

A RIP IN THE SOCIAL FABRIC: REVOLUTION, INDUSTRIAL WORKERS  
OF THE WORLD, AND THE PATERSON SILK STRIKE OF 1913  
IN AMERICAN LITERATURE, 1908-1927

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## ABSTRACT

In 1913, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) led a strike of silk workers in Paterson, New Jersey. Several New York intellectuals took advantage of Paterson's proximity to New York to witness and participate in the strike, eventually organizing the Paterson Pageant as a fundraiser to support the strikers. Directed by John Reed, the strikers told their own story in the dramatic form of the Pageant.

The IWW and the Paterson Silk Strike inspired several writers to relate their experience of the strike and their participation in the Pageant in fictional works. Since labor and working-class experience is rarely a literary subject, the assertiveness of workers during a strike is portrayed as a catastrophic event that is difficult for middle-class writers to describe. The IWW's goal was a revolutionary restructuring of society into a worker-run cooperative and the strike was its chief weapon in achieving this end. Inspired by such a drastic challenge to the social order, writers use traditional social organizations—religion, nationality, and family—to structure their characters' or narrators' experience of the strike; but the strike also forces characters and narrators to re-examine these traditional institutions in regard to the class struggle.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since the focus of this study is the representation of the working class, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to those members of the working class who have shaped my own political consciousness, beginning with my family. As my father worked in the tire industry and the sheet metal industry and my mother worked in a hazelnut factory throughout my childhood, I would like to acknowledge the sacrifices they have made in allowing me to pursue an education that was denied to them. In particular, it was the years I spent working with my father at the sheet metal factory that made me realize all that he had to put up with to put food on our table, pay for our home, and secure my education. It was only after working with him that I realized what workers must go through to support themselves and their families.

Besides my family history, I would particularly like to thank those people I have met through various labor struggles of which I have been a part. In the spring of 1999 I picketed with the International Association of Machinists at a Cummins Diesel plant in Portland, Oregon. It was a long bitter strike, in which a worker who lost his health care coverage had to contend with his wife's breast cancer and another worker, Sam, committed suicide. Despite these personal tragedies of the workers on the picket line, management made clear that it would not negotiate with the workers.

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## PREFACE

Like a prairie-fire, the blaze of revolution was sweeping over every American institution of law and order a year ago. It was eating its way into the homes of the American workmen, its sharp tongues of revolutionary heat were licking the altars of the churches, leaping into the belfry of the school bell, crawling into the sacred corners of American homes, seeking to replace marriage vows with libertine laws, burning up the foundations of society.

—Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, 1920

“You ask me why the I.W.W. is not patriotic to the United States. If you were a bum without a blanket; if you had left your wife and kids when you went west for a job, and had never located them since; if your job had never kept you long enough in a place to qualify you to vote; if you slept in a lousy, sour bunkhouse, and ate food just as rotten as they could give you and get by with it; if deputy sheriffs shot your cooking cans full of holes and spilled your grub on the ground; if your wages were lowered on you when the bosses thought they had you down; if there was one law for Ford, Suhr, and Mooney, and another for Harry Thaw; if every person who represented law and order and the nation beat you up, railroaded you to jail, and the good Christian people cheered and told them to go to it, how in hell do you expect a man to be patriotic?”

—IWW member, testifying during a sedition trial

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines American literature from the turn of the twentieth century inspired by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or Wobblies). The IWW organized workers regardless of race, nativity, and skill to provoke strikes and to move workers, in theory at least, towards a revolutionary consciousness. IWW propaganda presented the worker as vital, powerful, and the source of society's material livelihood. The degradation of the working class was not their own fault, according to the IWW, but was the effect of increased mechanization and systematic conditions brought about by capitalism that forced workers to make "all of the good things in life" (1905 Preamble in Kornbluh) while, because of the wage system, they could not afford the things the working class had made. Even the hobo, commonly seen as a begging parasite, was a productive source in the eyes of the IWW: "He built the road," the Wobbly song "The Blanketstiff" begins, a road upon which the hobo must walk looking for his next job. For the IWW, the capitalists or "employing class," were the parasites because as Eugene Debs, one of the founding members of the IWW, pointed out, "capitalists own the tools they do not use, and the workers use tools they do not own" (rpted in Kornbluh 1). The IWW looked to reverse this paradox through industrial unionism, organizing workers of all trades into One Big Union, an organization that, they envisioned, would ultimately run society through a democratic workplace. The Wobblies' chief weapon against the employing class was the strike. Through the strike, the IWW hoped to reveal a working class that was not only socially necessary but capable of organizing the material life of society according to need, not wealth.

Although formed in 1905, the IWW did not garner much attention from writers and artists until the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 in Paterson, New Jersey, where the city's proximity to New York provided easy access for intellectuals to witness—and in some cases, get involved in—an IWW strike first hand. However, while the IWW hoped to prove the capability and agency of the working class, the literature inspired by the IWW in general and the Paterson Silk Strike in particular focuses its attention on middle-class values and the conversion of the middle classes to the plight of labor. Even when workers in this literature organize strikes, it is through middle-class perception that worker agency is revealed through the action of the strike. The revelation of worker agency is presented as a crisis in which traditional social organization—capitalism, religion, nationality, ethnicity, or the family—is questioned and re-examined in response to the workers' revolt. Two things are new for American literature in works inspired by strikes: 1) the working classes make public their activity to a society that has often objectified them if not ignored them, and 2) the emergence of the working class into middle-class consciousness raises questions about traditional social organization.

American literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was preoccupied by the effects of the concentration of wealth into the hands of the few. While realist works like William Dean Howells' *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885) question the ethical and moral decisions that made fortunes, naturalist writers presented social inequality in extremes, with novels that examine the conditions of either the wealthy or the struggling poor. In Frank Norris' *The Pit* (1903), Curtis Jadwin compulsively plays markets, accumulating wealth while cornering the wheat market (although he ultimately loses his fortune in his speculative ambitions), and in Theodore

Dreiser's *The Financier* (1912) and *The Titan* (1914), Frank Cowperwood amasses a fortune through will, determination, political corruption. On the opposite end of the social spectrum, the working class and the poor are depicted as victims: in Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Street* (1890), characters are trapped within a cycle of domestic violence, alcoholism, and poverty; Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906) presents an industrial world that uses and disposes workers with no compunction whatsoever; in *Sister Carrie*, Hurstwood commits suicide after descending the social ladder from a respectable middle-class life to homelessness; and Jacob Riis' muck-raking exposé *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) laments tenement slums while promoting ethnic stereotypes. In all of these latter cases, the poor and working class are reduced to objects of pity with little to no control of their fate.

Part of the reason for the literary objectification of the poor and working class is the omission of labor from American literature which would reveal the actual activity of the working class instead of making them objects. While there are scenes of labor in the literature of the Progressive Era, they are few and brief. In *Sister Carrie*, Carrie takes a job at a shoe factory, and Dreiser narrates the monotony of the work, the ache of Carrie's wrists and hands, and the anticipation of the lunch bell (27-31). But Carrie's foray into the world of labor lasts a mere chapter, and her reaction to industrial life and its inhabitants perpetuates working-class objectification when she judges her fellow employees' "bandiage" as "hard and low" (30). Likewise, later in the novel when he becomes a strikebreaker, Hurstwood finds the laboring world a strange place, and Dreiser wonderfully depicts this estrangement when Hurstwood returns home from his shift and reads about the strike in the newspaper "with absorbing interest" (313), emphasizing his

observer status of the work world. Frank Norris' *The Octopus* reflects the world of agricultural laborers and presents the railroad trust as land-grabbing villains, but while there are scenes of the ranch-hands working, the main focus is Magnus Derrick, the owner of the ranch, and his defeat at the hand of the trusts. An exception to this omission of labor is Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* in which the hazards of industrial conditions are tediously reported in vivid detail. *The Jungle*'s failure, however, is not its depiction of labor, but the failure to reveal agency on the part of workers. Jurgis Rudkus and much of his family are flat characters, victims of their circumstances, and have no agency of their own. Sinclair's narration controls the novel, and there is little dialogue to reveal character thought. Jurgis and his family are merely moving parts of the setting. Only while listening to a socialist speaker (a Debs-like proxy) at the end of the novel does Jurgis become more than a cog, confirming Sinclair's intention that socialism will be the salvation of the working class.

Strikes in American literature confirm the same patterns as those of the larger class issue and the treatment of the working class, but strikes are also a moment of breakthrough. In Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* (1888), strikes are depicted as public nuisances but the result of a mismanaged distribution of goods. Julian West, the narrator and protagonist, is frustrated with the frequency of strikes in 1887 because they have delayed the building of his house. The futuristic socialism described in the novel is therefore not the result of worker militancy; Dr. Leete, West's tour guide in the socialist utopia of 2000, states that the labor question "solved itself" (61) through the concentration of capital until the vast monopoly was peacefully transferred to state ownership. While Bellamy dismisses unions and strikes as unnecessary nuisances, other

texts of the era portray strikes as mobs. But these mobs are not dehumanized in *A Hazard of New Fortunes* and *Sister Carrie*, both of which include street-car strikes in Brooklyn. In *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, the strike leads to a philosophical confrontation between father and son; Dryfoos, a northern capitalist millionaire, and Conrad, his son, argue about street-car strikers because Conrad “pit[ies] them” (379) even “though they go the wrong way to help themselves” (379). Like Dr. Leete in *Looking Backward*, Howells’ Conrad thinks strikes are the wrong course of action, and in line with the American literary tradition, he pities the workers. But once he leaves to witness the strike, Conrad sees his friend Landau, a supporter of the strike, beaten by police officers, at which point Conrad, the outsider and innocent bystander, is shot. Despite his describing the strike as a mob, Howells uses the contrast of characters’ philosophies to personalize the strike and brings the drama into the middle and upper class around which his plot revolves. When Hurstwood works as a strikebreaker for a day in *Sister Carrie*, the mob is personalized in a different manner in which we hear the voices of workers yelling at Hurstwood for being a scab. One of the strikers tries to convince Hurstwood to join the strike, appealing to him, calling him “pardner” (311), to which Dreiser comments that the striker “seemed most peaceably inclined” (311). Through this brief tour we can see a development in the depiction of strikes in literature: from dismissal in Bellamy, upper-class witnessing in Howells, to humanization in Dreiser. Regardless of the portrayal of strikes and strikers, the event brings characters and readers into a confrontation with labor and the working class.

Work itself is not a sublime act although its omission in literature would make it seem so. From a Marxist perspective, the omission of labor from literature is not

surprising. In a capitalist, commodity-based culture, literature reflects the commodity fetishism described in *Capital*; that is, in our daily life, we are confronted with commodities removed from their labor source, and our consumerism is isolated from the social aspect of labor. Traditionally, literature has concerned itself with the leisure time of the middle and upper classes, and only during times of economic crises do the working class and their activity become the subject of literature, and even then their day-to-day activity as laborers is rarely discussed. In *The Historical Novel*, Georg Lukács observes that the props with which Flaubert creates his realism in *Sentimental Education* are devoid of the labor necessary to make those artifacts (186). Frederic Jameson, in *Marxism and Form*, also points to this trend in realism: bourgeois literature is often set on week-ends, vacations, and personal crises that either remove or force characters from their workplace (167). The strike novel, by contrast, focuses on the same retreat from labor, but this crisis is forced upon the workers as a result of the conditions of their work, thus emphasizing their labor.<sup>1</sup> The strike, therefore, is an act of deconstruction: by not performing their expected duties, workers emphasize their daily activity. Because of the failure to recognize labor as a social activity, social life is redefined along traditional lines: religion, nationality, ethnicity, and family. Literature often reflects these more personal social organizations.

The French syndicalist Georges Sorel analyzed the possibilities of strikes in his study *Reflections on Violence* (1908). In line with syndicalist philosophy, he sees the strike, particularly the general strike, as a more effective method of ushering in socialism

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<sup>1</sup> In his *Crowds and Power* (1960), Elias Canetti describes the strike as a “prohibition crowd” (55-8) in which the idle workplace becomes communally owned by the workers as sacred ground. Paula Rabonowitz in *Labor and Desire* (1991) describes Depression-era breadlines as an historical moment in which women escaped from the “private sphere” into public awareness (3-4).

than turning to political party organization because the strike prepares a psychology of class consciousness, and its ultimate form, the general strike, becomes a moving, apocalyptic vision to inspire workers to revolution.<sup>2</sup> Sorel claims that

strikes have engendered in the proletariat the noblest, deepest, and most moving sentiments that they possess; the general strike groups them all in a coordinated picture, and by bringing them together, gives each one of them its maximum of intensity; appealing to their painful memories of particular conflicts, it colours with an intense life all the details of the composition presented to consciousness. We thus obtain that intuition of Socialism which language cannot give us with perfect clearness—and we perceive it as a whole, perceived instantaneously. (127-8)

Through the strike, workers overcome the division of labor which separates and silences them; in essence, they find expression. But Sorel's passage points to a contradiction. While workers find voice, the vision of the strike poses a problem of expression, in which "language cannot give us perfect clearness" (*ibid*). Sorel continues insisting that socialist revolutionaries must see their work as "sublime" (139) and concludes that the revolution via general strike must be "conceived as a catastrophe, the development of which baffles description" (148). This contradiction does not pose a problem for workers who have found voice through the act of the strike; for Sorel, the strike is spectacle enough. Instead, this contradiction poses a problem for writers and intellectuals who, also inspired

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<sup>2</sup> Sorel compares the general strike with the early Christian's anticipation of the Second Coming (125). Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri make a similar comparison in *Empire* (2000) in which early Christianity triumphed over the Roman Empire by offering an alternative subjective order to the imperial subjectivity: "In this process an enormous potential of subjectivity was constructed and consolidated in terms of the prophecy of a world to come, a chialistic project. This new subjectivity offered an absolute alternative to the spirit of imperial right—a new ontological basis. [ . . . ] Empire [ . . . ] was challenged in its totality by a completely different ethical and ontological axis" (21).

by the vision of the strike, must transform the vision into some representational language. Again and again, Sorel claims the limitations of language *vis-a-vis* the spectacle of the strike, particularly academic language.<sup>3</sup>

Strikes are ironic moments in history because they emphasize the division of labor at the same time they overcome the division. On the one hand, the gap between labor and management becomes exaggerated as a line between the two is clearly drawn. The halting of work allows workers to transcend the usual divisions of their labor. Furthermore, while on strike, workers have to organize for themselves the bare necessities to subsist through the strike. Often workers would rally support from local grocers and restaurants to provide collective kitchens where meals would be rationed out to strikers and their families. Sympathetic doctors would be recruited to provide health care and lawyers for legal representation for incarcerated workers and union leaders. In these instances, once again, a division of labor is overcome where middle class entrepreneurs and professionals join forces with the working class.

The picket line creates a social rupture which opens the perception of those who witness or are inspired by the strike. In response to the strike's division, writers seem compelled to revise society's structure. Throughout industrial history, particularly American labor history, workers were pitted against each other through various modes of identification: Protestants against Catholics, white against black, native-born against immigrant, "unskilled" worker against skilled worker. Furthermore, the traditional social

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<sup>3</sup> William Z. Foster in his pamphlet *Syndicalism* (1912) mentions Sorel directly (35) in his chapter "The History of Syndicalism." The pamphlet was the result of Foster's visit to Europe to study syndicalism more thoroughly. Foner states that Foster had been converted to syndicalism in the United States by his participation with the IWW. But upon his return from Europe, Foster reassessed the IWW's dual-unionism project as a failure and advocated a "bore from within" method in which a "militant minority" of syndicalists would join AFL unions and radicalize them, as he tried during the Great Steel Strike of 1919. In terms of his commentary on the general strike, though, Foster tries to provide a more concrete and reassuring vision of the general strike than Sorel's ambiguous "myth." See Foster (9-13).

structure of the family divided workers along clan lines; as a result of the atomistic view of capitalist society, each family competed against other families in order to take care of their own. Literature that depicts a strike is forced to analyze labor through its omission—that is, the working class and their activity come into focus negatively: the workers rebelling against their “duties” force the imagination to confront that which is usually unnoticed and unseen. Because labor is perceived negatively, literature uses traditional social life, most frequently the family, to form a frame of reference familiar to its audience as labor has never been valued as a relevant social organization. As the society does not perceive the labor or the laboring classes, there is no form of discourse for such radical social content.<sup>4</sup> But American history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century would suggest that labor, the working class, and labor disputes were becoming more frequent, providing a basis of historical content for which literature must respond.

The revolutionary zeal of the IWW was formed in the twenty years of economic social turmoil that preceded its formation. The Haymarket Affair of 1886, beginning with a strike for an eight-hour workday and ending with the execution of four anarchists accused of inciting revolution, aroused the American public to the conditions of the American working-class. The attention Haymarket evoked also prompted several American writers to examine social conditions, worker militancy, and the problem of revolution. The most famous literary reaction to Haymarket is Bellamy’s *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* which predicted a peaceful transition from capitalism to a socialist state. Bellamy presents a future scenario where citizens, through reason, restructure

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<sup>4</sup> In *Narrating Class in American Fiction* (2009), William Dow studies class as a discursive subject in American literature from Whitman to the Depression.

society to address the social ills of the late nineteenth century; the violence of Haymarket is not an option for such a transition. Realist writers contemporary with Bellamy also examined labor unrest and the problems of revolution: William Dean Howells' *A Hazard of New Fortunes* was partially inspired by Haymarket, and Henry James' *Princess Casamassima* (1886) anticipates the revolutionary violence of the Haymarket Affair that would crescendo in American history for thirty years. In all of these works, however, the violence associated with revolution—and the revolutionary idea in itself—is too much to bear: for Bellamy, society reshapes itself peacefully for its own survival; for Howells, the main characters are transformed by the strike, but their actions and reactions are individualized responses; for James, the terrorist inflicts violence upon himself instead of his target. The fabric of society, for these writers, cannot be unwoven by revolutionary means.

Despite the inability of American literature to express the violence of revolution and revolutionary action, for the remainder of the nineteenth century working-class militancy and class-based violence escalated. The Homestead Strike of 1892 against Andrew Carnegie in the steel industry ended in a violent confrontation. The Pullman Strike of 1894 headed by Eugene V. Debs, then head of the American Railway Union, later a Socialist presidential candidate, ended with President Grover Cleveland sending federal troops to quell the strike. These violent eruptions became more frequent as labor tried to organize larger affiliations to represent the workers' cause.

After the end of the Civil War, there were several attempts to organize worker affiliations on the national level; the earliest in this era was the National Labor Union (NLU) formed in 1866, but the NLU did not gain significant traction and disbanded

under the economic pressure of the Depression of 1873. The Knights of Labor originally formed in Philadelphia in 1868 as a local affiliation for the workers of the Philadelphia area. The Knights survived the Depression of 1873 and after the depression in 1878 held a convention with the intention of becoming a national organization. The Knights were radical, but after the Haymarket Affair, the Knights fractured because of its leadership's lack of response to Haymarket and unwillingness to promote strikes. Unlike its predecessors, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) formed in 1886 had less radical intentions and was unwilling to confront capital on such an aggressive basis but instead sought to form a partnership between labor and capital. The AFL embraced time contracts that would insure stability in labor-capital relations. The AFL became the main affiliation for skilled labor, but as a federation of craft unions, whose membership predominately reflected "native," white men, it developed into a privileged laboring class when compared to the labor of groups they refused to organize.<sup>5</sup>

The IWW formed in Chicago in 1905 as a radical alternative to the AFL. While the AFL hoped to change workers' lives through negotiating contracts with employers, and since the AFL often only represented skilled workers of certain "assimilated" ethnicities, the IWW hoped to organize all laborers, but particularly the "unskilled" whose population was growing with the mechanization of industrial production. With these advancements in production, AFL craft unions were quickly becoming anachronistic, a throw-back to a craft-based economy. Factories incorporated several trades in one location, each trade with its own union, thus undermining worker solidarity

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<sup>5</sup> See Dubofsky *Industrialism and the American Worker, 1865-1920* (1996) for a concise overview of American labor history. Bill Fletcher, Jr. and Fernando Gapasin have an even more concise overview (9-17) in *Solidarity Divided* (2008) to provide an historical background in diagnosing problems with the contemporary labor movement.

in the workplace. Furthermore, in contrast to the AFL's more conciliatory approach to employers and capitalism, the IWW advocated class warfare through strikes that would immediately settle worker demands. While it would negotiate contracts on rare occasions, the IWW was suspicious of contracts: first, contracts are legal documents defended by the same legal system that often persecuted and prevented workers from organizing for themselves and conducting strikes.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, contracts weakened workers who needed to be committed to class warfare. The IWW wanted their demands met immediately; if at any point management reneged, a strike would continue. This philosophy of the strike kept workers and employers in constant antagonism. Most importantly, though, the IWW envisioned a new social organization based on syndicalism, economic production democratically run by workers via an organization of industrial unions. In this aspect, the IWW was revolutionary with the hopes of "forming [ . . . ] a new society within the shell of the old" (1908 Preamble of the IWW, rpted in Kornbluh 13).

The IWW was born out of the working-class militancy that developed in the frontier West, particularly a product of the Western Federation of Miners, a radical independent union that was often in armed clashes with detectives and gunmen hired by mining companies and with the state militia.<sup>7</sup> In the beginning, the IWW stayed with its Western roots, organizing itinerant field hands, miners, lumberjacks, and conducting

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<sup>6</sup> For theoretical discussions of the problems of contracts see Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" (1923) in *Reflections* and Jacque Derrida's deconstructive analysis of Benjamin in "The Force of Law: the 'Mystical Foundation of Authority'" (1990) in *Acts of Religion* (2002). For historical treatment, see William Forbath's *Law and the Shaping of the American Labor Movement* (1991).

<sup>7</sup> Dubofsky's *We Shall Be All* (1969) presents a "nativist" history of the IWW. Philip Foner's *History of the Labor Movement, Vol. 4: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917* (1965) suggests a mixture of native origins and European syndicalist influence. Salvatore Salerno's *Red November Black November* examines immigrant influences on the IWW. As the IWW was often accused of being led by foreign agitators (particularly during World War I) many historians were insistent on its "frontier origins" to the exclusion of foreign influences. Salerno's history provides an interesting alternative to this historical trend.

“free speech” fights in Western cities. As its membership base was not necessarily workers of traditional, stable backgrounds and domesticities, the IWW eschewed the idea of contracts because contracts assume a continued presence at one location, and itinerant workers did not have this luxury. Instead, they advocated “direct action”: slow-downs, strikes, and at times, sabotage. Furthermore, given the IWW’s militant predecessors, violence was a frequent part of its rhetoric, and the IWW often responded to workplace injustice with violence against company property. If Wobbly lumberjacks were tired of lousy bedding, they would burn the bedding and refuse to work until it was replaced; if pay was cut, they would declare a strike until their demands were met. The philosophy behind direct action was to train workers for constant struggle and use their economic clout to win demands. In the bigger vision, short strikes were seen as dress rehearsals for the general strike that would usher in revolution.

In 1912 in Lawrence, Massachusetts, the IWW found its way into the Northeastern industrial establishment with the Lawrence Textile Strike, or the “Bread and Roses Strike,” as it is sometimes called. In January of 1912, workers from several mills walked out on payday when they received “short pay.” Quickly, several other mills followed suit. The cause of the strike and the solidarity of the strikers were the result, in many ways, of the conglomeration of Lawrence Mills into the American Woolen Company. Despite protective tariffs, the American Woolen Company introduced a two-loom system, resulting in lay-offs, unemployment, and a reduction in pay. Because the company was conglomerated and the mills were geographically consolidated, the news of

the pay-cut spread quickly and the strike was widespread, shutting down the American Woolen Company almost in totality.<sup>8</sup>

With the Lawrence victory, the IWW felt confident in taking on the silk industry in Paterson, New Jersey. But the silk-weaving scene in Paterson was different than the textile scene in Lawrence. According to Anne Huber Tripp in *The IWW and the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913* (1987), since its founding in 1905, the IWW had a presence in Paterson's silk industry. While Paterson was the "silk city" because of the predominance of silk-weaving and silk-dying there, the industry was not consolidated into trusts. Instead, the Paterson silk industry was an amalgam of large and small shops, and some of the larger manufacturers had opened shops in eastern Pennsylvania. So in 1913 when the silk shops went from a two-loom system to a four-loom system in Paterson, the results were the same as in Lawrence: a strike. But because of the diversity of companies and of geography in the silk industry, the results of the strike were not the same. In fact, Tripp cites Haywood's claim that the larger silk manufacturers, with their increased capital, waited out the strike, not only starving out the workers but also starving out the smaller manufacturers and consolidating economic power (220).<sup>9</sup> In the end, the strike was lost.

Despite its failure, Paterson has received much more historical interest than Lawrence. Part of this is due to the celebrity associated with Paterson: it became a cause célèbre, drawing intellectuals out of Greenwich Village to report and even to participate in strike efforts. Steve Golin's *The Fragile Bridge: Paterson 1913* (1988) analyzes all the various groups involved in Paterson: the workers are depicted as true agents in the historical process; the IWW are, for the most part, seen as benevolent helpers of the

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<sup>8</sup> See Tripp *The IWW and the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913* (1987), Chapter Two, "Lawrence" (17-35).

<sup>9</sup> See also Haywood "The Rip in the Silk Industry" (785)

workers' wishes; and the intellectuals see Paterson workers as their rebellious social vision manifested into an historical reality.

Other surveys of Paterson deal mainly with the intellectuals. Most famous, perhaps, are the early chapters of Daniel Aaron's *Writers on the Left* (1961), where Aaron provides a brief history of the bohemian Village scene and the radicalization of the magazine *The Masses*. Aaron reviews the beginnings of American literary radicalism and examines several Village writers, namely John Reed, as a leftist intellectual hero. More recent is Martin Green's *New York 1913: The Armory Show and the Paterson Pageant* (1989). Green studies the art of politics situated in one city in one year. It is important to notice, though, that both Aaron's and Green's focus almost entirely on the intellectuals: Aaron presents Max Eastman, Floyd Dell, and John Reed as the founding fathers of literary radicalism that will flourish in the 1930s, and Green makes these historical figures into messiahs, looking to transform the world. The artists in Aaron and Green become the only sign of nobility and salvation in modern times while the workers that inspired them to radicalism become invisible to their historical gaze.

The IWW was, in many ways, of minor historical importance in the larger sweep of history, but its contribution to the culture of organized labor was significant. Many songs still sung today on picket lines or as labor anthems were penned by Wobbly songwriters. But of more historical significance was the fear the IWW evoked in the established order, whether business or government. Two worker revolutions in Russia—one a failure, another successful—provide the bookends for the halcyon years of the IWW, 1905-1920. Between 1905 and 1917, the IWW was primarily a nuisance to industrial capitalists in the United States; it posed a threat significant enough to employ

detectives and to call out police and militia to stifle strikes, but after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the IWW progressed from industrial menace to national, even international, threat. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, under President Woodrow Wilson, organized the first Red Scare between 1917 and 1920. Perhaps an over-reaction to the IWW, nonetheless, the Palmer Raids, as they were called, essentially disbanded the IWW and the left-wing of the Socialist Party, arresting, trying, sentencing, and exiling 100 Wobblies.

The IWW later became the stuff of legends because of its intensity and dedication to worker revolution. Their fervency in restructuring society could be compared to a religious fanaticism, including “sainted” cultural heroes like “Big Bill” Haywood and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, primary leaders of the IWW, and a martyr roll with the likes of singer-songwriter Joe Hill, executed by a firing squad in Utah; Frank Little, lynched in Montana in 1917; and Wesley Everest who was castrated, lynched, and then used for target practice in 1919. The Wobbly vision inspired many workers and tapped into their wish for dignity, social justice, and power. But the social vision of the IWW was, essentially, as ill-defined as the Socialist and Communist visions that have arisen since. Part of the problem here was the IWW’s “unruly” vision of its new society. Organizing strikes of foreign and itinerant workers was their main method in disrupting the capitalist system. But how could immigrants who did not speak English and hoboes who did not share the American values of property and family form an organized, productive society? What would such a society look like? The IWW had answers to these questions theoretically, but for practical purposes such an “anarchist” vision—as they were often

called—would be impossible. The same problem persists for the literature that dealt with the IWW.

While there is not a significant body of American literature from the years contemporary with the IWW heydays, what literature there is has gone virtually unstudied, usually penned by lesser-known writers who have disappeared from bookstores, bookshelves, and publishing houses. Some influential later writers were inspired by the IWW or found them significant enough to mention in their works: John Dos Passos' first two volumes of the *USA* trilogy have Wobbly characters and vignettes; John Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle* refers to the Wobblies, and Wallace Stegner's *Preacher and the Slave* is about Joe Hill. The IWW vision was an inspiration for the generation of writers who faced or were facing the Great Depression, but what is the problem with the literature that was contemporary with the IWW? Jack London was inspired by the Wobblies. Ernest Poole, the first winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, drew on his experience with the Wobblies. Max Eastman, the editor of *The Masses*, a significant insurgent publication in the 1910s, knew and was friends with several Wobblies. The famous journalist Jack Reed was so inspired by the Paterson Silk Strike in New Jersey that he eventually involved himself in the Russian Revolution. Yet the commentary on these writers is sparse.

The literature historically inspired by the IWW in general, and the Paterson Silk Strike specifically, rotates around two issues. First is providing marginalized, silenced, commodified workers with voice in the face of social and capitalist repression. The second is more pressing in that the anarchist vision of the IWW is seen as destructive to the capitalist order. The literature tries to calm these fears of disorder by providing an

alternative order. Ironically, while trying to find an alternative orderly referent, this literature relies on conservative models to provide order in the form of prophecy, citizenship, and the family. These referents make structural sense in terms of readership. Novels, for the most part, were read by the middle and upper classes. Writers, therefore, structure their novels around their readership's values. These novels, of course, include violent, revolutionary rhetoric—Jack London's *The Iron Heel* in particular—but the rhetoric in the novels is a central backdrop only in challenging the characters' alignment with their class. The Paterson Silk Strike obviously evoked this issue when, because of its proximity to New York, intellectuals ventured out of their middle-class comfort zone to see a strike first hand, and many contributed to the Paterson Pageant to raise funds for the strikers. A survey of the historical literature of Paterson reconstructs a social division of labor, particularly a division between intellectual work and industrial labor. During the Paterson Strike, this division was overcome through the efforts of both the workers and the Greenwich Village intellectuals. The historical treatment of Paterson acknowledges this “bridge” between intellectuals and industrial workers, but it unwittingly upholds the division of labor in its commentary. The novels that were inspired by Paterson, however, use this division to create a psychological crisis in its main characters, and a strike is the best event to evoke such a crisis.

The literature inspired by the IWW and the Paterson Strike uses traditional social structures at the same time it challenges traditional social divides like religion, nationality, family, and even, at times, social class itself. The initial division of workers is transcended in the act of the strike, rupturing all other traditional social divisions. Of course, the class division is emphasized, but, at its basis, a strike questions the class

system. While all of the texts examined here deal with all of these divisions, each text focuses on a particular social divide to be overcome, bringing into question the traditional social order. But in order to question these traditional social institutions of class, religion, nationality, and family, writers must structure their text on the traditional order. Some texts, depending on the revolutionary fervency of their authors, build from tradition more than others, and often, it is those texts that emphasize tradition to deconstruct it that are most effective both as aesthetic pieces and as social commentaries.

