling Correspondence: Notes On Tourism. In *Border/Lines: Tourism Rethinking the View*. Summer 1988, 12. Retrieved from
<https://joegalbo.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/border-lines-no-12.pdf>.

References

- Blackshaw, T. (2010a). *Leisure*. London: Routledge.
- Blackshaw, T. (2010b). *Key concepts in community studies*. Sage.
- Blackshaw, T. (2012). The man from leisure: An interview with Chris Rojek. *Cultural Sociology*, 6(3), 319-335.
- Bluestein, G. (2006, April 5). Gulf Coast Stations Receive Peabody Awards. Retrieved April 1, 2009 from *Highbeam Research*: <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P1-121328754.html>
- Blum, A. and P. McHugh. (1984). *Self-Reflection in the Arts and Sciences*.
- Blum, A. (2002). Scenes. *Public* 22/23: 7-35.
- Blum, A. (2003). *The Imaginative Structure of the City*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Blum, A. (2007). Comparing Cities: On the Mutual Honoring of Peculiarities. In J. Sloan (Ed.), *Urban Enigmas* (pp. 15-51). Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Blum, A. (March 15, 2008). *End Notes: A Symposium on Death and Dying*. Culture of Cities Symposium Series: Toronto.
- Blum, A. (2011). Life, Death and the In-Between: The Duck-Rabbit/The Face of the Clown. In T. Connolly (Ed.), *Spectacular Death: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Mortality and (Un)representability* (21-42). Bristol: Intellect Press.

References

- Bohman, J. (1999). *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd Edition. Robert Audi, Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bonner, K. (2009). A dialogical exploration of the grey zone of health and illness: medical science, anthropology, and Plato on alcohol consumption. In *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* Volume 30, Issue 2 (81- 103).
- Bonner, K. (2006). *Reflexive Sociology and Dialectic: The Case and Example of Socrates*. Unpublished Manuscript.
- Bonner, K. (1998). *Power and Parenting: A Hermeneutic of the Human Condition*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Bonner, K. (1997). *A Great Place to Raise Kids: Interpretation, Science and the Urban-Rural Debate*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press
- Boorstin, D. (1961). *The Image*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Borsay, P. (2006). *A History of Leisure: The British Experience Since 1500*. New York: Palgrave.
- Boundas, C. V. (Ed.). (2007). *The Edinburgh companion to twentieth-century philosophies*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Bramham, P. and S. Wagg (2011). Unforbidden Fruit: From Leisure to Pleasure. In Bramham, P. and S. Wagg (Eds.), *The New Politics of Leisure and Pleasure*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

References

- Bromley, R. (2000). *Narratives for a New Belonging*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Brown, J. and A. Martin. (2005, September 2). "New Orleans Residents: God's Mercy Evident in Katrina's Wake." Retrieved April 7, 2007 from *Agape Press*:
<http://headlines.agapepress.org/archive/9/22005b.asp>.
- Brown, N. (1992). Beachboys as Culture Brokers in Bakau Town, The Gambia. *Community Development Journal*, 27, pp. 361-370.
- Burke, K. (1966). *Language as symbolic action*. Berkley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Burke, K. (1973). *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, 3rd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bustillos, M. (2013, March 19). On Video Games and Storytelling: An Interview with Tom Bissell. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from
<http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/on-video-games-and-storytelling-an-interview-with-tom-bissell>.
- Butler, R. W. (1980). The concept of a tourist area cycle of evolution: implications for management of resources. *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe Canadien*, 24(1), 5-12.
- Cahill, P. (2013, April 19). What motivated bombing suspects? 'Being losers,' uncle says. *NBC News*. Retrieved from
<http://usnews.nbcnews.com/news/2013/04/19/17827354-what-motivated-bombing-suspects-being-losers-uncle-says>.

References

- Chaucer, G. (2003). *The Canterbury Tales*. London: Penguin.
- Cohen, E. (1979). A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences. *Sociology*, 13, 179-201.
- Cohen, E. (1982). Marginal Paradises: Bungalow Tourism on the Islands of Southern Thailand. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 9(2),189-228.
- Cohen, E. (1985). Tourism as Play. *Religion*, 15, 291-304.
- Cohen, E. (1989). Primitive and remote: Hill tribe trekking in Thailand. *Annals of Tourism Research*,16(1), 30-61.
- Cohen, E. (1992). Pilgrimage and Tourism: Convergence and Divergence. In Morinis, A. (Ed.), *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage* (pp. 47-61). Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Cohen, R. (2014, August 25). The Making of a Disaster. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/26/opinion/roger-cohen-the-making-of-a-disaster.html?rref=opinion&module=Ribbon&version=context®ion=Header&action=click&contentCollection=Opinion&pgtype=Blogs>
- Corbin, Alain. (1995). *The Lure of the Sea: The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840*. London: Penguin Books.
- Cowell. C. R. (1972). Communication—Problem or Mystery?: An Interpretation of the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel. Speech given at the Convention of the Southern States Speech Communication Assn. .(San Antonio, Texas, April, 1972) *ERIC*. Retrieved November 5, 2013 from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED067714>.

References

- Crouch, A. (July, 2007). From Tower-Dwellers to Travelers: Ugandan-born theologian Emmanuel Katongole offers a new paradigm for missions,” *Christianity Today*, pp. 34-39.
- Crouse, R.D. (1986). *Images of Pilgrimage: Paradise and Wilderness in Christian Spirituality*. Charlottetown: St Peter Publications. Available at: http://www.prayerbook.ca/crouse/writings/images_of_pilgrimage.htm
- Cutten, G.B. (1926). *The Threat of Leisure*. Newhaven: Yale University Press.
- Dann, G. and E. Cohen. (1996). Sociology and Tourism. In Y. Apostopoulous, S. Leivadi, A. Yiannakis (Eds.), *The Sociology of Tourism* (pp. 301 -314). London: Routledge.
- Dare, B., Welton G. and W. Coe. (1987). *Concepts of Leisure in Western Thought*. Iowa: Kendall Hunt.
- Dauphinée, E. (2007). *The ethics of researching war: Looking for Bosnia*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
- Davis, O. (2010). *Jacques Rancière*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Dawson, L. L. (2006). Privatisation, Globalisation , and Religious Innovation: Giddens’ Theory of Modernity and the Refutation of Secularisation Theory. In *Theorising Religion* James A. Beckford and John Wallis Eds. Burlington: Ashgate.
- Deem, R. (1986). *All Work and No Play: the Sociology of Women and Leisure* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Debord, G. (1994). *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: Zone Books.

