

SECURITY EXCHANGES:
THE RISE OF SYSTEMATIC CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN THE GILDED AGE U. S.
IMAGINATION

By
TODD REYNOLDS

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To my mother and my father, just two of the working people—past, present, and future—whose struggle makes the political challenges offered through public higher education both possible and necessary.

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In September 2004, after the graduate student employees had occupied the UF administration building in protest of not receiving their pay for eight weeks, one letter to the editor of the *Gainesville Sun* chastised that local paper for seemingly taking the graduate workers side “against the University of Florida.” This challenge to workers rights would be just one instance within an ongoing battle for ownership of the University of Florida in particular and American Higher Education in general. The rallying cry in those days, as it is today, was “the administration is not the University of Florida; we, the working people, are.” Upon the social body composed of these workers, not just the faculty and the graduate students, but also the local community of activists, my education has been built; and this social body almost certainly does not include the central administration of the University of Florida who has periodically attempted to redefine the university’s function as an institution to both generate revenues and further deny access to whole segments of the population on whose back a public university has itself been constructed. In this sense, and with the understanding that the discovery of new knowledge—the work of those employed in the university take as their charge—is itself a social act, not the work of any one author, but a composite of social life in general, I wish to address that true university community: I am honored to have been able to labor in your ranks, and I can only hope that this dissertation can be considered adequate enough to participate in the work it is so vital for us to undertake.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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By

Todd Reynolds

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This study traces the rise of a system of U.S. criminal justice in response to the growing labor unrest and nascent nationalist imperialism at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. In particular I look at the stories that working people told themselves, as well as the stories propagated by the interests of industrial capitalism, about what it meant to be considered a citizen in this extraordinarily turbulent era.

CHAPTER 1.
“IT WAS EVERYWHERE; IT WAS NOWHERE”: 1877 AND LABOR IN THE NEW
INDUSTRIAL NATION

The Calculus of Nation Building: Commensurability and History in the Industrial Age

The first task confronting the author in Allan Pinkerton’s 1878 memoir *Strikers, Communists, Tramps, and Detectives* is the problem of bringing the labor unrest of the 1877 national railroad strike into public consciousness, to grasp this relatively new kind of mass-discontent in a way that utilizes the political vocabulary available at the time. The vehicle this detective-turned-author uses to register these events of 1877 is a text that is at once crime story, corporate advertisement, and history lesson. The text’s first attempt to contain the threat of general revolution posed by 1877, then, involves a reification of history, abstracting the events of 1877 from their contexts and placing them in some level of commensurate relation with other abstracted historical events in order to justify new practices to diffuse the threat. Contrasting the general strike of 1877 against the “Great Rebellion” that began the U.S. Civil War, Pinkerton wrote

There was something tangible about our great Rebellion. Public expectation was to a certain degree prepared for it. [...] For some time previous to the beginning of hostilities the two sections had become more distinct and separate, in all that constitutes mutual respect and consideration, than two contiguous unfriendly nations. All that was needed to complete the isolation of each was the border forts and the border patrol. [...] When [the hostilities] came, their consequences followed naturally and in constant order; and though neither section was wholly prepared for the rapid culmination of the numberless startling and dramatic events which crowded into the four years of civil conflict, both were enabled, through this previous certainty of some sort of peril, to cope with the same with an increasing wisdom and judgment.

Using the events of the Civil War as the standard, Pinkerton’s text demonstrates that the ability to locate the forces of contention is in and of itself “settling.” Thus, the reified picture of the Civil War is rendered here in terms as a rather stately conflict; that is, Pinkerton’s snapshot presents this antagonism literally made civil—less shocking, less disquieting, less disturbing to a

general public because the tensions supposedly developed gradually. In the language of mass-scale unrest, the politics of nation-building—represented here in the imagining of conflict as that not between people *per se* but between people organized into nation-states—offers the best way to minimize the damage of social unrest.

When his attention turns to the riots of 1877, Pinkerton's tone changes dramatically.