The main problem with using traditional social institutions and identifications is that it defers discussing the issue of class even though it is class conflict that inspires these works. While religion expects its adherents to be charitable and sympathetic, the values of charity and sympathy perpetuate the objectification of workers described above. Nationalism and patriotism also avoided confronting the class issue and instead promote a cohesive identity—usually defined by the middle and upper classes—that glosses over important social divisions like class status and the treatment of immigrants. Comparing the expectations of middle and upper class families to their working-class counterparts reveals the most blatant hypocrisy. While in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) Thorstein Veblen describes “the middle-class wife” whose domesticity preserves the “good name of the household and its master” (81), for working-class families, women’s labor frequently extended beyond the household into the industrial sector out of necessity to maintain the families’ livelihood. In her essay “Marriage and Love,” Emma Goldman argues that women can be free from the “parasitic institution” of marriage (235), but the price of “equality” is workplace exploitation (232). Besides the double-standard in the patriarchal treatment of women, the treatment of children also reveals the hypocrisy of

family values. While middle and upper-class children were educated, lax child-labor laws (despite the effort of reform groups) allowed working-class children to contribute to the family finances until the Depression.

This dissertation is structured chronologically beginning with Jack London's transformation of revolution into religion in *The Iron Heel* (1908). Socialists and radicals of the Progressive Era frequently expressed their economic and political mission in religious terms. Aileen Kratidor in *The Radical Persuasion 1890-1917: Aspects of the Intellectual History and the Historiography of Three American Radical Organizations* (1981), claims that radicals at the turn of the century frequently turned to prophetic modes to explain the socialist world to come. Since *The Iron Heel* is a form of early science fiction that assumes, like Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, that the political economy is destined to become a socialist utopia, the apocalyptic tone of the text suggests messianism. Instead of continuing this thread of analysis, I argue that prophecy in *The Iron Heel* is not prognostication and anticipation of the future even though those elements are clearly there. *The Iron Heel* is in a way truer to biblical prophecy in that it not only anticipates a future world that affirms the "religion," but it also presents an exegesis of contemporary conditions so as to affirm the faithful. In this regard, *The Iron Heel*'s future class system is actually an allegorical code for the present social structure, a structure that corresponds to the IWW's world view; thus, the IWW becomes a religion and the working class becomes the object of conversion to the faith. Ironically, though, London does not present the working class as the people to be converted by his prophetic message; instead, the conversions in the novel are those characters of the middle and upper class. So while the novel presents a workers' revolution, it is not a revolution

fought by the workers for themselves, but upper class revolutionaries fighting on behalf of the working class. Even though the novel was inspired by the IWW and explains the IWW view of the class system, *The Iron Heel* falls short of presenting the working class as the IWW saw it—a source of power and self-determination.

Chapter Three presents the main historical focus of this dissertation, the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 and the Paterson Pageant. The Pageant was organized by a group of Greenwich Village intellectuals as a fund-raiser to support the strikers who were in their fourth month of a bitter strike, and it was performed once at Madison Square Garden on June 7, 1913. The Pageant is typically treated as a piece of labor history connected with the strike, but I treat the Pageant as a piece of literature. As a picket line is already a type of pageant, the Paterson Pageant “aesthetizes” what workers were already doing, making a wider spectacle of an already dramatic historical situation. The Pageant was influenced by the American pageantry movement which, whether progressive or conservative, was nationalistic in scope. The Paterson Pageant, however, hijacked the nationalistic tradition of American pageantry that flourished at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century in America. In fact many reviews of the pageant hailed it as an aesthetic success but were leery of the political and social consequences of such performances. Even though intellectuals of the upper classes organized and directed the Pageant, the Paterson workers dramatized their own story. The Pageant is a piece of historical literature that treats the present as history and challenges both the spectators and performers to see themselves as historical subjects, and it becomes a successful Tower of Babel where national identifications are overcome through the cooperation of workers. If treated as literature instead of history, what is significant about the Pageant is

that workers represent themselves instead of being represented through a middle and upper class lens.

Chapter Four analyzes the use of family in representing the class struggle in Ernest Poole's *The Harbor* (1915), a novel which culminates in a water-front strike that is clearly based on the Paterson Silk Strike. Like the Pageant, *The Harbor* describes a strike only recently removed from its historical inspiration. *The Harbor*, as a novel, centers not on mass action, even though a strike is the climactic event of the novel, but the altering of perception of its main character and narrator, Bill. The strike forces Bill to recognize the conglomeration of nationalities that make up America's work-force. But more poignantly, Bill must come to recognize the labor of classes outside his own upper middle-class status. *The Harbor* becomes a tour of the American class system from an individual perspective, and the revelation of other classes not only forces him to re-evaluate his own class status, but to re-assess the role of his family which is so entangled with various upper class identifications. Between the Pageant and *The Harbor*, we see an immediate historical moment from two points of view, in the former a collective action and subsequent change of historical consciousness and in the latter an individual consciousness altered by a recent historical action.

Chapter Five analyzes the last novel of the era to be inspired by the Paterson Silk Strike, Max Eastman's *Venture* (1927). Unlike *The Harbor*, Eastman refers directly to Paterson as an historical setting, but over a decade removed from its historical inspiration, *Venture* departs from the history of Paterson. From 1921 to 1926, Eastman traveled through Europe, spending nine months in Soviet Russia observing the power struggles for Communist leadership after the death of Lenin. Eastman's exposure to

Leninist philosophy of the vanguard party also transformed his social vision. Eastman wrote *Venture* while traveling through Europe, and while part of his project in *Venture* was to write a fictional remembrance of his friend John Reed, both the romance of his elegiac project and his Leninist influences speak more to Eastman's own historical moment than an attempt to recreate Paterson in 1913. Jo Hancock, the main character of the novel, is torn between his mentor George Forbes, a philosophical businessman preoccupied with business efficiency and aristocratic breeding, and his romantic interest Vera, a strike leader in Paterson and daughter of a Russian revolutionary immigrant. Eastman uses the memory of Reed and the revolutionary social engineering of Lenin to propose a hybrid, Americanized version of the vanguard party in which Forbes' aristocracy mingles with working-class militancy.

When examining these works chronologically, the Paterson Strike becomes a center of hope for radicals in the first decades of the twentieth century: But the book-end chapters of this study—on London's *The Iron Heel* and Eastman's *Venture*—present abstractions of both revolutionary action and the working class: London anticipates a revolutionary cadre that will deliver socialism to the masses while Eastman believes that an aristocracy of the working class must be developed for the success of revolution. While the writers more contemporary with Paterson, Reed and Poole, seem to have felt that Paterson was a critical moment, a catastrophic event that could change the consciousness of individuals and the collective alike, the Pageant and *The Harbor* deal more with lived experience.

While all of these writers use traditional social referents, reading these works in terms of the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 reveals that the typical social structures, while

utilized for representational purposes, are also being questioned and critiqued, allowing for a re-examination of the American social fabric, looking for a way to weave the activity of the working class not only into society but into the literary tradition as well.

Since class issues are the central concern of this dissertation, and as class identities in America are vague, some working definitions are in order. The IWW reduced class conflict to two classes, employers and workers or owners and producers (in Marxist terms, the bourgeois and the proletariat). But since these works are written by writers who, while perhaps sympathetic to the IWW cause, were not Wobblies themselves, the class structure referred to in these works is more complicated. Typically, I use the term “working class” to designate wage earners, regardless of their mode of production (whether agricultural or industrial), but in all of these works, the working class is depicted as industrial laborers, or factory workers. The ruling class, or capitalists, alternatively, earns income via profits, particularly in the form of dividends. Capitalists are rarely seen in these works, but where they do appear, they are referred to with several synonymous terms: in *The Iron Heel*, the capitalists are referred to as the oligarchs, the plutocrats, capitalists, the trusts, and the Iron Heel; in the *Paterson Pageant*, they are described as the ruling class, capitalists, and manufacturers, but their presence is always implied and never explicit; in *The Harbor*, like the *Paterson Pageant*, members of the ruling class are not explicitly depicted, and if they are, they are referred to as Wall Street, bankers, etc.; in *Venture*, Eastman often uses Marxist terminology, particularly “bourgeois.” Most of the characters and narrators of these texts come from what I refer to as the middle or upper classes; that is, they may not receive earnings from dividends, but work in the interests of capital, or in the case of small business owners who earn

profits directly and not in the form of dividends (the entrepreneurial class or, in Marxist terms, the “petite bourgeois”) For the most part, I try to use the terms of each work, but at times my commentary will use “bourgeois” for ease, which typically refers to capitalists and those of the middle and upper classes whose ideological interests are directly aligned with capital.

## CHAPTER TWO

JACK LONDON'S DIVINE COMEDY: PROPHECY AND THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD IN *THE IRON HEEL*

Even though *The Iron Heel* (1908) predates the central historical focus of this dissertation, the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913, an examination of London's novel provides a succinct introduction to the IWW world-view at the same time that it anticipates the struggles later writers will have in transforming the IWW's rhetoric of revolution into an aesthetic work. While the other novels of this study deal with a strike primarily and a revolution secondarily, *The Iron Heel* reverses this trend, focusing mainly on revolution, but it only discusses the revolution obliquely. The narrative structure of *The Iron Heel* proves the difficulty of discussing revolution and what it entails. Written as a first-person narrative of a revolutionary movement in America and edited by a historian centuries hence, *The Iron Heel* never directly describes the revolution. Like the IWW theory that inspired the novel, it only speculates about revolution while describing the struggle necessary to bring about its utopian visioning. While the historian's annotations imply the eventual success and significant changes brought about by the revolution, they only treat the document at hand and do not detail the transition of the struggle to a socialist utopia; therefore, it only describes a means and not an end. The main focus of the text, though, is the manuscript and its description of a burgeoning revolutionary movement. The novel imitates the biblical prophetic tradition where an oppressed group, fearing the loss of its autonomy and identity, must explain itself and its identity to its own people. *The Iron Heel* relies upon allegory, and the allegorical code in *The Iron Heel* describes the IWW version of the American class structure. But like the revolution in the novel,

the oppressed group, the working class, for which the prophecy is intended, is not thoroughly represented in the text.

In May 1905 Jack London (1876-1916) wrote a short letter to the editor of *The Atlantic* regarding his essay “Revolution”:

Please find herewith, essay, “Revolution.” Before reading it, I wish you would take this one thing into consideration: It is an essay composed of facts. There is not one bit of prophesy [*sic*] in it. The number of the Revolutionists is a fact. The Revolutionists exist. Their doctrines exist just as much as they themselves exist. Their doctrines are facts. You will note that I do not say their doctrines are *right*. I merely state what their doctrines are, in the process of describing things that exist.

In conclusion, please remember that this essay is composed of facts. (*Letters* 170).

In this short letter of ten sentences London insists that his account of the working-class revolutionary movement is “factual” and based on a reality that exists. But a conspicuous sentence floats amongst these claims: “There is not one bit of prophesy in it” (*ibid*). But London’s work is not as devoid of prophetic moments as he claims. In *The Iron Heel*, published two years after “Revolution,” Ernest Everhard, the martyred revolutionary hero of *The Iron Heel*, predicts a violent totalitarian backlash to a Socialist political victory, in which certain factions of workers will betray other factions. Ernest, in a trance-like state, finishes in a swoon saying to his wife, Avis: “‘Sing me to sleep’ [ . . . ] ‘I have had a visioning, and I wish to forget’” (*Iron Heel* 470). The question arises, then, as to why

London, considering his preoccupation with facts and existence, would choose a prophetic character as his mouthpiece?

The figures London cites in “Revolution” for the number of revolutionists worldwide correspond closely to figures Algie Simons provides in his September 1904 article “The Socialist Vote of the World” in the *International Socialist Review*. But while the historical figures London cites are comparable and somewhat based in fact, the overall style of “Revolution” is not so objective. For example, he states:

This revolution is unlike all other revolutions in many respects. It is not sporadic. It is not a flame of popular discontent, arising in a day and dying down in a day. It is older than the present generation. It has a history and traditions, and a martyr-roll only less extensive possibly than the martyr-roll of Christianity. It has also a literature a myriad times more imposing, scientific, and scholarly than the literature of any previous revolution. (1147-8)

London presents a rather limited description of the revolution, for it has no precedent in history and is “unlike all other revolutions.” In the letter, London emphasizes that his description of the revolution is factual, but he has no real way to describe it. He continually uses the mysterious pronoun “it”; the revolutionists’ scriptures are uncountable as they are a “myriad.” London’s problem, as well as the problem for most radicals swept by the passion of the movement, is that while their rhetoric envisions a “new society in the shell of the old,” the new society can only be described in terms of religious zealotry. In his article “The Apocalyptic Structure of Jack London’s ‘The Iron Heel’” (1980), David Seed says of this passage that London was specifically trying to

imply that socialism is the new, political version of Christianity “since both look forward to ideal future states” (2). Also, Seed states that a “religious way of thinking about Socialism was apparently habitual to London. He talks of his ‘conversion’; he insists that political propaganda should have ‘a fervor in it of Paul and Christ’” (2).

Aileen Kraditor argues in her study *The Radical Persuasion 1890-1917: Aspects of the Intellectual History and the Historiography of Three American Radical Organizations* (1981), that radicals at the turn of the century invented their own “Proletarian Myth” (127). Kraditor criticizes such groups as the Socialist Party, the Socialist Labor Party, and the Industrial Workers of the World for “the absence [ . . . ] of reasoned argument” (126). In particular, she observes two important characteristics of radical Proletarian Mythic discourse: first is “the automatic slipping—usually near the ends of essays—into the oracular mode, to portray a vision without secure anchoring in a particular time or place” and secondly, “the assumption that victory was imminent” (126). London’s essay “Revolution” confirms Kraditor’s claims, but her prior claim of “a vision without secure anchoring in time and place,” while true for the most part, becomes problematic when we examine London’s *The Iron Heel*.

*The Iron Heel* is a two-frame narrative: one frame, told by Avis Everhard, the widow of the martyred revolutionary leader Ernest Everhard, is a first-person narrative describing the history of the revolution’s beginnings between 1912 and 1932; the other frame is that of the historian Anthony Meredith in the 27<sup>th</sup> century who has edited and annotated the Everhard manuscript, four hundred years after the revolution was complete, correcting or confirming the accuracy of Avis’ account. Interestingly, there is a significant gap between the action of the novel and Meredith’s historical commentary.

What is not provided is the transition from capitalism to socialism. The reader is informed that Meredith is writing in the year 419 B.O.M (the Brotherhood of Man, the socialist version of *Anno Domini*); therefore, the revolution from Meredith's perspective had been completed 400 years prior. In *The Iron Heel*'s antecedent, *Looking Backward*, Julian West and the reader get the advantage of not only a tour of the new socialist order, but there is an explanation in the process that reveals the transition. In *The Iron Heel*, this transition remains unknown, not outside of history *per se*, but at least outside the capability of the fictional historical commentary.

The historical annotations by Meredith suggest the prophetic mode akin to Kraditor's "oracular mode," but Meredith's annotations focus mainly on the history of Avis' first-person account. As a historian, Meredith does not need to explain his contemporary times; instead, he must explain the historical past and capitalism. What we know of Meredith's socialist future is only gleaned negatively from his historical footnotes: he must explain to his contemporary audience such bestial capitalist institutions and unsavory outcomes of capitalism as stockholders (342), strikes (343), "pedlers" (348, *sic*), thievery (350), insurance (359), bankruptcy (403), and lobbyists (424). The fact that all of these "social ills" have perished merely points to how dystopian the fictional America of 1912-1932 is, as well as the real America of 1905-1908. And yet the process of the revolution remains untold. Hell is merely described, but there is no exit sign in *The Iron Heel*. But this is probably London's point: to force us to examine institutions and crimes that we merely take for granted as a part of our "reality." London points to the present aberrations and lets the reader's imagination fill the gap of Meredith's socialist utopia. Prophecy is the mode that fills the ironic gaps

between Avis' narrative and Meredith's utopian footnotes; it is an allegorical code, a way of speaking about the present without overtly describing it. In *The Iron Heel*, London's dystopia corresponds to the IWW world-view, particularly their view of class structure and class warfare in America.

Since *The Iron Heel* is an early form of science fiction, readers are tempted to read its predictive, prophetic qualities. For example, Leon Trotsky in his "Critique of *The Iron Heel*" was "surprised [ . . . ] with the audacity and independence of its historical foresight" (137), and when analyzing a particularly "apocalyptic chapter" in *The Iron Heel*, Trotsky says that the "chapter must have seemed to be the boundary of hyperbolism," but "the consequent happenings have almost surpassed it" (138). In many ways such readings confirm Kraditor's critiques of Proletarian Mythic discourse, and for Trotsky, London wrote a fulfilled prophecy. If we remove the term prophecy from "historical foresight" and examine it from a religious tradition, London's prophecy is not simply "an oracular mode" (despite several episodes of prognosticating and visioning in the novel) but is securely anchored "in a particular time and place" unlike Kraditor's critique. Prophets in the biblical tradition are not concerned with the future as they are with their present. As Bruce Metzger and Ronald E. Murphy explain in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, the prophets "are not [ . . . ] prognosticators, predictors, or fortune-tellers [ . . . . ] Situated between several old, remembered traditions and the sure expectation of the future, the prophets are primarily advocates concerned for present tense social relations and institutional practices and policies" (864). Thus, the prophets are social commentators warning of their society's wayward nature. But more importantly, prophecy is a genre that creates a group consciousness in contrast to

competing cultural influences. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the prophetic tradition advocates “institutional practices and policies” that promote and maintain a specific religious identity, thus heightening the consciousness of that identity and ensuring the prophet’s “expectations of the future.” In *The Iron Heel*, this identity is none other than class consciousness, and the revolutionaries depicted in *The Iron Heel* are analogous to the biblical prophets in that they attempt to differentiate the working class from other social classes. The working class in *The Iron Heel* is faced with an existential threat, and only the revolutionaries realize the extent of this threat.

In *The Iron Heel*, Ernest is portrayed as a working-class messiah. From the outset of Avis’ narrative, we know that Ernest has been executed, becoming a martyr to the cause. The first half of the novel is nothing more than Ernest spouting socialist propaganda to those most entrenched in capitalist society, leading Walter Rideout in *The Radical Novel in the United States* (1954) to claim: “the first half of the novel being only an animated pamphlet” (45). While Rideout’s assessment is accurate, Ernest’s speeches or dialogues in the first several chapters have specific targets, criticizing various aspects of capitalism. Ernest, in the first chapter, attacks religious leaders as mere “metaphysicians” that know nothing of the material existence of the working class and their sufferings (327). He concludes the first chapter by pointing out that religious leaders' morality is the morality of the ruling class because the ruling class pays them (335). In Chapter V, “The Philomaths,” Ernest attacks the richest of Oakland, California, at their Philomath Club. The Philomaths have invited Ernest, so he says to Avis, “in order to tear me to pieces” (370). Later, as he gets into the most revolutionary aspects of his speech and threatens bourgeois rule outright, accusing them of mismanaging society,

Ernest “extended from his splendid shoulders his two great arms” (376). Of course, Avis presents such imagery as that of victory, for she compares him to an eagle with outstretched wings (376). But while appearing victorious, his posture and warnings to Avis foreshadow his martyrdom: he is to be torn to pieces, like Christ’s body; he extends his arms, as though crucified; and most important of all, he is challenging the Philomath Club at their own residence, as Jesus challenged the Pharisees at the Temple—in particular Christ attacked the money-changers, the bankers. Furthermore, the chapter ends with this biblically-inspired sentence: “And so ended the night with the Philomaths” (385). London does not hide his Christianizing of the socialist revolution. London wants readers to recognize socialism as the new Christianity which will overcome the aberrations of capitalist rule. But London first criticizes the middle-class Christian clergy so that he can proceed with his Christian parallels without re-inventing Christianity.

In the second half of the novel, the revolution becomes more overtly religious in its transformation from a political struggle. It does not move, in Avis’ account, from a political struggle to an economic struggle: “The Revolution took on largely the character of religion. We worshipped at the shrine of the Revolution, which was the shrine of liberty. It was the divine flashing through us. Men and women devoted their lives to the Cause, and new-born babes were sealed to it as of old they had been sealed to the service of God. We were lovers of humanity” (485). Avis’ presentation of the revolution as religion even includes Anna Roylston, “The Red Virgin,” who is so committed to the revolutionary cause that she “refused blessed motherhood” (520). The revolutionaries, in all their religious iconography, are seen as the salvation of mankind, committing themselves to a fight against capitalism. In *The Iron Heel* the revolutionaries are the

proxy of the historical IWW, who had the same religious fervency about organizing the working class for an apocalyptic fight against “the bosses”; however, while it co-opted particular religious ideas, mainly martyrdom and its “apocalyptic” mission, the IWW often used specific religious references with tongue-in-cheek parody.<sup>1</sup>

The Wobblies’ class conflict is not merely a battle between labor and capital. While that may be the essence of the battle, it is more complicated than that, and the Wobblies saw the class struggle as the interconnections of a five-class system: 1) the trusts, capitalists, employers, or “bosses”; 2) the capitalist’s army, including the army proper, the militia, the police, and other pseudo-police agencies, like detectives; 3) the skilled, organized laborers in the AFL; 4) the unskilled, unorganized laborers, or the “unenlightened”; and finally, 5) the Wobblies themselves as the revolutionary subversives. There are no politicians in this list. Wobblies were highly suspicious of politicians, even Socialists. Furthermore, as far as they were concerned the revolution was to be a battle on the economic field, not the political field, so the Wobblies virtually ignored politicians, save when they mocked them.

In *The Iron Heel*, London’s central chapters present the same social structure as the IWW world-view. Upon examining the titles of these middle chapters, one cannot help but note the apocalyptic overtone: “The General Strike,” “The Beginning of the End,” “Last Days,” and “The End.” Even more peculiar about these titles is that they are the central chapters; after “The End,” there are nine more chapters remaining in the

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<sup>1</sup> During the “Free Speech Fights” on the West coast, Wobbly organizers were arrested for soapbox speech-making while the Salvation Army was free to make speeches on street corners. Joe Hill, the “Wobbly bard,” wrote parodies of religious hymns to make fun of the Salvation Army and to point out the authorities’ double-standards in regard to free speech. Also, in the July 2, 1910 *Industrial Worker*, the IWW’s West coast newspaper, published a religious parody, “The Flight into California” by W. Metcalf, in which a Wobbly organizer is portrayed as Jesus or a prophet wandering through the wilderness spreading the gospel of class struggle (rpted in Korbluh 74-5).

novel. Also, the inauguration of capitalism's apocalypse begins with a general strike, but the general strike does not indicate a victory for the workers, far from it. Instead, the general strike brings about a severe totalitarian backlash from the capitalists, who are also termed, the Oligarchs, the Plutocrats, and finally, the Iron Heel. The central chapters, therefore, are not a denouement of the novel, but the final reduction of the capitalist social structure to prepare for the final battle; all former social classes must take sides either with the capitalist trusts or with the growing working class.

In chapters eight and nine, "The Machine Breakers" and "The Mathematics of a Dream," Ernest explains the fate of the middle class to a group of small business men. They complain that they are being squeezed and eradicated by the trusts. Several trusts are mentioned throughout the chapter: the railroads (400, 422), the Milk Trust (402), Standard Oil (402, 423, 425-6), and tobacco (422). Of course, these middle-class representatives want the trusts to be disbanded to allow fair competition and small business owners to survive. For this, Ernest labels them the "Machine Breakers" (399). In the next chapter, "Mathematics of a Dream," Ernest warns the Machine Breakers of their own demise and that they will soon have to decide whether they will side with the trusts or side with the proletariat (422). More importantly, though, he points out the problem with their stance towards the trusts: the trusts are efficient and centralized which is exactly the purpose of capitalism; therefore, to destroy the trusts would be to destroy the culmination of capitalist development. Of course, the culmination of this development is none other than imperialism, where countries no longer colonize but trusts do.

In his 1907 *International Socialist Review* article “Oligarchy and Imperialism,” Austin Lewis, a friend of London’s who is directly mentioned in *The Iron Heel*, explained that the roots of American imperialism were tied to the development of large trusts and the financial crisis of 1893. In historical terms, such imperialism manifested itself militarily in the Spanish-American War of 1898 in which the United States acquired former Spanish colonial holdings, namely Cuba and the Philippines. More importantly for the present argument, though, are the terms and the way that Lewis described this development and how it corresponds with London’s vision of society as expressed in *The Iron Heel*. Lewis describes the development of the trusts: “The new industries fell into the hands of a diminishing group of men who exercised an increasing amount of power, the oligarchy which had been foreshadowed even before 1893, was fast being realized, and had become an accomplished fact” (472). Lewis, like London, refers to the trust as an “oligarchy.” Also, Lewis associates the development of this oligarchy with increase of foreign military expeditions.

Lewis’ conclusion that trusts are implicitly linked to militarism can also be found in *The Iron Heel*. During his meeting with the Machine Breakers, Ernest reveals that the number of soldiers in the regular army has increased six-fold in only a few years (409). Later, just as Ernest is elected to congress during “the great socialist landslide that took place in the fall of 1912” (454), the trusts finish consolidating power financially and militarily, culminating in a potential war between Germany and the United States. But the plans for war are foiled when the socialists in both Germany and America declare a general strike. London explains that “organized labor had learned its lesson. Beaten decisively on its own chosen field, it had abandoned that field and come over to the

political field of the socialists; for the general strike was a political strike. Besides, organized labor had been so badly beaten that it did not care. It joined in the general strike out of sheer desperation” (460). While war is averted through working-class solidarity, it does not hinder the development of a militaristic police state. Later, reminiscent of scenes from Frank Norris’ *The Octopus*, farmers defend their interests against the trusts in armed combat against the regular army and the militia (479-80), and “the militia law of 1903 was put into effect, and the workers of one state were compelled, under pain of death, to shoot down their comrade-workers in other states” (480).

The culmination of this militarism in *The Iron Heel* is the development of the Mercenaries, a class of professional soldiers. In a footnote, Meredith explains the mercenary class as

A standing army of professional soldiers was created, officered by members of the Oligarchy and known as the Mercenaries. This institution took the place of the militia, which had proved impracticable under the new regime. Outside the regular secret service of the Iron Heel, there was further established a secret service of the Mercenaries, this latter forming a connecting link between the police and the military. (506)

In much the same way that the IWW saw the law enforced by a unified police power which included detectives, private police hired by trusts, the police, the militia, and the army, London’s dystopian view of a police state comes to the same conclusion. Anything that enforces the ruling class’ law is seen as a form of militarism, whether public or private, domestic or imperial. In *The Iron Heel*, the Mercenaries grow into their own “class” of people; as Avis later explains, the Mercenaries were a “body of soldiers”

evolved out of the old regular army and was now a million strong, to say nothing of the colonial forces. The Mercenaries constituted a race apart. They dwelt in cities of their own which were practically self-governed, and they were granted many privileges [ . . . ] They were losing all touch and sympathy with the rest of the people, and, in fact, were developing their own class morality and consciousness. (517-8)

A few chapters earlier, Ernest warned the Machine Breakers that the standing army was “three hundred thousand” (409); now as the Iron Heel truly takes shape the army is three times that size, and as Avis warns, this does not include colonial forces. These fictional figures bear out Austin Lewis’ observations in “Oligarchy and Imperialism.” But Meredith provides another footnote concerning the Mercenaries whose militarism is not fueled by imperial ambitions alone: “The Mercenaries [ . . . ] constituted a balance of power in the struggles between the labor castes and the oligarchs” (518). That is, militarism has a domestic purpose as well.

In *We Shall Be All*, labor historian Melvyn Dubofsky claims that the formation of the IWW can be traced back to the working-class struggles of the Western frontier, particularly in the formation of the Western Federation of Miners, one of the more militant antecedent unions to the IWW. The contentious relationship between the militia and the working class in the United States is perhaps best seen in the mine wars of the 1890s into the early 1900s. The most famous battle of these wars was the Ludlow Massacre of 1913 where women and children were shot down and burned alive in a miners’ camp. But the militia was not the only problematic police force confronting the miners. In 1907, three prominent members of the WFM—Charles Moyers, president of

WFM; Bill Haywood, one of the founding members of the IWW; and George Pettibone—were kidnapped and extradited to Boise, Idaho, to stand trial for the assassination of Frank Steunenberg, former governor of Idaho. The three were charged when the actual culprit, Harry Orchard, was convinced by Pinkerton detectives that his sentence would be lighter if he implicated the leaders of the WFM. It became a famous trial, making Bill Haywood an international star.<sup>2</sup> Most importantly, though, between the Moyer-Haywood-Pettibone case of 1907 and the Ludlow Massacre of 1913, the militant working class was assaulted by the law on all fronts: by detectives, the police, the militia, and the courts.

Before the Mercenaries developed into their full potential, labor defeats itself in *The Iron Heel*. After the first general strike prevented a war between the United States and Germany, Ernest has a meeting with the labor leaders to plan the next general strike. But O'Connor, the leader of the machinists' union, warns Ernest that his men are "sick of strikes" (465). Ernest discovers, through O'Connor's coyness, that the machinists have sold out to the oligarchs. After the meeting, Ernest, in conversation with Avis, has a rather prophetic moment where he foretells labor's down-fall. Ernest tells Avis that only the essential, skilled unions will be spared and granted higher wages while the "other unions will be ground out of existence" (466). He goes on to explain: "the railway men, machinists and engineers, iron and steel workers, do all of the vitally essential work in our machine civilization. Assured of their faithfulness, the Iron Heel can snap its fingers at all the rest of labor. Iron, steel, coal, machinery, and transportation constitute the backbone of the whole industrial fabric" (466). Ernest then predicts the coming of the

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<sup>2</sup> Meredith alludes to the Haywood-Moyer-Pettibone case in a footnote in *The Iron Heel* and compares it to the Haymarket Affair (492).

industrial caste system (467). In the next chapter, "Last Days," the implication of the caste system is explained further: "The newspapers published information of an unprecedented rise in wages and shortening of hours for the railroad employees, the iron and steel workers, and the engineers and the machinists" (471). Eventually, these unions withdraw from international agreements (472), and social strife ensues between the families of skilled, favored workers and those that are designated unskilled (472-3).

