Imagining Workers: The Working-Class Presence in Late Nineteenth-Century American Literature. (Volumes I and II).

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Imagining workers: The working-class presence in late nineteenth-century American literature. (Volumes I and II)

Watson, William Lynn, Ph.D.
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IMAGINING WORKERS: THE WORKING-CLASS PRESENCE IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE

VOLUME I

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of English

by

William Lynn Watson
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# Table of Contents

**VOLUME I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td></td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Towards a Dialectic of (Working-Class) Presence: Symptomatic Reading, the Realist Fiction, and the Rhetorics of Production</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Realism and the Domestic Ideology: Rebecca Harding Davis and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Discover the Industrial Milieu</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>The Novelist as Agent Provocateur: Henry James, Anarchism, and The Princess Casamassima</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VOLUME II**

| Four    | "A More Impressive Catastrophe": Polyglossia and the Hazards of Authorship in A Hazard of New Fortunes | 217  |
| Five    | What Work Is: The Theme of Management in Sister Carrie                                    | 274  |
| Six     | Imagining Workers: The Theme of "Realism" in the Realist Fiction                        | 337  |

Works Cited ..................................................... 359
Vita .......................................................... 365
Abstract
This dissertation examines how late nineteenth-century American realist and naturalist narratives defuse the working-class drive for class self-determination and political power. The texts examined are Rebecca Harding Davis's "Life in the Iron Mills" (1861), Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's The Silent Partner (1871), Henry James's The Princess Casamassima (1886), William Dean Howells's A Hazard of New Fortunes (1890) and Theodore Dreiser's Sister Carrie (1900). Each work is examined in the context of a specific proletarian insurgency that was taking place at roughly the same time, and sometimes the same place, in which the author was writing. Each text bears the impress of specific attempts by proletarians to represent themselves through activism and mass action. These proletarian attempts at self-representation become historically knowable to the extent that they at once resist and abet literary representation. Thus, while each literary text attempts to denature the emergent working-class presence in the body politic, that presence persists, often as a kind of absent or negative image of itself. Working-class presence inspires disruptions in the usual realist time-order narration, for instance, and it deeply affects plot, setting, characterization and metaphor use. Further, because realism and naturalism define themselves in the literary marketplace through rendering empirically precise, objective pictures of society, these
texts cannot simply erase workers from the narrative. Working-class presence certainly poses a threat to the class privileges of the middle-class authors and readers of nineteenth-century fiction, but it also provides an opportunity for those writers and readers to carve their niche in the emerging power structure of consumer capitalism. Thus instead of eliding working-class presence, realist and naturalist narratives at once depict it and imaginatively manage the threats it poses to the status quo. Realist and naturalist writings are both drawn to and repulsed by the scenes of proletarian insurrection that marked the late nineteenth century. The resultant writing-under-erasure of workers and worker power deeply determines American literature.
Chapter One

Towards a Dialectic of (Working-Class) Presence: Symptomatic Reading, the Realist Fiction, and the Rhetorics of Production
The Political Unconscious, Frederic Jameson's magisterial work on the social significance of narrative, includes some suggestive comments on how social class constitutes not just a political category but also a theoretical category by which literature was organized and can be understood. Jameson charges that the cultural work done by canonical literary writings is to perpetuate only a single voice in . . . class dialogue, the voice of a hegemonic class, (and they) cannot be properly assigned their relational place in a dialogical system without the restoration or artificial reconstruction of the voice to which they were initially opposed, a voice for the most part stifled and reduced to silence, marginalized, its own utterances scattered to the winds, or reappropriated in their turn by the hegemonic culture (85).

Jameson assigns such reconstruction primarily to anthropologists of "essentially peasant cultures" and to those auditors of "the oppositional voices of black or ethnic cultures, women's and gay literature, "naive" or marginalized folk art and the like"(85-86). And he concludes that, to be truly valuable, an account of oppositional voices must transcend institutional sociology's tendency to maroon nonhegemonic cultural praxes on the margins of "mainstream" culture, and instead reinstall them within the "dialogical system of the social classes" (86).

My project in the following essays on American realism and naturalism is to pursue Jameson's definition of class as a theoretical category and reconstruct some of the
oppositional voices, those of workers and their organizations, to which the literary voice of the hegemonic class was originally opposed. Thus I hope to reinstall some important American realist and naturalist writings within a particular, historically-situated "dialogical system of the social classes," a system from which they have been removed, ironically enough, by the so-called "New Historicism" criticism of the last twenty years. These essays on James, Dreiser and other writers from the period of the consolidation of industrial capitalism will examine literary artifacts of the hegemonic culture as articulations of a working-class culture of resistance without which the "mainstream" culture would have never cut its own channel, never attained to its own identity.

The timeliness of an essay on such a working-class presence in American letters has been dictated at least in part by the tendency of literary scholarship in the last decade-and-a-half to shy away from class-based, production centered understandings of the late nineteenth century milieu and concentrate instead on figuring "a culture of consumption and surveillance which sweeps all social relations into a vortex of the commodity and the spectacle" (Kaplan 1).  

1 My introduction below aims to explore and redefine the term "working-class presence." Such a redefinition must take into account the various relevant theoretical, philosophical and historiographic implications of the highly problematic concepts invoked by the term: the metaphysics of "Presence" lurking behind even casual uses of the term; the conflict between the historical existence of the working class and its
Such recent analyses are certainly cogent and rigorous, and they have injected new life into the study of realist and naturalist writings that were abandoned in the stampede to modernism. But the equation of culture, subjectivity and politics purely with consumption fails to account for the working-class presence, a producer's presence, in Gilded Age America's highly polarized class structure. America's universal prescription of "self-fulfillment through voracious consumption" (Lears 304), with its corollary that poverty—the inability to enter into consumption—is an individual failing, not a social one, has certainly tended to defuse place in the dogma of Marxism and other political economy; the clash between American labor economics and the so-called "new labor history" over the role of workers in the industrialization of America. Since these arguments will take a while to unfold, for the next nineteen pages let it suffice to say that "working-class presence" refers to "the impact of workers' consciousness and activities on the rest of the society," the definition given by a leading labor historian in his historiographic and bibliographical survey of the field of American labor history in 1980 (Montgomery 485). For a representative sampling of the last decade's interest in consumption see: Fox, Richard Wrightman and T.J.Jackson Lears, ed. The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980. (New York: Pantheon, 1983). Bowlby, Rachel. Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola. New York, London: Methuen, 1985. Kaplan, Amy. The Social Construction of American Realism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). Lears, T.J. Jackson. No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920 (New York: Pantheon, 1981). Michaels, Walter Benn. The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism: American Literature at the Turn of the Century (Berkeley: University of California, 1985) especially the chapters "Introduction: The Writer's Mark," "Sister Carrie's Popular Economy" and "Corporate Fiction." Vernon, John. Money and Fiction: Literary Realism in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (New York and London: Cornell University, 1984).
class awareness among working people in the last half of the twentieth century. However, the hegemony of consumer culture was simply not as pronounced a century ago. And thus the literature of that time, a time not so distant from our own, is uniquely well-suited for the reformulation of the category of class as a cultural determinant.

To carry out this reformulation, I have attempted to link my readings of five significant works of American literary realism to recent social histories of working-class communities. These histories challenge the long-standing notion that a shared consciousness of class and class struggle never truly emerged in America because of such American conditions as the deeply ingrained ideology of individualism; the safety valve of electoral politics; the economic successes of a relatively a-political labor movement; the social mobility made possible by unprecedented prosperity; and the deep divisions of race and ethnicity that have divided American workers. Recent historians of working-class culture and experience, following the trail blazed by E.P. Thompson's classic *The Making of the English Working Class* (1961), have challenged notions of American exceptionalism and shown that individual American working-class communities and shop floor organizations often functioned to subvert and resist hegemony, sometimes for several generations. These challenges provide a useful new
context for a refiguration of the so-called "rise of realism" in American letters.

Herbert Gutman, for instance, has shown how, "even in the land of Andrew Carnegie and Henry Ford, non-industrial cultures and work habits regularly thrived and were nourished by new workers" who brought with them concepts of community resistant to the hegemonic culture and community formations that nourished those concepts (Gutman 4-5). Further, because the factory floor was generally the first stop for the waves of unskilled immigrants from pre-industrial cultures who flooded American cities in the late-nineteenth century, the "industrializing (of) whole cultures . . . was regularly repeated" in America, since "each stage of American economic growth and development" involved "different first-generation factory workers"(Gutman 14). A synthesis of cultural residualism and nascent class awareness often occurred among these first generation proletarians, who worked at the lowest paying industrial jobs and lived crowded together in substandard conditions close to their work. As Paul Avrich's study of Chicago anarchism so dramatically illustrates, the conditions, both ideological and material, of the workers' ghetto could certainly make it possible, for one generation of workers at least, to breath the air of social revolution.²

² In addition to Avrich and Gutman, see Barrett, James R. Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922 (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1990); Corbin, David Alan. Life, Work and Rebellion in the Coalfields: The Southern West Virginia Coal Miners 1880-1922.
Cut off from any effective political culture, both by entrenched old-line WASP interests and by older, more established immigrant groups, it is not surprising that the resistance to hegemony manifested by such working people often found its initial field of action in the work place, the site of production. Thus, the form this resistance often took, the strike, can be thought as posing alternatives to the hegemonic organization of society around spectacles and commodities so cogently identified by Lears, Bowlby, Michaels and other consumption-focused new historicists.

Late-nineteenth century strikes had ideological repercussions that were felt far from the factory gates. If you read newspaper reports of Gilded Age strikes you rapidly arrive at the realization that such strikes were not perceived as merely an established labor union's way of continuing collective bargaining through other means. Strikes were often reported in the rhetoric of class war. Gilden Age labor unions had not become as politically conservative and deeply committed to the capitalist system as they have become in the last half century. Striking workers, instead of calmly negotiating limited, job-centered issues such as wages, benefits and work control, often took to the streets in mass demonstrations of solidarity, of which the occasional picket

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lines of today's "labor/management" disputes are but the faintest echo. Strikers formed momentary alliances with non-striking workers, shopkeepers and other indirectly affected members of the community, staging the economic dispute in a more public, more politicized arena than that of the collective bargaining table, and often voicing a stridently revolutionary rhetoric that combined equal portions of Jefferson, Lincoln and Marx (see Brecher, Dawley, Corbin). Given such apparent radicalism, I am not exaggerating, I believe, to suppose that very large strikes may have seemed, to the middle and upper classes, a portent of class war.3 Jeremy Brecher, for instance, has shown that although major popular disorders in 1877, 1886 and 1894 began as labor disputes, they rapidly embroiled whole cities and regions in a social struggle that looked as much like a working-class revolt as it did a strike over wages and working conditions. Joseph Dacus's account of the strike of 1877 for instance is rife with allusions to what Dacus sees as the very similar Paris Commune of 1871. Despite the importance of the cycle of working-class insurrections that swept the United States and Europe at the turn of the century, relatively few recent literary or cultural critics have examined the links between

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between working-class resistance and the elite cultural productions contemporary with it.  

June Howard, in her 1988 book *Form and History in American Literary Naturalism*, comes the closest of these few to focusing on working-class resistance as a determining factor in Gilded Age and Progressive Era literature. Howard, for instance, concludes a discussion of John Hay's novel of the great railroad strike of 1877 (*The Breadwinners*) by saying that, "the fear of class warfare . . . must be

Among the few are Cary Nelson, whose book 1991 *Repression and Recovery* uses proletarian cultural productions of various kinds—songs, ballads, poetry, broadsheets, drama—to create a context for reading modernist poetry of the 'twenties, 'thirties and 'forties. Also, Stanley Aronowitz, in *The Politics of Identity* (1992), and Michael Parenti, in his *Make-Believe Media* (1992), are very interested in how movies and TV portray the American working class. Aronowitz brings considerable theoretical sophistication to bear upon contemporary popular culture. Two earlier works touching on letters and labor are less sophisticated. Fay Blake's *The Strike in the American Novel* (1972) catalogs and synopsizes the dozens of American novels which in any way touch upon the industrial setting. The admirable breadth of her survey, however, tends to deprive close readings of major texts of much depth, and her examination of the historical models for the literary strikes is cursory at best. Michael Spindler's *American Literature and Social Change* (1983) is less broad than Blake, concentrating on Norris, Howells, Dreiser, Dos Passos, Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis and Arthur Miller. But his depiction of the "social change" he alludes to in his title tends to stay separate from his readings of the novels and drama. He discusses Howells's *Hazard of New Fortunes* for instance, and he mentions Howells's scandalous appeals for clemency for the Haymarket anarchists, and he mentions that Howells saw the Manhattan traction strike of 1889, but he does not use the latter two social "texts" to really thicken his description of the literary text, mainly, I suspect, because of a pronounced unfamiliarity with the theoretical foundations of new historicism. There is one reference to Frederic Jameson, a passing one in his introduction, for instance, and no citations of Foucault, Althusser or Raymond Williams.
recognized as a powerful element of the ideology of the period. The employing classes might not believe that revolution and chaos were imminent—but they feared it" (Howard 77). And her discussion of the recurrent figure of "the brute" in the naturalism of London, Crane and Norris identifies that figure with extra-literary ideologies which publish the Otherness of workers and distinguish the rational middle-class spectator from the threateningly irrational specter of "proletarianization" posed by the urban, ethnic masses. But Howard's discussion of the class milieu of turn-of-the-century American naturalism relies mainly on broad, synthetic surveys rather than on studies of the specifics of proletarian life, work and communities. In trying to understand naturalism as a feature of national culture, Howard opts for historical descriptions of similar breadth. Her choice is not, however, the result of selecting "inaccurate" sources for her depiction of the naturalist

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5 Howard relies on Robert Wiebe's *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (1967), although she is quite skeptical of its view of history from the top, and Melvyn Dubofsky's *Industrialism and the American Worker, 1865-1920* (1975), a much more worker-centered but still broadly synthetic history. She also quotes extensively from Herbert Gutman's *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (1976), a work that does contain a good deal of the kind of locally-focused social history which I see as an alternative to the unexamined, and perhaps unavoidable, conservative biases of many broadly synthetic surveys. But it is significant that almost all of her citations of this important work refer to the title essay—which attempts a broad overview of trends in the industrial milieu—rather than to the shorter essays on specific worker communities that make up the remainder of Gutman's book.
milieu. As I hope to show below, the current development of historical studies of working-class life generally forces the historically-oriented literary scholar to choose between, on one hand, intensely focused studies of local communities that in effect isolate these relatively autonomous communities from the national culture, and, on the other hand, broad studies of national worker institutions—mainly labor unions—that tend to isolate the workers' institutions from the very cultural determinants—ethnicity, race, gender—which have proven of primary interest to recent historicist critics. The problem of figuring local structures of proletarian resistance and revolt as at once relatively autonomous—that is, as working out localized issues of race, gender, class, and others—and linked in a national, or global, macro-constellation of economic interest, cultural dialogue and class resistance is a problem that my first chapter addresses as a problem of critical theory and historiography. This investment of literary study with theory and social history is also called for by the literature which will be examined: the nineteenth century "realist" novel has been identified by critics of it—from George Lukacs and Mikhail Bakhtin; to Irving Howe and Lionel Trilling; to Pierre Macherey and Frederic Jameson—as in some way an attempt to render whole the social dynamics and particulars of nineteenth century society. But my sense of the social and historical importance of the realist novel has been heightened by the way that
certain works of "realism" were composed amid local instances of proletarian unrest. Thus I argue that we can discern the effects of working-class resistance upon these literary compositions.

First I examine the case of Rebecca Harding Davis, whose short novella "Life in the Iron Mills" (1861) is among the first American literary examinations of industrial life, and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, whose The Silent Partner (1871) is the first American novel to attempt a graphic figuration of proletarian conditions. Stuart Phelps's novel is in direct line of descent from "Life in the Iron Mills," and I argue that in both works the assertion of progressive reform is made possible by the exuberant entry of militant working-class women onto the scene of writing in the Great New England Shoe Strike of 1860. However, besides empowering their literary spokeswomen, these workers articulated a radically democratic self-assertiveness which posed a threat to middle-class notions of feminine domesticity and obedience, at once attracting and frightening middle-class woman writers such as Phelps and Davis, and forcing them to enunciate the anti-feminist domestic ideology of the Cult of True Womanhood as a way of defining and protecting their class privileges.

Another case I will examine concerns the world-wide anarchist movement whose American leaders electrified the
nation during the Haymarket tragedy of 1886-1887. In Chicago in the 1880's, a fleeting moment of proletarian multiculturalism nourished the flowering of genuine class consciousness in the ethnically diverse Chicago workers. Thus, a definite tinge of radical socialism colored the aims of the Chicago Eight Hour Movement in 1886, a year in which an unprecedented number of strikes broke out all over America. The resulting juridical promulgation of the working-class presence at the Haymarket trial powered one of the most virulent "red scares" in American history. At the Haymarket, working-class activism came to be firmly associated, in the popular imagination, with anarchist terrorism and nihilist mass destruction. This association has previously unexplored consequences for our reading of two novels written by major authors during the period of the Haymarket induced "red scare."

Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima* (1886) anticipates the strategies for defining and exorcising the working-class presence effected in Chicago during the Haymarket events. In examining these strategies, however, I show them to not be totally assimilable to the omnipresent surveillance and specularity which Mark Seltzer finds in the novel when he links it with the "city mysteries" genre popular in James's scene of writing. Instead James is driven, finally, to a self-conscious realization that anarchism denies specularity by subverting the style of alienated
subjectivity that specularity needs to function. As a result, James insists, in bad faith, that anarchism merely parodies monadic individualism. Certain narrative disruptions in the novel, however, symptomize the imaginative impact of a militant working class on the alienated working-class individuals James posits as definitive symbols of the working-class presence.

William Dean Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890) reveals the novelist's attempts to rehabilitate himself in the literary marketplace after his scandalous appeal for clemency for the Haymarket anarchists in 1887. Howells's novel carries on a dialogue with an instance of labor radicalism which is going on during the time when Howells is writing the novel: The Knights of Labor's attempt to organize the polyglot car drivers of Manhattan in 1889. The novel and the resultant violent strike divulge thematic and theoretical similarities which Howells must disavow, despite how his art and sense of himself as an artist are driven by the same energies as the strike. Thus, his very strategy for drawing the line between worker insurrection and middle-class culture, a strategy identified by Amy Kaplan, divulges the power of working-class insurgency to author middle-class culture. This is an authority Howells needs to deny. Eventually the task of denial proves so antithetical to Howells's strongly held ideas of realism that his genteel narrative very becomes fragmented, disclosing a hollow
utopianism and a meditation upon historical models of closure in the novel, both of which mark a turning away from history and class turmoil. In James's and Howells's novels, the novelist discovers, explores and attempts to disavow the affinities between his art and the linked figures of anarchism and working-class presence.

The last major novel which I analyze as highly determined by the working-class presence is Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900). Dreiser quite likely saw the bloody Brooklyn Trolley Strike of 1895 first hand as a reporter for the *New York World*. And his novel is particularly redolent of the working-class presence because his widely noted attempt to mingle naturalism and sentiment finally gives way, as I will show, to an engagement with a most decidedly non-literary rhetoric, the rhetoric of scientific management (as in Frederick Taylor, Frank Gilbreth and others). Because this rhetoric, which strongly informs *Sister Carrie*, is such a feature of the response to the working-class presence at the turn of the century, we can identify that presence, and its effects, in the characterizations, narrative contours and other particulars of Dreiser's novel.

Given the ever present threat of insurrection testified to by the Great Uprising of 1877, the Haymarket Riot, the Homestead Strike, the Pullman Strike, and other instances of proletarian unrest, my dissertation takes as its project a
synthesis of working-class history and literature. This synthesis will illustrate the literary influence effected by the presence, an often contumacious presence, of working people in the American body politic. Since my dissertation is conceived as a worker-centered explanation of culture, it features the rearticulation of what will initially seem a somewhat dated premise, one that would be much more agreeable to American Marxist literary critics of the 1930's such as Mike Gold and Granville Hicks than it will be to today's marxian, new historicist inheritors of the tradition of social dialectics: the insurgent, class-conscious American proletariat deeply determined the literary imagination of the late nineteenth century United States. One of my aims will be to trace the trajectory of effects of working-class resistance as it arcs from the labor ghetto into literature; to show how the undivulged, militant worker---hidden in the shadows of narratives that seem to focus on other subject matter---determines canonical literature, sometimes even when that writing is not outwardly concerned with the workers' presence. In these essays, then, American literature comes to bear a marked resemblance to Marx's idea of History, driven by the motor of the working class. The old-fashioned Marxists who would find this a very congenial thesis would be less than happy, however, with the relative autonomy I shall posit for the literary texts. So a certain ironic reflection on "vulgar" Marxism is at work in this essay, a refusal of
simple "reflective" models of earlier Marxists, who stressed the primacy of the economic base over the cultural superstructure. Only if we engage and critique the insights of cultural materialist and marxian critics such as Frederic Jameson, Raymond Williams, Terry Eagleton, Louis Althusser, Pierre Macherey, V.N. Volosinov, Georg Lukacs and Mikhail Bakhtin can criticism rise to the concrete of historical interpretation. Common to these reinventions of material dialectics is the recognition that although all literary works pose a degree of fictionality, they have both bases and manifestations in material history. Literature refracts material history through the agency of semiosis, but the shape of history itself, its apprehension and lived texture, is determined by that same agency of semiosis, an agency best accounted for, and understood, by the literary critic. Thus if we take into account the current historical development of that theoretical praxis most centrally concerned with work, workers and the definition of "history"--the theories of representation put forward by recent inheritors/interpreters of Marxist dialectics--late-nineteenth century American realist narratives resist "vulgar" Marxist categorization: They are neither mere superstructural reflection of the logic of class struggle nor unsuccessful essays at socialist realism, as they would have been defined by Stalinist Prolekult in the 1930's. Literary discourse, even that as ostensibly "unliterary" as the detail-laden social reportage
of a Dreiser or a Howells, necessarily has a life of its own. The text may manifest the knowledge/power synthesis of its ideological macro-setting, but it also continually affronts power, refuses to be totally conscripted by it. Thus my second aim is to preserve that ability to affront, to illustrate how realism and naturalism also emulated, accommodated, reinvented, and augmented the working-class culture of resistance. Realist fictions, even those determined by the kind of deconstructing rhetorical sophistry identified by "consumptionist" new historians, can be seen to advocate working-class contumacy even as they attempt to manage and control it.

The following chapters illustrate ways that various realist fictions mediate between the concrete-historical working class and the inherent self-reflexiveness of literary representation. Faced with the persistence of historical reality, the realist fiction represents the working-class presence in ways not accounted for when contemporary critics show the realist imagination of poverty and industrial degradation to be rhetorically culpable for maintaining those conditions. Instead the concrete-historical working class preserves its own relative autonomy while imagining itself into realist fiction, forcing that fiction to fashion an overtly synthetic rhetoric of working-class Presence while asserting, and preserving, the genetic links of this literary synthetic to the concrete-real of class insurrection.
Concrete-historical class insurrection both confirms the validity of and resists the rhetoric of working-class Presence. The rhetorical Presence constructed by the realist fiction does compromise working-class historical efficacy by entangling it in the literary web of interpretation and representation identified by Seltzer, Kaplan and company. But examined in the light of theory and historiography, working-class historical efficacy can be seen to have not only survived, but indeed to have determined the literary entanglements that are supposed to have suffocated it. Like the extra-literary discourses of law, advertising and political economic which, according to the consumptionists, animate realism and naturalism, the strident working-class refusal to be silenced or scattered also calls into question the unblinking verisimilitude aspired to by realism and naturalism, a verisimilitude associated by earlier readers of these discourses with the founding moment of a radical social conscience. Realist fictions thus may be seen to have value as representation of class struggle only if we read their rhetoric of the Real--specifically their rhetoric of working-class Presence--against its grain. To do this is to reveal the resistance of the concrete-real to the realist fiction, to show how historical workers have produced the literary imagination, despite how, as the last generation of critics of realism has illustrated, this imagination may be premised upon the defusing of class consciousness. Since such against-
the-grain-reading requires us to assert the autonomy of both the working class and the literary narrative, we cannot precede further without establishing a basis for our style of reading. To do this I turn first to the theoretical basis for new historicist readings of realism and naturalism, and then to the origin and meaning of that, probably, unfamiliar concept which has sprinkled this introduction: working-class presence.

2.

In the view of new historicist critics, American realism and naturalism articulate a matrix of available discourses—legal, economic, scientific and mass media—to construct, valorize, and manage an ideologically overdetermined version of historical reality that undercuts class consciousness and eventually subsumes it within the ethos of "voracious consumption" identified by Jackson Lears. Thus, in the realist novel, the threat posed to bourgeois order by industrialism and its discontents often comes to be expressed and contained in simultaneous rhetorical gestures. Such simultaneity determines the realist novel at every level. This recent sense of realism is almost certainly indebted to Frederic Jameson's fertile definition, in The Political Unconscious, of the double-edged historic function of realism.

First, realism undermines pre-industrial ideologies, effecting a corrosive secularization "of those preexisting
inherited traditional or sacred narrative paradigms which are its initial givens" (Jameson 152). In the United States thus, the novel would have in some way channeled those successive waves of pre-industrial immigrants and emigrants away from agrarian cultural and occupational habits into the "Americanized" labor pool of the capitalist economy. Second, the realist narrative undertakes

the task of producing as though for the very first time that very life world, that very "referent"—
the newly quantifiable space of extension and market equivalence, the new rhythms of measurable time, the new secular and "disenchanted" object world of the commodity system, with its post-traditional daily life and its bewilderingly empirical, "meaningless," and contingent Umwelt—of which this new narrative will then claim to be the "realistic" reflection (152).

The realist novel, thus, both corrodes pre-industrial ideologies and replaces them with the rationalized ideology of industrialism, which constitutes individuals into the style of subjectivity necessary for the reproduction of capital and capitalism. Through making the market economy, mechanized time, and the industrial division of labor all appear natural, or "real," the realist narrative both masquerades as an unmediated depiction of the natural order of things and makes that order materially viable. The realist Umwelt, thus, is both the construct of a definite technology for producing/defining knowledge and the only epistemological terrain where that technology will work. Deriving these and similar insights from Jameson, Althusser, Foucault and others, new historicist readings of realist fictions often
feature an insistence that those fictions construct a social reality, both its objects and a way of knowing them, rather than depicting an already present real-concrete world. In their figuration of the working class in American realist and naturalist fiction, however, recent new historicist critics often seem to be in collusion with the ideology they set out to describe. For to emphasize a late nineteenth century American literature whose primary allegiance is to the emerging ethos of voracious consumption is to posit a realism which has essentially emptied itself of class struggle, a problematic position considering the immanent class insurrection testified to at Haymarket, Homestead and the thousand other battlefields of class war that dotted the industrial landscape. However, an alternative theory of reading the relation between history, the working class and the realist fiction can be gleaned from the very theoretical praxis which validated the new historicist version of realism.

A most useful investigation of the social construction of reality is to be found in Louis Althusser's Reading Capital (1968), which influenced Jameson's The Political Unconscious, and Michel Foucault's work of the 70's and 80's. A philosopher would understand Althusser's project to be the desecularization of empiricism and its reinstallation within the religious or idealist myth of reading which it seems to corrode. The texts at the center of Althusser's critique of
empiricism, however, are not the seminal philosophical statements of empiricism—Locke, Hume, Bentham—but certain centrally important works of political economy—Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Karl Marx—in which the contradictions, self-interest and historical situation of empiricism become manifest. This project is of particular interest to critics of realist fiction for two reasons, most obviously because of, to paraphrase Jameson, the bewildering, meaningless proliferation of empirical impressions from which realism and naturalism construct their fictive reality. Secondly, Althusser debunks the naive realist epistemology which makes those impressions seem self-evidently true, and directs us toward a theoretical praxis, or techne, which will permit us to understand that through reading, and only through reading, can history become accessible to the subject.  

4  Techne, as it will be applied below, is my own coinage. It derives from the Greek "techne," meaning art, craft or skill. The synonym in Althusser is "problematic," Althusser's term for the epistemological frame and process which produces and permits a specific registration of knowledge. "Problematic" emphasizes the difficulty—the problematic nature—of conferring the status of an objective science on any theoretical praxis which tends to reproduce, uncritically, the presuppositions of the hegemonic ideology. In my usage techne will have pretty much the same meaning, except that I wish to assert the positive, creative fluidity of knowledge—the fact that it can be worked upon—equally with Althusser's predominantly negative, corrosive critique of its institutional origins. To echo Marx on the making of history, people make their own knowledge, but they do not always make it exactly as they wish. Techne emphasizes the work, the human agency through which knowledge is produced. "Problematic" denies the possibility of such agency.
Of most particular importance to this dissertation, then, is how Althusser's critique of empiricism is analogous to the reading of realist literature as an articulation of working-class energy and identity. According to Althusser, Marx's theory of surplus value emerged as much out of his detection of a certain slipperiness in the rhetoric of political economy as it did from his study of the royal factory inspections and other supposedly "objective" data. To account for this slipperiness, Althusser figures the textual effects of the working class in a discourse, classical liberal political economy, which is in some way premised upon the elision of working class power and self-determination from history. According to Althusser Marx's reading of political economy resists the rhetorical intentions of that discourse. This act of resistant reading is key to Marx's drive to theorize the value of labor as a category for organizing all perception of the capitalist economy. Althusser construes Capital as epistemology, fitting Marx's economic readings and writings to the tasks of discourse analysis, but without removing them from the context of concrete-historical tasks Marx set for himself: namely the empowerment of the working class. Reading Capital ponders how labor could be figured, in classical liberal political economy, as the producer of wealth, but not be revealed as the source of surplus value. Working-class historical efficacy is written under erasure in that discourse as a
result of a congenital inability to reveal that surplus value, the source of wealth, is extorted from the proletarian after s/he has already produced enough value to maintain his/her power to labor. Althusser argues that at this crucial point in its disquisition political economy protects its own prerogatives by providing the correct answer to a question that has never been posed: "What is the value of labor?" As Althusser has it,

The original question as the classical economic text formulated it was: what is the value of labor? Reduced to the content that can be rigorously defended in the text where classical economic produced it, the answer should be written as follows: 'The value of labor ( ) is equal to the value of the subsistence goods necessary for the maintenance and reproduction of labor ( ).' There are two blanks, two absences in the text of the answer (22).

To return the repressed content--"power"--to either of those blanks, Althusser reasons, would be to risk identifying a contradiction between the value of labor power and the value created by the expenditure of that labor power. In Marx, of course, these values are not the same: labor power is the only commodity whose consumption creates more value than it is worth. This is a contradiction which political economy could not identify because to do so would be to provoke a "complete change in the terms of the problem" addressed by political economy (Marx in Althusser 22). Althusser argues that Marx was able to read the concrete role of the working class in history--here, the creation of surplus value--because of textual characteristics of the rhetoric of
political economy. In the instance we have been examining, the tautological answer to a question which was never posed writes the working class under erasure at the point in classical liberal political economy when it should be most overtly legible, where it should be most accountable to the terms of political economy's empiricist epistemology of the visible. Working-class historical agency—the ability of the proletariat to be its own agent in pursuit of historical change—is erased by the tautology Althusser identifies, but the terms of that erasure reveal that agency nonetheless. Althusser thus understands what he takes to be the great critique of political economy—Karl Marx's Capital—as at once historically-situated and driven by the ahistorical impetus of intertextuality.

Borrowing from Jacques Lacan's rereading of Freud in the context of linguistics, Althusser dubs such rhetorical slippage as we have been discussing "symptoms," applying the psychoanalytic description of the physical manifestations of neuroses to the textual manifestations of political economy's inability to acknowledge the self-confirming presuppositions of its own theoretical praxis. For Althusser, and for Marx's reading of Smith and Ricardo, the importance of classical liberal political economy derives from these symptoms. They promulgate the repression of self-consciousness of the gap between the fully rigorous science political economy pretended to be and the historically-situated ideology it
revealed itself to be to Marx. Further, Althusser argues that it was primarily because of these rhetorical symptoms that Marx was able to arrive at his theory of surplus value, the cornerstone of Marxist political economy. Symptomatic reading provided Marx with textual paradigms for his insights into value. Classical liberal political economy made the concept of surplus value thinkable to Marx not because of what that discourse revealed but through what it feared to reveal. Thus Althusser illustrates an instance where a reader, Karl Marx, could access historical reality, not through what amounts to a religious faith in mimesis that violates the self-interest of the text, but because of the definitive characteristic of discourse itself—derridean differance, slipperiness, intertextuality—which, according to post-structuralist theories of language makes history inaccessible to thought. Althusser's positing of the discourse of political economy as both loyal to ahistoric linguistic play and an unwilling informant of the historical scene of writing was crucial in the founding of new historicism, since it suggested ways for critics to read historiography, literature, political economy and other discourses as a thick description of ideological definitions of historical reality. These definitions, because of the sort of overdetermined complexity Althusser finds symptoms of in classical liberal political economy, tend to betray the concrete historical reality ideology imagines. That is, ideology bears within itself so many traces of the
concrete real—often as a way of denying it—that far from constituting a seamless, "false consciousness" of history, it can also be read, against its will, as historical description. Literature is key in understanding how ideology betrays historical reality.

In his *A Theory of Literary Production*, Pierre Macherey identifies literature as a series of negotiations between socio-economic determination and the autonomous linguistic constructs of the literary imagination, thus at once preserving literature from vulgar "reflectionist" descriptions and from idealist notions that literature, by definition, refuses historical description. Myra Jehlen's description of Macherey is particularly succinct: Macherey suggests that

the literary representation of ideology, in giving it the specific shape of this story or that drama, in turn enables the work to project, by juxtaposition, its own alternative structures. That is, the effort to embody ideology in literature can expose some of its problematical or controversial aspects. (Jehlen 9)

Applying Macherey's dialectic of ideology and literary autonomy to realist and naturalist literatures, then, reveals them as neither thoroughly verisimilar—as in the realism posited by the muckrakers and the theorists of "proletarian" literature—nor primarily self-referential—as in consumptionist realism, where that discourse refers mainly to another, larger, master discourse of spectacle, consumption and power. To recognize that non-verisimilar structures in realist literature also reference the working-class
experience of Necessity requires that we reconstruct the realist rhetoric of working-class Presence in that literature as the kind of negotiation between language and history posited by Macherey. If we reconceive this rhetorical working-class Presence—which the realist fiction constructs as a rhetoric of Otherness—within this kind of dialectic category, we can preserve working-class historical self-determination from those twin rubbish heaps of theoretical praxis: naive historical realism and ahistorical nominalism. For an efficacious working-class can be neither a logocentric Presence essential to a myth of symmetrical historical "progress"—as in both the classical liberal political economy debunked by Althusser-after-Marx and in the debased Marxist-Leninism discredited by the "collapse" of Soviet-style state socialism—nor a mere reflex of some ahistoric master narrative of power and knowledge—as in Foucault and the critics of consumption. To recover the working-class promise of historical change from that vortex of commodities and spectacles which has devoured it, we must co-opt the idealist category of Presence and refigure it not as a logocentric metaphysics but as a corrosive, historicized dialectic. This dialectical working-class presence will allow us to understand the role of the working class in history and discourse while asserting the relative autonomy and historical agency of both literature and the working class. Thus, realist and naturalist literature can likewise be saved
from reduction to an either more or less effective Soviet-style socialist realism without the complete surrender of working-class self-determination to the "market forces" and ideology of ascendent consumer capitalism posited by contemporary "consumptionist" critics of the nineteenth-century milieu. Again, Louis Althusser provides us with the necessary terms for this creative subversion of the category of Presence.

According to Reading Capital, the unmediated knowledge of historical reality supposedly attained to by the empiricist process betrays "the conception of knowledge underlying the object of knowledge which makes knowledge what it is"(34). Althusser demonstrates that a metaphysics of Presence, what he calls "the religious myth of reading"(17), provides empiricism with its conception of knowledge. Empiricism, for all its scientific mummmery, can often be seen to abstract the "pure essence" of the Real from its "impure essence" by acting out of a quasi-religious faith that all knowledge has been preordained in the object. To arrive at this equation of empiricism with Presence, however, we first need to understand the theoretical work done by the empiricist techne.

The empiricist essay at Knowledge, according to Althusser, takes as its major task to separate, in the object, the two parts which exist in it, the essential and the inessential--by special procedures whose aim is to eliminate the inessential real (by a whole series of sortings,
sievings, scrapings and rubbings), and to leave the knowing subject only the second part of the real which is its essence, itself real. Which gives us a second result: the abstraction operation and all its scouring procedures are merely procedures to purge and eliminate one part of the real in order to isolate the other (36).

Empiricism, in other words, labors long and hard (scouring, sorting, sieving, scraping and rubbing) to purge those parts of the real it deems "inessential," only to then insist that not only is the resultant perfectly polished gemstone of "the Real" a natural occurrence, but also that the theoretical work that went into its production never happened. Althusser argues that the empiricist epistemology which presents itself as having revealed the essence of the object has in fact produced the object as a product of its own "peculiar real system" of thought, a system "established on and articulated to the real world of a given historical society" (42). The empirically verified "real object," for all its importance to the establishment of the science of political economy (and of the social texture of realist and naturalist fictions) becomes identified as an idealist fallacy, the product of a historically-situated techne intent upon reproducing the material and ideological preconditions for its existence.

It must be stressed, however, that this overdetermination of perception (and literature) does not negate the presence and efficacy of the concrete-real, although it problematizes, as it should, the notion of the (empirically) Real. Instead it forces us to conceptualize
literature as a synthesis of ideologically validated notions of the Real rather than as either ahistorical "pure technique" (Henry James) or as "unmediated" social reportage (Theodore Dreiser). Thus, it should be noted that Althusser follows the Marx of the *Grundisse* in arguing for a distinction between the "real-concrete, the real totality . . . which survives in its independence" outside of thought and the "object of knowledge" which betrays in its every lineament the *techne* of its making (*Reading Capital* 41). Further, as Althusser expands upon in his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," since individual subjectivity itself is a product of cultural institutions, the subject can never confront the "real" object *qua* object. Subjectivity is always already ideologically determined. Hence, even the scientific critic, produced as s/he is as an expression of institutionalized *techne*, can only approach the real-concrete of history asymptotically. To "know" an object means to perform the act by which knowledge is produced upon an object, changing it irrevocably. Further, the object always resists the alchemy of that process.

Taken as the sum of its own ostensibly secularizing "scientific" rhetoric, empiricism seems perfectly content with the assertion that no object can ever be reduced to some indwelling Essence which expresses a harmonious universal totality. However, when divulged as the sum of its *symptoms*, or as a historically-situated *techne*, empiricism identifies
just such an essence in the object—especially in the related discourses of realist literature and classical liberal political economy—as a precondition of its production of harmonious social totality within prescribed registers. Althusser identifies this concept of the unsullied presence of knowledge in the object as a general expression of the "religious myth of reading," because it is based in a kind of faith in the existence of what is essentially a divine Presence at once outside of and essential to the object, a Presence which precedes human knowledge and guides it towards a progressive unveiling of its holy secrets. Despite its insistence that it is relaying the hard facts of material existence, empiricism continually reveals itself as a metaphysics of Presence, a philosophical idealism in which all human work, will and agency become a kind of footnote to the Logos.

Such a notion of Presence can be shown to have animated United States academic knowledge of the working class for most of the twentieth century, and the construction of working-class Presence in realist and naturalist literature may be seen to both antedate and fulfill this particular institutional definition of knowledge. If we historicize the key term in this equation—Working-class Presence—we have a good place to begin dialecticizing the metaphysics of Presence through which empiricism and realism register the working class. This historicizing of the term must take place
simultaneously in three related contexts: that of the ongoing debate between old and new styles of American labor history; that of literary theories of signification we have been discussing; and that of the realist and naturalist literature itself, through which the working class is refracted into, and refracts, the history of the present moment.

3.

In the sense that working-class presence is understood outside of the definition emerging in this essay it is not really an esoteric term. It may be interpreted, simply enough, as "the impact of workers' consciousness and activities on the rest of the society"(Montgomery 485). E.P. Thompson's use of the phrase "working-class presence" in his classic The Making of the English Working Class (1961), however, signalled the beginning of a distinctly new era in the writing of worker history, especially in America. For American labor historians, Thompson's study suggested alternatives to the institutional, or Wisconsin School, of American labor history, which concentrated almost exclusively on the economic activities of trade and industrial unions. Conversely, Thompson wrote the history of English working

people as a dialectic of their cultural and social activities, their communities, religious and family life, seeing their political and economic organizations as registrations of those energies rather than as aloof from them. "New Labor History," both in America and Britain, has tended to concentrate on the cultural and communal aspect of workers' lives, rather than assuming, as did the Wisconsin School labor historians, that workers' existence was primarily bound up in their economic institutions. Working-class history, according to Thompson, can only be understood if careful attention is paid to the evolution of working-class culture and social activities and to the effect of this evolution on the general cultural, social and political context--this would include literature--of which it is a part. By examining work, culture, community and the economy as parts of an ongoing dialectic, Thompson's approach stands in direct contrast to the economic-centered studies of American labor history which have defined the field.

The writing of institutional labor history begins with the ground breaking work of John R. Commons and the Wisconsin School of Labor Economics at the turn of the present century. Institutional labor history focuses on the evolution of trade and labor unions, their economic function, and organizational structures. Such studies, very often, group working people together within one of two related economic categories. They are a component of a particular labor market or participate
in the collective bargaining whereby "management" and "labor" negotiate what are primarily job-centered issues: wages, benefits, working conditions. In both these cases working people are known, primarily, as they are already represented by a labor union, or "institution." Non-institutional aspects of workers' lives assume secondary import in such studies: the condition of non-unionized workers, and proletarians' localized social and cultural activities are not of central importance to traditional labor economists, nor were such aspects of American workers' lives as ethnicity, race, gender, and the impact of labor socialism and other forms of radicalism. All through the first half of this century, labor economists such as Commons, Phillip Taft and Selig Perlman were recognized by government, business and labor union leadership as authorities on the past, present and future role of working-people in the economy. And the economic role of American workers thus posited came to take precedence over all other factors in "mainstream" knowledge of the American working class.

New labor historians, on the other hand, those influenced by class-conscious English historians such as E.P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm, have shifted the focus away from purely economic subjects to include such neglected factors as community, race, gender, religion and ethnicity, and their findings have often led them to a stern reappraisal of institutional labor economics. Herbert Gutman, for
instance, argues that "narrowly economic" Wisconsin School studies of labor unions and labor markets "neglected much of importance about the American working population" and tended "to spin a cocoon around American workers, isolating them from their own particular subcultures and from the larger national culture"(10). And Alan Dawley castigates John R. Commons as "an efficiency expert in finessing class struggle"(184) who restated "classical liberalism in the context of industrial and corporate capitalism"(183) with such a singlemindedness that "historians must recognize and weigh carefully the scholarly prejudices of his political orientation"(184). Seen in the light of some of the post-structural ideas about language, Presence and empiricism we discussed in connection with Louis Althusser, this historiographic debate assumes a revealingly familiar shape.

On the one hand, institutional labor economists, tending to figure the American worker almost entirely in terms of the economic activities of trade unions, can be seen to rearticulate the false "realism"—that "religious myth of reading"—which Althusser identifies Marx identifying as the determinant of classical liberalism. Extra-institutional worker activities—culture, community, radical politics, sexual and racial energies—tend to become part of the "inessential dross" of the empirical knowledge-object. Thus labor unions assume the status of a kind of Logos—the Sign which incarnates the thing itself—for working people. In
institutional analyses, the alphabet soup of labor-signifiers—such signs as AFL-CIO, UMWA, ILGWU, USWA—utterly represents the referent, the American working people, making them knowable as the inscription of a metaphysics of Presence. With this idealist metaphysical Presence a precondition of institutional knowledge of workers, the Thompson-ian cultural process by which classes come to know and articulate their identity is sieved, screened and otherwise purged from knowledge. According to institutional labor history, class consciousness never happens in America because American worker history seems by its own irresistible logic to culminate in the formation of the "modern" labor union, an institution by which worker demands for a better way of life are voiced only in the marketplace.

So pervasive has this sense of the "naturalness" of the modern labor union become that the imprimatur of institutional labor history's hidden theoretical work—its seining and screening of the "inessential" parts of proletarian history from the labor-logos—has eventually come to be an indelible mark on American workers' experience of Necessity itself. For example, the merger of the traditionally conservative AFL and the Communist-influenced CIO in 1955 may be seen to mark a signal triumph of the Wisconsin School's drive to reference all knowledge of workers to one great sign. This Logos, however, can be produced only following the repudiation, by the CIO, of all
factions not readily assimilable to the AFL agenda. Thus the AFL's political quietism and acceptance of the right of management to manage are accepted by CIO leadership in exchange for higher wages, more benefits and better working conditions . . . for union members. Given such an exchange, the CIO's deeply embedded Communist elements constitute an inessential part of the working-class Presence. Those unions which proposed worker self-management, or advanced a politics to ensure social justice for all workers (regardless of union affiliation) had to be, to apply Althusser's critique of empiricism, purged and eliminated so that the "essential" part of the "real" working class--a relatively conservative, job-centered labor union--could be isolated and installed in the pantheon of the Real. The working class became known, to the exclusion of all other content, by the universal fusing of economic referent to acronymic signifier carried out by the mega-union. The possibility that the AFL-CIO merger in fact may represent the inability of working people to effectively organize themselves in any meaningful fashion appears irrelevant. A symptomatic reading of labor historiography thus divulges the AFL-CIO as a knowledge-object, the product of a specific, historically-situated techne: the Wisconsin School, with its class-defusing assimilation of the potential power of the working class to a metaphysics of Presence. From within the techne of labor economics, such institutional labor-logos appear to be always
immanent in the working population, always appear to be seeking fulfillment in the marketplace. But this appearance is a symptom of the fact that the "labor union," the "marketplace" and the "working population" are all mutually self-confirming parts of the rhetorical structure by which the institution of labor economics itself proclaims and defends its own self-propagating version of the Real. Thus, institutional labor economics produces a stable knowledge of the industrial setting through imagining that the fixed, relatively immutable dichotomy of collective bargaining—labor unions versus capitalist managers—takes up all the theoretical space in which the work of figuring the historical process of class can take place, past, present and future. The stable (one wants to say ahistorical) knowledge of workers produced by labor economics (that all workers have sought to realize their historical identity in a job-centered labor union) defines its particular macro-economy of representation. Perlman, Taft and Commons each wrote multi-volume histories of the entire American labor "movement." On the other hand, new labor historians begin with the deconstruction of this dehistoricized comprehension and introduce an economy of representation which is decidedly decentered.

Catalyzed by E.P. Thompson's insight that the process whereby class becomes a presence in the body politic is carried out at innumerable cultural, communal and social
sites, new labor historians discover the once-stable Logos of institutional labor representation as an empty sign, a constructed center for what now appears as a decentered, perpetually realigning geography of localized, overdetermined labor parole. The discovery and figuration of this landscape makes the logocentric concept of Presence, so favored by the Wisconsin School, extremely problematic. The discovery of the almost infinite variety of American working peoples' experiences has deepened our sense of the working people's lives that went on oblivious to collective bargaining, and it has also revealed that many proletarian "institutions" themselves were in fact deeply determined by the very cultural, racial and sexual energies deemed inessential by the Wisconsin School. And herein lies both the great value and the limit to value of the New Labor History. For as they avoid idealizing all worker history into a mere expression of the logic of rationalized collective bargaining, new labor historians find themselves snared in a near infinity of local overdeterminations. The "new history" of working folk strains to reconcile vastly different textures of lived experience: How, for instance, can a politically connected community of Irish-American dock workers be related to a group of disenfranchised African American butcher workmen; or to a huge auto factory dominated by racist white migrants from Kentucky hill country? In its very economy, its hypercritique of local overdeterminations, new labor history tends to
shatter the widespread historical efficacy promised by working-class consciousness—which is at least known by its symptomatic absence from institutional histories—into a series of locally autonomous monads. David Corbin's history of the West Virginia coal fields, for instance, is invaluable in that it portrays the massive coal field war of 1919-1921 as the desperate action of class conscious industrial workers rather than a byproduct of parochial mountaineer traditions of gunplay and moonshine. But the decentered economy of this insight—its finely focused insistence on the validity of local determinants—does not encourage the forging of conceptual links between the coal field wars of West Virginia in 1919-1920 and similar warfare elsewhere: in Pennsylvania in the 1870's; East Colorado in 1913-1914; 1930's Harlan County Kentucky. Neither does Corbin do much to link his miners with the national paroxysm of Red 1919. These observations are not intended as criticisms of either the scope or execution of Corbin's fine book, but they point to what is surely one of the great ironies of recent intellectual history: American new labor historians seem to have destroyed the conceptual category "working class" to save it from the class-denying metaphysics of Presence which animated American institutional labor history. This historiographic scorched earth policy, however, is not without alternatives. And again, it is through the cultural dialecticizing of the category of Presence, rather than
through its obliteration, that working-class efficacy may be asserted and preserved.

If we place the Thompsonian description of working-class life made relevant by the American scene—with its infinite variations of place, race, gender and community—with the Althusserian framework, we can devise a dialectic of working-class presence which negotiates between the two poles described above: labor economy's institutional logocentrism, which is premised upon workers' perpetual reinstallation within idealist categories that deny working-class historical self-determination; and the new labor historians' deconstruction of "class" and "class consciousness." To corrode both the religious myth of reading and its new historical backlash Althusser offers us the notion of "structural totality." In Althusser's techne, the Presence-centered object of knowledge is examined as a structure of relative autonomy, not merely an expression of a greater totality. Such structures, of course, can present almost any conceivable form to the analyst: a word, a poem, a book, an individual life, a community, a social class, a nation. But the resulting analysis, to approach knowledge, must be conducted so as to show both the autonomy and the interrelatedness of the structures being examined. Althusser destroys the notion of Presence to preserve it. While determined, in the last instance, by macro-economic imperatives, Althusserian structures work upon macro-economic
determinants in ways peculiar to their own historical and ideological situation. As an object of knowledge the Althusserian structure is overdetermined, both by the resistance of its own concrete component to any knowledge-technology and by the self-preserving presuppositions of the particular techne brought to bear upon it in the historical moment of its existence. But this autonomy is not isolating, since wider determinants also works upon it, determinants such as culture, the ideological state apparatuses and, in the last instance, the macro-economy.