Anxieties over labor antagonism here cannot be easily framed within a context of inter-national conflict; rather, such unrest threatens the idea of nation itself:

But how different were we situated when this last great terror came upon us, and how unusual and startling were its phases and conditions! It was everywhere; it was nowhere. A condition of sedition which can be located, fixed, or given boundaries, may, by any ordinary community or government, be subdued. This uprising, in its far-reaching extent, was so alarmingly sudden that it seemed like the hideous growth of a night. (Pinkerton 13-4)

The panic evident in Pinkerton's response is telling as to what this new, elusive type of threat really presents, for as an anomalous "hideous growth of a night" it challenges and defies illumination and description. Moreover, as Pinkerton develops what he sees as a link between the riots of the 1877 strike and the Paris commune of 1871, an alternative model materializes that registers collective consciousness in a way that directly defies the available narratives of mid-century nationalism. Indeed, what seemed a new global challenge to the assumed "proper social order" of the nation-state was excitedly beginning to take shape. As Benedict Anderson notes, the first appearance of the word *anarchist* as a technical-political term occurred in 1877 amid the larger global counter to capitalism's arrangement of social life under the nation-state (72).¹ In

¹ Anderson's description of the social climate in which the term *anarchist* is coined offers a powerful perspective on the ways people planned their collective challenges to exploitative modes of production in industrial capitalism, as well as illuminating how many felt that other modes of resistance to capital were more easily quashed under apparatuses available to the industrial nation-state of the late nineteenth century. For a good deal of anti-capitalists, a recognition of the ways in which economic exploitation works through the nation-state became itself a grounds for political action. "Anarchism's emphasis on personal liberty and autonomy, its typical suspicion of hierarchical ('bureaucratic') organization, and its penchant for vitriolic rhetoric," Anderson writes, "made its appeal especially great under political conditions of severe repression by rightwing regimes. Such regimes found it much easier to

addition, certain critical flashpoints of U.S. history—the 1877 “national” railroad strike, the 1886 Haymarket incident, the 1892 Homestead Strike, the 1894 Pullman Strike, and the 1901 assassination of U.S. President William McKinley—were often described as the results of the political philosophy of *anarchism*; the word belied a terrifying sense of the desire and inability to name, frame, and conform to the political narrative of stateliness. In this sense, *anarchism* as term filled a general void, the ominous shadow not intelligible by the vocabulary available to the narrative of the industrial nation-state.²

Locating the source of rebellion is at once simple and difficult, and Pinkerton’s memoir of 1877 proceeds to reason that refugees from the 1871 Paris commune did more than merely influence, but directly participated in, the railroad action. Dedicating chapters in this history of 1877 to Paris 1871, Pinkerton’s text demonstrates a very palpable fear that this new unrest escapes what the cultural logic grasps as a materially present idea of managing mass populations—a nation-state. In other words, because these upheavals has no governments nor forts from which battle plans could be drawn, the fear emanating from a cultural anxiety over

smash trade unions and political parties than to keep track of, penetrate, and destroy dozens of self-generated autonomous groupuscles” (72).

² One glaring example of the socio-political deployment of the term as a method of identifying and locating the challenge to the capitalist nation-state can be found in August Spies’s comments at his 1887 trial for his alleged involvement in the Haymarket riots. Spies and the other men held accountable for the throwing of a bomb that had killed numerous Chicago police officers on May 4, 1886 (despite the fact that evidence shows they had done nothing more than organize the speeches and protests for that day), only accept the appellation placed upon them as “anarchists” at this final trial before their execution, as a moment of resistance and defiance. Previous to this point, these anti-capitalists would have been loathe to call themselves “anarchists.” Spies, often quick to point out his belief in socialism and the struggle of communities of working people to abolish the wage system, declared at his defense