The IWW warned that dividing workers along craft lines was dangerous to labor solidarity and it also warned skilled workers that with the increased mechanization and standardization of industry, the difference between skilled labor and unskilled labor would steadily diminish, and, eventually, what had been skilled labor would again be working side by side with what was formerly unskilled labor. Essentially, the dividing line between skilled and unskilled was the dividing line between the IWW and the AFL; in fact, Wobblies often referred to the AFL as either the AF of Hell or the American Separation of Labor. In the pamphlet "Why Strikes Are Lost" (1911), William Trautmann, one of the founding and influential members of the IWW, makes the case that craft autonomy prevents working-class solidarity. In one generalized example, he lists all the various craft unions that might be included in the building of a machine, at which point he concludes: "Now these various crafts, each contributing its share in the production of an article, are not linked together in one body, although members of these crafts work in one plant or industry" (rpt in Kornbluh 19). In a more particular example, Trautmann attacks the sacredness of the contract. Using a street-car strike in Philadelphia as an example, he recounts the street-car workers going on strike, followed by the power house workers. Once the power house workers went on strike in sympathy, the whole

street-car system was shut down forcing the Elkins-Widener-Dolan Syndicate to capitulate to the street-car workers' demands (rpt in Kornbluh 20). But Trautmann laments that "out of the approximately 320,000 wage workers in that city, 45,000 responded to the strike call, of whom there were 32,000 so-called 'unorganized' workers, or partly organized in independent unions or in the Industrial Workers of the World [ . . . . ] But the body of approximately 45,000 workers, organized in the AFL unions, who had issued the strike call, remained at work, protecting their contracts" (rpt in Kornbluh 20). This is only one example as to why Gompers' AFL was such a target of ridicule by the IWW. Furthermore, this anecdote—and the IWW presented many more that could be cited—resembles the situation of the machinists London describes in *The Iron Heel*, where O'Connor states: "I'm president of the Machinists' Association, and it's my business to consider the interests of the men I represent, that's all" (466).

In *The Iron Heel*, those not fortunate enough to be a member of the labor castes are referred to as the people of the abyss. The phrase is credited by Meredith to H. G. Wells. It was also the title of London's travelogue through East London, published in 1903 (which is discussed later). The people of the abyss are first introduced in the novel as "great masses of the proletariat beneath the starvation line" (486). These people are not merely the unemployed, however, as Avis explains later: "The condition of the people of the abyss was pitiable. [ . . . . ] They lived like beasts in great squalid labor-ghettoes, festering in misery and degradation. All their old liberties were gone. They were labor slaves. Choice of work was denied them. [ . . . . ] They were machine-serfs and labor-serfs" (520). The description of the people of the abyss is none other than what the IWW predicted of the working class if they did not organize industrially beyond

craft unions to keep up with economic developments and the mechanization of the workplace; thus the emphasis placed upon the linkage between the people of the abyss and machines. *The Iron Heel* likewise warns the working class that if they do not identify themselves as an autonomous group and organize accordingly, they will become dehumanized and lose any chance of developing an identity.

While they are presented as pitiable early in the novel, the people of the abyss are described and treated with much less charity as the class warfare develops. As the revolutionaries plan the first revolt, Avis describes the attitude of the revolutionaries to the people of the abyss: “we even depended much, in our plan, on the unorganized people of the abyss. They were to be loosed on the palaces and cities of the masters. Never mind the destruction of life and property. Let the abysmal brute roar and the police and Mercenaries slay. [ . . . ] It would merely mean that various dangers to us were harmlessly destroying one another” (524). The people of the abyss, as far as the revolutionaries are concerned, are nothing more than expendable decoys. The key word in the above quote is “unorganized.” The revolutionaries do not have time to concern themselves with humanity in the face of performing their historical role. In fact, when fighting begins during the Chicago Commune, Avis gets caught up in “a mob, an awful river that filled the street, the people of the abyss, mad with drink and wrong, up at last roaring for the blood of their masters” (535). She uses animal and ghoulish imagery to dehumanize the mob further:

It surged past my vision in concrete waves of wrath, snarling and growling, carnivorous, drunk with whiskey from pillaged warehouses, drunk with hatred, drunk with the lust of blood [ . . . ] dim ferocious

intelligences with all the godlike blotted from their features and all the fiendlike stamped in, apes and tigers, anæmic consumptives and great hairy beasts of burden, wan faces from which vampire society had sucked the juice of life” (535).

In the next scene, the dehumanized mob becomes cannon fodder, as Avis and another revolutionary use the people of the abyss’ bodies as shields against the mercenaries’ attack. London’s assessment of the people of the abyss becomes more and more vindictive as *The Iron Heel* progresses, as the cause of the revolution becomes more central than the humanity for which it stands. Once again, in line with the prophetic tradition, it is expected that the people of the abyss, once they realize that their survival is under threat, must join the revolutionary fighting groups. But as the passage above points out, they are no longer even depicted as humans but a ghoulish vampiric mob.

While London is dismissive of the people of the abyss in *The Iron Heel*, his treatment of “unskilled” labor in his non-fiction writings prior to *The Iron Heel* is much more sympathetic. In *Vanishing Moments: Class and American Literature* (2008), Eric Schocket examines writers and intellectuals who “crossed over” the class line, who lived, observed, and wrote about life in labor ghettos where unskilled workers often resided. Schocket refers to these writings as examples of “class transvestitism,” in which the writers dressed like and thereby “embodied” the working class in order to infiltrate working-class neighborhoods (110-15). London frequently used this transvestitism to explore working class life. In 1903, he wrote *The People of the Abyss*, his travelogue through the working-class neighborhoods of East London. In the first chapter of *The People of the Abyss*, “The Descent,” London describes arriving in London, procuring the

proper worn-out working-class garb and mastering a cockney “brogue” (12-14). London performed the same “transformation” when he examined hobo life in *The Road* (1907), which prior to its book publication was serialized in *Cosmopolitan* magazine (Kusmer 178). In the 1890s, London tramped around California and later joined Coxe’s Army, a group of homeless men led by Jacob Coxe who marched to Washington in 1894 to demand assistance for the homeless (Kusmer 58). London presents the hobo’s life as freedom from “monotony” (*The Road* 36). In his first chapter of *The Road*, “Confession,” with great humor London explores the prejudices against hoboes as parasites and do-nothings, and his narration of hobo life affirms his own quest to avoid work. But later in *The Road*, he presents the hobo as an American rebel who “defies society” (106) but in his defiance also works the system: since hoboes were frequently arrested on vagrancy charges, London explains that smart hoboes, during the winter months, try to get arrested where they know “the jails are ‘good’” (106). At one point London even extols a certain class of experienced hoboes—the “profesh”—as “the aristocracy of The Road”: “They are the lords and masters, the aggressive men, the primordial noblemen, the blond beasts so beloved of Nietzsche” (94).

But the chapter that is perhaps the most interesting in *The Road* is “The Pen.” London describes getting arrested on vagrancy charges and is railroaded by a judge to serve six months in the Allegheny County Penitentiary. In *The Road*, London’s time in prison affirms his aristocratic status because he gets involved in the prison rackets, and he frequently compares his involvement in the rackets to the upper class of American society:

We were the economic masters inside our hall, turning the trick in ways quite similar to the economic masters of civilization. We controlled the food-supply of the population, and, just like our brother bandits outside, we made the people pay through the nose for it [ . . . ] certainly there should be some reward for initiative and enterprise. Besides, we but patterned ourselves after our betters outside the walls, who, on a larger scale, and under the respectable disguise of merchants, bankers and captains of industry, did precisely what we were doing. (59)

London's tongue-in-cheek commentary, while it satirizes capitalist society and its ethos of "initiative and enterprise," continues the theme of aristocracy he described of the hobo outside of prison.

London provides an alternative narrative of his time in prison in "How I Became a Socialist" (1903). London begins the essay returning to the claim that as a hobo laborer he was one of "Nietzsche's *blond beasts*" (1118): "I was strong myself. By strong I mean that I had good health and hard muscles, both of which possessions are easily accounted for. [ . . . ] I loved life in the open, and I toiled in the open, at the hardest kinds of work. Learning no trade, but drifting along from job to job, I looked on the world and called it good, every bit of it" (1117). By the end of the essay, however, London comes to a different conclusion than what he narrates in *The Road*. He begins to think of the working masses not as noblemen, but more as people of the abyss: "I found [in prison] all sorts of men, many of whom had once been as good as myself and just as *blond-beastly* [ . . . ] all wrenched and distorted and twisted out of shape by toil and hardship and accident, and cast adrift by their masters like so many old horses" (1119).

He concludes this description of his working brethren with the image of degradation, one in which working-class bodies are turned into “shambles at the bottom of the Social Pit” (1119). At the realization of degraded nobility, he states that the “woman of the streets and the man of the gutter drew very close to him” (1119), and he ends his essay describing this epiphany as a “conversion” (1120).

Conversion is important in all of Jack London’s social writings, whether fiction or non-fiction. On the one hand, conversion suggests that the development of social awareness, particularly the awareness of class struggle, is a religious conversion, reinforcing his use of prophecy and religion in *The Iron Heel*. But conversion also implies a physical conversion, as in Schocket’s analysis of class transvestitism, in which the religious conversion is physically embodied. In his non-fiction, London poses as a working-class East Londoner in *The People of the Abyss* or as a tramping hobo in *The Road* while he uses these experiences to write for middle and upper-class audiences in such publications as *Cosmopolitan*. These embodied conversions also work their way into his fiction, most famously in his short story “South of the Slot” (1909) published in the *Saturday Evening Post*.<sup>3</sup>

“South of the Slot” tells the story of a reserved academic, Freddie Drummond, a professor of sociology at the University of California who studies working class culture, writing books that are popular and useful for the middle and upper classes in “understanding” the labor question.<sup>4</sup> Drummond realizes, however, that there is a significant divide between his middle-class academic life and the working class of which

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<sup>3</sup> My citations from “South of the Slot” are from a reprinted copy in the *International Socialist Review* 15.1 (July 1914): 7-17.

<sup>4</sup> Drummond’s given name, Frederick, and his studies of working class efficiency allude to Frederick Winslow Taylor, who developed “Taylorism,” the mechanization of labor to produce maximum efficiency.

he observes and writes about, a divide symbolized in the story by the “Slot,” trolley tracks that divide San Francisco along class lines. North of the Slot is the theatre district and department stores where the genteel classes live their lives, and south of the Slot is the working-class “labor-ghetto” where unskilled laborers live (7). In order to cross this divide, both physically and consciously, Drummond develops an alter-ego, “Big Bill” Totts, a clear reference to the IWW’s Big Bill Haywood. As Totts, Drummond, like London in his non-fiction exposés, dresses as a worker and works beside the working class in order to decrease the gap of his perception. But early into his adventures, Drummond comically reveals how little he understands the working class despite his famous studies and popular books which the upper classes read as an authority on the labor question. Drummond carries with him south of the Slot upper-class assumptions of industrial work, a combination of belief in work ethic and efficiency. But Drummond realizes how little he understands of working-class lives and ethics; his first week working piece-work at a box factory, he decides to make two to three times as many boxes as his fellow workers in order to increase his pay. He is ostracized by his fellow workers as a pace-setter and eventually beaten up. When Drummond explains this phenomenon in his academic writing, he refers to it as slacking and laziness, not understanding that production slow-downs are actually expressions of working-class consciousness, ethics, and solidarity.

The ironic distance between Drummond’s academic conclusions and the self-consciousness of the working class provides both the humor of the story and a different working-class than contemporary literary depictions or even *The Iron Heel* which preceded it. The workers in “South of the Slot” are not victims, as portrayed in Sinclair’s

*The Jungle*; in fact, it is the middle-class Drummond who becomes a victim of the working class. The workers, who Drummond teaches *about*, school Drummond:

When he refused to ease down his pace and bleated about freedom of contract, independent Americanism, and the dignity of toil, they proceeded to spoil his pace-making ability. It was a fierce battle, for Drummond was a large man and an athlete, but the crowd finally jumped on his ribs, walked on his face, and stamped on his fingers, so that it was only after lying in bed for a week that he was able to get up and look for another job. All of which is duly narrated in that first book of his, in the chapter entitled “The Tyranny of Labor.” (8)

For some time, Drummond’s conversion is cumbersome and incomplete, but soon he begins to embrace the freedom of working-class life. While as Professor Drummond, he maintains a respectable, self-repressed lifestyle, but as Totts, he enjoys drinking beer, smoking tobacco, and exploring sexual license. “South of the Slot” presents the working class as vivacious folks who celebrate life through beer-drinking and sexuality which Drummond in his normal life must subdue.

Drummond begins to enjoy his alter-ego so much that he eventually stops crossing over in order to keep a grip on his middle-class, academic identity. Steadily Totts begins to take on a life his own and becomes a separate entity altogether. Frequently, London narrates this split in which Drummond perceives Totts as an entirely autonomous being. Drummond while sitting in his office looking over a bookshelf of his publications realizes that “Bill Totts had served his purpose, but he had become too dangerous an accomplice. Bill Totts would have to cease” (12). But Drummond does

not retire Totts immediately, and Drummond's fear becomes even more pressing when Totts develops a crush on Mary Condon, president of the International Glove Workers' Union. Drummond "detested women with a too exuberant vitality and a lack of—well, inhibition" (12), but this reflection upon the unsuitability of Mary Condon ends with a revealing passage about the Drummond-Totts split:

Freddie Drummond accepted the doctrine of evolution because it was quite universally accepted by college men, and he flatly believed that man had climbed up the ladder of life out of the weltering muck and mess of lower and monstrous organic things. But he was a trifle ashamed of this genealogy, and preferred not to think of it. Wherefore, probably, he practiced his iron inhibition and preached it to others, and preferred women of his own type, who could shake free of this bestial and regrettable ancestral line and by discipline and control emphasize the wideness of the gulf that separated them from what their dim forbears had been. (12)

In order to subdue Totts, Drummond secures an engagement with Catherine Van Vorst, the daughter of a wealthy philosophy professor at the college.<sup>5</sup> But this engagement is short-lived when Drummond and Catherine are motoring along the Slot and happen upon a strike in progress. As the police occupy a coal truck and use it as a fort, Drummond can no longer subdue Totts who wants to help the strikers, and to Catherine Van Vorst's surprise, Drummond leaps upon the coal truck, his suit coat and shirt ripped off his body

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<sup>5</sup> Catherine Van Vorst in "South of the Slot" seems to be based on Bessie and Marie Van Vorst who, like Drummond, did undercover investigations of working-class life. Schoket states that the VanVorst published *Women Who Toil* in 1903, which was "a personal favorite of Teddy Roosevelt (111). In "South of the Slot," Drummond works on a similar work as the Van Vorsts entitled "Women and Work" (11).

in the process, and proceeds to pummel the police. The story concludes with a short epilogue in which Freddie Drummond is never heard from again while a new labor leader Bill Totts has married Mary Condon and led several successful strikes in the San Francisco area.

“South of the Slot” points to two interesting dynamics which elucidate *The Iron Heel*’s treatment of the working class and the portrayal of the revolutionaries in the novel. While “South of the Slot” emphasizes the animalistic nature of Totts, who is more in touch with the “muck and mess of lower and monstrous organic things,” *The Iron Heel* presents the people of the abyss in entirely negative terms, and because of their monstrosity, they can contribute nothing to the cause of the revolutionaries. Furthermore, both “South of the Slot” and *The Iron Heel* suggest that revolutionary leaders must be derived from the middle and upper classes. While Totts develops into an autonomous identity that is entirely of the working class, he is still derived from Freddie Drummond, the middle class sociology professor. *The Iron Heel* points to the same conclusion, besides Ernest who has working-class origins, he has, for the most part, abandoned those origins to mingle with the upper classes to spread the gospel of socialism. As the movement develops in *The Iron Heel*, most of the revolutionaries, at least those who are provided with a back story, are members of the middle and upper classes who have been converted to the revolutionary cause.

Avis, the narrator but also one of those most committed to revolution, is the daughter of a sociology professor at the University of California, like Drummond in “South of the Slot.” She converts to the socialist cause early in the novel because Ernest pushes her to investigate an industrial accident that led to the loss of a mill worker’s arm,

a loss for which he was not properly compensated. Avis' investigation affirms Ernest's critiques of the capitalist system and begins their courtship. Her conversion becomes more complicated later when the revolutionary movement becomes a story of spy intrigue, and disguised as a member of the oligarchy, Avis infiltrates the Iron Heel's command. As in Schocket's analysis, Avis' conversion is both of consciousness and embodiment, but Avis' entire narrative is that of a double-conversion; she converts to the socialist cause initially, only to convert again to her former upper-class self as a spy. Even more telling than Avis' conversion is the conversion of Wickson, the son of one of the oligarchs. He stumbles upon one of the revolutionary hide-outs, and instead of being executed, which is debated, it is decided that he will be educated. Wickson goes on to become a successful revolutionary and even becomes a martyr for the cause (515-16).

Like Drummond in "South of the Slot," it is the middle and upper class that must be converted in *The Iron Heel*, not the working class. Partly this targeted conversion of the middle and upper class must have been due to London's audience awareness. London's works were frequently published and serialized in popular magazines like *Cosmopolitan* and the *Saturday Evening Post* whose readership was not the working class but the middle and upper classes. Susan Ward examines this contradiction between popularity and radical ideology in her article "Ideology for the Masses: Jack London's *The Iron Heel*" in which she states: "Clearly London intended *The Iron Heel* to be both popular and an ideological success. Thus, *The Iron Heel* can be viewed as a novel which exploits the conventions of 'mass audience' or popular fiction in order to preach serious ideology" (167). However, London was disappointed in the novel's reception (Ward 166). But the failure of the novel was not, and is not, merely its failure to garner a mass

audience as its predecessor *Looking Backward* was able to do. Just as it cannot describe its own revolution, *The Iron Heel* fails to depict the working class on whose behalf the revolution is being fought.

While the novel is passionate in its religious fervency, it is the religiosity of its prophetic mode that fails to communicate the conditions of the working class which inspired the novel in the first place. Alessandro Portelli, in his article “Jack London’s Missing Revolution: Notes on *The Iron Heel*,” explains the omission of the working class succinctly: “The factory worker, employed in the productive process, remains outside the novel’s reach; the place where the working class is formed, the central place of the class struggle—the factory—unrepresented” (183-4). Of course, as stated in my Introduction, London is not alone in this omission of representing labor. As Kraditor claimed of the “oracular mode” so typical of the era’s radical rhetoric, it is not that the novel is devoid of a specific time and place because London is clearly alluding to his own particular time, but the failure of the oracular mode itself. Since London retreats to the allegory typical of the prophetic mode, he cannot speak directly of the working class itself, only in abstract representations, and in using allegorical representations, London cannot portray a working class revolution because he does not portray the working class. The working class is seen through middle and upper class perception. Later works inspired by the IWW and the Paterson Strike more successfully represent the working class than *The Iron Heel*, but the actual acknowledgement of the working class frequently causes a social disruption.

The Paterson Silk Pageant is an interesting departure here, for while it was organized and directed by John Reed, who, sympathetic to the workers’ cause, was born

of a privileged upper class family, the workers represent themselves in the pageant. But given that history of American pageantry was a mode mainly monopolized and controlled by middle and upper class intellectuals to promote national awareness and unity, the fact that the working class—and in particular a non-native, immigrant working class—co-opt this form subverts the nationalist intentions of the American pageant tradition.

## CHAPTER THREE

REVOLUTIONIZING A NATIONALIST TRADITION: THE PATERSON PAGEANT  
AND THE PAGEANTRY OF EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICA

At the turn of the twentieth century, pageantry became a popular forum to display patriotism and civic engagement. The growing popularity of pageantry to celebrate America corresponds precisely to the same era of growing class antagonism in American culture. Often the American pageantry movement glossed over social differences within American culture to promote a cohesive national identity, sometimes at the expense of “marginal” groups like workers, African Americans, immigrants, and women. Pageantry in America came to fruition under a particularly nationalist ideology whether the pageants were promoted by more conservative patriotic groups or liberal reform groups. Nevertheless, some groups, including the IWW, co-opted the popular form of the pageant to present alternatives to the hegemonic American identity often presented in American pageantry. The Paterson Pageant of 1913 in particular emphasizes two marginalized American identities: the working class and immigrants. Contemporary pageantry of the time promoted a worldview in which immigrants needed to assimilate into American culture and the working class must cooperate with capital. Instead, the Paterson Pageant promoted a vision in which the predominately immigrant working class of the Paterson silk mills should struggle to promote their own voice as workers and immigrants, and ultimately promoted the IWW ideal of worker-run industry. In this case, the IWW and John Reed (1887-1920), the radical journalist and director of the Paterson Pageant, used a contemporary, conservative genre for radical purposes. In particular, the Paterson Pageant deviates from the nationalism typical of the pageant to display the workers’ cause that transcends national identity.

The Paterson Pageant was the piece of artwork most immediately derived from the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913. Frustrated with the press' lack of coverage of the strike and its bias when it did report on it, organizers from the IWW searched for some alternative medium to publicize the workers' story. One evening in a Greenwich Village salon, Big Bill Haywood, head organizer for the IWW, complained to Village radicals, intellectuals, and bohemians of the press bias in regards to the Paterson Strike.<sup>1</sup> The idea of putting on a dramatic pageant was suggested, and quickly John Reed volunteered to put the effort together. On June 7, 1913, the pageant was performed at Madison Square Garden in New York City to a packed house. The next day, the press claimed it an artistic success, but financially it was a failure, and the workers conceded the strike shortly after the pageant's production.

Despite the initial reviews, few scholars have treated the Pageant as a piece of art; instead it is usually discussed as an historical occurrence. The pageant was a piece of social drama that reflects the convergence of three historical elements: the nascent cultural institution of pageantry; Reed's development from bohemian intellectual to partisan journalist; and the struggle of immigrants and workers in Paterson. Reed is often credited with authorship and direction of the pageant, which is technically true. But Reed actually collaborated with the workers of Paterson, whose story the pageant was telling. Reed and the workers had a symbiotic relationship: Reed received recognition as an artist, established his reputation as a journalist, and discovered his political commitments

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<sup>1</sup> See Tripp (138-9) and Golin (158-161). Tripp, using Mabel Dodge's autobiography as a source, presents Haywood complaining about New York-area press bias. Golin, citing both Haywood and Dodge, presents Haywood complaining about a "conspiracy of silence." *The New York Times* reported on the strike several times between February 1913 and June 1913, and much of the reporting emphasizes Haywood's arrests or AFL involvement in Paterson. The national press reported on the strike as well; *The Oregonian* took particular interest in Reed's arrest in Paterson.

while the workers, as artists, were able to express themselves on a mass scale, having a venue finally for their suppressed voices. These two “authors” came together at a moment when pageantry was debating the concerns of the strikers on a national level, albeit in milder terms than the Paterson Pageant. I have organized this chapter in such a way to de-emphasize Reed’s importance at the same time acknowledging his contribution and his political and journalistic development. Since Reed’s importance will appear again in my analysis of Max Eastman’s *Venture*, the discussion presented here acts as an introduction to Reed as he was in 1913. I begin, however, with a discussion of the pageantry tradition of late nineteenth and early twentieth century America to provide an historical overview, followed by an analysis of Reed, and end with the Paterson Pageant itself to emphasize the strikers’ role in telling their own story.

As a hybrid of drama and parade, pageantry was fitting for both the participants and the goals of the pageant. First, since the workers were immigrants and spoke a variety of languages, a traditional drama would not suffice in reenacting the events. Speeches, instead, were in the hands of the organizers, well-practiced speakers all—Haywood, who was known for moving crowds through simple messages; Gurley Flynn, who was a fiery rhetorician; and Carlo Tresca, who could speak Italian, a large portion of the strikers being of Italian origin or descent. Instead of speaking parts, pageantry allowed the workers to re-enact the strike through action and song. Song, of course, had been instrument Wobbly organizing throughout its history. Song was the perfect medium for the strikers since songs can be sung in foreign languages and not lose their effectiveness in moving an audience. Also, the songs for the pageant were mainly

international in origin: “The Marsaillaise,” “The Internationale,” and “The Red Flag” were all French revolutionary songs.

The second reason for choosing pageantry was its timely appeal. Pageantry was in vogue throughout the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. But pageantry was usually conservative in theme during this period. Two studies of American pageantry, David Glassberg’s *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (1990) and Naima Prevots’ *American Pageantry: A Movement for Art and Democracy* (1990), argue that pageantry became popular for two reasons. First, patriotism during America’s centenary celebration led to a demand for public festivals. These celebrations, however, were often unstructured and formed on a local, neighborhood basis and had a tendency towards “rowdyism” (Glassberg 24). In response, municipalities felt compelled to provide “structured celebrations” in order to preserve law and order, ultimately leading to a centralization of authority for such celebrations (Glassberg 24-5). Secondly, with the burgeoning popularity of structured public displays, several reform groups embraced the new movement to develop public sentiment for their projects: professional dramatists saw pageantry as an escape from the commercialization and repression exhibited in American theatre; patriotic and hereditary societies looked to pageantry as a conservation effort of “genteel standards”—mainly reflecting Anglo-Saxon Protestant dominance; and education and playground workers saw pageantry as a structured form of recreation and integration of disparate nationalities in the local community (Glassberg 112-3). While Glassberg, taking a wider historical view, identifies the source of pageantry with late nineteenth century civic celebrations, Prevots argues, taking a shorter historical view, that

the “increase in the number of pageants was directly related to the escalation of other unified coalition reform efforts that characterized the Progressive Era” (6). Prevots maintains that the beginnings of the American pageantry movement were based on progressive, democratic ideals, hoping to integrate and transform American society and its views of leisure. Glassberg has a more skeptical view of pageantry’s development in America: “Genteel intellectuals viewed public holiday celebrations as important opportunities not only to disseminate patriotism and morality but also to spread art and culture” (Glassberg 32). While Prevots isolates the progressive agenda, Glassberg points to the more conservative elements in pageantry’s civic celebrations.

These mixed influences—both conservative and progressive—that developed the early twentieth century pageant movement are of central importance to the message and meaning of the Paterson Pageant of 1913, which was by any standard, far more radical than even the most progressive pageantry at the time. Contextualizing the Paterson Pageant within the larger, historical pageantry scene, the main issue is American pageantry’s treatment of and intention for immigrant groups and the working class since Paterson’s workforce was predominantly unassimilated immigrants. According to both Prevots and Glassberg, American pageantry was in the hands of a central group of promoters, mainly middle-class, white, native, intellectuals, ultimately forming the American Pageantry Association (APA) in 1913, the same year as the Paterson Pageant. The chief organizer of the APA was William Chauncey Langdon, a conservative intellectual whose previous pageants often neglected depictions of “ethnic, class, and religious diversity” (Glassberg 94). Langdon not only omitted such social questions from

his own pageantry, but as a leader of the pageantry movement, advanced his opinions in others' productions as well:

Pageant directors and their clients created ideal past, present, and future communities on stage that were wholly free of class, ethnic, or racial conflict. Such imagery, they believed, would promote social harmony and evoke, in the words of William Chauncey Langdon, the “underlying public spirit” beneath social divisions.

Praising historical pageantry's ability to produce “the obliteration of class lines,” pageant-masters recommended that local officials present nothing that could arouse nascent class sentiment. Langdon pointedly advised the YMCA in 1911 that dramatists working with industrial groups “should avoid the labor question.” (126)

Langdon hoped to establish a pageantry that was based on local research and history, but that also reflected the town's present and progress into the future. But he warned that such images of the future should not be “‘vague’ or ‘merely gratuitous, petty imaginings’” (qtd in Glassberg 79) that the public could simply dismiss as utopian dreaming. Yet his own view of history was vague and polished for it eliminated pressing social questions that needed to be addressed for the development of any community. Instead, most often, “organizers of historical pageants used history to present an idealized portrait of local social relations” (Glassberg 126) and presented a “portrait of a town without internal conflict extended to ethnic relations as well” (128). So while Langdon had distaste for idealized imaginings of a future scene, he had no qualms depicting the past void of any conflicts whatsoever.

Progressives saw pageantry as a way to highlight immigrant contributions to American culture and as a way to celebrate and integrate immigrants into the community. Glassberg cites Mary Vida Clark, writing in *Charities and Commons*, "that the pageants represented 'a glimpse of the America of the future that is to come out of a mingling of races and race-ideals'" (Glassberg 63). He also quotes William Orr writing in *Atlantic Monthly* about a particular Fourth of July pageant: "As a people, we are making, plastic, responsive, receptive. Such a spirit will take the best upon all influences that bear upon it. Our civilization is in a 'nascent state,' with its power of affinity at its strongest, and its capacity for civilization most vigorous" (Glassberg 63-4). In Chicago in 1908, a playground workers' holiday festival highlighted folk dancing from various immigrant traditions, "promoting settlement house worker Graham Taylor to praise its 'cosmopolitanism' and 'democratic spririt'" (Glassberg 59).

Despite progressives' best intentions, however, even their praise of the immigrant in pageantry exposes a paternalism and dormant xenophobia. Glassberg states that recreation and playground workers looked to immigrant festivals as models for their pageantry because "making public celebrations for the entire community more like the immigrant folk festival [ . . . ], Americans could recapture the childlike solidarity and spirit of expressive participation that modern industrial society lacked" (62). According to such a sentiment, immigrants and their festivals reflect children's play, not the reflection of folk traditions much older than America. Also, there was a certain sense of possessiveness of America on the part of these progressives. Glassberg cites Clara Finch of the Drama League of America's Festival committee on immigrants in community pageantry: "We should grasp every opportunity to make the [immigrants] feel

they have a place in our play as well as in our work. Until recently the immigrant has been considered of economic value only. Now we know that his invaluable social heritage of art, music, story, and dance may be ours if we utilize it” (113-4). This sentiment is very progressive, but it inherently assumes and confirms the line drawn between immigrants and natives. While she values immigrant contributions beyond mere economics, she also emphasizes “our play” and “our work,” maintaining the divergence between immigrants and natives and possessing ownership of American culture. Of course, at the same time, she appeals for immigrant contribution to American culture, a type of progressive assimilation that shows an open-mindedness on the part of these intellectuals. But it also confirms who is in control of society and culture and holds that immigrant presence does not yet contribute to the society.

While progressives tried to embrace immigrants to some degree for pageantry efforts, the role and depiction of the working class in pageantry was even more lacking. Of course, in discussing the “immigrant question” class issues were inherent. Clara Finch lamented our utilization of immigrants as economic contributors while neglecting their heritage, and many pageant promoters were dismayed by the growth of industrialization and what this meant for American culture. But progressives in the pageantry movement did not take this issue head-on, or, when they did, they envisioned a peaceful co-existence between capital and labor that failed to reflect the historical reality of class conflict in America. Prevots holds that pageant leaders “claimed that the pageant involved the whole city and broke down barriers. The documents show that for the most part this was true, but the involvement of blacks was almost nonexistent and it is not clear whether organized labor or the multitude of the poor working class played a significant

role in the ‘democratic process’” (13). If class were treated in pageantry, it was only done on a symbolic level that addressed the problem while the answer lay in the use of abstract allegory, often reflecting traditional religious values. In 1915, *The Pageant of Blackhawk Country* in Freeport, Illinois, reveals the use of allegory clearly,

depicting “industrial toilers, their lives all but crushed out by the system of labor that takes its toll in human lives,” the epilogue concluded with the workers’ redemption, which came not by organizing to change that exploitative system, but rather by stately symbolic figures representing “Sympathy,” “Understanding,” “Cooperation,” “Justice,” “Idealism,” “Conservation,” “Brotherhood,” and “Love” driving back other figures personifying “Greed,” “Competition,” “Jealousy,” “Injustice,” “Inhumanity,” “Misunderstanding,” “Hate,” and “Materialism.” In the pageant finale, all sing “Labor is Joy and Joy is Love for All Humanity.” (Glassberg 126-7).