To credit E.P. Thompson's view, the English "working-class presence" provides a paradigm of such dialectical structures. Figured as a historical process by which some people "feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves and as against other men" rather than as a static "structure" or "category," working-class presence comprised an always only partially knowable unity of "a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material of experience and in consciousness"(9). Instead of imagining exhaustive knowledge of the working class to be somehow immanent in history if only the "inessential" elements of its existence may be "refined" away (as would the empiricism described by Althusser) Thompson discovers class as a dialogical construct. As a conceptual category it cannot pre-exist class conflicts: "we cannot have two distinct classes, each with an independent being, and
then bring them into relationship with each other," he argues (9). Instead class is "something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships" (9). This dialectical working-class presence was both undeniably local—tens of thousands of militant workers facing off against petit bourgeois and nouveau bourgeois militia in Manchester on 16 August 1819, for instance—and a universal conceptual category by which, to continue with the example, all English people came to perceive the Peterloo Massacre as a symbol of the human cost of industrialization. This dialectical working-class presence deconstructed the dichotomy between national consciousness and the localized "raw material of experience" (Thompson 9). It signified proletarian solidarity and bourgeois anxiety, and was both the result of a persistent working-class culture of resistance and the inspiration for unprecedented bourgeois unity. The working-class presence became by "1832 the most significant factor in British political life" (Thompson 12) because it directly entered the national political culture, for instance, in the Parliamentary elections for Westminster in 1807 (Thompson 454-472). The dialectical working-class presence thus constituted came to determine the English megaculture from the top down, and is felt in all aspects of the national culture, rather than being isolated in a sparsely populated landscape of autonomous local phenomena, as too often happens in American new labor history. It is, however,
this very isolation which necessitates the study of United States literature if the role of the working class in historical change is to be retheorized.

The basic geographic and ethnic differences between English and American workers may be seen to account for the different registrations of working-class power in the respective political unconsciousnesses: English workers were ethnically homogenous and geographically compact, while American immigrant and emigrant workers found themselves in a vast country and were divided by widely dissimilar cultural backgrounds. However, if English working-class power became overtly visible in politics, working-class power in America, deprived with few notable exceptions of a national political voice, might be expected to be even more pronounced in American culture. For a national culture, by its very definition, attains to a certain ubiquity, and if it speaks in that "single voice . . . of a hegemonic class" described by Jameson (152), that voice itself can be seen to symptomatize the erasure of certain cultural and political energies not assimilable to hegemony, as Althusser sees happening in classical political economy's "answer for which no question is posed." The decentered quasi-Thompsonian working-class presence described by new labor history may register a near infinity of local contumacies, and an underground knowledge of this widespread resistance—as in a segregated working-class culture—may corrode the logocentric
empiricist imagination by which workers are known and
governed. But because American working-class culture and
politics were seldom, if ever, articulated nationally, worker
resistance to hegemony has tended to remain fragmented,
local. Thus it is in the attempt of the realist fiction to
silence and scatter the very viable working-class culture of
resistance that the American working-class presence becomes
knowable. For only in dialogue between localized working-
class resistance and national culture can such a dialectical
presence take shape. Now, the reinstallation of American
national culture, especially realist and naturalist fictions,
within the context of working people's resistance to hegemony
can be invested with what I see as its considerable
theoretical and historiographic significance. Only one more
theoretical question needs to be posed before we can proceed
with close readings of texts: how does the dialectic of
(working-class) presence manifest itself in a discourse whose
existence is premised upon its effective absence?

4.

The answer to this question is to be found in the very
process of knowledge through which that absence is contrived.
For, while the realist fiction naturalizes both the world of
bourgeois industrial capitalism and the methods of knowing
it, the synthetic knowledge of working-class contumacy—or
working-class Presence—it produces has a curious double
existence, posing an extreme contradiction for the realist
techne. For although hegemonic knowledge of working peoples' resistance emerges as a construct of that epistemology, the real-concrete working class survives in its relative independence outside the realist Umwelt. It poses a conceptual limit and a material resistance to that world, but is also essential to its material existence. However, this survival of the working class outside the ideology of working-class Presence, and the resistance posed by this survival, need not necessarily derive from any romanticized ability of real-concrete working people to resist incorporation into the capitalist categories of mechanized time, division of labor and commodity fetishism by which workers are, in classical Marxist thought, "alienated" from the social importance of their labor. Rather, the ideology of working-class Presence is a conceptual product of the same process through which empiricism produces and marks the knowledge-object it can know. Thus, if empiricism relegates the resistance posed by the working class to the realm of the inessential it may be seen to do so out of its own self-defining devalorization of the conceptual category of work. For, in Althusser's description, empiricism conceals the multitude of scouring, scraping and purging operations through which it isolated the "essence" of the Real from its "inessential" elements. Work is something that the empiricist techne is constitutionally averse to revealing. In relation to the problem of the independent existence of the working
class, therefore, empiricism has a difficult time sorting subject from object. For it attempts to conceal the theoretical work that goes into producing the working-class \textit{Presence} as an object of knowledge, while also pointing to that object of knowledge as an explanation of how the work that goes into the construction of industrial age society gets done. In relation to the working class, empiricism's work of concealment is analogous to and simultaneous with its work of revelation. Thus the working class can be reduced to the "dross" of the Real only to the extent that the Real risks revealing itself as a fiction. Neither the work of knowledge concealed within the empirico-realist knowledge-object nor the knowledge of work posed by the concrete-historical working-class can enter into the supposedly natural/actually mythical objects that make up the empirico-realist fiction.

Working-class \textit{Presence}, as a category of hegemonic thought, may be constructed to manage the real-concrete working class, but this category continually, visibly, deconstructs itself. The nineteenth century realist fiction is an offshoot of empiricism in both method and ideological intention. It might be identified as an instance in which empiricism will risk revealing itself as an imaginary construct because of the problematizing of mimesis, the lack of scientific "seriousness," traditionally attendant upon any "literary" endeavor. Consequently, the realist fiction is not
only bounded by working-class resistance to the Real but must also invite that resistance into its own discourse as a way of validating its own peculiar registration of the Real. This is a moment of danger for realism, and realism survives through a continual repression of any survival of the real-concrete which resists its naturalizing drive back into the political unconscious of the age. Thus the very construction of the (fictive) Real threatens the mass-mediated spectacle of consumption--through which class-consciousness is subsumed--with a kind of perpetually returning knowledge. This is not a knowledge of the class Other--since knowledge of Other can always be assimilated to hegemonic desires as working-class Presence--but an alternative knowledge from the Other, a dialectical presence which reorders the (fictive) Real.

The psychoanalytic metaphor--of the return of the repressed--that determines the preceding paragraph is not casual. It is imminent in much of the founding discourse of new historicism: Althusser, Foucault, Jameson. And I wish to explore one example of this writing as a way of further understanding the paradoxical ability of a knowledge object--working-class Presence--to resist assimilation into the ideology that produced it. Perhaps the best precedent for the attempt to figure the novel as a symptom of the social unconscious is to be found in Frederic Jameson's attempt, in The Political Unconscious (1981), to "restructure the
problems of ideology, of the unconscious and of desire, of representation, of history, and of cultural production, around the all-informing process of narrative" (13). By thus designating narrative as "the central function or instance of the human mind" (13), Jameson discovers narrative as a kind of ideological battleground, the master literary code of the age of bourgeois ascendancy, and thus a site on which vital social dialectics—especially of class, but also of race, gender and others—manifest, conflict and resolve themselves. In Jameson's handling of the industrial age narrative—especially its privileged form, the novel—narrative emerges as a socially symbolic act, a kind of social, and hence political, unconscious. Like its counterparts in the writings of Freud and Lacan, Jameson's political unconscious seethes with imaginary and symbolic raw materials for, to extend the psychoanalytic metaphor, the dreamwork of culture. Jameson dubs these raw materials ideologemes, and his description of the ideologeme is particularly provocative:

an amphibious formation whose essential structural characteristic (is) . . . its possibility to manifest itself either as a pseudoidea—a conceptual or belief system, an abstract value, an opinion or prejudice—or as a protonarrative, a kind of ultimate class fantasy about the "collective character" which are the classes in opposition" (87, emphasis mine).

Such ideologemes constitute the "ultimate raw material" of all cultural work, Jameson concludes (87). Divulged as a "fantasy about the collective character" of working-class contumacy, the working-class Presence in the political
unconscious comes into being in the class *langue* of James, Howells, Dreiser and other producers of the realist fiction. But its coming into being is refracted into a rhetorical component in the realist fiction—just as the rhetorics of law, science and advertising are in the consumptionist readings of realism and naturalism which form the critical context of the present essay. This knowledge of/from Other derives from another, alternative rhetoric which existed in the scene of realist writing, one which I have come to designate the "rhetoric of production," because it is overtly production-centered.

In its many incarnations—feminist, socialist, anarchist, liberal and conservative—the rhetoric of production called for expanding the economy of plenty to include a producing class still predominantly mired within the kind of economy of scarcity detailed by Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) and other depictions of the lower depths. The rhetoric of production through which the dialectical working-class presence becomes known emulates working peoples' collectives in that it too resists being swept into the vortex of the emergent consumer culture. Counter-cultural formations such as the Knights of Labor, the anarchist International Working People's Association, and the Industrial Workers of the World, as well the innumerable ethnic-dominated trade unions, proposed that radical adjustments made at the point of production could usher in a
new golden age of efficient production, political stability and universal freedom from want. The great strikes which convulsed the industrial landscape constitute one form taken by this rhetoric. And in the following essays we will "drive the wedge of the concept of a text" (Jameson 16) into some of these strikes in a way that will reveal the mutual complicity of literature and labor insurrections. Both engage in a process of representation. The labor union, for instance, seeks to represent and in some way empower workers; the novelist seeks to represent them as well, often for the purpose of establishing his/her credibility as a purveyor of the Real in a literary marketplace determined by the genre of realism. Yet the rhetoric of production is not inextricably linked to leftist and labor radicalism. For simultaneous with this radical production-centered critique, there arose another densely articulated response to class tensions which sought solutions to social unrest through the enhancement of production. This response, scientific management, however, is usually associated with "Progressive" politics—rather as a response to radicalism rather than an affirmation of it—and finds its best known expression in Frederick Winslow Taylor's classic Principles of Scientific Management.6 Despite their

6 Principles of Scientific Management was first published in 1911 but it marks the culmination of over twenty years of scientific management experiments carried out by a very large cast of managers, scientists and engineers. F.W. Taylor did his first "motion studies" of industrial workers in the mid-1880's. And his ground breaking paper "A Piece-Rate System, Being a Step Toward a Partial Solution of the
divergent and often ambiguous political orientations, all such disputants of the "labor question," as it was called, identified the workplace as the source and solution to class unrest, even as the triumph of commodification, that process by which "the definite social relation between men themselves ... assumes ... the fantastic form of a relation between things" (Marx 165), went on, as it still goes on, unabated. Both radical and conservative critics thought that solutions to social problems could best be effected through better management of production. In other words, Thorstein Veblen's

Labor Problem" was delivered to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers in the summer of 1895.

7 Samuel Haber's Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era 1880-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964) provides a good overview of the production-centered responses to class unrest of F.W. Taylor, Frank Gilbreth and other scientific management figures, especially pp. 18-30. See also Jack London's essay "Revolution" in Revolution and Other Essays (New York: MacMillan, 1910) for a proletarian polemic on the impoverishment attendant upon bourgeois mismanagement of production; portions of this essay were published earlier as part of London's utopian novel The Iron Heel, one of the great literary documents of world socialism. It should be noted also that Taylorist methods of organizing production, despite their tendency to cause workers to grumble over being turned into automatons, enjoyed a certain vogue in the erstwhile "workers' paradise" of the early Soviet Union. It should also be noted that the idea that rank and file Soviet workers actually exercised any real control over the point of production, or indeed over any communal aspect of their lives, was discredited at about the same time that even die-hard American leftists would have begun to put quotation marks around the phrase "workers' paradise." Soviet socialism's attraction to Taylorism was probably more a sign of its inherent totalitarian tendencies--its desire to manage all aspects of its subjects lives--than it is a symptom of Taylorism's compatibility with any truly worker-centered ideology.
Theory of the Leisure Class (1899)—a text of central importance to consumptionist thick histories of the realist fiction—may have decried "conspicuous consumption" and "waste" for dissipating the leisure classes, but many of the people who produced the commodities were in no position to enjoy such leisure, had to worry more about hunger, disease and exhaustion than dissipation, and were periodically organizing themselves to control the means of production which made possible the existence of a leisure class in the first place. Even at its least politically radical, the rhetoric of production argued that "the maximum prosperity for the employer, coupled with the maximum prosperity for each employee" would dissolve class antagonisms and do away with poverty in one fell swoop (Taylor 9-10).

The following essays attempt to show that through articulations, often self-contradictory ones, of these linked rhetorics of production, specific literary works generated themselves in an attempt to accommodate and manage proletarian contumacy and power. The literature of the age of bourgeois ascendancy may assert its relative autonomy through controlling how the verisimilar portrait of working people is effected. But, permeated as they are with the ideolegemes—from-Other which announce working-class resistance, these texts cannot control when the working-class presence will irrupt into other portions of the discourse. When the materiality posed by the dialectic of presence thus irrupts,
the site of irruption becomes a momentary scene of class warfare, wherein the historical working class on the scene of writing dissolves into a narrative gap shaped especially for its dissolution. The ostensibly verisimilar realist fiction is thus provoked into various symptomatic failures to register the Real within its own epistemological matrix. Narration, time, character, setting, description all reveal the absence of working-class historical self-determination because the shape of the absence conforms to the contours of particular essays at self-determination.

These symptomatic gaps determine the modes of writing we have come to term realism and naturalism, and in the trajectory of their perpetual recurrence they resemble nothing so much as, to borrow a metaphor from aeronautics, the trajectory of a spacecraft trying to escape from Earth's gravitational field. For when confronted with self-knowledge that a dialectical presence has reordered its rhetoric of the Real, the realist fiction spirals away from materiality towards an ever more greatly ahistorical self-reflexiveness and indeterminacy, a destination for which the metaphor of outer space is not wholly inappropriate. Thus, the realist fiction orbits the sphere of working-class historical efficacy, being repulsed by it out of a desire to protect its own protocols, but drawn to it as well, out of an imperative to register the concrete-real. The dialectic of working-class presence becomes known to us as a cycle of revelations and
occlusions of working-class power. If the following close-readings of widely dissimilar instances of the realist fiction may be said to flatten out the differences between those texts, such flattening, in fact, may testify to a kind of general failure to attain aesthetic and political escape velocity by literature of the industrial setting. Louis Althusser argues, as we saw above, that such a limit was reached by the scripture of industrial capitalism—political economy—as a result of its similar and probably related inability to register dialectical presence. Thus, it is through its very synthetic registration of the working class within the hegemonic category of Other that the realist fiction discovers itself as incapable of fulfilling its drive to "reflect" the new reality of industrial capitalism. Although the dialectical presence inspires in the realist fiction a self-contradictory insistence on flaunting its imaginative independence as literature, the lineaments of working-class historical power are always etched in the very mummery of that fiction. The term "working-class presence" as it will be used in the essays that follow, then, must be considered to refer to the hegemonic rhetoric of Otherness and the concrete-real power and desire for self-determination of the working class itself. In this essay, as in history, hegemonic and resistant definitions of this signifier merge, conflict, separate and synthesize anew. And though the dialectical process of working-class presence is both
constructed within, and constructive of the realist fiction, neither this fiction nor working-class power is ever exhausted in the synthesis.\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{8} Two neologisms need to be accounted for here: the noun "the realist fiction" and the verb "to register." "The realist fiction" refers to the literary attempt to construct, proclaim and defend a version of social reality. "Realism" is a self-interested rhetoric that masquerades as unmediated description. Thus, the concept of "realism" itself constitutes a fiction, and the works of James, Howells, Dreiser and the others carry on the wider cultural work of displacing cultural formations which resist hegemony with artistic formations that enhance the supposed social "harmony" which hegemonic power requires. To "register" proletarian power is one way the realist fiction constructs this fictive, harmonious totality. My use of the term borrows from two of its common meanings: one, to apprehend, to notice with the senses or intellect; two, to formally enter a civil process or institution, as in "to register to vote" or "handgun registration." The realist fiction apprehends working-class power and tries to enter it into a rhetorical structure which will "safely" contain it.
Chapter Two

Realism and the Domestic Ideology:
Rebecca Harding Davis and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps
Discover the Industrial Milieu
American working people first wrote themselves into the national consciousness in the winter of 1860. Beginning on Washington's Birthday perhaps as many as thirty thousand shoemakers began "the greatest strike in American history before the Civil War" (Taylor 284). For six weeks the shoemakers took to the streets all over New England in well-organized marches and demonstrations, and these were depicted in mass circulation newspapers and journals all over the country (American Social History Project 361-362, Dawley 80). Phillip Foner concludes that the "force (of this strike) was felt from Maine to Florida" (240), and Herbert Gutman feels that this strike "marked the beginning of a new era of industrial conflict" (ASHP 361).

In this new era, the newly-felt working-class presence may be discerned, perhaps for the first time, in the story "Life in the Iron Mills" submitted to The Atlantic Monthly in 1860 by a never before published writer, thirty year old Rebecca Harding (later Davis) of Wheeling, Virginia. Published in April 1861 to immediate critical acclaim, "Life in the Iron Mills" brings into American letters a graphic, depiction of working-class conditions which is almost entirely without precedent. And while no simple cause and effect relation between strike and story should be posited--Tillie Olsen suggests Harding may have worked on the story for years (63)--Harding Davis's 1860 story bears examination
as a dialectic of working-class presence. For the uncanny repetition and reinvention of images of the striking workers—which may be ascertained when we compare newspaper coverage of the strike and Harding Davis's story of industrial workers—provides us with some key insights into the earliest moment of a mutually informative relation of labor and the literary mind which still marks American culture.

One of the most famous pictures in American labor history comes from the strike of 1860. Published in the March 17 Frank Leslie's Illustrated it renders a well-ordered parade of on-strike woman shoe factory workers in Lynn, Massachusetts. They march through a snowstorm led by a company of armed, uniformed male militia, a company which was probably also composed of shoe factory workers (Dawley 77). The women are well-dressed in the large hoop-skirts and bonnets of the time and carry a banner on which is clearly written "American Ladies Will Not Be Slaves" (American Social History Project 361). The early pages of "Life in the Iron Mills" render a procession of workers too, but the demeanor of Harding's workers'---a "slow stream of human life creeping past, night and morning, to the great mills. Masses of men, with dull besotted faces bent to the ground, sharpened here and there by pain or cunning" (44)--offers a striking contrast to the vigorous assertiveness of the Lynn shoe workers. While Harding Davis's "besotted" workers hint of drunkenness and criminal "cunning"--hints which will later prove true--the
workers' militia cannot be mistaken for criminals; the Leslie's artist depicts them as the out and out Jeffersonian revolutionaries their speeches and songs proclaimed them to be (Dawley 82). Also, the striking shoe workers took special pains to prevent intemperance in their ranks, even going so far as to attempt to prohibit the sale of beer and liquor by local shopkeepers. Newspapers widely reported the workers' temperance (Foner 242). So, at a time when insurrectionary workers are being especially temperate, Harding Davis's workers premiere on the American page as notably intemperate, as "besotted" figures out of a temperance tract, perhaps. In a similar act of substitution, the stream metaphor used in the passage develops from Harding's description of the polluted Ohio River that flows through Wheeling: a "weary . . . negro-like river slavishly bearing its burden day after day"(44). So the representation of workers using the metaphor of chattel slavery comments directly on the shoe workers' refusal to be slaves, as pictured in Leslie's Illustrated.

Further, when women workers appear on Harding's page, their demeanor is also distinctly unlike that of the shoemakers' march. The women shoemakers are respectably dressed, imbued with communal purpose and carry a placard written in forceful, standard English. Harding's "crowd of half-clothed women"(45) is quite drunk, and speaks a broad, regional-ethnic dialect ("Inteet, Deb, if hur'll come, hur'll hef fun"). They are distinctly Other to the middle-class
woman readers of Atlantic. The Lynn shoeworkers pictured in Leslie's, however, problematize the dichotomous class relation between reader and character in Harding Davis's worker-representation. For they seem intent upon emulating middle-class ideals of sobriety and modesty even as they violate the Cult of True Womanhood's stipulations that "women should not venture beyond kitchen hearth and church pew"(Dawley 82). While Deb Wolfe and her afflicted sister workers draw on the ability of the downtrodden to evoke pathos in the sentimental reader, the phalanx of Lynn shoe workers who march across Leslie's page at once partake of the social demeanor of that reader and critique the social order that underlies it. Immanent in the Leslie's picture is the very real possibility that the proto-feminist middle-class reader will envision a militant sisterhood with those distinctly less than other-seeming working women.

As if in response to the middle-class reader's recognition that she too could march in the Lynn workers' phalanx, Harding Davis's women workers manifest limits of solidarity undivulged in the resolute mass of shoemakers. They have abandoned a less competent sister to finish her piece work alone, for instance--"Where's Kit Small, then?" "Begorra! on the spools. Alleys behint, though we helped her,

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we dud" (46). But not only does this section suggest limits to solidarity, it also emphasizes the workers' ethnicity and otherness, as is evident in their speech. One reason Harding Davis's female characters are so clearly other-seeming could be that only by making them so could Davis extend the sympathy of the feminine fifties's domestic romance—a tradition with which Davis is heavily engaged, as Walter Hesford demonstrates—to encompass objects who are not racially other. The usual objects of romantic compassion in antebellum America, of course, were black slaves, who after the Dred Scott decision (1857) could not easily attain American citizenship even if they escaped the South. Because the Lynn shoe workers are white, respectably dressed and proclaim their American-ness, they present a problem to any romancer who would sentimentalize their Other-ness. Harding Davis will later in the story provoke speculation on the similarity between proletarian protagonist Deb Wolfe and her middle-class readers, thus commenting on the class ambiguity of the Leslie's women workers, when she suggests that Deb's unrequited love for Hugh Wolfe is the same for her as the experience would be for even the "rarest and finest" of women (48). But the effect of this suggestion is to reinscribe the solidarity implied between the workers pictured in Leslie's and Davis's middle-class reader within the margins of patriarchal domestic conjugality. Both working-class women and "rare and fine" non-proletarian female readers, Harding
seems to suggest, are capable of passively recognizing the finer gradations of male insensitivity in a conjugal relationship. Read in the social context of the women shoemakers' communal action, such individualized passive recognition has conservative implications which an imagined emotional similarity between working and middle classes can only partially disclaim. Finally, in a fashion similar to how the "masses of men" were described using a metaphor developed from images of black chattel slavery, the first individual woman described in this crowd is "a mulatto"(45). Since Wheeling, Virginia was slave territory in the time setting of the story (the 1830's), it would be quite possible for this unnamed mulatto to be enslaved under the color laws of the Old South. Again, the story suggests that the enslavement of "American Ladies" so vociferously resisted by the striking shoemakers is an accomplished fact of working-class life.

Thus, these two important early images of American working-class people divulge strikingly antithetical attitudes toward the burgeoning industrial order. While the Lynn, Massachusetts shoemakers pictured in Frank Leslie's pose a militant, clearly-articulated communal opposition to further industrial exploitation, Harding's workers appear to have been broken by that exploitation, and their ability to resist is diminished by drunkenness, criminality and limited solidarity. If the Lynn shoemakers debut on the historical stage by suggesting, strongly, they are capable of organizing
themselves to resist further victimization, then the workers in Harding's story--itself in some ways the debut of the American working class in literature--appear as victims par excellence. It would be dead wrong to argue, however, that Harding Davis's ground breaking fiction primarily articulates a simple, class-biased reactionary rhetoric. For despite its romance-based tendencies to sentimentalize workers' otherness, "Life in the Iron Mills" also documents, with graphic realism, the human costs of industrialization, as Tillie Olsen and Jean Pfaelzer have argued. Instead, Davis's and Leslie's linked images comment on each other; "Life in the Iron Mills" relates the undivulged--by the Leslie's image--deprivation that leads to worker insurgency, and the famous image of the workers' parade details a worker assertiveness and capacity for communal action altogether undivulged in Harding's story.

Both Davis's story and the lithograph in Leslie's, in other words, represent the strike. But despite the variety of strategies brought to the task, neither depiction exhausts or wholly contains the working-class presence made manifest in 1860 by the workers themselves. For if such discourses as Davis's and Leslie's may be seen to represent workers, so did the shoemakers' mass actions and worker-advocacy organizations. In 1860, American working people were just beginning to realize the importance and subtleties of their entry into the web of social discourse. Literary writers, on
the other hand, had a considerable store of discourses that were assimilable to the discussion of industrial-era class difference: the domestic romance, the slave narrative, the tall tale. And mass-published tabloids like Leslie's, The Spirit of the Age and others had acquired, by 1860, a considerable expertise with sensationalism, a style of journalism certainly compatible with strike coverage. Given such a lack of parity between the workers and the ideological apparatuses that portrayed them, the workers' nationshaking attempt to represent themselves in 1860 New England has national semiotic, and ideological significance. For it marks the seminal moment of the dialectic of representation through which the working class becomes present in American culture. As E.P. Thompson says of the English working-class presence, the American workers' presence "owes as much to agency as to conditioning. The working-class did not rise like the sun at an appointed time. It was present at its own making"(9). The striking cordwainers may have been an object for hegemonic representation--either in Leslie's or in Davis's novella--but they were also "present" on the scene where that representation was wrought. Such working-class presence must be seen as at once a rhetoric of Otherness and resistance to that rhetoric. This is the dialectic of representation at work in "Life in the Iron Mills."

One effect of a large strike on the literary imagination is to promulgate the possibility that workers neither seek
Volosinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, with its thesis that every ideological entity possesses semiotic value and every sign is inherently ideological, is useful in understanding the semiotic and ideological significance of this strike, or perhaps of any strike before the ascendancy of large scale labor advocacy institutions.

In a strike, the workers' act of representation, their writing themselves into history, problematizes the dichotomy between material and linguistic acts presumed by idealist theories of language and literature. Thirty thousand industrial workers with banners, signs and slogans proclaiming an identity and agenda, in other words, must be interpreted because they pose such a threat to the established order. And within the summons to interpretation which strikers serve to the ideological apparatuses is also written a notice that as Volosinov puts it "Every ideological sign is not only a reflection, a shadow of reality, but is also a material segment of that very reality" (11). The materiality of the sign becomes manifest on any scene of writing informed by a large strike because industrial workers have such an intimate relation to the material forces of production whereby capitalist society reproduces itself. Thus the strike simultaneously engenders the realist fiction through its summons to infuse the idealist sign with a greater materiality, and establishes limits for that infusion
because of the radical political and economic implications of working-peoples' writing themselves into history.

The particular social utterance we have been discussing, the great strike of 1860, provoked interpretations across the entire matrix of cultural work: judicial, journalistic, political, and literary institutions all represented the strike in ways calculated to enhance their power, often with wider implications than merely institutional ones. Sensational newspaper coverage of the 1860 strike, for instance, immediately cast it in terms of Red Revolution, harking back to the coverage of the European revolutions of 1848 supplied by Margaret Fuller, Evert Ducyckink and others (Reynolds passim). The 1848 revolutions have been shown by Larry J. Reynolds to have had a profound effect on those very American literary producers—notably Hawthorne and Emerson—who lionized Rebecca Harding after the publication of "Iron Mills." As Larry Reynolds illustrates, "socialist and communist doctrines eventually seemed the major cause of the (French) revolution to American observers"(3). Significantly, Reynolds comes to conclude that the specter of Red Revolution may be seen as the motive force behind some of the greatest productions of the American Renaissance. In 1860, New York Herald headlines which read "The Revolution at the North," "The Rebellion Among the Workmen of New England," and "Beginning of the Conflict Between Capital and Labor," invited the imposition of the state repressive power which
menaced the strike and prevented the newspapers' representation of it from becoming prophetic (Zinn 226). But these linked acts of publicity and repression also provide a glimpse into the historically limited matrix of interpretations of the shoe workers' act of self-empowerment from which came Rebecca Harding Davis's initial essay at an American realist fiction.10 "Life in the Iron Mills" both represents the point-of-view of worker advocacy and creates certain boundaries for that advocacy.

As I tried to show through a comparison between the opening passages of "Life in the Iron Mills" and the lithograph in Leslie's, the literary impulse to represent, and contain, insurgent workers, articulated through "Life in the Iron Mills," addresses the same kinds of industrial ills which spawned the strike. But the story does so by eliding the possibility that workers themselves possess the power to alleviate their suffering, a possibility writ larger than ever before in America by the New England shoemakers in 1860. Harding Davis's reaction to the working-class presence is to

10 The latest historical account of the cordwainer's strike would seem to substantiate the operation of a kind of Red Scare-induced misrecognition in the body politic in early 1860. David Dawley concludes that the massive demonstrations which so incited the imagination of the press arose almost entirely out of the shoe workers' sense that their pre-industrial, artisan-based community was under siege by industrialism. If this is true, the great demonstrations were made possible by a superannuated community solidarity, not triggered by the introduction of socialist class politics from Europe, despite the newspaper proclamations of red revolution and class war.
fashion a sympathetic representation of workers, but she does so in a way that emphasizes that the workers must have help, and guidance, from their betters. Her imagination of degradation and despair tends to align her with such radically socialist remedies to the plight of free labor as those seemingly coming out of the cordwainers' strike: militant workers' solidarity, assertive working-class feminism, recognition of the class bond between black chattel and white wage slaves. But her imagination of workers collapses into sentimental otherness. And by encoding working-class presence within a cipher of dumbness, passivity, intemperance and crime, she ends up questioning the workers' struggle for self-determination. Through manipulation of conventions of the domestic romance—a genre which had posed feminine nurturing as an alternative to masculine ruthlessness, both in the rapidly industrializing marketplace and in the slave-owning South, all through the 1850's—Davis carves a new identity from the emerging dialectic of labor and capital: the professional spokeswoman for the oppressed.

Rebecca Harding Davis and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps write the first American literary fictions to take up the banner of industrial reform. Under this banner the promise of enhanced autonomy and professional achievement is held out to women reformers. But while this new, feminine identity promises autonomy and achievement to some women, are those perquisites
to be extended to all women equally? In other words, is it not possible to see in Davis and Phelps a blueprint for expanding class privileges of career fulfillment and social achievement to middle-class women? Davis's female narrator's invitation to the reader, for instance—"I want you to hide your disgust, take no heed to your clean clothes, and come right down with me—here into the thickest of the fog and mud and foul effluvia" (44)—may easily be read as an attempt to find new arenas for the exercise of those strategies of surveillance and control defined by Foucault as vital to the management of industrial unrest and criminality. Such a duality has not gone unnoticed by critics, but the relative obscurity of these works has precluded, until quite recently, much comment of any kind.

One of the most important scholars of Rebecca Harding Davis, Jean Pfaelzer has expressed limited reservations about the efficacy of Davis's critique of industrialism. Pfaelzer, for instance, briefly suggests that Davis "flattens working-class life" by depriving Hugh and Deb Wolfe of their culture and "capacity for self-protection" (241), but does little to interpret the story in the light of this "flattening." And Mari Jo Buhle and Florence Howe briefly raise questions about the self-contradictory way that The Silent Partner concludes by refusing to deal with the very issues of class and privilege that seem throughout to be central to its themes (Phelps 378). Tillie Olsen, Pfaelzer, Howe and Buhle are very
similar in how they see these works as documents of the rise of feminism, as evidence of the growth of a feminine self-assurance and self-determination that crosses and blurs class lines. However, these readers do not explore the possibility, which they themselves raise, that the feminism being constructed by these fictions is inherently class-biased in its aims and methods. If we explore this possibility we can see that another way of understanding these fictions is as the founding documents of a new segment of the American petit bourgeoisie: intellectuals whose function is to soften the contradiction between productive forces and social organization through self-limiting promulgations of "concern," promulgations that leave industrial society essentially unchanged for those above and below the middle, without really expanding the middle very much. These works may be seen to carry on the cultural work of redefining the "middle-class" social work and identity as overtly managerial, a function more relevant to the industrial revolution than law, medicine, the clergy, and mercantile endeavor, the former definitions of the middle-class social role. Seen in this light, "Life in the Iron Mills" and The Silent Partner come to embrace some highly contradictory goals. For while they have embedded within them a sentimental, and sometimes radical, critique of industrial capitalism, this critique asserts a petit bourgeois historical agency, and emphasizes the management of
proletarians at least as much as their empowerment. Similarly, these narratives depict the attainment of fulfilling identities by formerly disempowered female characters, but they also alienate the new middle-class women from their working-class sisters and brothers. Davis and Phelps empower middle-class professional women through introducing them to a sentimental rhetoric of Other-ness and other strategies with which to control workers. In "Life in the Iron Mills," the romance convention of a framing narrative constitutes such a strategy for containing and interpreting a working-class presence which at once empowers and threatens the social construction of authorship. In The Silent Partner, which has the quelling of a strike as part of its narrative denouement, the working-class presence encoded within Davis's strategies of containment may be seen to fracture the domestic frame and etch fault lines in the feminine managerial personae constructed through those strategies.

2.

In "Life in the Iron Mills" the middle-class feminine narrator of the conventional frame story lives in a smokey, fogbound industrial town and relates the story of how Hugh Wolfe, a Welsh-American iron mill worker, and his cousin Deborah, a hunchbacked cotton mill worker, eked out a miserable existence in the town some thirty years before. The narrator stands looking out the window in the top floor of
the same building once occupied by the Wolfe family. In the tale she relates, Deborah loves Wolfe, but he does not reciprocate. When a group of educated middle-and-upper-class visitors to the iron mill discover the statue Wolfe has cut from "korl"—a slag-like industrial by-product—they try to convince him that he has a great artistic gift which deserves to be cultivated. These visitors represent a cross-section of the larger society that surrounds, and depends upon, the iron mills: a brutally laissez faire industrialist (Kirby); a well-meaning but ineffectual middle-class physician (Dr. May); and a coldly intellectual aesthete (Mitchell). This group praises Wolfe's creative potential, but they also make it clear that neither they nor the larger society they represent will aid Wolfe in cultivating his talent. The painful knowledge that Hugh will never have the money to pursue such cultivation causes Deborah, who has walked two miles in the rain to bring Hugh his lunch at the mill, to steal the wallet of one of the well-off visitors and give it to Hugh. Arrested, convicted and sentenced to 19 years—not only for the theft but also as an object lesson to the other mill hands, who are "gettin' onbearable" as a jailer says (62)—Hugh kills himself in jail, while Deborah serves three years for complicity, is released and leaves the mill town to join a Quaker community where she lives out the rest of her life in pious contrition for her crime. The story ends with a return to the scene of writing of the story: here, the
middle-class narrator awaits the coming of dawn in her studio, which now contains Hugh Wolfe's "korl woman" sculpture.

The radicalness and the limits of Harding Davis's critique of industrial capitalism are signalled by the indeterminacy of the prior "onbearableness" of the mill hands which occasions Hugh's sentence. Have there been strikes? assaults? other thefts? The narrative does not elaborate. In terms provided by the Althusserian theoretical techne we developed in Chapter I, this indeterminacy is symptomatic of those aspects of working-class historical agency not readily assimilable to the rhetoric of Other-ness. This inassimilable agency becomes known to us, here, not so much through what the narrative reveals but through what it fears to reveal, what it cannot bear. Thus not only is the marginalized contumacy of "these mill-hands" unbearable to the property owning class, it is also un-bare-able—that which cannot be laid bare—by the narrative itself. But this act of unveiling/occlusion is not isolated in the episode detailing the reason behind Hugh Wolfe's harsh sentence. In many ways the entire narrative moves toward the establishment of a related indeterminacy—a related failure to register the working-class within empirical categories of space, time, and dimension. And this failure occurs despite its historic introduction of "realist" tactics of description and "naturalist" subject matter.
Early in the novella, in the framing story—where the narrator quite conventionally addresses, and defines, her educated middle-class reader—she draws attention to a kind of epistemological indeterminacy which belies realist narration:

There is a secret down here, in this nightmare fog that has lain dumb for centuries: I want to make it a real thing for you. You, Egoist, or Pantheist, or Arminian . . . do not see it clearly,—this terrible question which men have gone mad and died trying to answer. I dare not put this secret into words. I told you it was dumb. These men going by with drunken faces and brains full of unawakened power, do not ask it of Society or God. Their lives ask it; their deaths ask it. There is no reply. I will tell you very plainly that I have a great hope; and I bring it to you to be tested. It is this: that this terrible dumb question is its own reply; that it is not the sentence of death we think it, but from the very extremity of its darkness, the most solemn prophecy which the world has known of the Hope to come (44-45).

The passage expresses a crucial ambiguity; does "the sentence of death" refer to the executions of criminalized workers, such as will be carried out, more or less, in the story of Hugh Wolfe? or to the revolutionary expropriation of the expropriators which may have seemed to have been posed by the great strike of 1860? Is the narrator proclaiming a politics of sympathy for workers condemned to living death in the industrial inferno? Or is she warning other members of her class ("we") of the kind of revolutionary ascendancy of the workers which Marx and Engels thought historically inevitable? Has the sentence of death been pronounced on the workers or by them? The mass circulation newspapers, with
their promulgations of class warfare, seem to proclaim the latter. On the other hand, all Davis's questions may seem merely provocative, a way of drawing the reader into the plot. However, no further revelation is forthcoming.

Recent editors of the story have suggested that "the terrible question may simply be "Can I be saved?" "(Davis 44)--the question asked by adherents of the social gospel in the mid-nineteenth century. But even this formulation exudes ambiguities. As Walter Hesford has it, Davis's literary depiction of the industrial inferno comes to center on:

- an unanswered question raised by the "dumb" masses. The secret is not easily revealed, the question not easily answered. The reader may finish "Life in the Iron Mills" without knowing exactly . . . the answer Davis intends to offer (73-74).

Although he does not mention the great strike of 1860, Walter Hesford is very close to the truth when he suggests that the "secret" to which the narrator refers may be the possibility of revolution (81). In other words, the materiality of some ten thousand militant shoe workers parading through Lynn, Massachusetts comprises a "secret" in Davis's novella, something she did not "dare put into words." For these journalistically depicted masses which border Davis's novella--parading with banners, slogans and voicing lists of demands--cannot easily be construed as "dumb." As a way out of this critical quandary over the "dumb secret," I want to suggest that by recognizing the pervasive smoke and fog imagery of the framing narrative as both catalysts of and
limits to vision, we can understand Davis's "dumb secret" as one of a series of consciously constructed gaps in her rhetoric of the real. And further, these gaps draw attention to their own indeterminacy. Davis's industrial smoke both tells us of human suffering in and around the mills and obscures our vision of it.

Images of the mill town smoke and fog ("this nightmare fog") dominate the opening scenes: "Smoke on the wharves, smoke on the dingy boats, on the yellow river . . . "(43). Significantly, the smoke infiltrates the domestic scene of narration, so that the wings of an angel figurine in the narrator's studio "are covered with smoke, clotted and black"(43). Because workers and writer share this "stifling" (42) atmosphere it at once links the middle-class narrator and the working people outside her window and obscures the view of their terrible secret. The sharing of suffering and the narrator's resultant investigation of it are thus precipitated by the same elements, the industrial smoke and "nightmare fog" that obstruct the narrative purview. Drawn into a specularity that has a certain blindness as a condition of vision, it is no surprise that Davis clarifies her "dumb question" very little beyond the initial formulation, insisting instead on working people's muteness at a time when historical working people are most assuredly not so. Unable to reveal the "terrible secret" of impending revolution, Davis proclaims blindness as a condition of
vision and dumbness as a condition of speech in a kind of ruptural unity. Through her own silence about the collective response of her fictive mill hands to the inferno of their lives, an inferno sketched so graphically in the narrative, Davis turns the dichotomy of speech and silence through which workers became known in 1860 on its head. Instead of being about working-class muteness and suffering, the novella ends up constructing its own muteness on the very issues it seems to most desire to expound upon. But since this construction is quite visible, like the industrial smoke and fog which fascinate and obscure the narrative eye, "Life in the Iron Mills" at once radically critiques capitalism and undercuts that critique.

This critique displays its deepest contradictions in its most notable single scene: at the point of production in the iron mills the night Deb steals the wallet, "the crisis night of . . . (Hugh's) life"(50). This is among the first depictions of the industrial workplace in American letters and Davis's grasp of the political economy of industrial capitalism bears notable similarities to similar critiques posed by social revolutionaries who were her contemporaries. For instance, if as anarchist sage Joseph Pierre Proudhon put it in the 1840's "All property is theft," then a thousand petty larcenies like Deb's matter little in relation to the huge expropriation of labor going on in the iron mills. Deb's
pitiful theft provokes a powerfully ironic criticism of industrial injustice.

The real theft being perpetrated in the iron works is the theft of human energy and potential testified to so powerfully by Deb's and Hugh's narrow, demeaning lives. Further, through placing her protagonists in the iron mills, Davis implies that a widespread social complicity, one which entangles the reader, makes possible the theft of the Wolfes' rights to liberty and happiness. For like any large industrial undertaking, the iron mills are only made possible by a great marshalling of social resources. It was Hugh Wolfe's employer, the narrator informs us, the "Kirby and John's rolling mills," which "took the great order for the Lower Virginia railroads . . . last winter" (45). So iron centers the new industrial order, entangling all commerce, and discourse, in a material web of railroad rails, car wheels and social complicity.

However, the financial benefits of making this central industrial signifier are largely denied to the men who labor in Davis's Dantesque mills. Instead, the labor of these men crystallizes, as if by magic it seems to the Wolfes, in the pockets of young Kirby and his friend Mitchell, the upper-class visitors to the mill. The estrangement of wealth from those who produce it is vividly underlined when Mitchell's stolen purse proves to contain no great amount of instantly negotiable cash money, only "one or two gold pieces and a
check for an incredible amount" which Wolfe could never hope
to cash successfully (59). Since he will be arrested,
imprisoned, and, effectively, executed for possessing the
symbol of wealth he has helped to create, Hugh's labor is
illustrated to have assumed a form which is actively
malevolent to him, the money form. Davis also reveals the
extent to which that symbol, money, is an empty sign. For the
exercise of privilege which money should make possible to its
holder comes, in Davis's story, to be identified as strictly
a function of upper-class identity; Mitchell can cash that
"check for an incredible amount" because his name, and only
his name, is written on it. Similarly, while Deborah's
evocation of folk myths about "t'witch people" and "t'witch
dwarfs," as a way of convincing Hugh to accept the money she
stole from Mitchell may be seen as a way of emphasizing her
pre-industrial ethnicity, it may also be read as a radical
commentary on the equally strange and magical transformation
of proletarian labor to bourgeois wealth.

It is instructive to remember that the American 1860's
mark a kind of borderline between pre-industrial and
industrial organizations of society. Subjects constituted on
the borderline of industrialism, such as Deb and Hugh, simply
would not recognize the "naturalness" of the money form.
Written in the 1860's, Karl Marx's Capital, Volume One also
stands at this border, and Part One of this work,
"Commodities and Money" labors long and hard to explore how
money comes to be, and what it is, before venturing into a discussion of how the working-class is prevented from realizing the true value of its labor by the wage relation money makes possible. Both Davis and Marx wish to emphasize the social construction, and the relative newness of the cash nexus. In such a terrible new world as Davis depicts, where the living force of emaciated Hugh and deformed Deborah is daily expropriated to pad the pockets and fatten the frames of the elegant Mitchell, the cold-blooded Kirby, and their class, money does have an illusory, magical aspect, one that is far beyond the capabilities of Harding Davis's working-class protagonists to understand or manipulate. It, money, comprises an idealist interpretation of the material act of production, an interpretation which is managed by the Mitchells and Kirbys alone. Because the working-class presence on the scene of writing infuses the literary sign with materiality, the idealist character of money comes to be revealed, and reviled, in Davis's important early depiction of the point of industrial production. This depiction also proclaims industrialism to be a direct affront to basic American ideas of egalitarianism and democracy.

Davis's critique of the industrial order targets American political democracy when she invokes the early-Republican rhetoric of the Lynn strikers. The Lynn shoeworkers, for instance, commenced their strike on the national holiday celebrating the birth of George Washington,
one of the original inscribers of that rhetoric, drawing deep symbolic connections between their struggle for social justice and an earlier America's struggle against political tyranny. Davis satirizes the limits of democracy suggested by the strikers' rhetoric by having Kirby (the millowner's son) describe how during the last election his father helped seven hundred mill hands "form themselves into a society" that called itself "The Invincible Roughs," who then voted for a candidate that the elder Kirby supported (51). In that case, the unbearable roughness of proletarian collective behavior was safely channeled into an electoral politics which had little real provision for working-class advocacy. Contumacy disappears because the workers voted to perpetuate the political control most agreeable to Kirby's laissez faire capitalist father, who like Kirby, probably washes his "hands of all social problems—slavery, caste, black or white"(54) created by the industrialization which benefits him and his class. Davis registers the essential coldness of the laissez faire position, and suggests its essential incompatibility with a true participatory democracy.

Similarly, at key moments in her depiction of Hugh's decline, Davis effects a kind of bitterly ironic examination of the issue of individual "rights" raised by the Lynn shoemakers' rhetoric and actions. Dr. May assures Hugh that "it was his right to rise"(56), for instance, after he, Kirby and Mitchell have also made it clear that the upper classes
bear no responsibility for protecting that "right." And after
Deb has shown Hugh the stolen money, and Hugh has insisted
that they return it, Deb parrots Dr. May by telling Hugh "But
it is hur (your) right to keep it" (59). The narrator then
depicts Hugh meditating, with disastrous effects, on the
meaning of "rights."

His right! The word struck him. Doctor May had
used the same. He washed himself, and went out to
find this man Mitchell. His right! Why did this
chance word cling to him so obstinately? Do you
hear the fierce devils whisper in his ear as he
went slowly down the darkening street? (59)

On the scene of writing in 1860, this concept of rights, of
course, is not a mere "chance," being at once vital to the
American sense of what is essential ("unalienable" in the
language of the Declaration of Independence) to the
individual subject and deeply problematized by the Lynn
shoeworkers strident equation of free labor with slavery.
Similarly Hugh's inarticulately expressed courtroom epiphany
that "the money was his by rights" (62) applies, with a
terrific irony, America's founding rhetoric of rights and
liberties to the present moment of industrial unrest. Davis
angrily interrogates American democracy by showing that an
American subject can be destroyed, ironically enough, through
imagining that his "rights" to dignity and the pursuit of
happiness outweigh the property rights of his social betters.
And yet even in the moment when this insurrectionary irony
enters American literature, the narration also assures the
reader that no radical solutions to the plight of the
industrial worker are in fact being posed. For although Davis covertly arrives at conclusions approximating Proudhon or Marx or the rebellious New England shoemakers this rhetoric is simultaneously generated and undercut at the moment of its production. One way in which she undercuts those conclusions is by allowing them to be voiced by the nihilistic aesthete Mitchell, who applies irony--Davis's own insurrectionary tool--to the very critique of industrial "rights" she has herself asserted.

For instance, when Mitchell teases Dr. May that if he should "preach his Saint-Simonian tomorrow to Kirby's hands . . . and . . . next week they'll strike for higher wages" (Davis 56) he is in fact satirizing the widely-credited perception of a real socialist threat to the status quo in antebellum America, a threat intensified by the presence of those insurrectionary shoeworkers on the scene of writing. As Larry Reynolds found, it was the same socialist ideologies as Mitchell articulates which seemed to most Americans to be the cause of the 1848 explosions in Europe (Reynolds 3). In some way, the proximity of the red menace to the scene of writing dictates that Davis's direct mentions of collective action are ironic, despite how both her depiction of the proletarian inferno and her ironic interrogation of "rights" could place her squarely in sympathy with such action. Thus, for instance, Mitchell's satirical speech about how social reform must come from below, not trickle down from above, makes use,
almost entirely, of religious and artistic metaphors when describing the future possibility of popular revolt:

Reform is born of need, not pity. No vital movement of the people's has worked down, for good or evil; fermented, instead, carried up the heaving clogging mass. Think back through history, and you will know it. What will this lowest deep—thieves, Magdalen, negroes—do with light filtered through ponderous Church creeds, Baconian theories, Goethe schemes? Some day, out of their bitter need will be thrown up their own light bringer,—their Jean Paul, their Cromwell, their Messiah. (56)

Mitchell does voice the socialist dogma that revolution will grow out of social contradiction and impoverishment, but his formulation of that decree is itself so contradictory as to arrive at a kind of nihilistic indeterminacy. Thus, Mitchell figures popular revolt in the overdetermined, patriarchal terms of aesthetics, theological dispute and Messianic salvation at a time, 1860, when, because of the apparent "Revolution at the North," popular revolt was being discussed much less circuitously. This is the only figuration possible, apparently, with the "onbearable" unrest that precedes and makes necessary Hugh Wolfe's harsh sentence. Further, in enumerating the denizens of "this lowest deep"—the iron mill where the speech is made—Mitchell describes the industrial workers as inmates of hell, criminals, prostitutes and slaves, as everything but workers, in other words. Again, the working-class is always already an object for interpretation and management; here workers are knowable as objects for surveillance by missionaries, penologists, social workers and
the abolition movement, all activities which drew educated middle-class women, like Rebecca Harding Davis, into the antebellum public arena. Finally, Mitchell's speech both poses a warning to the middle-class feminine reader that "the sentence of death" may in fact be handed down by the working-class other, as the narrator implied earlier, and through its very irony poses another solution, a distinctly conservative one, to the social inequities suffered by the "clogging, heaving mass." The reception of this irony is assured by the very generic type he approximates.

The final element which assures that Mitchell's credibility will be undercut is that, to readers of the domestic romance, the coldly intellectual Mitchell, with his patina of aristocratic European sophistication, approximates the literary type of the rake or seducer. It is no accident that Deb, the lovelorn, temperate working girl, is drawn to steal Mitchell's wallet, and thus begin her slide to perdition. From Susanna Rowson's Montraville (Charlotte Temple (1791)) and Hannah Foster's Peter Sanford (The Coquette (1791)) through to Harriet Jacob's smooth-tongued Mr. Sand (Incidents from the Life of a Slave Girl (1861)), good hearted young girls like Deb started similar slides when they gave in to the temptations posed by such characters. To the female American readers who were fascinated with and repelled by the seducer, Mitchell's entire speech would equate with a kind perdition-ensuring seduction. Thus the
solution to industrial suffering which Mitchell identifies as being least efficacious would be the most attractive. This solution to the unbearable roughness of working-class life, of course, is "pity," the province of the sentimental domestic narrative. In "Life in the Iron Mills" the domestic narrative is most clearly synonymous not with the point of production, which as we have seen is the province of irony, seduction and the discourses of revolt, but with the scene of writing of the narrative, the frame story. It is through the frame story of the middle-class narrator that "pity" acquires a social form which will defuse the revolution immanent at the point of production. That form is the social identity of the narrator herself.

3.

A curious contradiction underlies Davis's setting, because, as the narrator tells us in the first framing narrative, "nearly thirty years" have elapsed between the events of the Wolfes' story and the moment of its narration in 1860 (45). Davis's setting for the novella is thus historically bifurcated. While such a frame story is a convention of the romance, the tall tale and Southwestern humor, such generic conventions assume new resonances, attain new uses, in the industrial milieu. In 1860, the narrator gazes out her window at a "slavish" stream of downtrodden workers, but the downtrodden workers she chooses to represent inhabit the 1830's. During the Great Strike of 1860, Davis is
historically positioned to fulfill Georg Lukacs's requirement for a great "realist." She writes "Life in the Iron Mills" in "a great historical period . . . of transition . . . of crisis and renewal, of destruction and rebirth" (Lukacs 10). However, she ends up both reporting that moment and not reporting it. In a very real way, American realism—in Lukacs's sense of a discourse which "opposes . . . the destruction of the completeness of the human personality" and seeks to counter the "excessive cult of the momentary mood" (Lukacs 6)—is stillborn in Davis's novella. For while Davis offers Hugh Wolfe as a socio-historical "type" in which "all the humanly and socially essential determinants are present on their highest level of development" (Lukacs 6), she also registers Hugh's typicality, especially the latent artistic and revolutionary energies he evinces, as a corollary function of the emerging petit bourgeois quest for self-fulfillment and identity.