Grinnell [one of the prosecutors in the case] has intimated to us that Anarchism was on trial. The theory of Anarchism belongs to the realm of speculative philosophy. There was not a syllable said about Anarchism at the Haymarket meeting. At that meeting the very popular theme of reducing the hours of toil was discussed. But “Anarchism is on trial!” foams Mr. Grinnell. If that is the case, your honor, very well: you may sentence me, for I am an Anarchist. I believe with Buckle, with Paine, Jefferson, Emerson and Spencer, and many other great thinkers of this century, that the state of castes and classes—the state where one class dominates over and lives upon the labor of another class, and calls this order—yes, I believe that this barbaric form of social organization, with its legalized plunder and murder, is doomed to die, and make room for a free society, voluntary association, or universal brotherhood, if you like. (Spies 14)

conflict was that the conflict superseded an assumed idea of the state—that perhaps nation-state was itself an overdetermined response to new forms of mass conflict. Pinkerton’s reaction is to append or even develop new practices and modes of social intervention that would better equip the state to contain and direct mass-scale unrest; the detective memoir he publishes, while serving as advertisement for his new agency of private, professional investigators, participates in a much larger project of imagining the social discord and conflict that had been accelerating in the final years of the nineteenth century, and submerging or channeling this unrest into a narrative form that reworks social conflict into that between “law-abiding” or “law-transgressing” citizenship.

The problem I pose here contemplates a collective imaginary attempting to understand human activity from 1877 and continuing throughout the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, with large-scale, general, indeed *national* labor unrest. My project demonstrates that from the 1870’s through the turn-of-the-century, and via diverse, often new methods of representation from dime novels to early motion pictures and even World’s Fairs and planned industrial communities, American cultural production reframed political activity within a new schema of citizenship in order to both diffuse the social antagonisms forged by the dynamics of production under the flag of nationalist sovereignty as well as to prepare capital for a global expanse through that new notion of nationhood. In giving historical significance to 1877 in this particular way, cultural logic recontextualizes upheaval and revolution in a new juridico-political way. Here I examine how and why the areas of labor, unionism, professionalism, a new type of imperialism, a new notion of what counts as technology, and even what has cultural value as public as response to a momentum of privatization, affect the imagination to the point in which *identity* becomes a commodity of elaborate social systems—what Stephanie Smith has

identified as an endeavor to collapse complexities in order to render “[t]hat which was at one time unpalatable or difficult to swallow in the popular perception [...] tasty” (135). Moreover, this project looks at to what extent an identitarian politics depend upon a management the global masses that divides them into “law-abiding” at one polar end, “criminal” on another.

According to the logic exhibited by texts like Pinkerton’s, the urgency to comprehend and manage new forms of mass conflict demands that a new idea of nation be recovered within the context of the new tensions wrought by industrial and investment capital. The modern U.S. criminal justice system, like the detective/crime novels that were ubiquitous in the era, or more generally like the movement of literary social realism itself, strives to capture and represent revolutionary sentiment in a way that never explicitly challenges but indeed tacitly facilitates modes of production that would further develop the industrialist nation state as it prepared to be an agent on the stage of global capital. Rather than telling a tale of socio-political antagonisms based on the modes of production that prevailed in the later portions of the century, the narrative mantra/new state apparatus frames social life and politics within a larger project to maintain law-and-order, to assuage any and all threats under the rubric of domestic or nationalist security. Rather than placing emphasis on the population as a mass of producers, the heightened emphasis on the dynamics of security—exemplified by these artifacts that grant us some access to a general, broadly social view—depict the creation of a consumerist culture, eviscerating the living-labor element from the political field. In effect, the social bond upon which any sort of communal resolution can be built is reconfigured from the shared capacity of all humans to labor and produce to the shared condition of being completely subjected to the nation-state as a social formation intended to maximize surplus production and accumulation.

The cultural logic then privileges and offers as panacea a new way of understanding human activity, i.e., through specific systems that linked together constitute a technology of justice and a narrative mechanism that virtually runs on its own, like clockwork. A project that needed to actively suppress any sort of realization of the population as consisting of workers/producers must also of course present justice itself as free of any sort of “limited perspective” of human agency and authorship. A new mechanism of justice as a narrative of social realism systematically reanimates its characters not based on the prevailing modes of production, reproduction, and accumulation, but instead based on legal/judicial notions of criminality and citizenship. And, as Stephanie Smith has shown elsewhere, the developing perception of authorship as professional producer in this era of the novel of social realism (and thus a professional working in the field of knowledge production) as specialized and not alienated worker—distinct from or above “the rabble”—assumes reading and/or interpretation as subordinate activities and as acts of consumption (109, 111). Thus, new systems of justice are *de facto* dependent upon whole populations maneuvered into the passive role of consumers in need of security; all political activity becomes specialized, professionalized, not something for the masses to participate in or collectively author, but for everyone to passively experience, be subject to, or consume. The vehicle to this reorganization under specialized politics of the industrial nation-state is the machine-like narrative of the criminal justice system. It is not for the masses to write the narrative of justice, but rather for the individual to interpret where she or he might fit within this master narrative that has been systematically, mechanically reproduced before them.