Even more poignant in considering the Pageant of the Paterson Silk Strike, was a pageant in Lawrence, Massachusetts, six months before the textile strike in that city—also led by the IWW. In that pageant, “‘Labor’ and ‘Capital’ [ . . . ] danced together joyfully,” and the “cover of the pageant program depicted textile workers, like the Indians of an earlier day, paying homage to a vision of ‘The City’” (Glassberg 128). The class question as presented in pageants avoided the more difficult issues of power in the class struggle, and the presentations, instead, were a means of keeping industrial peace.

But progressives were not blind to the cultural perils of industrial growth. Percy MacKaye (1875-1956) was a devoted pageant promoter and a founding member of the

APA. In fact MacKaye protested Langdon's notions of pageantry openly when Langdon tried to standardize themes for pageants in 1915. In a letter, he wrote to Langdon:

I learn for the first time from a letter from my sister Hazel that a bulletin of the American Pageant Association is soon to appear in which the precise definition of a pageant is to be settled and standardized by the Association "for the good of all." As one of the directors of the Association, I want to say as emphatically as possible that I do not believe at all in such definitions and that I shall surely count upon having the bulletin submitted to me, as one of the board of directors, before it is printed and sent forth so that I may know whether it is a thing which I wish to stand for or not. (Percy MacKaye, Letter, 6 October 1915, qtd. in Prevots 98)

Not only did MacKaye oppose Langdon and his conservative estimations of pageantry's purpose, but in 1911 he wrote *The Civic Theatre in Relation to the Redemption of Leisure: A Book of Suggestions* (1912). At heart, MacKaye felt that pageants could invigorate civic participation, much like other progressives involved in the pageant movement, and held that modern industrialization has stripped work of its original integrating purpose for society and stripped individuals of happiness through work:

Day in, day out, and all day long, the typical American is strenuously engaged in hard work—in what is technically called "acts of production." To what purpose? Presumably for happiness. But happiness—unless work becomes an end instead of a means to life—is a matter of consumption.

When, therefore, shall this giant producer, America, have a chance to consume, to “reap the reward of his labor”? This is the problem of leisure. (30)

In his advocacy of “structured leisure,” MacKaye points to three institutions that provide such structure: churches on the Sabbath, schools for children, and universities for the youth (31). He points out that “night leisure [ . . . ] is left disorganized, chaotic, utterly ignored and neglected by public support” (31). As a result, leisure is passed away as the wasteful consumption of for-profit “amusement”: “commercial theatres, vaudeville houses, moving picture shows, dance halls, etc.” (31). But such consumption is divorced from the consumer’s production. Instead, MacKaye promotes civic leisure, particularly in the form of pageantry and plays, as a means to create a new public economy.

MacKaye felt that the pageantry movement could reinvigorate an arts and crafts economy left destroyed by industrialization. In the spirit of William Morris, whom he cites on occasion, he felt that public arts could bridge the gap between production and consumption.

MacKaye’s vision for a new arts and crafts society, while noble, is anachronistic considering the growth of the industries he criticizes. But MacKaye actively corresponded with the Greenwich Village scene, of which John Reed, the director of the Paterson Pageant, was a part. In fact, MacKaye is of central importance to the Paterson Pageant because of his presumed influence on John Reed: “Moving between the genteel world of the St.-Gaudens art colony in Cornish and the bohemian world of *The Masses* and Greenwich Village, MacKaye also grew friendly with the circle of radicals surrounding Mabel Dodge, including John Reed, twelve years his junior, whom he first

met when Reed acted in one of his productions at the Harvard Dramatic Club” (Glassberg 171). Most historical accounts of the Paterson Pageant credit Mabel Dodge, an upper class socialite and John Reed’s lover, for initiating the idea of the pageant, but with Reed’s connections to MacKaye, drama, and pageantry, Reed himself could have been the originator of the idea for the pageant, which may explain why he volunteered for the job.

John Reed was born into a family of wealth and privilege. Reed’s maternal grandfather, Henry Green, was a “highly successful pioneer capitalist,” working in the fur trade for the Hudson Bay Company (Rosenstone 10). Reed was born in 1887, two years after his grandfather’s death, “in his grandmother’s mansion” in Cedar Hill, an affluent neighborhood in Portland, Oregon, “the showplace of the city” (Hicks 1). Despite such a fortunate birth, Reed’s connections to bourgeois society were tenuous at best. His father, C. J. Reed, came to Portland from New York, selling farm equipment for the D. M. Osborne Company (Hicks 4, Rosenstone 12). Although his story is similar in trajectory, C. J. Reed was of a different generation than his father-in-law Green: he came to Portland on “less an adventurous search for riches than a matter of practical business” (Rosenstone 12). According to Rosenstone, C. J. Reed “achieved prominence on the basis of personality rather than position” (12). The Reeds’ social standing, however, was tested after the Depression of 1893 when C. J. lost his job. Economic problems would continue, even after C. J. Reed became a U. S. Marshall and successfully prosecuted timber companies for land-grabbing; when John returned from a trip to Europe after graduating from Harvard, his father was forced to inform him about the family finances, which “were lamentable” (Rosenstone 77). C. J., because of his successful prosecution of the

timber barons, had been seen as a “traitor” by local Portland businessmen and ostracized for his role in the prosecutions (Rosenstone 77). Reed, though, respected his father for the stance he took against the timber companies. After C. J.’s death in 1912, Reed tried to rationalize the cause of death and came to the conclusion that worries about money and social position brought about his father’s demise: “An unbearably burdened C.J. had made heroic efforts to let [John and his brother, Henry] ‘live like rich men’s sons’ at school, and the cost was too high” (Rosenstone 92). Racked with guilt for only becoming aware of his father’s efforts after his death, “Jack assumed blame for many family problems and disappointments” (Rosenstone 92). But Reed’s feelings of inferiority did not merely stem from his and his family’s struggles with social class.

Reed’s life, from the beginning, was marked by the feeling of being an outsider, and, from this, he developed a certain form of an inferiority complex that would dog him throughout his adolescent life. Reed was a sickly child, and his mother often sheltered him, not allowing him outside to play with other children. Reed said of his childhood:

I wasn’t much good at the things other boys were [ . . . ] and their codes of honor and conduct didn’t hold me. They felt it, too, and had a sort of good-natured contempt for me. I was neither one thing nor the other, neither altogether coward nor brave, neither manly nor sissified, neither ashamed nor unashamed. I think that is why my impression of boyhood is an unhappy one, and why I have so few close friends in Portland, and why I don’t ever again want to live there. (qtd in Hicks 10)

Reed’s words, here, reveal a lack of placement; he is “neither one thing, nor the other.” While this isolated him continually throughout his life, it contrarily provided two

interesting aspects to his personality. On the one hand, his lack of placement often forced Reed to place himself forcefully into a position, a characteristic often seen in his reporting where he becomes a character in the historical process instead of objectively reporting it. On the other hand, Reed does not seem to associate himself with his upper-class roots. Reed's stories prior to the Paterson Strike, during the Paterson Strike, and even his later mature journalistic pieces present Reed as someone who can clearly identify, sympathize, and even at times empathize with fellow "outsiders"—the homeless, workers, immigrants, foreigners, etc.

Prior to the Paterson Strike which inaugurated his journalistic career, Reed tried to make a name for himself as an artist, writing poetry and short-stories. Two of Reed's short-stories reveal Reed's ambivalent position in regards to his own upper class identity and his ability to identify with outsiders. "The Capitalist" (1912) is an ironic short story in which a young homeless man is mistaken for being a capitalist by an elderly, drunk washer-woman who has been cheated out of her pay and is trying to sleep in Washington Square Park. "Another Case of Ingratitude" (1913) is a first-person narration of a young man, presumably someone like Reed, who sympathetically buys an out-of-work bricklayer dinner, but instead of showing gratitude, the bricklayer gives the young man a quick lesson on the problem of sympathy. Most of Reed's early short stories deal with the misperception of class, and the settings often emphasize a lack of clarity—usually set in misty, winter evenings where even the street lamps, instead of illuminating the scene, cast off a hazy glare.

In "The Capitalist," William Booth Wrenn, the main character, is presented by the narrator as "an ordinary young man in ordinary circumstances, perhaps a clerk in some

flourishing haberdashery shop” (15). The “ordinary” is defined as middle-class since the qualifying statement suggests a “flourishing” shop. But closer examination reveals that Wrenn’s clothing betrays this middle-class appearance, and Reed describes all of the details that indicate the exact opposite of the initial perception: frayed collar, a sleeveless shirt, worn-out shoes, and a fire-damaged raincoat (16). The drunken woman mistakes Wrenn for a “capitalist” because he is jingling change in his hand, a total of sixty-five cents, which he had counted three times (15). But Wrenn plays along with the woman’s misperception, taking on an affected upper-class air and charitably giving the old woman a quarter so that she could find a bed for the night. By the end of the story, only the policeman who chases Wrenn out of the park has clear enough vision to perceive his ragged appearance.

“Another Case of Ingratitude” has a similar scene of charity as that of “The Capitalist,” but instead of the charity coming from a fellow homeless person playing the role of a capitalist, it is a young man who we presume is of a comfortable class status who buys dinner for a down-on-his-luck bricklayer. While the bricklayer eats his dinner of roast beef, two ham sandwiches, pie and coffee (48), the narrator observes a transformation: “He became an individual instead of a descendant; where there had been a beast, a spirit lived; he was a man!” (49). This degrading observation foreshadows the irony of the culminating scene in which the bricklayer reveals how much of man he is, criticizing the young man for his charity: “It might as well ‘a’ been me as any other bum. But if you hadn’t struck me, you’d ‘a’ hunted up another down-and-outer [ . . . ] you just had to save somebody tonight. I understand” (50). The bricklayer humbles the young man because he sees through the charity and false sympathy.

Both “Another Case of Ingratitude” and “The Capitalist” reveal a few things about the young Reed. First, class is seen as malleable and based on perception. Frequently Reed uses details in clothing, particularly shoes, to reveal true class standing, but these details are often overlooked, allowing characters like Wrenn to be shape-shifters in American society, a society that often refuses to accept class differences as a reality at the same time individuals are judged by those differences, as in the case of “Ingratitude.” But “Ingratitude” also emphasizes another issue that will be central to understanding Reed’s reporting and involvement in the Paterson Strike, for it points to the problem of “sympathy” as dehumanizing. The charitable meal does not re-humanize the bricklayer, as the young man thinks; his protest and criticism of the young man’s charity—his ingratitude—expose the bricklayer’s humanity. These stories reveal that Reed understands class differences, but more importantly Reed empathizes with his lower-class characters instead of making them objects of pity.

A couple of days after Reed met Big Bill Haywood in a Village salon and heard about the struggles of the Paterson strikers, he ventured to Paterson to see the strike first hand. The result of this visit was two-fold: he was arrested, and he gathered material for his article “War in Paterson,” originally published in *The Masses* in June 1913. Rosenstone states that “Reed’s prose flares into the dramatic” and that the “article was hard-hitting, vivid and angry, and it showed that Reed had undergone a change, had shifted from being a sympathetic reporter to an involved partisan” (123). Since Reed becomes a partisan, his prose not only reflects the “drama” of the strike, but moves the strike to mythic proportions. The title and first paragraph of the article reveal this: “There’s a war in Paterson. But it’s a curious kind of war. All of the violence is the

work of one side—the Mill Owners” (143). By declaring the strike a war, Reed moves the strike from yet another labor dispute to an epic battle between capital and labor. The “Mill Owners” are set up as the *other* with whom the battle must be fought. But this *other* is mysterious and hidden, as Reed’s commentary explains the Mill Owners’ control of Paterson:

Their servants, the Police, club unresisting men and women and ride down law-abiding crowds on horseback. Their paid mercenaries, the armed detectives, shoot and kill innocent people. Their newspapers, the Paterson *Press* and the Paterson *Call*, publish incendiary and crime-inciting appeals to mob-violence against the strike leaders. Their tool, Recorder Carroll, deals out heavy sentences to peaceful pickets that the police net gather up. They control absolutely the Police, the Press, the Courts. (143)

Only the mercenary forces of police, detectives, press, and courts are left to be made the villains in the guise of the mill owners. They become a spectral opponent, a metonymic replacement for those against whom the true battle is being fought.<sup>2</sup> Their presence is felt in the piece, though, through economic power, the ability to possess, as made clear in the repeated “their.” But the lack of presence of the mill owners is problematic in Reed’s role as a mediator: he can only engage with representatives—metaphors, in a way—and not the actual *other* of the conflict. While his middling role is limited, he acknowledges what the police, press, and courts represent. Through his arrest he engages with both

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Walter Benjamin’s “Critique of Violence” in *Reflections* and Jacques Derrida’s discussion of Benjamin in “Force of Law: The ‘Mystical Foundation of Authority’” in *Acts of Religion*. In particular, Benjamin refers to the police as a form of “spectral” violence (286).

sides, namely the police and the courts, on the one hand, and the strikers and the organizers on the other.

Analysis of the article presents the dual nature of Reed's role in Paterson. His desire for fame, recognition, and attention can be immediately gleaned from the second paragraph of the article: "Let me tell you what *I* saw in Paterson and then you will say which side of this struggle is 'anarchistic' and 'contrary to American ideals'" (143, emphasis added). The entire article reports his experience where he is the main character, the central figure through whose eyes we witness the action. But he forces his ego and experience into the narrative, propelling himself to the status of an epic hero around whom the events revolve.<sup>3</sup> At one point, Reed sympathizes with the police as workingmen merely caught on the other side of the conflict: "Nervous, bleary-eyed, unshaven, these officers were worn out with nine weeks' incessant strike duty" (143). Reed makes it clear that the police, despite their "villain" status, are workers as well. But the entirety of "War in Paterson" tempers any sympathy the reader might feel since the police are representatives of the manufacturers.

Once in prison, Reed communes with the workers, but his identification with the workers is not immediate. Firstly, Reed obviously was neither a striker nor a member of the working class. According to "War in Paterson," Big Bill Haywood, who was also imprisoned, rescues Reed from suspicion and introduces him to the strikers: "'Boys,' said Haywood, indicating me, 'This man wants to know things. You tell him everything'—" (145). But Reed has omitted details from the actual events. For the purpose of space, he

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lukács contrasts the epic hero Achilles to the role of the middling character in Scott's novels: "Achilles is not only compositionally the central figure of the epic, he is also a head taller than all his fellow actors, he really is the sun round which the planets revolve" (36)

reports a more compact version of what had happened. Rosenstone's version says that Reed was "locked in a cell with a large Negro and a swarthy, bearded foreigner" (120). The "foreigner" was Carlo Tresca, another IWW leader in the strike effort. Tresca hesitated in approaching Reed: "Because he was obviously not a silk worker, the labor leader had thought him a stool pigeon planted by the police" (Rosenstone 121). Tresca's suspicion verifies Reed as an outsider. Eventually, Haywood does arrive and vouch for Reed, after which "the Italian heartily embraced [Reed], [and] other strikers eagerly gathered around to meet an editor of a well-known radical magazine and his sense of dislocation melted away" (Rosenstone 121).

Secondly, to alienate him further from his subject matter, Reed was clearly an "American" amongst immigrant workers. He catalogues several nationalities that were involved with the strike and has conversations with "Italians, Lithuanians, Poles, Jews, one Frenchman and one 'free-born' Englishman!" (146). He says of the Englishman: "He was the only Anglo-Saxon striker in prison except the leaders—and perhaps the only one who had been there picketing" (146). Reed uses his identification as an outsider, an American and fellow Anglo-Saxon, to bridge the gap between other social outsiders: foreign, immigrant workers. Once again, Reed propels himself and his identity into his subject matter as he questions the workers in prison. He asks the workers which nationalities make up the strike, to which a worker responds with a litany, highlighting the "Italians, Hebrews, and Germans" as the stalwarts of the picket line (146). Reed follows up with a question about Americans, and the strikers

all shrugged their shoulders and grinned with humorous scorn. "English peoples not go on picket-line," said one, softly." "Mericans no lika fight!"

An Italian boy thought my feelings may be hurt, and broke in quickly:  
 “Not all lika dat. Beeg Beell, *he* ‘Merican. *You* ‘Merican. Quinl’, Miss  
 Flynn, ‘Merican. *Good! Good!* “Merican workman, he lika talk too  
 much.”

This sad fact appears to be true. It was the English-speaking group  
 that held back during the Lawrence strike. It is the English-speaking  
 contingent that remains passive in Paterson, while the “wops,” the “kikes,”  
 the “hunkies”—the “degraded and ignorant races of Southern Europe”—  
 go out and get clubbed on the picket-line and gaily take their medicine in  
 Paterson jail. (146)

Reed interjects his own ethnicity—and, for the Paterson Strike, a controversial ethnicity  
 at that— into the story as a subject of conversation. On the one hand, this is a courageous  
 move on Reed’s part; he does not shy away from his outsider status—in fact, he  
 emphasizes it. By doing so, he more deeply identifies with the workers where the Italian  
 boy sympathizes with Reed and defends him, listing him amongst the American “heroes”  
 of the strike: Haywood, Flynn, and Patrick Quinlan, another IWW organizer. On the  
 other hand, it shows Reed’s lack of identity, his ability to forfeit his identity in order to  
 commune with an *other*. Reed so identifies with the immigrant workers as outsiders that  
 he can list derogatory epithets and the mainstream perception of them as “degraded and  
 ignorant,” but, in the same sentence praises their bravery on the picket-line and in jail.  
 He at once is the Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking reporter and outsider with his fellow  
 outsiders.

Reed's experience during the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 was transformative. He became a committed partisan in the class struggle, and the Pageant gave Reed a chance to anchor himself in his political convictions. Anne Huber Tripp states that "Reed [ . . . ] was the moving spirit; he wrote the script, chose the scenes, and got his friends to help in staging the production" (141). As with much of Tripp's historical analysis, she tends to focus on the institutions and celebrities of history and not on the historical agents themselves, the workers. In some ways, she is correct that Reed was the "moving spirit" in that he organized the Pageant, wrote the script, and selected the scenes. But it was the "silk-workers, who, in their variety of languages, educated John Reed on the strike" (Hicks 99). According to Martin Green, Big Bill Haywood introduced Reed to the strikers on 19 May 1913, and "Reed asked them to suggest the strike scenes they should represent" (195). The workers' participation in the Pageant did not end with the selection of scenes; during subsequent rehearsals Reed "asked the strikers how the events they were reliving had felt and took suggestions from them about how they dragged their feet approaching the mill in the mornings" (197). But even Green acknowledges that his main assistants were other Greenwich Village intellectuals (197). Reed's peculiar identity allowed him the openness to listen to the strikers about their own struggle and shape it into an artistic picture. But the source of the piece was entirely material from the workers' own lived experience.

Reed provided the workers with the opportunity to express themselves and see themselves in a different light. Reed listened to the workers' experiences and transformed it into a condensed vision of a drama. This concentrated narrative of their own experience allowed the workers to see their own story as something both familiar,

but also larger than their own experience: “The Pageant revealed the power of the strikers, especially to themselves. By uniting and concentrating the disparate revolutionary elements of the strike in a single drama, the Pageant encouraged the strikers to affirm the most radical meaning of their own experience” (Green 163-4). This concentration reduces the vast and arrayed dynamics of the historical action down to a concentrated message that is concise, profound, and meaningful.

The Pageant rotates around four essential themes: life, death, sound or speech, and silence. It is immediately noticeable that these four themes organize themselves into two pairs of oppositions: life v. death and sound v. silence. The most manifest and immediate themes are those of life and death as the introduction to the “Program of the Paterson Pageant” makes clear:

While the workers are clubbed and shot by detectives and policemen, the mills remain dead. While the workers are sent to jail by hundreds, the mills remain dead. While organizers are persecuted, the strike continues, and still the mills are dead. While the pulpit thunders denunciation and the press screams lies, the mills remain dead. No violence can make the mills alive—no legal process can resurrect them from the dead. Bayonets and clubs, injunctions and court orders are equally futile.

Only the return of the workers to the mills can give the dead things life. The mills remain dead through the enactment of the following episodes. (rpt in Kornbluh 210)

The mills are repeatedly associated with death while the workers are *animus*. As pointed out earlier, the manufacturers never make themselves present on the battlefield: the workers only interact with representatives. Here, the mills act as the representatives of the absent social force of the bourgeoisie. But there is logic to this representation. Just as the police, press, and courts were possessed by the manufacturers, the mills are more immediate representations of the mill owners as they are their private property. Essentially, the workers are not fighting the mill owners, *per se*; instead they are fighting against the idea of private property. Property, any commodity, is dead so long as its living force, the worker, is not recognized in the process.

In the Pageant, the workers become the spirit which will give the mills life, for “[n]o violence,” a carrier of death, “can make the mills alive.” The workers in this regard become truly messianic: “Only the return of the workers to the mills can give dead things life.” But as Episode One: “*The Mills Alive—The Workers Dead*” makes clear, so long as the workers give themselves to the mills, the mills will be alive. Throughout the first half of Episode One the mills are the agent: “The mill windows are all aglow” (210). The mills become personified, where the glowing windows represent the eyes of some bestial consciousness. The mill becomes the subject for the historical process: “The mill whistle sounds the signal to begin work” (210). The mills make the sounds as though it were its own being; the word “work” lingers at the end of the sentence removed from its actual agent, the workers. When the workers appear on the scene, they only give more life to the mills and their labor, as the Program presents it, is further removed from them and given to the mills: “Men and women, old and young, come to work in the bitter cold of the dawn. The sound of looms” (210). Again, it is not the workers who are making the

sound through their activity, but the mechanization of labor, the looms—the increased machinery that caused the strike.

When “*The Workers Begin to Think*” in the second half of the first episode, the workers become alive. Prior to thought, the workers are merely commodities to be traded, private property like the mills. A commodity, however, cannot think; it merely represents the thought and action of some human laborer. Once the workers begin to think for themselves, develop class-consciousness, do they realize their power as a life-giving force, which is the “beginning of the great silk strike” (210). Furthermore, conscious living is associated with sound: “The striking workers sing the Marsaillaise, the entire audience being invited to join in the song of revolt” (210). Instead of the mills being the living agent, as represented by the sound of the looms, the workers recognize themselves as the agents of history and make sound for themselves in the form of song.

This class consciousness prepares the main action of the second episode, “*The Mills Dead—The Workers Alive*” when the workers, treated as mere property, decide to withhold their life-giving labor. In Episode Two, the workers are described as being “alert” (210), another sign of life. But the police arrive and “treat the strikers with great brutality” (210), which as transformed living agents react accordingly with “anger,” and “[f]ights between police and strikers ensue” (210). Prior to the strike the workers did not possess their own life; they were the living dead as the imagery makes clear. Once they go on strike and develop class-consciousness, however, they realize that they have a life to fight for. Thus, the police, like the mills in the previous episode, become the harbingers of death in the form of violence as eventually “[s]hots are fired by the detectives hired by the manufacturers, and Valentino Modestino [ . . . ] is hit by the bullet

and killed as he stands on the porch of his house with one of his children in his arms” (210). The violence instigated by the police and detectives results in death, and the death is all the more poignant since Modestino was holding his child, a symbol of the continuation of life after death. This theme is brought up again in Episode Five when the striking families send away their children to foster families sympathetic to the Paterson workers’ cause.<sup>4</sup> Once again, children are transformed in this situation from a life-affirming symbol to a symbol of death.

Episode Three, “*The Funeral of Modestino*” continues the death imagery, but the workers, as a source of life, “drop red carnations and ribbons upon the coffin until it is buried beneath the crimson symbol of the workers’ blood” (210). Blood, of course, is an ambivalent symbol: it at once represents a life force, but the shedding of that life force often represents death. Modestino was an innocent bystander, “not a striker or a silk mill worker” (210). According to Tripp’s history of the strike, IWW leaders were quick to seize the moment for publicity purposes: first, demanding that the mill owners discontinue the use of private detectives; secondly, IWW leaders approached Modestino’s widow, promising “to pay all the bills, provide \$30 a month to support her family, and see to the education of her children” if they would allow them “to stage a mass funeral for the fallen worker” (110). Tripp claims, and perhaps rightfully so, that the IWW wanted “to exploit the killing for propaganda purposes” (110). Modestino, besides the IWW strike organizers, is the only individual presented during the pageant. But Modestino is not a fully realized individual as a character; instead, he plays a twofold role: a sacrificial victim and a rhetorical device. This twofold role, however, concludes

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<sup>4</sup> The IWW used this same tactic of sending strikers’ children to supportive families as a publicity stunt during the Lawrence Strike of 1912 as well.

with the same message: the need for solidarity in the face of police brutality. Through his funeral, Modestino represents the workers' sacrifice—their blood and their life. As an individual he cannot be realized because the story of the pageant is myth, the story of a collective, the workers; in the end, he must merely represent them, not himself.

The remaining three episodes, save for the second half of episode five, "*Sending Away the Children*," re-enact meetings and parades. All of these episodes include songs sung by workers or speeches performed by Haywood, Flynn, and Tresca—the organizers. But in the final episode, "*Strike Meeting at Turner Hall*," "strikers, men and women, legislate for themselves": "They pass a law for the eight-hour day. No court can declare a law thus made unconstitutional" (210-12). Here, the process of the workers coming to life in the strike, which began with their "thinking" results in the workers making decisions for themselves. Legislation is a process of deliberation, a process of speech which results in action. The program of the pageant emphasizes that the courts cannot "declare a law thus made unconstitutional" because throughout the history of the strike, the courts were merely agents of the mill owners, stifling the right of free speech on the picket line.

Throughout the Pageant, speech and song are associated with life whereas silence is associated with death. Looking at the pageant schematically reveals this association, and the transformation of the sound of the mills to the speech of the workers illustrates a process of resurrection, of death to life (see *Fig. 3.1*). If we analyze the "life" column

<b>LIFE</b>	<b>DEATH</b>	<b>SILENCE</b>	<b>SOUND/SPEECH</b>
Mill Windows Aglow			Mill Whistle Sounds
Men and Women Go to Work			The Sound of the Looms
Silk Strike Begins			Workers Sing Marseillaise
Mass Picketing			
Workers Alert			
	Police Brutality		
Workers Provoked to Anger			
	Shots Fired: Modestino Killed (Child in arms)	Strikers clubbed and arrested	
Fights Between Police & Strikers			
	Funeral Procession		
Strikers drop Ribbons and Carnations			
Great Mass Meeting			
Mayday Parade			Organizers speak
	Strikers send children away		Songs
			Flynn speaks
Strikers legislate For themselves			Haywood speaks
			Speeches by Haywood, Flynn, and Tresca

Figure 3.1 Thematic Chart of the Paterson Pageant<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> I used Claude Lévi-Strauss' method of analyzing mythology as described in "Chapter XI: The Structural Study of Myth" (206-31) in *Structural Anthropology* to determine the Pageant's thematic structure. The

moving downward, the mill is the first entry, as it is the first entry in the “sound and speech” column. As we move down the columns, though, as the workers begin to sing and organizers begin to speak, workers not only become more alive, but autonomous as well, ending with the “legislate” scene, the final result of workers taking their life and decisions into their own hands. Besides “*Sending Away the Children*,” the events in the “death” column become more sparse as the drama unfolds. Death, as the column illustrates, is occupied by types of oppression: either the effects of physical brutality or the effects of poverty. But as the workers become more alive and make decisions for themselves, oppression begins to disappear. Furthermore, the oppression, death, results in silence—in its one instance, strikers being clubbed and arrested.

The need for the pageant arose from local press bias in which the workers’ side of the conflict was not being heard. In the Pageant, not only are the workers finally heard, but they are also given voice, namely through song. Once provided with voice, the workers can enter into historical dialogue and overcome their commodity status; they become *res cogitans*, not merely *res*. Thus, they become subjective agents in the historical process. The mill owners, police, press, and pulpit, tried to prevent this speech. A review on the *Guardian* warned of the detrimental effects of giving rebellious workers voice in a review of the Pageant as “a public warning of possibilities which may result when elemental passions are exploited for political purpose and private gain” (qtd in Tripp 147). Ironically, this can also be stated of the mill owners who exploited silk workers for “private gain” for decades. Even in this brief statement, the threat of working masses

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chronological events of the Pageant can be read from left to right; the columns represent the themes under which the events are organized. Initially, my plan for this dissertation was to examine the strike in American literature as a mythic discourse, comparing these representations to Georges Sorel’s description of the general strike as proletarian myth. Regardless the change in my project’s scope, I found Levi-Strauss useful in analyzing the Pageant’s themes.

having their own voice seems inconceivably threatening. The threat of voice only makes clear the necessity to silence such expressions to continue economic and political domination. Of course, the workers had been punished for weeks—months—for voicing their needs and desires. But the pageant brought about the publicity for the workers to make themselves heard on a larger level, to express their own side in a way that their demands would be clearly heard by the community at large.

Even though the strikers had been singing on picket lines in Paterson for weeks—according to Golin’s historical account, years, Reed was instrumental in channeling that native ability into a spectacle. As the Pageant provided the workers with a larger venue to express themselves, it transformed their perspectives of history as well. Even during the rehearsals workers began to see themselves differently by being a part of an artistic production. As Golin reports, one worker was asked about stage fright, to which she responded: “We know we can make a strike pageant because we are strikers. We’re rehearsing every day, in the strike” (qtd in Golin 162). While this can be read as the strikers not seeing their historical role as divorced from the simulacrum of the pageant, there was a transforming quality by re-enacting their own events, not just for an audience, but for themselves as well. Hicks reports that “[r]esponding to Reed’s enthusiasm, the strikers’s evolved the details of each scene, lost their self-consciousness, and felt them re-enacting stirring events of their own drama” (101-2). They not only “lost their self-consciousness,” but gained a critical consciousness and a class consciousness as well. As Hicks’ own words relate, the workers were re-enacting scenes of “their *own* drama.” Whereas in prior texts the possessive “their” belonged to the owning class, here, the workers possess something, their experience. They were able to see themselves as

something while also performing it. As historical subjects, they saw themselves as artistic objects that reflected a familiar, recent history. Instead of a drama, pageant, or other text about the great lives of others, the text was their own life as a mass; they become the great other of history, like a Henry V or Julius Caesar. Rose Pastor Stokes expressed this view concisely in a review of the Pageant in the Socialist *New York Call*: “Here, then, is a pageant, oh Daughters of the Revolution, that will set forth in thrilling episodes, not the glory and courage, the aspirations and struggles of a dead past . . . but a pageant that gives us history fresh from the hands of its makers and—more thrilling marvel still—with the makers themselves as the actors in the play” (qtd in Tripp 144). Stokes emphasizes the workers as “makers of history” and the pageant comes “fresh from” their working “hands.” More importantly, though, Stokes points out that the immediate situation is historical in its very unfolding.

The Paterson Pageant, despite the emphasis of John Reed’s direction, was a collective enterprise with the intent of moving a collective audience. But artistic representations of Paterson continued in novel form, where the focus is the individual and not the collective. Ernest Poole’s *The Harbor* emphasizes the transformation of an individual caused by a strike much like the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 transformed Reed. In fact, Poole shared the platform with Reed at the strikers’ rally in Haledon, New Jersey, and also contributed his energy to the Pageant. Even though *The Harbor* is about the New York waterfront, the similarities between Paterson and *The Harbor*’s climactic strike are obvious. Furthermore, like Paterson, the portrayal of the strike in *The Harbor* once again emphasizes the contribution of foreign immigrant workers in the first decades

of twentieth century America. But unlike the Pageant, Poole uses the novel to reveal the strike's transformative effects upon and individual.