In the conventional frame narration at the beginning and end of the proletarian plot line, Davis is essentially telling the story of her own making as an artist. "Life in the Iron Mills" divulges what Amy Kaplan identifies (although not in connection with "Iron Mills") as the realist's "strategy for defining the social position of the author" (Kaplan 13), a strategy which, in Davis's case, is based on the representation of a proletarian Other whose labor is symbolically expropriated for the social
construction of authorship. Into the absence left by a culturally-determined inability to bare/bear proletarian mass action, Davis projects her own artistic persona. This persona is inscribed within the 1860 setting, and shifts the focus from the point of production in the 1830's to the sensibility of the narrator of the story in her study, awaiting that deliciously ambiguous dawn. The great statue of a woman, which the narrator keeps hidden "in a corner of my library" (68) provides the link between Hugh and Deborah's proletarian past and the middle-class present of the scene of writing. It reveals the human potential wasted in the iron works and also places a proletarian figure on the scene of writing of the story; but it also attains to a consciously constructed artistic indeterminacy which corrodes the statue's (Lukacsian) "typicality," its threatened revelation of those unbearable developments of social and human determinants being displayed in 1860 in the shoe making towns of New England. Walter Hesford thinks Davis learned about the literary uses of ambiguity, and other lessons, from Hawthorne, whose last romance The Marble Faun (1859) conflates the creation of the title sculpture with the development of the artistic consciousness of its sculptor. At the point where Davis's realist impulse could reveal a working-class role in the production of the narrative, that narrative generates itself through reference to (and reverence for) another more distinctly idealist discourse,
Hawthorne's romance. The "korl woman" which provides a crucial link between the scenes of writing and production assimilates to a kind of metasymbolism that defers referentiality. It is a provocatively indeterminate fixture in a scene of writing where the great strike of 1860 has drawn attention to the inherent materiality of the sign.

Provoked by the mingling of physical power, spiritual hunger and interpretive possibility in the "korl woman," feminist critics have rightly remarked on the autobiographical content in the proletarian plot-line which this symbol makes manifest. Thus while the workers' plot line leaves a visible sign, the "korl woman," on the scene of writing of the story, Tillie Olsen, Jean Pfaelzer and others have detected the outlines of Davis's own artistic self-image in that statue's "mighty hunger, its unfinished work"(Davis 68). As Pfaelzer puts it, Wolfe's statue "assumes the frustrations of Rebecca Harding Davis's own life: unfinished, hungry and eager to know"(243). Similarly, Tillie Olsen is fascinated with the similarities between Davis's domestic drudgery, as housewife for a minor New York and Philadelphia editor, and the soul-killing labors of her "Iron Mills" protagonists. Olsen speculates that even before her marriage Davis would have had to do her artistic work early in the morning and late at night--when Hugh Wolfe does his sculpting--after her family was in bed or before they awoke, a nocturnal scene of writing which is glimpsed at the end of
"Life in the Iron Mills" as the narrator spies the coming of dawn amid the "homely fragments" (Davis 68) of her diurnal domestic life. In the "rough, ungainly" (68) lines of Wolfe's statue Tillie Olsen detects a ready analogue for the artistic roughness of almost all of Davis's own fiction (Olsen 114). Davis's genuine sympathy for the working class, and especially for those working-class women shouldering, like Deb, the double burden of work and family, thus may be seen to arise from how Davis shared their plight, torn by the double needs for work and conventional conjugality. However, let us also remember that the *Atlantic* publication of "Life in the Iron Mills" in 1861 briefly made Davis a literary *cause célèbre*, and, thus, let us also realize that if Hugh Wolfe's powerful sculpture of the proletarian woman is an artifact of the related process by which Davis fashioned herself, then both the fictional sculpture and the self thus fashioned may be identified as compositions of the proletariat. To elaborate, "Life in the Iron Mills," certainly aspires to a radical social criticism, but it can also be seen to narrate the process by which Davis manages and directs the very proletarians her social criticism would aid. Thus managed, these workers create a larger-than-life feminine persona, a persona which allows Davis to transcend the very work/family double bind cementing her sympathy to the working class. Davis's fictive proletarians build the
broad avenue of literary fame by which she escaped, alone, into the literary marketplace.

It is no coincidence then, that Wolfe's huge feminine statue has escaped from the point of industrial production, finding its unlikely way from the rolling mill into the narrator's library, where it is an integral part of the scene of writing of the story and the scene of Davis's self-creation as a narrator, and manager, of proletarian lives and labor. The statue reinvents the ruptural unity of the smoke and fog which I discussed above. The statue is both an artifact of industrial barbarism and a limit to the perception of that barbarism. Jean Pfaelzer, whose reading of the story is both important and deeply sympathetic, views such a limit in terms of Davis's middle-class upbringing and perspective. She asserts that Davis's different-class perspective creates a tension within her portrayal of "the changed nature of woman's role in industrial family life" (234), and points to how Davis "flattens working class life" so that from "the perspective of the middle class narrator we do not see the working class capacity for self-protection" (241). Pfaelzer's argument is correct in its identification of the limits of Davis's vision and the textual results of that limitation—the otherness of the workers—but it also presumes that a kind of static, changeless relation between social classes existed at a time when neither working people nor the petit bourgeoisie nor
even the capital-owning class could have been said to have consolidated a class consciousness. A more dialogic appraisal of class, one that emphasizes process over identity, is therefore in order. And, typically, Davis can be seen to both announce the kind of ahistoric class identifications Pfaelzer identifies and emphasize the superannuation of traditional middle-class social roles.

First, we must remember that the narrator is not reporting the current moment of industrial unrest. Thirty years have intervened between what happened to the Wolfes and the moment of narration. The narrative thus operates out of a kind of ahistorical presumption—that working-class life has a timelessness about it—that tends to defuse social criticism by robbing that criticism of its timeliness and particularity, a definite detriment to any social realist description of an industrial milieu which was changing as fast as Davis's was. Davis can imagine what the working class was like as a way of consolidating her social identity, but the present (1860) moment of proletarian insurgency tends to deconstruct that identity. Pfaelzer recognizes, in a general sense, Davis's fear of insurrection, but she ends up reinscribing the ahistorical view of class through which Davis herself assuaged that fear. Davis's bifurcated settings and plot lines fix her depictions of working-class degradation as occurrences of the 1830's. Thus while honestly progressive, these depictions also serve, through their
distance from the proletarian contumacy of 1860, to legitimize the existing order. Davis conflates industrialism with the essential timelessness and naturalness of the work of art the story both attains to and depicts. "Life in the Iron Mills," however, does also carry on a dialogue over the fluidity of class and this fluidity is most visible when the narrative suggests that the superannuation of middle-class social roles is already an accomplished fact in the 1830's. Middle-class obsolescence dictates the ineffectuality and hypocrisy of Dr. May, and the inaccessible diction and vocabulary of the famous clergyman who preaches the social gospel to Wolfe on his last night of freedom. Out of this dialogue, "Life in the Iron Mills" actually creates Davis's different-class perspective, through imagining that the management of working-class presence calls for a redefinition of middle-class historical agency.

As E.P. Thompson puts it, class is not a "structure", nor even a "category", but . . . something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships"(9). In Thompson's widely influential definition, the experience of class arises from a specular relation between social groups:

Class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs (9).
In other words, because "class is a relationship not a thing" (Thompson 11), no different-class perspective is possible without the cross-class perception which is narrated by "Life in the Iron Mills." Davis articulates a new middle-class identity which renders traditional professions such as doctor and minister as obsolete as her fictional physician and clergyman are irrelevant to Hugh Wolfe. And this new middle-class vantage point on proletarian contumacy is constructed at the exact moment when, as historian David Dawley shows in his account of the 1860 cordwainer's strike, manufacturers and operaives alike were beginning to realize the extent to which the industrial "marketplace compelled manufacturers to adhere to the laws of competition, opposing the interests of those who bought labor to those who sold it" (84). By 1860 industrialism had supplanted the pre-industrial "community of householders" (Dawley 84). Given a stark new dichotomy of capital owners and wage workers, the middle-class cultural work becomes quite clear cut: to fashion a social self for the new era, a self which preserves traditional middle-class perquisites and autonomy through assuaging the worst excesses of industrial capitalism. Again, Davis, born female into the household of a well-off businessman and civic leader is ideally positioned to cut the pattern for such a self. In that "dawn" which the narrator glimpses from her studio, the tenets of the so-called Cult of True Womanhood—Piety, Purity, Domesticity and Obedience—
which so defined middle-class American womanhood, may still
be enacted by the new woman.

4.

As Barbara Welter and others have shown, The Cult of
True Womanhood defined the petit bourgeois response to urban
life, ensuring both sympathy for and separation from the
laboring classes. The kind Quaker woman who cares for Hugh's
corpse and promises Deb that she "shall begin . . . life
again, --there on the hills"(67) exemplifies how such a new
woman may reenact traditional domestic femininity in the
social realm, thus replicating the class interests inherent
in True Womanhood. She encourages Deb to be pious and
contrite for the moment of class consciousness she evinced by
robbing Mitchell of the wealth she herself had, in a general,
social sense, created. She encourages Deb to abandon the
urban scene of her revolt for the heavenly pastorale of the
Quaker farm, decreasing the possibility that Deb will again
contest the industrial order. Deb's exile is necessary
because her physical unattractiveness places her, unarguably,
outside the network of carnal exchange delineated by the Cult
of True Womanhood. Worse, her unrequited desire for Hugh
Wolfe has broken free of conjugal anchors and engendered a
direct, albeit criminal, action against the ruling class.
Deb's unanchored desire, in other words, could beget class
consciousness and direct action, not feminine servitude.
Given a scene of writing in which thirty thousand New England
proletarians are also defining themselves through direct actions against the industrial order, Deb's marginality to True Womanhood has radical consequences. We can detect both the author's sense of the political danger posed by Deb and a strategy for containing it, a strategy which will reach fruition in her seclusion in the Quaker colony, in the very first scene where she appears, and in some senses this is the very first scene in which an American worker appears in literature as well, since previous to the great strike of 1860 the working-class was never quite so "present" at its own making as here.

When the drunken crowd of cotton mill operatives come on the scene they are trying to convince Deb to join them in a carouse. When she refuses, several of the others grab at her, but Deb is defended by an Irish comrade: "Let Deb alone! It's ondacent frettin' a quite body"(46). Here Davis's narrative provides an answer for a question which has not been asked. From the very moment she appears the narrative asserts that Deb must be a very singular proletarian, "a quite body," in some way segregated from the unruly mass of fellow workers by her temperance and sobriety. Why must this be so? Deb's hunchshouldered body must be quiet because the desire she poses cannot be channeled into conjugality. To contain this desire the depiction of Deb's "crime" conflates sexual seduction, by the rake-type Mitchell, with her direct action to aid another member of the working class. To further
counter the sublimation of desire into class-consciousness. Davis contrives a conclusion in which Deb's social role assimilates entirely to the leading tenet of the Cult of True Womanhood: Piety, "the core of woman's virtue" (Welter 21). The Quaker settlement provides a place where middle-class piety anchors Deb's body of potentially revolutionary desire: "There may be in her heart some latent hope to meet there (in heaven) the love denied her here,—that she shall find him whom she lost, and that then she will not be all-unworthy" (68). The Quaker firmly fixes Deb on a contemplation of heavenly caritas which will absolve her of the earthly crimes of desire and class consciousness, and insure her silence in the social arena.

Deb is described as a "woman much loved by these silent, restful people; more silent than they, more humble, more loving" (68-69). The Quaker settlement provides a place where Deb can become more silent than silent, marking her as an indeterminacy into which the narrator will project her own persona, her own representations of the implications of industrial life. The narrative thus strives to quiet the body of desire which Deb represents. Again Davis's overdetermined insistence on Deb's muteness, because it occurs at a time when loud working-class voices were being heard from Maine to Florida, signals Davis's own desire: to fashion an identity as a spokeswoman for the working class before workers' growing sense of self-determination outstripped the need for
other-class representatives. For, given the historical context, we do not need to provoke that Irish workingwoman's appraisal of Deb ("a quite body") very much to see that thirty thousand militant workers are quite a body of workers. In its attempt to construct a worker whose accent clearly proclaims her otherness to the middle-class reader, Davis's narrative reveals the historical imperative dictating that otherness. Quite a body of unquiet bodies may just be making the revolution in Massachusetts. The sole worker ("Let her alone") in the narrative field of vision, Deb must be a quiet body. But her quiescence reveals its own construction.

To acquire a sense of contrast with this middle-class approach to "reforming" industrial unrest, one could do worse than to look at a cross-class encounter narrated from the supposedly silent proletarian point-of-view. The most poignant proletarian literary depiction of how middle-class feminine professionalism defends its own class interests is probably to be found in Anzia Yezierska's autobiographical essay "America and I" (1955), where Yezierska recalls the time she confronted an inflexible woman bureaucrat in a settlement house in New York who sought to convince her that she should give up her inchoate longings for social mobility and try to be happy, and more productive, in her mind-killing work at the turn-of-the-century shirt factory. Davis's own professional vantage point on the waves of immigrant unskilled workers who flooded American cities and factories
is similar to that of Yezierska's social worker. Davis at once rebukes and assimilates to Mitchell's refutation of the efficacy of bourgeois charity to the workers: "Some day out of their bitter need will be thrown up their own light-bringer" (56; my italics). Like Yezierska's social worker, Davis wants to bring light, certainly, but she also wants to "be thrown up," elevated by and above the proles she would illuminate. The "flickering, nebulous, crimson . . . promise of the Dawn"(68) which the narrator discerns in her studio only ironically echoes the arrival of the revolutionary "light bringer" prophesied earlier by Mitchell. Because the "dumb woeful face" of the proletarian surrogate on the scene of writing—the "korl woman"—"seem[s] to belong to and end with the night," it is the writer herself who remains to figure—in the linked senses of narrating and representing—the coming of light.

Her workers' essential indeterminacy, their silence and sealed containment within a prior moment of historical development, are ensured by the deeply drawn suggestion that the "korl woman" figures the "hunger" and incompleteness of the middle-class narrator, who is potentially recognizable as Davis herself. Who will interpret this symbol? the narrative seems to ask, at once identifying Davis as the interpreter for her impoverished Welsh immigrant workers and enabling her to distance herself from the immediate scene of their
deprivation. Davis best imagines her paradoxical embrace and abandonment of the working-class milieu when Hugh Wolfe, having decided he will slash his wrists and having sharpened the tin scrap to do the job with, gazes wistfully over the "market" on the street below his cell window, and tries, unsuccessfully, to "be spoken to once more" (Davis 65).

This scene juxtaposes the prison and the marketplace, two sites wherein power over workers may be administered in ways that occlude worker importance to the production of wealth. It reveals symptoms, in other words, of the point of production, the center of the web of industrial significance which "Life in the Iron Mills" works so hard to contain within its framework of artistic indeterminacy. Looking down into the market street from his prison cell Hugh Wolfe sees a laughing, mulatto servant in a scarlet turban, whom he absentmindedly plans to try to sculpt tomorrow. Through the agency of a genuine artistic inspiration Hugh briefly imagines alternatives to his imprisonment and death, escaping momentarily from the confinements of a particularly painful history. It is important to note that the mulatto who here inspires Hugh by walking the seam between prison and marketplace may be seen as a recurrence of the earlier

\[\text{11 Davis literally did distance herself from the Wheeling inferno as a result of publishing "Iron Mills." Although the story was published anonymously, at her request, the author's identity rapidly became known, with upshot being that she met her soon-to-be husband on a tour of the literary shrines of New England, and left Wheeling soon after.}\]
mulatto, who is the first woman to speak in the story. Earlier, when we discussed the scene in which Deb comes home from work with a crowd of "half-dressed," drunken fellow workers, I argued that the mulatto worker figured a naturalistic rebuttal to the Lynn shoe workers' proclamation that "American Ladies Will Not Be Slaves." This rebuttal would spring from the fact that her African blood would subject her to enslavement in the antebellum south where the novella is set. In the jailhouse scene, the mulatto is reimagined as both a beautiful subject of art and subject to the enslavement the earlier mulatto had managed to elude. Hugh sees her "following her mistress" across the square with "a free, firm step, a clear-cut olive face, with a scarlet turban tied on one side" and determines that tomorrow he would try to "cut one like it" (65 italics mine). Socially, this mulatto is a slave, subject to the will of her "mistress." But in the eye of the artist, and the narrator, her physical beauty equates with a freedom that enslavement leaves unspoiled. Whereas earlier the fragility of the mulatto's freedom comprised an ironic statement on the "wage slavery" of northern "free" labor, here the enslavement appears ephemeral compared to the freedom the imprisoned artist detects in her step. Thus she becomes socially mulatto—half-slave/half-free—through the narrator's reimagining her in the eyes of the imprisoned Wolfe. Whereas the first mulatto worker exemplified a racial otherness
intended to distinguish her (and the insurgent shoeworkers she may represent) from the middle-class reader, here we must ask if the recurrent mulatto's mingling of beauty and enslavement does not signal the absorption of slavery, both chattel and "wage slavery", into an idealist aesthetics that in some way "justifies" it.

Once again we see Davis's narrative as driven by and towards the realization of a kind of radical indeterminacy that unveils/occludes the "unbearable" roughness of proletarian contumacy within the dense ambiguity of the "korl woman" symbol. Deb's mulatto co-worker is originally depicted as physically degraded, ironically "free" free labor. She originally makes manifest the danger to the status quo lurking in the social pit, but here the mulatto returns as an ironic slave whose inherent ambiguity—her mulatto-ness—transcends her historical condition without upsetting the social apple-cart. In the same way that the massive, mysterious "korl woman" contains the painfully verisimilar narrative within a structure of ambiguity, the latter mulatto is neither free nor slave, neither black nor white, blasting her "free" of historical restraints, "free" to become but an object of artistic representation. I have argued that an important cultural work done by "Life in the Iron Mills" is to enshroud historical specifics of proletarian power within a miasma of "artistic" ambiguity, or indeterminacy. A certain ideological imperative thus ensured that the mulatto woman
"suddenly grew grave and hurried by" when she saw Hugh Wolfe staring at her from his cell (65). For by order of the court, the convicted felon Wolfe centers all indeterminacy, represents all the "onbearable" mill hands whose labor is hidden in the marketplace.

Hugh has been given a sentence that is "all the law allows . . . for 'xample's sake" (62), that is, to make an example of him to the unbearable workers. As she did in her overdetermined insistence on quieting Deb's body of revolutionary desire by removing it from the collective insurrection she represents—quite a body of revolutionary worker—Davis again depicts the conversion of an individual proletarian into a determinate symbol. Hugh becomes a singular example in which the unquiet workers may read the limits and implications of their behavior. That "onbearable" behavior is knowable to the reader, however, only to the extent that it resembles the individual criminal act carried out by Deborah and acquiesced to by Hugh. Thus the fact that the sensitive, artistic Hugh and the lovelorn, abstemious Deborah are both very singular proletarians—proletarians whose personalities are markedly different from those of the rest of their class—is only partially attributable to their being demi-romantic characters. That their actions stand out from those of their class, taking on a higher relief and a higher quotient of individual self-determination, is also a way of denying the efficacy, and the existence, of the
collective unrest they connote on the historical scene of writing and reception: the Great Cordwainer's Strike of 1860. Because this context of collective insurgency is firmly excluded by the frame story's depiction of the making of the artist, Deb's larcenous response to poverty reinscribes her, and in effect all the other "unbearable" mill hands—both fictional and historical, if this distinction can now be maintained—within the context of proletarian drunkenness, violence and vice, where collectivity equates firmly with criminality. Davis marks the beginnings of a certain style of representing workers. For throughout the industrial age in America, the orderly, dignified women shoe workers' march has come to be symbolically displaced by the drunken "crowd of half-clothed women." The miasma of criminality occludes the existence of any other possible style of response by the underprivileged class to its own condition, responses such as the New England shoe workers' strike.

From the Mollie Maguires' murder convictions in the 1870's, through the Haymarket tragedy of 1886-87, to the murder conviction of Wobbly bard Joe Hill in 1915, to the protracted trial and eventual execution of Sacco and Vanzetti in the 1920's, American proletarian radicals—especially workers of non-native birth, like Hugh Wolfe—were seldom charged with political crimes such as treason or sedition. Rather they were tried and convicted on criminal charges, most prominently murder. Thus, bourgeois power displaced the
unquiet body of proletarian revolt which so determined our experience and literature in that period, with the quiet, because overdetermined, body of the convicted, imprisoned criminal. Given this trend, it is instructive to note that Hugh Wolfe is not merely an oversensitive, artistic ironworker who wants nothing more than to escape from the iron mills. Rather, he is a potential revolutionary leader who has a "clear, projected figure of himself, as he might become . . . able to speak, to know what was best, to raise these men and women working at his side up with him" (57). The scene where Davis mentions Hugh's revolutionary potential comes directly before the scene in which Deb reveals to him that she has stolen Mitchell's wallet, the revelation which leads directly to Hugh's disastrous meditation on his "rights," discussed above. Thus the logic of the narrative sequence itself may be seen to work to displace Hugh's latent revolutionary tendencies with the sign of criminality. Davis shows how Hugh is deceived into crime through a genuinely ingenuous misrecognition of the distinction between civil rights and property rights.

So Davis's exposition is ironic; her intent, satirical; her target, the inhumanity and anti-democratic nature of laissez faire capitalism. But, historically, the displacement of revolutionary energies by the sign of criminality has been deadly serious. For such displacements have provided a way to avoid revealing, publicly, that the real offense committed by
the Hugh and Deborah Wolfes of history is their recognition that, as the Hugh is said to have put it when his sentence was read, "the money was his by rights"(62). This pathetic suggestion that the republican rhetoric of political rights must now be applied to economic injustice reveals the complicity between state and economic power that will send the national guard into every notable labor struggle of the late nineteenth century on the side of capital 12. Since Davis both asserts this revolutionary insight and displaces it—beginning when her procession of "cunning" potential lumpenproles substitutes for the potentially revolutionary Lynn shoe workers' parade—"Life in the Iron Mills" stands at the beginning of this crucial meconnaisance as well as at the beginning of the middle-class liberal tradition of social protest. In 1860, at a time when American workers are just barely beginning to glimpse the power they might possess if they organized to reappropriate the wealth their labor has created, Rebecca Harding Davis both imagines that the reappropriation of wealth by the dispossessed workers is justified by their soul-killing impoverishment, and represents the attempted reappropriation as an individual,

12 The inability to recognize this complicity has also marked American labor advocacy as inherently different from that of Europe. For while American workers have shown again and again a willingness to fight for wages and better working conditions, they have seldom if ever, articulated a general politics to this end, unlike European workers, whose struggles for political democracy—in 1789, 1830, 1848, 1870, 1905, 1917 and 1919—were inseparable from the quest for economic parity.
self-defeating criminal act, thus occluding the proletarian potential for a collective response.

This longstanding displacement of proletarian contumacy by criminality presumes the naturalness of the capitalist marketplace. And the initial construction of that naturalness, even as the worker looks on bitterly, gives Davis's jailhouse scene a deep historical importance. For Davis's jail overlooks a "marketplace"(64). In the general marketplace of consumer society, on the site of the privileged half of the jailhouse/market dichotomy, the worker must sell his/her labor to be converted into a form actively malevolent to him/her. The alternative is criminality, confinement in prison. Gazing from his prison cell, Wolfe not only exemplifies the human costs of industrialism but also threatens to deconstruct the dichotomy of marketplace and jail by which the working-class presence is known and managed. The mulatto-in-the-market, a carefully structured "artistic" ambiguity, just as clearly represents an imaginative strategy for apprehending, one might say consuming, such knowledge. Their mutual gaze intersects at a point where the working-class presence could become visible as a component in all commodities, including the text, a possibility the text tries hard to contain. Thus it is only the fact that Wolfe has already decided to erase himself as a living presence from the scene of writing--leaving behind his labor as an artifact for interpretation sans laborer--
that makes the mutual gaze possible in the first place. With
the workplace—where proletarian control is most immanent--
safely elided from the spectacle of power, market and
jailhouse reign uncontested over the bourgeois episteme.
There are other ways in which Davis both writes from and
erases the imaginary position of her proletarian artiste
manque in this scene as well.

Looking out into the marketplace from his jail cell Hugh
Wolfe recognizes several people he knows and finally calls
out to one of them. Significantly, the friend he calls to in
the street, is a fellow manual worker, "Joe Hill, lighting
the lamps," but Joe is too far down the street to hear him,
and Hugh's shouts merely arouse the wrath of the jailer, who
strikes the cell door with a club and tells him to "Be
quiet!" This final failure to communicate, and the jailer's
resultant censure, cause Hugh to feel "an inexpressible
bitterness" (Davis 65). Since the bulk of criticism of this
story has been autobiographical, emphasizing the filiations
of drudgery, disempowerment and domesticity that bind Rebecca
Davis to the Wheeling working people, a biographical reading
of this scene, one that emphasizes and expands upon those
filiations is not unprecedented. Like Hugh Wolfe, first-time
author Rebecca Harding may be seen to imagine an escape into
the marketplace through a projection of artistic creativity.
She longs to have some reply, some gesture of recognition,
from the literary marketplace which her story has petitioned.
But she is also genuinely distraught over the deprivation of the working people she has represented through her realist fiction of blighted families and unrequited love. Her story, like Hugh's cry, attempts to provoke some measure of solidarity with others feeling this bind—perhaps educated women caught in the prison house of true womanhood—as a way of organizing a feminine/feminist "reform" of the class inequities at the heart of industrialism. Thus Old Joe's domestic life—he has an invalid wife whom he works hard to keep cheerful and comfortable—is given equal mention by the narrative with his occupation as lamplighter because domesticity feminized him. Like Davis's feminine audience, Old Joe is caught by the double bind of work and domesticity. Davis's symbolic call to this audience, however, evidences ideological limits, both in its inception and reception.

For if the jail is Davis's way of imagining the site of her domestic imprisonment, it is also represented as a vantage point, from which the artist may safely look down upon—in both senses—working-class and racial others such as Joe Hill and the "olive skinned" mulatto. The middle-class narrator's studio further mimics this vantage point by being in the upper story of the house in which the Wolfe family occupied a basement apartment. If in the frame narrative Davis acts on a cultural imperative to construct a class vantage point from which worker contumacy may be figured/contained, in the jailhouse scene this vantage also
becomes a particular setting for the realistic narrative. Thus the jailer's command to "Be quiet!" begs to be read as a direct statement of the cultural imperative directing this narrative towards indeterminacy. In some way Davis must construct a silence that envelopes and contains those radical solutions to the industrial inferno being proposed by the workers themselves in 1860 Massachusetts. To imaginatively realize such a tautological "dumb question (which) is its own reply" the frame narrative surrounds that inferno within a chronicle of the constitution of a middle-class, feminine subjectivity. The locus of this subjectivity, the densely ambiguous korl woman, is the only sign of proletarian presence in that subjectivity: "Nothing remains to tell that the poor Welsh puddler once lived but this figure of the mill-woman cut in korl"(Davis 68). And as much as it documents the deprivation and suffering of the Wheeling proles it also begs to be read as an analogue for the artistic persona of the narrator.

Thus, for all her identification with the struggles of the proletarians trudging by her windows, the narrator of "Life in the Iron Mills" reinforces her alienation from them, thickening the lens of her sympathy until it becomes both a medium of vision and a partition for ensuring privilege. In "Life in the Iron Mills" Rebecca Harding Davis both writes from the point-of-view of the working-class and erases that writing. She both suggests that the large scale "theft" of
labor in the industrial setting makes a mockery of bourgeois legalist definitions of petty crimes against property and displays a certain complicity in the displacement of proletarian collectivism by the sign of individual criminality. This displacement, a displacement provoked by the proletarian insurgency on the scene of sentimental writing, marks the limit of Davis's argument with the feminine romance narrative, and also initiates the longstanding and uneasy synthesis of sentimental and realistic narrative modes in the American realist fiction's cultural work of defining the real. Other distinctly feminine ideologies—that is, ideologies associated with the social construction of woman—play similar roles in the dialectic of working-class presence in Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's *The Silent Partner*.

5.

In "Life in the Iron Mills" and *The Silent Partner* Davis and Phelps depict female characters who are empowered through the act of overcoming suffering, in the best traditions of Susan Warner and Harriet Beecher Stowe. But this romantic empowerment—be it for reader or character—can occur ultimately only outside of the industrial setting. For Davis and Phelps, the only way to cure the ills of the proletarian woman's existence is for her to escape from it, to be "thrown up" out of it. At the end of "Life in the Iron Mills," for instance, the escape is physical and total. The chastened
Deborah, released at one stroke from both prison and the inferno of the mill town, becomes a saint-like, spinster member of a Quaker community set in a pristine agrarian paradise: "broad wooded slopes and clover crimsoned meadows" (Davis 67). And there is no mention of her returning to the mill town to do the kind of relief work carried out by the Quaker woman who comforted her after Hugh's suicide. Deborah satiates the vital need of Davis' novella to realize an indeterminacy which occludes the possibility of working-class self-determination: the only evidence of her desperately hard work in the mill-town is the huge korl figure cut by a man whom she struggled to feed and nurture. Sip Garth, the working-class heroine of Silent Partner effects an escape which, although religion-centered like Deb's, does not feature a physical abandonment of the mill town, but rather figures the same ideological escape from the possibility of collective action arrived at through Davis's strategies of indeterminacy. Sip's escape is all the more striking because of the doctrine of working-class quiescence she preaches when she becomes a lay minister in the novel's conclusion. In both writings, the resolution of the problems of industrialism occurs through an appeal to tenets of the domestic ideology, an ideology against which these writers, especially Phelps, often sought to define themselves because of the way that it removed middle-class women from public life. Further, in Phelps's novel the worker contumacy we saw
contained in "Life in the Iron Mills emerges, almost, into a
depiction of an abortive strike. Let us look at The Silent
Partner, a work directly influenced by "Life in the Iron
Mills," as a way of coming to some conclusions about the
seminal influence exercised on the realist fiction by the
reinvention of the middle-class domestic ideology as a public
rhetoric for the management of worker insurgency.

The Silent Partner (1871) is perhaps the first American
novel to depict industrial life with anything even
approaching "realistic" detail. Historians Mari Buhle and
Florence Howe have shown how the novel evolved directly from
Phelps's 1868 Atlantic story "The Tenth of January," a story
which clearly reinvents Deb Wolfe in Asenyth Martin, a
hunchshouldered New England mill girl who suffers unrequited
love and eventually dies in the disastrous Pemberton mill
fire of 1860. This story, Phelps wrote in her autobiography,
brought her "first recognition . . . from literary
people"(Phelps 374). Silent Partner was her next published
work, and as such we must see it as a further articulation of
the professional identity conferred by having a story
published, to critical acclaim, in the prestigious Atlantic
Monthly, the same career path followed by Rebecca Harding
Davis. The novel also emulates Davis in its naturalistic
strategies of description and narration. For instance, Phelps
interpolates the findings of a Massachusetts state
commission's investigation of the factory system into the
novel, thus attaining to a certain Zola-esque verisimilitude in her depictions of the factory floor, industrial accidents, and the habits and housing of workers. The Silent Partner depicts the unlikely friendship between two young women: Perly Kelso—the daughter of a rich industrialist—and Sip Garth, a factory operative whose deprived life and family history give the lie to notions, important in the postbellum industrial milieu, that the American working class was immune to the kind of de-evolution suffered by its European counterparts.

After her father's death, Perly tries to exercise some progressive influence over the management of her father's company, and in this she is the reverse image of the coldly laissez faire Kirby in "Iron Mills." But she is prevented from doing so by her father's partners, one of whom is her fiancee. She becomes a legal "silent partner" in the business, refuses both her fiancee's offer of marriage and that of Stephen Garrick—a kind of deepened Horatio Alger figure who has raised himself from the shop floor to a partnership in the mill—and eventually devotes her life to bringing cultural enlightenment and spiritual solace to the off-hours of the impoverished mill hands, who continue to labor early and late for a pittance. Her essential estrangement from the workers is codified when she defuses, in a particularly mysterious fashion, what is shaping up to be a violent strike in the first half of the book's
bifurcated climax. And in this encounter we might recognize what E.P. Thompson might call the occurrence of class, an event through which, to continue to paraphrase Thompson, Perly feels and articulates the identity of her material interests as against other people whose material interests are clearly different from hers (Thompson 9). Perly Kelso, in other words, signifies an attempt to place the feminine managerial personality—which Rebecca Harding Davis inscribed as a marginal vantage point outside of worker insurrection—directly within the narrative vantage on such contumacy. It becomes an object of vision rather than the subject who sees. This development will have important implications for later literary managers of the industrial milieu, as I will discuss below, in examinations of Henry James and William Dean Howells.

Sip Garth, like Deb Wolfe, shoulders the double burden of work and family, but she also attains to the same kind of managerial personality as the narrator of "Life in the Iron Mills," although as with Perly, Sip will enact this role within the narrative vantage. Sip takes care of her deaf, non-speaking, physically ugly, slightly deranged and quite possibly sexually active sister Catty. In the almost genealogical relation to "Life in the Iron Mills" which Phelps's novel evinces, Catty is the quasi-human detritus of Deb Wolfe after Deb's competence, sentimentality, frustrated romantic longings and displaced revolutionary insight have
been fully realized in Sip and Perly. Catty is the proletarian Other *ne plus ultra*. Unlike in Deb's case, Catty's silence does not divulge the narrative's own desperate need to escape the reactionary implications of quieting the unquiet body of proletarian desire. Catty's silence is imposed on her as a condition of her existence, by authorial fiat. Doing so allows the narrative to use working-class misery to evoke pathos without signifying either of the potential threats to bourgeois power immanent in Deb Wolfe: the threat that her emotional similarity to the sentimental middle-class reader will engender a cross-class solidarity that eludes the margins of domestic conjugality; and the direct threat to property which results when Deb's unanchored desire for conjugalitv begets class consciousness. Catty represents the logical conclusion of the petit bourgeois drive to render un-bare-able any and all of the proletariat's attempts to write itself into history, a drive which we saw forged in "Life in the Iron Mills." She becomes the perfect object of sympathy, the worker emptied of all the dangerous volition present in Deb and Hugh. Catty eventually goes blind as the result of working in a wool factory and is swept to her death in the great flood which furnishes the latter half of the novel's bifurcated climax. Thus Sip and Catty are the last survivors of a proletarian family weakened by generations of industrial life and depicted as finished off by the usual drunkenness, promiscuity and violence into which
hegemonic discourse displaces the collective threat posed by working-class consciousness.

After Catty's death, Sip, besides refusing a marriage proposal herself, enacts the role of proletarian-under-erasure alluded to above, becoming a street preacher who counsels oppressed workers to accept Christ because "Christ's way is a patient way, it is a pure way, it is a way that cares more another world than for this one, and more to be holy than to be happy" (Phelps 300). So Sip replicates the flight from the industrial inferno into religiosity of her literary predecessor, Deb Wolfe. But in Sip's case, the sequestered piety of Deb's individual regeneration becomes a public action, a rhetoric through which Sip enacts the management of proletarians. The first step in the attainment of this identity was effected by Rebecca Harding Davis when she (Davis) symbolically expropriated the labor of Hugh and Deborah for the purpose of constructing the larger-than-life authorial persona immanent in the korl woman. Much more so than with the narrative persona in "Iron Mills," however, Sip reveals how the lens of sympathy engendered by Davis can thicken into a partition that protects the onlooker's privileges. Thus, Phelps's narrative underlines the paradoxical importance of maintaining the status quo to Sip's new, managerial identity by describing how the impoverishment of Sip's dress, demeanor and surroundings is vital to her "eloquence" (295). Although Sip often preaches from "one of
the foulest alleys in Five Falls" (293) "there was a syntax in Sip's brown face, and bent hands and poor dress and awkward motions . . . There were correctness and perspicuity about that old doorstep" (295). Removed from this setting Sip would merely "harangue" a middle-class reader (295). The narrator strongly implies here that Sip's newly reconstituted evangelical persona derives its force and character from the maintenance of industrial oppression and ugliness, a suggestion which is reinforced by the social quiescence of her message, which is the essential message of the domestic ideology. In a very real sense it is through voicing and carrying out the tenets of True Womanhood that Sip escapes from the working class. Although she remains a factory hand at the conclusion of the novel, she is a proletarian under erasure as much because of her refusal to enter into the network of conjugal exchange as for her work as a street evangelist. In a similar displacement to that which determines Davis's substitution of crime for revolt, Sip's rebellion, in other words, takes place on the grounds of middle-class conjugality rather than the terrain of workers' class consciousness.

In the popular women's magazines of the mid-1800's, those manifestoes of True Womanhood, it was not unheard of for unmarried, and by this is meant "maiden," women to undertake a "life of single blessedness" as "unselfish ministers to the sick, teachers of the young, or moral
preceptors with their pens, beloved of the entire village" (Welter 37). As Barbara Welter's study of these magazines reveals, however, the one common cause of the life of "single blessedness" was the death of the fiancée (37). Sip's refusal of marriage would seem like an out and out rebuke to the domestic ideology were it not for the fact that by refusing marriage to the mill hand who proposes to her she clearly escapes from the kind of degraded domestic life to which her own family history, including Catty's deformities, bears witness. Sip voluntarily channels desire away from the degrading conjugality which is offered to her. Unlike Deb Wolfe, Sip's act of desire will not beget a radical revelation of the illusory character of money, wages and civil rights which resulted when Deb's unanchored-by-conjugality desire seized on an upper-class object, namely Mitchell's wallet. Further Deb could atone for this "crime" only by withdrawing into the overdetermined silence through which Davis's novella reveals/conceals its essential conservatism. Sip, thus, attains to both Piety and Purity; she evinces no unanchored desire that will lead her into perdition. Sip's final attainment of an extra-industrial identity occurs by merely extending the province of the domestic ideology to include the streets and alleys of the mill town. Obedience to the head of the household takes, for Sip, the form of a literal obedience to the paradigmatic patriarch, God the Father, here known in His more feminized
incarnation: "Christ's way . . . a patient way" (Phelps 300). By keeping the Five Falls mill-hands piously oblivious to the exploitation of industrial life, Sip ensures the relative autonomy, and the femininity, of her own extra-industrial identity. She sublimates the revolutionary desire of Deb Wolfe into a much more clearly public, and middle-class, occupation than Deb's sequestered pastoral spinsterhood.

Perly's half of the bifurcated climax—the quelling of a strike—is even more revealing of how the realist author's tendency to manage popular discontent is engendered through the articulation of the domestic ideology. If we read this scene as a realist narrative the actual way that Perly prevents the strike is unknowable: she defuses violence by making the workers ashamed of their pending intransigence: "Oath and brickbats seemed to have been sucked out to sea by a sudden tide of respectability" (251). Then she berates the crowd for not accepting Mr. Garrick's explanation, delivered five minutes before, that a wage cut is necessary because of market conditions. Then Reuben Mell, one of the mill hands whose grade school age son was torn to pieces in an industrial accident earlier in the novel, delivers a short speech saying that while he does not understand why his wages must be reduced himself he will "take the young leddy's word for it" (253). When the crowd dissipates, Perly and Garrick walk home in the rain, after taking the time to fire an
overseer, "Irish Jim," who is too drunk to leave the mill yard under his own power!

The key to this strange anti-strike scene lies in the cultural work of managing proletarian dissent carried out by the inscription of the middle-class feminine identity. Reuben Mell makes this point for us by ascribing the truth value of Perly's speech to her social class: she is a "leddy." He states that he cannot understand how a wage cut can mean hunger and deprivation for the workers and not a "dollar's worth less of horses and carriages and grand parties to the company," but concludes that he's "free to say that we'll not doubt as the young leddy does. I'll take the young leddy's word for it" (252-53). It is no coincidence that the climax of Perly's feminist self-development occurs in the very presence of working-class militancy. For her self-defining synthesis of the prestige of her inherited class role--"leddy"--with her autonomous, new-feminine social identity--that of nurturing, pious, unmarried social worker--occurs almost entirely through the management of workers. The narrator's comment that the pending description of the strike-that-doesn't-happen is "valuable chiefly as indicative of the experimenter (Perly), rather as a hint than as history" (243), thus, brings us back to the registration of Hugh Wolfe's typicality as a corollary of the process of petit bourgeois feminine empowerment. Confronted with class insurrection, Perly's newly constructed individuality, like that of Rebecca
Davis, reaffirms individuality as the valorized half of the individuality-collectivity dichotomy, a dichotomy which Georg Lukacs identifies as posing "the most difficult question of modern literature" (9). In Lukacs's terms, Phelps's assertion that the defusing of the strike is "valuable chiefly as a hint" about Perly's individuality denies the existence of that "organic, indissoluble connection between man as a private individual and man as a social being" (Lukacs 8) through which "realism" attains its world-historical value. The strike provides Perly with a chance to indicate that her experimental, socially-voiced domesticity has important uses in industrial society, uses that distinguish her from the unruly proletarian collectivity she at once confronts, and, because of her relative powerlessness as a woman, emulates. Like "Life in the Iron Mills," The Silent Partner may be seen to narrate the stillbirth of American realism. And this stillbirth is dictated by Phelps's insistence that personality precedes collectivity, an insistence driven by the equation of collectivity with working-class contumacy. Because she accommodates herself to the economic status quo by asserting her will over her class others Perly too may be seen to symbolically comply with the cultural imperative to "Be Quiet!" Like the narrator/author of "Life in the Iron Mills," Perly manages to acquiesce to that imperative in a way that creates room for the enactment of power.
Here the imperative to silence is delivered by her dead father's partners, both men of course, so by not contesting her "silent partner" status legally Perly remains obedient to the patriarchal will and within the margins of the Cult of True Womanhood. Her ideological obedience to that Cult ensures that she does not give up her membership in the capital-owning class. And as we saw in the strike scene it is her class status, that of "leddy," which provides the material means of performing a cultural work, that of quelling class insurrection. Perly fulfills the desire for a middle-class managerial identity which "Life in the Iron Mills" could imagine only idealistically--through an artistic indeterminacy--constructing the settlement house as a vantage on the point-of-production which is only suggested by the narrator's studio in the earlier novella, and literally encountering and impeding the class insurrection which had to remain "a dumb secret" in "Life in the Iron Mills." Through the actualization of the progressive middle-class identity which is only imagined in "Iron Mills" Perly inhabits the "dawn" of feminine professionalism which never quite arrives in Davis's novella. Unlike Davis's korl woman, Perley's progress produces no trace of the labor linking the middle-class scene of writing to the point of production. By the time of the quelling of the strike, the silence of The Silent Partner herself (Perly) has become a medium of middle-class power; it has no organic link to working-class powerlessness,
as did the statue on the scene of writing of "Iron Mills," since the association of powerlessness with the workers has been symbolically contained in the deaf, non-speaking Catty. Catty clearly acts as other to Perly, in a way that cannot be said of the relation between the korl woman and Davis's narrator. Further, Catty's being swept into the flood insures that the working-class presence on the point of production of the narrative/narrator leaves no material artifact/byproduct, such as Davis's korl woman, to catalyze the narrative into the telltale dialogic spiral toward indeterminacy and away from working-class historical agency discussed in Chapter One, a structure which defines working-class presence. This scene also bears examination for its metaphoric links to the scene where Perly defused the strike.

When Catty is swept into the flood, her death catalyzes the sentimental "pity" through which the middle-class professional woman comes to know herself and effect her privilege in the public arena. But Catty's demise also signals an attempt to contain the working-class presence, to figure it within the same miasma of pathology and dangerous willfulness that embraced Deb and Hugh Wolfe. "Type of the world from which she sprang," Phelps's impassioned rhetoric of pity rings out, describing Catty, who has wandered onto a bridge about to be swept away by the flood (277):

the world of exhausted and corrupted body, of exhausted and corrupted brain, of exhausted and corrupted soul, the world of the laboring poor as man has made it, and as Christ has died for it, a
world of deaf, dumb, blind, doomed, stepping confidently to its own destruction before our own eyes (277-78).

For all its passion, however, this rhetoric can only feebly imagine the degraded condition of the working-class as symbolic of the universality of original sin, a condition that unites all classes. Rather, what seems to be happening here is that the working-class world-type's "stepping confidently to its own destruction" comprises a spectacle through which the narrator comes to a sense of class consciousness ("our own eyes"). Further, the passage touts its metaliterary-ness by revealing that a "type" is being offered here, divulging an association of Biblical typology and sentimental diction with social reform that empties Phelps's realist fiction of a readily available historical-material density and fills it instead with evidence of the cultural sophistication of the author. The metaliterary slide out of history here is reminiscent of Rebecca Harding Davis's reference to/reverence for the indeterminacy of Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*, a crucial component in her dialectic of working-class presence. Further, the flood surge that engulfs Catty is a reinscription of the ocean metaphor repeatedly used to describe the impending strike in the previous chapter: "a distant sea swell of a strike"(243), "the sea swell murmured"(244), "The sea swell splashed out a few delegates"(244), "The swell broke with a roar"(244). This reinscription of the workers as a natural disaster neatly
deconstructs the working-class contumacy within the narrative purlieu, destroying it to save it one might say. By reimagining workers as the destructiveness of nature—an ahistoric force which will fascinate naturalist writers—the narrative both generates itself through identification with the valorized pole, culture, of the culture/nature dichotomy and firmly associates worker intransigence with willful self-destruction.

The "world of the laboring poor" thus "stepping confidently to its own destruction"((276-77) requires the nurture and management of Perly, Sip and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. However, Catty must be finally erased from the domestic scene—Perly's settlement work, Sip's loving care—because that care and work could in some way preserve her as a material sign. A material sign, like the korl woman, poses a living affront to the idealist sign, provoking a spiral towards indeterminacy which symptomatizes the political ideologies at work in art. Phelps's novel takes no chances that a dangerous symptom of worker power will haunt the scene of literary production. When Catty disappears into the flood, her place on the ruined bridge has been filled by perhaps the most rigorously determined sign available to the western imagination:

On the empty ruin of the sliced bridge, two logs had caught and hung, black against the color of the water and the color of the sky. They had caught transversely, and hung like a cross (278).
As it was for Deb, Catty's silence, the deep silence of a deaf mute, is finally not silent enough for her to remain in the industrial milieu. But whereas Davis, writing closer to a pre-industrial age, could still imagine a living retreat into pre-industrial pastorale, Phelps, writing in a more clearly industrialized age, can imagine only one alternative for the proletarian unable to either be silent or assimilate to middle-class ideals: material death/idealist reinscription. Standing on the riverbank as a displacement of materialism by the idealist sign sweeps Phelps's carefully constructed "type" into ahistorical symbolhood, Perly and Sip embrace across class lines, at once actualizing and reinventing the militant sisterhood which Rebecca Harding first glimpsed, and feared, in 1860, when those insurgent woman shoe workers wrote themselves into history. The change which permits this embrace is, paradoxically, the evolution of class identities catalyzed by the introduction of the domestic ideology into the public arena. That embrace, however, is between professional managers of proletarian contumacy, not between social revolutionaries.

In both these important early works, works which link the realist fiction to the American tradition of middle-class liberal social protest, the value of working-class contumacy is that it gives the potentially subversive woman professional a chance to indicate that she too will articulate the patriarchal domestic ideology—thet
promulgation of domesticity, piety, purity, and obedience to authority—as a way of defining and protecting her class privileges. Further, these works display the particular resonances given to the individual/society dichotomy, which so determines the rise of the novel, when that dichotomy is part of the imagination of working-class presence in a moment of proletarian contumacy. Both "Life in the Iron Mills" and The Silent Partner depict the entry into the industrial milieu of a larger-than-life authorial personality which does the cultural work of metaphorical management of a dangerous collectivity: proletarian lives and labor. The inherent hazards of this cultural work arise from how the working-class presence is simultaneously imagined and managed. For though the working-class presence on the scene of literary reception necessitates literary modes of management, that presence also threatens to exceed representation and destroy the representor—the author. The "onbearable" behavior of millhands may not always be stemmed by the criminal prosecution of one of their number. Instead they may march out of the smoke and fog which render their suffering invisible and lay siege to the vantage points of the newly formed middle-class managers. The flood tide of proletarian discontent may not always subvert itself into the channels of true womanhood. Instead it may overflow those ideological banks and sweep the settlement house workers and factory owners alike into the revolutionary maelstrom.
The turbulence of American class relations in the post-
Civil War period of American history, in other words,
continually infuses the literary sign with a materiality that
may overwhelm literary strategies of representation. This
possibility provokes the realist imagination of the working-
class presence into the dialectic spiral towards
indeterminacy and away from proletarian power, proletarian
historical agency. While such an appeal to linguistic
difference/deference simultaneously makes the working class
visible and invisible—necessitating the author's managerial
work and protecting his/her social ad- vantages—it is in the
resulting overdetermination that language must remain itself,
must deny referentiality, that the historical basis of the
realist fiction becomes most clearly visible. Gilded Age
fiction writers visibly construct scenarios of worker
ascendancy and then visibly deconstruct them because in some
essential way (and the metaphor of essense is not casual) the
working class is present at the scene of its own literary
(un)making.
Chapter Three

The Novelist as Agent Provocateur:
Henry James, Anarchism, and The Princess Casamassima
1.

"No dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention."

Raymond Williams (1971)

"An anarchist society of a large size would be impossible ... unless it would begin by guaranteeing to all its members a certain minimum of well-being produced in common. Communism and anarchism thus complete each other."

Peter Kropotkin (1903)

Although the insurrection and the novel are not exactly synchronous, Henry James's 1885 novel The Princess Casamassima and the Haymarket Tragedy of 1886-87 also express the dialectic of working-class presence we discerned in the earliest American representations of a working class, "Life in the Iron Mills" and The Silent Partner. In 1886, America experienced its first "Red Scare." The shockwave of fear, revulsion and reaction generated by the Haymarket bomb blast reverberated across an America convulsed by so many strikes and popular agitations that labor was often thought to be in open revolt. To reintroduce the psychoanalytic metaphor of the political unconscious, the Haymarket-inspired Red Scare signals the return to public consciousness of a barely repressed knowledge of class violence that had become manifest less than a decade before in the Great Uprising of 1877. The historical value of James's Princess Casamassima springs from how symptoms of this return of the repressed determine the novel, which was completed by the late summer of 1885. As with Davis's and Phelps's discourse, James's
recognizes the dangers this return poses to its own existence as discourse and arrives, far in advance of the historical revolt, at semiotic strategies for dealing with a general revolt of labor through a simultaneous revelation and occlusion of worker intransigence. To quiet the body of proletarian desire James will replicate the strategies of Davis and Phelps despite the earlier writers failure to found a viable "tradition." And James's own dialectal registration of working-class presence on the scene of writing bears similarities to that we saw in Davis, and thus its own ruptural unities reveal symptoms of working-class power.