References

- De Grazia, S. (1964). *Of Time, Work, and Leisure*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.
- Embree, W. and I. Inwood. (2000). *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. New York: Routledge
- Emirbayer, M. and J. Goodwin. (1994). Network Analysis, Culture, and the Problem of Agency. *The American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 99, No. 6 (May, 1994), pp. 1411-1454.
- Erasmio, M. (2004). *Roman tragedy: theatre to theatricality*. Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Falk, R. (2009). *Achieving Human Rights*. New York: Routledge.
- Feifer, M. (1985). *Going Places*. London: MacMillan.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making Social Science Matter*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Foley, M. and J.J. Lennon. (1996). JFK and Dark Tourism: A Fascination with Assassination. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 2, 198-211.
- Foucault, M. (1986). "Of Other Spaces". *Diacritics* 16 (1): 22-27. available online at <http://foucault.info/documents/heterotopia/foucault.heterotopia.en.html> (accessed 10 August 2014).
- Franklin, A. (2003). The Tourist Syndrome: An Interview with Zygmunt Bauman. *Tourist Studies* , 205-217.

References

- Fromm, E. (1965) [1941]. *Escape from Freedom*. New York: Avon Books.
- Gadamer, H.G. (1975). *Truth and Method*. London: Sheed and Ward.
- Gadamer, H.G. (1996). *The Enigma of Health*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Gallagher, K. T. (1962). *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, forward by Gabriel Marcel. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Gauny, L. G. (1983). *Le Philosophe plébéien*, textes réunis par Jacques Rancière. Paris, La Découverte/Maspéro.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Giddens, A. (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford University Press.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Giddens, A. (1994). *Beyond Left and Right — the Future of Radical Politics*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Goodger, J. M. (1983). Directions for Leisure Research: A Critique of the Radical View. *Quest*. 35:1.
- Graburn, N. (1977). Tourism: The Sacred Journey. In V. Smith, V. (Ed.), *Hosts and Guests: the anthropology of tourism* (pp. 17-31). University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia.

References

- Gunther, A. (1998). Sex Tourism without Sex Tourists. In M. Opperman (Ed.), *Sex Tourism and Prostitution*, (pp.73- 90) . New York: Cognizant Communication Corporation.
- Habermas, J. (1996) *Between Facts and Norms*. Boston: MIT Press.
- Hage, G. (1996). Nationalist Anxiety or the Fear of Losing Your Other. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 7:2, 121-140.
- Hage, G. (2000). *White Nation: Fantasies of White supremacy in a multicultural society*. New York: Routledge.
- Haldrup, M. and J. Larsen (2003). The Family Gaze. *Tourist Studies* 3 (1), 23-46.
- Hanson, V.D. (2013, August 27). An American Satyricon. Retrieved August 6, 2014 from *National Review*: <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/356805/american-satyricon-victor-davis-hanson>
- Harper, D. (2014). *leisure* - Online Etymological Dictionary. Retrieved September 2012 from *Online Etymology Dictionary*: <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=leisure>.
- Harvey, D. (1990). *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Haworth, L. (1984). Leisure, work and profession. *Leisure Studies*, 3(3), 319-334.
- Heidegger, M. (1977). *The questions concerning technology and other essays*. Trans. William Lovit. New York: Harper Collins.

References

- Hemingway, J. L. (1988). "Leisure and Civility: Reflections on a Greek Ideal," *Leisure Sciences*, 10, 179–191.
- Hemingway, J. L. and M.G.W. Parr. (2000). Leisure Research and Leisure Practice: Three Perspectives on Constructing the Research–Practice Relation. *Leisure Sciences*, 22, 139–162.
- Herda, E. A. (1999). *Research conversations and narrative: A critical hermeneutic orientation in participatory inquiry*. Westport Ct/London: Praeger Publishers.
- Hick, J. (1983). *Philosophy of Religion*. 3rd Edition. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice–Hall, Inc.
- Hick, J. (1998). "Evil and the God of Love" in D. Stewart (ed.) *Exploring the Philosophy of Religion*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Higgins, M. (2001). Introduction: More Amazing Tales, in W. Smith, M. Higgins, M. Parker and G. Lightfoot (eds) *Science Fiction and Organization*, pp. 1–12, London: Routledge.
- Horkheimer, M. (1974) [1947]. *Eclipse of reason* (Vol. 1). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Innis, H. (2007). *Empire and Communications*. Plymouth, United Kingdom: Rowman and Littleford Publishers Inc.
- International Maritime Organization. (2006). IMO –30 years of change, 30 years of progress. Available at:
http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D7830/MaritimePolicyandManagement.doc [accessed September 2006].
- Jacobs, J. (2005). *Dark Age Ahead*. Toronto: Vintage Canada.

References

- Jary, D., & J. Jary. (1991). *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Sociology*.
New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Karch, C. A. and G. H. S. Dann. (1996). Close Encounters of the Third
World. *The Sociology of Tourism*, 173-192. Apostopoulous, Yiorgos et al., Eds.
London: Routledge.
- Katagiri, M. (1992). On privatization of meaning. *Human Studies* 15(1): 61-76
- Kearney, R. (2012). Diacritical Hermeneutics. *Hermeneutic Rationality. La rationalité
herméneutique*. Maria Luísa Portocarrero, Luis António Umbelino, Andrzej
Wierciński Eds. Berlin: LIT VERLAG.
- Keen, S. (1984). The Development of the Idea of Being. In Schilpp and L. E. Hahn and
P.A. Schlipp (Eds.), *Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel* (pp. 110-111). La Salle, IL: Open
Court.
- Kelly, J. and G. Godbey. (1992). *The Sociology of Leisure*.
Pennsylvania: Venture Publishing Inc.
- Kevan, S. M. (1993). Quests for cures: A history of tourism for climate and health.
International Journal of Biometeorology 37 (3): 113-124.
- Kingwell, M. (2005). *Catch and release: Trout fishing and the meaning of life*. Penguin.
- Kleiber, D. and M. Wilke, (1995). *Aids, Sex und Tourismus: Ergebnisse einer Befragung
deutscher Urlauber und Sextouristen*. Baden-Baden: Nosmos-Verlagsgesellschaft.