## CHAPTER FOUR

RE-EXAMINING THE BOURGEOIS FAMILY: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND FAMILIAL GROWTH IN ERNEST POOLE'S *THE HARBOR*

Because *The Harbor* takes as its subject the psychological and social growth of its narrator, it is individualistic and atomistic at the same time that it is social and collective in that a wide array of social forces are revealed to Bill over the first three decades of his life, and he is at once drawn into an identification with these social identities as they make themselves apparent to him, forcing him to reject previous identifications at each stage of his life. As a child he is alienated from his father who runs a warehouse on the Brooklyn waterfront, and in adolescence he attempts to transcend his social class by becoming a writer. In his early adulthood, the death of his mother forces him to confront his father and his familial social status as a part of the entrepreneurial class. His marriage to his childhood sweetheart introduces the world of big business, represented by his father-in-law, and through his father-in-law, he engages in a career as a public relations consultant promoting Wall Street interests that are modernizing the harbor. Finally, a college friend reappears towards the end of the novel to organize a strike on the waterfront, and this reveals to Bill the world of labor which he has repressed while exploring his other class affiliations. As a result, his individual psychological development and his exploration of American social strata are circumscribed by familial relations. Since *The Harbor* is an autobiographical account of the narrator's life, it is a personal story that centers upon family. But the introduction of the working-class by an outsider to his familial structure forces Bill to re-examine both his individual and his social identity.

Ernest Poole (1880-1951) was born in Chicago, the center of a growing industrial nation and growing class conflict. Chicago was the epicenter of labor radicalism: the scene of the Haymarket Affair in 1886, the birth place of the IWW in 1905, and the setting for perhaps the most famous social novel, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906). But despite his radical environment, Poole's radicalism was tempered. He supported moderate Socialist leaders like Morris Hillquit and, as more radical elements quipped, "slow-cialist" policies like legislative reforms to ameliorate class conflict and other social ills (Keefer 38-9). Nonetheless, Poole was inspired by more radical elements as well, particularly the IWW, their success in the Lawrence, Massachusetts, textile strike of 1912, the failure of the Paterson Silk Worker's Strike of 1913, and their potential to organize the stokers and dockworkers of New York's harbor.

Poole's *The Harbor* (1915), his most famous work, reflects his interests in growing industrial conflicts and the role of such radical organizations as the IWW. But Poole did not share the IWW's confidence that the working masses might be able to effectively and efficiently master the means of production (Keefer 43). Poole was involved in the Paterson Strike and the organization of the Paterson Pageant, and, in his autobiography, *The Bridge*, speaks admiringly of Big Bill Haywood, despite doubts of Haywood's more radical aims. His account of his acquaintanceship with Haywood is sympathetic and opposed to the general view the public was presented with from the press:

Haywood came to New York to take charge of a big strike in the textile mills at Paterson. I was with him often there, in strike headquarters in a hall filled with Italians, Spaniards and Greeks, who gave me an abundance

of life and color for the stories I wrote. And on a lovely spring afternoon at a meeting out of doors, from the porch of a small frame house, where I stood with Jack Reed and the strike leaders, I looked on a whole hillside massed with men and women and children, more than twenty thousand in all. Just below us stood an ominous line of armed deputies waiting for one word of violence in Haywood's speech. A born orator, he raised that crowd up and up and came to his climax, and then glared down at the armed men below.

"They say I'm here to preach to you violence! I do preach it!" he roared. He stopped and all through the multitude you could feel excitement go like some electric current just before a storm. Then slowly Haywood folded both huge arms across his chest. "But the only violence I preach is the violence of folded arms!"

He had known violence at first hand in many Colorado strikes. Only a short time before, he'd been tried for his life, wrongly accused of the murder of the governor of that state during the strike at Cripple Creek. Darrow had won an acquittal but, after nearly a year in jail with his life hanging by a thread, the strain had done things to Haywood's nerves.

(198)

This passage is an interesting piece when compared to the wider public's attitudes towards the IWW's violent reputation. Poole lauds Haywood as a leader opposed to violence, compared to the conservative and moderate Socialist's critiques of the IWW. Instead, Poole presents Haywood as a victim of state violence which tempered and

educated Haywood toward a different violence, the more benign violence of passive resistance as indicated by his “folded arms.” In a later passage, Poole mentions hosting Haywood at his home for dinner, after which his wife states: “That is the most magnetic and dangerous man I have ever met” (199). Poole’s ambivalence between his own political conviction and his sympathy towards the IWW is of the essence here and is of significance in approaching his novel *The Harbor*. Unlike London’s *The Iron Heel*, where naturalist preoccupation with gruesomeness and the fantastical, allegorical plot allow for the violence necessary for revolution, Poole hedges his revolutionary views because of his distaste for violence.

As London used allegory and Reed used nationalism and patriotism, Poole uses the bourgeois family structure as a metaphor for class-warfare. In *The Harbor*, the extended family becomes a microcosm of the various aspects of class warfare: a struggling middle class versus large corporate interests and radical working-class militancy versus the corporations that have triumphed over small business. Bill, the main character in *The Harbor*, is intimately connected to all facets of the social upheaval through familial connections; providing the work with a subjective narrator who can empathize with all sides of the conflict. Interestingly, the radical militant, Joe Kramer, who almost enters the family structure via marriage to Bill’s sister, is ultimately excluded from the familial circle. But Poole’s novel ultimately argues for a redefinition of the family structure, a structure not of kinship through blood and marriage, but a kinship that transcends familial ties and class boundaries. In many ways, *The Harbor* charts the psychological development of Bill; however, his development is not a course of individuation but one of identification: as Bill interacts with various sectors of society,

his consciousness expands, but his own ego does not become fixed. On the contrary, Bill's ego becomes more ambivalent and ambiguous. Bill's journey reveals class relations, the means of production, and ultimately argues for a way to overcome capitalism's alienation. However, there is a contradiction between Poole's "brotherhood of man" vision and the barrier that prevents Joe Kramer from entering the traditional family structure.

Bill's family is intricately linked to the New York harbor: his immediate family, in particular his father, struggles to maintain a small warehouse, a struggle he ultimately loses; Bill's family by marriage are social engineers looking to transform and modernize the harbor under Wall Street interests and hope to alleviate the social ills of capitalism through capitalist efficiency. The harbor is a perfect metaphor for capitalist alienation: commodities come through the harbor from various destinations bound for other destinations, but they float isolated from the work necessary to produce them; it is merely a world from the point of view of consumption. Commodity fetishism prevents a holistic picture of commodity production; it represses the knowledge of production in favor of desire and consumption, not acknowledging the intimate and necessary link between the two. Bill, himself, as the protagonist is a limited subject because he desires to see the whole picture, but his familial connections impede his quest. It is only through his college friend, Joe Kramer, who has become a union organizer, that Bill is exposed to the labor that his father's and father-in-law's businesses have tried so hard to hide. The topography of the novel—both physical and social—explains this removal of work from society's sight. Bill's father-in-law, Dillon, works out of a skyscraper that views the harbor from a removed, abstract, scientific height. His father's warehouse, while closer

to the real labor of the harbor, is still removed from the goods that move through the harbor. Joe Kramer, as an outsider to Bill's family, occupies a central position to Bill's social and psychological development, but Bill, because of loyalty to familial ties, resists—or represses—Joe's revelations.

Joe Kramer's intervention in Bill's life can be seen as a rupture in Bill's traditional familial relations. Joe's familial history and class origins remain unknown throughout the work; therefore, he is not limited by class identity, oedipal repression, or guilt.<sup>1</sup> As a revolutionary, based historically on the IWW, Joe defines his family by class-lines; race and nationality do not impede his ability to identify with others. Bill, on the other hand, is consistently limited by identification with familial relations. In the first chapters, *The Harbor* appears less a social novel and more a Freudian coming-of-age novel. Christophe Den Tandt claims that "Bill's exploration of the docks is structured by the preoedipal and oedipal scenarios" (239). A psychoanalytic reading of the novel depicts Bill, throughout his life, struggling through various father-figures to find guidance. But Bill's "oedipal scenarios" are merely a passing phase (that takes up a majority of the novel's development); Joe's "schizoanalysis" eventually deterritorializes Bill's familialism: that is, Joe brings about awareness of working-class conditions that forces Bill to re-examine his relations to his family and class. However, in his youth,

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<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* presents the best method to explore the contradiction of family and class structure in *The Harbor*, for it merges Freud's psychoanalytic repression, or overcomes it, in terms of Marx's description of political oppression via the capitalist mode of production. In particular, Deleuze and Guattari critique psychoanalysis' Oedipus not merely as individual repression, but as social repression, at the most basic level of the family structure. Since the main structure of the book is a merging of Bill's class identity with his family structure, Kramer's intervention in the novel could be seen in terms of "schizoanalysis," in which the schizo is not bound by identity—familial or otherwise—and is able to associate with others beyond his own identity.

while he consistently blames the harbor for his repression and disgust, Bill's true problem is not defined by the harbor itself, but class-lines, namely a disgust for the working-class.

Bill first explores the harbor as a child when he befriends a bunch of working-class boys who live close to the harbor, and his friend Sam takes him to a brothel where Bill witnesses a prostitute conducting her trade with a dock hand. Bill is disgusted by the scene and rejects the harbor entirely: "And at one of these [tables] a man, stoker or sailor I don't know which, his face flushed red under dirt and hair, held in his lap a big fat girl half dressed, giggling and queer, quite drunk. And then while Sam whispered on and on about the shuttered room upstairs, I felt a rush of such sickening fear and loathing that I wanted to scream—but I turned to faint" (19). This scene is permeated with working-class descriptors: Sam is a working-class boy who knows the ins and outs of harbor life; the man in the scene is a grimy "stoker or sailor" that Bill cannot clearly identify; finally, the woman is a prostitute selling herself. Bill misplaces his blame not upon the social class that truly disgusts him, but upon the harbor: "And it left a deep scar on my early life. For over all the adventures and over my whole childhood loomed this last thing I had seen, hideous, disgusting. For years after that, when I saw or even thought of the harbor, I felt the taste of foul, greasy water in my mouth and in my soul" (19). The sexual scene is not the object of repression but merely a symptom because he recognizes "a deep scar." This scar reappears later while playing with a young girl, Eleanore, who will later become his wife: "But as I made a first uneasy movement, a bit of bright color caught my eye. It was one of her red garters which had slipped down from beneath her skirt. And all at once out of my memory rose a picture of years ago, a picture from the harbor, of that fat drunken girl I had seen. She too had worn red garters—in fact, little

else. With disgusting vividness up she came! And I jumped trembling to my feet” (40). Once again, the harbor and the prostitute leap to his mind too freely to be the object of repression. For the remainder of the novel, Bill tries to sublimate his repression, by making the harbor more abstract. But as Bill seeks elevated heights, that which he is truly repressing, the working class, is always lurking at the bottom. Bill’s continual fascination with the harbor is the painful exploration of a social class which will reveal itself to Bill in time.

Throughout the novel, Bill continually represses the vision of labor. When he approaches scenes of labor, they are “mysterious,” “strange,” or “uncanny”—adjectives implying Otherness. When he directly confronts labor, Bill is disgusted by the grime he sees and the filth he hears. As a boy he hears workmen loading a ship at the dock:

Their work I learned was to load the ships whose masts and spars peeped up at me over the warehouse roofs. From my nursery window above I could see them better. Sometimes they had large white sails and then they moved off somewhere. I could see them go these tall ships, with their sails making low, mysterious sounds, flappings, spankings and deep boomings. The men on them sang the weirdest songs as they pulled all together at the ropes. (7)

Not only does the ship make “mysterious” sounds, but the dockers sing “weird” songs. Bill, however, can only tolerate or be tempted by the scene of labor in the abstract—at a removed height. Later, Bill finds himself attracted to the chanties of the sailors and dockers and pursues them: “Soon after this, toward the end of a warm, windy April night, I awoke and heard them singing. [ . . . ] Quickly I threw on some clothes and

hurried down to the docks. The waterfront was empty, swept clean of all that I disliked. [ . . . . ] Not silence, but something richer was here—the confused mysterious murmuring, the creaking and the breathing of the sleeping port. And out of this those voices singing” (44-5). Bill claims that the harbor has been cleaned—in fact, “empty”—of all he dislikes while he rushes to hear the “mysterious murmurs” of “voices singing.” In fact, the waterfront is not empty at all, but filled with the activity that has driven him there. While the songs remain unclear and mysterious, Bill feels “suddenly such a deep delight as I had never dreamed of,” which he wants to “gather it into [himself] and remember,” and hastily concludes that the songs “fitted into all that was fine!” (45). As he approaches, his vision is as impaired as the clarity of the singing: “I could see the lines of little dark men heaving together at the ropes” (45). Finally the dockers come into view and the lyrics become clear:

I looked out. Close by on the deck, in the hard blue glare of an arc-light, were some twenty men, dirty, greasy, ragged, sweating, all griping the ropes and waiting for Paddy, who rolled his quid in his mouth, spat twice and then began:

“As I went awalking down Paradise Street

A pretty young maiden I chanced for to meet.”

A heave on the ropes and a deafening roar:

“Blow the man down, bullies,

Blow him right down!

Hey! Hey! Blow the man down!”

Again the solo voice, plaintiff and tender:

“By her build I took her for Dutch.

She was square in the stuns’l and bluff in the  
bow.”

The rest was a detailed account of the night spent with the maiden.

(46)

When the men come into plain sight, Bill describes them in much the same way he described the harbor, “dirty” and “greasy,” and while he was attracted to the music, the lyrics recall the sexual scene that initially drove him away from the harbor. Once again, the working class is conflated with sexual desire. Oddly, this is appropriate for the word “proletariat” refers to a class of breeders, those that reproduce themselves. But for Billy these songs that are so mysterious and awe-inspiring from a distance become lowly and grotesque upon closer examination:

“There go the folk songs of the seas,” I thought disgustedly,  
looking out on the water now showing itself grease-mottled in the first raw  
light of day.

I tried other songs with my artist’s ears and found them all much  
like the first, the music like the very stars, the words like the grease and  
scum on the water. (46-7)

Bill does not equate the “disgusting” lyrics to the class that produces them; instead, he associates the sexuality with the “grease and scum” of the harbor: he represses the producers, the working class and their activity. Furthermore, Bill is attracted to the abstract, the removed scene, where all is vague and reshaped into something beautiful. The particulars of the real world, with its dirty, greasy workings, are to be loathed.

Despite his apprehension, an interaction with one of the dockers leads to a significant turning point in his life. The docker suggests that Bill write an article about the chanties. At first, considering the example Bill has already overheard, he immediately assumes that the songs “can’t be printed,” to which the docker replies that “*most* songs and stories can’t” (47). But the docker does provide Bill with chanties fit to print and suggests Bill “write an article, tell where you found them, put them in, and send it to a paper? So you can give them to the world” (48). Den Tandt claims that a later scene with Eleanore, where Bill begins to appreciate the harbor, takes on the narrative pattern of Coleridge’s “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” (239). But the mariner’s curse actually begins here, for the docker wants their story to be told and invokes the young Bill to “tell where you found them.” But Bill’s class repression forces him to lift the chanties up into something that is “fine” (48): “In the writing I found again that deep delight I had had on the dock, just far enough off to miss the dirt, the sweat and the words of the song” (48). Bill has an antiseptic aversion to the realities of working class life. He is “just far enough off” to miss what the docker really wanted him to tell, to report the working class as a source of creativity, to tell of the realities of their toil. Instead, Bill romanticizes the chanties, moving to a higher plane.

Bill’s disposition in *The Harbor* creates a particular topography which works both in the psychology of the narrator but also takes on important social ramifications as well. Bill oscillates in this topography from top to bottom, both in physical terms and in terms of the varying class positions that inspire him. As in his reaction to the dockers and the content of their songs, Bill responds through extremes: the songs’ theme and content—the earthy, sexual nature of the song—forces Bill to the abstract, “finer” things. Bill,

here, in place of his curiosity about the harbor, turns to his mother's preoccupation with art and beauty, obviously rejecting the father whose life is intertwined with the harbor for something more Oedipally fulfilling. Bill's childhood with the harbor is characterized by a rejection of father-figures, both real and figurative. Yet his preoccupation and subsequent retreat from sexuality forces him to attempt to transcend the harbor's reality; his father whose work is preoccupied with the harbor, occupies a lower space, by the docks, by the water at sea-level. If we were to think of this on the bodily register, Bill's father's "lower place" drives Bill towards his mother. The sexuality associated with the harbor is displaced to the higher, here, maternal, sphere. Yet the sexuality of the harbor is carried over and transformed while approaching the maternal sphere. Bill wants to transform the harbor through his writing into something that is beautiful, something that would please his mother.

Bill follows his mother's artistic interests and pursues a college career at Princeton to become a writer, later living as an ex-pat in Europe as an apprenticeship. It is in this phase, where Bill occupies the "higher" space, that Joe Kramer, a character who will come to occupy the lowest register, a representative of the working class, disrupts Bill's more artistic pursuits. Joe, also at Princeton, was preoccupied with Socialist and anarchist news, rebelling against the old ideas the college represented. Later in Paris, he participates in the Russian revolution of 1905 by securing an arms deal. Bill, at his highest extreme of the topography, is called again and again by Joe, distracting Bill from his "high" artistic pursuits towards "lowly," economic concerns Bill calls "hay" (Poole 92). Joe drags Bill toward the lower sphere, forcing him to face material reality. Bill

resists, though, until his mother dies and he returns home to help his father at the warehouse.

His mother's death allows Bill freedom from his oedipal conflict, to which Bill responds by embracing his father and tries to understand his father's business and point of view. In this way, Bill returns to the harbor, but still remains above it and his repression. After he returns home, Bill discovers that his father's firm is in dire straits and facing bankruptcy. Bill begins sorting through his father's books to discover:

In the ledgers his story was still alive. Yellow and dusty as they were, for me day by day they revived that still odorous warehouse until I saw it as it had been, a huge dim caravansary for the curious products of all the earth. And that trick of feeling a man, which I had learned in Paris, made me keenly aware of this lonely old stranger by my side with whom I was becoming acquainted. I could feel the pull of these books upon him, pulling him out of his cramped old age back to his glad boundless youth. How suddenly spacious they became as he turned the pages. Palm oil from Africa, cotton from Bombay, coffee from Arabia, pepper from Sumatra. Turn the page. Ivory from Zanzibar, salt from Cadiz and wines from Bordeaux. Turn the page. Whale oil from the Arctic, iron from the Baltic, tortoise shell from the Fiji Islands. Turn the page! India silks and rugs and shawls, indigo, spices! Turn the page!

I began to see the sails speed out along those starlit ocean roads. I began to feel the forces that shaped my father's life. And little by little I saw in those days what not even my mother had understood, that in my

father's business life there had been more than dollars, that what to us had seemed only a hobby, a dull obstinate fixed idea, had been for him a glorious vision—the white sails of American clippers dotting all the seven seas. (102)

The books are dusty because Bill's father is a dying breed of American mercantilism, the early form of capitalism before the expansion of trusts. Bill revives his father's business through the romanticism the ledgers report and represent. But the reality of the class wars between big capitalism and its petite bourgeois competitors puts Bill's father on the losing side; in quixotic fashion, he wants to return to mercantile protectionism. What entrances Bill is the commodities and their national origins, but only the commodities seem to have life. The national origins are not the people who occupy and work within the country. Instead the countries are romanticized into faraway places, reminiscent of the romances Bill read with his mother in his childhood. Furthermore, the commodities are the same "hay" (*ibid.*) of which Bill complained to Joe. The appearance of a commodity in print transforms and transfigures the material into something more artistic and worthy of contemplation. Still, this is Bill's introduction to the business world that will preoccupy him for much of the novel. Trusts and their predecessors, mercantile capitalists, all deal with the same basic material; trusts, however, can deal in a greater, abstract volume, which further removes the commodity from its origins.

The warehouse folds under the pressure of the modernized harbor and its corporate backing. Eventually, Bill's father declares bankruptcy: "And still the debts kept mounting. How small they were, these last ones, a coil of rope, two kegs of paint—the irony of it compared to the bigness of his life. Still these little figures climbed. At

last he handed me his balance. He was in debt four thousand, one hundred and forty-six dollars and seventeen cents” (108). In the end, the big life of his romantic ledgers is reduced to dollars and cents, and the realities of the new harbor make themselves apparent:

I sat there dully for some time. Then I remember there came a harsh scream from a freight engine close outside. And I looked out of the window.

The harbor of big companies, uglier than I had ever seen it, no longer dotted with white sails, but clouded with the smoke and soot of an age of steam and iron, lay sprawled out there like a thing alive. Always changing, always growing, it had crushed the life out of my father and mother, and now it was ready for Sue and me. (108-9)

Ironically, the companies who treat the harbor in a more abstract fashion than even Bill’s father make for an uglier harbor, the smoke and soot replacing the former grease and scum. Still, Bill’s mind aspires upward. Tempered by his mother’s death from pursuing an art career and the material realities of his father’s financial state, Bill realizes that the “hay” world of commodities, and the harbor, too, can no longer be avoided.

At this point, Bill begins a romance with Eleanore Dillon. As earlier, it is through feminine inspiration that drives Bill into upward abstract heights. But his mother’s preoccupation with art is replaced by Eleanore’s father’s plans to reorganize the harbor. The topographic change here takes on several meanings. First, Bill’s romance with Eleanore is much more sexually fulfilling than an oedipal longing; also, it is socially permitted and sanctioned. But with Eleanore as an inspiration, where the sexuality can

truly be consummated without guilt, Bill can no longer strive to the abstract heights of his mother's inspiration: the earthiness of sexuality prevents such lofty heights.

Furthermore, Eleanore is infatuated, in an Electra-like way, with her father's engineering project. Bill eventually follows in Eleanore's infatuation. Dillon's plans for the harbor are developed aloft, away from the grime and reality of the harbor. This height is appealing to Bill's own disposition. Also, Dillon is exerting control over the harbor that Bill has long desired. In his misplaced repression, he believes Dillon's control of the harbor will allow him influence over the harbor that has been controlling him. The problem, however, is that Bill does not recognize that the issue is not the harbor itself, but the working class whose lives occupy the harbor. Dillon, in his plans, is also blind of the human element of the harbor; he does not understand that he is not merely tampering with a piece of harbor-side real estate, but the lives that depend upon the harbor for survival. Still, Bill's spheres of social influence are winding him into a tighter circle of middle-class life. Outside of this circle is the working class that Joe Kramer has come to represent (see *Figure 4.1*)

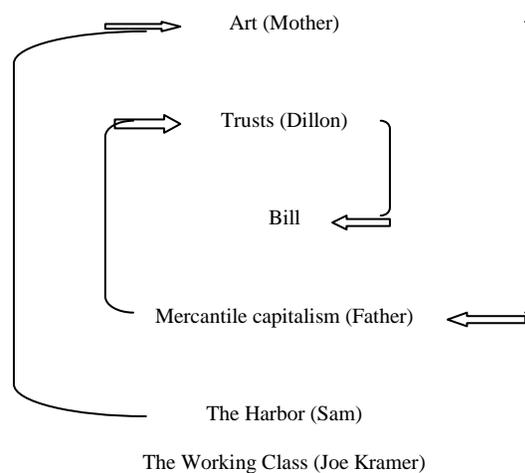


Figure 4.1. Topography and Spheres of Social Influence

Bill's adult romance with Eleanore begins with her invitation to take Bill on her boat around the harbor. As she deftly steers the boat through the busy harbor, Eleanore provides Bill with an alternative perspective, essentially her father's. The harbor, once associated with Bill's pre-adolescent sexual experience, is still strongly associated with sexuality; however, in his early adulthood, and with Eleanore as a guide, the harbor as a sexual symbol takes on new ramifications. Den Tandt claims that the tower in which Dillon works is a large phallic symbol that exerts panoptic control over the harbor (240). When Eleanore invites Bill she explains her father's point of view:

“My father works up in that tower,” she said. “He can see the whole harbor spread out below. But he keeps coming down to see it all close, and I've steered him up close to everything in it. You've no idea how much there is.” She threw me a glance of pitying scorn. “There are over seven hundred miles of waterfront in this small port, and I'm not going to have you trudging around getting lost and tired and cross and working off your grudge in your writing. You come with me some afternoon and I'll do what I can to open your eyes.” (138)

Eleanore later explains the harbor to Bill, and it is teemed with sexual innuendo: “they're all on top, this is down at the bottom, it's one of those deep places that seems to make the world go 'round. It's right where the ocean bumps into the land. You can get your roots here, you can feel you are real” (144). Here, Eleanore and the harbor become sexually conflated. But, more importantly, Dillon, Eleanore's father, provides Bill with a sexually fulfilling situation that transcends his previous oedipal fixation.

A father-figure to Bill, Dillon, however, exerts control over the harbor. Furthermore, Bill's relationship with Eleanore becomes a projected oedipal fantasy: Bill is eventually sanctioned to have sexual relations with a woman under a father-figure's control. Of course, this is later complicated by the fact that Eleanore is in tune with feminist causes and very much her own woman, as shown by her navigational skills in the harbor. But, from Bill's patriarchal perspective and his earlier mother fixation, Eleanore becomes a transferred maternal preoccupation for Bill's sexual fantasies and his desire to control the harbor, for not only does Dillon control the harbor as a father-figure, but Eleanore can control the harbor at sea-level in captaining a boat. For Bill, his courting Eleanore becomes the best of all possible worlds in terms of sexual desire, but also in his quest to exert power over the harbor. The sexuality, which Bill had been evading to this point, can finally be confronted, and with Eleanore as a guide the harbor is revealed in that "unmysterious hour" he spends on the boat with her (139). The sexuality expressed by the working-class in earlier sections was a mystery to the young Bill and, because of his aversion to the working-class, remains so. But because sexuality had been previously conflated with the working-class, it was an issue of repression. Bill did not realize that the dockers and sailors were exerting their control over the harbor, albeit in a different form than Dillon: because of Bill's class alignment, he could not recognize that the power the dockers exert is more localized and materially real than Dillon's abstract planning.

Bill writes a sketch about the harbor, an homage to his father's failed business. Later, continuing his courtship with Eleanor, Bill meets Eleanore and Dillon for dinner. On the boat, on the way to his cabin for dinner, Dillon praises Bill's sketch for its human

touch and recruits Bill for public relations work for his firm. Of Bill's sketch, Dillon says:

“The thing I liked most in that sketch of yours,” he was saying a few minutes later, when our boat was on her course, “was the way you listed that Dutchman's cargo. ‘One baby carriage—to Lahore.’ A very large picture in five little words. I can see that Hindu baby now—being wheeled in its carriage to Crocodile Park and wondering where the devil this queer new wagon came from. I've been nosing around these docks for years, but I missed that part of 'em right along—that human part—till you came along with your neat writer's trick.” (147-8)

Once again, the perambulator's description is entirely from the point of view of consumption. For Dillon, the harbor represents a business poised for consumption, which it is. But “that human part” that so moves him is ironic, for he has overlooked the dockers whose work packed the carriage to India and whose lives are materially intertwined with the harbor, an odd oversight from a man who has been “nosing around these docks for years.” In this manner, Dillon and Bill are of the same mind.

Later, Bill visits Dillon in his high-rise office. Bill, whose natural inclination is toward abstract heights, is impressed by the view and the power it symbolizes: “a tremendous panorama unrolled down there before our eyes. We could see every part of the port below stretching away to the horizon, and through Dillon's powerful field glass I saw pictures of all I had seen before in my weary weeks of trudging down there in the haze and dust. Down there I felt like a little worm, up here I felt among the gods” (184). After weeks of exploring the harbor as a “worm,” he raises Dillon's position to that of a

god. Dillon's point of view is that of an all-seeing eye, as the "powerful field glass" suggests. Dillon explains the necessity of such a point of view: "'To see any harbor or city or state as a whole,' he said, 'is what most Americans cannot do. And it's what they've got to learn to do'" (184). Here, Dillon expresses his democratic sentiment that his engineering will usher in an era of prosperity and understanding for all, an industrial Whitmanesque vision of the New York harbor. But as explained before, Dillon's heights impair his vision: he does not see the whole himself; he has omitted the working class from his perspective. Instead, he approaches the harbor as a doctor towards a patient, or, more precisely, an engineer towards a mechanic project: "A complicated industrial organ, the heart of a country's circulation, pumping in and out millions of tons of traffic as quickly and cheaply as possible. That's efficiency, scientific management or just plain engineering, whatever you want to call it" (186). Dillon has embraced Taylorism, but like Taylor—and Ford who followed Taylor's footsteps—scientific management, while delivering cheap goods that even the masses can afford, treats people merely as cogs or pieces of a machine that do not possess their own life or consciousness, as the Paterson Pageant depicted earlier.

Bill is entirely transfixed by Dillon's vision and the control it has over the harbor. Bill spent weeks exploring the harbor as a journalist, trying to get a writer's feel for the place. But for Bill, "That harbor of confusion had been for months my entire world, it had baffled and beaten me till I was weak" (186). As it was in childhood, where the harbor was an oppressive presence, it is in his adult life as well. Bill invests in Dillon's vision for vicarious control, but he idolizes Dillon and his project elevating it and deifying it:

It needed men like Dillon and behind him those mysterious powers downtown, the men he called the brains of the nation, who read the signs of the new times, who saw that the West was now fast filling up, that the eyes of the nation were once more turning outward, and that untold resources of wealth were soon to be able for mighty sea adventures, a vast fleet of Yankee ships that should drive the surplus output of our teeming industries into all markets of the world. [ . . . ]

And by degrees I made myself a new god, and its name was efficiency.

Here at last was a god that I felt could stand! I had made so many in years gone by, I had been making them all my life [ . . . ] One by one I had raised them up, and one by one the harbor had flowed in and dragged them down. But now in my full manhood (for remember I was twenty-five!) I had found and taken to myself a god that I felt sure of. No harbor could make it totter and fall. For it was armed with science, its feet stood firm on mechanical laws and its head were all the brains of all the strong men at the top. (188)

Bill, in a moment of self-analysis, explains his tendency towards idolatry that has plagued him throughout the novel. But here the idolatry takes a marked change in course. He has found a source of power to answer the harbor's ability to "drag" idols "down." But the harbor's ability to destroy idols does not impede Bill from searching for new ones; he refuses to admit that something base—whether hay or the harbor—can have control over the power of imagination and abstraction. In his youth, the harbor had been a symptom of class antagonism that expressed itself through sexuality. Now, as Bill leaves

adolescence, the harbor enters directly into class relations since Bill's oedipal complications have been somewhat remedied by the death of his mother, the bankruptcy of his father, and his impending marriage to Eleanore.