I begin my dissertation with the extended quote from this detective memoir to illuminate the numerous anxieties and slippages that participated in a larger, cultural imagination. Often

using 1877 as a marker for a new era (for it saw the end of reconstruction and the return of white rule in the South as well as the beginning of mass-scale labor revolt), historians of this period have presented a wide array of arguments on the late nineteenth century, ranging from calling the period one of the bitterest explosions of class warfare in American history (such is the argument posited by Eric Foner, Robert V. Bruce, Lawrence Goodwin, and Nell Irvin Painter) to emphasizing the level of social unease with technological and mechanical changes shared by both working and middle-class—an unease that the “iron horse” catalyzes tensions in what counts culturally as public, and what is becoming increasingly mechanized, unnatural (and by implication, privatized) space. Leo Marx’s *The Machine in the Garden* is not the only example of this latter view; David O. Stowell’s *Streets, Railroads, and the Great Strike of 1877* exemplifies this vein of thinking, de-emphasizing class differences in arguing that in northern cities like Albany, Buffalo, and Syracuse, “The Great National Strike of 1877” was much more of a spontaneous uprising of urban peoples from different economic and social stratum in response to “one of the most direct and damaging ways that they experienced capitalist industrialization outside of the workplace, namely, the use of the city streets by railroads” (1). Surely, despite Stowell’s explicit de-emphasis of class, a contention over what will constitute public vs. privatizing urban space can itself be a residual conflict of class practices. And, just as surely, describing 1877 in terms of class conflict seems to situate class in a very confining, static, (and perhaps also spatially contained) system, a description that hardly speaks to anxieties over the complexities of unrest, and deflates an idea of class as a lived, social relation. The problem exhibited here rather seems to revolve around a paranoia about nation itself which history has settled; that is, these critical and historical interpretations have already conceded to, if not placed implicit faith in, an idea of nation that had been exhibited and rhetorically assumed as a starting

point for, and ultimate resolution to, any history expressed in the cultural logic, without interrogating what nation has historically come to mean. In short, each subscribes to an idea of history as a system of commensurability, whose telos is nation.

Pinkerton's text is demonstrative of a new anxiety over change that threatens to rupture what was culturally understood as history—threatens to explode the subjects of that history, i.e., the nation-state. Because revolution is at once “everywhere and nowhere,” the avenues for resolving conflict were simply not yet available. But what is also remarkable is the extent through which one of the first instances in American culture of a “red scare” is used to reformat history within the context of the nation-state engulfed in new sorts of class conflicts. This detective memoir/history blames foreign instigators and refugees from the Paris commune as the most responsible for 1877, allying the poor and “tramps,” who like the revolutionary spirit were both everywhere and nowhere, as one particular symptom of industry and investment.³ However, Pinkerton's use of a red-scare tactic does not use the same warrants of those very same tactics we are familiar with today, following the McCarthyism of the middle twentieth century that brought new descriptors of nationalism into the cultural lexicon. The view of those refugees of the Paris commune as “un-American” is a secondary concern in this nineteenth-century anxiety; instead, Pinkerton's detective memoir gives also a history of Paris 1871, chronicling the “heinous acts of those lawless communists,” whose “prompt and utter extermination, in this and all other countries, is the only method of removing a constant menace and peril to government and society” (67). It would seem that here, Pinkerton's first concern is the divert of all forms of active resistance to capitalist exploitation and make those resistances legible as criminal

³ Christian Parenti's critical analysis of the contemporary Prison Industrial Complex, a term used to describe the systematic use of correctional state apparatuses as a resolution of social and economic conflict, and thus a perpetuation of post-consumerist capital, notes that the targets of this system, the impoverished and those more actively seeking social justice, are treated as “social dust” or “social dynamite,” and thus are always targeted by any advance in social suppression.

challenges to the nation-state, a social formation that on the surface appeared to have very little to do with the production and accumulation of the surpluses that defined industrial capitalism.