References

- Klein, J. (2005, September 4). Listen to What Katrina is Saying, *Time*. Retrieved April 10, 2007 from <http://www.time.com/time/columnist/klein/article/0,9565,1101282,00.html>
- Kuester, M.F. (1979). *Where Birch Trees Grow...A History of Baltic-German Immigration to Canada after World War II*. Edmonton.
- Kurzweil, R., & Grossman, T. (2010). *Transcend: Nine steps to living well forever*. Rodale.
- Lasch, C. (1978). *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.
- Lash, S. (1990). *The Sociology of Postmodernism*. New York: Routledge.
- Lash, S. (1994). *Reflexive Modernization*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Lennon, John and Foley, Malcolm. (2007). *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*. London: Thomson Learning.
- Lewandowski, J. D. (2000). Thematizing Embeddedness Reflexive Sociology as Interpretation. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 30(1), 49-66.
- Linder, S. B. (1970). *The Harried Leisure Class*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lycett, P. and M. Martin. (1994). *Abraham LeBlond Colour Printer 1819-1894*. Burton Upon Trent: John Mackie Printers Limited.

References

- MacCannell, D. (1976). *The Tourist: a new theory of the leisure class*. New York: Schocken.
- MacCannell, D. (1989). *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*.
New York: Schocken.
- MacCannell, D. (1992). *Empty Meeting Grounds: The Tourist Papers*.
New York: Routledge.
- MacCannell, D. (2001). Tourist agency. *Tourist studies*, 1(1), 23–37.
- MacCannell, D. (2011). *The Ethics of Sightseeing*. California: University of California Press.
- MacCannell, D. (2012). On the Ethical Stake in Tourism Research. *Tourism Geographies: An International Journal of Tourism Space, Place and Environment*, 14:1, 183–194
- Malpas, J., “Hans-Georg Gadamer”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL =
<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/davidson/>>.
- Marcel, G. (1949). *Being and Having*. Translated by Katharine Farrer. Westminster, UK: Dacre Press.
- Marcel, G. (1951). *The Mystery of Being*, vol.1, *Reflection and Mystery*. Translated by G. S. Fraser. London: The Harvill Press.
- Marcel, G. (1962). *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope*. Translated by Emma Crawford. New York: Harper Torchbooks.

References

- Marcel, G. (1962). *Man Against Mass Society*. Translated by G. S. Fraser. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company.
- Marcel, G. (1973). *Tragic Wisdom and Beyond*. Translated by Stephen Jolin and Peter McCormick. Publication of the Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, ed. John Wild. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Marcuse, H. (1955). *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Marx, K. (1932)[1968]. *The German Ideology*. Moscow: Progress Publishers. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_The_German_Ideology.pdf
- Mason, P., Grabowski, P. and W. Du. (2005). Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, Tourism and the Media. *International Journal of Tourism Research*. 7 (11-21).
- McHugh, P., Raffel, S., Foss, D.C., and A.F Blum. (1974). *On the Beginning of Social Inquiry*. London: Routledge and Keenan Paul.
- McLuhan, M., Q. Fiore, and J. Agel. (1967). *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects*. New York: Bantam Books.
- McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- McLuhan, M. (1970). *From Cliché to Archetype*. New York: The Viking Press.

References

- Mead, R. (September 11, 2014). Kicking the Bucket List. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/kicking-the-bucket-list>
- Merrigan, G., Huston, C.L., and R. Johnston. (2012). *Communication Research Methods*, Canadian Edition. Don Mills: Oxford.
- Morris, W.F. (2006). *Emotion and Anxiety: A Philosophic Inquiry*. United States: Xlibris Corporation.
- mission. (n.d.). *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)*. Retrieved July 31, 2007, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/mission>.
- Moore, A. (1980). Walt Disney World: Bounded Ritual Space and the Playful Pilgrimage Center. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 53 (4), 207-218.
- Moore, A. (1985). Rosanzerusu is Los Angeles—an anthropological inquiry of Japanese tourists. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 12, 619-43.
- Moore, T. J. (2012). *Roman Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mowbray, J. (2005, December 9). January, 5 2006 – Gray Line Tour Presents Katrina Impact. Retrieved August 3rd, 2006 from *New Orleans*: <http://www.neworleanscvb.com/articles/index.cfm/action/view/articleID/299/typeID/10>.
- Mustonen, Pekka. (2005). Volunteer Tourism: Postmodern Pilgrimage? *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*. Vol.3, Issue 3: 160-77.

References

- Nakamura, J. and Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2001). Flow Theory and Research. In C. R. Snyder Erik Wright, and Shane J. Lopez. *Handbook of Positive Psychology*. Oxford University Press.
- Nietzsche, F. (1913). *Human All-Too-Human: A Book for Free Spirits, Part II*. Translated by Paul V. Cohn, B.A. New York: Macmillan.
- Nietzsche, F. (1976). *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Nietzsche, F. (1979). *Ecce Homo*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Olasky, M. (2006). *The Politics of Disaster: Katrina, Big Government, and A New Strategy for Future Crises*. Nashville: W Publishing Group.
- Northcutt, W. *Darwin Awards*. Retrieved from <http://www.darwinawards.com/>.
- Opperman, M. 1999. 'Introduction', in M. Opperman (ed.), *Sex Tourism and Prostitution: Aspects of Leisure, Recreation and Work*, New York: Cognizant Communication Corporation.
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. New York: Sage Publications.
- Perlez, J. (2014, Sept. 26). ISIS Lieutenant Emerges From Australian Red-Light District. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/27/world/asia/isis-australia-mohammad-ali-baryalei.html>.
- Picard, M. (1996). *Bali: Cultural Tourism and Touristic Culture*. Singapore: Archipelago Press.