Dillon convinces Bill finally to become a writer in the interests of his Wall Street backers, a public relations position comparable to that of Dos Passos' Richard Ellsworth Savage in his *USA* trilogy. Dillon encourages Bill to use his writing to expand the average American's view of the financial engineers that are steering the country by writing "a series of portraits of some of the big Americans and the America they know" (210), so that Bill can also participate in Dillon's "widening view" (210). Bill accepts Dillon's offer and his vision and begins a series of interviews and sketches of businessmen that control almost every industrial sector of American society, and the view offered changes him drastically:

It took the view I had had of the harbor and widened it to embrace the whole land, which I now saw altogether through the eyes of the men at the top. The most central figure of them all, and by far the most difficult to attack, was a powerful New York banker, one of those invisible gods whose hand I had felt on the harbor. (210-1)

Finally Bill encounters one his god-like figures who, like Dillon, controls the harbor. But while Bill has always aspired heavenwards, his task is made difficult because the influence this banker has is "invisible." Bill has embraced "hay" enough to write about baby carriages, but a man who handles the monetary—"invisible"—machinations of the harbor appears to be too grandiose and abstract for Bill to contemplate:

For into this man's office had come the men of the mines, the factories and the mills, the promoters of vast irrigation on prairies, builders of railroads, real estate plungers, street traction promoters, department store owners, newspaper proprietors, politicians—builders and boomers, the strong energetic men of the land. He showed me their power and made me feel it was still but in its infancy.

He made me feel a dazzling future rushing upon us, a future of plenty still more controlled by the keen minds and wide visions of the powerful men at the top. (212)

Bill, so impressed by Dillon's view of the harbor, sees through negative capability this man's connections to the vast web of American commerce. His reaction recalls a response to the sublime, something even more sublime than Dillon's panoramic view. From Dillon's office, Bill can still see the object of Dillon's project, the harbor. But from the banker's office, Bill can only imagine the connections that make this man a hub of American, even international, commerce.

Bill carries on with his tour of industrial captains, meeting the heads of agribusinesses, mining, and industrial companies. Ironically, while meeting with a "Dakota ranchman," they discuss "wheat, corn and alfalfa he owned" (212). Once again, even at the top, Bill must talk about hay. But the most ironic is his meeting with the president of a mining company who confesses bribery in avoiding a strike:

The head of a mining company sat in his office one afternoon and talked of the labor problem. There was no right or wrong involved, he said, it was simply a matter of force. Once when a strike threatened he

had called in a “labor expert” who had used money wholesale and there had been no strike.

“Well?” he asked, smiling. “What do you think of it?”

“I think I can’t print it.” He still smiled.

“Naturally not. But what do you think? If you yourself were responsible to several hundred stockholders, what would you do? Risk a strike that might wipe out their dividends? Or would you resort to bribery”—his smile slowly deepened—“which is a penal offense in this State?”

I found such questions cropping up almost everywhere I went. In their dealings with the public and still more with their rivals, there was a ruthless vigor that swept old-fashioned maxims aside. And I liked this, for it got things done!” (213-4)

Bill responds to this admission by saying that he “can’t print it,” the same response he gave the docker about the chanty that began his writing career. In his skewed morality, the question of bribery becomes less important than lurid song lyrics, but the explanation lies in Bill’s continual travel into more abstract economic heights. He accepts the bribery as the oil of the machinery of efficiency; more importantly, though, the bribery restricts laborers from making their cause known, a restriction to which Bill is already accustomed. And he once again invokes the notion of topography in his summation of hobnobbing with corporate elites: “So we adventured gaily, not deeper down, but higher and higher up into life” (217). But, in almost tragic fashion, as Bill achieves his highest heights, issues will arise with the intent of tugging him downward.

Bill's first movement downward comes from within his familial circle. He once again remembers his father and his ruined business. While Bill cavorts with the financial and industrial engineers of the nation, he realizes the irony of his life thus far: when his father was deeply involved in the business of the harbor, Bill rejected both the harbor and his father. Now that Bill is allowed access via Dillon, the new harbor that pushed out his father becomes the means of his success: "A vague feeling of guilt and disloyalty would creep into my now boundless zest for the harbor that had crowded him out" (192). Of course, Bill's dismissive attitude towards the harbor of his youth and his father's business with the harbor was due to Bill's sexual immaturity and his oedipal longing, as already discussed. Still, the notion of family drags Bill towards a harbor he spent his whole life avoiding; that is, Bill's guilt moves him to the lower social classes his father now occupies. While not destitute, his father has been stripped of his former middle class title. The issue of social class, while always central to Bill's life yet never acknowledged, has been, up to this point, connected to familial ties.

Class relations, thus far, have been explored throughout the novel in terms of kinship relations, whether through blood or marriage. Since Bill's life has always been circumscribed by upper and middle-class relations, whether middle class in terms of his father, or upper middle class in terms of his father-in-law, Bill's full exploration of America's class struggle has been a restricted one. From here on, however, the novel takes a drastic turn in its representation of social class with the re-entrance of Joe Kramer, who returns to organize the harbor and its workers for an industrial union that is clearly the fictional equivalent of the IWW, and Joe's organizing efforts mirror those of the Paterson silk strike.

Eleanore, who reintroduced and reacquainted Bill with the harbor, informs Bill that Joe Kramer is back in town and working down at the harbor. Eleanore is the only character who can lower Bill from his abstract heights without Bill's resistance. It is important, therefore, that Eleanore is the one that breaks the news to Bill which, in turn, sends Bill back to the harbor proper. Eleanore's informing Bill of Joe's presence, and the subsequent conversation, once again suggests a spatial topography that is directly linked to social class: "He's a man that made up his mind that he wanted to get way down to the bottom, and see how it feels to be down there. So he took the very worst job he could find. For two years he was a stoker—on ships of all kinds all over the world. And now that he knows just how it feels, he has an office down on the docks where he's getting the stokers and dockers together—getting them ready for a strike—on your beloved harbor" (236). While Bill has ascended, Joe has descended. Bill responds fittingly, and the pursuing conversation is rife with double-entendres that suggest the topographic theme:

"He might have looked me up," I said.

"He doesn't want to look anyone up, I've only seen him once myself. He has simply buried himself down there. Why don't you go and see him, Billy?" (236)

Eleanore, as compared to the harbor's abstract power, is the gentle, suggestive voice of compassion that drags Bill below. Despite this, Eleanore's prodding elicits a resistant response from Bill, but he confuses the topography:

When she had gone I took up a book and tried to read. But I soon gloomily relapsed. Would J. K. never leave me alone? What was he doing with my harbor? Why should I look him up, confound him—he

hadn't bothered his head about me. But I knew that I *would* look him up and find him more disturbing than ever. How he did keep moving on. No, not on, but down, down—until now he had bumped the bottom! (237)

Bill feels as though he has acquired not only power but ownership over the harbor and has a sense of security in terms of the harbor's place in his life. But it is the thing that he has most repressed about the harbor, its unacknowledged labor, that troubles Bill so much because Joe Kramer is there to organize a strike, a spectacle that will force Bill to recognize that which he has tried so hard to avoid. Furthermore, Bill's sense of empowerment fades in his thoughts of Joe, for he ponders why he "should look him *up*," an inversion of the actual spatial sphere Joe Kramer represents. In this slippage, he realizes that the old harbor is still there because he never truly empowered himself over what disturbed him most about the harbor, the working class.

With the reemergence of Joe Kramer, Bill realizes that he has avoided the harbor while pursuing his corporate career. His sojourn from the harbor has allowed him to explore "airy heights" and enabled his repression of the harbor and the working class: "I had hardly been near the harbor in years. It had become for me a deep invisible cornerstone upon which my vigorous world was built. I had climbed up into the airy heights, I had been writing of millionaires" (238). Kramer, like an analyst, forces Bill to return to his roots and explore Bill's internal antagonisms. When Bill meets Joe, he explains their relationship in terms of topography: "Since I had seen him five years ago he had continued his writing, but as he had grown steadily more set on writing about only what he called 'the truth about things,' the newspapers had closed their doors. While I had gone up he had gone down, until finally throwing up in disgust 'this whole fool game

of putting words on paper,' he had made up his mind to throw in his life with the lives of men at the bottom" (240). Joe, disgusted with the abstractions of language, moves to a realm of action. It is clear that Poole models Joe on an IWW organizer when he describes Joe's organizing efforts and philosophy: "he and his friends had already induced some twelve thousand stokers and dockers to leave their old trade unions and enroll themselves as members of this new international body, which was to embrace not only one trade but all the labor connected with ships" (240). What Poole describes succinctly in this one sentence is the industrial unionism of the IWW. The IWW was founded on the irony that workers must organize themselves in the same manner trusts organize production. Since agricultural, industrial, and commercial labor is all linked in a vast web, the IWW promoted a union that linked workers likewise. Of course, the panoramic vision that so inspired Bill in his "airy heights" is the same panoramic vision that inspires Joe "with the lives of men at the bottom." But in his aversion to language, Joe embraces a social rupture that defies description, yet he has a general outline of events, the same outline of "history" that inspired the IWW and other radicals, and he explains this vision to Bill: "Then there would be mass meetings here and presently a general strike. And as the years went on there would be similar strikes in all trades and in all countries, until at some time not many years off there would be such labor rebellions as would paralyze the industrial world. And out of this catastrophe the workers would emerge into power to build up the strange new world of their own" (241). Bill, insulated as he is from working-class life, is presented with a radical alternative to his own top-down philosophy, and Joe further chastises Bill for not understanding the real force of historical movements: "'You comfortable people,' he said, 'are so damned comfortable

you're blind. You see nothing ahead but peace on earth and a nice smooth evolution—with a lot of steady little reforms. You've got so you honestly believe there can't be any violence in the world” (241). Again, though, Joe, tired of language, ends his attack with, “But what's the use of talking?” (241). Poole frames Bill's entire journey throughout the novel—with all of his sexual preoccupations, his father-figures, and his middle-class influences—to prepare for this final conflict, and it takes on the parameters of the IWW's Preamble: “The working class and the employing class have nothing in common.” Joe's vision of the conflict, from this point of view, reinforces his certainty of a violent clash and explains his impatience with Bill's reform agenda. The conflict is irreconcilable and inevitable. But Poole has framed this larger social war between two people, who while at odds over social philosophy, are friends. Poole finishes this argument by introducing his fictional proxy for Bill Haywood, Jim Marsh, who Joe mentions: “He smiled as he named the notorious leader of the whole organization” (242).

So far all of the class conflicts within the novel have been familial and circumscribed by familial ties. Essentially, Poole has laid out the history of capitalist development: early capitalist entrepreneurs consolidate power and wealth and squeeze out the weaker entrepreneurs and upstarts. This history is also a familial battle in that both parties, despite being in conflicting positions, are essentially related to each other through the philosophy of capitalism. But while this battle within capitalism was taking place, an antagonism was forming from an entirely different family, labor. Historically, though, the AFL, not recognizing the historical familial ties of capital, insisted that capital and labor could be friends on occasionally antagonistic terms. Like Poole's topography, which encompasses both psychological and social perception in the novel,

the familial links are aggregates of social conflicts. Throughout the novel, Bill has been tied to his clan, all of whom are middle to upper class. Joe Kramer occupies the lowest sphere which has been avoided in a form of xenophobia. Xenophobia and social conflicts have always been intimately linked in American history: Newly arrived immigrants are relegated to “unskilled,” poorly compensated labor. It is only through assimilation and further immigration that former immigrants have been included into the national social and economic sphere, albeit on limited terms. The IWW was a particular threat to this national identity, as seen in the Paterson Strike and Pageant, because they accepted immigrants and minorities in terms of class, not race or ethnicity. For this reason and with the ideology of American social mobility, labor has often taken on the essence of the Other in American culture. Like Bill’s sphere of influence, labor is there, but not recognized. Joe Kramer is reintroduced into the novel to remedy this omission.

Joe gives Bill an alternative tour of the harbor, but the tour explicitly points out what Bill has always overlooked, avoided, or repressed, and it takes on a narrative framework of *The Divine Comedy*, with Joe as Virgil and Bill as Dante, for Bill is taken down to the stokehole of a ship. While in his youth, Bill could wander the harbor and see labor being performed, albeit unrecognized, under Dillon’s engineering, the labor has been driven “underground,” into the bottoms of ships where it cannot be seen. Joe explains the life of a stoker: “They’re what the factories and the mills and all the rest of this lovely modern industrial world throw out as no more wanted. So they drift down here and take a job that nobody else will take, it’s so rotten, and here they have one week of hell and another week’s good drunk in port” (247). The scene is complete with a description of the sleeping quarters, the grime of coal dust on the men, and the greasy

stew presented as the men's board. The scene is almost exactly that of the opening scenes of O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* published seven years after *The Harbor*, and the tour ends with Joe saying what could be the words of Yank Smith: "Let's go up where *you* belong" (250). The scene inverts the social order and emphasizes the irreconcilable difference between the classes, reinforcing an IWW worldview. Like *The Hairy Ape*, the question of "belonging" is based entirely on class perceptions. Thus far, the novel has viewed the world through a bourgeois lens, revealing the working world only in the peripheral vision. Here, the working world is brought into plain view, in perfect focus, and the revelation challenges Bill's "alignment." While his insular upper middle class life has provided a comfortable sense of belonging, Bill in the stokehold becomes a stranger in a strange land. Ironically, the stokers are an international labor force from all the nations represented in his father's old ledgers, yet here Bill is the foreigner, not because of nationality, but because of class alignment.

After the tour, Bill returns home to Eleanore understandably shaken, and she reveals the importance of Joe Kramer to Bill's life:

"You can't dream how often you've spoken about him."

"I didn't know I had!" It is most disquieting at times, the things Eleanore tells me about myself.

"I know you don't," she continued, "you do it so unconsciously. That's why I'm so sure he has a real place in the deep unconscious part of you." (253)

Bill is "disquieted" by the additional revelation of Joe's significance. But the passage does not merely refer to Joe's place in Bill's unconscious; it also speaks to the working

class' place in Bill's unconscious, for Joe is a representation of the working class to Bill, a referent. Joe is familial enough to move Bill towards acknowledging what is in his unconscious. But as an outsider to what is *familiar*, Joe is also the only person who can provide an alternative to Bill's limited perception. For the rest of the novel, Bill explores his repression fully, but with reluctance, he holds on to what is familiar to him. Later in the novel Bill recognizes what the revelation has done to his perception:

From the old house in Brooklyn I once more explored my harbor.  
All day and the greater part of each night I went back over my old ground.  
Old memories rose in sharp contrast to new views I was getting. From the  
top I had come to the bottom. Crowds of sweating laborers rose  
everywhere between me and my past, and between these masses and their  
rulers, I felt the struggle drawing near, the whole immense region took on  
for me the aspect of a battlefield, with puffs and clouds and darting lines  
of smoke and steam from its ships and trains and factories. (305)

For the first time, "laborers rose everywhere" in Bill's perceptions. Joe has tapped Bill's "unconscious," as Eleanore states, to expose Bill's class repression and omission. But the struggle is not only internal for Bill as it also reflects an external struggle. Bill's psychological growth is also the nation's material growth: The conflict of class struggle, so often omitted from our historical consciousness, becomes clearly exposed, challenging Bill's entire worldview.

Bill's transformation, though, is not immediate. Unlike so many radical novels in which the main characters' social transformation takes on the form of receiving a message from a radical archangel, Poole realistically depicts the slow, conflicting nature

of social change, for both the individual and society. Poole's personal political opinions temper his main character's development, making the transformation realistic and not religious. Bill's arguments with Joe continue, and Bill still espouses faith in scientific management and efficiency. Like Poole himself, Bill doubts that the masses have the knowledge to take on an entire industrial organ without a functioning managerial class.

To this Joe responds:

“If you want to help the people you've got to drop your efficiency gods. You've got to believe in the people first—that all they need is waking up to handle this whole job themselves. You've got to see that they're waking up fast—all over the world—that they're getting tired of gods above 'em planning out their whole lives—that they don't want to wait till they're dead to be happy—that they feel poverty every day like a million tons of bricks on their chest—it's got so they can't even breathe without thinking! And you've got to see that what they're thinking is, 'Do it yourself and do it quick!' The only thing that's keeping them back is that in these times of peace men get out of the habit of violence!” (261-2)

Bill poses a legitimate and pressing question concerning a truly working-class revolution. Joe, like many left-wing Socialists and Wobblies of his day, points out that the working-class has been managing the nation's material health for some time in that they produce it. The problem, of course, lies in the fact that the working-class has never been in a position to plan the labor that they have performed for so long. Therefore, Bill points out the oppressive, yet necessary, managerial role of the middle class. In their rhetoric, radicals, like Joe, often posited the workers' ability—and the bosses' inability—to run the

machinery of production as the de facto determination of the working-class' right to rule. Joe falls back on this typical radical argument, but also presents another, even more pressing, issue about working-class revolution that is often ignored or repressed—the means of violence towards revolutionary ends.

The progressive belief in slow and steady betterment of the working-class—or any repressed group—through incremental reforms was contrary to more radical sentiments. Joe, like the IWW, believed that only the material infrastructure, the “shell of the old,” should remain for the “new society.” But the “new society”—regardless its method of inception—is inherently violent, particularly to the owners of the “old.” Joe’s plans for a violent rupture of society, while slowly transforming Bill’s consciousness, impede Bill from developing a truly radical sensibility. Bill’s faith remains with the people at the top slowly and steadily reforming social ills.

The traditional family structure has mitigated Bill’s social perception and wound him tighter and tighter into a bourgeois social identity. With his re-entrance into the novel, Joe has slowly begun to unwind Bill’s social perception. The family structure in the novel becomes even more problematic for Bill when he discovers Joe’s intention to marry Sue, Bill’s younger sister. Since kinship lines are a metonym for American bourgeois society, the entrance of Joe into Bill’s family would symbolically destroy the family, just as Joe intends to destroy bourgeois society. Bill calls a meeting between his father, Sue, and Joe to convince Sue and Joe that the marriage should be called off. Bill questions Joe about his beliefs and life as an organizer, revealing to Sue that his lifestyle would make for an unsuitable marriage:

“What do you believe in, Joe? Just briefly, what’s your main idea in stirring up millions of ignorant men?”

“Mainly to pull down what’s on top.”

“As for instance?”

“All of it. Business, industry and finance as it’s being run at present.”

“A clean sweep. And in place of that?”

“Everything run by the workers themselves.”

“For example?” I asked. “The ships by the stokers?” [ . . . ]

“The working people in full control. No restraints whatever from above.”

“There won’t be anyone left above. No more gods,” he answered.

(299-300)

While the pretense of the conversation is about marriage, what Joe represents socially is the center of discussion, ultimately driving home the point that family structure is class structure. The marriage is called off when Sue reluctantly recognizes what marriage to a radical means. But what is more significant in this scene is the issue of familial hygienics: the family must maintain its middle class status; Joe as a representative of the working class cannot be allowed into the family structure despite his growing influence upon Bill. This scene reinforces precisely what Deleuze and Guattari observe of familialism: “It has often been remarked [ . . . ] that the prohibition [of sleeping with one’s mother] existed in two forms, the one negative, having to do above all with the mother and imposing differentiation, the other positive concerning the sister and

requiring exchange: I have a moral obligation to take as a wife someone other than my sister, and an obligation to keep my sister for someone else; I must give up my sister to a brother-in-law, receive my wife from a father-in-law” (71). Essentially, marriage is ultimately a bourgeois interest because it is a matter of exchange—an exchange of property regulated by men. More importantly, marriage remains a bourgeois affair; otherwise, this would be a working-class comedy: radicals would be allowed to reproduce ultimately creating a rival clan for social control, as argued in my next chapter on Eastman’s *Venture*. Towards the end of the novel, Bill states that “Joe Kramer’s harbor [ . . . ] is struggling to be born” (373). Interfering with Joe and Sue’s marital plans assures that a revolutionary movement *must* struggle to be born. But the story is not Joe Kramer’s revolution, but Bill’s social transformation—a slow and steady transformation. Denying Joe entrance into Bill’s family serves a bigger, radical purpose in Bill’s story and development: it forces Bill beyond his family structure to perceive the larger social structure, particularly that section of the social structure which has been left out thus far, the working-class.

Joe succeeds in organizing a general strike in the New York harbor, and it is clear that the strike and Bill’s experience is modeled on the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 and Poole’s involvement in that strike. Paterson somewhat converted Poole from his conservative socialism to an appreciation of the IWW revolutionary vision—that is, in the words of Poole’s wife, Bill Haywood was “the most magnetic and dangerous man I have ever met.” The magnetism of the strike in *The Harbor* will likewise convert Bill. Poole seems to refer to the Paterson Pageant when Bill and Eleanore go to hear a “young stenographer speak to twenty-thousand in Madison Square Garden” (320). Later, during

the strike, Jim Marsh—the fictional proxy for Haywood, gives a speech on violence which is nearly verbatim of Haywood’s speeches at Paterson: “‘I am not afraid of violence,’ he continued sharply, ‘I am here to preach it. But the only violence I preach is the violence of folded arms. You have folded your arms and the ships are dead. No other kind is so deadly as that’” (336). As mentioned prior, Poole attended this speech and stood on the platform with Haywood, John Reed, and the other organizers. Furthermore, the Italian strike organizer at the harbor is named Vasca (339), a name similar to the Italian IWW organizer at Paterson, Carlo Tresca.

Poole, like Reed before him in “War in Paterson,” emphasizes the international make-up of the striking body. Like Paterson workers and their pageant, the strikers turned to their personal experience and national traditions to mobilize strikers. Bill mentions the use of song, particularly songs that reflect the workers’ international experience on the sea: “The little Italian and his friends had had printed a red pamphlet, ‘Revolutionary Songs of the Sea,’ the solos of which he sang on the boat while the rest came in on the chorus” (318). Also, like Reed when in prison in Paterson, Bill comments on a familiar scene that emphasizes the international origins of the workers: “A voice asked each one of us to name his nationality, and we found we were Americans, Irish, Scotch and Germans, Italians and Norwegians, and three of us were Lascars and one of us was a Coolie” (344). Since Poole is using the harbor for the backdrop of his historical setting, the nationalities represented is even more diverse because of the nature of sailors’ work. At Paterson, the main nationalities were Italian and Jewish, with a smattering of Slavs, Greeks, Armenians, etc., mainly European. But Poole’s make-up reaches into Asia with the inclusion of “Lascars and Coolies.”

The international composition of the strike forces Bill to move beyond his realm of experience and comfort. Heretofore, Bill has only engaged Joe in arguments of abstract intellectualism. With his engagement in the strike, Bill begins to have a concrete experience that moves him away from his mental abstractions. Here, his father's ledgers come alive, not with mere foreign place-names and exotic goods, but the life that made and transported these goods. Furthermore, since he is dealing with the maker of goods, he encounters the working-class for the first time since his childhood. Bill recognizes what the experience is doing to him: "From the beginning I could feel that it meant for me a breaking of ties with the safe strong world that had been my life" (304). Bill reaches out of his tightly controlled bourgeois family identity to an identity that has no boundaries in terms of nationality, and an identity in terms of class that he has never truly experienced. Dillon warns Bill not to venture out of his comfort zone: "I've seen so many good reporters utterly spoiled in strikes like this. They lose their whole sense of proportion and never seem to get it quite back" (305). Of course the proportion that Dillon is discussing here is Bill's moving away from the central control of his class identity, the central control formerly represented by Dillon's tower and spyglass, which keeps him at a safe distance from experience where his point of view will not be challenged and therefore "ruined." But Bill ignores his father-in-law's advice and proceeds with his involvement in the strike: "I drew close—so close I could feel them heaving, sweating, panting, feel their laboring hearts and lungs. Long ago I had watched them thus, but then I had seen from a different world. I had felt the pulse of a nation beating and I had gloried in its speed. But now I felt the pulse-beats of exhausted straining men, I saw that undertaker's sign staring fixedly from across the way" (306).

Bill is essentially confessing, to himself, that, as far as Dillon is concerned, he *is* “ruined,” for he has rediscovered his childhood but in a different way. Bill has always been an observer: watching the dockers as a child, learning to study people in Paris, writing profiles of corporate titans. But as an observer, he remained steadfast in his subjectivity watching objects, not people. Here, Bill begins to “feel”—even their pulse and their breathing. His own subjectivity is beginning to break down through his experience to form empathy.

Crowds play a significant part in the breakdown of Bill’s ego. It is in a crowd that one feels himself lost to others. For individuals in a crowd, personal identity is transposed into that of a group identity. IWW cartoons often reflect this loss where crowds form into its own bodily image or image of body parts. Joe warns that this will happen to him, and Bill describes the experience:

I thought of what Joe had said that day: “When you see the crowd, in a strike like this, loosen up and show all it could be if it had the chance—that sight is so big it blots you out—you sink—you melt into the crowd.”

Something like that happened to me. I had seen the multitudes “loosen up,” I had felt myself melt into the crowd. (311)

Bill’s individual consciousness, which he has been holding onto with such tenacity, finally dissolves: he is “blotted out”; he “sinks; he “melts.” All of these images convey the dispersal of former individual components reconstituting themselves into a new body that is no longer entirely their own.

IWW cartoons frequently depicted a mass of workers merging into one body, and like the IWW cartoons, Bill sees the reformulation of the mass into a new form: “For in some mysterious fashion a crude order had appeared” (314). Prior, Bill had always been skeptical of how such a mass could one day rule; he had been for so long under the spell of the trusts and their scientific management that insisted upon an abstract removed leader or planner being the brains and nerves of the organization that he is shocked when he feels the heart and lungs of the crowd—organs that keep the nervous system intact. While at a strike meeting, he also realizes that the heart and lungs in the crowd also develops its own nervous system:

Gradually I began to feel what was happening in this hall. That first “strike feeling”—diffused, shifting and uncertain—was condensing as in a storm cloud here, swelling, thickening, whirling, attracting swiftly to itself all these floating forces. Here was the first awakening of that mass thought and passion which swelling later into full life was to give me such flashes of insight into the deep buried resources of the common herd of mankind, their resources and their power of vision when they are all joined and fused in a mass. Here in a few hours the great spirit of the crowd was born.

For now the crowd began to question think and plan. Ideas were thrown out pell mell. I found that every plan of action, everything felt and thought and spoken, though it might start from a single man, was at once transformed by the feeling of all, expressed in fragments of speech, in applause, or in loud bursts of laughter, or again by a chilling silence in

which an unwelcome thought soon died. The crowd spoke its will through many voices, through men who sprang up and talked hard a few moments, then sat down and were lost to sight—some to rise later again and again and grow in force of thought and expression, others not to be seen again, they had simply been parts of the crowd, and the crowd had made them rise and speak. (315)

The message here is the same as that of the Paterson Pageant: when crowds escape the confines of control, whether in the form of factory or machinery, they are re-born en masse as a thinking organism that can govern itself, essentially re-humanizing them from an organization that has dehumanized them as objects, components working as a machine. Once again, this scene shows organic decision-making of a group once allowed to make its own decisions.

Thus far, the crowd has developed its own organic systems: heart, lungs, and brains. Finally, the crowd becomes its own psychological entity entirely when it develops a personality:

But back we would go into the crowd, and there in a twinkling we would be changed. Once more we were members of the whole and took on its huge personality. And again the vision came to me, the dream of a weary world set free, a world where poverty and pain and all the bitterness they bring might in the end be swept away by this awakening giant here—which day by day assumed a personality of its own. Slowly I began to feel what It wanted, what It hated, how It planned and how It acted. And this to me was a miracle, the one great miracle of the strike. For years I had

labored to train myself to concentrate on one man at a time, to shut out all else for weeks on end, to feel this man so vividly that his self came into mine. Now with the same intensity I found myself striving day and night to feel not one but thousands of men, a blurred bewildering multitude.

And slowly in my striving I felt them fuse together into one great being, look at me with two great eyes, speak to me with one deep voice, pour into me with one tremendous passion for the freedom of mankind.

Here the crowd begins to feel its own desires and pursues them. Bill describes the crowd as an “It,” oddly similar to Freud’s id. More importantly, Bill’s own socially constructed ego has given way to a new psychological formation because he no longer wants to get a feeling for an individual, but of a “multitude.” His own ego, so tightly controlled by family and class-lines throughout the novel, explodes into a group consciousness, a form of schizophrenia as judged by Dillon and the class he represents which only recognizes the personality and power of individuals. Furthermore, Bill not only dissolves his class identity and his family identity but constructs a new identity that seems to have no bounds and no fixed points. It refracts through a crowd that does not see itself as individuals, families, or nationalities, but as a being unto itself.

Bill, however, does not entirely escape the confines of his bourgeois individuation, and he finds himself questioning his place in the crowd. He realizes that the crowd and “Its” personality are ultimately as foreign to him as the make-up of the strikers. At one point, as the crowd gathers strength and condenses, one of the strikers begins to laugh ominously. Bill equates the laugh with a “foreboding of violence” (338), and the laughter spreads like contagion through the crowd, to which Bill responds:

“Why are you here?” I asked myself. “You can’t join in a laugh like that—you’re no real member of this crowd—their world is not where you belong!”

But from somewhere deep inside of me a voice rose up in answer:

If the crowd is growing blind—is this the time to leave it? Wait.”

(338)

He is at once repelled from the crowd but also drawn into it. The questions become more persistent, and he begins to think again as an individual instead of being swept up in the crowd’s laughter: “‘Where am I?’ What has happened? What has all this to do with me? What is it going to mean in my life?’” (343). Bill realizes that he has identified with an Other—the same Other of his childhood—which is entirely antithetical to his background, place in society, and what he considers to be his true identity. But, with his usual idolatrous tendencies, he transforms the crowd into a god, but a god that is entirely removed from his sphere, an abstract personification of the Other destined to topple his own familiar god: “The last of my gods, Efficiency, whose feet had stood firm on mechanical laws and in whose head were all the brains of all the big men at the top, had now come tottering crashing down. And in its place a huge new god, whose feet stood deep in poverty and in whose head were all the dreams of all the toilers of the earth, had called to me with one deep voice, with one tremendous burning passion for the freedom of mankind” (351). There is a strange mixed reaction in this passage, for while the new rising god of labor represents everything Bill has heretofore resisted, the new god ultimately represents the benign American values of democracy and freedom. The crowd, in many ways, is representative of Bill’s own adolescent narrative: a crowd that

has been restricted and controlled abstractly by father-figures resists paternal control, embraces their desire, and tries to destroy the father. The problem for Bill is that while the father-figure for the crowd is an abstract, controlling entity, for Bill it is his actual family and his father-in-law. He has resisted father-figures enough throughout the novel to understand the crowd's desire and point of view, but he cannot ultimately commit himself to a fight which topples his own family.

After the strike is over, and the army intercedes defeating the workers, Bill returns to his familial life. But Bill's return is different; he has been changed through his identification with the crowd. Upon Bill's return, he ironically uses the harbor as a metaphor:

Once I saw the harbor in a February storm. And in the wind and scurrying snow I saw it all together like one whirling thing alive. But the next morning the storm had died away, and a wind from the south had brought banks of fog that moved sluggishly low down on the water dividing the whole region into many separate parts. And from above, a dazzling sun shone down upon three objects near me, a ferryboat, a puffing tug, and a tramp which lay at anchor, shone so brightly on these three they seemed alone, with nothing but mist all about them.

So it was now for a time with me. The strike, which had so suddenly drawn me into its whirling crowd-life, now as suddenly dropped away. And personal troubles piled one on the other. In place of that mass of thousands, I saw only a few people I loved, and I saw them so intensely

that for a time we were quite alone, with nothing but mist all around us.