It would be an understatement to describe the era following the Civil War as an era of social, political, and cultural upheaval. Numerous studies have been dedicated to this purpose, focusing primarily on the new social stratifications as a result of the advance of machine production (as in Alan Trachtenberg's *The Incorporation of America*), as a result of racial re-ordering after emancipation⁴ and rise of Jim Crow and lynching (as in Sandra Gunning's *Race, Rape, and Lynching* and Trudier Harris's *Exorcizing Blackness*), or as a result of the discord between business and labor (as in Alan Dawley's *Struggles for Justice*). But I am primarily interested in the new ways that the social sphere in this period remodels itself through a shift in perception on a juridical level. The cultural imagination relocates conflict into not one of international relations—foreign versus domestic—*per se*, but instead intra-national relations—criminal contra law-abiding social subjects.

Certainly, as Douglas Kellner has shown, such questions would be of central importance for a burgeoning critical theory that attempted to resolve the increasingly authoritarian position of the state and the rapidly developing modes of capitalism (Kellner 66). Subtle disagreements existed between “fellow travelers” of the Frankfurt School as to whether, as Otto Kirchheimer argued, the state marked the organic development from liberal capitalism to organized, monopoly capitalism or whether, as Max Horkheimer argued, the “tattered veil” of capital had been replaced by the a completely new, techno-political apparatus of the state as absolute authoritarian regime (44). This study sides with the former and looks at specific developments

⁴ Patricia Williams uses the term “unowned” rather than “emancipated” to describe the African American former slaves after the Civil War. “They were also disowned: they were thrust out of the market and into a nowhere land that was not quite the mainstream labor market, and very much outside the marketplace of rights” (21).

characteristic of what we understand to be the modern state as can only be understood in its history forged in the tumultuous groundswell of unrest and revolution that was the late-nineteenth-century U.S. industrial age. This study's conclusion agrees with the view of the modern state—and its imperial trajectory—as the development of a capitalist economy and organization of society meant to maximize efficient productivity and guarantee the production of surpluses by embedding a diffusion of the antagonisms of production in favor of an emphasis on securing spaces for a consumerism into the idea of an imperializing nation state.

To this extent, the new technologies of justice emerge to marginalize the contours of economic and social conflict stemming from industry's advance: what easier way to rationalize the complexities of social discord in an era of mechanical reproduction than to measure them with the objective, rational, systemic law? The ways in which crime and punishment were envisioned and then distributed becomes a way of mapping the contradictions, anxieties, and antagonisms that had been produced by burgeoning capital into a narrative of crime and punishment. In an era where the machine was the fetish because of its faculties for mass production, cultural systems also became the choice for resolving social problems. Put another way, the groundwork was laid in place so that the expression “the system works” could culturally make sense.

An analysis of the function of a systemized set of laws that manage interactions among the population as a channeling of social conflict is not really new. Psychoanalytic critic Rene Girard's *Violence and the Sacred* demonstrates the key distinction through how civilization (and for Girard, that means the European West) claims as its definitive feature the incorporation of some systematized judicial apparatus. Whereas “primitive societies” are subject to a vicious cycle of violence,

for us [civilized as opposed to primitive societies] the cycle has been broken. We owe our good fortune to one of our social institutions above all: our juridical system, which serves to deflect the menace of vengeance. This system does not suppress vengeance; rather, it effectively limits it to a single act of reprisal, enacted by a sovereign authority specializing in this particular function. The decisions of the judiciary are invariably presented as the final word on vengeance. (Girard 15)

The *civilizing mechanism* herein that differentiates the west from Other seems to be the ritual of the judicial *system*. But Girard later points out that this ritual is nothing more than a regular exercise of “good violence” (17), a notion that seems to underlie our entire reliance on a benevolent notion of justice. This principle introduces the possibility that the whole idea of justice as an objective machine defers our desires for reciprocal revenge and works to suppress and redirect the conflicts and frictions that emerge as industrial and investment capital develops.