References

pilgrimage. (n.d.). *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. Retrieved July 26, 2007, from Dictionary.com website:

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/pilgrimage>

Pilkington, E., A. Gabbat and P. Beaumont (2013, April 21). Skateboarding, marijuana...and jihad. Inside the minds of the Boston bombing suspects. *The Observer*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/21/boston-bombers-complex-picture>.

Plato (1956). *Plato: Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates, and Crito*. E.E. Cummings Ed. Translated by F.J. Church. Prentice Hall.

Plato (2001). *Phaedo*. Digireads.com: Stilwell.

Plato. *The Republic*. The Internet Classics Archive. Available at: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.html>

Plato. *Theaetetus*. The Internet Classics Archive. Available at: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/theatu.html>

Pollner, M. (1991). Left of Ethnomethodology: The Rise and Decline of Radical Reflexivity. *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 56, No. 3, pp. 370-380.

References

- Postman, Neil. 1985. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in an Age of Show Business*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Potter, A. (2010). *The Authenticity Hoax: How we Get Lost Finding Ourselves*. Toronto: McLelland and Stewart.
- Pruitt, Deborah and Suzanne Lafont. (1995). For Love and Money: Romance Tourism in Jamaica. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 22, 422-440.
- Queenan, J. (2015, March 19). From Insurgent to Blade Runner: why is the future on film always so grim? *The Guardian*.
http://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/mar/19/dystopian-films-blade-runner-insurgent-future-grim?CMP=fb_gu
- Raffel, S. (2004). Imagination. *Human Studies*. (27)3: 207-220.
- Raffel, S. (2013). *The Method of Metaphor*. Bristol: Intellect Press.
- Rancière, J. (1989). *The Nights of Labour: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-Century France*. Trans. John Drury. Temple University Press
- Rancière, J. (2004) *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*
Trans. and introd. Gabriel Rockhill. London and New York: Continuum.
- Rancière, J. (2009). *The Emancipated Spectator*. Translated by Gregory Elliot. London: Verso.
- Repent America. (2005, August 31). Hurricane Katrina Destroys New Orleans Days Before "Southern Decadence". Retrieved April 8, 2007 from *Repent America*:
http://www.repentamerica.com/pr_hurricanekatrina.html.

References

- Reuters News Service. (2005, December 13) New Orleans company to offer Katrina disaster tour. Retrieved December 12, 2006 from CNN.com:
[http://www.cnn.com/2005/TRAVEL/12/13/hurricanes.tour.reut/index.html%20Tuesday,December%2013,%202005;%20Posted:%201:53%20p.m.%20EST%20\(18:53%20GMT\)](http://www.cnn.com/2005/TRAVEL/12/13/hurricanes.tour.reut/index.html%20Tuesday,December%2013,%202005;%20Posted:%201:53%20p.m.%20EST%20(18:53%20GMT))
- Ricoeur, P. (1991). What is a text. *From text to action: Essays in hermeneutics, II*, 105-124.
- Rinehart, J.W. (1996). *The Tyranny of Work: Alienation and the Labour Process*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada.
- Rojek, C. (1985). *Capitalism and Leisure Theory*. Tavistock.
- Rojek, C. (1995). *Decentring Leisure: Rethinking Leisure Theory*. SAGE.
- Rojek, C. (2005). *Leisure Theory: Principles and Practice*. New York: Palgrave.
- Rojek, C. (2007). *Cultural Studies*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Rojek, C. (2010). Leisure and Emotional Intelligence. *World Leisure Journal*. 52:4, 274-278.
- Rolfe, J.C. (1927). *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*. With An English Translation. Boston: Harvard University Press.
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2007.01.0071%3Abook%3D19%3Achapter%3D10>
- Roney, M. (September 30, 2011) Company will load loved ones' ashes into ammunition. Retrieved December 20, 2012 from USAToday.com.
<http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/story/2011-09-29/cremation-ashes-ammunition-guns-Holy-Smoke/50610712/1>

References

- Ryan, C. and R. Kinder. (1996). Sex, tourism and sex tourism: fulfilling similar needs? *Tourism Management*, 17, 507-518.
- Svenson, S. and C. Ruf. Life and Death in New Orleans: Disaster Tours Imagined. In T. Connolly (Ed.), *Spectacular Death: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Mortality and (Un)representability* (183-201). Bristol: Intellect Press.
- Sadlek, G. M. (2004). *Idleness Working: the Discourse of Love's Labour from Ovid through Chaucer and Gower*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press.
- Salazar, N.B. (2012). Tourism Imaginaries: A Conceptual Approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(2), 863-882.
- Salmon J. L. and L. Smith. (2006, February 27). Two-Thirds of Katrina Donations Exhausted. *Washington Post*, pp. A1.
- Schütz, A. (1945). The Homecomer. *American Journal of Sociology*, 50:5, 369-376.
- Schütz, A. and T. Luckmann. (1973). *The Structures of the Life World*, vol. 1, trans. R. Zaner and H.T. Engelhardt Jr. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Seaton, J. (2005). *Carnage and the Media: The Making of News About Violence*. London: Penguin.
- Shaw, S.M. (2000). If our research is relevant, why is nobody listening. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 32:1, 147-151.
- Shields, R. (1991). The System of Pleasure. Liminality and the Carnavalesque at Brighton. *Theory, Culture and Society*, (7)1: 32-79.

References

- Simmel, Georg. (1971). *On Individuality and Social Forms*.
Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Stewart, D. (1998). *Exploring the Philosophy of Religion*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Svenson, S. and C. Ruf. (2011). Life and Death in New Orleans: Disaster Tours Imagined.
Spectacular Death: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Mortality and (Un)representability.
Ed. Tristanne Connolly. Bristol: Intellect Press.
- Taylor, C. (1991) *The Malaise of Modernity*. Toronto: Anansi.
- Taylor, C. (2002). Modern Social Imaginaries. *Public Culture*, 14(1), 91-124. Retrieved
from <http://publicculture.dukejournals.org/content/14/1/91.full.pdf+html>.
- Taylor, C. (2004) *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Taylor, C. (2007) *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Taylor, R. (2012). After the Modern Subject: Between Activity and Passivity in
Heidegger, Levinas, and Gadamer. *Hermeneutic Rationality. La rationalité
herméneutique*. Maria Luísa Portocarrero, Luis António Umbelino, Andrzej
Wierciński Eds. Berlin: LIT VERLAG.
- The Times Picayune. (2006, January 17). *Transcript of Ray Nagin's Speech*. Retrieved
May 10, 2007 from http://www.nola.com/news/t-p/frontpage/index.ssf?/news/t-p/stories/011706_nagin_transcript.html.