(355)

Bill has spent the entirety of the novel trying to wrest control of his life from an oppressive harbor which always seems to intervene. Bill used marriage and family to gain control over the harbor. But after the strike, Bill compares his family to the harbor itself, and his immediate family members to individual vessels floating in the harbor. The experience of the crowd has dragged Bill from his abstract heights, lowered him to the waters of the harbor, and isolated what is most important to him. He also returns to the family to regain a sense of order that has been elusive throughout the novel, and nearly lost in his involvement in the strike. Still Bill returns to the order of his immediate family and moves away from the larger familial experience of the strike. Where he was refracted through a multitude earlier, he returns to the clarity of isolated objects in the form of his own family.

Of course, Bill's return to the family also includes a "confrontation" with his new father, Dillon. Dillon wants Bill to get back to his publicity writing for the big firms and return to a life of bourgeois normalcy. But he has been transformed by his experience, and in his response to Dillon, Bill sounds eerily like Joe Kramer: "I saw something in that strike so much bigger than Marsh or Joe or that crude organization of theirs—something deep down in the people themselves that rises up out of each one of them the minute they got together. And I believe that power has such possibilities that when it comes into full life not all the police and battleships and armies on earth can stop it" (368). Bill warns Dillon of his ultimate error in backing the firms against the workers and predicts efficiency's demise: "The crowd is going to pull him down. Because it's not democracy.

The trouble with all of your big men at the top is that they're trying to do for the crowd what the crowd wants to do for itself. And it may not do it half so well—but all the time it will be learning—gathering closer every year—and getting a spirit compared to which your whole clean clear efficiency world is only cold and empty” (369). These words, coming from Bill, are almost verbatim of Kramer’s words in earlier conversations with Bill. Bill’s political and class commitments have moved through the entire social spectrum and have altered Bill’s perception completely. Bill’s perspective has become so skewed that editors who previously accepted his work reject his piece on the strike:

I took my story of the strike to every editor I knew, and it was rejected by each in turn. They thought it all on the side of the crowd, an open plea for revolution. Then I took it to Joe in the Tombs.

“Will you sign this, Joe?” I asked, when he had read it.

“No,” he replied. “It’s too damn mild. You’ve given too much to the other side. All these bouquets to efficiency and all this about the weak points of the crowd. The average stoker reading this would think that the revolution won’t come till we are all white-haired” (372).

While Bill has moved radically towards Kramer’s point of view about “the crowd,” Kramer is still arguing for the immediacy of revolution.

Bill’s story is a psychological progress that takes thirty years and has, like Dillon’s planning, seen the entire social gamut. Kramer, on the other hand, is fixed on only one aspect of society—the working class and *their* revolution. His impatience was typical of radicals at the turn of the century, particularly members of the IWW, who anticipated revolution as a Christian does the Second Coming. Bill, instead, sees the

foundation for eventual social change, perhaps not as drastic as Kramer's, but he sees a larger historical process unfolding as exemplified in his own personal experience with the harbor and the psychological change it has brought about in him: "I have seen three harbors," I said to myself. 'My father's harbor which is now dead, Dillon's harbor of the big companies which is very much alive, and Joe Kramer's harbor which is struggling to be born'" (373). Interestingly, each step in the harbor's historical process is a removal from Bill's familial connections, from father to father-in-law to friend. In this manner, the traditional family as an isolated social unit, is opened to allow not only Kramer as a friend, but the working-class whom Kramer represents. The psycho-sociological tour Bill has experienced has forced him to examine the class-structure, acknowledge labor as a social activity, and even allowed the working class—albeit abstractly, unconsciously—into his family.

While familial and class hygienics stay intact throughout *The Harbor*, Bill's experience reveals a radical transformation of social consciousness. His experience in the strike forces him to identify outside himself and his socially prescribed identity, an empathic transformation that alters his social perception. At the end of the novel, he retreats back to his atomistic family life, but he has eschewed the values of his previous generation. Eastman's *Venture*, the subject of the next chapter fails in many ways to achieve this transformation of consciousness. Like Bill, Eastman's main character Jo Hancock performs a similar social tour and identification, but Hancock does not embrace the value of labor enough to transform his consciousness. Instead, the family structure becomes a marriage of bourgeoisie scientific management with the proletarian struggle for autonomy. While it would seem that these two trajectories—that of Bill and that of

Hancock—are similar, they are vastly different because Hancock’s transformation is limited, in fact it is not a transformation at all, and the potential marriage between the two classes is the only way to bridge the gap between the two worldviews. Bill’s transformation reveals an imagination that can transcend the confines of class and family while Hancock, although a poet, is too fixed and rigid as a romance hero to truly transform entirely and the influence must come from outside.

## CHAPTER FIVE

REVOLUTIONARY NECROMANCY: ENGINEERING HISTORY IN MAX EASTMAN'S *VENTURE*

At first glance, Max Eastman's (1883-1969) *Venture* (1927) appears to be a retelling of Poole's *The Harbor*: a young middle-class man flirts with big business only to have his class perceptions challenged by an IWW strike. But *Venture* does not have the psychological complexity of *The Harbor*. The main character, Jo Hancock, is an alter-ego for Eastman, a merging of Eastman's childhood and the adolescence of John Reed. While Hancock changes his political alignment, the transformation is not as penetrating as Bill's maturation in *The Harbor*. *Venture* is a novel where the development of the main character is complicated because, on the one hand, he discovers himself socially and politically while, on the other hand, he appears on the historic stage already formed as a hero, a man of action, and while he wavers between embracing capitalism and revolution equally, in the end his action is entirely committed to revolution.

*Venture* is a fictional version of Reed's radicalization, retelling Reed's life, particularly the years of 1910-1915. Eastman thought the novel to be a commentary on the radical left of the United States, "about a proletarian revolution still going on in America" (O'Neill 121). Alternatively, F. Scott Fitzgerald, who read the *Venture* manuscript, was somewhat accurate in assessing the novel as "a historical document" (O'Neill 121): "beautifully written and it tells me so much about what are to me the dim days 1910-1917 that formed so many people of the liberal side in the generation just ahead of me and mine. You make it all very real and vivid—nothing so sane on that terribly difficult subject—for it was after all a creed, a faith, in the purest and most

helpless sense, has even been written” (qtd in O’Neill 122). Both opinions—Eastman’s and Fitzgerald’s—reveal historical misapprehensions, for Fitzgerald about the past represented and for Eastman the present he thought he was depicting. While *Venture* uses the Paterson Silk Strike as a setting for the novel, Eastman conflates and reverses several historical moments: World War I is treated as historically concurrent with the strike, and the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 precedes the Lawrence Textile Strike of 1912. The reversal of the IWW strikes, however, is perhaps the most conspicuous historical error in *Venture* because Eastman was the editor of *The Masses* between 1911 and 1917, so he would have been well aware of the historical sequence of the strikes. But his purpose was not, as Fitzgerald thought, to represent history. In fact, Eastman seemed to have little faith in the idea of history, and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and his visit to Soviet Russia from 1922-1924 convinced him that Leninism enabled people to transcend history and to control it as engineers. Therefore, *Venture* is not really about history, Paterson, or the radical left in the United States; it is a reassessment of Paterson suggesting the development of a Leninist project for America.

*Venture* was also an elegy for John Reed, his revolutionary mission, and the passing of an era of leftist politics that Reed symbolized. In the vacuum of Reed, Eastman transplants a romance where Reed’s character, Hancock, not only lives, but potentially carries his revolutionary project on into future generations. *Venture* re-writes history as a leftist success story and argues for the scientific breeding of political activists—a revolutionary aristocracy. The novel centers around the conflict between George Forbes, a philosophical businessman who hopes to breed an American bourgeois aristocracy, and the revolutionary agenda of the IWW as represented by Big Bill

Haywood. Jo Hancock is attracted to Forbes' Nietzschean ideas and becomes Forbes' business apprentice and philosophical student. But Hancock is also inspired by the IWW and their democratic hopes for revolution. With the IWW and the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913, history enters the fictional realm, but only superficially, for the strike also introduces Hancock's love interest, Vera. The more significant historical referent in *Venture*, however, is that of Leninist revolutionary philosophy. Ironically, George Forbes' preoccupation with business, breeding an aristocracy, and organizing the material world is the capitalist version of Lenin's scientific, social engineering. Jo, therefore, becomes a mediator between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, Lenin's vanguard party, and the novel suggests that Jo will carry Forbes' aristocratic program to the proletariat; he thereby forms the vanguard party.

Eastman and Reed began their friendship in 1912 when Eastman was editing *The Masses*. Reed sought out Eastman to publish his short story "Where the Heart Is"—about a world-traveling prostitute reflecting on her return home. According to Eastman's *Enjoyment of Living*, an autobiography published in 1948 (well into his eventual conversion to conservatism and anti-Communism), he was unimpressed with Reed until he read the short story (406). Eventually, Reed would become a fellow editor for *The Masses*, develop its masthead, and contribute several pieces to the magazine, including "War in Paterson." Reed later reported on World War I, but his fame and notoriety are mainly derived from his account of the Russian Revolution of 1917, *Ten Days That Shook the World* (1919). A comparison of "War in Paterson" and *Ten Days* reveals a shift in Reed's journalism. While it begins in a similar fashion as "War in Paterson"—that it is "history as [he] saw it" (*Ten Days* 575) and that his "sympathies were not

neutral” (*Ten Days* 580), *Ten Days* is more mature in journalistic style. Reed’s earlier reporting in “War in Paterson” and even in *Insurgent Mexico* (1914) emphasized his participatory nature in the events and relied heavily on first-person narration. *Ten Days* emphasizes his presence, but for the most part he uses the first-person to verify his connections with his sources instead of forcing himself into the events as he had done in his earlier reporting. After the publication of *Ten Days*, Reed would return to Russia to contribute to the beginnings of the Third International, but died of typhus shortly before his thirty-third birthday in a Moscow hospital in 1920.

Even before Reed’s death, Eastman supported Leninism and Bolshevism. *The Masses* was suppressed by the government in 1917, and Eastman was tried twice for sedition because of the magazine’s position against conscription. Besides the sedition trials, the government dealt the final blow to *The Masses* when it denied mailing privileges. Eastman continued the publication the following year, however, with *The Liberator*, but for a time, Eastman made peace with Wilson, since the war was over, and tried to use *The Liberator* to steer Wilson to recognize the Soviet government. While this caused tension between Eastman and Reed, and Reed resigned from the editorial staff in protest, Reed continued to publish in *The Liberator* and assured Eastman of no ill-will despite his decision (O’Neill 74-5). Eastman finally became irritated with Wilson’s reaction to Russia and, more importantly, with Wilson’s continued war-time policy of leftist persecution and suppression of free-speech (Cantor 74). In response to Wilson, Eastman began using *The Liberator* as an editorial pulpit to promote Bolshevism and Leninism. Eastman eventually tired of editing *The Liberator*, handed it over to Mike

Gold and Claude McKay in 1921, and made plans to travel to Russia to observe the Socialist experiment first hand (O'Neill 98).

Eastman's preconceptions of Russia seem indebted to Reed's reporting. For example, in *Ten Days*, Reed states that "waiters and hotel servants were organized, and refused tips. On the walls of the restaurants they put up signs which read, 'No tips taken here—' or, 'Just because a man has to make his living waiting on table is no reason to insult him by offering a tip!'" (602). In his monograph *Max Eastman*, Milton Cantor reports that Eastman "was disquieted by the practice of tipping" in Russia, stating, "there was no tipping in my utopia [ . . . ] no such indecent exposure of class relations was tolerable" (qtd in Cantor 85). But Eastman continued to perceive the Russian Soviet experiment with optimism despite warning signs, such as when factory workers told him that union leaders were appointed by the party instead of elected (O'Neill 104). Because of his friendship with Reed and his pro-Bolshevik editorials in *The Liberator*, Eastman had fairly unfettered access to "inner circles" and "nearly all Bolshevik circles" (Cantor 86), eventually allowing him to sit in at the Thirteenth Party Congress.

The Thirteenth Party Congress was consequential because it was the congress to determine Lenin's successor. Eastman had befriended Leon Trotsky, and it was assumed that Trotsky would inherit leadership of the Party, but instead Stalin had maneuvered himself for the leadership position, and Trotsky acquiesced so as not to divide the Party. This was to be Eastman's "breaking point" (O'Neill 105), and he left Russia shortly thereafter, marrying Eliena Krylenko—a marriage of convenience, securing Eastman's exit visa as his passport had expired while in Russia. Despite Eastman's insistence on it being of convenience and open, the marriage lasted throughout his lifetime (O'Neill 106).

Eastman stopped in France on his way back to the States where he rested and worked on three books: *Since Lenin Died*; *Marx, Lenin, and the Science of Revolution*; and *Venture*. While the latter two works are central to the present chapter (and dealt with in more detail later), *Since Lenin Died* (1925) was more controversial for Eastman politically because it revealed Lenin's "testament"—that is, Lenin's criticism of Stalin and his intention that Trotsky was the appointed heir to Party leadership. *Since Lenin Died* did not gain much traction for Eastman's place in the radical left since both Trotsky himself and Nadezhda Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, disavowed the veracity of the testament, resulting in the denouncing article "Since Eastman Lied" by C. M. Roebuck in *Workers Monthly*. Eastman later had Lenin's testament printed in full in *The New York Times* on October 18, 1926, and Trotsky, Krupskaya, and others later capitulated (Cantor 94-5).

*Venture*, published a year after the testament controversy, reveals that despite the political isolation which resulted from Eastman being, essentially, the first Trotskyist, he continued to support Bolshevism and Leninism. (He would retract his support for the Socialist experiment in Russia, eventually becoming one of its main critics through the 1940s and 1950s.) But Eastman's historical influences create a significant philosophical problem. Since the main historical event depicted in the novel is the Paterson Silk Strike, the IWW, which led the strike, differed greatly with Lenin's idea of the vanguard party. Lenin did not believe in spontaneous revolutions, and his answer to this "problem" was the vanguard party, a group of intellectuals—mainly middle-class—who would organize, educate, and direct workers politically until the workers could run the political machinery themselves. The IWW was much more supportive of worker spontaneity and their

organization, despite the typical cadre of organizers, was loosely structured; in essence the IWW had more faith in the workers than Lenin. The natural figure to mediate this divide in revolutionary philosophy was John Reed—who supported the IWW and Lenin. Furthermore, Reed had a romantic temperament as well as revolutionary zeal. Shortly after Reed's death, Eastman fixed on Reed as a Romantic figure, a man who knew how to embrace life and seek adventure: "In the memorial speech Max said that Reed was a poet who 'chose to make a great poem of his life'" (O'Neill 97). Eastman transfers these characteristics into *Venture's* hero, Jo Hancock, who through his various experiences is educated to mediate the revolutionary philosophies of the IWW (the historical setting for the book) and Leninism (the anachronistically applied philosophy *Venture* advocates).

Eastman presents Hancock, from the outset, as a Romantic, a hybrid of Rousseau, Wordsworth, and Shelly. Besides reflecting Eastman's own philosophical temperament, the Romantic era was one of revolution, particularly the French Revolution. Therefore, Hancock possesses all that is necessary for such a Romantic revolutionary figure, and Eastman is unsubtle in presenting his protagonist as such. From his early youth, Hancock "feels rebellious and heroic" (6). He is introduced to the reader as a poet: "He had a gift of imaginative language—he had poetry in him. It is really a gift for feeling the qualities of experience. If you can feel them well, and have a good brain, then you can convey them to other people by means of words. That is poetic imagination. Jo was a poet, but he did not know that" (2). In this fashion, Hancock is presented as an American Wordsworth, a boy who with innate imagination seeks out experiences to satisfy his poetic inclination. But Hancock also has earlier Romantic philosophical inclinations: "He was thinking about the world and himself. He was wondering how to build in the

world the romance of himself. It had to be such that when he looked at it as an object he would be gratified, and yet also such that he would find pleasure as a subject in the daily enactment of it—a most absorbing problem and one that he believed he could solve” (17). This passage seems taken directly from Rousseau’s *Confessions*, a philosophical disposition which does not tolerate the space between the subject and object, and, more so, he has a possessive nature which seeks to gratify itself.<sup>1</sup> These characteristics of rebellion, poetic imagination, and quest for experience are not only a hybrid of Romantic figures like Rousseau and Wordsworth, but it is also a hybrid of Eastman and Reed himself. Hancock is Eastman in that he pursues experience for pleasure and gratification. Also, Eastman was rebellious and his editorship of *The Masses* reflected this rebellion. Finally, Eastman had strong opinions concerning “poetic imagination,”<sup>2</sup> and much of *Venture* is a fictional pulpit from which he preaches what it means to have such an imagination. The same qualities applied to Reed: a young bohemian poet living in the Village, and like many bohemians in the Village, also possessing a rebellious nature.

Hancock is romantically depicted as a man of action, not necessarily a man of thought. When he attends a socialist dinner party with his Village upper-class socialite friends and Dr. Moses, Eastman’s fictional Morris Hillquit (Cantor 39),<sup>3</sup> Hancock is disgusted with all of the ambiguous talk of class conflict while he “found these socialists

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<sup>1</sup> In his *Confessions*, Rousseau states: “Money tempts me less than things, because between money and the possession of the desired object there is always an intermediary, whereas between the thing itself and the enjoyment of it there is none. If I see the thing, it tempts me; if I only see the means of gaining possession of it, it does not” (1633).

<sup>2</sup> See Eastman’s *Enjoyment of Poetry* (1913)

<sup>3</sup> Morris Hillquit was one of the founders of the Socialist Party of America, but for Eastman’s tastes, he was too much of a moderate and too much a theorist. Dr. Moses is thus depicted as being too bookish to contribute any real use to the revolution. But Eastman also presents Hancock’s observation of Dr. Moses which presents an interesting historical note in Eastman’s thoughts of the development of leftist thought in America: “This Socialist Education Society had about as much downright reality and driving force of will in it as a Hartford Sunday School. And Dr. Moses—substituting Karl Marx for the Hebrew Prophets—might very well be the superintendent of the school” (*Venture* 108).

a good safe distance away from the poor, in the first place, eating a four-course dinner in the conventional style” (99). Much of the oratory at the dinner is dedicated to criticizing the IWW—“the first time Jo had ever heard serious talk of the I. W.W.” (99). He particularly finds the sermonizing about socialism and peace distasteful, reminding him of his father’s sermon’s about Satan and “began to experience a lurking respect for the I.W.W., a respect mingled with real dread” (102). After dinner, while riding home with Dr. Moses, Mary Kittredge, and Muriel Paxton-Kadner, Jo argues with Dr. Moses about socialists’ timidity towards class conflict. Jo claims, “I don’t belong to any class at all” (105), and Moses corrects him, claiming that as a part of the intelligentsia, Hancock still serves bourgeois interests. But Jo is attracted to the idea of struggle and fight and pursues his criticism of socialists, only in a non-academic fashion that fails to appeal to Moses’ scholasticism: “I haven’t read the three volumes of *Das Kapital* and I promise you I never will, but I’ve read histories of the French Revolution and the Paris Commune, and I know you can’t conduct a fight about property on the lines of a church social” (108). The Paris Commune was an ideal historical moment for the IWW as it was essentially a general strike.<sup>4</sup> Here, Jo is not as interested in class-conflict as he is with the rebelliousness of conflict in general. Furthermore, the allusion to Satan in his father’s sermon places Hancock as an heir to the Romantic tradition which looked longingly at Milton’s Satan as a rebellious, heroic figure. Of course, Hancock grew up reading

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<sup>4</sup> Big Bill Haywood in his Speech “The General Strike” (1911) makes a comment that it is the fortieth anniversary of the Paris Commune (qtd in Kornbluh 45). Furthermore, the IWW was fond of French revolutionary anthems, namely, “The Marseillaise” and “The Internationale.”

Shelley and Byron (*Venture* 6)—two Romantic poets who died young in foreign lands, like Reed.<sup>5</sup>

Hancock leaves the Socialist dinner-party disgusted by the talk about revolution without transforming it into action. The next day, he meets George Forbes, a venture capitalist. Forbes presents himself as a man of action and lectures Hancock about the necessity of being a man of “reality” and “action.” Forbes introduces three texts to Jo: a sermon by Bishop Joseph Butler, where there is only one quote of fifteen words that Forbes finds of any use; the other two texts are Nietzsche’s *The Anti-Christ* and Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. The irony compounds as Forbes, the man of action, limps around the desk, revealing that he was born with a lame foot (126). Then Forbes reflects on George Washington’s contribution to the American Revolution, claiming that while all of Washington’s contemporaries were writing and thinking about freedom and equality, Washington presented himself quietly in uniform and waited to act. Forbes states that Washington “knew that all this talk had nothing to do with the matter in hand, which was a fight between two conflicting interests” (129). Hancock is presented, at first glance, with the exact opposite of his socialist dinner: while the socialists speak of conflict without embracing it, Forbes, presenting himself as a philosophical heir to Washington, sees conflict as the only source that results in any significant action.

Forbes’ lesson is interrupted by a phone call, and while Hancock waits, Forbes makes a deal in coffee worth \$30,000. He goes on to point out that the bank that sold him the coffee has never seen it, and as the deal is for next year, the likelihood is there will never be any coffee. He explains: “Time and space are entirely transcended. Even

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<sup>5</sup> Byron is of particular interest here as Hancock’s life—and Reed’s—parallels Byron’s biography to a certain extent: a young poet moved by the historic moment gives his life to a foreign revolution.

existent matter is unnecessary. It's action, that's all—naked action—naked of all attributes. It lacks even position” (131). All the same, Forbes again cites the \$30,000 profit he has made on the phantom coffee before revealing his plan to take advantage of the World War in making America the center of trade instead of Europe (132-4). Jo is moved by Forbes and, like a man of action who lacks reflective capabilities, is won over by Forbes' rhetorical force more than by what he actually said. For if Hancock had paid attention to the details of Forbes' lecture on reality and action, he would have noted that there was no action at all nor any reality to the transaction as everything was “transcendent” since the coffee was not real and since Forbes' game was entirely speculative. Still, when Forbes finally asks Hancock about his “affairs”—a fine choice of words for Jo who had been flirting with a variety of “society” women—Jo reveals his awe for Forbes and compares Forbes to himself:

Jo felt that his affairs would hardly bear mentioning beside the projects of this man's imagination. He felt that he had no words that could stand up in the storm of speech that came out of him. George Forbes seemed to let his thoughts go with the recklessness of a man who is raving, and yet as though by continual accident they went right. He was not raving. (134)

Hancock is silenced at the presence of Forbes and his imagination. But again, Hancock does not perceive that the transaction Forbes just completed was merely imaginary and had no reality. More importantly, though, Hancock has met his match, a representation of himself in the guise of a successful business man, for the recklessness Jo respects in Forbes is merely a projection of his own recklessness.

If we compare the two examples above—the socialist meeting and the meeting with Forbes, it is clear that Hancock is torn between two opposite extremes: the IWW concept of class war and Forbes’ dedication to “reality” and “action.” In both cases, though, vague and unclear references move Hancock. He has only heard about the IWW, and from an audience unsympathetic to its cause; he only hears a conversation about a commodity that is “transcendent,” possibly even non-existent. Hancock, though, seems attracted to the mysterious and unknown; thus he finds both the discussion of the IWW and Forbes’ successful coffee “deal” appealing. But since the IWW is only alluded to, Hancock is more entranced by the “action” philosophy of George Forbes, and he allies himself with Forbes, borrowing money to start a coffee roasting and distribution service for New York City.

The IWW does not remain only the topic for conversation, however, and Mary Kittredge, Jo’s friend and lover, invites Jo and others to a salon where Big Bill Haywood will be speaking about proletarian art. Historically, such an occasion is also the scene where Reed became involved with Paterson. But Reed, unlike Hancock, was a bohemian Village poet and burgeoning journalist, not a venture capitalist like his fictional inspiration. Despite his business concerns, though, Hancock is moved by Haywood’s talk: “Jo sat silent. He felt like a small and unpleasantly complicated thing. He felt rebuked by the simplicity of this man’s thought and feeling. He wished that he could refrain from asking the tiresome little question: Is it true?” (211). While George Forbes will go on at length providing his business philosophy with the philosophical backing of

Nietzsche, Plato, and Machiavelli, Haywood's message is simple and straightforward.<sup>6</sup> Forbes, despite his constant clamoring about action and reality, is as caught up with abstract ideas and talking about action as Dr. Moses, his Marxist counterpoint.

Haywood is presented as a man of action. The topic of his talk at Mary Kittredge's was proletarian art, again, an abstract topic that would not appeal to Jo's temperament. But Haywood dismisses the topic of the speech immediately and discusses more pressing concerns:

Bill told Mary's guests that the first thing he wanted to call their attention to about proletarian art was the fact that there isn't any. [ . . . ]

“Not only is art impossible to such a man,” he said, “but life is impossible. He does not live. He just works. He does the work that enables you to live. He does the work that enables you to enjoy art, and to make it, and to have a nice meeting like this and talk it over.”

Bill said these words “nice meeting” without irony; he called the meeting nice because that is what it was.

“The only problem, then, about proletarian art,” he continued, “is how to make it possible, how to make life possible to the proletariat. In solving that problem we should be glad of your understanding, but we don't ask your help. We are going to solve it at your expense. Since you have got life, and we have got nothing but work, we are going to take our share of life away from you, and put you to work.” (210)

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<sup>6</sup> In his pamphlet and speech *The General Strike*, Haywood states that he is “not here to theorize, not here to talk in the abstract, but to get down to the concrete subject whether or not the general strike is an effective weapon for the working class” (qtd in Kornbluh 45).

Haywood is not concerned with talking about such issues as proletarian art because he understands that the historical groundwork has not been laid yet. Unlike George Forbes, whose action is speculative, transcendent, and abstract, Haywood understands that there is no point in discussing an abstract future until the reality is prepared for it.

Furthermore, the last parts of this speech reveal him to be entirely a man of action, and this impresses Hancock the most: “‘I like this man Haywood, though. He’s so damned big. He seemed so much bigger than anybody else in the room [ . . . ] It was impressive’” (221). Haywood therefore provides Joe with a counter-point to Forbes, and fittingly they are also antagonists in class war.

When Haywood meets Hancock at the salon, Hancock’s reputation as a Village poet has preceded him, but, like the conclusion of Haywood’s speech, talk of literature does not appeal to Haywood. Instead, he tries to recruit Hancock’s help in Paterson: “‘Mrs. Kittridge tells me you’re a poet,’ he said. ‘Come over to Paterson some Sunday afternoon and I’ll show you a poem. I’ll show you fifteen thousand working men standing up for their rights. Did you ever attend a strike meeting?’” (220). For Haywood, social action is the only fitting art until the revolution is complete—only after the revolution will art be worthy of contemplation.

As a fellow businessman, Forbes continually warns Hancock about the IWW’s threat to business “sovereignty” (180). In order to ensure Hancock’s continued allegiance, Forbes convinces him to invest in the silk mills in Paterson. Forbes knows that socialists like Dr. Moses will theorize a social revolution without acting, but he recognizes a difference in the IWW’s agenda and methods:

This strike in our silk mills in Paterson is not a strike, it's a revolt. It ought to be put down with lead and steel. It would be, if we had a good systematic control of the press and the government such as I advocate. Everything is so entirely loose and unorganized, so damn full of mystery and whispers. Why, this man Haywood has got more organization than we have with less than two per cent. of the power. It's because he talks straight out. (180)

Much like Plato's philosopher-kings in *The Republic*, Forbes believes in censorship, strong military control, and a docile workforce. But while the IWW did evoke fear in the business classes in America—particularly with the triumph in the wool mills of Lawrence and definitely with the Bolshevik take-over in Russia—Eastman seems to inflate business' opinion of the IWW. In fact, much of Wobbly history was characterized by exactly what Forbes *wishes*: the press was already controlled by business; the militia acted on behalf of business; and the IWW was not as thoroughly organized as Forbes suggests. Eastman's hyping of IWW potential is more of a dramatic external historical reference to intensify the internal, fictional struggle of Hancock.

Forbes eventually relents from his IWW scare-tactics, and while doing so points to the true historical threat of the IWW: "I don't suppose this man Haywood is dangerous really, but his head's clear of the fog, what head he's got. He's a very different thing from those Blessed-are-the-meek-who-believe-in-the-class-struggle people you were telling me about. He's broke through. He's not a Messiah. He's a revolutionary" (196). The IWW, at least its leadership and most dedicated activists, had "broken through," as

Forbes describes. The IWW philosophy argued for worker aristocratic ethos.<sup>7</sup> The IWW in their cartoons and literature depicted the ruling class as well-dressed, cigar-smoking, obese, slovenly caricatures while workers are presented as overall-clad and muscle-bound, wielding the club or hammer of syndicalism, physically threatening the ruling class' control of industry. Wobblies felt entitled to control of the economy because, like Hegel's masters or Nietzsche's aristocrats, they saw themselves as the founding fathers of the material world—they "built the road," Wobblies often reminded people, the same road that they had to tread while looking for work. Eastman carries over this earlier cartoon tradition into *Venture* where Haywood the big man of action takes on Forbes' "control." But Forbes is correct in his assessment that the IWW was beyond the Christian moralizing of many reform groups. Instead the IWW understood that it was in economic warfare and that the weapon was withholding labor.

As the novel progresses and the Paterson strike intensifies, Forbes becomes more preoccupied with the Wobbly threat. He explains to Hancock, again, the threat of the IWW's aristocratic thinking:

You're a little puzzled by my intensity about this thing, Jo, but let me remind you those I.W.W.'s are real people. They can see their own feet walking the earth. They know which way they're going, and which foot first, and why. They don't read our papers. They publish their own papers. They've got a rotary press out there in Chicago. Did you ever read an I.W.W. paper? They talk a different language. By God, they talk

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<sup>7</sup> Sorel makes the same case for working-class aristocratic ethics in *Reflections on Violence* (1908): "The free producer in a progressive and inventive workshop must never evaluate his own efforts by any external standing; he ought to consider the models given him inferior, and desire to surpass everything that has been done before" (242).

facts and not fog. They know God damned well that the general population of the United States is gassed. Jo, they're the real obstacle. The real obstacle to a true aristocracy in this country is these revolutionaries that have broke through, these hard guys that have got a breath of air, and are making a straight break for freedom. They're a sort of aristocrat themselves, in a certain way of speaking. (349)

Forbes, who wants to control the press more thoroughly, cites Wobbly papers as an example of their potential, a strange example since the *Industrial Worker* and *Solidarity* were not in wide circulation. But the circulation itself is not the threat. Numbers to Forbes are insignificant since he recognizes the fact that only two percent of the population essentially controls the entire means of production of the country. The threat instead is the IWW's ability and boldness in creating their own language and thereby making their own moral code.

Unbeknownst to Forbes, Hancock accepts Haywood's invitation to Paterson to see the strike for himself. Instead of feeling like a student, as he does under Forbes, when around working people, Hancock seems in his element: "Jo was Homeric in his temperament. He moved happily among these more natural people who lived by doing something with their hands. He understood their thoughts because he felt their feelings. It is a long journey from one mind to another, but there is that short-cut through the heart, and Jo was familiar with it" (226-7). In his youth, Hancock would roam the New England countryside breakfasting with local farmers, "natural people," and here, he has returned to that element, closer to Rousseau's ideal in *Emile*, in an unassuming, child-like manner, unfettered by social expectations of "society." Furthermore, Hancock is curious

about the workers' purpose for the strike: "He was keenly interested, too, in a question which interested them—the question to what extent they were fighting for wages and a half-holiday, and to what extent for the revolutionary aims of the I.W.W." (227).