Individualist anarchism, the political ideology to which James's protagonist Hyacinth Robinson, becomes committed, is the perfect vehicle for James's attempt to imagine working-class power. For in individualist anarchism James finds a ready made symbol, an already articulated ideology, for that presence, one that both scares the devil out of solid citizens from London to Chicago and emulates James's own artistic predispositions towards making the individual consciousness, over and against class consciousness, the center of narration. The working-class presence asserts itself in James's delicately nuanced attempts to create individual consciousnesses that betray communist anarchism by assimilating it to a severe individualist anarchism. However, James emulates communist anarchism in the very gestures with which he turns traitor to it. To paraphrase Kropotkin,
communism and anarchism complete each other in James's vision of working-class dissent, but they do so against James's will. The anarcho-communists who played a leading role in the great revolt of labor which swept America in 1886 were not isolated individualists; they represented and unified the workers in America's second largest city, a unification that deconstructed itself in the events surrounding the Haymarket Square bombing of May 4, 1886.

Anarchism plays a key role in the national phobia occasioned by the return of repressed knowledge of working-class intransigence to public consciousness in 1886. There is no mistaking the connection, trumpeted by almost every newspaper in America, between the bomb blast and the militancy of the Chicago proletarians' Eight Hour Movement. The International Working People's Association (IWPA), the anarchist group unified in America by the Pittsburgh Congress of 1883, had over 5000 members in Chicago and played a leading role in organizing the polyglot Chicago proletariat and inspiring them with the militant class solidarity needed

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13 Recent cultural materialist criticism of The Princess Casamassima has tended to reproduce this meconnaisance. Left-oriented critics John Carlos Rowe, Mark Seltzer and Mike Fisher all tend to accept as exhaustive and definitive some rather partial and geographically limited historical accounts of anarchist praxis. I can only theorize that the reasons for this are to be found in the fact that anarchism has produced nothing at all like the voluminous cultural critique that Marxism inspired and these critics have reinscribed in some way the antique institutional biases of Engles and Marx against that ur-individualist Mikhail Bakunin. However, as I hope to show, individualism does not, and did not, exhaust anarchist praxis and theory.
to press their demands against a capitalist class which had at its ready disposal both the mainstream press and the state's agencies of repressive control. Despite mutual disavowal of each others' aims, ideology and methods by late nineteenth century Marxists and anarchists, the Chicago IWPA of the early 1880's often espoused clearly socialist political aims--such as the passage/enforcement of laws mandating the Eight Hour Day--and worked tirelessly to represent the proletariat in the struggle for better working conditions, wages and treatment. As Paul Avrich has it, the Chicago IWPA "was almost exclusively a working-class organization" through whose "propaganda and other activities, the idea of labor solidarity took on flesh and life;" it was thus, he concludes, that "anarchism assumed the character of a genuine class movement" in America's second largest city in the early 1880's (87). The IWPA, however, despite its alignment with the more conservative aims of trade unionism, remained deeply committed to the Bakuninist prescription of individual acts of violent resistance. Although if one reads the IWPA English-language newspaper Alarm, one gets the impression that the target has shifted from the state to class enemies, the fact remains that Alarm recommended individual acts of violence as an effective tool for popular liberation, advising disempowered readers to "study chemistry and ballistics," reprinting sections of Johann Most's infamous little book on bomb making, and generally singing
the praises of Nobel's invention as a panacea for social inequity. It is in part because of the undeniable violence of the IWPA's propaganda and rhetoric that, despite the fact that the identity of the bomb thrower was never established, the Haymarket anarchists were convicted, condemned and executed. Further, because the Haymarket affair implied the existence of rhetorical and organizational links between terrorism and labor militancy, the events of May 1886 catalyzed the tendency of Americans of all classes to reject labor radicalism outright, often in direct contradiction to their class interests. Turn-of-the-century American workers were often repelled by any labor organization tainted with the shadowy, almost occult image of the bomb throwing nihilist. Hence a truism of labor history is that the Haymarket-inspired Red Scare that swept America in 1886-1887 marked a major setback for the fairly conservative trade union movement which fathered the institutional unions that came to represent the American working-class, for better or worse, and still do today.

It is to this issue of how anarchism came to represent the working-class, both in the American mind and in social practice, that we will address ourselves here. Of course, anarchists were often at the forefront of American labor radicalism, reenacting the Chicago IWPA's role as genuine class representatives, well into this century, as the Sacco-
Vanzetti case attests. Representation, however, be it social or linguistic, has an inherent slipperiness. In literary studies, the "culture war" debates of the last decade have often targeted this slipperiness— its existence and implications—and these debates have led to serious interrogations and affirmations of the value and definition of literature itself. In labor studies, however, the hegemony of institutional history has until quite recently assured that the instability of the signifier/representative is not often investigated deeply. As I illustrated in Chapter I, above, institutional labor economics have, instead, promulgated a logocentric definition of the working class, a definition that reifies working people into an expression of the logic of their institutions; as the union is, so are the people, goes this line of reasoning. The assumption of this type of naive referentiality—that the labor signifier/representative does exhaust working-class practice, energy and intention—has numerous salubrious effects for capital, but few for working people. For instance, management is certainly going to be more than happy with the linguistically naive idea that the corrupt regimes of gangsters such as Teamster Presidents Jimmy Hoffa and Jackie

14 In 1926 Eugene V. Debs called Sacco and Vanzetti "two of the bravest and best scouts that ever served the labor movement" for instance, and wrote that he "could not think it possible that the American workers will desert, betray and deliver to their executioner two men who have stood as staunchly true . . . in the cause of labor as have Sacco and Vanzetti" (Dos Passos 5).
Presser signify an essential selfishness, rapacity, laziness and corruption on the part of the rank and file. At the Haymarket in 1886, the labor logocentrism that still marks labor representation of all kinds becomes of crucial importance. It is to investigate this issue of labor logocentrism that we open up a dialogue between the Haymarket affair, that crisis of working-class representation, and Henry James's novel (written in the latter half of 1885), a novel very much concerned with the representation of anarchism, which was being serialized in The Atlantic when the bomb went off and the anarchists went on trial for their lives.

In this dialogue, the historical reception of anarchism may be seen to provide James's novel with a rhetoric of Otherness through which the novel can simultaneously acclaim and disclaim the working-class will to power, similar to what we saw in Davis's and Phelps's works. This rhetoric of Otherness is salubrious to the status quo to the degree that it is determined by those similarities between bourgeois and anarchist individualism which have led socialist critics of anarchism from Marx on to decry anarchism as a reactionary tool. James latches on to anarchism's liberal critique of socialism, in other words, at the same time as he tries to repress its socialist critique of capitalism. The latter critique was made dramatically manifest by the Haymarket, where anarchism manifested itself as a genuine class
movement. So James’s attempt to pose individualist anarchism as the symbol of working-class insurrection exhibits symptoms of other styles of subjectivity posed by the working-class collective hovering on the margins of the Haymarket. I hold that we can readily see this substitution of, to use Macherey’s terms, a "divulged event" for that which must remain "undivulged" in the way that The Princess Casamassima, by delineating individualist anarchism out of the numerous radicalisms provided for James’s palette, both by the East End London setting of the novel and the social scene of its writing, engages in an act of representing the working class which is both salubrious to the status quo and homologous to the reactionary representation of the Chicago proletariat inscribed by the Haymarket controversy.15

These representations of the working class anticipate the partial, biased, socially-determined representation of working-class dissent written into the American mind by the Haymarket affair. In both, the socialistic tendency comes to be effaced by the reification of a cult of individualism, a cult which, although certainly divulged by these social phenomena—especially in the case of anarchism—in no way exhausts, that is completely represents, their ideology,

15 Howard Tilley suggests a very provocative question, one which he does not follow up, when he points out that "almost all the bombings and terrorism carried out in London (during the time James was writing The Princess Casamassima) were . . . the work of Irish separatist groups" not anarchists (19).
aims, or praxis. By producing a knowledge of working-class dissent which inculcates readers with a sense of the naturalness of autonomous individualism, James's novel and the Haymarket Tragedy both proclaim and forestall the production of genuine class consciousness. In neither case, however, is this attempt at forestalling totally successful, for although ideology may not divulge the specifics of class consciousness, class consciousness is knowable to us through its symptoms. As is visible in the ruptural unities and spiral towards indeterminacy of "Life in the Iron Mills" the formal, textual and rhetorical characteristics of literary texts readily exhibit such symptoms.

How does Henry James "choose" to represent working-class conditions in his novel of London's East End, the largest working-class ghetto in the world? To put it simply, he chooses not to. Compare The Princess Casamassima to a contemporary novel of proletarian conditions, Emile Zola's Germinal (1884), and the difference is striking in this respect. There are no scenes of industrial production in James's novel, for instance, no scenes of mass protest, no crowd actions, no revolutionary speeches such as led up to the Haymarket tragedy. In fact, none of the characters we meet are proletarians really, in the sense of their being mass-production worker. And as numerous critics, beginning with Lionel Trilling in 1947, have pointed out, in this elision of the industrial working-class from his field-of-
vision James is true to certain aspects of anarchism. Anarchist organizations apparently did fill their ranks with skilled artisans, men, usually, who were alarmed at how small was the niche provided by an increasingly industrialized market for their older, more labor-intensive forms of handicraft production. Marxist charges that anarchism was reactionary derive at least partly from this evident wish to demystify labor and dignify the laborer through a general regression to pre-commodity forms of production.

However, as the Chicago IWPA's alignment with proletarian class interests testifies, anarchist organizations could have a much wider appeal and a more socialistic agenda than is evidenced by James's elision of proletarians from his representation of anarchism. But the links between anarchism and large-scale popular revolt were not limited to Chicago. Anarchists made up a large percentage of the First International, for instance. James's extensive editing of the novel for the New York Edition, undertaken some twenty years after the original publication, suggests how deeply he was aware of anarchism's socialistic aspect. For in the later edition, as Frederick Nies has shown, James changes the setting from 1871 to 1881. The later date insures that some nine years intervene between the events of the novel and the occasion in 1872 when Marx and Engels booted Bakunin and the anarchists out of the Workers' International. In an 1881 setting, anarchism and communism have fewer overt
conceptual links than previously, and no organizational links. The later setting also distances the novel from that primal scene of anarcho-socialist praxis, the Paris Commune of 1871. Similarly, the elision of the anarchists' potential constituency, industrial workers, comprises a major characteristic of James's depiction of anarchism, in stark contrast to the events surrounding the Haymarket. These two roughly simultaneous acts of representation comment on each other in revealing ways.

James's anarchists are almost comically rendered, hidden away in an arcane workingman's club in Bloomsbury, they are politically impotent and cannot decide on any course of action. James's description of the conversation at the Sun and Moon shows workers whose ineffectuality is so extreme that it even portends a kind of general epistemological failure, a failure to be able to perceive, to be able to know. The perpetual, rhetorical inquiries with which James has his anarchists fill the bad air of the Sun and Moon ("What the plague am I to do with a seventeen bob," "Well now are we just starvin or ain't we just starvin'," Well, are we in earnest or ain't we in earnest?--that's the only thing I want to know") figure the kind of epistemological exigency that we would expect to find in a milieu where the individualist problematic, which produces knowledge for subjects more definitively interpellated within it than the exemplars of contradiction at the Sun and Moon, has been
seriously corroded. James's revolutionaries meet as a collective, but reason, badly, as isolate individuals. However, the very contradictoriness they exhibit—which James thinks of as engendering a kind of paralysis—is what would best suit them for the task of revolution.

Their economic marginality, as artisans, to the factory-dominated productive complex, the polyglot backgrounds epitomized by Schinkel and Poupin, the classlessness of Hyacinth, Poupin's experience of revolution and the Commune, all evince the kind of deep social contradictions that make imagining revolution possible. To thus think in terms of transindividual goals requires an epistemology that is not the unmitigated product of the discrete self and, as thus, it is difficult to even envision from within that self. Thus, James's shallow depiction of these men, and his repeated insistence on the "occult" nature of Hyacinth's anarchist affiliations tend to place them beyond the pale of what is knowable from within the individualist problematic: they are a mass, a mob whose uncertain manner of "ascertaining" knowledge is a result of their failure to individuate, leaving them, as Hyacinth sees them, "striving . . . blindly, obstructedly in a kind of eternal dirty intellectual fog"(244). When Hyacinth boldly offers his life to the cause, he asserts the kind of romantic will to action needed to focus this mob upon some radical undertaking, as the Chicago anarchists did in 1884 by taking the lead in the Eight Hour
movement. And the narrative reaction is revealing; Poupin and Paul Muniment immediately take Hyacinth out of the "dirty intellectual fog" and sweep him across London to take "the terrible vow" of loyalty to Hoffendahl, the master anarchist. James, thus, moves to individuate Hyacinth before he attracts the proletarian constituency which anarchists had at the Haymarket.

The Haymarket anarchists, conversely, were part of a large-scale labor contumacy that ended in a public tragedy. It was the repressive power of the state which moved to individuate Spies, Parsons, Lingg and the others, removing them from their constituency, at last, by dangling them from the gallows. Conversely, James's Hoffendahl—a composite of Mikhail Bakunin, Johann Most and Peter Kropotkin—is a shadowy master individualist, never divulged by the narrative, who lives in hiding and communicates his commands through a clandestine network of secretive messengers. By having Hyacinth become merely a functionary of Hoffendahl's will at the very moment when Hyacinth threatens to burst the integuments of the individualist problematic James reinscribes his protagonist within that problematic. Unlike the shadowy individualist Hoffendahl, August Spies and the other Chicagoans articulate a public discourse of revolution that invites all working people into the kind of egalitarian democracy practiced by the Chicago Central Labor Union (Avrich 116). They published a daily German newspaper,
Arbeiter-Zeitung, an English weekly, Alarm, and Czech and Bohemian papers as well. They gave speeches all over the Midwest and organized huge public demonstrations of proletarians. James's anarchism elides the public discourse of the Chicago anarchists, changing it from a broadly inclusive langue to an idiosyncratic parole, a series of covert oaths and secret messages delivered from the One to the Few. The Many are not part of the picture; they remain bound in that "dirty intellectual fog" which is as much James's symbol for and limit to working-class consciousness as it was for Rebecca Harding Davis. Other features of James's depiction of working-class life also reveal symptoms of the working-class presence. The novel's earliest reviewers, for instance, were quick to pick up the fact that nearly all the significant London scenes take place on Saturday evening or Sunday: the working folk's day off. Thus the numerous depictions of London street life, in which James comes as close as he ever does to emulating the French Naturalists who are of marked import to this novel, divulge the portion of the workers' time when their roles in production are obscured by an ostensibly free choice of styles of spending money on commodities. Hyacinth is always squiring his working-class girlfriend Millicent to various parks, pubs and tea shops or standing transfixed before opulent shop windows or gazing upon working folk who are either doing their marketing, getting ready for a debauch or
walking around hungry, gazing, like Hyacinth, upon taunting evidence of consumption. These scenes pepper the novel. And in every case, James offers us what Marxists of an earlier generation would call a "false consciousness" of the East End, a working-class ghetto falsely peopled by consumers, not producers. For in the act of consuming commodities the social labor that goes into the production of those commodities remains undivulged. Given the omnipresence of the prison in this novel—Hyacinth's mother dies there, he is take there at an early age to visit her, much of the talk at the Sun and Moon centers around the possibility of ending up there, James visited Milbank prison to do research for this novel—we can read much of this novel as walking the seam between the marketplace and the prison, a route we saw literalized in the jailhouse scene in "Life in the Iron Mills." James' is not, however, completely successful in his essay at—to use the terms of the false dichotomy we developed in discussing Davis's novella—keeping the revolutionary specter of the point-of-production from intruding on the specular dichotomy of marketplace and prison.

As was the case with Deb Wolfe in "Life in the Iron Mills" Henry James's proletarians Millicent Henning and Hyacinth Robinson represent an unquiet body of desire which may engender class consciousness and thus must be quieted through a complex set of displacements and substitutions. In imagining that body of desire, James encounters a dangerous
moment in the history of the culture of consumption, one which we have seen before. In "Iron Mills" we saw how Hugh Wolfe's gaze into the marketplace so disconcerted the exemplar of Davis's strategy of indeterminacy—the beautiful mulatto slave—that she fled the market in panic. And I argued that Hugh's gaze into the ideological fault line between jailhouse and market threatened to deconstruct the prison/marketplace dichotomy through which proletarian class consciousness, a kind of unanchored desire, is channeled into consumption, into a desire for money, wages, and commodities and away from the desire to control the point of production. In that case, the only reason Hugh's deconstructive gaze could occur at all was because he had already decided to erase himself, and the dialectic of working-class presence he portends, from the spectacle of power. James's proletarian representatives—Hyacinth Robinson and Millicent Henning, those inveterate gazers into shop windows—figure a similarly destabilizing gaze into the marketplace, a gaze which at once threatens and reinscribes the prison/market dichotomy. The possible exercise of this gaze assures a social need for the authorial manager to carry out his semiotic strategy of containing the working-class presence within a series of indeterminacies, what James calls in his 1907 Preface to the novel, "the effect of society's not knowing"(9) James's insistence that language remain itself occurs at a moment when working-class intransigence has infused the literary
sign with materiality. Thus consciously constructed literary indeterminacies tend to reveal as much as they conceal, as we saw, for instance, when Davis's quasi-marxist critique of the money form divulged that industrialism had transformed the founding rhetoric of American democracy into a collection of empty signs. In the moments of ruptural unity which indeterminacy provokes, the dialectic of working-class presence becomes known. The Princess Casamassima also divulges such ruptural unities, moments in which an historical working-class presence imagines its own agenda into the text. As with Hugh Wolfe, Hyacinth's self-erasure from the marketplace is a precondition of his momentary ability to deconstruct it. Henry James's "effect of society's not knowing" is much like Rebecca Harding Davis's consciously constructed emphasis on the fog and smoke that cloak the mill town; both constructions remind us that blindness is a precondition of vision in the proletarian milieu.

We see Hyacinth's tendency toward self-erasure in the very moment that he comes on the scene, at age eleven, in Chapter One. But the manner in which that self-erasure is constructed also reveals the possibility that Hyacinth could explode the determinate symbol-hood which James—acting in much the same manner as "Judge Day" in "Life in the Iron Mills"—has imposed on the working-class power Hyacinth portends. For Hyacinth, the prescribed determinacy is enacted through his own longing for psychic autonomy. James insists
that this autonomy can be attained only by an aristocracy of consumption, but the imaginative impact of working-class activism can be discerned in the manner of his insistence. Imagining the working-class presence, James simultaneously reveals and occludes the social cost of production which makes that consumption possible. Hyacinth represents a moment in which the reification of autonomy is contradicted by the material circumstances of his insertion into ideology. Hence, I would hold that the possibility of revolutionary involvement which he signifies arises at the moment when the inscription of his autonomy under erasure comes to be known by him as having been socially produced. Hyacinth's very contradictoriness allows us to identify points at which the novel must deny Hyacinth the insights into history which are his by virtue of his position athwart the very ideologies James asserts to completely exhaust Hyacinth's historical will to action. Anarchism and communism complete each other, Kropotkin would say. But Henry James is having none of it.

2.

Our first sight of Hyacinth as a child perfectly exemplifies how the working-class is written under erasure and how both the erasure and the knowledge that it has been done determine the rest of his career:

At this time of day the boy was often planted in front of . . . an establishment where periodical literature, as well as tough toffy and hard lollipops, was dispensed and where songbooks and pictorial sheets were attractively exhibited in the small paned
dirty window. He used to stand there . . . and spell out the first page of the romances in *Family Herald* and the *London Journal*, where he particularly admired the obligatory illustration in which the noblest characters (they were always of the highest birth) were presented to the carnal eye. When he had a penny he spent only a fraction of it on stale sugarcandy; for the remaining halfpenny he always bought a ballad (26).

Here the narrator places the ten year old Hyacinth in the position of viewing subject, yet the class orientation of subject to object is almost diametrically opposed to that of the discrete intellectual who haunts the London streets, both in James's preface and in the popular literature of surveillance which Mark Seltzer has shown James to at once mimic and disavow. There is no power emanating from Hyacinth's gaze here, no attempt to classify, manage and control the object of the gaze, and this is a relation that will hold true of Hyacinth's entire career. Instead, the power of the aristocracy to enthrall and mystify the very people who they most oppress runs backwards up Hyacinth's gaze, infusing his "carnal eye," holding him captive for "half an hour at a time," as if before an icon. What holds the boy thus riveted to the spot?

One argument, James's own, would be that the scene testifies to how deeply Hyacinth feels his predicament: "the figures in any picture," James tells us in the preface, "the agents in any drama, are interesting only in proportion as they feel their respective situations" (*PC* 9). Hyacinth's "respective situation" in relation to the vexed question of
his class is literalized by his position before the sweetshop window. Young Hyacinth is so fascinated by the content of a literary production that he turns his back to the sordid reality of Lomax place, foreshadowing his later unsuccessful attempt to escape into the belle monde of the aristocracy. Thus his mesmerized reading of the *London Journal, Family Herald* and the other publications signifies a standard ideologically managed misreading of his social milieu; Hyacinth idealizes the romance of aristocracy, a fiction which occludes historical mention of how the Victorian aristocracy came to occupy the position of a social elite, by concentrating on the "personal," "romantic," present moment. The delicious, masterful irony of this scene signals an unmistakable intention on the part of Hyacinth's creator, as ten year old Hyacinth, through a painfully inappropriate misreading of the romance of aristocracy, becomes an avid consumer of the ideology of his own enslavement.

James's intention here is the enhancement of our sense of irony, but if we place this scene of Hyacinth's constitutive (mis)reading within the historical context of proletarian revolt and dissent, what we find is a moment where the synchronic proximity of the ostensible and actual narratives of Hyacinth's origins, from which this particular irony derives, is a direct representation of the crucial dialectic of the age: the dialectic between workers' lived, historical experience of oppression and their immersion in
the ahistorical moment of ideology, whose effect is to elide unmediated perceptions of class oppression.

From the point of view of bourgeois ideology, Hyacinth's insertion into ideology, to the extent that it occurs in front of the sweetshop, comprises a kind of worst case scenario. At that moment both the historical social content of a subject and the like content of a commodity become visible; they coalesce through their synchronous figuration as parts of an artistic wholeness, in the case of James, that of irony. In most cases in which the constituted subject confronts the commodity, of course, the discourse of labor occluded in the commodity remains unheard, but young Hyacinth's fascination with these particular products of literary production presents a special case, in which the class violence that the commodity form usually elides can come to be recognized, by the subject, as directly responsible for the conditions of his subjecthood. As a synecdoche for Hyacinth's formative years, James offers a moment in which the reader/consumer--Hyacinth Robinson, bastard child of a scandalous, and mutually fatal, union of aristocrat and proletarian--is confronted by a text/commodity which might very well have proclaimed the particular local conditions of the production of his own oppressive subjecthood. Thus the content of the Family Herald and London Journal, that romance of the aristocracy, portends the demystification of the form of Hyacinth's subjecthood,
constructing a gap in that subjecthood through which the social content of his subjectivity, and of commodities, can be visible. It is as an ideologue of revolution that Hyacinth is most likely to glimpse such content. James's carefully constructed irony, his attempt to show the effect of Hyacinth's not knowing, again, reveals ruptural unity between an unquiet body of proletarian desire and the ideological means of enforcing silence.

Now, this is not to suggest that Hyacinth in some manner managed to read a "romance" version of the story of Lord Frederick's seduction of and murder by his mother in that very shop window and was thus constituted into some alternative subjectivity, into some consistently subversive communal subjectivity. From a subjective position within hegemony a totally subversive radicalism may be approached only asymptotically, if at all. For various reasons this is true of Hyacinth, most certainly. For instance, Pinnie's fiction of Hyacinth's paternity—that "tall fond structure that . . . (Pinnie) had been piling up for years (29)—has temporal precedence, and it too substitutes the ideology of romance for mention of the violence of the painfully real carnal exchange between Lord Frederick and Florentine Vivier. The self-subverting tendency of Hyacinth's revolutionary involvement may have been carefully stage-managed by James, but the sad history of anarchist terrorism—bombings such as the Haymarket always posed a setback for working people—
certainly illustrates the historical efficacy of the hegemonic ideology into which Hyacinth was inserted by his formative reading of the romance of aristocracy. The relative inescapableness of ideology is a valuable point that Mike Fisher makes in his Althusserian reading of Hyacinth's anarchism. But the literary spiral towards indeterminacy which represents the working-class presence insures that Hyacinth's individualism will betray (in both senses: to show and to turn against) the collectivism that helps create it. Thus we must note that Hyacinth does, after Pinny tells him the story of "who he is," go to the reading room of the library of the British Museum and dig up the pertinent issues of the Times, thus reading about the scandal of his own paternity through a somewhat less opaque lens than that of romance (429). So it is through reading that Hyacinth confronts the specter of class violence adhering to his paternity. And this later reading of his own history, which in a limited sense effects a critique of the mystifying romance of aristocracy, must be laid alongside the sweet-shop window scene and Pinnie's "tall fond structure" if we are to account for the possibility of dissent in Hyacinth's personal history and environment.

In his 1988 essay "The Jamesian Revolution in The Princess Casamassima: A Lesson in Bookbinding," Mike Fisher points out that as Hyacinth searches the Times for evidence that his aristocratic father was humane and honorable he
becomes further and further estranged from his proletarian maternity, and thus that in reading the *Times* Hyacinth "reads the Establishment press to help him construct an Establishment fiction" (89). However while Fisher accounts for the operation of an Althusserian version of ideology which defuses Hyacinth's revolutionary potential in the text and suggests ways in which historical anarchism eventually came to reinforce the status quo, there is little accommodation made in Fisher's adroit manipulation of Althusser's theory of ideology for explaining how genuine dissent comes about in the first place—a standard criticism of Althusser's theory of ideology—or to discern at what points James's text can be seen to, a la Machery, manifest the limits of the hegemonic ideology. We can glimpse, in the material/historical positions of Hyacinth's reading, moments in which the "Establishment fiction" and the brutality of class relations this fiction is supposed to elide instead collide violently in a local example of what Althusser, in an earlier essay, called "a ruptural unity," an overdetermined contradiction which "is inseparable from the total structure of the social body in which it is found, inseparable from the formal conditions of existence" (*For Marx* 99). It is in the case of such an overdetermined contradiction that, for Hyacinth, a symptomatic reading of the undivulged events of the far from noble aristocratic romance that led to his conception becomes almost irresistible, especially if we consider Hyacinth to be
that young man upon nothing is lost James intended him to be. Ideology makes dissent difficult to think, but in a capitalist society the all-determining contradiction between social conditions and productive capacity inevitably produces ideological contradictions, which seek expression in the material actions of individual subjects. It is one thing to say that ideology tends to smooth out these contradictions, but it is quite another to suggest that the entire tendency of any social activism or literary discourse is toward such a smoothing out, as Mike Fisher, through a rather too narrow reading of Louis Althusser, suggests. For instance during his "never-to-be-forgotten afternoon" (431) in the British Museum library in the mid-to-late 1870's, Hyacinth could have, not inconceivably, come across Karl Marx, who was constructing volumes II and III of Das Kapital out of a symptomatic reading of such "Establishment fictions" as David Ricardo's and Adam Smith's political economy and the royally commissioned factory inspectors' reports. Hyacinth too testifies to the possibility of genuine social critique and social activism, possibilities which are managed through a strategy of exclusion whereby James chooses from the landscape of proletarian revolt only those formations, such as individualist anarchism, for instance, which ultimately reproduce his social position as an agent of literary production. However, these "choices," since they are known only from within the bourgeois-dominated problematic of
divulged events, do not utterly exhaust the historical formations of proletarian dissent.

Thus it comes to be possible that by having his earliest reading experiences infused with the ideology of reaction which informs the tabloid's "romance" of the aristocracy, Hyacinth, whose very existence testifies to the violence that underlies that romance, is inserted into that ideology at the exact point at which it fails to account for the class violence written in his flesh. James's protagonist must be accounted for in terms that take into account the linked possibilities that ideology may either be subverted or subverts itself. Terry Eagleton has argued, for instance, that ideology is not merely "a false consciousness which blocks true historical perception, a porous screen imposed between men and history" (69) Instead, ideology must be thought as "an inherently complex formation, which, by inserting individuals into history in a variety of ways allows of multiple kinds and degrees of access to that history"(69). Hyacinth's insertion into history is symbolized by his position before the sweet-shop romances; the ideology inherent in the romances at once conceals and reveals his history. This ideology, by "deformatively producing the real . . . nevertheless carries elements of reality within itself"(Eagleton 69). It is useful here to remember that in the preface James measures the success or failure of a literary work according to the degree to which it renders
protagonists whose consciousness of their respective situations is "finely aware and richly responsible" (PC 9), and later declares that Hyacinth Robinson's "passion of intelligence is . . . precisely his highest value for our curiosity and our sympathy" (PC 15). To guarantee the success of his art, then, James would like to create Hyacinth as a consciousness capable of the very intelligence and perspicacity which would allow him to perceive the contradiction between the tabloid romance of the aristocrats and the debased sexual relation of aristocrat to proletarian to which his existence testifies. If James is successful in creating a passionate proletarian intelligence, then, both James's and his character's discourse represent a threat to the status quo.

James thus makes manifest a moment in which the basis is laid, in Hyacinth, for an individual performance of ideology, to adapt Terry Eagleton's term for the relation of literature to ideology, which emphasizes that ideology can be an object of vision at least as much as it emphasizes the narrowly Althusserian notion that ideology is a precondition for vision. Lacan's conception of the mirror stage is useful in understanding how Hyacinth comes to problematize this issue. For I hold that we witness an historically mediated simulacrum of the mirror stage when Hyacinth stands rooted before that sweetshop window. Here Hyacinth's meconaissance of the textual image of an unattainable social/ideological
integrity—that of aristocracy—reenacts the way in which, according to Lacan, the infant subject mistakes the mirror image of its own autonomous physical outline for a paradigm of subjectivity.

In Lacan's understanding, during the mirror stage "the I is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as a subject" (2). This "I," which Lacan also refers to as the "Ideal-I,":

situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will only rejoin the coming-into-being (le devenir) of the subject asymptotically, whatever the success of the dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve as I his discordance with his own reality (2).

However, the social and historical terms of Hyacinth's mirror moment, as they are manifest in the novel, should not be lost on us, because it is through them that Hyacinth, and James, will attempt the dialectical syntheses that will resolve his discordance with historical reality. Hyacinth's moment is firmly implicated in the politics of consumption. As if in vivid illustration of this complicity, the narrator says he always buys the "ballad with a vivid woodcut on top"(25) in conjunction with "stale sugarcandy" when he has money, thus illustrating the link, mystified by the practice of consumption, between the stunted corporeal development that marks the badly nourished proletarian child and the
ideological development which insures his/her malnourishment by eliding the material relation between that child and the ruling classes who control a disproportionate share of wealth, and nourishment. As the narrator informs us, "he (Hyacinth) was exceedingly diminutive, even for his years, and . . . it seemed written in his attenuated little person that he would never be either tall or positively hard"(34). Further, when he doesn't have money, only the shallowest reading of the Ideal-I, literally its first page, is available to Hyacinth, and he remains frozen before its commodified form in what, given our Lacanian setting, becomes an image of primary narcissism. Hyacinth's wistful paralysis before the sweetshop window, avatars of which, as we shall see, haunt his entire life, in many ways prefigures the plight of the consumer/subject in T.W.Adorno's negative-utopian vision of the totalized consumer society: mesmerized by a vision of polymorphous consumption which is offered up as the only available means of establishing and defining an autonomous identity despite how the polymorphous vision itself violates and makes impossible any viable autonomy. Hyacinth's similar desire for unlimited consumption both derives from and deconstructs around the romance of aristocracy, so that his misreading of the aristocratic romance is continually, painfully contradicted, although never corrected, by the intrusions of material history. Given that James constructs Hyacinth's desire for perfect autonomy
through a kind of archetypal retelling of (according to Lacan) the essential moment of such autonomy, it is no coincidence that Hyacinth often behaves like a middle-class consumer, perpetually frustrated before a titillating array of goods that would require a bourgeois pocketbook. But it is equally true that his frustrated longing to consume is almost inextricable from his realization of the high social cost of bourgeois consumption, the realization that makes his revolutionary engagement possible. Based on his willingness to take the "terrible vow" of revolutionary commitment I would hold that unlike most consumers in a capitalist economy, he does not fail to recognize the social content of the commodities before him, and that this recognition, and the revolutionary possibilities it entails, inform Hyacinth's character from the first moment he appears in the text, in the narrator's atemporal depiction of him before the sweetshop window. The possibility of revolution that Hyacinth signifies can be recognized in the extreme disquiet which he often feels in the presence of commodities.

Like the social autonomy of the aristocrat, the objects which Hyacinth desires are usually unattainable, material badges of class status which he cannot hope to attain, at first because of his lowly class station and then later because of his connection with a nihilist anarchism which would annihilate all such badges of status. Instead of manipulating these commodities, as would an autonomous
subject, he is, in effect, manipulated by them, just as he was by the romance of the aristocracy in the sweetshop tabloids. On his outings with Millicent into the prosperous West End, for instance, Hyacinth is often "liable to moods in which the sense of exclusion from all he would have liked most to enjoy settled over him like a pall" (132). And on the promenade in Hyde Park Hyacinth experiences a kind of infinite, and frustrated, desire to consume, to experience the perquisites of the ruling class: "He wanted to drive in every carriage, to mount on every horse, to feel on his arm the hand of every pretty woman in the place" (133). This kind of consumption is a privilege of a social identity which Hyacinth both has— as the bastard offspring of Lord Frederick— and doesn't have— as an obscure little journeyman whose proletarian mother died in prison— and it is in the acute sense of how deeply he is riven that the working-class presence asserts itself. His mad desire to mount all the horses and know all the women— the sexual puns have to be accounted for— identifies him as the unquiet body of proletarian desire we first saw represented in Deborah and Hugh Wolfe.

Thus the two halves of his "character" are recognizable as distinct literary types bound together in kind of ruptural unity that at once disguises and reveals the working-class presence. Neither the archetypal aristocratic bastard moving towards the realization of his patrimony through a kind of
darkened Tom Jonesian landscape of the picaresque nor the pathetic, undernourished, not traditionally gendered or attractive proletarian youth cast in the mold of the Wolfe cousins exhaust Hyacinth's desire. Hyacinth is somehow greater than the sum of his types. And this is seldom more noticeable than when Hyacinth is shown to be perfectly capable of the kind of discrete, deductive subjectivity of a Sherlock Holmes or some other privileged East End explorer. In the most striking instance in which we see him directly observing the working class we must note the diametrically opposed psychic and political implications of these observations before we ascribe to him the "advantages" which James ascribes to himself in the preface.

On one hand, a subversive consciousness of the hidden class violence which determines the proletarian milieu infuses Hyacinth's gaze. On the other hand, Hyacinth evaluates the proles according to their style of consumption instead of on the basis of their participation in the production, and thus tends to define himself as a beneficiary of class violence:

(Hyacinth) liked the people who looked as if they had got their week's wage and were prepared to lay it out discreetly: and even those whose use of it would plainly be extravagant and intemperate: and best of all, those who evidently hadn't received it at all and who wandered about disinterestedly and vaguely, their hands in empty pockets, watching others make their bargains and fill their satchels, or staring . . . at the graceful festoons of sausage in the most brilliant of the windows (76).
Like the most privileged of Victorian sociologists, or perhaps like a modern marketing expert, Hyacinth classifies the workers into distinct consumer groups: the temperate, the intemperate, and the unemployed. The setting of this scene lends to the reification of workers into consumers: it is Saturday evening and the workers have entered into that portion of their time, leisure time, during which their social productive roles are almost completely hidden from view by an apparently "free" choice of styles of spending money on commodities.

Thus this is the moment in which the alienation of the workers is most obvious because by abandoning their productive roles for consumptive ones they reflect the larger social tendency whereby, as Marx has it, "the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labour . . . (becomes) a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers" (Capital 165). This is a tendency in which money plays the key role, since "the money form . . . conceals the social character of private labor and the social relations between individual workers" (Capital 168-69). So it is no accident that styles of spending are the central criteria in Hyacinth's typology of the working class, since the expression of "individuality" through consumption styles effects a primary mystification of the social character of the labor in which those "consumers" really participate. James's much-commented-upon setting of so
much of the novel on Sunday, the working folks' day of rest, is of a piece with this overall mystification of the social character of labor, and as thus comprises one of the strategies of containment of that "social character" which determine the form of this novel. Similarly the novel never really depicts the material conditions in which workers labor at the point of production: we never really see proletarians at work in this novel. Indeed it is questionable whether or not we ever see any proletarians at all. However, in the above scene, Hyacinth's perspicacity, that essential quality of the Jamesian protagonist on whom nothing is lost, leads him to identify a type of working-class experience—the experience of "those who evidently hadn't received it (their week's wage) at all"—which tends to demystify the reification of workers into consumers, revealing that a bedrock of unemployment, poverty and hunger underlies the visible consumer relation being enacted in the East End marketplace. Further since the occlusion of poverty and social labor is a prop of the social system that produces the privileged overseer in the first place, Hyacinth's perspicacity deconstructs even the meager social advantages that allow him to exercise it. Thus his recognition of people who, because they have received no wages, cannot be classified under a mystified typology of consumption, both calls attention to the precariousness of Hyacinth's own social situation, and also gives evidence of his awareness of
class violence, a perception that makes possible his attempt at revolutionary involvement.

However, the point must be made that this longing of the unemployed for basic necessities is divorced from Hyacinth's similar longing--for these folks' hungry gazing through shop windows is distinctly akin to Hyacinth's own characteristic gazing at and longing for bourgeois baubles--by his superior material circumstances, and thus becomes a source of pleasure to him, a pleasure founded on his social superiority to the unemployed: he likes them "best of all" because by fixing them in his gaze and deducing a knowledge of their social station from their inability to enter into consumption he reinforces his own sense of social superiority. Like Rebecca Harding Davis's middle-class narrator looking down from her window, Hyacinth defines his sense of social and psychic autonomy against the presence of a class Other. This Other's markedly inferior ability to consume, paradoxically, is said to be a source of pleasure to Hyacinth, not only despite his own perpetually frustrated consumer longings but also despite the fact that he is painfully aware that his autonomy is not natural and must be perpetually reproduced since it is threatened from two sides. First, precariously autonomous, would-be-bourgeois Hyacinth, the individual that James must create for his art to be successful, is at risk of "los(ing) himself in all the quickened crowding and pushing and staring" in the "vulgar districts"(76). Second, proletarian,
activist, transsubjective Hyacinth feels doubly cut off from the kind of material prosperity which would allow his "spirit to expand," which leads him into "states of paralyzing melancholy, of infinite sad reflection . . (and) dull demoralization"(132). Bourgeois prosperity is actually made possible, Hyacinth realizes, only at the cost of the type of human suffering manifest in his own scandalous personal history.

James's alienated approach to the evidence of production would not seem such fertile ground for explication if The Princess Casamassima were not set primarily in the largest working-class ghetto in the world, the East End of London, a thoroughly un-Jamesian setting. Despite this setting, there is no realistically rendered point of production in this novel, no space in which conflicting discourses of socialism, anarchism, laissez faire and liberalism are spoken and subverted in the same utterance, as we saw in "Iron Mills." We do not even see anybody at work in the novel. There are no infernal scenes in chemical factories (Paul Muniment is a chemical worker), no scenes of cutting, sewing, gluing and binding at Crook's book bindery, no pictures of Pinnie ruining her vision sewing late into the night with penury hovering just outside her circle of candlelight. However, a return of the repressed point-of-production, with attendant ideological discordance, can be glimpsed in Hyacinth's preparations for and execution of an exquisite rebinding of
a copy of Tennyson's poems as a gift for the Princess, a gift which he is unable to deliver to her because of her capricious changes in address and demeanor. Though this is work carried on outside the capitalistic network of production and exchange, Hyacinth's labor eventually comes to symbolize the arc of all productive labor under capitalism. Driven to imagine and control the point of production by working-class immanence James responds by declaring consciousness the site of production.

Hyacinth, unable to deliver the volume to its intended recipient, keeps it for so long that at last it "had come to appear not that the exquisite book was an intended present from his own hand, but that it had been placed in that hand by the most remarkable woman in Europe" (224). Thus Hyacinth's labor seems to him to come back to him as a gift from another person, identical to the way that the wages of the proletarian are presented to him/her in compensation for the expenditure of laboring power, instead of as a complete reflection of the amount of value which that expenditure created. The fact that Hyacinth ironically comes to value the artifact of his own labor to the degree to which that artifact comes to represent his relation to "the most remarkable woman in Europe" provides James with a dense, complex symbol for the class violence inhering to the wage

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16 See Rowe, pp.176-179, for a more in-depth discussion of Hyacinth's bookbinding.
relation. This representation of that violence is mediated, however by the elliptical course the symbol traces around the reluctance of the novel to examine the "social problem" at the point of production: we are, in effect, asked to infer that the inequity of the wage relation has come to be reflected in every social exchange without having that inequity displayed to us in its ur-form, economic exchange. James removes the wage relation from the social field in the same gesture with which he asserts its importance. The alienation of a laborer from the artifact of his labor is here presented as a fluke of consciousness. The narrative assures us that of course the exquisitely bound book was not really an instance of how the upper class makes a present to the producers of some percentage of the exchange value of their labor; that's just the way the producer involved comes to be conscious of the dynamics of production and exchange. The miasmal, fantastic quality of material exchange is cemented firmly by the supernatural metaphor that comes to subsume, in Hyacinth's consciousness, the material artifact of his own labor: "the superior piece of work he had done after seeing her last, in the immediate heat of his emotion, turned to a virtual proof and gage--as if a ghost in vanishing from sight had left a palpable relic"(224). Like the cross symbol that Elizabeth Stuart Phelps substituted for evidence of class violence when Catty was swept away by the flood, James here substitutes a highly determinate symbol--
the works of poet laureate Tennyson—for Hyacinth's labor. James's symbolic miniature of the dynamics of capitalist production and exchange here is, in one sense, quite decidedly marxian, as John Carlos Rowe puts it: "The reversal that occurs between giver and receiver expresses well the way that the arts of society transform one's own labor into a "gift" from another" (Rowe 179). And certainly the suggestion of a wage relation between the Princess and Hyacinth shows the Princess to be in collusion with the methods of control exercised by the bourgeoisie she would supposedly like to overthrow, as Mark Seltzer concludes. However, it is necessary here to comment upon an aspect of this elliptical depiction of production and exchange that goes beyond a purely marxist critique of James's incipient modernism to bear upon the vexed question of representation ever more strongly: this episode illustrates the tendency for the individual human consciousness to come to be James's preferred site of production of knowledge about class struggle. The end result of this choice of sites is that knowledge of class struggle, especially in the instance just cited, becomes primarily a creation, a hallucination, of the individual consciousness.

This charge of creation is key here because at the heart of Jamesian "point-of-view" is an essentially dialectical relation between subject and object, between observer and observed, which although definitely not positivistic in its
manner of rendering the real (as in Zola for instance, where we are asked to accept the narrator's point-of-view as unequivocally true) nonetheless insists that material reality must be at least approximated through a careful dialectics, rather than seen as either a complete fabrication of consciousness or transparently obvious. This dialectic vision of reality is at least one thing that James picked up from his early study of the impeccably ambiguous Hawthorne and also explains why relatively minor physical details can carry so much weight in a Jamesian narrative. When Isabel Archer (Portrait of a Lady), for instance, sees Osmond seated before a standing Madame Merle, the revelation of their adultery shatters Isabel's perception of the relationship between these three characters. We see a similar, although less unexpected scene, in The Princess Casamassima when, in Chapter 47, a despairing Hyacinth recognizes a sure knowledge of his betrayal in Captain Sholto's cool, unhurried appraisal of Millicent in the dress shop. These episodes point to a James for whom the unmediated seeing of reality must be considered a momentary, problematic, perhaps even accidental phenomenon. James exemplifies the epistemological difficulty of sorting subject from object, a difficulty which has marked western epistemology ever since Kant's critique of empiricism. Thus, to read the obsession with seeing-as-a-mode-of-power, which Mark Seltzer so cogently identifies in The Princess Casamassima and its milieu, without realizing
that such powerful vision grows out of the prescription of a
certain style of individual subjectivity, is to circumvent
the whole issue of consciousness in James, as well as to
underestimate the challenge that James presents to the
panoptic power when his novel executes, as numerous critics
have noted, a turn away from the omniscient narrative
techniques of earlier works in favor of the technique of
"central recording consciousness," a technique which
problematizes perception because of the extent to which
perception is determined by consciousness.

The novel's participation in the so-called "London
Mysteries" genre has been provocatively argued by Mark
Seltzer. Seltzer points to the obsessiveness with which the
novel uses metaphors of surveillance, spying, and the
theater, and aligns the work with a vast literature of
surveillance of subterranean London--including everything
from seminal urban sociology to sensational detective
fiction--which emerges in the latter half of the nineteenth
century. Seltzer points to the occluded centrality of
Milbank prison to the novel and uses Foucault's
interpretation of the Milbank panopticon from Discipline and
Punish to examine the extent to which James's novel itself
qualifies as the kind of "seeing machine" that Jeremy Bentham
designed in Milbank Prison. An aspect of the panopticon which
is particularly germane to the project of understanding the
novel in the context of the struggle to valorize
individualism is that the panopticon prison has as its primary aim to individuate, separate and define individual subjects. In the panopticon, as Foucault describes it, "The crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities" (201). Thus the panopticon prison, which Seltzer sees to provide the social model for the surveillance genre in which *The Princess Casamassima* can be read, has as a primary aim the effacement of individuals' tendency to join into a collective subjectivity. In the context of the Haymarket, Foucault's description of this aspect of panopticism is extremely provocative. Foucault argues that the panopticon can arrange "workers . . . (so) there are no disorders, no theft, no coalitions, no distractions that slow down the rate of work" (201, my emphasis). Read against the IWPA's contemporaneous attempt to organize the Chicago proletariat into a militant collective, James's novel of surveillance takes on some interesting resonances. For if the novel of surveillance takes its *raison d'être* from the panopticon's attempt to shatter mass subjectivity's "collective effect" into readily processed autonomous individualities, then the IWPA's attempt to organize the Chicago working class into just such a "collective effect" constitutes the *bête noire* of the novel and its social paradigm both.
James's stake in this general attempt to impose a "sequestered and observed solitude" (Foucault 201) on the working-class collectivity inheres to the cultural work of surveillance carried on by the realist fiction of proletarian conditions. A key to new historicist readings of "naturalist" and "realist" fictions has been to note the very similar kinds of cultural work done by those fictions and the panopticon prison: both register, survey, and manage social energies which threaten the existing social order. Realist fictions figure and manage such threats in the same gestures, and as we saw in the cases of Davis and Phelps, such managerial representation affords the realist writer a chance to construct a social identity. James's 1907 Preface constitutes a vantage point on the labor ghetto and its discontents similar to that of Rebecca Harding Davis when she invited her educated feminine audience into the industrial inferno as a way to redefine the historical importance of the petit bourgeoisie. Yet the managerial realist is neither safe from the "terrible secret" of proletarian revolt nor hidden from the general surveillance going on in the industrial city. S/he is at once object of and subject to the discourse of knowledge and power s/he would manipulate. Thus, as Foucault notes, the panopticon has "an apparatus for supervising its own mechanisms" and the fate of the "master of the panopticon" is, in Bentham's original plan, tied up with the performance of his institution: if the "collective
effect" of the inmates' massed subjectivities is not shattered, the master of the panopticon will be the first victim of the uprising (Foucault 204). It is when attempting to inscribe the working-class presence within the novel of surveillance that the master of that novel runs the greatest risk of having his/her own authorial subjectivity effaced. June Howard calls this threatened loss of social identity "proletarianization." The realist manipulator of the rhetoric of Other-ness may, upon failure in the literary marketplace, find him/herself sinking into the social abyss s/he has set out to register.

Thus, for James to mishandle the collective effect of proletarian consciousness is to risk rendering himself persona non grata with his overseers, the myrmidons of literary production. James flirts with just this idea when he complains to William Dean Howells in 1888 that his most topical novels to date, The Bostonians and The Princess Casamassima, have "reduced the desire and the demand for my productions to zero" and that editors have condemned him "to eternal silence"(Lubbock 135). Again the relevance of viewing this novel in dialogue with the Haymarket is brought home. For James's confrontation with possible self-effacement affords him the opportunity to deeply engrave his individualism against the presence of a class Other, as the Haymarket did for Police Captain Schaak and County Prosecutor Julius Grinnel at the Haymarket, both of whom saw the affair
as a chance to advance their political ambitions (Avrich 110). Such similarities between social and literary texts extend beyond the comparative author functions of James, Schaak and company as well.

For instance, although the ostensible point of the Haymarket criminal proceedings is to identify precisely, without any of the "sketchiness or dimness" (PC 22) James attributes to his registration of proletarian life, the individuals responsible for the murder of Officer Degan, this task is made impossible by the "atmosphere of unparalleled prejudice" (Avrich 261) attending the return of the repressed knowledge of working-class dissent. For instance, none of the members of the Haymarket jury were workingmen; not only was the eventual jury composed entirely of petit bourgeois, but the pool of potential jurors was handpicked by a special bailiff who was later found to have said, before witnesses, that he was going to call jurors whose prejudice against the defendants would be sure to result in their conviction (Avrich 264). Judge Albert Gary even pronounced a relative of one of the mortally-injured police officers fit to serve on the jury (Avrich 265-66)! Both legal and literary discourses of 1886 partake of what James calls a "sketchiness and vagueness" about "what goes on beneath the vast smug surface" of bourgeois knowledge of the working class because, as we saw in "Life in the Iron Mills," such blindness is a precondition of the writing subject's vision of the social
pit. Judge Gary, Prosecutor Grinnel and the other juridical managers participate in pretty much the same process of registering the class other as Rebecca Harding Davis. Their imagining of class others will necessitate the articulation of power, and assure the constitution of the author-managers who will wield it. In his 1907 Preface, James comes very close to identifying realism's function as an ideology of individualism and class privilege. There he defends the historical density of his depiction of the social pit by saying; "There was always the chance that the propriety might be challenged by reader of a greater knowledge than mine. Yet knowledge, after all, of what? My vision of the aspects I more or less fortunately was, exactly, my knowledge"(19). Thus, individual ownership of knowledge of social conditions gives the author-manager the right/write to dispose of that knowledge as is seen fit. James imagines the workers and manages them. His strategy of representing proletarian revolt as "the effect of society's not knowing" anticipates the attempt of Judge Gary, Prosecutor Grinnel and others at the Haymarket to figure proletarian insurrection as a self-subverting product of individual pathology.