References

- Treanor, Brian, "Gabriel (-Honoré) Marcel", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2010 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/marcel/>.
- Turley, D. (2005). Death, Where is Thy Sting? Morality and Consumer Motivation in the Writings of Zygmunt Bauman. *Inside Consumption: Consumer Motives, Goals and Desires*. London: Routledge.
- Turner, L. and J. Ash. (1976). *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Turner, R. (1974). *Ethnomethodology*. Great Britain: Hazell Watson and Viney Ltd.
- Turner, V. (1985). Liminality, Kabbalah, and the Media. *Religion* 15, 205-217.
- Turner, V. and E. Turner. (1978). *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Turner, V. (1973). The Centre Out There: Pilgrims Goal. *History of Religions*, 12 (3), 191-230.
- Urry, J. 2002 [1990]. *The Tourist Gaze*. Second Edition. London: Sage Publishing.
- Urry, J. (2000). *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-first Century*.
- Urry, J. (1996). *Consuming Places*. London: Routledge.
- Van Gennep, A. (1977). *The Rites of Passage*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

References

- Van Manen, M. (1998). *Researching Lived Experience*. Cobourg, Ontario: Transcontinental Printing Inc.
- Varney, J. (2005, November 21). Religion, Politics Mix After Storm. *Times-Picayune*.
- Veal, A. J. (1987). *Leisure and the Future*. London, Allen & Unwin.
- Veal, A. J. (1997). *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism*. Second Edition. Great Britain: Pitman Publishing.
- Veal, A. J. (2009) *The Elusive Leisure Society, 4th Edition*. School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism Working Paper 9, Sydney: University of Technology, Sydney, available at: <http://datasearch.uts.edu.au/business/publications/lst/index.cfm> and at www.leisuresource.net.
- Veal, A.J. (2011). The leisure society I : myths and misconceptions, 1960-1979. *World Leisure Journal*, 53 : 3, 206-227.
- Veblen, T. (2007). *The theory of the leisure class*. Oxford University Press.
- Vogt, Jay W. (1978). Wandering: Youth and Travel Abroad. Tourism and Behavior. pp. 19-31. Zamora et al. Eds. Virginia: Dept. of Anthropology, College of William and Mary.
- Wall, G. (1992). Tourism alternatives in an era of global climatic change. *Tourism alternatives: Potentials and problems in the development of tourism*, 194-215.
- Wang, N. (1996). Logos-modernity, Eros-modernity, and leisure. *Leisure Studies* 15, 121-135.

References

- Waring, A. (2008). Health club use and 'lifestyle': exploring the boundaries between work and leisure. *Leisure Studies*, 27:3, pp. 295-309.
- Weber, M. (1946). Science as a Vocation. In H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Translated and edited), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, (pp. 129-156). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wearing, Stephen. 2001. *Volunteer Tourism: Experiences that Make a Difference*. Wallingford, Australia: CABI.
- Webster (1964). *Websters New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language*.
- White, R. , J. Wyn and P. Albanese. 2013. Youth and Society: Exploring the Social Dynamics of Youth Experience.
- Zafiropoulos, Christos A. 2009. Socrates and Leisure. In E. Close, G. Couvalis, G. Frazis, M. Palaktoglou, and M. Tsianikas (eds.) Greek Studies, Flinders University June 2007", Flinders University Department of Languages - Modern Greek: Adelaide, 31-38. Available at: https://dspace.flinders.edu.au/jspui/bitstream/2328/8060/1/31-38_Zafiropoulos.pdf. Accessed February 2014.
- Zizek, Slavoj (September 3, 2014). ISIS Is a Disgrace to True Fundamentalism. Retrieved October 13, 2014 from www.nytimes.com:
http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/09/03/isis-is-a-disgrace-to-true-fundamentalism/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0

Appendix One: University of Waterloo Research Ethics Materials



February 2009

Letter of Information /Consent Form

Volunteering in the 9th Ward

Investigator:

Stephen Svenson
PhD Candidate
Department of Sociology
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario
N2L 3G1

Purpose of the Study

I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Waterloo being supervised by Dr. Lorne Dawson. I am here for the dates of February 23rd to the 28th volunteering here in the Lower 9th Ward and doing research on the rebuilding efforts.

I am interested in interviewing volunteers about their experiences. I wish to study and document this period in the rebuilding of the Lower 9th Ward both through a documentary film and qualitative research.

What will happen during the study?

You are invited to tell me about your experience volunteering and about your experience with the rebuilding of the lower 9th ward. You may choose to participate in a video taped session for possible use in a documentary film or in an audio-taped interview. If you choose to be videotaped or a documentary please be aware

Appendix 1: University of Waterloo Research and Ethics Materials

that it will be used for educational purposes in university classrooms and at conferences. It may also be featured on public television. You may also

Interviews will follow a general guideline but in order to allow you to tell your stories will also be open-ended. Interviews will be approximately 30-60 minutes in length, depending on your availability.

Interviews will take place in a mutually agreed upon location and time. With your permission, a video recorder or digital voice recorder will be used.

I will be asking you questions like:

- 1) How do you feel this trip has affected you? In what ways have you been affected?
- 2) What sorts of things did you do when you were volunteering?

Potential Harms, Risks or Discomforts:

It is not likely that there will be any harms or discomforts associated with this study. However you may discuss some things that bring forth strong emotions. You do not need to answer questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer.

Potential Benefits

I hope to learn more about how communities form strong social bonds in the face of adversity. We hope that what we will learn will help us understand more about how to create more livable and sustainable communities and the role that volunteering and working together plays in this. The research will not benefit you directly although you may get some satisfaction out of telling your story and contributing to research on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and volunteering in the lower 9th Ward.

