

MAKING *THE SAVOY*:  
AESTHETICISM, DECADENCE, AND COLLABORATIVE  
PEDAGOGY

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Instructors in the humanities looking to address the challenges of teaching in an increasingly decentred, multivocal, and STEM-oriented academic environment often turn to new learning technologies, hoping that incorporating tools such as asynchronous videos, team chat apps, and online learning platforms will better enable them to meet the needs of their students. But what of the classroom space itself? How might we reconceive our seminar rooms and lecture halls in such a way as to promote a more communal and care-based pedagogy, one that will not only provide our students with the skills they will require to succeed, but encourage them to reflect critically on what and how they learn? In what follows I want to reflect on a graduate seminar I conducted on the making of *The Savoy*, a “little magazine” of boundary-pushing art and literature, much of it by artists and writers associated with the aesthetic and decadent movements, that ran for eight issues between January and December 1896. I use the verb *to make* here as a nod to “maker culture,” the popular movement that has sought to unleash the cultural and political potential of new digital technologies by showing learners how to build and create things rather than simply consume and, in consuming, be consumed by them. As Mike Sharples and his co-authors at the Open University write, “Maker culture emphasizes the production of tangible artifacts that solve a need in their makers’ everyday lives – and this explicitly includes playful or aesthetic ‘needs.’ It emphasizes experimentation, innovation, and the testing of theory through practical, self-directed tasks” (33). Visitors to a “maker space” might find, for example, a digital scanner for capturing an object they wish to create and a 3-d printer to produce it. This stress on knowing by doing, one which promotes the values of both collaboration and individual reflection, consensus and dissensus, caring for one’s self and meeting the needs of others, embodies the ethos of both the group of artists and writers who worked together in 1895-96 to make the physical version of *The Savoy*,

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