In both cases this task is abetted by the collusion of anarchism with hegemonic ideologies of individualism; this is the anarchism of individual "mad bombers" and assassins such as Leon Cgoglz and Mario Boda which defines anarchism in the
popular imagination. But this collusion does not exhaust anarchist praxis, aims, and ideology, as the IWPA's leadership of the Chicago workers' struggle and as numerous other instances of anarchist praxis testify: the broad based anarcho-syndicalism of the Spanish National Workers' Confederation (CNT); Kropotkin's insistence on the need for communal production; Bakunin's proclamations in the "Revolutionist's Catechism" that the sole aim of the revolutionist is the freedom and happiness of the manual workers. Anarchist writings and praxis certainly valorize individualism, but not every anarchist is as strict a disciple of Max Stirner as was Benjamin Tucker, who even denounced the Haymarketeers as false anarchists (Mancini 289). In fact it is easy to view May 4, 1886 as the historical moment at which the category of the individual itself betrays its essential instability.

For with the introduction of dynamite, the weapon most often associated with individualist terrorism, the whole tendency of individualism to stabilize society into a collection of alienated, self-interested monads must be balanced with the view that the alienated individual can also wreck vast destruction, as does Zola's anarchist Souvarine in Germinal, an 1884 novel much applauded by continental and

17 Leon Cgolgz assassinated President William McKinley in 1900. Mario Boda placed the bomb on the New York Stock Exchange which killed forty people in 1920. Both were avowed members of anarchist groups.
American anarchists. The courtroom speeches of both August Spies and Albert Parsons illustrate the socialist critique of capitalism inherent in anarchism by arguing that they cannot be held individually accountable for the Haymarket bombing since both dynamite and the universal social equality which it portends are products of the capitalist economy (Accusers 4, 120). The very thing which keeps the theory and practice of individualism from exploding with the fury of a dynamite bomb, of course, is that the category of the individual is a product of, to borrow Louis Althusser's language, certain "ideological state apparatuses"—schools, churches, professional associations—whose function is to interpellate subjects, that is to at once interrogate and insert subjects, within the hegemonic ideology.

Since the subject must appear to be always already present, any revelation that individualistic subjectivity is not a "natural" human condition calls into question the legitimacy of bourgeois power. Revelations that the subject is in fact a social construct, and must be produced despite the possibility of other modes of subjectivity, these revelations scandalize basic social institutions, such as law. If the ongoing process of constructing subjectivity becomes an object of knowledge, that is, if it becomes known as a process, it becomes a scandal. It is at the Haymarket, however, that such a revelation becomes irresistible, because here the judicial system publicly constructs monadic subjects
as a cipher for a type of social unrest—communist anarchism—which threatens monadic subjectivity. The registration of the proletariat within a rhetoric of Other-ness, thus, becomes an object of the juridical narrative gaze itself, despite how that gaze, and the property rights it ensures, are premised upon the "natural" status of proletarian Other-ness. It is significant in this context to note the language of the Illinois Supreme Court's upholding of the guilty verdict in the Haymarket trial, for none of the Haymarket Eight were ever found guilty of throwing the bomb; they were found guilty of having "conspired to excite classes of workingmen in Chicago into sedition, tumult and riot and to the use of deadly weapons and the taking of human life" (cited Kogan 85). This is a legal strategy which William Deans Howells pointed out would have condemned Emerson, Thoreau, Wendell Philips and half the clergy of New England to death for their public support of radical action by condemned abolitionist John Brown (Howells "Letter"). In Chicago, according to the Supreme Court, the murder of Officer Matthias Degan and company was effected not by Parsons, Spies and the others but through their "conspiracy to excite classes of workingmen" into collective effects, such as the May 3 attempt to turn back scab workers from the McCormick Harvester plant that ended in a bloody pitched battle between police and strikers. The Cook County Criminal Court's verdict and its upholding by the Illinois Supreme
Court signify an attempt to reify, publicly, this dynamic collectivization around a referent—the Chicago Eight—which centers working-class insurrection. This insurrection, however, because it is a collective expression of working-class power, denies the attribution of crime to individual action upon which rests the definition of criminality at work in the literature of surveillance, with its insistence on creating a collection of isolated individualities.

A standard ploy of capital in its battle with labor, of course, is always to attribute labor militancy to the work of an "outside agitator" or "walking delegate," a self-serving, pathological demagogue whose misrepresentation of social conditions inspires otherwise docile workers to overt "riot and tumult." And the Haymarket trial is not alone in its participation in this trend. The trials of Alexander Berkman (1892), "Big Bill" Haywood (1907) Joe Hill (1915) and Sacco and Vanzetti (1920) all attempt to figure working-class militancy as the result of individual pathology, thus the knowledge is repressed that workers live everyday in the "riot and tumult" built into capitalist production, where, as social historians are beginning to find out, conditions were extremely harsh. To give an example, upwards of twenty thousand railroad workers were killed or badly injured in 1889, at a time when occupational safety regulations and workman's compensation schemes were thought of as wildly utopian (Zinn 250). The proletarian experience of the point
of production in such a setting can often culminate in the *extinction* of sensibility, a theme pursued most notably by Jack London's *Martin Eden* (1907) and Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1905). At the same time, those dehumanizing means of production produced the material prosperity which permitted upper-class subjects, such as Henry James's moneyed family, to cultivate a heightened sensibility. Given a social scene of writing in which the bourgeois social order was scandalized at being forced to publicly construct pathological individualists as a symbol for the proletarian revolt, it is no coincidence that James devotes a good deal of his preface to *The Princess Casamassima* to enumerating those literary experiments, from *Hamlet* to his own *Wings of the Dove*, which were likewise successful at creating characters whose "concentrated individual notation" of circumstances enhances literary art. When in describing Hyacinth Robinson in 1907, James notes that his "passion of intelligence is . . . precisely his highest value" (PC 15) we do not have to push too hard on the economic implications of his metaphor to see James participating in the general social manufacture of subjectivities whose tendency is to produce another kind of "value," surplus value.

3.

We can discern the mechanics of the repression and return of decentered identity, which is so important to understanding James's strategy for creating and managing
difference, in two crucial settings in the novel. The first is in James's occlusive handling of Hyacinth's "terrible vow," which binds him to the master anarchist Hoffendahl. The second is to be found in the sections in which Hyacinth, and through him, James himself, confronts and exorcises the specter of revolution during his trip to Paris. Although no amount of antiquarian footwork will certify it, I believe that Hyacinth's fatal vow derives from Bakunin and Nechaev's infamous "Revolutionist's Catechism," which was widely publicized in Europe in 1871 (Wilson 326) and was printed several times in the Chicago anarchist newspapers Alarm and Arbeiter-Zeitung in the mid-eighties (Avrich 171, David 85). The "Catechism" betrays a paradox of anarchism which problematizes those readings of The Princess Casamassima wherein James's depiction and thematic use of anarchism defuse a potentially revolutionary situation because of anarchism's tendency to valorize the exact style of individualism which is so vital to the reproduction of the status quo. (Rowe, Seltzer, Fischer). Yet even a cursory reading of the "Catechism" divulges a rich, self-contradictory critique of individualism which goes far to counter the socialist criticism that anarchism is inherently compatible with the worst kind of laissez faire economics. Instead, the "Catechism" describes the revolutionary as someone who acts out an expression of collective will: "It is unnecessary to speak of the fellowship amongst the
revolutionists; upon them exists the entire might of the revolutionary work... as much as possible consult all important affairs in common and take resolution unanimously" (Alarm); it insists upon the abandonment of all the trappings of individualistic subjectivity: "The Revolutionist is a doomed man. He has no personal interest, feelings or inclinations; no property, not even a name of his own" (Alarm). And it evinces a subversive recognition that subjectivity is a social construct when it proposes that "A revolutionist must obtain entrance in the upper ten as well as among the middle class, in stores, in churches, in the aristocratic palace, in the political, military and literary world; yes, even in the detective agency and the emperor's palace" (Alarm). Now, the attempt to decenter subjectivity does not define anarchism, for the exhortation to "act alone" is written all over the "Catechism," even if it is equally clear that those solitary actions are an expression of a collective will directly opposed to the pursuit of self-interest. Thus James cuts the complexity out of anarchism by valorizing individualism over the socialistic, self-effacing portion of anarchist discourse—that side which has marked so much of anarchist social praxis and is exemplified in the IWPA's leadership of the Chicago proles. This side is as undivulged by recent critics of the novel, who see anarchism only in collusion with James's style of authorial management,
as it is by James's handling of the administration of the oath.

James inscribes the anarchists' undivulged historical role as popular representatives, so richly evident in the "Terrible Vow," only to efface it, holding anarchism aloof from its historically demonstrated tendency to represent the proletariat and figuring it instead as merely a parodic and self-subverting reenactment of bourgeois individualism. Thus, to invoke Althusser's definition of ideology, James's Hyacinth Robinson represents the imaginary relation of potentially class-conscious proletarians to the "riot and tumult" of the labor ghetto. This imaginary construct posits proletarian subjectivity to be knowable only within the frame provided by the individualist problematic. The working class thus imagined is the product of bourgeois anxiety, but that anxiety itself testifies to how the working class is itself present at the moment of its inscription. James can only vacillate between bourgeois individualism and anxiety over pure nihilism, with no synthesis ever attainable. James's failure to dialecticize this dichotomy causes is thus symptomatic of his engagement with a wider formation of working-class revolt than he can register. James attempts to write this formation under erasure through Hyacinth's suicide at the end of the novel. Thus, the narrative of Hyacinth's loss of faith in the revolution divulges the dialectic of working-class presence.
For instance, by the time Hyacinth receives his revolutionary assignment from Hoffendahl he has been dispossessed of the knowledge that revolution portends the synthesis of beauty and necessity into a utopian freedom—the rightful ideology of a socialist revolutionary. Hyacinth subsides into despair, the sickness unto death. A primary reason for this is that he realizes that he will never escape from the object pole in the social panopticon. Be it the police power, Christina Light, Hoffendahl's ubiquitous agents, or the novelist Henry James himself, everybody keeps close tabs on Hyacinth Robinson. However, James's objectification of Hyacinth does not totally exhaust the working-class presence. Hyacinth's involvement in revolutionary politics implies that he—and the workers' revolt he symptomizes—will no longer remain a passive object in the dissociated dyad of James's supervisory gaze. Hyacinth's bid to become the narrator of his own destiny, to be present at his own making, is testified to in the epistolary section of Chapter Thirty. Here James imagines the revolutionary circumstance pervading the scene of writing and projects his own resolution to that circumstance into the persona of his protagonist. After discerning himself as an inscription in the revolutionary palimpsest of Paris's "Place de Revolution," James's protagonist can briefly write in his own voice. But that voice is carefully modulated by the master, Henry James, because in thus imagining the place of
revolution, James finds his voice as a narrator and manager of the working-class. As with the episode of the gift book, this revolutionary struggle is expressed and contained within an individual consciousness which is that struggle's undoing.

The epistolary section is interpolated into the narrative directly following a description of Hyacinth's nocturnal visit to the epicenter of continental revolutionary politics, the Place de Revolution in Paris. Hyacinth, finding himself, significantly, "almost isolated, has left the human swarm and the obstructed pavements behind" and strolls into the Place, of whose "tremendous historical character" he has been aware "from the day of his arrival" (349). Alone before the sublime spectacle of history, Hyacinth imagines the Place as a kind of palimpsest, where the opening passages of the long saga of bourgeois conscription of proletarian energies, in 1789, 1830, 1848, and 1870, are still legible. Here, at the ur-sight of that betrayal, James finds the ideal location for Hyacinth's own betrayal of the revolution as well as for his, James's, own conscription of the working-class presence into art.

In the place of revolution Hyacinth discovers that the revolution's "spirit of destruction"--which is also James's only way of understanding anarchism--has been "effaced by the modern fairness of fountain and statue, the stately perspective" of the refigured Paris, that capital of the nineteenth century. On the paving stones of this capital the
unquiet body of revolutionary desire posed by Hyacinth comes to be enlisted into a kind of aesthetically enlightened, but deeply conservative, consumerism: "a sense of everything that might hold one to the world . . . the fascination of great cities, the charm of travel and discovery" (349). His feeling that Paul's enlistment of him into anarchism is a great betrayal of the "religion of friendship" (349-50) purports to mean a betrayal of the religion of personal life, but the passage marks a ruptural unity in James's substitution of individualism for class consciousness. For the phrase "religion of friendship" announces a universality which transcends the merely personal in the same way that revolutionary comradeship does. James portrays Hyacinth's coming back into the fold of bourgeois individualism in terms that reveal Hyacinth's uneasy posture in that position. In the Place de Revolution Henry James confronts a radicalized avatar of the industrial point of production we saw in "Life in the Iron Mills," a place where discourses of revolt are valorized and undercut, and where the working-class presence makes both articulations vitally important to the well-being of the narrator. Hyacinth's authorially-managed meconnaisance of the relative worth of bourgeois present and revolutionary past will constitute him as writer-within-the-novel in the epistolary section which ensues directly after the nocturnal scene just narrated. And that same act of meconnaissance will constitute Henry James as master of the panopticon novel
of proletarian conditions. Both of these constitutions into writing, into language, are recognizable as occurring through an internalization of the Law of the Father, whose "inscrutable obelisk" (349), reared on the site of the guillotine, centers the collectivity of the working-class presence on the Place de Revolution ("the religion of friendship") around the determinate, reductive sign of individualist anarchy which is necessary to preserve the status quo. Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" are useful in understanding Hyacinth's and Henry James's linked constitution into the symbolic order enacted here.

Inscribed into the Parisian palimpsest of revolution, Hyacinth becomes an uneasy inheritor of the revolutionary tradition and is drawn to "retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at the moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers" (Benjamin 255). However, while Hyacinth both inhabits and reads the "moment of danger," in the Place de Revolution, he perceives it as a "shadow" of the "sea of blood" (PC 349) in which both past and present revolutions are to culminate. Thus the moment of danger is "erased" by the "modern fairness of fountain and statue, the stately perspective and composition" of the present day Place. This "composition" emanates outward from the phallic "inscrutable obelisk" which has been driven into
the heart of the revolutionary palimpsest to quiet the unquiet body of proletarian desire. Hyacinth thus misrecognizes the dangerous moment of revolutionary tradition into which James has placed him, and is unable "to wrest (that) tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it" (Benjamin 255). Hyacinth's struggle in the Place de Revolution is analogous to the struggle of Henry James to confront the working-class presence inherent in his fiction of the real. For at the "moment of danger" posed by widespread contumacy, James represents an anarchism which is devoid of anarchism's historically demonstrated tendencies to unite the proletariat into a militant collectivity. In place of the revolution, in other words, James substitutes individualist anarchism, a social formation distinctly more congenial to his art of fiction.

If we further pursue Benjamin's paradigm, we can see that during this encounter of James and his protagonist, an individualist "conformism" overpowers the anarcho-communist tradition which is not only written large on the scene of writing but even more powerfully evoked by Hyacinth's reading of the "tremendous historical character" of Paris, an historic character deeply engraved in 1871 by the synthesis of anarchism and communism by the Commune. Hyacinth thus mimics James's own situation as the master of the panopticon novel of revolutionary anarchism. Both author and protagonist confront history at a moment of danger, a moment when the
interpretation of the revolutionary past has tremendous implications for the present. James's vocation of writing is both endangered and made possible by his engagement with the dangerous collective effect of revolutionary tradition. In figuring this collective effect as exhausted by a self-subverting anarcho-individualism, James reinvents what Benjamin called "the conformism of his age" (255) in much the same way that Rebecca Harding Davis and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps reinvented the Cult of True Womanhood as a strategy for empowering middle-class professional women. James substitutes the tremendous ahistorical character (in the sense of literary character) of the isolate, individualist master anarchist, Hoffendahl, for the "tremendous historical character" of the revolutionary tradition.

Thus a definite imagination of the scene of James's writing animates Hyacinth's sojourn in the Place of Revolution. Here the urgency of the working-class presence is most deeply felt, driving James's substitution of individualism in place of revolution. In another essay, it would be useful to trace the evolution of James's "free indirect style" from this moment of danger in the Place de Revolution. For one might be able to discern in that style a kind of discursive compromise with the working-class Other, a compromise by which James agrees to write from the position of the Other as a way of preserving the social privileges of authorship. But that project must be reserved for another
setting. Here suffice it to say that the moment of danger in Paris provokes a narrative discontinuity of three weeks and results in James's compromising with his unruly protagonist enough to allow him to speak in his own, albeit rigidly modulated voice. The fact that this voice is so modulated exists as a gauge of how deeply into the individualist ideology James feels his protagonist has been constituted. Like Davis's domestic voyeur at the window of the scene of writing, James's narrator (uncharacteristically) stands back from the action and declares that he has "reproduced the principal passages" of Hyacinth's letter to the Princess (350). James wants us to know that he has stepped back from the dangerous moment in which his articulation of Hyacinth's point of view threatened to announce sympathies with the working-class. Further, the change to epistolary can be interpreted as James's own attempt to, in Benjamin's terms "seize hold of a memory"(255) of the epistolary history of the novel at a moment in which the rise of bourgeois individualism, which so determines the rise of the novel, is endangered by the narrative being set, and written, in the Place of Revolution. James fractures the realistic mode to be sure that Hyacinth has finally, once and for all acceded to conformism. Thus the letter both articulates a working-class voice and testifies to the success of Hyacinth's constitution into writing and out of revolt before the "inscrutable obelisk" of the Father, a constitution enacted when he and
his creator found themselves "almost isolated" in the Place de Revolution.

4.

It is this identification between James and his protagonist--their linked coming into being in the moment of danger--which announces James's simultaneous enlistment into and subversion of anarchism, an ideological indeterminacy which marks the novelist as agent provocateur. Working-class myth has often attributed the throwing of the Haymarket bomb to an agent provocateur hired by the police. And at both the Haymarket and in *The Princess Casamassima* the resulting misrepresentation of the workers had lethal results. At the Haymarket, Spies, Parsons, Engels and Fisher were executed and Lingg killed himself in his death row cell. The Eight Hour Movement was defeated in the hysterical wave of reaction that radiated out from the bomb blast. In James's novel, Hyacinth's slide into suicide is inevitable once he gets his revolutionary assignment from Hoffendahl (the assassination of an English duke) after having been so deeply constituted into the bourgeois aestheticism that James poses as the only alternative to nihilism.

That such an inscription of the naive binary opposition between Necessity and Beauty could arise unproblematically from Hyacinth's earliest insertion into ideology, an insertion which I hold must be seen as contradicted by material conditions peculiar to this subject; and further
that this dichotomy could remain intact despite Hyacinth's later interest in anarchist and socialist politics, these suggest that a certain misreading of the social milieu has come into play. Irving Howe, for instance, suggests that James's invoking of the contemporary notion that "the political struggle between radicalism and conservatism . . . (was) a clash between cultural barbarism and cultural refinement" (166), and that, accordingly, a socialist revolution will annihilate all vestiges of high culture, stands as hard evidence of his lack of "general ideas" about the political movements he is ostensibly describing (166). Howe concludes that the novel is flawed because James makes the "mistake" of emphasizing the personalities of various revolutionary characters over the character of the revolution they would make; it is impossible, Howe concludes, to truly understand these personalities without understanding that they are engaged in an activity which is much, much greater than the mere sum of the personalities involved in it. I would take Howe's reading a step further and suggest that both James's lack of "general ideas" about the character of social dissent and the resultant flight from transsubjective politics into individual psychology, far from being an aesthetic flaw, are an organic part of James's strategy of not knowing. His lack of what Howe calls "general ideas" about the material particulars of working-class presence has been produced here—as it was in "Life in the Iron Mills"—as
a means of managing the dissent that James, exercising the novelist's peculiar circumscribed freedom, sets out to portray.

Hyacinth's reification of the dichotomy between Beauty and Necessity signals the operation of one strategy by which such management is effected by the text. This reification presents a divulged event which when read symptomatically allows us to discern the parameters of the dominant epistemology at the exact point and moment where the undivulged event of proletarian contumacy cannot be visible. The possibility that the threat supposedly posed to high culture by the ascendance of a radical democracy could be experienced as a psychic threat by the individual subject should not be lost on us. One can see that, to Hyacinth's eventual way of thinking, the social autonomy of the aristocrat and the continued preservation of the western heritage in fine arts are clearly interdependent. And though this autonomy is, problematically, misread by Hyacinth as the "natural" form of human subjectivity, it is in fact socially determined, a perquisite of the ruling class and its overseers of proletarian dissent. Some gestalt recognition of the social labor occluded in the autonomous self is what really rooted Hyacinth before that sweetshop window; unfortunately for him, no alternative psychic or social organization presents itself once the demystifying connection has been made between social and psychic autonomy. As Mike
Fisher and John Carlos Rowe have pointed out, the individualist anarchism with which Hyacinth becomes involved tends to reinscribe the hegemonic ideology of individualism rather than corrode it. And as Mark Seltzer has shown, the determining trait of both Hoffendahl the master anarchist and the aristocrats that oppose him is their pronounced insistence on occupying the subject pole in the gaze of power. According to these critics, all available forms of dissent turn out to be merely staged reenactments of the hegemonic ideology.

These readings of The Princess Casamassima are valuable in that they allow us to approach an understanding of how individual subjects in capitalist society are inoculated against the possibility of socialist revolt at the level of the unconscious, and thus come to base their constitutive sense of reality so firmly on the class interests of their rulers that socialism appears as a kind of madness which, because it is at once an individual and social distemper, scandalizes the entire project of the production of autonomy. The vehemence of reaction during the aptly named "Red Scares" that haunt the history of American class relations offers a convincing demonstration of the existence of a deep-seated collective phobia against socialism. Since class interests are inscribed at the level of the unconscious, the empirical "observations" made by a discrete self appear natural and self-apparent to anyone who shares the same unconscious
orientation; linguistic free play and historical knowledge are thus bounded and circumscribed by a social power which operates through the production of individuals' consciousness. If read symptomatically, however, the seemingly natural discrete self emerges as a primary theoretical structure, perhaps the primary theoretical structure, and tends to produce only those perceptions salubrious to the reproduction, both material and ideological, of the social relations that maintain general production. Certain historically contingent alternatives for psychic, productive and social organization will always be invisible from within this theoretical structure, and their elision is a product of the subject's constitutive misreading of the unity between bourgeois interests and psychic autonomy. Thus a certain absence of alternative organizations—productive, psychic and social—though it is demonstrably true of James's novel, was simply not true of the historical setting in which it should be read. To read The Princess Casamassima as a well-wrought and consistent containment of these alternative organizations and ideologies is to risk reproducing a kind of formalist elision of history from the text. This is something which Fisher definitely does by figuring the novel as demonstration of the seamlessness of ideology a la Althusser, without accounting for the formal disruptions in the realistic narrative produced by the undivulged events of the historical milieu.
Similarly, Rowe and Seltzer flirt with formalism when they accept as wholly representative some rather partial figurations of anarchism, figurations which are circumscribed by the very ideology that destroys Hyacinth, without confronting the distinct possibility that anarchism itself could be merely an articulation of a much wider effective formation, a formation that actually does pend the dissolution of hegemony. Bakuninist anarchism, a political formation whose existence and effect on history are thoroughly implicated in textuality and signification, could be, like any other linguistic construct, only asymptotically reducible to an actual, historical constituency. James is able to reduce the terrific historical character of the working-class presence to the terrific historical actor of Mikhail Bakunin (Hoffendahl's model) through just such an appeal to textuality. But the converse is true as well: the historical formation leaves a trace through which it can be known. As Raymond Williams put it in his essay on "Traditions, Institutions and Formations" in Marxism and Literature:

(Formations) are most recognizable as conscious movements and tendencies (literary, artistic, philosophical or scientific) which can usually be readily discerned after their formative productions. Often, when we look further, we find that these are articulations of much wider effective formations, which can by no means be wholly identified with formal institutions, or their formal meanings and values, and which can sometimes even be positively contrasted with them(119).
In fact, wider strategies for productive and psychic organization abound in James's milieu, and I would hold that they constitute the dominant undivulged event of the novel, that event which must not be seen, but which creates significant silences in James's rhetoric of the real.

Perhaps the most striking evidence of James's strategy of exclusion can be found in his misreading of the artisan milieu itself, the background against which critical evaluations of Hyacinth's anarchist politics are usually effected. English historians such as E.P. Thompson, for instance, have discovered that the London artisan milieu was politically quite radical in James's day, possessed of a radical tradition that went back three generations (Jones 388). Also to be noted in evaluating the artisan milieu of Hyacinth's London is the fact William Morris and John Ruskin's Arts and Craft movement proposed the organization of society into small communes of artisans in which every individual would attain a high level of artistic talent. These communes were theorized along lines suggested by Morris and Company, Morris's own communal publishing and manufacturing venture in the 80's and 90's and bear a striking similarity to the small productive communes anarchist sage Prince Peter Kropotkin extolled in his 1887 essay "Anarchist Communism" (Boris 160). William Morris's book, furniture and textile design all advertise a concept of the Beautiful which, although thoroughly recognizable from
the point of view of mainstream aesthetics also incorporates his desire to "win back art, that is to say, the pleasure of life, to the people" (Boris ii). In terms that contrast sharply with Hyacinth Robinson's eventually fatal equation of art with the social hegemony of the aristocracy, one of Morris's most famous dictums proclaims "Art was not born in a palace. She was taken sick there" (Boris 174). Commentary on The Princess Casamassima has tended to neglect this progressive side of the artisan milieu and instead insist that small workshops such as Crookenden's bookbindery, where Hyacinth works, survive as anomalous "vestiges of a pre-capitalist era . . . tolerated by industrial capitalism, the mass production techniques of which could not hope to match the quality of their goods" (Rowe in Fisher 92). These minute local contradictions to the overall trend toward mass production engender, according to this line of thought, a fairly conservative "aristocracy of labor largely cut off from the mass of the workers" (Trilling 68), many of whom are drawn to anarchism because anarchist ideology, like the artisan mode of production, tends to "preserve the illusion of an articulated identity . . . to the exclusion of the increasingly communal modes of production . . . that typified

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18 The anarchistic newspapers that Morris edited in the 1880's were named Freedom and Commonweal, and although Morris' relation to anarchism is, according to anarchism's leading historian George Woodcock "not easy to define" (441), articles from them were regularly featured in anarchist papers of a much more militantly radical stripe, such as Haymarket anarchist Albert Parson's Alarm (1884-86).
late nineteenth century capitalism" (Fisher 93). These critics have adopted James's reading of the artisan milieu, a reading which necessarily lacks scope, since a primary ideological function of James's sighting of the proletarian milieu is to elide the threatening discourses of alternative psychic and productive organization which inheres to the point of production. Thus the assessments of the artisan milieu made by James and the critics enumerated above neglect to account for the socialist critique of capitalism which was nurtured in communal workshops such as Morris's Merton Abbey, with its one hundred employees (Boris 9) or C.R. Ashbee's Guild and School of Handicraft. Ashbee, emphasizing "the growth of the individual through community," educated seven hundred East End working-class men and boys in handicrafts and democratic self-determination between 1888 and 1895 (Boris 16-17). This widespread recognition that the Freedom posed by a socialist reorganization of society could subsume Beauty, rather than annihilate it, is excluded when James posits a Beauty of organic, ahistorical integrity, an elitist integrity which cannot be assimilated into a more just social order. The novel, thus, misreads the milieu of proletarian dissent, just as the young Hyacinth's supposedly misread the myth of aristocratic autonomy in those sweetshop romances.

The novel intends for the reader to reflect back on the image of Hyacinth rooted before the romance of aristocracy as evidence of how his revolutionary involvement has been doomed
to deconstruct all along. However, it is Hyacinth's intended misreading which deconstructs because of his position in history. Thus the subject, Hyacinth, can recognize that the fictional autonomy of that aristocratic identity is indeed just that, a fictional autonomy, that it is actually a socially constructed alienation from the economic responsibilities called into being by bourgeois/aristocratic rapacity, an alienation whose boundaries are preserved by the rule of force inherent in the judicial and penal systems of the bourgeois state. That Hyacinth does not in fact misread the social content of aristocratic romance is signalled by the possibility of revolt he comes to signify and by the fact that his longings for bourgeois privileges are always tortured by a simultaneous knowledge that those privileges have been obtained through class violence. However, this possibility of revolt is nonetheless thwarted by his authorially managed misreading of the social content of Beauty, on which he confers an ahistorical autonomy that his position athwart ideology would call into question if James did not insist that he not do so. Like Walter Benjamin, Hyacinth does dialectize Beauty to find that all documents of culture are also documents of barbarism. However he does not recognize how a synthesis of Beauty and Necessity, that is Freedom, inheres to the same social dialectic by which he arrived at his realization of the social content of Beauty,
a recognition to which both his position athwart ideology and his involvement with the revolutionary movement entitle him.

Given the culture of resistance which enfolds this narrative, Hyacinth's suicide can be thought as the product of Hyacinth's knowledge of his objectification by James's rhetoric of the real. Doomed by his authorially-managed individuation to be unable to connect with the culture of collective resistance, on the last day of his life Hyacinth traces an ever narrower spiral around familiar London scenes of leisure, and consumption, in an attempt to realize some sense of connection to "the great indifferent city he so knew and loved," a city which has never worn "more proudly the stamp of her imperial history"(504). This final walk confirms Hyacinth in the futility of popular struggle, perhaps because such struggle, in James's landscape, betrays no trace of popularity. His moment of danger, and possibility, has passed, and Hyacinth has been forced into an alienated consumer-relation to history by his conformity to the ideology of individualism. In place of the discourses of revolution and production, James has substituted consumption, and thus it is no coincidence that Hyacinth's path at last comes to the great department store where Millicent Henning works. Here, in the possessive gaze of Captain Sholto on Millicent, he sees clear evidence of the similar objectification of the assertively Cockney, and assertively working-class, Millicent, who had posed for him a kind of
last, best hope for a life-assuring "freedom from the sophistries of civilization" (504). Lacking any possible contact with a history which is not exhausted by such sophistries, Hyacinth lapses into the sickness unto death, and disappears from the narrative. Like Hugh Wolfe, Hyacinth gazes into the marketplace at the moment his death is most immanent and then excises himself from the dyad of prison and marketplace that make the working-class presence known to the middle-class managerial gaze. The final image of the novel signals James's attempt to substitute a determinate symbol for the working-class presence, a strategy we saw carried out at the end of The Silent Partner, when Catty is swept into the flood and only a cross remains to mark the ideological space she occupied. Standing over Hyacinth's body, Schinkel (one of the coterie at the Sun and Moon) picks up the gun Hoffendahl provided to Hyacinth and reflects that "it would certainly have served much better for the Duke" (511). The Hoffendahl-provided gun signals that once again, as with the flood-imagery in Silent Partner, the working class has deconstructed itself. As a result of Hyacinth's self-subversion, the gun occupies his ideological space—a space whose indeterminacy signals the working-class presence—as the final, determinate symbol of that all-provocative presence. Thus the symbol of violence, and the symbol of violence alone, remains on the scene of reception to mark the
place where the working class has tried to write itself into history.

James thus acts the agent provocateur by enlisting anarchism and the artisan milieu into the fight to contain working-class power, but the strain of this double identity is divulged in the substitution of the gun symbol for any viable symbols of the culture of collective resistance. The difficulty of subverting working-class power also is visible in the disturbance within the realist narrative at the end of Book Two, where Hyacinth meets the anarchist Hoffendahl. It is at this moment, the (not)divulging of the master individualist, that James's agent provocateur narrative discovers that the spiral toward indeterminacy has come round to a point where it poses a contradiction to the ideology of individualism, a contradiction which will burst the integuments of that ideology. This disturbance renders this crucial moment in the narrative indeterminate and occludes the "terrible vow."

The narrative barely divulges this scene of contradiction, filtering it through the comedy of manners surrounding Hyacinth's worries about becoming too obligated to the Princess:

What would become of him if he should add another servitude to the one he had undertaken at the end of that long anxious cab ride . . . in the back bedroom of a house to whose whereabouts he was even now not clear, while Muniment and Poupin and Schinkel, all visibly pale, had listened and accepted the vow? (272).
John Carlos Rowe argues that James's occlusive rendering of the vow symptomizes anarchism's self-defeating complicity with bourgeois repressive agencies; on this head, secrecy and indeterminacy paradoxically enhance the social control the anarchists hope to undermine. The anarchists thus become constituted as a powerless Other to the bourgeois order, whose strategies of surveillance and repressive control they mimic, inviting bourgeois retaliation and surveillance and defusing revolutionary energies in the very kind of shadowy rituals and impotent workingmens' clubs to which James's depiction of anarchism limits itself (Seltzer, Rowe 187). However, as I have been arguing all along, Rowe, Seltzer and company accept as representative some partially inscribed, one could say reified figures of the anarchist tradition contemporaneous with James's novel. An anarchism which functions as a broad based "class movement," conducting mass rallies, and organizing workers for political action in the manner of the Chicago IWPA, this anarchism is not figured, either by James or his explicators. Their anarchism remains a shadowy individualism which participates in the general social tendency to defuse popular insurrection by shattering the collective into easily managed individuals whose very individualism precludes popular revolt.

Judge Gary, the Cook County criminal justice system and novelist Henry James encode the decentered subjectivity posed by the anarchists' proletarian constituency within a cipher
for those conditions—anarchists Hyacinth Robinson, Albert Parsons, August Spies et al—at once figuring and erasing the anarchists' historic role as popular representatives. In Chicago the erasure is carried out on the gallows, in James's novel through the linked agencies of Hyacinth's self-execution and Hoffendahl's all-animating colossal egoism. But, if James figures insurrection within personalities, as happens in Chicago, he must also occlude Hoffendahl and the vow because, given the historical moment, these signify the same contradictions of individualism which scandalize the Haymarket's public reenactment of the interpellation of the subject.

Anarchism signifies the moment in which the alienated monadic worker, who stabilizes the status quo by acting out his/her supposed "self-interest," becomes the disaffected, individualist bomber, who threatens the status quo by effacing him/herself in the interests of collective insurgency. The definition of individualism demanded by the insurrectionary working-class presence in 1886 informs the Supreme Court's reversal (Wabash v. Illinois) of an earlier ruling (Munn v. Illinois 1877) which held that corporate property, because it was invested with a public interest, was not protected from state regulation by the Fourteenth Amendment (Munn v. Illinois). Through this reversal, 

19 The legal definition of the corporation-as-individual had first been argued successfully—by Daniel Webster no less—in the Dartmouth College Case of 1826. Ralph Waldo
rendered in the year of the Haymarket, the Supreme Court minimalizes the public interest inherent in corporate property, accepting instead the argument that corporations were equivalent to "persons" and, under the Fourteenth Amendment could not be deprived, by the state, of life, liberty or property without due process of law (Zinn 254-55). Through this definition the Court proffers its own definition of the subject, one which erases the social content of the corporation and substitutes its own inscription of a "terrific historical character" for the public interest. In the next year alone, this decision led to the overturning of 230 state regulations designed to regulate corporate excess.

It is not remarkable then that James must occlude the moment when Hyacinth sacrifices his individualism to serve the collective struggle, since individualism is the style of self-hood that the American judicial system, corporate power structure and ideological apparatus are trying to valorize as the definitive figure of the relations of production. Around

Emerson echoes this definition in his essay "Self Reliance" (1841) when he writes, "An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man." Since this is considerably prior to the moment of danger at the Haymarket, it is not fair to say that Wabash vs. Illinois (1886) invents the doctrine of corporate individualism. But it is accurate to say that the Court's decision asserts, codifies and promulgates this doctrine, and that it does so during a time of unprecedented collective agitation by the working class. In Raymond Williams's terms, Wabash vs. Illinois marks the translation of corporate individualism from a "residual" element of culture to a mainstay of the "dominant" culture (Williams 121-127).
this scandal the realist fiction founders, and spirals into the ambiguous representational strategies of romance. Thus at the end of Book Second, Hyacinth and Paul's cab ride is essentially asymptotic, towards but never arriving at Hoffendahl, because Hoffendahl is an ideological construct which in 1886, can only be figured outside the purview of naturalistic narrative. The narrative discontinuity of some weeks between this cab ride and Hyacinth's awakening in the Princess's rented country house signals James's need, as agent provocateur, to at once enlist in and sabotage the anarchist critique of bourgeois individualism. The ur-scene of corporate individualism remains occluded by the same ambiguous "effect of society's not knowing" that buffers the novelist's similar individualism from the decentered subjectivity of the labor ghetto. Only such an indeterminacy, such an absence, can figure the revolutionary genius, which is, in James's words, "the immeasurable body that Hoffendahl represented" (Princess 340). The moment when Hyacinth sacrifices himself to serve the unquiet and immeasurable body of revolution cannot be divulged. Because of his agent provocateur's need to sabotage the anarchist critique of bourgeois individualism, James figures the revolutionary genius, which anarchists represented at the Haymarket, as strictly an affect of Hoffendahl's colossal individualism, but he cannot divulge the individual which sets the insurrection in motion. Why? One answer is that the self-
immolation of the anarchist assassins who haunt the modern mind tends to be effected simultaneously with their entry into history as autonomous subjects. In this way posterity comes to know them as lone pathological assassins, not as articulations of that immeasurable unquiet body of workers. Death insures an individual's fixity like nothing else. However, at the moment of the assassin's terrible oath, which James resists depicting, the self-immolation is most real while the individuation is still pending. This moment in time, when individualism is surrendered, cannot be divulged.

Instead, James wants us to know that Hoffendahl is, like the Haymarket Eight, in Paul Muniment's estimation, "the real thing" (Princess 258); Hoffendahl is the revolution, the thing itself, a signifier which denies explication because he is the thing he represents; he's "one of the pure" (203) as Poupin, one of James's anarchists, calls him. Here James insists that we identify anarchism closely with contemporary criticisms of master anarchist Mikhail Bakunin's colossal individualism; Marx and Engels, for instance, describe Bakunin by saying that although he "had boasted that the organization of the Alliance was to prefigure the future society in which the State should have been abolished, it had actually been contrived as a dictatorship by one man, le citoyen B." (Wilson 329). It comes as no surprise, then, that upon finding that Hyacinth has actually seen and conversed with Hoffendahl, the Princess exclaims "Then it is real, it
is solid?"(290). Given the widespread contumacy of labor experienced by James and his audience, only Hoffendahl's colossal individualism can be permitted to signify the existence of the collective effect behind the anarchist conspiracy. Finally, James insists that Hoffendahl be the only one arrested for that grandiose international terrorist assault "early in the sixties . . . in four continental cities at once . . . which . . . had done more for the social question than anything before or since"(251), and that was so horrifying that any mainstream attempt to represent it was, in James's description, repressed almost as savagely as the assault itself: "there had been editors and journalists transported for even hinting at it" (251).

In the eyes of the bourgeois justice system Hoffendahl thus came to center all representation of both this earlier "assault" and the one going on as the book was being printed in The Atlantic Monthly. His silence under torture, his selfless refusal to name his comrades, is a sure sign of James's collusion with judicial strategies for the production of knowledge of proletarian insurrection, for it places the imprimatur of heroic autonomous individualism on a collective action, emphasizing that Hoffendahl, and he alone, be responsible for providing any knowledge of the collective effect behind the assault. Hoffendahl thus becomes a logocentric Presence, which James and his other interrogators insist must exhaust knowledge of the working class. But
because Hoffendahl also must instance a moment when the realist fiction refers only to itself he remains silent under torture, refusing to betray the revolution. Likewise this silence is mimicked by the narrative. Hoffendahl is absent from the direct narration of occurrences in time and space, being divulged only as an instance of Hyacinth's individualized consciousness. As a such a figment, he does not divulge what the "large . . . latent possibilities"(210) for revolt which Hyacinth's own pathetic anarchist cell (mis)represents. For both James and the American judiciary, the latent collective effect underlying the manifest revolutionary figurehead deconstructs the hegemonic epistemology of the age, an ideology which, as witnessed by Wabash v. Illinois, was becoming more and more obsessively centered around a notion of individualism based on the occlusion of "public interest" or social content.

Neither the Wabash v. Illinois promulgation of corporate individuality, nor James's absent yet ubiquitous Hoffendahl, nor the 1886 murder conviction of the Chicago Eight divulges this collective effect. Instead all participate in what Foucault calls its "replacement by a collection of separated individualities . . . that can be numbered and supervised"(201). In 1886 the revolutionary genius can be divulged only on the gallows, where the death penalty insures that it is forever subjugated, known and supervised within the individual subject. Regardless of how heroic the
individual subject is, s/he may be subjugated, known and supervised in isolation, while the collective may be recovered only through the shape of its absence. This dynamic of presence and absence, or more precisely speech and silence, lends a special resonance to August Spies famous, and still enigmatic, last words: his warning to his executioners, "The time will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle here today," poses a refusal to center proletarian discourse that arises from a knowledge that to so center it is to deny the existence, aims and efficacy of the collective, of which the individual radical is but a partial representation. Instead, Spies threatens his auditors with silence, a silence suggesting that individualism does not exhaust the category "human," a silence which prophesies that, despite a hegemonic epistemology which demands that he should be individuated and made to stand for all subversive proletarian genius, this collective genius will return, "more powerful" than the mere, partial symbol at once inscribed and erased on the gallows, "more powerful" than linked agencies of literature and law which inscribe and erase.
Chapter Four

"A More Impressive Catastrophe":
Polyglossia and the Hazards of Authorship in
A Hazard of New Fortunes
In his 1909 preface to a new printing of *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, William Dean Howells sketched the social ferment in 1889, when he was writing the novel. Howells describes how the vastly popular utopian musings of Edward Bellamy, Henry George's plan for a Single Tax on unearned rent income, the Haymarket martyrdom of 1886-87, and other phenomena all attend a period of "strong emotioning in the direction of the humaner economics" which was "hitherto strange to the average American breast" (*Hazard* xxii). Howells then hints provocatively at the local conditions in New York in the winter of 1888-’89, where he ran his realist's eye over the urban raw materials of a larger social novel than he had yet carried out:

> Opportunely for me there was a great street-car strike in New York, and the story began to find its way to issues nobler and larger than . . . love-affairs. The scene which I had chosen appealed prodigiously to me, and the action passed as nearly without my conscious agency as I ever allow myself to think such things happen (xxii).

A definite ambiguity between the "action" and "scene" of the strike and the "action" and "scene" of the novel pervades it. Howells may be said to have "chosen" to move both himself and his narrative field of view to New York in 1889. And the "action" of the novel and the street-car strike seem to coalesce, appear to have written themselves in this scene without much "conscious agency" on Howells's part.
This chapter, in a way, is an attempt to investigate just these phenomena, to examine the similarities and resonances between the strike being enacted on the "scene" of social discourse and the novel being written on, and about, the "scene" of writing. Like Rebecca Harding Davis discovering the working class during the Great Cordwainer's Strike of 1860, Howells finds the "great street-car strike" a perfect opportunity for sculpting a literary identity. Like Davis, Howells both acclaims and disclaims the subversive rhetorics of production abroad in his milieu.

Howells's propensity for social realism reached its height in the late 1880's. This propensity is quite fully realized in protagonist Basil March's diatribe against "this economic chance world in which we live" (486), which has been taken by many critics to emulate Howells's own views, influenced as he was at the time by Tolstoi's Christian socialism:

... what I object to is this economic chance world in which we live, and which we men seem to have created. It ought to be a law ... that if a man will work he shall both rest and eat, and shall not be harassed with any question as to how his repose and his provision shall come ... But in our state of things no one is secure of this. No one is sure of finding work; no one is sure of not losing it (485-486).

In this apparently quite radical critique of the random economic violence of Gilded Age America, Basil March announces that he has a difficult time seeing any redeeming pattern in the deaths of Conrad Dryfoos and Berthold Lindau
which have preceded, and inspire, the speech. These deaths occurred during a riot of the kind Howells knew first hand from his experience of the street-car strike, and through Basil March's speech Howells may be seen to define his own position in and feelings about the larger scene of violence and impoverishment—including the Haymarket and the Manhattan strike—which formed the permeable margins of the realist fiction.

This is the Howells who, almost alone among notable Americans, risked official censure and public vituperation to plead publicly for clemency for the Haymarket anarchists, raising a lone voice of dissent amid the general blood lust that filled the popular press and mind in November 1887. However, in the 1909 preface Howells appears willing to disavow his advocacy of the losers in the "economic chance world." Instead, he proclaims the artistic value of class violence. Through his 1909 use of the metaphor of "opportunity"("Opportunely for me") in describing the earlier scene of writing, Howells depicts himself as holding the winning number in the vast lottery of the "chance world," writing that the "great street-car strike" came "opportunistly" at a time when the strike not only resulted in a timely

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20 In an unpublished letter intended for the New York papers directly after the executions, Howells's description of the Chicago Eight anticipates the "chance world" metaphor of luck, emphasizing not just the anarchists' innocence but also their sheer bad luck in being chosen as scapegoats by an irrational system (Cady 73-77).
appeal to his readership, but also, the passage suggests, directly determined the writing itself. This writing, because of the strike, found its way "to issues larger and nobler" than the usual novelistic "love-affairs," and progressed seemingly without much "conscious agency" on Howells's part. About such outbreaks of working-class insurrection as the New York streetcar strike of January 1889 Howells concludes "In my quality of artist I could not regret these, and I gratefully acknowledge that they offered me the opportunity of a more strenuous action, a more impressive catastrophe than I could have achieved without them" (xxiv, emphasis mine). Given this fortunate "opportunity," Howells acted in his "quality of artist" and completed the novel, his longest, in about six months. And it was, by the standards of the time, a huge popular success, doing a lot to restore public good will after his much maligned advocacy of the Haymarket martyrs.

Looking back at the turbulent, revolution-prone 1880's from the distance afforded by twenty years and a marked literary renown, Howells in 1909 suggests a fertile contradiction. For the strike of 1889, which is, according to his account, at once setting for and catalyst of A Hazard of New Fortunes, is symptomatic of a broader pattern of working-class insurrection that forms the scene of writing of the American realist fiction. His registrations of this scene—as occasioned by the Haymarket Affair of 1887 and the Manhattan
street-car strike of 1889--first threatened to destroy and then enhanced his career and literary standing. In the following essay I want to posit that Howells found himself in 1889 at once drawn to, psychically energized, and threatened by the "More Impressive Catastrophe" of the strike for reasons at once essential and antithetical to his art and social identity. Because it bears testimony to such a mixture of motives, A Hazard of New Fortunes begs to be read as a metafictional critique of the realist fiction of working-class presence we have seen developed in Davis, Phelps and James.

2.

When William Dean Howells moved to New York City in the winter of 1888-89 he put himself into the storm center of American class unrest and insurgency. Although Howells had done some note taking, a la Emile Zola, in the textile mills and impoverished mill towns of Massachusetts as preparation for Annie Kilburn in 1886, there was little in his experience to prepare him for the vast size and terrific poverty of New York's working poor. Inextricable from this experience of class was that of the unprecedented ethnic heterogeneity of the city. Thus, an uneasy sense of the Otherness and penchant for civic disorder exhibited by New York's large ethnic proletariat determines Howells's cityscape in A Hazard of New Fortunes. A similar fear of the increasingly polyglot urban proletariat also determines Jacob Riis's famous, pioneering
photo essay *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), which historian Robert Wiebe aptly describes as "a parable of fear" for the upper classes (88), as well as Josiah Strong's 1885 best seller *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, which identifies the ethnic urban proletariat as "men who are ready on any pretext to raise riots for the purpose of destruction and plunder" (cited Kaplan 69). By the time of Howells's arrival in Manhattan this knitting together of ethnic and class prejudices was an accomplished fact, given the final knots as it was by the Haymarket "riot" and bombing of May 1886, which nativism's most prominent historian, John Higham, calls "the most important single incident in late nineteenth century nativism" (54). Howells focuses his narrative eye on New York—the point of entry for millions of non-WASP immigrants and the storm center of American nativism—in January 1889, just a year and two months after his open letter to the New York papers decrying the Haymarket executions engulfed him in the nativist imbroglio. So we can see the change of scene, and *Hazard*, as an attempt by Howells to re-register the proletarian unrest represented at the Haymarket, an attempt to bring the realist fiction to bear on that unrest at its strongest point. His move into the cultural melting pot, however, is also emblematic of Howells's interest, as an artist, with the phenomenon of cultural heteroglossia.
Amy Kaplan's chapter on Howells in her 1985 book, *The Social Construction of American Realism* illustrates how in a Gilded Age America increasingly fragmented by nativism and torn by strikes and class insurrection, Howells came to conceive of realism, in both his theory and practice, as essential to the preservation of traditional democratic forms. The specific cultural work of realism would be to effect a widespread consensus about what daily life in America really *is*. As Howells put it in 1887, fiction should "cease to lie about life" and instead should "portray men and women as they are, actuated by the motives and passions in the measure we all know" (cited Kaplan 70). This attempt at what Howells deemed "democracy in literature" is marred, of course, by the extent to which it assumes the existence of the consensus it would create: how *is* that "measure we all know" arrived at? Such a measure of common sense as Howells recommends looks suspiciously like the everyday wisdom of the native-born WASP ruling class. Looking back at Howells's time through the prism of materialist theories of the ideological basis of perception, the grounds of self-apparent common sense upon which Howells would convene the democracy of literature appear dangerously shaky. And Kaplan shows that a useful way to read *A Hazard of New Fortunes* is to see in it an attempt to naturalize the grounds of apparent common sense.
Kaplan shows that Howells's narrative reacts to the class and race-fragmented urban landscape by repeatedly lifting the narrative eye from the threatening crowds and taking it for rides along the elevated rail lines. Propelled along the new elevated railway lines, the narrative eye not only escapes from the earthbound, riotous masses, but is also provided with a voyeuristic vantage point from which to gaze unobserved into the tenement house windows of the proletariat. The class insularity of this new vantage point is guaranteed by relative expense of the fare. The new elevated thus becomes for Basil March, Howell's protagonist, a type of the "Seeing Machine" which Michel Foucault argues is the epitome of modern social management: installed into a setting where he/she may be readily observed while the observer remains invisible, the human object may be more easily managed, supervised, controlled.

Foucault's paradigmatic "seeing machine" is the modern penitentiary, of course, but the implication of his argument is that all of modern society is being arranged around such figurative one way mirrors, where power derives from the act of seeing without being seen. Thus, Kaplan explains, the popularity of both Howells's 1890 novel and Jacob Riis's 1890 photo essay How the Other Half Lives derive from a timely attempt to stabilize the class-threatened epistemology of apparent common sense around clearly framed, indisputable visual images, images offering a "one way intimacy (which)
derives from the power to violate the domesticity of others" (Kaplan 72). The term "picturesque" comes up repeatedly in the novel, and in this term we can ascertain the similarity between the strategies of Howells's realist fiction and Riis's photography. In both, the picture-maker seeks out and registers, and thus contains, the proletarian threat to his social autonomy. When Jacob Riis's modern editor notes that "This straining after the picturesque was the style of the age" (Riis xvi), he is referring ostensibly to strategies for sentimentalizing the Other, such as Dickens's penchant for creating cute, spunky street urchins. But his remark can also be taken to refer to the growing recognition of the age that photographic image-making allows the institutions of power to individuate, know, and proclaim the Other-ness of the threatening masses of foreign-tongued immigrants filling American cities. To apply the language of police procedure, both Riis and Howells "book" the denizens of the Lower East Side. They bind worker insurrection between the covers of a literary commodity,

20 A similar strategy for dealing with worker-insurrection through "picturing" it, was recently applied by the management of Pittston Coal during the bitter, protracted strike of 1987-'88. Video cameras mounted at mine gates, and other installations where strikers picketed, provided a way for the company to identify picket leaders and instigators of vandalism or other violence. The strikers' reaction to this surveillance is revealing: they wore identical clothing--camouflage coveralls, UMW baseball caps and red bandannas--on the picket lines. Thus the striking miners proclaimed their collective identity as a way of countering the company's attempt to individuate them.
inscribing and commodifying a class Other as a way of asserting an autonomous identity in the literary marketplace.