Confidentiality:

If you choose to be audio-taped, anything that you say or do in the study will not be told to anyone else. Anything that we find out about you that could identify you will not be published or told to anyone else, unless we get your permission. Your privacy will be respected. We will not be asking you to provide your name or any personal information

If you choose to be videotaped you will enter into an agreement to be “on the record” and you may be featured in a documentary film. At your request, I can provide you with a copy of the documentary before distribution.

Appendix 1: University of Waterloo Research and Ethics Materials

The information obtained by me will be kept in a secure location, and will only be made available to myself and researchers who sign a confidentiality agreement. The information will be locked in a cabinet in my office and be retained indefinitely.

Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is your choice to be part of the study or not. If you decide to participate, you can decide to stop at any time, even after signing the consent form or part-way through the study. If you decide to stop participating, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal, any data you have provided to that point will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still be in the study.

A transcript of the documentary will be available in August of 2009. I will send you a copy for your review if the film is to go to public television. I will be making a return trip in February of 2010 at which time I will advise you of a screening date to watch the documentary.

Information About the Study Results:

You may obtain information about the results of the study by contacting Stephen Svenson at the following email address:

srsvenso@artsmail.uwaterloo

If you are interested in a summary of the research findings please contact the email address above.

Rights of Research Participants)

If you have any questions about your participation in this conversation, please feel free to ask me. If you have additional questions at a later date, please contact Dr. Lorne Dawson (519) 888 4567, extension 35340.

This project has been reviewed and has received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics. If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes at 519-888-4567, Ext. 36005

CONSENT

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Stephen Svenson of the University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study, and to receive any additional details I wanted to know about the study. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time, if I choose to do so, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview video recorded and understand that this is considered to be “on the record.”

YES NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES NO

Participant's Name: _____ (please print) Date: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Witness Name: _____ (please print) Date: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Stephen Svenson
Department Sociology
University of Waterloo
srsvenso@artsmail.uwaterloo.ca

February, 2009

Dear Participant:

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study. As a reminder, the purpose of this study is to provide a stronger understanding and description of the volunteer experience. Please remember that any data pertaining to yourself as an individual participant will be kept confidential unless you have authorized release on the informed consent form. Once all the data are collected and analyzed for this project, I plan on sharing this information with the research community through seminars, conferences, presentations, and journal articles and a documentary film. If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study, or if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at the email address listed at the top of the page. If the documentary is to be distributed to television I will send you a transcript of the documentary for your review.

As with all University of Waterloo projects involving human participants, this project was reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. Should you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes in the Office of Research Ethics at 519-888-4567, Ext., 36005.

Appendix 1: University of Waterloo Research and Ethics Materials

Your input has been invaluable and has assisted in providing a stronger description of the volunteer experience. I would appreciate any comments you may have on the study and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to email me at srsvenson@artsmail.uwaterloo.ca , or call Dr. Lorne Dawson (519) 888 4567, extension 35340. Once again thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Stephen Svenson

Volunteering/Rebuilding and Hurricane Katrina – Interview Questions

1. How did you come to be interested in volunteering for the Hurricane Katrina cleanup?

2. What were your expectations for yourself before you left for the trip? What did you expect would be the outcome personally and for those affected?

3. How was the trip organized?

4. What sorts of things did you do when you were volunteering?

5. What other activities did you take part in when you were volunteering in New Orleans?

6. When you returned to your home, what was that experience like? What was the experience of coming home like? (for those that have been down once before)

7. What was the experience of sharing your experiences with others like? What came of this sharing?

8. How do you feel this trip has affected you? In what ways have you been affected?

**Questions Particular to 9th ward:

- 1) One of the interesting elements is the way in which planners are faced with often fierce resistance to the idea of abandoning areas due to their obvious dangers,

which seems irrational from the planners' perspectives. I would like to know something about people's desire to return/stay in those sorts of areas (and whether the agencies and state are actively discouraging this).

- 2) Tourists and common ground (could start with signs)
- 3) What difficulties have you encountered in rebuilding in the lower 9th ward.

Appendix Two: McMaster University Research Ethics Materials

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

I am a Canadian citizen interested in the relationship among leisure, health and community.

My previous research has looked at various communities and has attempted to understand and document those elements that contribute to strengthen social bonds.

Here in the Lower 9th Ward I am particularly interested in the stories of volunteers and residents and their efforts to strengthen social bonds and rebuild their community.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions about my research and participation in the documentary project please contact Sarah Cameron or myself here at Common Ground.

You can also email me at:
svenson@mcmaster.ca

This Study has been reviewed and approved by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board

If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact the McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat.

Phone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
Email: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca
Mail:
c/o Office of Research Services
McMaster University
1280 Main Street West
Hamilton, ON L8S 4L8

McMaster University

Stories of intervention in the Lower 9th Ward

Researcher
Stephen Svenson

Department of Communication Studies and
Multimedia
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario



ABOUT THIS PROJECT

I am here for the dates of February 18th to the 22nd volunteering here in the Lower 9th Ward and doing research on the rebuilding efforts.

I am interested in interviewing volunteers and residents about their experiences.

I wish to document this period in the rebuilding of the Lower 9th Ward both through qualitative interviews and a documentary film.

PARTICIPANT'S ROLE

You are invited to tell us about your experience volunteering and about your experience with the rebuilding of the lower 9th ward. Interviews will follow a general guideline. We will be asking you questions like: What has been your most memorable experience throughout the period after Katrina? And how has the disaster and the rebuilding process impacted you and your family? But for the most part, in order to allow you to tell your stories, the interviews will be open-ended. Interviews will be approximately 30-60 minutes in length, depending on your availability. They will take place in a mutually agreed upon location and time. We would like to audio-tape these interviews, but will do so only with your permission.

In addition to audio-taping the interviews we would like to video-tape them. Again, we would only video-tape if you are willing. We are hoping to make a documentary film based on these recordings. The film will be used for educational purposes in university classrooms and at conferences. It may also be featured on public television.