Material concerns do not matter to Hancock as much as the idea of revolution even though material concerns are the reason for strikes and worker revolution. Forbes appeals to Hancock because he speaks of action, action that results in material rewards, but for Hancock, it is the action that is appealing. While in Paterson, he holds the workers to the same standard: if the struggle is for struggle's sake, then it merits his support. Many Village radicals, like Hancock, lived meagerly, but their lives were circumscribed by a bourgeois lifestyle. They may have rebelled against their class backgrounds in several ways, but, as with Hancock, their positions were not necessarily in touch in the material reality of the working class. As the Haywood character points out at the salon, the Village radicals can offer their sympathy, but they were not in a position to offer their true understanding and therefore their help. Hancock's attitude, while he may reject its implications, reinforces Dr. Moses' assessment that he is in fact bourgeois.

Hancock, however, does come to a realization at the strike rally that mediates this tension between the principle and the material. After discussing the strike with some Irish workers, and not finding the satisfactory answer to his questions of the strike's purpose, Hancock meets an Italian couple and their baby. Through this interaction Hancock comes to the following conclusion which resolves his conflict, and thinks of the situation from a rhetorical point of view:

Jo decided that if he were trying to make this crowd applaud, he would talk more about social revolution, but if he were trying to make them act he would talk more about wages and hours of freedom. The idea of taking possession of the mills and running them without the bosses was a kind of battle slogan, he thought—a war-cry. It expressed the belligerent emotions of the mass or of those at least who were heart-and-soul in the fight. They were glad to fight under that banner. But it was actively and practically believed in by a minority. If this crowd were an army, you might say that the non-commissioned as well as the commissioned officers were revolutionists like Bill Haywood, and also a good number of intelligent privates, but the common soldiery were fighting for wages and hours. Or they were fighting because of the general assumption that every decent worker, every one who is not a “scab,” will fight. The central problem of the strikers was to maintain this assumption—to convince the whole working community that “scabbing”, or strike-breaking, is bad, indecent, disloyal—or dangerous. Their problem was to preserve the solidarity of the workers. And the problem of the bosses was to break it—to get enough men back into the mills so they could run the machinery. Hence the picket-line was the field of battle. (227-8)

In Paterson, the strength of the strike was the Eastern and Southern European immigrants. It is only after talking to the Italians that Hancock understands the strike as a battle-front where morale must be steeled through practical propaganda: while people are moved by the bigger vision of the IWW, they act in response to material conditions. The conditions

therefore can be used rhetorically to advance the more principled, abstract action that attracts Hancock's romantic sentiments.

Despite Hancock's concern about principles, after listening to several speeches by strike organizers, he remembers his investment in the mills: "And then he thought about his five thousand dollars. He looked out over the mass of eager attentive faces and decided there was not much hope for his money. [ . . . ] If one thing was exciting and romantic, and almost like a legend here, it was the number of the people, the enormous crowd that had tramped through the field to hear this simple sensible talk" (234). These reflections reveal that Hancock is not so much interested in the principle of the fight but the romanticism of the fight itself. The multitude of people is a sublime vision of mass action—like that of a revolution. It is the romance of revolution that inspires Hancock. In fact, he is so moved by the scene that he forgets his obligations to his business and stays the night in Paterson at the house of a strike organizer, a Russian immigrant who is also a veteran of the 1905 Russian Revolution. The man discusses the revolution and its Marxist inspiration. Marx, in the Russian's story, is not treated in a theoretical manner of Dr. Moses: "Marxism became so different a thing in this heroic drama from what it was in the lecturing jabber of Doctor Moses, that Jo could hardly identify the two things at all. Here it was a scientific technique for getting a great deed done. With Doctor Moses it had been a vast incomprehensible system of abstract ideas, enabling you to sit back and do nothing with a very nasty sort of know-it-all smile on your face" (243). Marxist theory is portrayed as inspiration for a stirring historical event, and this Marx enraptures Hancock enough to stay through the evening. In the morning, he discovers that the Russian man has a daughter, Vera, whom Hancock had seen in a café weeks before and

whose beauty inspires him to write and publish a poem. This romantic interest further places Hancock on the side of the workers.

It is at this juncture in the novel that Eastman develops the full dramatic tension. As Haywood and Forbes are portrayed as equivalents and force Hancock to make a decision between the two poles of plutocracy and revolution, the entrance of Vera as a love interest drives Hancock more into the arms of revolution, intensifying the drama of the political choice. After he meets Haywood, Hancock informs Mary Kittredge that he has invested in the mills and intends to go to Paterson to witness the strike. Mary takes this moment to warn Hancock, informing him that he must make a decision about allegiances: "I mean it, Jo. You can't play both games at once. George Forbes will throw you out like a wormy apple if he knows you are fooling around the I.W.W. Your business really depends on him a lot more than you think" (222). He responds coldly to Kittredge, ignoring the reality of her warning, informing her of his priorities: "My freedom is different, that's all. It isn't made out of money. I'm not going to let George Forbes or anybody else cheat me out of my experience of life. I'm not in the coffee business, Mary. I'm in the business of living. If you're in a different line, there's no use of our discussing anything" (222). Prior to Vera, Hancock is inspired by both sides as both sides reflect his romantic search for experience and adventure. But in the absence of a serious love interest, he holds both opposing forces as equals for his attention: "He saw that both George Forbes and those I.W.W.'s were living reality. There was a hard light on the earth in both camps, and he liked them both. He felt at home in both attitudes" (252). Thus far, Hancock has not had to make a decision because his lover has been Kittredge, an upper-class socialite, placing him more in Forbes' camp instead of forcing

Hancock into a choice, and Kittredge's warning reveals her class position because she warns Jo about his business. Vera, however, whose is entirely committed to the strikers, forces Hancock to make a decision. But he continues to play both camps for some time even though his allegiance steadily moves forward with the strikers.

Forbes, intent on destroying the strike, does begin to drive Hancock away from the Forbesian program, but the program itself has some implicit problems for Hancock as well. Forbes' chief interest is the scientific breeding of a bourgeois aristocracy, a group of Plato's philosopher-kings who not only rule because they are in touch with transcendent ideals, but because they scientifically manage the material production of society. Forbes presents this ideal to Hancock at their first meeting, but Jo is so enraptured by Forbes' force of thought that he does not entirely understand the significance of what Forbes is proposing. During one of many Forbes philosophical and historical lessons, he explains the failure of past empires:

All crowns are tin crowns. Napoleon knew that once, but he forgot it. He fell short of his own stature. So did Augustus. That's just where Washington showed his great nerve. He might perhaps have made himself king, but he looked into the future. He founded a real aristocracy—or at least he made it possible for us to found one. And it's time we got about it. We're republicans. Let's lay that down at the very beginning. In other words we aren't children. We don't want any tinsel and cheap trappings of the Middle Ages. What we want is real power in the hands of real people. And we know that real power is possession and control of the earth and the machinery on it. (152)

Forbes' proposal is a new aristocracy that moves away from the Middle Ages and embraces modern industrial society. He proposes a business aristocracy based solely on ownership of the means of production, based not on heredity alone but on eugenics:

The ultimate decay and failure of all previous aristocracies is due to the fact that they took the idea of hereditary nobility as a mystic principle instead of a principle of action [ . . . . ] The aristocracy of the future, Hancock, the American aristocracy, will put its trust in science. It will base its prosperity and its permanence upon the active principle of hereditary nobility. In plain words, it will cultivate the science and the art of breeding men. (154)

Of course the inherent problem with Forbes' proposal is that eugenics is founded upon heredity. But Forbes' plan diverges from previous aristocracies because the new aristocracy will not rule because of a "mystical" divine right of kings but heredity based on science. Forbes' disability, however, adds to the irony of his proposal, for eugenicists hoped to breed all potential disabilities out of society, and Forbes was born with a deformed foot. If he were consistent with his principles, he would opt out of such a breeding program. Instead, though, Forbes presents himself as the founding father of an aristocracy.

For all of his talk of physical action, Forbes is not necessarily interested in a race that runs society based upon physical prowess, the Nietzschean ideal. Instead it is entirely a bourgeois aristocracy based on ownership:

Ten percent. of the people in this country own ninety per cent. of the wealth. Two per cent. own approximately sixty per cent. of it. Within the

part owned by that two per cent. I dare say twenty-five or fifty own the half, and five or ten of those two hundred combined together could control the rest. They do control them. In an unacknowledged and not even entirely conscious way they control the country. They control it in a mist, just the way everything else is done by the human animal in a mist—especially since the promulgation of the Beatitudes and the inauguration of democratic politics.

I propose that we come out of the mist. I don't say that these figures are satisfactory. They are certainly not. But I say that they constitute the essential foundation of an American aristocracy—a real aristocracy, a business aristocracy, not a bunch of stage puppets decorating themselves with titles and twiddling the gold toys of the infancy of men. Get our heads clear, get where we know what we're doing, and the figures can be very rapidly improved. (152-3)

So Forbes' aristocracy is based upon the physical, the ownership of the physical material society. Furthermore, this aristocracy will not be limited merely to the hereditary principle of primogeniture, as under medieval aristocracy. Forbes' proposal has a certain democratic allowance as to where such an aristocrat can be derived: "In a really aristocratic commonwealth there will be nothing in law or custom to prevent such a man rising into the aristocracy from anywhere—from the bottom of a coal mine" (153). But what Forbes presents as science here is none other than the American dream veiled in Herbert Spencer's social Darwinism, and he is committed to eugenics: "Plato did not grasp the importance of the active principle of hereditary nobility. He glimpsed the idea

of breeding men—he glimpsed all ideas. But he did not see its application to the problem of perpetuating an aristocratic caste—perpetuating it, improving it, and making its sovereignty impregnable. [ . . . ] We’ve got to breed men or surrender” (180). His statement concludes that he is making this proposal amidst a class war, a class war whose main battle is in Paterson as he speaks.

As Hancock is wooed by the energy of the Paterson strike and his love-interest in Vera, he begins to question Forbes’ program. Prior to his visit to Paterson, he defended the Forbesian program while dining with socialists and debutantes in the Village. But Hancock begins to recognize the arbitrary nature of determining Forbes’ aristocracy:

“The fact remains, though, that you haven’t proposed any way of deciding who’s the best,” Jo said. “*You* decide, that’s all. And you decide that *you* are, naturally, you and a few other people who already own the earth and the machinery. That’s just leaving it to chance again.”

“I’ve thought of all that, Hancock. Let me tell you this. There’s a certain arbitrary act of audacity—a volition—at the bottom of every great idea. You can’t get away from it. I assert that I am an aristocrat, and it’s true. It’s true because I assert it. I’m ready to take the consequences. I’m ready to live it out to the last letter. Another thing. I propose a system of conduct for aristocracy that will increase their superiority to the common run and make it sure. I propose science. I propose scientific breeding. Don’t forget that. Any little error in our initial assumption will be corrected, my boy, in the force of a few generations.” (197)

Forbes, in true Nietzschean fashion, cites his will as rationale enough for his program. Paterson has changed Hancock, but he does not entirely abandon Forbes' ideas. Even though he begins to challenge Forbes, Hancock merges the idea of breeding an aristocracy with a revolutionary movement: "This was the trend of Jo's thoughts, and he began to feel that the real solution must be a combination of these two programs—the small minority who will organize the business of society, and yet they will be permitted to do so, not because they own the earth, but because they are friends of the mass" (253). Eastman basically presents the Leninist idea of the vanguard party: professional revolutionaries from middle-class ranks who will organize production to foster revolution.

Eastman saw Leninism as the purgation of Hegelian metaphysics out of Marxist philosophy. In *Marx, Lenin, and the Science of Revolution* (1926), published a year before *Venture*, Eastman praises Marx for his scientific interpretation of the economy, but Eastman felt that Marx's philosophy of history was too imbued with the teleology of Hegelian Spirit; that is, Marx inherited from Hegel the metaphysical inevitability of revolution. Eastman comes to the conclusion that Lenin and Marx were perfect bed-fellows "because Marx had in him the practical scientist, and Lenin never consciously got rid of the metaphysician" (*Science of Revolution* 167). The conceptual chiasmus between these two thinkers essentially hands the mantle of Marxist revolution to Lenin. In particular, Eastman lauds Lenin for his engineering of humanity instead of relying on history to unfold itself:

If you wanted to build a bridge across a stream, it would be absurd to make your calculations upon the assumption that the properties of steel

and iron are such that they are going across the stream, and that you are lending consciousness to the process. [ . . . ] In creating the dictatorship of the proletariat, as a bridge towards a real human society, the absurdity of this way of calculating is less obvious, but it is equally great. The only difference here is that the material you work with is moving, and it is human, and you are a part of it. This does not alter the nature of thought and purposive action, or justify you in regarding yourself as a reflecting apparatus, instead of an engineer. It merely gives rise to a large and altogether peculiar set of engineering problems. And it is exactly these problems which Lenin solved, and whose solution created the Bolshevik departure in Marxism. Lenin's fundamental contribution to the Marxian science was a determination of the way in which engineers who use it, must relate themselves to the moving human material of which they are a part. (*Science of Revolution* 141)

In *Venture*, Forbes sees himself as such an engineer, and plainly admits this to Hancock at the end of the novel: “‘Just stand here by the wall, Jo, and look down and see what human life really is. Do you see that dark viscid substance flowing in the street over there? That's composed of separate individuals. That's people. That's the material out of which I propose to create something' [ . . . ] 'I'm an engineer of history, Jo—the first in existence. I take this material, humanity, and I examine its real properties and I intend to create with it'” (385-6). Eastman presents Forbes as a bourgeois “engineer of history,” who will build a bridge to a future aristocratic society. Forbes and Lenin are equivalents, save one main difference: while he developed an aristocracy in the form of the vanguard,

Lenin, and his philosophy of revolution, “intended” to hand power to the working-class eventually; the vanguard was to be only a phase once their engineering project was complete. Of course, such a transition was never completed under Stalin, and Eastman hoped that Trotsky would finish the task after Lenin’s death. Since Forbes is purely interested in a business aristocracy, and since he has been mentoring Hancock in how to develop an aristocracy, Hancock, as a “friend of the mass,” becomes the perfect proxy of Lenin, at least once he has securely determined his commitment to the working class.

While his experience with Forbes provides one component of Hancock’s developing Leninism, Vera presents the role of the working class in history, but she is by no means a Leninist. She understands class struggle as the IWW perceived it: pressuring the ruling class by constant strikes, small battles that will eventually manifest themselves in the revolution, the spontaneity of revolution Lenin rejects in *What Is To Be Done* (1902). When Hancock returns to Paterson, he hikes through the woods to gather his thoughts. While there, he stumbles upon Vera by a stream, and Hancock seizes the moment to further his relationship with her. But Vera is not interested in Hancock because their class interests are not aligned, as reflected in her criticism of his poem about her:

I didn’t like the title [“Flirtation”] you gave it in that silly magazine a bit. That shows that you are bourgeois as well as insincere.”

“Bourgeois!”

That word was a complete surprise to Jo. [ . . . ] but Jo was not sure he knew exactly what it meant. (316)

Once again, like Dr. Moses' accusation, Hancock's class impedes his revolutionary disposition, an impediment enhanced by Hancock's association with Forbes. But he continues undaunted with flirtatious banter, and they play a game of racing sticks down a stream. At one point, Vera interferes with the natural course of the race by bombarding Hancock's stick with a rock:

“No fair throwing stones!” Jo said. “You can't interfere with them at all. If you're stuck in the weeds you've lost the race, that's all.”

“Oh, but I have to do something! That's not fair. I can't stand here and watch you sail right past me.”

Vera stood above the brook with that rock poised high in her hand like the weapon of a Valkyrie.

“I'm going to throw it!” she said.

“No, you can't. You've got to wait. If I get there first, we'll go back and race again.”

“Can't I throw *one* stone? Just once—to get started again?” (318)

While this is merely a game, it mirrors the action of the Paterson strike as fictionalized in *Venture*, for a striker is accused of planting a bomb at a mill owner's home, jeopardizing the strike. Similarly, when Vera throws her stone, she sinks her own stick, but she agrees with Jo and insists on racing again (319). Initially, Vera accuses Jo of being bourgeois, but then proceeds with a childish game of racing sticks in the brook. Vera, the daughter of a Russian immigrant revolutionary, represents the working class while Jo represents the bourgeoisie, although unknowingly. She loses the race, just as the working class loses the strike in Paterson, but she insists on playing again. This was the same

philosophy of the strike as the IWW: continual strikes, “play” battles, until the revolution. Jo’s protests over Vera’s interference reveal the philosophy that history must follow its own natural course. Vera, however, intends to manipulate the race, “bombing” the stick in order to achieve her desired outcome. By the end of the conversation, though, Jo has transformed and expresses the IWW’s vision of class struggle: “races” between the ruling class and revolutionaries must continue and will become more historically pertinent as both sides gather strength, as revealed in the second stick race where they make an agreement that each side can use a certain number of stones:

The second race was five times as thrilling as the first. Jo and Vera dragged themselves up on the beech log after ten minutes, wet and bloody and bleeding from the briars and panting with laughter at each other’s excitement. They had used up all their ten stones, preserving them at first with military caution, and then letting them all fly in a panic. They had splashed and spattered each other from head to foot. Vera had stepped in the brook up to her knee, and Jo, trying to pull her out, had sat down in a patch of blackberries. Their boats had passed and re-passed four times, and now they were clinging together in mid-stream drifting swiftly toward the goal. (320)

The revolution is reduced to a childish game devoid of seriousness, where people are sticks and weapons are stones, and the two sides come out dirty and laughing at each other. In the meantime, the sticks are “clinging together,” locked in battle, “drifting swiftly toward the goal,” or revolution. But even though this is a game of sticks, a

figurative revolution, it does provide some revolutionary ends since Jo and Vera overcome their class differences, establishing the beginnings of a potential relationship.

When Hancock returns from Paterson, his alignment has transformed, and it appears that the radicalism is the choice. Hancock transforms from being Forbes' student to his rival: "He had greeted George Forbes with a strong handshake and a certain feeling of exultation, as though they had suddenly become equals. He looked level in the eyes of his friend because he had been fighting him—he was going to fight him some more—but he did not feel the slightest hostility" (337). Vera's playful stick-race transforms into a real social battle between the bourgeoisie and the working-class, but Hancock, a member of the middle-class himself, becomes Forbes's opponent. Of course, Forbes has been fighting the working-class the whole time, but as revealed in the chapter on the Paterson Pageant, the battle is a proxy war between the silk-workers and representatives of the owners, namely the police, press, and Paterson city administration. Here, Forbes has an opponent that looks him the eye, directly, away from a representative, "transcendental" fight he has pursued thus far. Also, his rival is his apprentice. But Hancock is not straight-forward with Forbes, and like Forbes' spies, Hancock appears before Forbes as a double-agent with the intent of borrowing \$25,000 to establish a defense fund for the leaders of the strikers who have been arrested because of the bomb threat, including Vera. Although Jo has a pang of conscience for turning against his friend, mentor, and class, he is now completely committed to the revolution:

Jo felt a birth of shame in him because he wasn't honest with George Forbes. He loved this man's great talk. The supreme honesty of the talk was what he loved. It was ignoble to answer that honesty with a

deception. And yet Forbes was Jo's enemy. Forbes was raiding his friends' houses, shooting them dead in cold blood, locking them up irresponsibly by the hundred, destroying them, "cracking their heads open before they break for the hills", to use his own expression. George Forbes would stop at nothing. Even his truth-telling was only for aristocrats. He would lie to the masses. Jo was fighting on the side of the masses now.

Why not lie to George Forbes? (339-40)

Despite this inward debate, Jo's decision does not necessarily reveal his own agency so much as the fulfillment of some romance, for Vera is described as a princess locked in a tower: "Jo's noble and beautiful girl was locked up in a cell. She was in a fight. And he was in the fight with her, loyally and absolutely. He was going to get her out of jail first, and then help her win the fight" (339). Even though Forbes is trying to establish a new aristocracy that rids itself of the vestiges of the Middle Ages, here, the medieval romance makes itself absolutely apparent, and while he may be fighting a new incarnation of aristocracy, Hancock is presented as the old guard of aristocracy, the knight in shining armor. But just as Forbes is unlike his noble predecessors, he does not fight the war himself to establish dominance, but by subterfuge, and Jo matches Forbes in the same game, playing both sides.

Hancock's game fails, however, and at the end of the novel, Forbes is aware of Hancock's intended double-cross and reveals his plan to engineer history to his class interests. Furthermore, the strike is lost, and Hancock's compromising nature about setting up a strike fund using the enemy's money is revealed to the strikers as well, ostracizing him from both sides, as Eastman himself would eventually be ostracized from

the American Left. But Hancock's defeat has its lessons: as Haywood explained during the salon, the class-war will not be won by middle-class sympathizers, using capitalist tactics. The class war must be exactly that, a war between a ruling-class aristocracy and a militant, mobilized working-class. In the end, Forbes is presented as an evil mastermind who must be fought with direct force:

That rich brilliant creature, limping about, insane-drunk with quaffing like champagne his burning clear ideal of a true aristocracy—Jo saw him a born-mad monster now. Monstrous in his beauty—yes, that was the word. Jo looked up from the sidewalk at the dizzy pile of stone he had come down from, and thought for a moment that men must definitely go mad up there.

Sit there in the windy sky, delirious with pride of mind and money, while beautiful and kind people, devotedly striving for decency down on the earth, are tried and convicted and thrown into jail for your dirty and criminal tricks! Laugh and sing out musically and call that the rule of the best, if that is the best you can do! Why not all the tall pride piles of stone in the sky sing out about it? Why not sing clear since they really believe it? Why not hand out the flags of kings? Silk Kings, Railroad Kings, Oil Kings, Money Kings? That would be honest. That would be breaking through . . . (354-5)

As they part ways, Forbes warns Hancock how the fight must be fought: “Well, there you are. That's what you get for playing both sides, and both sides weakly. I told you you can't live in No Man's Land, Hancock, and you can't” (389). Forbes, as he often

describes himself, comes clearly out of the fog and states the facts of class struggle and hammers home the lesson of *Venture*: to be a revolutionary, one must throw one's self into the fight whole-heartedly on behalf of whichever side he or she chooses. The final words between Forbes and Hancock complicate the immediate implications of Forbes' lesson when Hancock responds:

“[ . . . ] You may be the first engineer of history, but you won't be the last. If you can use science to shackle all of humanity in the service of your egotism, there'll be men born who will use science to free them. There'll be men with a mind just as madly hard as yours and a great heart, and that's where the big fight will begin. I take my stand right now. I'm a traitor, if Spartacus was a traitor, and Jesus Christ was a fool . . .”

“You're going pretty far, Hancock. You better be careful. I like you personally. You've got something in you that I like—something I haven't got. Poetry, I suppose. Why not stick to poetry?”

“To me poetry is living life, it isn't running away from it,” Jo said.

(390)

Hancock's final words to Forbes reveal the major lesson Eastman intends in *Venture* and that is establishing the basis of the vanguard party which will engineer history through the revolution. Massachusetts plays an even more significant role because halfway through the novel Haywood's character mysteriously disappears from Paterson, but later it is discovered that he is not in “hiding” but continuing the IWW's labor struggles in Lawrence, Massachusetts: “[ . . . ] ‘Bill's not hiding in any hole. He's gone up to Lawrence. We're going to be there before they walk out and not after, the way we was

here” (324). More specifically, Haywood departs the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 to organize the Lawrence Textile Strike of 1912: “Bill Haywood had gone up to Massachusetts [ . . . ] on the invitation of the workers in the woolen mills who were organizing for a strike. His disappearance had nothing to do with the conditions in Paterson, and he was coming right back” (325). Haywood is presented as a messiah of labor organizing, for while he has disappeared from the Paterson scene, as he had done from American scene in 1920, he will return in his glory to organize the winning battle in Lawrence. The problem, here, is that history seems to travel backward where Haywood leaves to organize Lawrence Strike of 1912 even though the historical setting is Paterson of 1913. But this is not merely faulty historicizing on Eastman’s part.

In 1927, Eastman was still supporting the Leninist idea of engineering history and the socialist experiment in Russia. The details of real history do not matter because the reins of history will be in the hands of engineers, who can guide history whichever way they wish. Thus, history can flow backwards as it does in *Venture*, and the story can end with the coming IWW success in Lawrence instead of ending in the tragedy of Paterson. The hopes of this engineering are secured on the one hand by Hancock’s final warning to Forbes about the revolutionary vanguard that will fight for the people, and, on the other hand, because Vera returns to Jo and reconciles with him, the novel ending with a hopeful kiss between the two, the sign of a burgeoning relationship, and a hopeful offspring of a working-class revolutionary and a middle-class poet trained and committed to become an engineer of history.

The poet fails of life exactly because of the purity and greatness of his wish to live. He wishes to live all of life, and in the very nature of the

case he can not choose or take a direction. People realize that the height of the poet's art, great tragedy, represents an inexorable conflict of wills. Do they realize that the poet is condemned to live both sides of the conflict and be torn to death? He can do that in his imagination, and still survive, weakened and made ineffectual, in the real world. But in the real world he can not do that and survive. In order to live he must choose and take a direction, and that is to renounce life in its totality as he thirsts for it.

“His very nature is to fail,” Jo said to himself, and this large and sad idea comforted him. (393)

In terms of Hancock as a proxy of John Reed, Eastman here presents Hancock with a choice of either being an artist or a revolutionary. Reed abandoned his artistic career, even his journalistic career, for the sake of revolution. But even though Reed chose revolution, Eastman seems to imply that it was Reed's artistic nature that “tore him apart” (*ibid*); that is, the artist and the revolutionary cannot coincide. The novel ends ambiguously as to which of these two choices Hancock will choose, but his interest in Vera and his hopes of their reconciling suggest a choice of revolution for the sake of romantic love.

While Eastman's final assessment of Jo maintains the heroic aspects of the poet in some romantic fashion, it also points to the overall problem faced in all of the texts examined thus far. The subjectivity of the novels studied throughout this dissertation is that of middle-class narrators and characters perceiving something outside their experience. Furthermore, in the case of both *The Iron Heel* and *Venture*, the middle class partisans are rather rigidly fixed in the class identities despite their desire to fight on

behalf of the working-class. Interestingly, in *The Iron Heel* and *Venture*, the conversion of the middle-class character centers around a romantic relationship, love driving these characters to abandon their class. But in *Venture*, this prospect becomes significant in that Leninism provides a place for such middle-class revolutionaries, and since the Bolshevik Revolution and its struggle to establish socialism were the most profound influences on Eastman as he was writing *Venture*, it makes sense that he use a real-life middle-class model upon which to perpetuate his romance of revolution and write an elegy in honor of John Reed.

## CHAPTER SIX

## CONCLUSION

Eric Schocket begins *Vanishing Moments*, his study of working-class representations in American literature, with two epigraphs—one from Emerson’s “Self-Reliance” and the other from Marx’s *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, and I wish to depart from the latter epigraph: “They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented.” The “they” of this quote, Schocket implies, is the working class, but Marx was actually describing small landholding peasants. I would like to present this quote more fully, however, because the fuller quote explains Marx’s definition of class:

The small peasant proprietors form an immense mass, the members of which live in the same situation but do not enter into manifold relationships with each other. Their mode of operation isolates them instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. [ . . . ] Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; it directly produces the greater part of its own consumption and therefore obtains its means of life more through an exchange with nature than through intercourse with society. The smallholding, the peasant, and the family; next door, another smallholding, another peasant, and another family. [ . . . ] Thus the great mass of the French nation is formed by the simple addition of isomorphous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes. In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests, and their cultural formation from those of other classes and bring them into conflict with other classes, they form a class. In so far as these small peasant

proprietors are merely connected on a local basis, and the identity of their interests fails to produce a feeling of community, national links, or a political organization, they do not form a class. They are therefore incapable of asserting their own class interests in their own name, whether through parliament or through a convention. They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented. (238-9)

The fuller text of this quote illustrates the complete problem of working-class representation if “the identity of their interests fails to produce a feeling of community.” This dissertation has attempted to show that strikes transcend the various identities that make up a group; strikes are a “conflict with other classes”; strikes assert the working class’ “interests in their own name”; and therefore, strikes are moments in history in which workers “represent themselves.” Alternatively, when workers are represented by people outside of their own class, they become “isomorphous magnitudes” of other identities. These other identities may “produce a feeling of community,” but they distract from forming a class identity, a limitation of “intercourse with society.”

The writers examined in this dissertation were not members of the working class. The historical inspiration for these writers, the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913, was a moment in which the working class represented themselves; however, these writers, despite their sympathy for the working class, represent them not as a class asserting itself but as an amalgam of alternative identifications which, through the representation, does not recognize the working class as a class. They are united as a class, but divided by religion, nationality, ethnicity, and family. At the same time, while the writers work within these other identities to explain the strike, they must contend with the force of

class identification cohered in the strike that challenges these traditional identifications—even if for a brief period of days, weeks, or months.

The works that particularly stand out for facing this challenge are the Pageant and *The Harbor*. The Pageant is most evident in this regard because the workers did represent themselves, on the picket line and in drama, forcing the audience to recognize the working class' challenge to national identities. *The Harbor* slowly reveals a working class that is continually resisted because it lies outside of the narrator's family which has circumscribed his life, and although he resists, Bill is made aware of a working class fighting to represent itself. By the end of *The Harbor*, Bill is not entirely convinced of Kramer's syndicalist project and socialist goals; that is, it is not a story of religious conversion, as in *The Iron Heel*. Instead, the working class becomes a violent rupture in Bill's social perceptions, pointing to a reality he had failed to grasp previously. If we were to apply Marx's quote from the *The Brumaire*, the violent rupture of his consciousness is actually his own class consciousness confronting another class. But he does not cross over to become an organizer; he maintains his place as an observer. It is interesting that a work whose character spends a majority of the novel avoiding the working class is perhaps the best work to explain class struggle.

The novels that inaugurate and terminate this study fail at representing the working class although class struggle was the main inspiration and theme of *The Iron Heel* and *Venture*. Each novel has its own reason for this failure, but the failures unite with a general rule. Since it does not represent a strike directly but instead the larger concept of revolution, *The Iron Heel* struggles with its own abstraction, and the class struggle is communicated through an allegorical code that presents the class struggle

from a theoretical level without having to describe these various classes in a realistic manner that conveys class as an experience. *Venture* does not have the same problem, for it is partially inspired by a strike that relates the particulars of a class struggle, but *Venture's* abstraction, like *The Iron Heel's*, is derived from the theoretical model of Leninism instead of treating the particular class struggle at Paterson for what it was. It is London's anticipation of revolution and Eastman's observations of the Bolshevik Revolution that force the novels into their respective abstractions.

While the strike presents a crystallized moment where class identity makes itself apparent because, as Marx describes in *The Brumaire*, the strike intensifies class conflict, the study of working-class representations outside the context of the strike merits further analysis. More importantly, though, the study of the working class representing themselves in literature needs much more attention, whether in the context of the strike or merely workers writing about their labor and their lives.

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