Faced with the city, then, the ultimate forcing ground of the literary realism Howells advocated so forcefully for so long, Howells's "picturing" of everyday life deconstructs his attempt to enfranchise a new "literary democracy." Similarly, Howells's related dictum that realistic fiction should "speak the dialect, the language that most Americans know--the language of unaffected people everywhere," sounds fallacious as well, especially given the cacophonous polyglot cityscape inhabited by Hazard. For although the Howellsian realist works to create such an idiom, the notion that this idiom is the one that "most Americans know" simultaneously assumes that the ecstatic polyglossia exemplified by New York has largely already become unified through the operation of a sort of communal linguistic and ideological melting pot, where presumably "affected" languages, and other inaccessible idioms and creeds are refined out. It is on the New York scene of A Hazard of New Fortunes--a scene in which striking street-car workers bid fair to represent themselves--that Howells's "democracy in literature" displays its most self-contradictory aspects.

Amy Kaplan is thus correct when she argues that Howells seems intent more on drawing and defending lines which separate "most Americans" from the ethnic and social "Other Half" than he does on assimilating it into the field of what
"most Americans know." But because of the complete absence of proletarian characters from the work it is too simple to see Howells's narrative as an articulation of middle-class ideology, since the social role of the middle class is predicated on the repression of a social Other. Around Basil March and his journal *Every Other Week*, Howells incorporates a kind of comic middle-class utopian community which simultaneously represses and is sympathetic to proletarian plight, in a manner directly homologous to the contemporary attempt of middle-class women to reformulate their class position through urban reform and social work, the cultural work which powers *Life in the Iron Mills* and *The Silent Partner*. But Howells's affinity with his class Other runs deeper than can be figured if we try to understand *Hazard* as primarily an attempt to "conceptually reinforce the hierarchy between classes" (Kaplan 75) through simultaneously "imagining and managing the threats of social change" (71). For as historian E.P.Thompson would remind us, the working class is not merely an Other, thing, or structure which can be readily managed or consigned to a certain real or imaginary locale. Rather it is an "historical phenomenon, unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material of experience and in consciousness" (9). Without articulating the experience of class and class difference as such a process, as a synthesis of diverse knowledge at the level of consciousness, and thus open to intervention at the
level of consciousness, history becomes a kind of sealed, monstrous machine running either amok or smoothly, but running without human input in any case.

We can humanize such a monstrous history by trying, as with prior discussions of Davis, Phelps and James, to illustrate how the working class is present at its own making and unmaking in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*. As an antidote to the realist ideology Kaplan seems to both describe and reenact I want to propose ways that Howells's historical authorship, both his theory and practice, can be seen to exhibit distinct affinities with the particular proletarian insurgency inscribed within the scene of writing. Howells does attempt to figuratively separate social groups whom his proposed literary democracy of realism would supposedly unite, but the process by which this segregation is attempted, a realist registration of an ecstatically polyglossic setting, is itself a product of the very polyglot cacophony which Gilded Age America, Howells included, wanted to homogenize into "the dialect, the language that most Americans know."

The fact that the novel was partially written and set during the strike of between five and six thousand Manhattan and Brooklyn street car drivers in January and February 1889 must be taken into account because of undeniable affinities between Howells's literary attempt to represent the polyglot proletariat of New York and the attempt of the Knights of
Labor to represent the same group. Nativists saw the Knights' action in New York as yet another instance, such as the Haymarket, where ethnic immigrants and socialist agitation went hand in hand. And the street car companies' refusal to let their work force unite under the representation of the District Assembly of the Knights of Labor (the issue that caused the strike) is symptomatic of how employers throughout this period used ethnicity as a tool to divide and conquer proletarian unrest. Similarly, Howells wants to both represent and disenfranchise this ethnic polyglot constituency in his "literary democracy."

Kaplan argues that Howell's ostensible literary democracy, when confronted with the city, must "combat its otherness and . . . fix its protean changes within a coherent narrative form"(44). Key to this aesthetic reorganization of the city is the author's and his protagonists' "knowledge of the line" between threatening and congenial urban spaces.

(Basil and Isabel) came to excel in the sad knowledge of the line at which respectability distinguishes itself from shabbiness... There was an east and west line beyond which they could not go . . . (and) keep their self-respect (58).

One way of understanding Howells's "line" is to see it as a literalization of the ideology of privilege Rebecca Harding Davis inscribed when she peered through the lens of feminine sympathy at the slow stream of workers passing beneath her window. In Hazard, then, Davis's strategy for segregating the
working-class Other from the middle-class subject becomes itself an object of narrative surveillance. Kaplan acutely shows that this metaphor of the dividing line unites the interminable house hunt of Basil and Isabel March in chapters eight, nine and ten—a section of *Hazard* which has always seemed essentially digressive and distracting to critics—to major issues of the novel. In the house hunt, Kaplan sees a paradigm of Howells's strategy for drawing a line, in the novel as a whole, between a "coherent picture of the city" and "the peripheral category of "useless information" (Kaplan 48). The Marches' urban peregrinations thus become a search for a new domestic vantage from which to observe and manage the insurgent working class, the "catastrophe of the strike" Howells refers to in the 1909 preface. This search applies geographic, and domestic, metaphors to a hunt for ideological space.

In investigating the "knowledge of the line", however, Kaplan misses a point which is vital to understanding *Hazard* as a dialectic of working-class presence. The difficulty and interminableness of the hunt for domestic space result not just from the difficulty of colonizing and containing the almost illimitable disorder of the urban scene, but also from Howells's much proclaimed rejection of romance and valorizing of realism. Since it is from the vantage point of domestic sentimentalism that worker contumacy can be and has been managed, as we saw in Phelps and Davis, Howells is dragging
his protagonists through a search for domestic space which he wishes, because it equates with romantic management strategies, they would never find. In the end Basil even rejects the idea that a real domestic space can exist in much of New York: "Think of baby in a flat! It's a contradiction in terms; the flat is the negation of motherhood . . . the flat abolishes the family consciousness" (70). And Isabel expresses Howells's paradox even more neatly when, during a particularly unsuccessful phase of the search, she turns to Basil and says "I'm beginning to feel crazy. But I don't want you to lose your head, Basil. And I don't want you to sentimentalize any of the things you see in New York" (71). Pinioned between sentiment and madness, this is precisely the situation in which Howells, the self-designated realist, finds himself in the presence of worker contumacy such as the 1889 street car strike. Having thrown himself out of the house, so to speak, of the sentimental ideology of domesticated reform, Howells has no vantage point on urban life, but he must refuse to "sentimentalize . . . things . . . in New York" nonetheless. Complicating the search for a domestic vantage is the fact that Howells had earlier exercised distinctly sentimental strategies for portraying (and creating) class difference in his novel of a New England mill town Annie Kilburn (1887).

In that novel the title character comes to an other-class understanding of working-class deprivation reminiscent
of Rebecca Harding Davis. She resolves her middle-class crisis of conscience by adopting the orphaned daughter of a minister of the social gospel, the Reverend Peck. Peck has been driven out of his congregation by a conservative backlash against his preaching of quasi-Tolstoian doctrines and is killed in a fluke train accident on his way to take a job in a particularly nasty textile mill in a neighboring town. Annie, whose girlhood in Europe broadened her perspective on social justice, has threatened the congregation that if they drive Peck out she will join him in bringing the social gospel to the mills. Peck's death frees Annie of her sentimental obligation to go Elizabeth Phelps's Perly Kelso one better and actually become a mill worker, but it also necessitates a return to the domestic space which, as we saw in "Iron Mills," comes to displace the point of production in the realist fiction of the working class. In New York, Basil March mimics the attitude towards social justice that Howells found himself in at the end of Annie Kilburn.

At once stuck with the need for the vantage point on urban disorder provided by domestic ideological space and unable to find any that suits his sensibility, Basil must deny the efficacy of domestic space and ideology without having anything to replace them. Further, if we consider Basil's and Isabel's explorations of the city to be an occasion when Howells investigates the efficacy of the
various internal protocols of the realist fiction, the house hunt becomes self-reflexive, metafictional. It registers the process of writing realism as much as it does the urban landscape. Ostensibly about the division of the class-haunted, ethnically-divided, concrete-historical city into safe and threatening zones, the house hunt may in fact be read as an instance in which the realist fiction displaces history through an attempt to represent, and thus validate, its internal technologies. We have seen this before, of course. When Rebecca Harding Davis panned her narrative eye over the point-of-production in the iron mills, for instance, almost the first thing she descried was a group of middle- and-upper-class visitors—Kirby, Mitchell, May—who were emulating the surveillance carried out by the narrative. But the incursions of the disfavored rhetoric of romance into Howells's rhetoric of the real are not the only instance in which this strategy of displacement by self-reflexiveness is deployed. Howells may also be seen to occlude the "more impressive catastrophe" of the traction strike itself in this fashion.

Driven from the space made sacred to the domestic ideology by Howell's espoused anti-romantic desire to "Bat the babes of romance about" (cited Kirk 143) the realist eye removes to other sites. Kaplan identifies the major alternative when she unfolds her metaphor of the ideological "knowledge of the line" to include the new elevated rail
lines which provide a vantage point for "framing the spectacle of working-class life in a series of domestic still lifes" (Kaplan 50). Basil and Isabel take numerous excursions on the new L's. And in Kaplan's view the "L" violently excludes class and ethnic Others from participation in the moving spectacle. Thus, the Marches'and Howells's "knowledge of the line" comes to conflate an inherent knowledge of the geographic class variations which circumscribe available domestic space with the point of view of the "L" rider: "The L can be read as a metaphor for the violence implicit in not seeing in order to make the city visible and real" (Kaplan 51). Since the domestic vantage on proletarian life can only surreptitiously be reinvented, given Howell's self-consciously militant realism, the "knowledge of the line" purveyed from the L becomes the valorized producer of middle-class identity in and knowledge about the city. And here lies the essential contradiction to Amy Kaplan's identification of a strategy of compartmentalizing the city between coherent pictures and useless information. For that "impressive catastrophe" of six thousand striking surface-car drivers on the scene of writing necessitates our questioning the extent to which the middle-class knowledge of the line has been constructed by a proletarian knowledge of the lines. This is a knowledge of both how the work of railroading is done and the hidden histories of those that do it, a knowledge which, although repressed, determines the shape of the gap which
occludes it. If the L allows Howells to view proletarian life as a series of "domestic still lifes" (Kaplan 50), in other words, what are working people doing when they are not comfortably ensconced in their flats and in the purview of the realist fiction?

One aspect of this knowledge of the line which determines Howells's fiction is, by his own admission, his knowledge that the surface line workers are carrying on an angry, violent strike. It is this knowledge of the line, which, according to Howells's 1909 account anyhow, "tended to give the whole (novel) a dignity and doubtless made for its success" (xxiv). As we saw in Davis's confrontation with/construction of her class-Other, the existence of a strike on the scene of writing problematizes outdated concepts of petit bourgeois social identity by tending to reveal the proletarian work underlying middle-class privilege and comfort. Thus Hugh and Deborah Wolfe may sculpt Rebecca Davis's literary identity, but they are also erased through the act of sculpting it. The identity endures, while the work that constructed it is glimpsed only fitfully through the fog. One way of understanding the L's in Hazard then, might be to see in them Howells's displacement of the (proletarian) knowledge of the surface lines which powered his novel. Howells's depiction of the elevated rail lines so perfectly embodies the realist surveillance strategy—omnipresent, the very type of scientific progress, disconnected from the
disorder surveyed—that it cries out to be interpreted in terms of what is not visible because of the representation of that vantage. As in The Princess Casamassima, one thing that is persistently not visible is the work that has constructed and maintains the city. Such elision of labor also unifies Jacob Riis's photographs of lower-class living conditions in The Other Half with Howells's trespass vision into workers' flats in Hazard; both focus on domestic arrangements rather than on points of production. By showing us the elevated railways and their vantage, Howells thus substitutes a self-reflexive depiction of realist narrative strategies ("the knowledge of the line") for the proletarian knowledge from the line—the knowledge of how to work it and how to strike it—made manifest by the striking street-car workers. At a moment when the working-class role in history demands to be seen, Howells chooses instead to take inventory of his own strategies for registering the visible.

By understanding Howells's knowledge of the line in terms of what it can divulge, Amy Kaplan comes to figure Howells's New York in terms of a middle-class foreground and, on the other side of the line, a background in which the discord and tumult of the city reign. She thinks Howells's "literary democracy," his call for an all inclusive picture of "life as it really is" in terms of an exclusion of class and ethnic others. In fact, however, if we place working-class revolt on the scene of this novel, what we can see is
that the incursions of the tumultuous background into the decorous middle-class foreground have been brought about not, as Kaplan has it, because "Realism in Hazard continually contests its own drive to contain conflict and minimize excess"(54), but because Hazard itself has a dialectical relation to working-class activism, and thus continually exhibits its internal processes in a kind of self-aggrandizing spiral. In "Life in the Iron Mills," the realist fiction of industrialism in America appeared at almost the very moment the working class wrote itself into American history on a national scale, in the Great Cordwainer's Strike of 1860. In 1889, the "impressive catastrophe" of the New York surface-line strike and Howells's novel are written simultaneously, and they draw from the same source. Both instance a kind of master discourse, one which synthesizes many voices: class epistemologies, languages, literatures and cultures. Both strike and novel are articulations of the ecstatic polyglossia of the New York scene of writing, a scene of writing in which a close link between foreign culture and worker activism had been decreed, by 1889, with a fanatic intensity.

3.

Some information about the historical context is essential before we can understand the 1889 strike and A Hazard of New Fortunes in their mutual light. So at the risk of being recklessly sketchy about vast phenomena which are
still being described, I am going to outline the making of the American working class that was going on in Howells's New York. What we find is that "in the late nineteenth century the impulse to emigrate reached progressively deeper into Europe, uprooting more and more remote peoples" as the turn-of-the-century approached (Higham 65). The Census of 1880, for instance, found numerous crowded districts of Italians and Russo-Polish Jews already invested on New York's Lower East Side, and the decade that followed saw immigration by Italians, Slavs and Jews increase even further, with New York being the site of disembarkation for fully three-quarters of them (Higham 47-65). With limited exceptions, these newest immigrants found their way to the lowest paid jobs, the worst living and working conditions, the most disenfranchised political culture and, most ominously for the increasingly nativist upper classes, the growing labor and trade union organizations, where they made up a disproportionate share of the rank and file. During periods of labor unrest— and in the quarter century following the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 such unrest was almost continuous— employers either hired freshly-immigrated workers to break strikes or contracted them abroad for much lower rates of pay than those commanded by native born workers and immigrants of long standing.

These practices lead to fault lines in the working class. Older immigrants and native-born workers on one side opposed newly arrived workers on the other. Employers also
undermined labor unions through provoking ethnic unrest in
the polyglot proletarian population (Aronowitz 57-115).
Although the trade unions themselves, according to Higham and
Aronowitz, consciously resisted nativist policies, not least
because so many union members were immigrants themselves, the
history of American strikes is replete with instances of
employer attempts to maintain the autonomy of ethnic groups
and encourage dispute between them as a means of keeping
labor costs low. Although no definitive account of the 1889
strike exists, we can glimpse this ethnic aspect of the
strike in the 1 February *New York Herald* report that the
company contracted a large group of replacement workers
directly from the Castle Gardens immigration center. The
company superintendent who did the hiring seems, in the
*Herald* coverage, at great pains to dispel a rumor that one
hundred Italians had been hired "fresh off the boat," the day
before, and the *Herald* reporter insists that the one group of
men he saw hired as scabs were English, Irish and Swedes.
Acting out of what I take to be a recognition of the popular
demonizing of the Italians in Gilded Age New York, the
company probably wanted to avoid alienating nativist public
opinion, although since the figures cited by Higham show that
Italians were disembarking at Castle Gardens in record
numbers that year it may be fair to assume that a good number
of them found their way into the ranks of the strikebreakers.
Now as we've seen before, like much of working-class history
this account remains an outline to be filled in, but let us proceed to theorize this increasingly ethnic proletarian cityscape as both the setting and the scene of writing of A Hazard of New Fortunes.

In such a setting the usual pattern would be for powerful interests to attempt to prevent the workers from recognizing that ethnic divisions imperil class solidarity and lead to an ethnically fragmented work force disempowered by barriers of language and culture. New York Herald accounts of the strike however reveal that the organization which took the lead in the strike was one which had all through the 1880's tried to corrode just those barriers in its attempt to empower workers. The Knights of Labor, whose bid to represent the five thousand streetcar employees was the root cause of the strike, was really the first American industrial union. As an industrial union, the Knights took as their mission to organize and empower all workers regardless of occupation, race, gender, language or ethnic group. Other worker advocates, such as the American Federation of Labor, stressed occupational and ethnic difference, and attempted to win wage, benefit and work place concessions for relatively narrow segments of the working population. The AFL was notorious for excluding unskilled workers, women, and people of color and non-Anglo Saxon background. The Knights of Labor valorized unity over difference, however. And the American working class was coming, by 1890, to be mainly composed of
unskilled workers from southern and eastern Europe, the very
groups usually excluded from the conservative trade unions
grouped under the AFL.

Thus, in the 1880's and 1890's American unionism often
spoke with a foreign accent. Further, in the polyglot labor
ghetto the presence of many speech communities reduced the
efficacy of American ideological state apparatuses, such as
the fledgling public school system. The relative immunity of
newly-immigrated workers to "Americanization" was underlined
by the Chicago Labor Union's ability to unite the immigrant
workers of that city behind the banner of the eight-hour
movement in 1886, a unity that catalyzed the Haymarket
crisis. Ethnics brought their own newspapers and cultural
institutions to America, and these residual organizations
fostered a kind of working-class autonomy that made it
possible for oppressed groups to think the revolution. Into
and out of this setting came the Knights of Labor, proffering
a socialistic ideology to the very people whose material
deprivation and insularity from hegemonic ideology suited
them for insurrection. The Knights seem to have realized that
ethnic and cultural difference at once posed obstacles to
worker solidarity and allowed workers to be able to see their
situation in terms not dictated by the hegemonic ideology.
Their unifying response to difference may thus be seen as an
enhancement and emulation of the ecstatic urban
polyculturalism going on in New York City. This proximity and
fusion of disparate cultures and languages— or polyglossia—made New York the crisis point of the conflict between Americanization and labor radicalism. The enactment of polyglossia in the New York streets also made it an ideal point of production for Howell's novel, as we shall see.

Perhaps no literary critic has written with as much insight about the phenomenon of polyglossia—which Howells both portrays and emerges out of—as the marxian Soviet scholar Mikhail Bakhtin. In The Dialogic Imagination, Bakhtin illustrates how the cultural forms of the modern West were determined by the polyglossic fusion of tongues and cultures attendant upon the rise of capitalism, with its innovations in transport, trade and publishing. Most particularly, polyglossia has determined the modern emergence and characteristics of Howells's chosen artistic form, the novel. In fact, Bakhtin argues, because its restless protean form and drive to include other literary genres and cultural productions mimic the restlessness and inclusiveness of capital, the novel must be seen as the representative mode of culture of the modern age.

The novel, says Bakhtin, was "powerfully affected by a very specific rupture in the history of European civilization: its emergence from a socially isolated and culturally deaf semipatriarchal society, and its entrance into international and interlingual contacts and relationships" (11). In the parochial America of 1889 it would
be hard to conceive a single figure more representative of such "international and interlingual contacts" than William Dean Howells. In the review articles he wrote for The Atlantic in the 70's and 80's, for instance, Howells critiqued French, Spanish, Norwegian, Russian, and English literature, informing an entire generation of American readers about the realism and naturalism then emerging with such force in Europe (Kirk 89). Further, Howells's self-proclaimed intention to portray people and things "as they are," is perfectly understandable within what Bahktin calls "the new zone opened by the novel for structuring literary images, namely, the zone of maximal contact with the present (with contemporary reality) in all its openendedness" (11). In the polyglossic moment of the modern novel's ascendency, the "new zone . . . for structuring of literary images" is produced by the autocritique, dissolution and reformation of literary genres formed "during eras of deaf and closed monoglossia" (Bakhtin 14). Simply by coming from Puritan-haunted, genteel Boston to New York, the most polyglot city in America, Howells was forced to reformulate the genteel comedy of manners so that it would accommodate the new voices he encountered in the zone of maximal contact with the present.

Similarly, the Knights of Labor's creed reflects just such an emphasis on synthesizing new structures in the present from the old, reified forms of craft and trade
allegiance. The Knights recognized none of the divisions between crafts, unskilled and skilled workers which have historically inhibited the ability of American workers to achieve solidarity. Instead they welcomed all workers: as Grand Master Workman Terence Powderly has it

The Knights of Labor (tell) each member, the hour of his initiation, that it was his duty: as opportunity offers, to extend a helping hand to all branches of honorable toil. The True Knight of Labor believed it to be his duty to "help and assist those who, with hand or brain, did anything honorable or useful to earn bread" (163-64).

The Knights' attempt to organize the polyglot New York proletariat, then, has affinities with two aspects of Howells's realism: the first is his attempt to fuse the polyphony of European languages and cultural practices available to him into a form of the realistic novel for American contingencies; second there are also affinities to his attempt to blast realist literary images free of the constraints of the romance—certainly in his view, a reified monoglossic genre—so that literature can present "men and women as they really are," in the zone of maximal contact with the present. Thus an unconscious affinity between Howells's literary method and the strategy of proletarian insurrection lurks in Howells's realist fiction like a ticking bomb. This affinity is especially hazardous because it is situated in the overtly polyglossic New York scene of writing. A Hazard of New Fortunes is a novel that discovers the primal scene of its own conception in the New York street
car strike of 1889, a violent confrontation between labor's polyglossic desire to inscribe disparate cultures in a union of equals and capital's adamant, nativistic monoglossia. In 1889 New York, Howells's desired literary democracy tries unsuccessfully to spiral into indeterminacy as the "impressive catastrophe" is carried to its conclusion. It is in the images and narrative handling of overt polyglossia that we can see Howells's uneasy attempts to accommodate nativist reaction and socialist radicalism, an accommodation necessitated by his unpopular championing of the Haymarket Eight. In those passages where Howells is writing most playfully about the tendency of language to be itself—playful, intertextual, referential—the dialectic of working-class presence asserts itself.

4.

Perhaps no other characteristic of Every Other Week, the journal which centers the petit bourgeois settlement in Hazard, is more pronounced than its fusion and redefinition of wildly heterogenous cultural and linguistic influences. Given that Howells's critical writings on European literatures valorize this kind of play as essential to the practice of realism, the magazine signifies a kind of self-portrait of the novel of which it is part. Thus, the precise temporal metaphor of the magazine's title, Every Other Week, identifies the magazine with the strict measurement and control of time essential to both the realist fiction and the
epistemology of urban industrial life. And the characters who publish, staff and write the magazine can be read as synecdoches for differing voices on Howells's heterogeneous scene of writing:

a fraternity and equality crank like poor old Lindau, and a belated sociological crank like Woodburn, and a truculent speculator like old Dryfoos, and a humanitarian dreamer like young Dryfoos, and a sentimentalist like me (Basil March), and a nondescript like Beaton, and a pure advertising essence like Fulkerson, and a society spirit like Kendricks (360).

Fulkerson, the journal's publicity manager, for instance, is a "pure advertising essence" whose speech is an exuberant "mixture of American slang with the jargon of European criticism" (218). In the class-polarized, polyglossic context of 1889 New York, Fulkerson personifies the intertextuality into which the realist fiction spirals when caught within the gravitational field of working-class power. His remarks often provoke the narrative into the kind of double entendre which reveals the dialectic of working-class presence: the spiral towards indeterminacy and the working-class power it would obscure.

Formerly in the newspaper syndicate business, Fulkerson has what seem to be an infinite number of connections with journalists all over the country that enable him to manipulate public reception before the magazine's debut:

He worked his interest with the press to the utmost, and paragraphs that did credit to his ingenuity were afloat everywhere. Some of them were speciously unfavorable in tone; they criticized and even ridiculed the principles on
which the new departure in literary journalism was based. Others defended it; others yet denied that this rumored principle was really the principle. All contributed to make talk. All proceeded from the same fertile invention (106).

Because Fulkerson has widely circulated these innumerable self-contradictory and provocative evaluations of the yet-to-be-released journal, Every Other Week becomes a signifier perpetually in search of new signifieds along an infinite trail of postal routes, telegraph and telephone lines; the magazine is always immanent, leaving a trace of interest everywhere but offering no stable signification anywhere. Continually deconstructing itself in Fulkerson's "fertile invention," Every Other Week, for a good portion of the novel, is always absent, always Other.

When, in the conclusion of the novel, Fulkerson moves his new bride into his old apartment above the magazine office he testifies to both the efficacy of Other-ness proclaimed by Howells's critical writings on European cultures and to the uneasiness Howells feels over writing from the place of that Other. By marrying his work, so to speak, Fulkerson literally enacts all desire—sexual, domestic, social, and literary—within the decentered, polyglossic economy of the sign participated in by the magazine. But although the magazine is the site of radical linguistic play and desire, it is also a bastion of middle-class culture, and when Fulkerson invests the magazine with conjugality he sneaks the domestic viewpoint on proletarian
insurrection, which we saw promulgated in Davis and Phelps, back into Howell's militant "realism." Through Fulkerson, then, Every Other Week starts out as a paradigm of the polyglossic play which empowers, in Howells's view, the writing of realism. But through his overt representation of the Bahktinian "zone of maximal contact with the present," Howells discovers the revolutionary aspect of such play, and thus the magazine comes to house the domesticated sentimentalism Howells has so noisily rejected. Every Other Week emulates working-class historical agency—here knowable as an overt, ecstatic polyglossia—but, in its redefinition as domestic space, the magazine finally testifies to the deep uneasiness Howells exhibits over his engagement with the working class. Such uneasiness is especially evident in Howells's depiction of the class-polarized New York point of production of the novel, where the polyglossic/polygeneric fusion the magazine portends has radical political implications. Again, Fulkerson's remarks and their setting are revealing.

To Basil's observation that the New York press has paid little attention to Fulkerson's advertising blitz, Fulkerson remarks,

"Don't mind that, old man. It's the whole country that makes or breaks a thing like this: New York has very little to do with it. . . . New York does make or break a play; but it doesn't make or break a book; it doesn't make or break a magazine. The great mass of readers are outside New York, and the rural districts are what we have got to go for. They don't read much in New York; they write
and talk about what they've written. Don't you worry" (106-107 emphases mine).

Fulkerson's insistence that the text is not present in New York provides a profoundly revealing index to Howells's feelings about his own literary production. For Hazard has certainly been made in New York. Catalyzed by the "more fortunate catastrophe" of the strike, written in the city and of the city—and perhaps by the city—New York has, to paraphrase Fulkerson, a great deal to do with A Hazard of New Fortunes. Similarly, Fulkerson's repeated use of the idiomatic phrase "make or break" offers itself as a metaphor for success or failure in circulation and consumption, but can be seen to reveal itself, through a kind of parapraxis (Freudian slip), as an anxious ("Don't you worry") displacement of the act of production which commodification tends to occlude. In the same utterance that he is assuring Basil that no book or magazine has its success or failure "made" in the city, Fulkerson also reveals that New York is indeed a site of production, a place where a good number of books are written, or "made." Fulkerson's polyglossic speech, his "mixture of American slang with the jargon of European criticism" (218), thus works through him to substitute depictions of the network of consumption in which the realist fiction attempts to place itself—"make or break" in the sense of market success—for depictions of the point of production—"make" in the sense of literary and industrial production. The resonances between writing realism and
industrial production, and industrial unrest, are made manifest by Howells's making a book on the scene of workers' insurrection.21 As in any displacement, Fulkerson's speech conceals/reveals anxiety over the symbolic content which is being displaced. So the framing of Fulkerson's speech by admonitions for Basil to not be anxious ("Don't mind that old man" and "Don't you worry") only draws attention to the hazards inherent in Howells's making a novel which emulates the polyglossic unification being carried out by the Knights of Labor in 1889 New York. Fulkerson's strategy of displacement reveals the dialectic of working-class presence in another highly revealing instance as well.

Fulkerson speaks volumes about the coalescence between literary and insurrectionary articulations of polyglossia when he reacts to being ordered, by the natural gas magnate who owns the magazine, to fire the magazine's anarcho-socialist German immigrant translator, Berthold Lindau. He tells Basil, "Well, I suppose you can easily get somebody else to do Lindau's work for you. This town is just running over with half-starved linguists"(389). The way this speech links polyglossia with impoverishment pretty clearly points

21 Howells himself will later openly proclaim the similarity between writing and manual-production labor in his oft-noted essay "The Man of Letters as A Man of Business"(1893). But this proclamation will be made from the prestigious "Editor's Easy Chair" of Scribner's Magazine, a position to which Howells acceded, in part, through the popular success of his registration of working-class effectivity in A Hazard of New Fortunes.
to the masses of foreign-speaking immigrant workers crowding against Howells's margins. In fact, thousands of "half-starved" foreigners do seem to threaten to overrun the city, and many of them, in the eyes of the nativist middle and upper classes, partake of the foreign-accented anarcho-socialism of Berthold Lindau. Basil March himself solidifies the nativist connection between workers and foreigners when he responds:

"Look here, Fulkerson; you may regard this as a joke, but I don't. I'm not used to being spoken to as if I were the foreman of a shop, and told to discharge a sensitive and cultivated man like Lindau, as if he were a drunken mechanic; and if that's your idea of me--"(389-390).

In fact, given the class-and-ethnically-polarized New York scene of writing Basil March is expected to treat Lindau like any other foreign-sounding workman. The threat of proletarianization which will ensure that he does acquiesce is signalled by the squinting pronoun of the last line of Basil's speech. In the phrase "if that's your idea of me" the pronoun "that" squints at both "the foreman of a shop" and "a drunken mechanic," offering Basil/Howells an identity as either a manager of workers or a worker himself. The first identity is attendant upon the successful registration of workers within the realist fiction. The second is immanent in Howells's imagining of workers through engagement with the same polyglossia that empowers the Knights of Labor.

Another point at which linguistic play betrays social content is in the character of Colonel Woodburn, a regular
contributor to the journal, a former Confederate officer and ex-plantation owner who has come to New York to write and publish his unlikely treatise on the labor question. This treatise proposes that antebellum slavery, if protected from "vitiation" by capitalist Northern influences would have evolved into the "mild patriarchalism of the divine intention" (190) prescribed by antebellum pro-slavery writers like William Gilmour Simms, the best of all possible conditions for the laboring poor. Here we see enacted the clash and reinvention of social forms which defines polyglossic culture. Neither March nor Fulkerson take the Colonel's theories to be anything but a gambit to provoke their readership and inspire interest in the magazine. Slavery thus becomes reinvented as a new kind of advertising venture.

Most critical of all these junctures of play and referentiality, of course, is Berthold Lindau, the magazine's elderly translator, the fire breathing German immigrant anarcho-socialist, whom Howells allows to give voice to the widespread socialist critique of American society, albeit in a heavy and almost incomprehensibly rendered German accent. Lindau figures prominently in Howells's synechdochical representation of class struggle, the dinner party given by the magazine's owner and publisher, during which, roughly two-thirds of the way through the novel, the major "social" conflict is set in motion. Not only does this dinner party
present the class struggle in microcosm but it comes off like a veritable tower of Babel as characters speak in or understand at least four different languages, throw about references to a broad spectrum of western cultural works and eventually have a political disagreement which threatens to redefine the social form of the dinner party into a local outbreak of the class warfare being waged over control of the streetcar lines.

Thus, at the dinner party where this polyglot repartee takes place the repressed subtext of Howells's former advocacy of justice, at the Haymarket, begins to return through the inextricable link between ethnicity and the labor question in the political unconscious of the age. Angus Beaton, the Aubrey Beardley-esque art editor quotes "lurid verses" from Baudelaire. Then Lindau is described as having "Pronounced"—the choice of term is key, here, since it draws attention to the act of speaking and away from the content—Beaton's recitation to be "a disgrace to human nature" and responds by quoting Victor Hugo in French "with his heavy German accent" and then quoting Schiller, in German. Woodburn, who has been lecturing on how the virtuous Jeffersonian yeomanry were corrupted by commercialism, responds by saying that Scott and Addison are the only fit authors for gentlemen, to which Kendricks, a literary dilettante, replies with a cryptic remark about Flaubert. The dinner party is hosted by Jacob Dryfoos, a nouveau riche
Indiana natural gas millionaire of Amish heritage, who owns the magazine on which the other characters work, but who feels alternately threatened and mystified by the conversation. As March had hinted before, if the diverse characters gathered here "could only allow one another to talk uninterruptedly all the time, the dinner would be" a great success (360). But it's "listening that'll spoil the pleasure of the time," he concludes (360), and this accurately foreshadows the action. As the polite polyglossic exchanges grow cacophonous, the social implications of polyglossia, which are inherent in the ideological link between foreign cultures in New York and the "labor problem," focus the formerly decentered, and harmless, dialogues, around an account of how Dryfoos broke up a labor union in the gas fields some years ago.

Deprived of the ecstatic free play of their decentered dialogues by Fulkerson's attempt to bring the parochial Dryfoos into the conversation, the other characters are forced to listen and then congratulate Dryfoos on his toughness and gumption. The young dilettante Kendricks, whom the narrator describes as looking "at the affair purely from an aesthetic point of view," exclaims "Such a coup as that would tell tremendously well in a play" (379), thus signifying that he understands only the cultural half of the implications of what Bahktin would call the "zone of maximum contact with the present" opened up by the inscription of
class violence within the context of an overtly polyglossic culture and society. The socio-political component is not lost on old Lindau, however, who sits, horrified, realizing that his wages and the food on his plate have been paid for, to his way of thinking, with the suffering of workers. He speaks to March in German, describing his host, "That was vile treason . . . He's an infamous traitor," not knowing that Dryfoos's rusty grasp of Low Dutch, which is just about the only remnant of his Amish heritage left, enables him to understand Lindau's outburst. At this juncture, however, the symbolic class violence which this overtly depicted polyglossic exchange portends is held in check by Howells's own refusal or inability to entirely abandon the comedy of manners, as well as by those conventions of etiquette demanding mutual civility between guest and host, even if host and guest do represent militant labor and adamant capital.

Dryfoos will, however, confront March the next day and insist that Lindau be fired. March's refusal to do this neatly problematizes the relative autonomy of his social role, for although March maintains an almost unbroken skepticism toward Lindau's socialist rhetoric, his "dynamite talk" as Fulkerson calls it, he's also outraged by the thought that Lindau, an old friend, will be deprived of his livelihood for voicing political views. March tenders his resignation rather go along with Dryfoos. As numerous critics
have pointed out, March and Howells are thus aligned through their shared advocacy of socialist miscreants: March in his magazine office and Howells at the Haymarket, but this alignment cannot last given the volatility of the social scene of Howells's writing.

Through Lindau, Howells traces the outer periphery of permissible social criticism by voicing a highly controversial socialist critique, as is consistent with a liberal interpretation of the First Amendment, one of those traditional democratic forms Howells works to stabilize. But he also delegitimizes the socialist critique by emphasizing its foreign origins and alien quality. Similarly, in his handling of the literary mode of socialist rhetoric—for which Lindau is a synecdoche—we can see the "generic criticism," the crashing together and redefinition of old genres, which Bakhtin argues is at work in polyglossic, novel-dominated culture. For satire, a withering irony, is the primary literary mode of German anarchist and Marxist writings in the nineteenth century, but here, the satirist himself, Lindau, becomes the target. Through Howells's literal, comic-tinged rendering of his German accent, in the eyes of Fulkerson, who mimics that accent, and through the skepticism and condescension of March who calls Lindau "a fraternity and equality crank" (360) and twice quizzes his son to make sure that he's not taking Lindau's rhetoric too seriously. It is significant then, that Lindau is fatally
beaten by a policeman while enacting the role of public satirist unimpeded by these ironies, heaping sarcasm on the police for their role in breaking the street car strike. Described in an image clearly recalling abolitionist John Brown, "a tall old man with a long white beard," Lindau mocks the police, telling them that they should

Glup the strikers—gif it to them! Why don't you go and glup the presidents that insoalt your lawss and gick your board of Arpidration out-of-toors? Glup the strikerss—they cot no friendts! They cot no money to pribe you, to dreat you!"

(470).

Thus when Howells removes Lindau from the repressive social setting of the comedy of manners exemplified by Dryfoos's dinner party, his strident, German-voiced socialism returns and becomes dangerous, both to the stability of Basil March's middle-class literary venture, Every Other Week, and to the social and perhaps even psychic, well being of his creator. The polyglossia of Howells's milieu will sometimes enact a generic undercutting of the radical socialist rhetoric posed by Lindau—and by the Knights of Labor—but the presence of European socialist rhetoric in this milieu in the first place is equally a condition of polyglossic culture and is liable seek representation in dialogue with genres which do not defuse its subversiveness.

Howells's inscription of Lindau's German-voiced socialism in the very scene of insurrection occupied by the Knights of Labor for ten days in January and February 1889, aligns the novelist too closely with the Knights' attempt to
break down ethnic and occupational barriers between the disempowered streetcar workers. In fact, Howells's image of the white bearded Lindau haranguing the police in the middle of a riot bears a striking resemblance to a Harper's Weekly lithograph of the Haymarket bombing from 1886 (cited Avrich plate 14). This litho renders the exact moment the bomb went off. The heavily bearded Haymarket anarchist Samuel Fielden stands on a wagon overlooking a shattered phalanx of police, some of whom are firing revolvers into the surrounding crowd. Given Fielden's pose—he has his right arm upraised and all his weight leaning forward on his left foot—it is not inconceivable that he has just thrown the bomb! Of course, the pose is also a stock oratorical gesture, at least it offers itself that way. But the Harper's litho also visually connects the violence of Fielden's speech to the bomb blast. Howells certainly makes a similar connection in the scene where Lindau harangues the police. Here the speech act of an anarcho-socialist equates with and begets violence against and by the police.

This alignment of Lindau with the European socialism manifested at the Haymarket also occurs through the polyglossic dialogue of genres. For if Lindau resembles the Harper's litho of Samuel Fielden, he also resembles fabled abolitionist John Brown, who figured America in terms derived from Old Testament prophecies of retribution and bloodshed. And this resemblance is no coincidence, partly because Brown
was a significant figure in Howells's boyhood, but also because the dialogue of socialist and Christian millennial rhetorics played a major role in the doctrines of Christian Socialism to which Howells came by reading a French translation of Tolstoi's *What Must Be Done?* in 1886.

That this particular generic dialogue operates in the novel, and that it is dangerously subversive in the scene of writing, provides us with an explanation of why young Conrad Dryfoos and Lindau have to receive their death wounds almost simultaneously, a contrived piece of plotting that has rankled critics of the novel since it was first reviewed. Conrad, who greatly resembles the Tolstoi-esque Reverend Peck in *Annie Kilburn*, is killed by a stray bullet only a few yards away from where Lindau is being clubbed. The real catalyst of this coincidental double execution is Howells's need to at once give voice to the polyglossic dialogues essential to his art form, the novel, and to stabilize them in a milieu where polyglossia has dangerous political implications, a milieu where the Knights of Labor are enacting the same deconstruction and realignment of old social forms--craft, skill and ethnic allegiances--as Howells's novel is doing with discursive ones--satire, romance, the comedy of manners, polyglot European realisms. Similarly, another contrived piece of plotting which has bothered critics has been how March, Lindau, and Conrad all just coincidentally blunder into the path of violence. And
again this "coincidence" can be explained as an overt expression of the polyglossic play which animates both the strike and the novel. The strike can be all places at once in the New York scene because the "knowledge of the line" through which Howells constructs his insular middle-class community is also the knowledge that the line is on strike and that five thousand militant workers are in the streets. The polyglot New York working class is always already present at Howells's (un)making of it. All social discourses—realism, Christian millenialism, and the Knights of Labor alike—are at play in the ecstatic polyglossic setting Howells must imagine and register to force the birth of realism.

Howells, however, wants cultural polyglossia to be untainted by the socialist implications connected to it in the nativist ideology. To effect this, the novel presents the journal Every Other Week as a kind of wildly dialogic utopia where, initially, polyglossia can be cultural without being political. When the politics of proletarian advocacy inevitably return, at Dryfoos's dinner party, the logic of nativism demands a sacrifice if the utopia is to be upheld. Lindau's and Conrad's deaths purge this utopia of ethnic, socialist and capitalist taints in one fell swoop, since Dryfoos sells the magazine to Fulkerson and March, two native-born Americans from the middle west, after his son's death. Thus the vast capitalist expansion of trade and
production that inspires modern polyglossia is erased from the magazine utopia as well, and one is reminded of how a similar excision of crass materialism and foreign influence animates two other vastly influential works contemporary with A Hazard of New Fortunes: Frederick Jackson Turner's The Importance of the Frontier in American History (1891) and Edward Bellamy's utopian fiction Looking Backwards (1887). For Turner's historiography posits American development as essentially disconnected from foreign influences, driven instead by the impetus of the western frontier. And Bellamy's utopia is a nostalgic New England village writ large, but with none of the social or ethnic conflicts attendant upon such size. The utopian solution to Hazard of New Fortune imposes a form of closure on the ecstatic polyglossia of the scene of writing, but it is a closure that could only be effected through an overt, visible denial of the social complexities of the "literary democracy" Howells sets out to create.

A profitable way of looking at Basil March's "chance world," speech, then (with a discussion of which this chapter began) is to see in it a partial acknowledgement that the lives of Howells's characters and the energies of his social setting refuse the preemptory, and empty, closure Howells tries to impose on them. They resist being neatly resolved in a narrative frame. The progression of March's speech attests to both the desire for and a lack of resolution. It may open
with Tolstoian rhetoric but it proceeds immediately with an appeal to middle-class domesticity:

We don't moil and toil to ourselves alone; the palace or the poorhouse is not merely for ourselves, but for our children, whom we've brought up in the superstition that having and shining is the chief good. We dare not teach them otherwise, for fear they may falter in the fight when it comes their turn (487).

Basil's speech tries to contain radical sentiments, in both senses of the word. The very embedding of the speech within a conversation between a husband and wife tends to keep the Tolstoian discourse of social reform out of the public arena, for instance; whereas, during the Haymarket crisis Howells voiced similar sentiments in the New York papers. Hazard here anticipates Howells's 1894 utopia A Traveler from Altruria, where concern about the social changes wrought by industrialism is voiced only within polite conversations at an upper-class summer resort. Basil's domestically-contained speech would very likely provoke the middle-class reader to identify with the crisis of conscience of the speaker, Basil March, rather than with the radicalized street-car workers surging against the domestic margins of the scene. As in Rebecca Harding Davis's scene in the iron works—with its synthesis of the nihilist aesthete Mitchell from the discourses of revolt and seduction—Howells will openly criticize laissez faire only when that criticism is undercut in the act of its utterance. But it is necessary to question how successful the undercutting is in this scene.
Eventually, in the conclusion to this scene, Basil will more clearly resign himself to the "chance world" than he will resolve his deep moral ambivalence about it. He begins echoing Tolstoi, but concludes by making jokes about the authenticity of a street beggar he and Isabel once encountered, jokes that may be read as a provocative kind of critique of the verisimilitude of the realist fiction itself:

Suppose that poor fellow wasn't personally founded on fact: nevertheless he represented the truth; he was an ideal of the suffering which would be less effective if realistically treated. That man is great comfort to me. He probably rioted for days on that quarter I gave him . . . and if Every Other Week wants to get rid of me, I intend to work that racket (488).

Despite being driven by the Tolstoian realization that deprivation and poverty surround his middle-class domestic settlement, Basil cannot accept the evidence of his senses that he is surrounded by injustice—as he would be driven to do if Howells's dictum that the realist should show "life as it really is" were in league with the socialist rhetoric of the opening of Basil's "chance world" speech. Rather Basil arrives at a statement, and perhaps even at an epistemology, that undermines the grounds of apparent common sense on which Howells would base his literary democracy. In the language of Howells's essay on realism, Basil jokingly decides that "to lie about life" is more efficacious than to treat it "realistically." In Basil's joke, Howells constructs irony out of the deepest assumptions of the realist fiction, hinting that the brutal "chance world" he decried moments
before—and to whose depiction inheres the reformist power of "realism"—is a kind of "racket" or confidence game. Basil jokes that the street beggar participates in a general construction of reality. Rather than being an object of the realist's unmediated seeing of the concrete real, the beggar's potential impersonation of poverty can be said to represent "an ideal of suffering which would be less effective if realistically treated" (488). Thus, the beggar's impersonation of poverty would invert the subject-object dyad so essential to the realist seeing machine, turning the middle-class manager of urban disorder himself into an object of vision and management by his class Other. Basil's "chance world" speech concludes with a scandalous suggestion of the constructed nature of (the realist fiction of) reality—scandalous because it reveals the very fictiveness Basil's point of view is supposed to occlude. Basil's speech is also drawn by the logic of that suggestion to imagine, albeit ironically, a corrosion of the middle-class right to survey and control which the realist fiction defines and enacts. In this speech, then, a speech which definitely interpolates a socialist critique of capitalism, Howells voices a radical rhetoric he can neither quite affirm or erase.

Basil's speech signifies an unsuccessful attempt to write a radical rhetoric under erasure, and this symptomizes the more general lack of closure in the novel, an inability of the novel to resolve its own socio-political and personal
conflicts, that has been noted numerous times. Most recently, Amy Kaplan locates the "chance world" speech within a section of the novel that "can be read as a discussion about how realistic novels might end"(61). Some of these alternative endings arrived at by Howells's novel are "the reconciliation of enemies in death, marriage, nonmarriage, a move to Europe"(Kaplan 61). The "chance world" speech, thus, functions as one of "a potpourri of conclusions" to the novel, each of which is eventually "undermined by pressure from conflicting grounds"(61). Kaplan argues that the scatter shot approach she describes testifies to Howells's inability to filter the background rumble of urban disorder--including, most notably, the streetcar strike, which "strains the conflicting forces of Howell's realism to the limit"(61)--out of the genteel narration of salons, marriages and polite society. Since Howells's earlier novels were premised upon the importance of this domestic setting (those "smiling aspects of life" about which H.L. Mencken would trash Howells in the 1920's) it makes sense that a narration of "issues nobler and larger than those of the love-affairs common to fiction"(Howells xxii) would find the novelist somewhat bereft of ways to resolve those issues. Yet another way to conceive of these multiple endings, however, is as an overt

representation of the dialectic of presence by which the middle-class foreground is constructed. This is a literary self-reflexiveness which we saw in Davis and James.

James's resemblance is particularly striking here. After his sojourn in the Parisian palimpsest of revolution, James's Hyacinth Robinson, you will remember, is permitted to speak in his own voice—albeit a strictly modulated one, since Hyacinth's letter narrates his loss of revolutionary commitment—in the epistolary section of Chapter 30. This interpolation of epistolary first person into James's more characteristic free indirect narration picks up Hyacinth's grand tour three weeks after his walk in the Place de Revolution. In the epistolary section of Chapter 30, thus, James welds back together the temporal discontinuity which resulted when the narrative found itself so densely intertwined with the traditions, and praxes, of European social revolution that "realistic" time-order narration—a tool of the naturalizing rhetoric of the real—proved insufficient to the task of registering those traditions and praxes. Howells's narrative, conversely, because of the multiple endings which it imagines for itself, can be seen to never really recover from the shock of registering the historical agency of the working class during the streetcar strike. Instead it is fragmented into a series of disconnected parallel narratives: Fulkerson's semi-comic marriage; Angus Beaton's botched marriage proposal and
botched suicide; the Dryfooses' expatriation; Margaret Vance's rejection of New York high society, and others. The repressed violence of the street-car strike—a social conflict which, to credit Howells's 1909 description, is both written about by and in some way writes the novel—irrupts into the tenuous petit bourgeois settlement, destroying both fictive lives and homes, and the coherence of the narrative rhetoric of the real which is a prop of that settlement's concrete-real existence.

Howells's novel thus testifies to the dialectic of working-class presence much more openly than *The Princess Casamassima*. For James allows the dialectic of working-class presence to disrupt the narrative in only two places—following Hyacinth's encounters with Hoffendahl and the Place de Revolution—while Howells's novel actually *concludes* with such a disruption. In its very form—the fragmentation of focused, sustained narrative into relatively autonomous vignettes—*A Hazard of New Fortunes* rehearses the fragmentation and destruction of "coherence" posed by any failure of the petit bourgeois to sustain its "realistic" rhetoric of power. Howells's meditation on historical models of narrative closure, identified by Kaplan, also bears comparison to James's epistolary section in *Casamassima* since epistolary voice was, historically, an essential component of the rise of the novel. Epistolary voice provided James with a perfect material to weld his narrative back together.
because, through using it, James could escape from the hazardous place and moment of revolution into a reference to/reverence for the history of his art form, the novel. This self-reflexiveness confirms Hyacinth's, and James's, individuated identity as observer/manager of collective revolt. Conversely, Howells is unsuccessful in his attempt to similarly reform his narrative. In fact his ransacking of the history of the novel for some way to conclude *Hazard* is among the most noted features of the novel. In the language of my introduction, the multiple (non)endings evidence the dialectic of working-class presence: Howells seems unable to contain the concrete real working class within a rhetoric of the real that registers workers as primarily an instance for the petit bourgeoisie to establish, and refine, its own social identity.

As discernable in "Life in the Iron Mills" and *The Princess Casamassima*, blindness is a precondition of petit bourgeois vision in the industrial milieu. Thus, Davis's mill town smoke and fog at once focus and smear the lens of petit bourgeois sympathy, and James's "effect of society's not knowing" enables him to parse the visible from the invisible in the social field, constructing a fictive anarchism that does not corrode the individualist ideology which his fiction asserts. Similarly, Davis, Phelps and James are linked by the way that their respective rhetorics of the real each concludes with the substitution of an almost allegorically
determinate synecdoche for the absent worker on the scene of writing: in Davis, the korl woman sculpture of the author's own hunger for an extra-domestic social identity; in Phelps, the cross that marks the site of Catty's disappearance, a Logos that explains her effacement by naturalistically drawn forces of heredity and environment as, in fact, an instance of divine Presence; in James, the revolver which kills Hyacinth, the final synecdoche for individualist anarcho-terrorism that James substitutes for working-class consciousness and collectivity.