We also hope to share some of our video-recordings with Common Ground Relief. We have no formal connection with Common Ground Relief, but the people at Common Ground are helping us out with recruitment and making their own documentary and would like to be able to use some of our recordings. If you would like to participate in this research, but do not want any video-recordings shared with Common Ground Relief, you can simply let us know.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All records of our observations, tapes of individual interviews and conversations will be kept private unless of course participants wish to be featured in documentary films where confidentiality is not guaranteed and participation will be considered to be "on the record."

If at any time participants feel uncomfortable with the interview, they are welcome to let us know and we will make every effort to respect their privacy.

If there are any questions that may make participants feel uncomfortable answering or that they would prefer not to answer, they may skip over that section or stop the interview.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and participants can decide to withdraw at any time.

February 2009

Letter of Information /Consent Form

Stories of Intervention in the Lower 9th Ward

Principal Investigator: Stephen Svenson
Department of Communication Studies and Multimedia
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
(905) 525-9140 ext. 2437

Purpose of the Study

I am here for the dates of February 16th to the 22nd along with my research assistant, Sarah Cameron, volunteering in the Lower 9th Ward and doing research on the rebuilding efforts.

We are interested in interviewing volunteers and residents about their experiences. We wish to document this period in the rebuilding of the Lower 9th Ward both through qualitative interviews and a documentary film.

What will happen during the study?

You are invited to tell us about your experience volunteering and about your experience with the rebuilding of the lower 9th ward. Interviews will follow a general guideline. We will be asking you questions like: What has been your most memorable experience throughout the period after Katrina? And how has the disaster and the rebuilding process impacted you and your family? But for the most part, in order to allow you to tell your stories, the interviews will be open-ended. Interviews will be approximately 30-60 minutes in length, depending on your availability. They will take place in a mutually agreed upon location and time. We would like to audio-tape these interviews, but will do so only with your permission.

In addition to audio-taping the interviews we would like to video-tape them. Again, we would only video-tape if you are willing. We are hoping to make a documentary film based on these recordings. The film will be used for educational purposes in university classrooms and at conferences. It may also be featured on public television.

We also hope to share some of our video-recordings with Common Ground Relief. We have no formal connection with Common Ground Relief, but the people at Common Ground are helping us out with recruitment

and are making their own documentary for promotional purposes and would like to be able to use some of our recordings. If you would like to participate in this research, but do not want any video-recordings shared, you can simply let us know.

Potential Harms, Risks or Discomforts:

Talking about your experiences may generate strong emotions. You do not need to answer questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer. If you feel after the interview that you would like to talk to someone about any of the issues your participation in the research might raise, we will be providing you with information about local resources you can access.

You may also worry about how others might react to what you say. We discuss below the steps we are prepared to take to protect your privacy.

Potential Benefits

We hope to learn more about how communities form strong social bonds in the face of adversity. We hope that what we will learn will help us understand more about how to create more livable and sustainable communities and the role that volunteering and working together plays in this. The research will not benefit you directly although you may get some satisfaction out of telling your story and contributing to research on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the rebuilding of the lower 9th Ward.

Confidentiality:

We are prepared to treat your participation in this project confidentially. If you decide that you do not want to be audio- or video-taped or if you agree to the audio-taping only, we will not be using your name or any information that would allow you to be identified in any of our papers or in the film. However, we are often identifiable through the stories we tell, which means that you may be identifiable based on what you say. You should keep this in mind through the interview.

If you agree to be videotaped, however, you would also be agreeing to participate “on the record.” That is, you may be featured in the documentary film.

The information obtained by me (Stephen Svenson) will be kept in a secure location. Only I and my research assistant will have access to the data. The information will be locked in a cabinet in my office and be retained indefinitely.

Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is your choice to be part of the study or not. If you decide to participate, you can decide to stop at any time, even after signing the consent form or part-way through the study. If you decide to stop participating, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal, any data you have provided to that point will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still be in the study.

Information About the Study Results:

If you are interested in a summary of the research findings please contact the email address below. A summary will be available in August of 2009. I will be making a return trip in February of 2010 at which time I will advise you of a screening date to watch the documentary.

svenson@mcmaster.ca

Rights of Research Participants)

If you have questions or require more information about the study itself, please contact Stephen Svenson at svenson@mcmaster.ca.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, you may contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat

Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142

c/o Office of Research Services

E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Stephen Svenson of McMaster University. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study, and to receive any additional details I wanted to know about the study. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time, if I choose to do so, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview video recorded and understand that this is considered to be “on the record.”

YES NO

I agree to have my interview video recording shared with Common Ground Relief.

YES NO

Participant's Name: _____ (please print) Date: _____

Participant's Signature: _____



Oath of Confidentiality

I understand that as an interpreter / transcriber / audio/ video assistant/ or research assistant (*circle one*) for a study being conducted by Stephen Svenson of the Department of Communication Studies and Multimedia, McMaster University under the supervision of Professor Stephen Svenson, confidential information will be made known to me.

I agree to keep all information collected during this study confidential and will not reveal by speaking, communicating or transmitting this information in written, electronic (disks, tapes, transcripts, email) or any other way it to anyone outside the research team.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

(Print)

Date: _____ Witness Signature: _____

Some Services in the Lower 9th Ward

Dial 2-1-1

2-1-1 is an easy to remember number to call when you are in need of help and don't know where to turn. Our counselors will listen to your concerns, provide telephone counseling when needed and help to find a health or human service program in the community that may be able to help you. Counselors use our Community Resource Directory to search over 3,000 programs in the area.

2-1-1 is a free service and is available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. People call 2-1-1 for a variety of reasons. Some are looking for information about and referrals to community programs such as:

- **Basic Needs Resources:** food banks, clothing closets, shelters, rent assistance, utility assistance, housing.
- **Medical Programs:** health insurance programs, Medicaid and Medicare, maternal health, medical information lines.
- **Mental Health Programs:** crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling, drug and alcohol intervention and rehabilitation.
- **Employment Assistance Programs:** job training/placement transportation assistance, education programs.
- **Support for Special Populations:** adult day care, congregate meals, Meals on Wheels, respite care, home health care, transportation, homemaker services, disability assistance
- **Children, Youth and Family Supports:** child care, after school programs, Head Start, family resource centers, summer camps and recreation programs, mentoring, tutoring, protective services.

