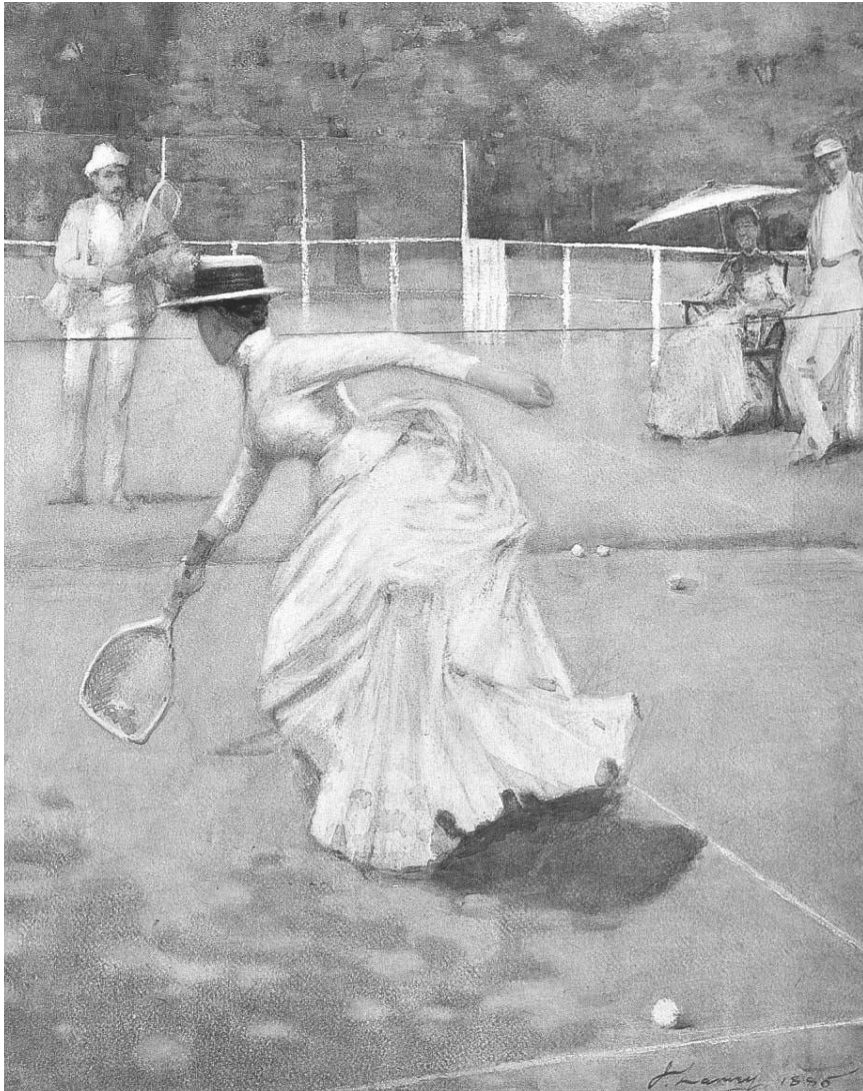


TRANSATLANTIC IDENTITIES



11. THE FABRIC OF SELF

December 6, 2023

THE FABRIC OF SELF

MY TITLE COMES from the late 19th-century American writer Agnes Repplier: "It is in his pleasure that a man really lives; it is from his leisure that he constructs the true fabric of self." What did 19th-century people do when they were not working? Was it the same in both countries, for both genders, and all classes? What facilities were brought into being to make this possible? And how did leisure activity reflect on everyday life?

We will start by looking at city life in London and New York, the shift of emphasis to cultivate shopping as a social outlet, and the development and use of the public parks in both cities. We will then look at where people went for day trips and holidays, and the development of seaside resorts.

The second hour is divided into two contrasting sections. On the one hand, outdoor sports and team games, and their supposed benefits in building body and character. On the other, the indoor enjoyment of theater, vaudeville, popular music, and dance. *rb.*

A. CITY SCENES

Using two paintings of Victorian London as a jumping-off point, we consider the contrast between those who work and those who don't, and its class implications—with a brief visit to a department store.

Brown: *Work* (1863, Birmingham)

Joy: *The Bayswater Omnibus* (1895, Museum of London)

♫ **French:** *The Mountains o' Mourne* (Jim McCann)

♫ **Trailer,** *Mr. Selfridge* (2013, British Independent TV)

B. PARKS AND RECREATION

The chain of Royal Parks in central London had existed for centuries; Central Park in New York was a new experiment in social engineering. Yet the changing use of these parks follows similar patterns in both cities.