Howells, conversely, cannot close his rhetoric of the real with such a seamless displacement. Instead he ends up being locked into a metaliterary critique of the concept of closure, and actually interrogates the kind of synecdochical strategies by which working-class contumacy was managed in the realist fictions we have thus far examined. Hazard ends with the Marches meeting Margaret Vance, a former debutante who has become so involved in settlement house work that she has joined the Salvation Army or some other uniformed Protestant "sisterhood"(552). Margaret Vance gives the Marches a joyful smile that causes them to feel "that the peace that passeth understanding had looked at them from her eyes"(552). Margaret may have contributed to Conrad Dyfoos's death, since she suggested to him that someone needed to go among the rioting strikers and try "to make them see how perfectly hopeless it was to resist the companies and drive
off the new men"(468). Responding to this, Conrad, who was in love with Margaret, was shot dead in a melee between strikers, scabs and police as we discussed above. On the last page of the novel, the Marches speculate about Margaret's culpability and her transformation:

"Well, she is at rest, there can't be any doubt of that," he said, as he glanced round at the drifting black robe which followed her free, nun-like walk.
"Yes, now she can do all the good she likes," sighed his wife. "I wonder--I wonder if she ever told his father about her talk with poor Conrad that day he was shot?"
"I don't know. I don't care. In any event, it would be right. She did nothing wrong. If she unwittingly sent him to his death, she sent him to die for God's sake, for man's sake."
"Yes--yes. But still--"
"Well, we must trust that look of hers"(552).

This exchange, and the events its alludes to, initially appear quite familiar in terms of the sentimental management strategies of Phelps and Davis.

In Howells's conclusion, however, the message of social quiescence posed by Sip Garth in The Silent Partner and the Quaker Woman of "Life in the Iron Mills" is revealed as insufficient to quell the overt rebellion in which it was delivered. In fact, since Conrad, the messenger, was killed, the delivery of this futile message may be said to have worsened the violence it was intended to ease. Similarly, rather than conclude by posing Margaret's look of "the peace that passeth understanding" as a determinate synecdoche which contains and obscures class insurrection--as Phelps and Davis may be said to do--Howells has the Marches testify to both
their compulsion towards and revulsion from Margaret's type of sentimental petit bourgeois ideology. In a sense they must trust that look of hers because the sentimental management of working-class power it portends is essential to their class privileges. For to question the content of Margaret's affect would be to reveal that the conventional piety she poses partakes of the self-interested public refiguration of True Womanhood (Piety, Purity, Domesticity and Obedience) we saw in "Life in the Iron Mills."

Howells, thus, may not be able to take the radical step of seeing women's settlement house work as a prop of middle-class self-interest, but neither can he allow the Marches, and his readers, to accept, uncritically, the proposition that Margaret's conventional piety will right social wrongs. In fact, Mrs. March even suggests that Margaret's enlistment in the settlement house sisterhood is essentially selfish: "Yes now she can do all the good she likes." Howells's rhetoric of the real thus concludes--in the sense of ending--with a critique of the reduction of working-class contumacy to an instance for the assertion of petit bourgeois historical agency carried out by Davis, Phelps and James. Instead of asserting a determinate symbol which will occlude working-class power, Howells hints that the "more impressive catastrophe" of this power tends to reveal the social determination of such symbols. The Marches's sense of being compelled to enlist in the sentimentalizing of the Other,
their sense that they must trust Margaret's look of peace rather than examine the forces which compel that trust, reveals the dialectic of working-class presence in Howells's rhetoric of the real.

Howells thus ends his most ambitious novel by unintentionally interrogating the strategies of the realist fiction with which he set out to colonize the city and reform his career. The proletarian knowledge from the line forces him to acknowledge that enfranchisement in his "literary democracy" is in fact severely limited, limited to those intimates of an intensely sentimental petit bourgeois household who can draw "the line at which respectability distinguishes itself from shabbiness" (Howells 58). In a way, Howells's career as social realist ends with this gesture of self-erasure. Unable to reconcile his novelist's need for polyglossic play and dialogue with the nativistic phobia of foreign culture and European socialism raging in his America, Howells never again attempted a social fiction of such scope as A Hazard of New Fortunes, and spent the rest of his life producing works seldom read today: nostalgic autobiographies of his Ohio boyhood, theatrical farces, effete utopian "romances," and novels of manners set in polite middle-class society, where polyglossic attainment is synonymous with social refinement, not with socialist revolution.
Chapter Five

What Work Is:
The Theme of Management in *Sister Carrie*
As Ellen Moers and Richard Lingeman have shown, Theodore Dreiser's firsthand experiences of the proletarian underbelly of New York during 1894-95—the depths of the worst depression in American history to that point—provided him with a rich storehouse of impressions and images for his first novel. Further, the action of *Sister Carrie* takes place during the time of some of the most violent class warfare in American history: the Homestead strike of July 1892 and the Pullman Strike of July 1894 are the most famous of these confrontations, and both occur during the time period *Sister Carrie* depicts. But the little known historical paradigm for the strike in *Sister Carrie*—the Brooklyn trolley strike of 1895—was itself so widespread and violent that regiments of militia occupied the city for some six weeks, and martial law was in effect for roughly the same period. As do the other narratives we have examined, *Sister Carrie* registers this ubiquitous class violence. This effects of this registration however, extend beyond the "realistic" depictions of the strike and the abyss of poverty embedded in Dreiser's rhetoric of the real.

Dreiser also contains class struggle within a matrix of recognizable discourses contemporary with the production of this novel. Most notable among these is Frederick Winslow

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23 No modern account of this strike has yet been written. My information on it comes from the New York Times coverage of the strike from January 15 through February 20 1895.
Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management*, which may be read as a veritable *vade mecum* to the relationship between Carrie and the men who "manage" her: Hansen, Drouet, Hurstwood and Ames. Through unearthing this rhetoric and those which opposed it we can understand that the vital proletarian milieu which crowds against the margins of this novel is prone to reappear in its center, forming and deforming Dreiser's narrative, and our readings of it. Dreiser's representation of the Brooklyn trolley strike of 1895 illustrates how proletarian power irrupts into the narrative, allowing us to understand that the realist registration of the working class has formal and conceptual implications much more subtle, and subversive, than those posed by (un)verisimilar depictions of under-class and working-class degradation. Again, the dialectic of working-class presence can be known, and perhaps reclaimed, only through a symptomatic reading of the verisimilar rhetoric of the real in which it is registered.

An association between underemployment and social unrest was central to the cultural self-perception of turn-of-the-century America. And the rhetoric through which our not-too-distant ancestors proclaimed this association assumed many political and ideological orientations, from the Marxist polemics of Jack London, to Charlotte P. Gilman's argument that women's enforced economic non-contribution would insure the decline of the West, to Frederick Winslow Taylor's
"scientific management" paeans to the beauties of extreme sub-division of labor. This association and these rhetorics deeply determine Theodore Dreiser's 1900 novel *Sister Carrie*, a fiction which at once imagines and graphically details the social and psychological implications of work, the search for it and the lack of it, in 1890's America. However, our most cogent recent readings have concentrated on the ideology of consumption which so marks Dreiser's style, themes and characterizations, without examining how that ideology can itself be seen as structured by the relations of production.

Walter Benn Michaels for instance, delineates Dreiser's sentimentalist complicity with consumer capitalism and its "economy of desire"(35) and shows how Dreiser inevitably associates realism—a supposedly subversive mode of writing—with "exhausted desire and economic failure"(46). When Michaels proclaims that *Sister Carrie* illustrates how "The economic function of art is the production of desire," he brings a late-Twentieth century consumerist ideology of representation and desire—through which the notion of class has come to be devalued—to a text that is the product of a world where, in Raymond Williams's terms, that ideology was emergent, but not hegemonic. *Sister Carrie* underlines the relative tenuousness of this ideology when Hurstwood is drawn out of the debilitated comfort of his newspaper reading to seek work as a strikebreaker in Brooklyn. Hurstwood discovers that class conflicts circa 1895 are waged with pistols, billy
clubs and cobblestones, not subsumed by the orgiastic spectacle of advertising, nor defused in shopping malls and mass media sensationalism, as is usually the case in America today. In 1895 New York it was possible for Hurstwood, and Theodore Dreiser, to experience class conflict directly, and in the process discover that the experience calls into question the verity of mass media representation of it.²⁴ Hurstwood's discovery of the inescapable violence concealed behind the newspaper ad's contention that strikebreakers are "guaranteed protection" (Sister Carrie 410) illustrates just how class violence can exceed hegemonic representation.²⁵

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²⁴ It is my sincerest wish that the above lines not be interpreted as evidence of nostalgia for the "good old days" of Haymarket, Homestead, River Rouge etc., times when a supposedly unmediated experience of class solidarity, class consciousness, was still possible. Instead it is my intention to debunk the apparent ahistorical naturalness of the ideology of consumerism, to show it to be an historical process determined by the necessity of sighting oppositional discourses—such as those of radical labor organizations—from within an ideology that must, as a matter of course, subvert and deny the efficacy of the opposition.

²⁵ The edition of Sister Carrie which I will be referring to is the so-called Pennsylvania Edition. This 1981 edition restores Dreiser's novel to the form the editors surmise he intended for the 1900 Doubleday and Page Edition. Based primarily on the handwritten draft Dreiser allowed his wife Sara White Dreiser and friend Arthur Henry to cut and revise before submission to Doubleday and Page, whose editors cut and emended it further, it includes about seventy pages which were cut for the 1900, and all subsequent editions. The Pennsylvania edition restores the integrity of Dreiser's ponderous Germanic style, with which Arthur Henry tinkered extensively and ineffectively, as well as the more explicit sexual references and other supposed indecencies. Most notably, the Pennsylvania edition restores Dreiser's decidedly unsentimental original ending: the suicide of Hurstwood in the flop house. Despite the fact that, as Amy Kaplan points out, the Pennsylvania edition exemplifies the
Sister Carrie figures a different world from our world today, a turn-of-the-century world in which, as June Howard puts it, "actions and meanings are constantly seen in terms of class, in which omnipresent class conflict is virtually assured" (Howard x). Because the consumerist ideology has been so successful at eliding such conflict from our experience in the latter half of the twentieth century, Michaels arrives at a partially anachronistic vision of the novel in which "desire" constitutes a kind of common denominator to which all other values may be reduced.

attempt of critics to absolve Dreiser of his besetting sin of sentimentalism—and thus to establish Sister Carrie as an authentic realistic "masterpiece"—I have chosen to use this edition because of the different direction from which I approach the very trend Kaplan, and Lionel Trilling, describe (see "Reality in America" in The Liberal Imagination): Dreiser's inscription of a certain, ideologically determined perception of history as the "real." As do all realists in an insurrectionary milieu, Dreiser cultivates an authorial cult of personality which exfoliated in the ideological space wherein the social content of authorship and literature could be divulged. In defining "reality" such a realist inscribes his/her own identity as a literary producer within the existing hegemonic apparatus of cultural production and distribution. My work attempts to illustrate how the individual literary producer comes to inscribe his/her subjectivity as a bulwark against various contemporary incarnations of subversive intersubjectivity—linguistic free play, class consciousness, gender or racial ambiguity—which pend the dissolution of the autonomous subject and threaten the social order that produced it. Thus the Pennsylvania edition is more suited to my ends because it offers a more precise approximation of Dreiser's individual "intentions" and is thus a more dependable gauge of his reaction to, and creation by, the insurrectionary milieu. All subsequent parenthetical page references to the novel will refer to this text. References to the 1900 edition which has become familiar to most readers will be identified as such.
Human desire, as understood in the psychoanalytic discourse which Michaels engages, attaches itself to an endless series of objects in an open-ended and perpetually frustrated attempt to restore the individual to the polymorphous state left behind when the individual was separated from the body of the mother before the Oedipal crisis: capitalism enhances the open-ended deferral of desire by providing an endless progression of commodity-objects of desire out of its (capital's) own irresistible, and almost illimitable, drive for perfect self-realization. The famous final scene of an unfulfilled Carrie in her rocking chair, perpetually desiring, rapt in a dream of "such happiness as . . . (she) may never feel" synthesizes social and sexual drives into one, monolithic image of desire, so that in Sister Carrie all desire equates with consumerist desire. This reduction has a certain undeniable accuracy, of course. For the theme of "desire," as well as the term itself, are ubiquitous in the novel. And the novel clearly does do as much to glamorize the consumer ideology as it does to critique it, as Michaels and Rachel Bowlby argue. However, it is not my purpose here to contest the complicity of the novel in the very capitalism which destroys Hurstwood. Dreiser's equation of the biological drive to procreate with the socially-constituted desire to consume certainly comprises one of the founding moments of the emerging culture of consumption. However, given the setting and scene of writing
of Dreiser's novel, a society still overtly structured by the relations of production, another explanation for the ubiquity of desire may be construed, namely that "desire" is dialogic rather than monolithic, that "desire" itself—as both theme and signifier—owes its significance as much to the various rhetorics of production as it does to the emergent ideology of consumption.

Thus I hold that it is essential to imagine "desire" as a figure for something else, as a figure for, in Machereyan terms, some other affect of the social field which must remain undivulged, an affect which resists incorporation into the infinite body of capitalistic desire. Despite the recent predominance of readings of the novel which valorize its complicity with consumerism, Sister Carrie can still speak to us of an opposition to the hegemony of consumerism, and this is an oppositional discourse articulated with considerably more sophistication than posited by a Zola-esque reliance on making us see the gruesome reality of under-class suffering and degradation. Since we above alluded to the final scene of the 1900 edition let us examine Dreiser's manuscript ending for the novel, Hurstwood's suicide, for evidence of how a critique of consumerism arises when we read the desire to consume, which so marks the novel, in dialogue with discourses which understand human being-in-history in terms of productive capability, terms just as resonant to Dreiser's time as the allure of the marketplace.
In 1935, Charles Beard, John Dewey and Edward Weeks all made lists of what they considered to be the most influential twenty-five book published since 1885 (Bellamy v). All three identified Karl Marx's *Capital* and Edward Bellamy's socialist utopia *Looking Backwards* as the most influential works. In a historical setting so conversant with the labor theory of value we do not have to provoke Hurstwood's pathetic final question "What's the use?" very hard to see in it a critique of the replacement of use value by exchange value—with the resultant alienation of humans from a sense of the purpose of their own labor—which dominates commodity production. The Knights of Labor, for instance—who organized the 1895 Brooklyn trolley strike represented in *Sister Carrie*—counted "the abolition of the wage system" (Brecher 28) among their most deeply held principles, and instead proposed producer/consumer cooperatives as a way to restore the sense of human community destroyed by the wage relation (Wiebe 65-66). In a cooperative society, such as in *Looking Backwards*, the use value of labor to the laborer is neither displaced by the introduction of wages nor subsumed into the vortex of commodity exchange. Workers encounter their labor not in the alien commodity form symbolized by the natural gas which kills Hurstwood, but rather in a benevolent society which testifies to the usefulness of all labor. Hurstwood's abysmal odyssey of unemployment may thus be read as a kind of negative image of Bellamy's labor utopia.
As if to indicate the impossibility of finding any sense of the use value of his own labor within the walled city of exchange, Hurstwood asks his pathetic rhetorical question "What's the use" two other times (in the manuscript version, once in the 1900): the first time, soon after the New York saloon is sold out from under him, it signals that he has begun to lose the will to look into possible job opportunities (361); the second time occurs a few days before his death, when, half-starved, he walks past several fancy theater district restaurants and is "recalled keenly to better things"(493). In effect, Hurstwood's unsuccessful search for work and his resultant descent into the abyss are framed and informed by this question. For when the Warren street establishment is sold out, Hurstwood is confronted with the fact that he has no profession, no inherent role in production, that his labor power is of no "use" to him. Throughout the novel Dreiser has repeatedly identified Hurstwood as "the manager" and "the ex-manager," as if to emphasize the futility of his secondary relation to production; what does Hurstwood actually do? what is his profession? what does he produce? Management, as illustrated in Hurstwood's case, is an empty sign, meaningless to Hurstwood outside of the superficial associations with wealth and privilege that conferred significance upon it at the fashionable Chicago resort: "I'm not anything," Hurstwood answers, truthfully, to the trolley company official's query
about past experience (413). To apply Sinclair Lewis's description, in *Babbit*, of the quintessential middle-class burgher, Hurstwood's essential failing is that he has "made nothing in particular, neither butter nor shoes nor poetry" (Lewis 6).

Deprived of the tenuous middle-class identity of "manager," Hurstwood is unable to really function as either consumer or producer, and the only thing he is finally able to produce is literally nothing, the nothingness of his own death. Thus the question "What's the use?" implies that Hurstwood's suicide is the inevitable result of the depletion of all sense of communal or personal usefulness from society. Georg Lukacs described the social condition that produces a Hurstwood's futility quite accurately, in *History and Class Consciousness* (1922), when he wrote, "where the market economy has been fully developed . . . a man's activity becomes estranged from himself, it turns into a commodity which, subject to the non-human objectivity of the natural laws of society, must go its own way independently of man, like any other consumer article" (87). Estranged from his own labor, Hurstwood's final act is an act of consumption, one which at once symbolizes and insures this estrangement. It is tempting to say that Hurstwood's conversion of his ragged jacket and vest into a gasket for rendering the flophouse cubicle airtight, so that he can gas himself to death, qualifies as the only production for "use" we see in the
novel, a scathing comment on the futility of human activity under capitalism. Less whimsically, the natural gas that suffocates him can readily be seen as the perfect symbol of the pernicious effects of consumerism as defined by the oppositional ideology of socialism. Deadly yet invisible, ubiquitous— or "natural"— because it is piped everywhere in the city, the gas kills and serves equally well, but never reveals the enormous human labor that went into making and distributing it. When the individual is completely engulfed by such commodities, self-annihilation of one form or another is the only possible action, since commodified human activity inevitably has "an autonomy alien to humankind" (Lukacs 87; Marx 165). Hurstwood's question is even more resonant in Dreiser's original manuscript version of the novel— which ends with the suicide— because the suicide scene casts such an ironic light on the frenzied reification of human relations into exchange values which Sister Carrie documents and glamorizes. The thesis that Hurstwood's suicide dramatizes the social effects of the displacement of use value by exchange may be seen as consistent with numerous socialist and anti-modern ideologies which arose at this time to offer alternatives to the growing hegemony of consumerism. Both Dreiser's novel and the times in which

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26 See Eileen Boris's Art and Labor for a discussion of the influence of Ruskinian notions of craftsmanship and labor on American culture in this period. Also, see T.J. Jackson Lears's No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920, especially
it was produced, then, are replete with answers to the question "What's the use?" And the following chapter situates Sister Carrie and Dreiserean "desire" within a dialogue between conflicting discourses of the subject, some of which define the subject in terms of production, not consumption.27

Chapter Two, "The Figure of the Artisan: Arts and Crafts Ideology," for a discussion of the assimilation of concepts of communitarian production--derived from Ruskin, Tolstoy, William Morris and Peter Kropotkin--to a therapeutic ethos which emphasized the re-creation of the individual subject through non-alienating work, while eliding the socialistic implications of communitarian production.

27 One of the ways that turn-of-the-century America understood the psychic effects of alienation was through grouping diverse psychological symptoms--notably just such "a paralysis of the will" as destroys Hurstwood--under the heading of "neurasthenia"(Lears 50). This condition especially affected "business and professional men and their wives"(Lears 51)--the non-producing classes--and given the class-determined milieu of the turn-of-the-century it is significant that the most prevalent "treatments" for this condition may be seen as framed in terms of production and consumption. The most famous treatment, Silas Weir Mitchell's "rest cure," sought to replenish the nerve tissue of harried professionals and their wives by making them over entirely into passive consumers. Conversely, when Theodore Dreiser tried to cure his own neurasthenia in 1904, as documented in An Amateur Laborer, he tried to effect a kind of "work cure." He first sought manual labor jobs in factories, construction, and on the railroad as a way to rebuild muscular strength and mental health which had been debilitated by the purely intellectual labor of magazine work, and writing and publishing Sister Carrie. And when his brother Paul talked him into entering an expensive sanatorium instead, Dreiser found that the regimen there consisted of heavy exercise. As Amy Kaplan puts it, "If Dreiser saw work as a form of therapy, the ex-heavy weight champion who ran the sanatorium, Muldoon, turned therapy into a kind of work" for his neurasthenic, upper and upper middle class patients. (Kaplan 137).
To be able to reclaim a *Sister Carrie* engaged with the relations of production we have to define *what work is* in the novel. Who are the people that work and how are they constituted, both psychically and within the general polity? In approaching the definition of work it is essential to understand that we have to approach it through a matrix of conflicting ideologies present in the scene of writing: does Fred Taylor's idea, that an extreme division of labor—in effect the ultimate "estrangement"—will liberate the worker from want, exhaust Dreiser's notion of what work is? Or is the Ruskinian notion of the larger social import of individual handicrafts and small scale communitarian production for use equally important? How about the Knights of Labor's insistence on the need for community between producers and consumers? These and other ideologies of production informed Dreiser's milieu. Yet recent critics have commented upon the issue of work in *Sister Carrie* without relating it to such utterances. In *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel* (1985) Philip Fisher concentrates on the reified *evidence* of work in *Sister Carrie*, the omnipresent urban commodity, but deemphasizes the importance of production, and its social relations, "because in Dreiser work itself is only one kind of atmosphere" (141-42). Fisher argues very provocatively that "Dreiser is the first novelist to base his entire sense of the self on the dramatic
possibilities inherent in a dynamic society"(167), thus identifying the theater, and the ubiquitous theatricality of the realistic novel, with a site of production, the production of the self. But he neglects to reconstruct the dialogue between Dreiser's description of the theater as a site of production of the self, and contemporary discourses on general production. This dialogue is most apparent in the antithetical relation between Dreiser's revelation that managerialism is an empty sign—figured in Hurstwood and other characters—and Frederick Taylor's assertion of the efficacy of scientific management and managerialism, which I see to be figured in Robert Ames, the idealistic young scientist Carrie meets several times in the course of the novel. This dialogue will be discussed in greater detail below. For the moment, suffice it to say that Fisher isolates theatrical production from the historical field. Similar is his approach to the worker him/herself. He delineates a hierarchy of levels of the commodification of self inherent in the various occupations pictured in the novel. These range from a low end of such "lifelong toilers" as the taciturn Hansen, whose work "extinguishes the self;" through Drouet, whose work is to lend a "personal glow" to the objects he sells, and then vanish, leaving the customer with the object itself; through Hurstwood, who sells his intangible "tone, presence and polish to the nightclub"; to the actress, "the peak of the hierarchy of work," who sells her innermost self
to the theater goers (Fisher 162–63). Rachel Bowlby, in *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola*, comes to conclusions similar to Fisher, concluding that "the theater . . . is not the site of a radical contrast with the world outside it; on the contrary, it stands at the peak of a continuum marked off at (the other) end by the base level of subsistence" (64).

These critics argue persuasively that Dreiser's diverse characters are alike in that they must all sell labor power to reproduce themselves as workers. However, neither accounts for the possibility that in a capitalistic system such a shared condition can, and did, catalyze a potentially subversive community between workers, such as that represented in the trolley strike in *Sister Carrie*. In other words, if industrial commodification destroys the autonomy of the subject, the conditions under which the commodification of labor power takes place can also furnish the individual, according to classic Marxist doctrine, with materials to construct an alternative subjectivity, class consciousness. "The Strike" in Chapter 41 of *Sister Carrie* testifies to such a possibility. To fathom the inherent subversiveness of work, and of the ideas about work which underlay any "continuum" of productive capability embracing both Broadway stars and Bowery bums, one must take into account contemporary discourses on the control and management of work, and workers. And neither the work of the theater nor the enforced
idleness of Bowery bums is of much importance to such industrial engineers as, say, Frederick Taylor and Frank Gilbreth, or to radical labor leaders like Eugene Debs. They saw work in terms of large scale industrial management and production. What is work in *Sister Carrie*? Carrie's experience of the exhaustion, boredom and degradation of work in the Chicago shoe factory and Hurstwood's encounter with the militant Brooklyn car drivers provide us with numerous answers to this question.

In his depictions of "The Strike" and the shoe factory, Dreiser simultaneously invokes the power of the realist fiction to convey social conditions and calls our attention to the limits of that power. For instance, a distinct contrast is shown to exist between what Hurstwood reads about the strike in the papers and the actualities of labor insurgency. For Hurstwood, the Brooklyn strike "was an astonishing experience ... He had read of these things but the reality seemed something altogether new"(425). The newspapers, through which Hurstwood came to his flawed understanding of class struggle, illustrate how hegemonic representation, even the most graphic and accurate journalism, operates to defuse class tensions, by commodifying them. For it is a defining characteristic of all commodities, even newspapers, that they do not divulge the human labor that went into their manufacture. The New York newspapers that have interposed a gap between Hurstwood's
expectations and historical reality thus testify to their status as commodities; if called upon to literally divulge class violence, they inevitably fall short of this task. And this failure is especially significant when we consider that the New York dailies of the 1890's—which Dreiser came to New York to work for—have been identified by numerous critics as the spawning ground of American literary naturalism (Moers, Ziff, Lingeman). The gritty investigative journalism of Stephen Crane, Lincoln Steffens, Richard Harding Davis and other star reporters for the Pulitzer and Hearst papers played an essential role in defining both the style and the subject matter of American literature at the turn of the century. Hurstwood's discovery of a gap between the newspaper accounts of the strike and his experience of the strike itself testifies to the commodity status of the newspaper. The commodification, and concealment, of information about the strike by the New York newspapers may be seen to literalize the general concealment of labor going on in the capitalist marketplace. Hurstwood's discovery that the newspapers are commodities first and historically-accurate reportage second almost directly precedes the journalistically-inspired portrait of his decent into the abyss of poverty, underemployment and homelessness: Carrie leaves him, almost penniless, about a week after his return from Brooklyn. It is as if before Dreiser can depict the grim proletarian underworld in which Hurstwood will expire, he
must undermine the reader's confidence in the journalistic methods he will use to convey that setting!

His depiction of the Chicago shoe factory is similarly self-effacing; the reader's sympathy for the assembly line workers is simultaneously provoked and undercut. For instance, because she is inexperienced, Carrie rapidly becomes exhausted by "concentrating herself too thoroughly—what she did required less mental and physical strain" (38). Carrie eventually becomes "one mass of dull complaining muscles . . . performing a single mechanical movement" until it becomes "absolutely nauseating" (39). But the narrative strongly implies that the reason for this discomfort is that Carrie has not yet acquired the proper skills, skills which will come to her in time, as they have come to the other assembly line workers, who gossip and work absent-mindedly while Carrie suffers and strains. Further, the text hints that the depiction of working conditions in this scene is deliberately anachronistic, as Dreiser reminds us that "the new socialism which involves pleasant working conditions for the employees had not then taken hold upon manufacturing companies," and that "what we now know of foot rests, swivel back chairs, dining rooms for the girls . . . a decent cloak room" and other bare amenities "were unthought of" (39; emphases mine). This is one of the few times in Sister Carrie that Dreiser draws our attention to the fact that the settings and social conditions he depicts are not strictly
contemporary with the writing of the novel. And he does so as if trying to assure the reader that the grim, exhausting and dehumanizing aspects of factory work are not only something that Carrie will learn to overcome eventually but, further, that such conditions have been done away by the time the reader reads of them. In other words, Dreiser's depictions of the Chicago shoe factory define what work was, for one green worker on her first day in an obscure shoe factory, more than a decade before the publication date. Through calling attention to its own anachronism and the atypicality of its protagonist, the narrative subverts the force of Dreiser's social criticism. Compare *Sister Carrie* to another, and more overtly dissident, piece of naturalist narrative, *The Jungle* (1905), and important differences in the depiction of work and workers become clear. Sinclair depicts up-to-the-minute conditions in the largest plant of the largest consumer industry in America, and he shows graphically how, far from becoming adapted to industrial conditions over time, his protagonists are destroyed by them. As a visible affect of the social field in *Sister Carrie* then, the conditions of work and workers are written under a kind of erasure: when shown at all they are shown in a way that calls into question the relevance or accuracy of the depiction of social conditions. If reportage of proletarian conditions, the figuration of work and workers as they are visible, were all *Sister Carrie* had to offer, we could read the novel as a text
which merely mimics the newspapers' accounts of the strike, and commodifies class violence for a mass audience. Such is Walter Benn Michaels's thesis: "the power of Sister Carrie . . . arguably the greatest American realist novel, derives not from its scathing "picture" of capitalist "conditions" but from its unabashed . . . acceptance of the economy that produced those conditions" (35). To regain a Sister Carrie which problematizes such a reading, we have to figure work symptomatically, as something invisible, a task to which the novel lends itself very well.

"The Strike" in Chapter 41 comprises a most starkly defined instance of work-as-absence. Work is what the striking Brooklyn trolley drivers refuse to do and, further, it is what they resort to violence to prevent. The narrative effects of their refusal to work and of the resultant violence, however, are not neatly contained within such self-effacing discourse as we have just examined, but can be seen to spill over or irrupt into other aspects of the novel—plot, characterization, metaphor, style. The Brooklyn strikers warrant representation because, like Melville's Bartelby, they would rather not work; however, in Sister Carrie, Bartelby's isolated, and isolative, idiosyncrasy goes through a sea change into a ubiquitous and communalizing force which is antithetical to the solipsism of Melville's scribner, and vastly more threatening. For, in the trolley strike in Sister Carrie, some of the work that goes into the
production of the walled city of consumption itself suddenly ceases. In centering the narrative around the middle class "ex-manager" Hurstwood—a character who lacks any inherent role in production—Dreiser may be seen to attempt to manage a nagging awareness that the "fairy land" of commodification trumpeted elsewhere in the narrative is also the site of production of a radical class consciousness. Given the violence, duration and size of the Brooklyn trolley strike of 1895, which one biographer thinks Dreiser covered for the New York World, it is not difficult to see how such an awareness could creep into the novel (Lingeman 155).28

28 Since we are examining the insurrectionary milieu of Sister Carrie, a word needs to be said about the historical paradigm for the strike in the novel. Donald Pizer, the editors of the Pennsylvania Edition of the novel and other scholars have shown how the newspaper advertisement for substitute workers on the trolley's read by Hurstwood was lifted verbatim from the New York Times of January 15. The Brooklyn trolley strike of January and February 1895 was coordinated by the Knights of Labor District Assembly 75. It was the Knights of Labor, remember, who organized the violent New York street car strike of 1889, that "more impressive catastrophe" in which Howells's A Hazard of New Fortunes discovered and disavowed the socialistic political implications of its participation in polyglossia. Like the 1889 strike, the Brooklyn strike of 1895 was large, widespread and very violent. According to the New York Times, about 5,000 drivers and conductors walked out on January 14 in a dispute with several companies over wages, unsafe working conditions and the company's use of non-union part time workers, or "trippers," part time workers who were hired for rush periods and paid a sub-standard wage. The strikers saw the use of such part-timers as a threat to the jobs of union workers. Violent crowd actions, such as Dreiser depicts, rapidly ensued when the companies tried to run a limited number of mail and commuter cars. By the 21st of January, Brooklyn was under martial law, Mayor Charles A. Schirren had suspended freedom of assembly, and several regiments of New York state militia had invested positions around trolley company power stations and offices. At one
declares a certain class allegiance by having Hurstwood find work not as a member of the community of car drivers, but rather as a strikebreaker, as the personified negation of that community. The "ex-manager," ironically enough, provides a viewpoint for managing class consciousness through the kind of surveillance enacted by both Henry James's "pedestrian prowler" in London's East End and Jacob Riis's realist photographic essay How the Other Half Lives.

In Hurstwood, literary characterization reenacts and overlaps with the conservative cultural work of the realistic narrative, the work of sighting and supervising urban workers' insurgency. Hurstwood is both a fictional impoverished character manipulated into destroying labor community and an ideological device for facilitating the same thing in turn-of-the-century America. This overlap provokes the narration of Hurstwood's point-of-view in Brooklyn to approach the kind of double entendre Fulkerson provoked in A Hazard of New Fortunes. Thus, when the narrator describes Hurstwood's stubborn determination to run the trolley by

point, worker and community resistance to the running of cars was so stiff that each car went out with a militia officer and ten troopers aboard (Times 24 January). Dreiser was in New York during this period—the depths of the worst general economic depression in American history to that time—and was probably unemployed, although he may have covered the strike as an underpaid "legman" for the World. Several critics, most notably Ellen Moers and Richard Lingeman, have argued persuasively that the ubiquitous poverty and deprivation Dreiser saw, and felt himself slipping into, in 1894-95 New York had a major effect on his development and on Sister Carrie particularly.
remarking "This one trip seemed a consuming thing" (425), he is also describing the cultural work done by the realistic narrative. For the narrative of surveillance itself is "a consuming thing," a commodity which has as its purpose to facilitate the reader's consumption of under-class settings and characters by staging them as a kind of entertainment. Similarly, when one of the strikers calls out to Hurstwood, "Do the dirty work! You're the suckers that keep the poor people down" (424), the remark refers not so much to the scabs manning the cars—who by Dreiser's account are generally as impoverished as the strikers themselves—as it does to the middle-class managerial viewpoint informing the narrative. It is worthy of note, then, that the autonomy of the narrative viewpoint centered in Hurstwood is assured by key aspects of the development of his character which take place well before he gets to Brooklyn.

Hurstwood's relative immunity to oppositional discourse is underlined by the futility of the appeals to his masculinity informing the strikers' shouted appeals for him to join them. "Come down partner, and be a man" (426) and "Won't you come out pardner, and be a man" (427), they shout, after the narrative has meticulously described the psychic emasculation undergone by Hurstwood following his business failure in New York: the cessation of sexual relations with Carrie; his inability to act as breadwinner and his replacement by Carrie in this role; his feminization through
the taking on of domestic chores. Further, in this setting, masculinity has a political significance which extends beyond Hurstwood’s failures as traditional breadwinner and lover. For American railway workers were, at the time just before the Brooklyn strike of early 1895, heavily exposed to a pre-industrial, masculinist ideology which was reinvented and (one could say) disseminated by American Railway Union leader Eugene V. Debs during the great national railway strike of 1894 (the so-called "Pullman Strike"). Nick Salvatore, Eugene V. Debs’s recent biographer, argues persuasively that Deb’s politics were always informed by a pre-industrial worker’s vision of masculinity as deriving primarily from communal work experience and from communal knowledge of the individual man’s ability to produce. This derivation of masculinity from production stands in direct contrast to how Hurstwood and Drouet demonstrate their masculinity to Carrie, through consumption of fine clothes and other commodities. Debs’s pre-industrial ideology stressed that "the very concept of manhood hinged on the ability of any given individual to assume in his localized social group personal responsibility for his deeds" (Salvatore 19). Further, Salvatore argues this ideology was imparted by Debs’s boyhood experiences in Terre Haute, Indiana, Theodore Dreiser’s home town. The existence of such an oppositional ideology in the scene of writing is suggested by how crucially important to the conservative cultural work of the narrative is the absence of any similar
productive community from Hurstwood's experience. Even his occupation is entirely based in consumption; his work of gladhanding the male luminaries at his Chicago resort, for instance, although definitely an instance of male community, most often takes the form of consuming liquor and tobacco. Further, as we just discussed, Hurstwood's emasculation is an accomplished fact by the time he goes to Brooklyn, making it impossible for him to "be a man" and participate in the masculine community of striking producers.

The already emasculated Hurstwood, then, is securely contained within his function as the managerial viewpoint of the realistic narrative, and he seeks to negate the community of male producers in Brooklyn by sighting this community as a mob, invoking the use of state power. To an extent, the management thus effected is successful; for the trolley workers offer themselves up as subjects for a portrait of a mob, a mob shown to literally overwhelm the middle-class managerial viewpoint, eventually swarming over Hurstwood with a barrage of missiles, punches and kicks that sends him scurrying back to Manhattan. Glimpsed in mob form, from the point-of-view of Hurstwood, the working class invites the imposition of repressive force which will break the strike, as actually happened in Brooklyn in 1895, where state troops occupied the town for six weeks. However, the cultural work of managing/representing the strike has repercussions for the
form and content of the novel. These repercussions surround the journalistic representation of class insurrection.

After being faced with proletarianization, Hurstwood will reaffirm the autonomy of the middle-class viewpoint he at once enacts and represents by secluding himself in his snug middle-class Manhattan apartment and reading newspaper accounts about the workers "with absorbing interest"(430) despite having discovered the gap between representation and reality which those newspaper-commodities conceal. The ostensibly realistic narrative mimics Hurstwood's flight into reading, periodically rupturing into overt self-referentiality after the strike episode, as if to reaffirm its own class allegiance following Hurstwood's lesson in the reality of class warfare. We saw Howells, in A Hazard of New Fortunes, launch into almost a similar flight from working-class consciousness into overt self-referentiality, a flight figured there by the near-comic linguistic play that informs the publishing of Every Other Week.

In Howells's novel, the political incompatibility of the competing rhetorics in the polyglossic milieu comes to the fore at Dryfoos's dinner party, necessitating that Howells reaffirm his monoglossic class allegiance by reenacting the "judicial murder" of the Haymarket anarchists within his own narrative. Hence the fact that the anarchist Lindau and the Christian socialist Conrad Dryfoos are killed as a result of the street car strike both recants Howells's 1887 stand
against the Haymarket executions—which occurred as a result of the Chicago Eight Hour agitation—and allows for the reinvention of *Every Other Week* as a simulacrum of the white, male, middle-class, middle-western utopia. In *Sister Carrie*, narrative contours and details also reflect a reaction to undeniable knowledge of class violence, but in Dreiser's novel the orientation of the flight from class consciousness is reversed.

Here, Hurstwood takes refuge in textuality, but his retreat from history signals the failure of the managerial viewpoint he centered in Brooklyn, a failure finally symbolized by the loss of his eyesight and the blackness of the flophouse room in which he dies, "hidden from view" (499). Dreiser does not attempt, like Howells, to resolve historical tensions set up by his representation of class struggle; he has no need to, he never defended the Haymarket anarchists when everybody else in America was calling for their blood. Instead, Dreiser shows how the managerial viewpoint—figured in Hurstwood—can simply turn its back on history. When Dreiser depicts the indigent Hurstwood reading obsessively—first in the apartment directly after the strike and later in the cheap hotels on the Bowery—it is as if he opens the door to a hall of mirrors in which the reader/text dyad is reflected endlessly, assigning everything outside of that dyad, history for instance, to oblivion. Hurstwood cannot so
easily escape into textuality from working-class historical agency, however.

Enmeshed in a text that takes up the decidedly self-reflexive task of representing a reader's consumption of representation of events just represented in the chapter before, Hurstwood begins to experience those hallucinatory "lapses" in his sense of time and place, which will repeat themselves as he descends into the abyss, because time and space are the two most important categories for the organization of realistic narrative. So as the narrative becomes self-reflexive as a way of defusing class conflict, Hurstwood falls into a kind of ahistorical reverie which at once symbolizes and insures his fate. In the first of these, almost immediately after he returns from Brooklyn, Hurstwood finds "himself staring at an item (newspaper item) but thinking of . . . a hilarious party he had once attended at a driving club, of which he had been a member"(430-31). The content of the hallucination underscores the self-reflexive character of the narrative: Hurstwood, who has assumed the alias "Wheeler," and has just returned from a stint as strikebreaking "driver" of trolley cars, reads (probably) further newspaper accounts of the strike, and hallucinates that he is once again a member of a brotherhood of "drivers." The hallucination tries to reinvent Hurstwood's experience of the strike in terms familiar to a personal past, a past from which knowledge of class violence was excluded. Like
Howells, Hurstwood attempts to redeclare his class allegiance. But by immersing himself in a politically charged discourse—the accounts of the strike he reads "with absorbing interest"—whose accuracy he has cause to doubt, Hurstwood falls into the gap between history and signifier which reveals that realism too is a commodity. So the "lapse" in his sense of space and time, again perhaps the most vital arrangements of the realist fiction, makes perfect sense. The realist fiction too, as articulated in *Sister Carrie*, may be seen to suffer from such lapses even in its grittiest pictures of social conditions.

We have already seen how in Brooklyn the viewpoint and characterization of the "ex-manager" were conflated with the cultural work of surveillance carried out by the novel. In this conflation Hurstwood's fate became the fate of the narrative itself. Hurstwood's experience of the commodity function of realism is mimicked by the flight of the narrative into intertextuality. For the most ostensibly "realistic" section of the novel—the grim chapter detailing Hurstwood's homelessness, titled "Curious Shifts of the Poor" in the 1900 edition—may be read as a reading of two earlier pieces of journalism, one by Dreiser himself and one by Stephen Crane (Moers 8-9). As Ellen Moers comments, "the story of its making (of the chapter "Curious Shifts of the Poor") tells as much about the literary lessons as about the real experiences that Dreiser absorbed from New York in the
nineties" (9). That a novel which F.O. Matthiessen called "one of the major accounts of the nature of poverty in American fiction" derives its power from a strong reading of the realistic tradition reveals how the realist fiction can appear to access the concrete real while actually constructing the Real as a by-product of the process by which it refines the economy of its own intramural apparatuses (Mathiessen cited Pizer Essays 180). This displacement of social reportage by a process of internal refinement is reminiscent of how Howells displaced the proletarian knowledge from the line by projecting his own narrative strategies as a setting of Hazard. There, the perfectly mobile, perfectly secure point-of-view of the middle-class, elevated railway passenger enjoyed by Basil and Isabel March may be seen to mimic the realist strategy of containing the proletariat through "picturing" it. Howells pictured his protagonists gliding above the proletarian milieu, picturing that milieu as a series of domestic still lifes instead of descending into the worker knowledge of historical processes manifested in the street-level violence of the surface-car strike of 1889. Dreiser's construction of "Curious Shifts of the Poor" from earlier essays at transparent social reportage evinces a similar meta-literary distancing from historical conditions. This self-reflexiveness belies the essay at a journalistic familiarity with working-class misery during the
Depression of 1894-1895, a familiarity by which the chapter ostensibly defines itself to us. Again, the self-audit of a text's own intramural apparatuses displaces the knowledge from Other that threatens the existence of those apparatuses.

Similarly, at the point we have just been describing, Hurstwood's return from Brooklyn, the narrative further reveals its willingness to substitute overt meta-literature for historically accurate reportage by embarking upon a description of the first of Carrie's many successes as a professional actress (430). When describing Carrie's improvised reply "I am yours truly" to the leading comedian's improvised question "And who are you?", the novel thus represents Carrie's and the comedian's interpolation of a bit of representation into an other piece of representation. Again, the doorway to the hall of mirrors hidden in the realistic narrative swings open. The overtly metaliterary character of the episode is further underlined by how Carrie's retort to the "exceedingly facetious" comedian--"I am yours truly"--is itself an epistolary convention. *Sister Carrie* becomes progressively more of a novel about writing, about literature and drama, at the point when worker power is enacted within the narrative purview. In all these cases--Carrie's self-inscription into the theater, Dreiser refining his narrative style through critical readings of New York journalism, and Hurstwood with his hallucinations and newspapers--the narrative is shaped by a retreat from the
essay at transparent representation of working-class insurgency, into an overt representation of representation that calls into question the verisimilitude of the realist fiction. The power of the insurgent workers to overwhelm the middle-class viewpoint is not exhausted, then, when the mob sends Hurstwood sneaking back to Manhattan. It reinvents itself in the contour and details of the very narrative which effects its marginalization and reifies it into a commodity. This reinvention of insurgency has other effects as well, but before we can examine them we need to understand why the strike must be perceived as a threat to the existence of the realist fiction itself.

3.

As we saw with Rebecca Harding Davis's sodden parade of potential criminals; with the anarchist cells in James's fictive London; with the anarchists at the Haymarket; and with the streetcar strike in *Hazard of New Fortunes*, a discursive strategy of hegemony is to substitute depictions of civil disorder and criminality for the inherent violence, disorder and dehumanization of the proletarian experience of the point of production. This is a strategy followed by *Sister Carrie*. But concealed behind the hegemonic representation of the Brooklyn workers as a mob, is the fact that they are also strikers, a class community which refuses to offer its work as a thing to be represented by the kind of realist techniques used to depict Carrie's experience of the
Chicago shoe factory. Their refusal to work, and thus to have their work represented, may be read as a dissentient comment on the complicity of the realistic narrative with those very hegemonic strategies of supervision and control illustrated by the shoe factory scenes. Given that the shoe factory workers are complacent while the car drivers are not, it is provocative to ask why the shoe factory workers—who intimidate Carrie with their crudeness and sexually suggestive banter—are much less sympathetically drawn than the strikers, for whom Hurstwood, and his creator, display a distinct sympathy. This seeming paradox may be explained by engaging Georg Lukacs's attempt to "locate the production of consciousness in the work process" (Aronowitz 7). The influence of factory work upon subjectivity is omnipresent in an industrialized society, and Dreiser's literary management of industrial workers clearly partakes of this influence.

As Foucault suggests in his discussion of the rise of the penitentiary, the control of immanent insurrection in a factory is a function of the panoptical arrangement of the plant (Foucault 195-228). Assembly line work, as in the shoe factory in *Sister Carrie*, isolates workers at separate, but mutually dependent, work stations. This enhances supervision, ties worker activity to a centralized time schedule, makes conversation/coalition difficult, and causes slower workers—like Carrie, in whom we see almost a terror of getting behind—to be viewed antagonistically by their more efficient
co-workers. Thus we see Carrie tied to an assembly line that not only produces shoes but also atomizes a potentially subversive work force into readily managed individuals, monads who are turned away from, and even against, one another as a consequence of the arrangement of production. However, for the social control enacted in the factory to be efficacious outside of the factory the worker must necessarily internalize the lessons imparted on the assembly line. As Stanley Aronowitz has it, "The barriers to the ability of the working class to grasp the fact that its own exploitation at the point of production results from systemic causes are not chiefly ideological: they are rooted in the labor process"(7). Dreiser's narrative depiction of workers who, from Carrie's point of view, are crude, gossipy and insensitive reenacts the systemic control of the factory within ideology, isolating the middle class reader from any sense of community with the workers, causing such a reader to view the workers antagonistically because they so frighten and threaten the upwardly mobile Carrie.

The atomization of individuals in capitalist society is so crucial that Dreiser's narrative of the shoe factory, for all its realistic detailing of hardship and degradation, cannot really dissent. For as Georg Lukacs put it "The fate of the worker becomes the fate of society as a whole; indeed this fate must become universal as otherwise industrialization could not develop"(90). The Brooklyn riot
scenes, however, depict a moment when labor-rooted control over the workers has broken down, and the narrative no longer must mimic this mode of control because state repressive agencies—the police and militia—have assumed the burden of containing working-class power. In depicting the strikers sympathetically, Dreiser ostensibly aligns himself with the politics of progressivism and turn-of-the century socialism, but his treatment of the shoe factory workers was not similarly generous. In both cases the workers present a threat to the protagonist, but unlike the case with the vulnerable Carrie in the factory, Hurstwood's middle-class managerial viewpoint is no longer physically unprotected from the workers, and thus dependent upon ideological means of supervision. Instead, this viewpoint can rely on the repressive agencies of state power, personified in the two police officers who escort his streetcar, to protect its integrity. Hurstwood may be battered, bruised and dispirited in Brooklyn, but when he returns home to Manhattan, he finds the most serious wound he has sustained to be "a mere scratch" on the shoulder (429). Thus his physical integrity is inseparable from the ideological integrity of the narrative viewpoint, an association strengthened by Hurstwood's emasculation and solipsism, as discussed above. All of these conditions both pre-exist and are augmented by the sighting of insurrection. In the mere act of sighting insurrection, the realistic narrative justifies the
repressive intervention which renders its viewpoint relatively immune to oppositional discourse. In 1895 New York, power did break the strike, and reconstituted strikers and strikebreakers in their prior form, as industrial workers, a form which insures that supervision and control are "rooted in the labor process" (Aronowitz 7): isolated pairings of car driver and conductor, one pair to each numbered street car, each pair competing with every other pair for fares and trips.

In Sister Carrie, however, we never see the breaking of the strike; the strike is unresolved, and remains undivulged by the narrative after Hurstwood's return. So an almost overt critique of managerialism haunts the attempt to manage proletarian insurrection. The ineffectual "ex-manager" burlesques managerialism at the same time as he carries out the surveillance of insurrection. Further, the striking Brooklyn trolley drivers—whom, because they are striking, we never see as isolated workers, but only as unified insurgents—act as if aware of the complicity between the narrative and their industrial managers. As a result of this class awareness they may be seen to be on strike against the novel as well as against the car companies! By refusing to work they testify to the limitations of the "systemic control" built into the work place, and earlier reenacted by the Dreiser's realist fiction of the shoe factory. Their absent labor and present class community resist
commodification, which Dreiser so often celebrates, and irrupt into other spaces in the narrative. One of these, perhaps the most important, is the representation of the theater.

4.

In her discussion of *Sister Carrie* in *The Social Construction of American Realism*, Amy Kaplan holds that when Hurstwood goes to Brooklyn to work as a strikebreaker, he "leaves the world of his life with Carrie and enters an entirely separate realm in which the strike takes place" (154-155). As a result, "the strike is rendered quite visible at the cost of any narrative context" (155). Such an assessment overlooks important similarities between the trolley strike and chorus girl Carrie's fortuitous revolt against the enforced silence of her role as "Katisha, the Country Maid." By examining these similarities we can arrive at a Carrie who can represent not just the incorporation of all human energy into the "body of desire in capitalism" (Michaels 56) but also a discourse which opposes that incorporation, an equation which deserves to be explored.