A River of Hope Mental Health Resource Center

<http://www.headwatersrelief.org/whatwedo.ariverofhope.2007-01.php>

The Center, located in the Lower 9th Ward, offers free counseling, referral and support services to anyone in need. Hours are Wednesdays from 8:30am-5:30pm, Thursdays from 1pm-9pm, Fridays from 9am-9pm, and Saturdays from 8:30am-5pm. The Center is located at the corner of North Claiborne and Alvar, across the street from the New Salem Baptist Church and located in the Community Resource Center building.,1600 Alvar Street. Call (504) 943-0207 for more information.

Lower 9th Ward Homeowners Association

Neighborhood organization provides case management services for homeowners in the lower Ninth Ward – priority given to senior citizens. Services includes finding volunteer labor, rebuilding materials, furniture and appliances for homeowners trying to rebuild; help with Road Home and property succession issues.

Appendix 2: McMaster University Research Ethics Materials

Contact:

Linda Jackson

(504) 355-6560

ljackson_9w@hotmail.com

Meets weekly on Saturdays at 1 pm at Holy Angels Academy, 3500 St. Claude Ave.

Volunteering/Rebuilding and Hurricane Katrina – Interview Questions

Volunteering (especially interested in stories)

1. How did you come to be interested in volunteering for the Hurricane Katrina cleanup?
2. What were your expectations for yourself before you left for the trip? What did you expect would be the outcome personally and for those affected?
3. How was the trip organized?
4. What sorts of things did you do when you were volunteering?
5. What other activities did you take part in when you were volunteering in New Orleans?
6. When you returned to your home, what was that experience like? What was the experience of coming home like? (for those that have been down once before)
7. What was the experience of sharing your experiences with others like? What came of this sharing?
8. How do you feel this trip has affected you? In what ways have you been affected?
9. What has been your most memorable experience throughout this volunteer experience?

Rebuilding (Stories – obstacles – What is it about the lower ninth)

1. Could you please tell me about the rebuilding process?
2. Have you run into any obstacles in rebuilding? If so which?
3. Have there been organizations that have been helpful? If so, which?

Appendix 2: McMaster University Research Ethics Materials

4. How was the disaster handled?
5. What has the presence of the volunteers been like for you?
6. What has the presence of the tourists been like for you?
7. Are there lessons to be learned from this disaster?
8. How has the disaster and the rebuilding process impacted you and your family?
9. What has been your most memorable experience throughout the period after Katrina?

Appendix Three: UBCO Research Ethics Materials

Been There, Saved That: The Role of Volunteer Tourism in the Development of the Self

Principle Investigators: Robyn Moen, Britney Durand, Scott Temple, Tiffany Mervyn, Brad Lively & Anissa Vandezande

Committee Member: Stephen Svenson

Contact Information: Robyn Moen (250) 575-8642
Britney Durand (778) 214-0764
Scott Temple (250) 801-1909
Tiffany Mervyn (250) 859-4745
Brad Lively (250) 818-8918
Anissa Vandezande (250) 826-0098

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Svenson, Professor of Sociology at the University of British Columbia, undergraduates Robyn Moen, Britney Durand, Scott Temple, Tiffany Mervyn, Brad Lively & Anissa Vandezande are conducting research on Volunteer Tourism. The purpose of this interview is to help the researcher's study the popularity, and the outcomes of Volunteer Tourism.

PROCEDURES

If I agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:

- I will be asked to participate in an individual interview that will last for roughly 60 minutes.
- I will be asked to discuss the following topics: My volunteer experience, my life back home, what I have learned from my experience of volunteering, and what drew me to the Hurricane Katrina relief effort.
- I will also be asked my age, gender, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and educational background.
- If I agree to participate in this research study, a videotape and audiotape recording will be made for research purposes.

RISKS

I will be asked questions of a personal nature, which may produce strong emotions that make me uncomfortable. I realize that some questions are sensitive but are necessary for the study. I may be afraid of how others may perceive my opinions, but steps will be taken to ensure my confidentiality below.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Please note that this interview will be kept completely confidential. Your name will not be used in any reports, or publications that come from this research study. All of your notes, video, and audio tapes will be transcribed, and coded to maintain secrecy. Only the researcher's (Robyn Moen, Britney Durand, Scott Temple, Tiffany Mervyn, Brad Lively & Anissa Vandezande), and the committee member, or supervisor (Stephen Svenson), will be able to access my interview information. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I may choose not to answer certain questions or discontinue the interview at any time, for whatever reason.

QUESTIONS

I have spoken with Robyn Moen, Britney Durand, Scott Temple, Tiffany Mervyn, Brad Lively & Anissa Vandezande about this study and they have answered my questions. If I happen to have any further questions regarding this study and my participation in it, I may contact Robyn Moen, Britney Durand, Scott Temple, Tiffany Mervyn, Brad Lively & Anissa Vandezande by email.

Robyn Moen robynmoen@gmail.com
Britney Durand bmdurand@gmail.com
Scott Temple scottytemple@hotmail.com
Tiffany Mervyn tiffany_mervyn@hotmail.com
Brad Lively lively-20@hotmail.com
Anissa Vandezande avandezande@hotmail.com

CONSENT

I have read the information about the research study being conducted by Robyn Moen, Britney Durand, Scott Temple, Tiffany Mervyn, Brad Lively & Anissa Vandezande with the University of British Columbia. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time, if I choose to do so, and I agree to participate in this study.

I have been given a copy of this form.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview video recorded and understand that this is considered to be "on the record."

YES NO

Appendix 3: UBCO Research Ethics Materials

12. What is the difference between volunteering at home, and volunteering for the Hurricane Katrina relief effort?
13. Tell me about your experience upon returning home.
14. Do you consider yourself a humanitarian?

Lower 9th Ward Residents

1. What does volunteering mean to you?
2. Who, in your opinion, are the people participating in the volunteer effort down here?
3. How do you receive the volunteers that come down here?
4. Tell me about the post-hurricane rebuilding process