Shepherd: *Green Park* (1830s) and *Hyde Park* (1840s, both Yale)

Ritchie: *A Summer Day in Hyde Park* (1858)

Ritchie: *Winter in St. James' Park* (1859)

Olmsted and Vaux: Proposal for Central Park

Currier and Ives: *Central Park*

Prendergast: *Central Park* (1900, Whitney)

♪ **Ives:** *Central Park in the Dark*, central section

C. DAY TRIPS

Already by mid-century, it was possible to take day excursions by train to various beach resorts, whether well-established or newly developed. And with this came a seaside culture that may have begun with high society but soon embraced the masses.

Rossiter: *To Brighton and Back for 3/6* (1859, Birmingham)

Nicholls: *At the Seaside* (1860s, Wolverhampton)

Frith: *Ramsgate Sands* (1851–54, Royal Collection)

Homer: *Long Branch, NJ* (1869, Boston MFA)

Carr: *Beach at Coney Island* (1879)

Bellows: *Beach at Coney Island* (1908)

Stella: *Luna Park* (1913, NYC Whitney)

♪ “I do like to be beside the seaside” (Basil Rathbone)

D. MIRROR OF LIFE

The sports of a country are a fun-house mirror of its culture and ethics. As appendices to previous classes, we look especially at the increasing participation of Women, sport in the context of Empire, and team games as the embodiment of national Values.

Saturday Evening Post, covers, 1902 to 1909

Harper's Bazaar, *Women playing football*, 1869

Frith: *The Fair Toxophilites* (1872, Exeter)

Lavery: *A Rally* (1885, Ottawa)

♪ **Newbolt:** *Vitai Lampada* (Jonathan Jones)

♪ **Thayer:** *Casey at the Bat* (Richard Poe, ill. CF Payne)

E. A NIGHT OUT

Another appendix. What did late nineteenth-century people see or hear when they went out to the theater, music-hall, or bar?

Glackens: *Hammerstein's Roof Garden* (1901, Whitney)

♪ **Montage:** American Vaudeville (movie clips)

Posters: *Calder's White Slave Company*, Theatre Royal, Edinburgh

♪ **Harris:** *After the Ball is Over* (the composer and Rebecca Baxter)

Sickert: *Little Dot Hetherington at the Old Bedford* (1888)

♪ “The Boy I love is up in the gallery” (Jenny Coulson)

♪ “Where did you get that hat?” (Robert White, BBC)

♪ **Movie:** *Scott Joplin* (1977), Joplin plays “The Entertainer”

♪ **Joplin:** *The Maple Leaf Rag* (piano rolls)

♪ **Joplin:** *Treemonisha*, finale (Carmen Balthrop, Houston)

George **Bellows** (1882–1925, *American painter*), Ford Madox **Brown** (1821–93, *English painter*), Samuel **Carr** (1837–1908, *American painter*), Augustin **Daly** (1838–99, *American playwright*), Percy **French** (1854–1920, *Irish songwriter*), William Powell **Frith** (1819–1909, *English painter*), William **Glackens** (1870–1938, *American painter*), Charles K. **Harris** (1867–1930, *American songwriter*), Winslow **Homer** (1836–1910, *American painter*), Charles **Ives** (1874–1954, *American composer*), Scott **Joplin** (1868–1917, *American composer*), George William **Joy** (1844–1925, *English painter*), Sir John **Lavery** (1856–1941, *Irish painter*), Alfred **Morgan** (1836–1924, *English painter*), Sir Henry **Newbolt** (1862–1938, *English poet*), Charles Wynne **Nicholls** (1831–1903, *Irish painter*), Frederick Law **Olmsted** (1822–1903, *American landscape architect*), Maurice **Prendergast** (1859–1924, *American painter*), John **Ritchie** (1821–75, *English painter*), Charles **Rossiter** (1852–90, *English painter*), Sidney **Shepherd** (1784–1862, *English painter*), Walter **Sickert** (1860–1942, *English painter*), Ernest Lawrence **Thayer** (1863–1940, *American writer*)

The course website is www.brunyate.com/britain-america
I will always respond to mail at rogerbrunyate@gmail.com