Through representing Carrie's daring bit of "business" in the theater, Dreiser attempts to imagine and control the threat labor insurgency posed for his narrative when the striking car drivers refused to let their work be commodified by the realist fiction. The narrative strongly implies the ubiquity of such unresolved insurrection by highlighting the
simultaneity of the strike—an attempt by militant workers to control their own work—and Carrie's assertion of limited control over her work. Carrie's charming riposte to "the leading comedian and star" takes place on "the evening when Hurstwood was housing himself in the loft of the streetcar barn," resting up for his day as a strikebreaker(430). Further, the narrator has already drawn our attention to the similar skill levels and employability of chorus girls, such as Carrie, and the proletariat proper: "Girls who can stand in a line and look pretty are as numerous as laborers who can swing a pick"(385). Both kinds of workers classify as unskilled labor, and workers in both occupations are likely to be unemployed because the supply of such labor is too high. Similarly, the narrator has described how Carrie's richness in feeling, the quality that will best suit her for success on the stage, derives from the fact that "her sympathies were ever with that underworld of toil from which she had so recently sprung and which she best understood"(146). Given these, and other, equations between Carrie and the proletariat, it is not surprising that Carrie's riposte and the trolley strike share other similarities besides simultaneity. For instance, both may be seen to result from the mismanagement of human productive energies in the work place. Hurstwood's experience of the biting cold, fatigue, long hours and low pay which make up the trolley drivers' daily portion—when they can get work—
goes a long way to suggest that these conditions could
certainly catalyze a strike, if not an out and out revolt.
Similarly, Carrie's "emotional greatness" ill suits her for
the narrow limitations of her job as a simple chorus girl.
And that "greatness" seeks expression at considerable risk to
Carrie's well being, for chorus members have been warned that
to "interpolate lines or "business" meant a fine or
worse"(431). Carrie is thus willing to risk unemployment to
gain some control over her work, just as are the Brooklyn
strikers. We can infer, then, that both Carrie and the car
drivers possess an inherent knowledge of the conditions of
their work which they feel would enable them to better
arrange it. The possession of such inherent knowledge by the
worker, however, was an issue which was ideologically
charged, highly charged, at the turn of the century. And if
we read Carrie's and the trolley drivers' simultaneous
attempts to control their own work, rather than having it
managed from above, in light of this turn-of-the-century
controversy we can more fully understand how deeply Sister
Carrie both imagines proletarian insurrection and further
critiques the industrial management burlesqued by Hurstwood.
Frederick Taylor, for instance, based his highly influential
theory of scientific management on the premise that "the
science which underlies each act of each workman is so great
and amounts to so much that the workman who is best suited to
actually doing the work is incapable of fully understanding
the science" (Taylor 25-26). To understand the "science of work," the scientific managers studied each job with a stopwatch and sketch pad in hand in an attempt to eliminate all wasted motion from the work process. Frank and Lillian Gilbreth even went so far as to attempt to compose an ostensibly universal vocabulary of workers' distinct hand movements. Foremen especially trained in the new methods then instructed the workers as to the most productive way to work. Those who could not keep pace with the newly efficient work methods were, supposedly, shuttled into jobs for which they were better suited. Although labor historians still debate the scope and effects of applied Taylorism, one of the most influential recent accounts of Taylorism described the central facet of the Taylor system as "a belief in the original stupidity of the worker . . . Otherwise it (management) would have to admit that it is engaged in a wholesale enterprise of prizing and fostering stupidity" (Braverman 108). In Gilded Age America, this view of the workers' "original stupidity," of course, would clash with classic socialism, especially the position constructed around Marx's statement, in Volume I of *Capital*, that workers' control over production is inevitable because the working class is "trained, united, and organized by the very mechanism of the capitalist process of production" (929). V.I. Lenin would further articulate Marx's vision of workers' control, in *State and Revolution* (1916), which posits a
smooth transition to the proletarian state because the proletariat, alone of all the social classes, possesses the day-to-day practical knowledge of how society is run, and their intimate knowledge of production renders superfluous any management by the capital-owning class and its representatives. Workers' revolution, in the classic Marxist view, makes production more beneficent by bestowing the responsibility for, and benefits of, production on the class most suited to that control. In Edward Bellamy's highly influential socialist utopia Looking Backwards, the transition to the worker's paradise is so smooth that it seems to occur almost literally overnight.

Taylor, then, can be seen to mount a full scale assault on a dangerously subversive, and widespread, notion that workers actually understand what they are doing. His solution was to call for the creation of an entire new social class--the scientific managerial class--endowed with the responsibility of enhancing production and stabilizing the work force through arranging an extreme division of labor. As seen from the point-of-view of workers' radicalism (especially a Gilded Age radicalism still tinged with a pre-industrial era respect for handicrafts and skilled artisanry) such a resultant atomization of production into a myriad of isolated, insignificant tasks would rob workers of their ability to understand the significance of their productive role. The importance of the antinomy between workers' control
and scientific management to Sister Carrie comes home when we realize that Carrie repeatedly demonstrates an inherent knowledge of how to best utilize her own abilities to enhance the various theatrical productions in which she participates.

In the first Elks Club rehearsal of Under the Gaslight, for instance, Carrie realizes that the director is trying to instruct the cast in minute "details of expression" although it has not "been proven yet whether the members of the company knew their lines" (168). And thus she suggests that the cast "go through our lines once to see if we know them," leaving the director "somewhat abashed" at having his authority so usurped; but he is forced by the logic of Carrie's request to comply with it (168). Similarly, earlier in the rehearsal scene, Carrie is shown to have a clear sense that the director's demonstration of how her character should walk is somehow all wrong: "She walked in imitation of her mentor. . . inwardly feeling that there was something strangely lacking" (167). The entire rehearsal scene is marked by the director's, and the narrator's, aggressive insistence that, except for Carrie, none of the hopelessly amateur cast has the slightest clue of how to go about producing the desired dramatic effect. This relentless management burlesques the Taylorist control of human motion required in the industrial work place, where all the workers are, by definition, as incapable of understanding how to go about their jobs as is the cast of the Elks' production. In
Taylor's famous study of pig-iron hauling, for instance, the pig iron haulers, for all the world like Dreiser's novice actors, literally have to be instructed how to walk and how to rest efficiently (Taylor 59-61). Yet, Carrie resists being so relentlessly managed. Later in the novel, after the episode simultaneous with the strike, Carrie will again exert some control over the conditions of her work. Brooding over the menial nature of her non-speaking part as a Quaker maid, Carrie becomes a star after her originally inadvertent frowning during a rehearsal has an "effect . . . so quaint and droll it caught even the manager" (446), and he decides to incorporate Carrie's frown into the show. Again, Carrie's ability to produce dramatic illusion--her ability to work--necessitates that an alteration be made in the manner of disposal of her labor power. This pattern, then, repeats three times in the novel: in the Elks' theatrical and in Carrie's portrayals of Katisha and the Quaker maid.

The theater seems to be able to repeatedly absorb the challenge posed by her Carrie without having to alter the social form of her exploitation, a limit to Carrie's insurgency emphasized by the relative insignificance, and pronounced subservience, of the professional roles she enacts: a harem girl, a silent, passive Quaker maid. But remember, each of the plays benefits when Carrie exercises her inherent ability to control her work from below. Such a result directly opposes the managerialist ideology, which
holds that the worker is essentially ignorant and needs direction from above in order to insure maximum profitability. Yet the Broadway plays become more profitable and gain greater media attention as a result of Carrie's self-directed labor. Further, these benefits ripple outward from the theater into society at large: the hotel which provides Carrie with a lavish suite for a minimal charge stands to increase its own profitability from an association with her, the newspapers enhance their circulation by speculating on Carrie's provocative seclusion. Carrie's labor strains the forms designed for its commodification, yet the result is neither disruption of these theatrical productions nor a decrease in their profits. In the world that the scientific managers would make, such a possibility is heretical. As Fred Taylor put it in the introduction to his *Principles of Scientific Management*, these "principles can be applied with equal force to all social activities"(8). Yet at the end of the 1900 edition of the novel, no real management of Carrie's insurgency has been effected. Thus her continuing, open-ended search for happiness, suggested by the concluding rocking chair scene in the 1900 edition, can also be understood as a perpetual need to work, with the futile motion of the chair signifying her surplus physical energy, an energy that destabilizes the commodified subject and the institutions set up to effect that commodification. One of these institutions, of course, is the novel itself, and a
kind of self-consciousness that *Sister Carrie* has failed to fully commodify the insurgent proletariat it has imagined and tried to manage manifests itself in settings that are far removed from its sightings of industrial production and class warfare.

5.

First, the insurgency is reenacted in the middle of the domestic space Carrie shares with the Hansons, Drouet and Hurstwood. If Dreiser *registers* the Knights of Labor's 1895 uprising in the section detailing Hurstwood's misadventures in Brooklyn, he also *imagines* this uprising in a conflict between Hurstwood and Carrie which is recognizable in terms of labor unrest and insurrection. Second the overriding concern of this novel with managing labor betrays itself in the parapraxian use of the language of political economy and the language and strategies of scientific management in a great number of dissimilar contexts in the novel.

The strike does far more than provide a backdrop for the disintegration of Hurstwood and Carrie's "marriage" and create an index by which we may gauge the withering away of Hurstwood's ego. Instead, by viewing the events in Brooklyn and those in the Wheeler apartment in the kind of dialogue examined above, the domestic crisis may be seen as *precipitated* by the social one. Narrative details go far towards describing this cause-effect relation. For instance, in the thirty-three hours Hurstwood is absent during his
scabbing adventure, Carrie's latent productive energy manifests itself in the domestic work place as well as in the theater. With Hurstwood gone, Carrie feels new "hopes for the future," experiences "a gleam of pleasant energy," and realizes "what it is to grow weary of the idler" (430). These rebellious perceptions hasten her desertion of Hurstwood, reenacting the workers' walk out directly in the center of the domestic realm. The same productive capabilities that make her chafe under the limitations of her work as a shoe factory worker and a chorus girl, make her chafe under the restrictions of her positions as "Mrs. Wheeler" and "Mrs. Drouet": housekeeper and concubine to, respectively, a progressively ever more emasculated and neurasthenic "ex-manager" and a self-interested, shallow "drummer." In both domestic and industrial realms the revolt initially takes the form of a cessation of work by the aggrieved workers. Carrie walks out on Hurstwood and Drouet; the trolley drivers walk out on the trolley companies. Most importantly, I think, recognizing Dreiser's temporal and thematic alignment of working class insurrection with Carrie's "private" life forces us to see how thoroughly Dreiser's subjectivities, and the cultural formations which construct them--domesticity, conjugality, the theater, the city, the autonomous individual--figure historical forces of class and production.

As Philip Fisher has it, in Dreiser's New York and Chicago "the miniaturization of social and political fact is
superimposed on the magnification of deeply interior psychological states. Both are made concrete by the same urban details" (129) so that the Dreiserian city comes to represent both "the psychological dynamics of the individual and the politics of America itself" (131). The superimposition of subjective "states" and political ones is certainly suggested by Dresier's innumerable, and seemingly casual, uses of the term "state" to describe the psychological and material conditions of his characters. The political/psychological "city-state" thus rendered, however, is not a socially quiescent spectacle of privileged consumption, such as Sherry's restaurant or the opulence of Broadway. For the presence of social Others to the consuming class is never sufficiently "miniaturized" and superimposed onto individual psychologies to escape narration. Even aside from the relatively brief portions of the novel which narrate, a la Jacob Riis and Stephen Crane, Hurstwood's and Carrie's under-class peregrinations, provocative descriptions of proletarians and proletarian conditions punctuate the novel, like repressed material returning in a dream.

There is the shabby proletarian girl "who worked at the machines in the shoe factory" a now well-dressed Carrie encounters on the night Drouet first seduces her in Chicago (76-76). And also the "gaunt faced man of about twenty-eight, who looked the picture of privation and wretchedness" who materializes suddenly to panhandle Drouet, Carrie and
Hurstwood as they exit the theater in Chapter XV (139). In the most remarkable of these passages, in Chapter XVI, Dreiser elucidates a key connection between workers and the consciousness of the artist, thus explaining the periodic narrative return of the social Other just noted. In this passage the narrator begins to explain the nature of Carrie's attractiveness by seeing it as a reaction to unglimped experiences of "doubt and longing" which have resulted in "a certain open wistfulness of glance and speech . . . as suggestive and moving as pathos itself" (144-45). But although Dreiser never elaborates on the ur-moment of that "doubt and longing"--Carrie is only nineteen at this point--he does go on to describe the present source of Carrie's all-constitutive sorrow: "an uncritical upwelling of grief for the weak and the helpless" (145). Dreiser then moves into a catalog of images of the kind of poverty and degradation Carrie just barely escaped: "ragged and poor" Shop girls from the West Side; "white faced, ragged men . . . in a sort of wretched mental stupor" (145). Carrie is also haunted by a sort of constant, if peripheral, and sentimentalized awareness of workers. Her sense of working-class ubiquity catalyzes the excess of "sympathy" and "feeling" so vital to her beauty and dramatic gifts:

On the street sometimes she would see men working--Irishmen with picks, coal heavers with great loads to shovel, Americans busy about some work which was a mere matter of strength--and they touched her fancy. Toil, now that she was free of it, seemed an even more desolate thing than when
she was of it. She saw it through a mist of fancy—a pale somber half-light which was the essence of poetic feeling. Her old father in his flour dusted miller's suit, sometimes returned to her in a memory—revived by a face in a window. A shoemaker pegging at his last, a blastman seen through a narrow window in some basement where iron was being melted, a bench worker seen high aloft in some window, his coat off, his sleeves rolled up—these took her back in fancy to the details of the mill. She felt, though she seldom expressed them, sad thoughts upon this score. Her sympathies were ever with that underworld of toil from which she had so recently sprung and which she best understood (145-146).

This is a remarkable passage for a number of reasons. First, it conveys the ubiquity of the proletariat in Carrie's daily experience, and hints that the existence of the work behind the commodities that dominate the new historicist landscape is not entirely subsumed by the spectacle of the commodity. Toil is not hidden away in Dresier's milieu: Carrie is not "free of it" in the sense that she still notices the existence of workers and makes a mental connection between that existence and her own. Second, this existence is constitutive of her psychic state, as is conveyed by the fact that she remembers her father in his "flour-dusted" work clothes. After leaving the Hansens, Carrie has no contact with her family, but when a familial memory does return, unbidden, its familial associations are mediated by its occupational associations; Carrie remembers her father primarily as a worker, not as a parent. The flashback is not linked to depictions of domestic life but to depictions of production. Thus Dreiser imagines the wider power of an
insurgent proletariat to "father" Carrie's subjectivity and the society to which she belongs. Her perception of toil engenders the "essence" of the "poetic fancy" with which she will entrance Drouet, Hurstwood and Broadway. Further, the thesis that Carrie reenacts the role of insurgent labor is strengthened by the numerous, seemingly casual applications of the language of political economy and scientific management to Carrie's work in the theater.

For instance, in a discussion with Drouet over Carrie's efforts in the Elks' theatrical, Hurstwood casually articulates several key tenets of scientific management while simultaneously placing Carrie in the position of the worker: "I want to see her. She's got to do all right. We'll make her," (said) the manager"(166). Casually or not, Hurstwood is thus identified as a "manager" who feels compelled ("I want") to keep Carrie under close observation; is quite concerned ("She's got to") that Carrie do an "all right" job of acting; and is not willing to leave the conduct of that work in Carrie's hands ("We'll make her"). Hurstwood's deep compulsion to closely observe Carrie as a means of dictating her success is perfectly understandable when we consider him as a simulacrum for the managerial class. For the managers' social identity hinges upon surveillance of the workers. Similarly, when Carrie is singled out for praise by the director, one of the hapless amateurs--"Mrs. Morgan," the wife of one of the petit bourgeois Elks--tries to reduce her
feelings of inferiority using a revealing economic metaphor: "She's some cheap professional," she gave herself the satisfaction of thinking" (170). In fact, given a marxian, class-centered explanation of Carrie's innate ability to understand and improve her own work, she does represent the "cheapest" portion of the working population: the proletariat, whose knowledge of how to best control production, which so rankles Mrs. Morgan, is a condition of their intimacy with it. In another key example of the irruption of metaphors of management, at the moment of Carrie's success as the frowning Quaker maid, the narrator will depict her effect on the "portly gentlemen in the front rows" in similarly suggestive, and inadvertently economic, terms: "It was the kind of frown they would have loved to force away with kisses. All the gentlemen yearned toward her. She was capital" (447). For indeed Carrie does figure "capital," the accumulated surplus value which it is the function of the scientific managers to extract from the workers. Similarly notable here is the metaphor of coercion. Throughout the 1890's, capitalists repeatedly assumed that the displeasure of labor was merely an affect—usually the momentary effect of outside agitators—a "frown" that they could "force away," as was the case in the Homestead Crisis of 1892, the Pullman Strike of 1894, and the Brooklyn trolley strike of 1895.
Also, in Carrie's first theatrical job most of the chorus girls are dressed as soldiers, and Carrie's friend Lola is, as a result of this role, often described afterwards as a "little soldier." Viewed in dialogue with Taylorism, this metaphor loses its innocence because "soldiering" was a universal synonym for malingering by industrial workers. In fact, Taylor's innumerable lectures on the value of scientific management always began with a description of the damage done by "soldiering" in the industrial work place. Although I do not want to press on this too hard, Carrie's association with "soldiering" enhances the sense that her labor must be more fully exploited than the organization of her work permits, or the work place will be destabilized.

Finally, Carrie's realization that Broadway success does not necessarily mean happiness is conveyed using a metaphor that draws a very clear connection between her disquietude and the workers' discontent which broke out in Brooklyn: "Unconsciously, her idle hands were beginning to weary her" (458). One of the most important tenets of Taylor's system was that if factory "hands" were worked as hard as they could bear, and paid well enough to reflect the increased productivity, labor agitation would disappear. Dreiser's passage draws the parallel between Carrie and the ubiquitous, discontent proletariat repressed by the narrative by referring to how the presence of "idle hands" leads to an awareness that she is not satisfied with her life, and work.
Again, Carrie signifies a site where proletarian metaphor and imagery irrupt into psychological and domestic space. The persistent return of images of proletarian work and suffering, the framing of Carrie as a simulacrum of the working people, and the irruption of the language of political economy and management into the theater testify to the uneasy awareness of this novel that the theatrical form of Carrie’s commodification is not sufficient to contain the insurgency she poses. This awareness takes one final, notable form: the oft-commented-upon reentry of the young scientist Bob Ames into the narrative.

6.

This managerial reaction to Carrie’s threat is much better sketched out in the manuscript version of *Sister Carrie* than in the 1900 edition, for in Dreiser’s original version the young scientist Bob Ames figures much more prominently in Carrie’s final scene, and the representation of Ames quite clearly partakes of the methods and rhetoric of scientific management. Despite the idealistic and progressive rhetoric in which Ames’s advice to Carrie is couched, his real task is to define what work Carrie can undertake so she will no longer pose an insurrectionary threat to managerialism. After reading Ames’s advice to Carrie at the end of the manuscript, the historically acute reader will have little trouble discerning the Taylorist component to Ames’s personality: at the same time as Ames insists that
Carrie must work as hard as she can for others, he also suggests that he, not Carrie, fully understands how that work should be carried out!

As we have seen, in his representation of Carrie's inherent drive to be an actress Dreiser engages a major contemporary controversy: the "labor question." Ames further articulates the managerialist response to this controversy. The second and third of Frederick Winslow Taylor's four principles of scientific management --the scientific selection of the workman and his scientific education and development (Taylor 130)--comprise Bob Ames's tasks in the novel. Taylor holds that the worker thus selected and educated is not only "five or six times as productive" as the randomly selected worker, but at the same time acquires "a friendly mental attitude toward his employers and . . . . working conditions whereas before a considerable part of his (sic) time was spent in criticism, suspicious watchfulness, and sometimes open warfare"(Taylor 143-144). As if to facilitate the "scientific selection" of Carrie for her work as an actress, Dreiser is, from the first page of the novel, highly meticulous about including a deeply drawn, if exterior, portrait of her psychic makeup in his narrative, allowing the reader to evaluate, as would a Taylor-system personnel manager, Carrie's relative fitness for whatever occupations befall her. Carrie is first described, famously, as "possessed of a mind rudimentary in its power of
observation and analysis. Self interest with her was high but not strong"(4). Also she has "a certain natural intelligence" and possesses "wild dreams of some vague, far off supremacy which would make it (the city) prey and subject, the proper penitent, grovelling at a woman's slipper"(4). Later, Dreiser will be sure that we know that Carrie, despite her "rudimentary" mind, is "possessed of that sympathetic impressionable nature, which even in its most developed form, has been the glory of the drama"(157), a judgement that will be affirmed by her subsequent experiences on the stage in Chicago and New York, and finally reiterated in the authorially-tinged pronouncements of Bob Ames close to the end of the novel. My point here is not that Dreiser's psychological portrait of Carrie attains some vaunted quality of consistency (over which critics have wrangled for years), but that this portrait betrays a rhetorical insistence on the special qualities of Carrie's sensibility that both suit her for the career in "serious" drama which Ames proposes for her at the end of the novel, and make her unsuited for the various occupations she engages in prior to Ames's adjustment.

In Taylor's system, personnel managers sought to suit worker to work in a rigidly-managed productive setting as a way to forestall strikes, "soldiering" (systematic underproduction by workers) and other varieties of social upheaval. Dreiser's novel both imagines such social upheaval
both in the microcosm—Hurstwood's crime and the destruction of his petit bourgeois respectability—and depicts it in the macrocosm—the bloody Brooklyn trolley strike. Thus, the narrative of Carrie's progress is underlaid by an unresolved crisis of underemployment and mismanagement. Simultaneously, in the forefront of the narrative, Carrie's theatrical talents—an underemployed productive energy—destabilize the social forms that exploit them—as factory worker, kept woman, mistress and wife, chorus girl and comedic actress—because those forms are as imperfectly organized for the exploitation of labor as the trolley car companies are. Various styles of management of Carrie's energy are effected unsuccessfully: by the Hansons, Drouet, Hurstwood, the various New York theatrical managers and directors, etc. Finally, when Robert Ames, the electrical engineer whose previous anti-materialistic pronouncements catalyzed Carrie's dissatisfaction with her life with Hurstwood, returns in Chapter XLIX, it is as if he is called into being by Dreiser's own need to impose some closure on Carrie's apparently open-ended, and socially destabilizing, search for satisfying work. If a continuum of workers unites the diverse occupations portrayed in Sister Carrie, then Ames must be seen as the zenith of a continuum of managers called into being, by the rise of managerialism contemporary with the novel, in an effort to manage that work.
Ames's effect on Carrie seems so disproportionate to the relatively short amount of time Carrie spends in his company that it has provided a critical conundrum for several generations of readers. Ames, as you will remember, is an electrical engineer from Indiana, Dreiser's home state, whom Carrie meets at the apartment of her friend, Mrs. Vance. His criticisms of the conspicuous consumption displayed at Sherry's restaurant, his dislike of the popular culture which has shaped both Carrie's reading and her nascent theatrical aspirations, and his declaration that he "shouldn't care to be rich"(335) have a profound effect on Carrie, who begins to compare Hurstwood, and herself, to the cultured anti-materialism Ames seems to pose as an ideal. When Ames reappears in Chapter XLIX, he advises Carrie to abandon frivolous musical comedy for serious "comedy-drama," and tries convincing her that her dramatic gifts spring from her inherent receptivity to the needs and desires of other people (485), confirming the narrator's appraisal of Carrie's "sympathetic, impressionable nature"(157) and "passivity of soul which has always been the mirror of the active world"(157). The standard view of Ames, articulated best by Ellen Moers, has been that Ames "expresses Dreiser's own opinions"(Moers 109) and that Ames's anti-materialistic discourse allows Dreiser-the-social-critic to distance his female protagonist, and himself, from the worship of success and wealth indulged in by so much of the rest of the novel
(see also Michaels 35-36). Donald Pizer concurs with and expands upon Moers's reading. He sees Ames's role as being to show Carrie how "material comforts do not bring inner peace and happiness and that her spirit demands a higher calling" (65). Such an alignment of Ames with the authorial viewpoint should remind us of the overlap between narration and conservative cultural work we identified as a determining factor in the shoe factory scene and in Hurstwood's viewpoint on the strike. In the latter, the striking Brooklyn proles refused, violently, to submit their labor to the kind of narrative/industrial management which disempowered the shoe workers. Thus, the final terms by which Ames apparently manages Carrie's transformation from self-interested, ignorant small-town girl to serious, high-minded New York actress—a transformation which has struck numerous readers of the novel as decidedly unlikely—should by now be familiar to us: Ames attempts to do to Carrie's work exactly what the striking Brooklyn car drivers would not permit the realistic narrative to do earlier: reify the workers' inherent ability to work into a presence which is malevolent to them, and transform their labor into a Tayloresque "science" which is unknowable to the individual worker.

Ames's relatively brief section in Chapter XLIX of the manuscript is replete with indications that while the extent and nature of Carrie's dramatic talents—her ability to work—are unknown to her, they are known to the young scientist,
a position that mimics that of the scientific managers. For instance, in reply to her questioning of his assertion that she has "the sort of disposition that would do well in a strong comedy-drama" Ames answers, "I don't suppose you're aware of it, but there is something about your mouth and eyes which would fit you for that sort of work" (483). And later he declares, "There's a shadow about your eyes, too, which is pathetic. It's in the depth of them, I think. You probably are not aware of it" (484). After thus defining what one might call the affective basis of her acting abilities, Ames asks her what she is going to do with her talent; and Carrie, acquiescing to his expertise like any factory girl, replies "I don't know . . . Sometimes I don't seem able to do much of anything" (484). And finally Ames concludes by insisting that he understands, while she does not, "the quality of that thing which your face represents," telling Carrie "you are a mere expression of something--you know not what" (485). Georg Lukacs's description of the psychological effects of the rationalization of production provide a strikingly accurate description of Ames's attempt to guide Carrie into the right kind of work:

With the modern "psychological" analysis of the work-process (in Taylorism) . . . rational mechanization extends right into the worker's "soul": even his psychological attributes are separated from his total personality and placed in opposition to it so as to facilitate their integration into specialized rational systems and their reduction to statistically viable concepts (88).
Dreiser's psychological portrait of Carrie reaches a kind of apotheosis in Ames's attempts to at once analyze and reify Carrie's unconscious suitability to serious drama.

Underlying the idealistic and socially progressive rhetoric of Ames—by which Dreiser expresses his "personal hostility to capitalism" in "a failed attempt to make his work morally respectable" (Michaels 58)—we may identify the rhetoric of the scientific manager of capitalist production, whose task it is to reify the very "soul" of the worker and ensure that s/he is so controlled by the very arrangement of work that both insurrection and "soldiering" are nearly impossible. Again, however, we have to question whether this final adjustment is effective, because moments after Ames's departure Carrie is described as "the old, mournful Carrie—the desireful Carrie—unsatisfied"(487), a description enhanced and amplified, for the more elaborate final scene, Carrie in her rocking chair, of the Doubleday, Page edition of 1900. In a sense, Carrie's final, defining disquietude concludes the symbolic critique of managerialism begun with the Hanson's inability to keep Carrie's nose to the wheel enough to prevent her from exercising her nascent theatrical powers by going to the theater and standing at the apartment street doorway. This is a critique which finds its most notable moments in the persistent revelation of Hurstwood—who is referred to innumerable times as "the manager" and the "ex-manager"—as an empty sign, a burlesque manager. Carrie's
ability to project dramatic illusion is never really harnessed, a surplus of powers testified to by the oft-commented upon number of social identities she presents throughout the novel: Carrie Meebler, Mrs. Drouet, Carrie Madenda, Mrs. Murdoch (a name the fleeing Hurstwood briefly takes from a factory glimpsed from the train), Mrs. Wheeler, the various theatrical roles. But perhaps more important than the openendedness of Carrie's search for rewarding work is the way that her underemployment seemingly catalyzes the realist fiction to overtly thematize the cultural work of managing the working-class which we have seen to constitute the hidden agenda of much of the realist fiction examined in the preceding chapters.

*Sister Carrie* thus may be seen to manifest and critique the managerialism which was latent in these works. The novel tries to manage Carrie, and the working-class will to power she poses, into becoming the object of continual surveillance, in the theater. And this, finally, becomes Ames's purpose in the narrative; to fix Carrie in a productive "role" where the conditions of the "labor" she contains and effects will preclude coalition, work stoppage, or revolt. But if this narrative is discernable, so is its reverse. In dialogue with Carrie's overt management through theatrical surveillance, the novel can be seen to bring surveillance to bear on management and managerialism themselves. In the dialectic of working-class presence, the
registration and management of working-class energies carried out by Dreiser's realist fiction become visible as the text tries to displace evidence of working-class power with portraits of its own processes. And the different styles of management which are thus apprehended, critiqued and discarded not only form the contours of the plot, but also dictate the logic of narrative events, and fill those contours and events with thinly-veiled references to the rhetoric of managerialism. Through the active thematization of its own defining metaphors of management and specularity, through the critique of its own "hidden" cultural work, *Sister Carrie* eventually comes to transcend New Historicism formulations which fully implicate it in the culture of consumption. Only such a reading will allow us to humanize the culture of consumption and reclaim the sites of cultural resistance which have been subsumed by its vortex.
Chapter Six

Imagining Workers: The Theme of "Realism" in the Realist Fiction
For all its obviousness, the thematization of management we saw carried out by *Sister Carrie* should not be thought of as qualitatively different from the dialectic of working-class presence that shapes narration, setting, character and metaphor in the other narratives we have examined. In fact, all these narratives may be seen to thematize the processes by which they, and the hegemonic culture they construct and critique, attempt to register working-class power. Throughout the chapters above I have described how the realist fiction, when obliged to register a working-class contumacy which is dangerous to its own protocols and processes will do so by making that contumacy visible as a mere instance for the validation of those protocols and processes. Howells, for instance, is more than happy to spend a quarter of *Hazard of New Fortunes*--the infamous "house-hunt" chapters--sorting out the differences between the sentimentalized perspective on urban life and that available from the elevated railway lines. Here and in other places, Howells audits his narrative strategies for "picturing" workers rather than actually representing them, perhaps because representing workers has political overtones that could align Howells more closely with labor radicalism than he is willing to hazard. All of the realist fictions we examined audit their intramural processes in some similar way. Often they do so as a way of repressing knowledge of the proletarian unrest which gives
the realist fiction its sense of urgency and importance, its sense of being real, a sense that the fiction needs to define itself, as "real-ism," in the marketplace. So the realist fiction continually flirts with disaster, walking a fine line between an overt self-reflexiveness,--which will diminish its value in the class-haunted marketplace--and an emulation of worker activism and socio-economic power that will have the same result. The project of new historicist readings of American "realism" and "naturalism" has been to show how such an inherent self-reflexiveness, which the realist fiction is both drawn to and must downplay, belies the way "realism" tends to offer itself as unsophisticated, unliterary, politically progressive reportage of the concrete-material world. So it is with a thoroughgoing sense of irony that I arrive at the conclusion here that much of the narrative we have examined in this essay must be classified, in fact, as quite successfully "realistic," realistic in the sense of being true to actuality in its rendering of class relations. For repeatedly, as we have seen, these fictions construct themselves out of a synthesis of actual historical apparatuses for the control of working-class contumacy: petit-bourgeois, settlement house feminism; the juridical definition and enforcement of individualism; police strategies of photographic registration and surveillance; scientific management. The realist fiction may not offer a politically disinterested and linguistically unsophisticated
depiction of "things as they are," but when we brush its verisimilar rhetoric of the real against the grain we can see that it does certainly include a life-like depiction of how workers and worker insurrection clashed with and were managed by the hegemonic class. Through evincing the dialectic of working class presence—that simultaneous inscription and erasure of workers' political and economic actions—the realist fiction attains to a definite verisimilitude, as it were, against its will.

2.

"Life in the Iron Mills" and *The Silent Partner* narrate the process by which a feminine petit bourgeois sensibility comes to define an historical purpose through giving voice to a sentimental critique of industrial capitalism which will displace and defuse the insurrectionary energies made so dramatically manifest in the Great Cordwainer's Strike of 1860. *The Silent Partner* thematizes the strategies for management of proletarian life and culture imagined by "Life in the Iron Mills." In both, a petit-bourgeois, proto-feminist narrator discovers a resemblance between the condition of a working-class narratee and her own disempowerment. Rather than imagine a militant sisterhood with that narratee, however—a sisterhood made available to the literary imagination by mass media coverage of the 1860 strike—the narrator interpolates her working-class sister within a rhetoric of Otherness which emphasizes that the
workers need the kind of sentimental management from above, that she, the middle-class narrator, and only she, can provide. The limited feminine self-determination thus arrived at is premised upon the erasure of the insurrectionary proletarian Other who invites the self-defining petit-bourgeois surveillance of the labor ghetto.

Rebecca Harding Davis constructs a sentimentalizing rhetoric of Otherness by which proletarian power can be inscribed and erased. She displaces the dangerous point-of-production of iron—with its subversive discourses of red revolt and unquiet sexuality—with the point of production of the narrative, where proletarian content is contained, through the agency of ambiguous romantic symbolhood, in the "korl woman" sculpture of the narrator's own hunger for an extra-domestic social identity. A synecdoche for the author's own search for identity thus partially displaces a synecdoche for the revolutionary consciousness of Deb and Hugh Wolfe, and the insurgent shoe workers they represent. But, if this displacement erases the proletarian moment, it also reveals it, since, in the korl woman sculpture which dominates/animates the narrative, Davis's inscription of her identity coalesces with the erasure of worker power, worker self-definition. This coalescence evinces the dialectic of working-class presence, making worker activism visible to us through the exact shape of its absence.
Elizabeth Stuart Phelps takes Davis's feminine managerial persona from the margin to the center in *The Silent Partner*, making Perley Kelso's cultivation of a class Other and attainment of a managerial personality primary themes in her 1871 novel. The inevitable result of her successful definition of an Other is the explanation of class revolt through the sentimentalizing rhetoric of Otherness. This explanation provides the narrative logic of the twin denouement of *The Silent Partner*, the defusing of the strike and the great flood. Perley must defuse the pending strike at the cotton mill because doing so puts the imprimatur of class interest on her new personality as sentimental manager of workers. On the grounds of the factory itself Perley demonstrates middle-class sentiment and settlement house work to be essentially compatible with the reproduction of capital. In fact they will enhance it, since Perley's bringing hegemonic culture to the mill workers' off hours—she organizes dramatic readings and music recitals and gives Sip Garth an engraving of Beethoven—is a way for hegemony to colonize the consciousness of workers whose own distinctive pre-industrial culture, historically, provided a basis for resistance to commodification. Through Perley, high culture displaces a worker culture which is inherently oppositional to capital.

Similarly, Sip Garth will define herself, finally, by reenacting, as public discourse, the sequestered piety which
redeems Deb Wolfe, in "Life in the Iron Mills." By becoming a street evangel who preaches submission and patience to the mill workers, Sip makes Deborah's more-silent-than-silence social quietude a prominent daily feature of working-class experience. The most lambent proletarian absence in *The Silent Partner* is Perly's literal silent Other, Catty Garth, Sip's deformed deaf mute sister. When Catty is swept away by a flood at the end of the novel, her space, her absence, on the broken bridge is immediately filled by two boards hanging together in the shape of a cross. Catty's progressive effacement by forces of heredity and environment—in the depiction of which Phelps displays a Zola-esque precision and detail—thus comes to be displaced by the symbolic suggestion that in her suffering she has become a type of Christ. But more telling than this uneasy substitution of the sign of Piety for that of proletarian impoverishment is the way that Catty's absence from the narrative is immediately filled, and explained, by the same gesture which removes her from it. The realist fiction moves immediately to substitute the Logos—a Presence implied by the Christian symbol—for the erased power and politics of worker advocacy. Only by offering this sentimentalist synecdoche for workers can the realist fiction conceal that, given its reliance on empirical protocols, workers are, essentially, invisible. As we saw in Louis Althusser's interrogation of political economy, workers' failure to register in the visual field results from
emiricism's congenital inability to reveal either the theoretical labor that "realism" does in constructing the fictive real or the concrete-real labor that workers do in creating surplus value. Catty's space cannot remain empty because the fiction of worker Otherness is itself an empty sign. It reveals more about the onlooker than it does about the worker-object. Thus by representing Catty's absence the realist fiction would threaten to reveal that its own processes and protocols are insufficient to the registration of working-class power. Catty's simultaneous erasure as a material sign and reinscription as an idealist Presence epitomizes the dialectic of working-class presence in Phelps's and Davis's texts.

The Princess Casamassima thematizes James's own strategies for controlling the working class through displacement and containment. James imagines his working-class protagonist, the anarchist manqué Hyacinth Robinson, as a strategy for defusing the ubiquitous worker discontent that culminated in the Haymarket Crisis of 1886-1887. Because of this discontent, however, Hyacinth continually resists his creator's attempt to interpret collective revolt as a sign of pathological individualism, the strategy employed by the Chicago bourgeoisie at the Haymarket trial. Like the striking Brooklyn traction workers in Sister Carrie, who are really on strike against the novel as well as against the traction company, Hyacinth contests the right of the narrative to
manage and survey him. James makes four attempts to write Hyacinth's proletarian identity and politics under erasure, and these inscriptions frame and center James's narrative.

First he shows us how the child Hyacinth, through the agency of a kind of Lacanian mirror stage, internalized a myth of individual autonomy by imagining himself into the romanticized aristocracy depicted in the penny dreadful romances for sale behind a candy store window. The myth of autonomy thus generated persists through Hyacinth's entire life despite his enlistment into an anarchist cell, and, thus, despite the fact that historical anarchism posited numerous alternatives to the definition of individual identity through consumption Hyacinth has imposed on him by his creator. This interrogation of individualism, and its vehement reassertion by the forces of hegemony, comprises a major element of the historical anarchist controversy, a controversy which reached a head at the Haymarket in 1886, where anarchists assumed the role of representatives of the proletariat while the whole world watched. So James emulates the anarchists' relation to the working class: he creates an anarchist who represents the working class.

To counter this dangerous alignment James thematizes the management of revolution in a second setting. He imagines the master anarchist Hoffendahl as an expression of the kind of colossal, all animating individualism being proclaimed by American courts as the definition under law of the capitalist
corporation. According to this logic, the revolution is only a lengthened shadow of Hoffendahl in the same way that, for instance, Standard Oil is only the lengthened shadow of John D. Rockefeller. Yet Hoffendahl cannot be divulged. For the revolutionary catechism, that "terrible oath" he administers to Hyacinth, severely corrodes the ideology of individual self-determination with which James and the American courts try to displace the collective self-determination being enacted in 1886, the Year of the Great Revolt of Labor. The contradiction brought about by thematizing its own hidden cultural work causes the time-order narrative of the novel to rupture. Paul, Hyacinth and Poupin essentially never arrive at Hoffendahl's house, at least not within the purview of the time-order narrative. And the scene of the oath can only be divulged considerably later, in the time frame of the novel, by Hyacinth to the Princess, within the walls of her country estate. Since the oath cannot be surveyed and contained within the realist fiction without rupturing one of its most important protocols, James tries yet again to find a way to constitute Hyacinth within the individualist problematic; this time he moves the narrative purview to the epicenter of red revolution, Paris. The moment of danger catalyzed by James's sharing the same strategy of representing the proletariat as the anarchists refuses to pass.

James's reaction to this persistent moment of danger is literalized in Hyacinth's walk through the Place de
Revolution in Paris, the third setting in which James tries to erase Hyacinth's proletarian contumacy. Again, James tries to do so by constituting Hyacinth within an autonomous individualism which will make collective revolt impossible to imagine. Since the constitution of finely individuated literary personalities, or characters, provides James with a weapon against the militant collectivism crowding against his margins, a strikingly psychoanalytic setting underlies both the revolutionary palimpsest of the Place of Revolution and the candy store scene we examined earlier. Hyacinth's solitary confrontation with the phallic obelisk stuck in the heart of the Place of Revolution acts as a kind of Oedipal crisis. This crisis is designed to individuate him, to separate him once and for all from the intersubjective body of the revolution. Again, as in the case of Hoffendahl and the oath, the overt self-referentiality of this scene—the way in which it evinces the politically conservative cultural work hidden in James's ostensible retreat from the political—causes the time order narrative to falter. Hyacinth's letter from Italy resumes the narrative, after a break of three weeks. And the epistolary voice in which Hyacinth narrates his own loss of commitment is a gesture that refers and defers to the history of James's art form, the novel. James hopes that through an appeal to the novel's history of constructing middle-class identities he can find a way out of the place of revolution he has created and tried
unsuccessfully to escape. Again, the retreat from working-
class historical agency causes the realist fiction to find
ways of "reflecting the real" which call attention to its
fictiveness more than to its verisimilitude. The dialectic of
working-class presence becomes known through the way that
James ruptures the protocols the realist fiction elsewhere
seeks to preserve.

James can finally terminate this cycle of recurrent
ruptures only through terminating Hyacinth Robinson. So he at
least partially fails in his attempt to constitute Hyacinth,
his representative of proletarian revolt, within an
individualist problematic. Thus Hyacinth's experience of
revolutionary ideology and involvement in a revolutionary
movement may be seen to interrogate that problematic too
strongly for it to persist. By having Hyacinth kill himself,
James reenacts the ironic self-determination Rebecca Harding
Davis allowed to Hugh Wolfe. It is as if in both cases the
appearance of self-determination inherent in suicide will
reinforce the fixity of individual identity conferred by
death. For the fixed identity conferred upon the autonomous
individual by law and surveillance is threatened by the
intersubjectivity inherent in the insurgent proletarian
collective, with its emergent class consciousness, that both
Hugh and Hyacinth represent. Thus in the setting of both
Hugh's and Hyacinth's deaths we can discern an overt
depiction of strategies of management hidden in the attempt
of the realist fiction to pass itself off as a "reflection of reality." Again, the realist fiction thematizes its cultural work of management.

In Davis's case the strategy is to confine Hugh Wolfe within a false dichotomy of jailhouse and marketplace that displaces the site of immanent worker control: the point of production. Hugh's gaze into the marketplace next to the jail locates only two alternatives for the disposal of the emerging working class: workers may either sell their labor in the marketplace, and thus commodify themselves into "private" property whose existence is often malevolent to its makers; or they can be jailed for violating the laws protecting "private" property. The dialectical possibility that property has an undeniably communal nature, a possibility Hugh has imagined and which militant workers voiced stridently during the 1860 strike, must be displaced. Thus, the jailhouse/marketplace dichotomy takes up all the available theoretical space in which to figure the power of workers to make their own history. Similarly, on the scene of Hyacinth's death James substitutes the symbol of individualist anarchist terrorism—the pistol given to Hyacinth by Hoffendahl—for the militant collectivity represented by Hyacinth, a trans-individualism being writ large in Chicago and London by mass demonstrations of worker discontent in 1885 and 1886. In the act of denying his commitment to transindividual goals, Hyacinth removes himself
from the narrative purview; only the revolver, the symbol of James's reinvention of proletarian mass revolt as individualist terrorism, remains to mark the point of his erasure.

In creating/discovering the New York setting of *A Hazard of New Fortunes* William Dean Howells discovers that the polyglossia informing his theory and practice of the novel is also a site of radical social agitation. The streets of 1889 New York are filled with ethnic immigrants, some of them socialist labor militants who are waging a strike against the Manhattan traction companies. The polyglot cacophony of those mean streets is at once analogous to and resists Howells's attempt to reinvent the European social realism of Tolstoi, Balzac and others as the language all Americans know. The dialectic (or perhaps here the dialect) of working-class presence may be seen in how often the narrative eye tries to escape from the polyglot cacophony of the streets into an audit of the intramural processes of the realist fiction. For instance, when Howells imagines the city as a series of photographs shot from the elevated railway, he is advertising the celerity of his pictorial strategy for segregating the middle-class observer from the "picturesque" proletarian life in the tenements as much as he is actually revealing that life. Evidence of proletarian power, however, returns at the dinner party given by Dryfoos, despite how the party celebrates the success of the magazine *Every Other Week*. The
magazine is a locus of the comically self-referential linguistic play into which Howells tries to escape from the implications of being himself inscribed within the dialectic of working-class presence. Driven from the dehistoricized locus of play by the recognition that play can and will emulate history, Howells attempts to purge history from the magazine utopia through reenacting the executions of the Haymarket anarchists within the pages of his novel.

Conrad Dryfoos and Berthold Lindau, thus, must both die from police violence during the trolley strike. Dryfoos, a Tolstoi-esque Christian socialist, and Lindau, a German born anarcho-socialist, die from injuries sustained while, for all intents and purposes, exercising their rights to free speech, so their resemblance to the Haymarket martyrs—predominantly European immigrants who were convicted of conspiracy—is quite pronounced. Howells cements this similarity by having Lindau resemble a famous depiction of Haymarket anarchist Samuel Fielden which circulated in a mass circulation magazine in 1886. But as successful as Howells is at exorcising the influence of "foreign" radicalisms from his dialogic utopia Every Other Week, A Hazard of New Fortunes never really recovers from the shock of having to stage the containment of working-class insurrection directly within the narrative purview. The containment of working-class unrest is a cultural work the realist fiction would often prefer to disavow. And this is especially true of Howells, who, in
1887, protested the "judicial murder" of the Haymarket anarchists, and saw the mission of the "realist" as the creation of a democratic consensus over what America should mean. Howells's narrative of genteel society, thus, is shattered not only by a symbolic irruption of workers into the Dryfoos drawing room, but, more importantly, by arriving at a rather unattractive self-knowledge: that the management of workers—even if it means resorting to violence to do so—is part of the cultural work the realist fiction must inevitably perform.

Howells tries to heal his shattered narrative by cataloging historical models of closure for the novel genre, referring and deferring to the history of the genre as a way of, one might say, displacing the genre of history from his pages. But unlike James's succinct reference/deference in Casamassima—where Hyacinth at least gave the appearance of rejecting the revolution—Howells draws attention to his consternation over picturing the conservative cultural work of his novel by offering a hundred pages of self-consciously conventional genteel endings. Finally, the best he can do to close his novel is attempt to disavow the knowledge of his own complicity in political reaction. Thus he refuses to allow the Marches to uncritically accept Margaret Vance's look of "knowledge that surpasses understanding" as a sentimental synecdoche containing and obscuring proletarian identity, the tactic of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps and, to a
lesser extent, Rebecca Harding Davis. The realist theme thus made visible by the dialectic of working-class presence shatters Howells's fiction of the real, leaving him to somewhat pathetically protest that at least he is no sentimentalist.

3. Finally, *Sister Carrie* may be seen as deeply determined by conflicting definitions of what work is and by the overt search for a "manager" for the proletarian rhetorics of production that throng the streets of Dreiser's "fairy land" of consumption. When we turn a cold eye on the spaces assigned to working people and their organizations in Dreiser's and the others' fiction of the real, then, we often find that worker-shaped lacunae pepper its otherwise densely-figured fictive reality. Workers often appear to be written under a species of erasure in the realist fiction, for, as the above chapters have shown, their inclusion often reveals realist strategies for the organization of narrative—the control of time, characterization, description and setting—to be insufficient to the task of registering the working class, producing a fictive worker who is knowable by the shape of his/her absence from the realist fiction. Similar gaps in "realistic" narrative have been explained by contemporary critics as spawned by generic conflicts, such as that of romance versus realism; as symptoms of influence anxiety, such as that between Henry James and Hawthorne; or
as the effects of emergent mass media forms on the novel (see Seltzer, Rowe, Kaplan). New historicist criticism, however, has proven quite shy about exploring the semiotic and rhetorical links between worker resistance and realist fictions. And the question should be asked whether such criticism reproduces realist strategies for the management of working-class consciousness and activism as much as it comments upon them. The reason for this paradoxical reluctance (on the part of left-oriented critics well-versed in Marx and his critical inheritors) to explore the effect of working-class resistance on the realist fiction may perhaps be found in the new historicists' problematic relation to the working class, in its dual role as historical presence and knowledge-object. For if one adds the working-class to the new historicist depiction of realism's socially-constructed Real then that Real begins to look suspiciously like the History of so-called "vulgar" Marxism, a coinage debased by its connections to Stalinist totalitarianism.

Despite the sophisticated marxian reidentification of literature as a battleground of conflicting ideologies—an identification made, most notably, by Terry Eagleton (1976), Pierre Macherey (1969) and Frederic Jameson (1981)—no recent literary close readings have truly figured the literary articulation of class interests suggested by E.P. Thompson. This historiographic path has not been followed by new historicist critics of realism; and it is because of this
neglect, I would argue, that the conceptualization of class in literary scholarship has largely been abandoned. Without a deepening of our understanding of the ways that the history of working people has come to be figured, the conceptualization of class tends to appear on the scholarly scene as a kind of ideological idiot cousin—its blood vitiated by Zhadonite prolekult and other Stalinist monstrosities—to the sleek, fashionably ahistorical European critical technologies that have been embraced in America since Jacques Derrida first stepped onto the podium at Johns Hopkins back in 1966. Thus it is only by staging the historiographic debate over the writing of working-class history within the arena of literary criticism and literary theory that the conceptualization of class may be rescued from the rubbish heap of criticism.

If we redefine the mimesis carried on by realist and naturalist fictions in terms of the dialectic of working-class presence suggested by E.P. Thompson, the worker-shaped lacunae in the realist fiction may be seen to resist new historicist explanations of them. Instead, the erased representation of workers in the realist fiction suggests that the historical American working class, even in its function as object of the hegemonic ideology, contends with the narrative over the manner in which it, the working class, will be represented. If we, to borrow Frederic Jameson's phrase "drive the wedge of the concept of a text"(16) into
this troubled relation between the historical working class and certain realist fictions we can surmise a socially-determined process of representation acting itself out in both texts and historical events. The labor union, ideally, seeks to represent and in some way empower workers; the novelist seeks to represent them as well, often for the purpose of establishing his/her credibility as a purveyor of the Real in a literary marketplace determined by the genre of realism. In describing this second act of representation, new historicism is quite accurate: by making a spectacle of worker contumacy for the consumption, and self-identification, of the middle-class subject, realism does assimilate the often contentious, usually polarized class relations of the Gilded Age to the triumph of the commodity. However, new historicist literary scholars have paid almost no attention to the ways that the resistance to commodification posed by historical working-class communities— as illustrated in the studies of Brecher, Gutman, Corbin and others— comes to be enacted on the literary page, in worker resistance to the realist fiction of commodities and spectacles. In other words, the realist fiction of (erased) worker resistance extends off the page into the concrete real, the flesh and blood history of worker resistance. To naturalize the social order, the realist fiction invites class insurrection into discourse, but the forms in which that insurrection enters discourse must have
a certain rhetorical autonomy if working-class Otherness is to be more than a mere paper tiger. This immanent class insurrection, however, poses the dissolution of both the social order which realism seeks to naturalize and the realist discourse by which that naturalization is effected. James, Davis, Phelps and the others, through their self-defining attempt to at once depict and subdue class struggle, pose a threat to the literary commodification of the social order they also carry out.

Late-nineteenth century fiction may exclude militant workers from the narrative focus—as do Rebecca Harding Davis and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps—or individuate militant workers into alienated monads—as Henry James does—or negate the existence of proletarian advocacy groups whose power must be in some way invoked by the narrative—the tactic of Dreiser and Howells. But the marginalized workers usually find some way to irrupt into the center of the narrative. Thus the realist fiction must both invite the working-class into discourse and represent hegemonic social controls over it. But because this latter representation reveals the resistance of the concrete real to "naturalization," the attempt to contain proletarian power within a register of spectacles and commodities never really succeeds. The socio-political forces which attempted to quash working-class insurrection saw it spring up again and again in the cycle of strikes and revolts that marked late nineteenth and early twentieth century
America. And, similarly, the working-class presence always asserts itself in literature, bulging literary margins by deforming the ideological prescription of the Real, informing "character," "plot," "tone," metaphor and other privileged artistic categories by imagining workers in ways not accounted for in mere verisimilar mimesis. Thus my title reveals what I hope is a fertile indeterminacy, an indeterminacy which the literature of the United States has been driven to emulate by the dialectic of working-class presence. For if that literature generates itself by imagining workers, those workers also imagine themselves into literature. Thus both the institutions of bourgeois life and the realist fictions that make those institutions appear natural can, and should, be read as evidence that the working class has, in some essential way that has come to be ignored, written its own history.
Works Cited


Vita

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