An emphasis on a legalized entity, an identity, emerges as a product of this new vision that resubjugates the populace. In effect, this activity is a recolonization of the population that responds to the increases of urbanization, machine production, labor and racial discord by altering notions of citizenship based on the degree to which the individual subjects her or himself to those laws. Such a rubric calls for a new, critical lens with which to view the roles of policing agents (a role that had been gaining national prominence through the nineteenth century, culminating in the introduction of a national police force, the FBI, in 1908), the threats posed by individuals marked as criminals (a specific anxiety that had been associated with the rise of urban populations, as Karen Halttunen’s *Confidence Men and Painted Women* argues), and other actions industrializing society takes (such as the rise of the modern criminal justice system and prison industrial complex) to maintain a sense of a stratified, positivist order. Rather than reducing the issue to one in which particular factors in the social climate determine these institutionalized formations, I believe, as Raymond Williams asserts in *Marxism and Literature*, that literature stages the process by which these factors dynamically participate in a historical,

material production of a particular mechanism that situates a response to the question of citizenship within a capitalist-industrialist nation. Using the words of Fredric Jameson, we must analyze the ideological production of very real structures, an analysis to “explore the multiple paths that lead to the unmasking of cultural artifacts as socially symbolic acts” (*The Political Unconscious* 36). But beyond that, we must explore the cultural practices, literary and otherwise, that populate a political landscape and set the terms for the imagination of a people who would remake themselves as citizens of an industrializing, modern, national community.

Realism’s projection: Exporting Consumerism, Docility, and Security

If the issue as I have posed it is one of systemically containing into identity a particular discourse, I propose to look to a period of American history in which controllable, predictable, mechanized methods of production for mass consumption begin to make headway. In short, I mark as this period of cultural history a beginning of a particular technology of docility. Amy Kaplan’s argument in what has been continually understood as “American literary realism” grounds my point:

The renewed interest in history, however, has reconstructed a new social context for realism as well. Realism is now related primarily to the rise of consumer culture in the late nineteenth century, in which the process of commodification makes all forms of the quotidian perform in what Guy Debord has called the “society of the spectacle.” In this context, the novelist’s attempt to represent everyday life is understood either as a way of staging a series of acts of exhibition for symbolic consumption, or as a means of engaging in one of the most common activities of modern life: “just looking.” (Kaplan 7)

Ontologically structuring human activity on a massive scale to the point that activity is a specific state or phase in relation to and distinct from “just looking,” the cultural logic and master-narrative envisions human interaction as again a calculus of reciprocity to the point that all activity can be understood to produce an end—all activity can be now measured commensurate

against others, *captured* (using the Deleuzian term) for consumption.⁵ If the period, as many literary historians have remarked, does indeed advance this notion of spectacle, of just looking, it also must be recognized as having a specific role in industrial and capital's advance, managing mass populations and organizing them into an idea of citizens as consumers.

As law-abiding citizenship becomes the marker through which new forms of consumption can be mapped and dispersed, such an effort belies the expansive characteristics of industrial nationalism, a new imperialism that begins in the late nineteenth century for the United States. By the end of the nineteenth century, the nation would be heavily involved in bringing freedom to other localities outside the U.S. border, but only after the trajectory of industrial nationhood had remade, managed, and made docile its own population. The project of industrial nationalism can happen only with not just the permission of the population's imagination, but also with its willful participation, a process which uses as its key terms measuring the place of the law-abiding against the role of those who would commit crimes *against civilized society*. Both archetypes thus created are still grouped under the genus citizen, not having inherent rights, but having those rights derived by the industrial nation. If industrial nationalism is an expansive projection, any action inefficient to imperial growth is socially deviant, a social illness in need of a cure.

The product has been given governance over the process, and this shifts over to a de-emphasis of labor, now governed by consumption. It is in this spirit that Horkheimer and Adorno note, "[t]he criminal has always been bourgeois—like the retribution which consists in robbing him of his freedom. [...] Man in prison is the virtual image of the bourgeois type which he still

⁵ Fredric Jameson's essay "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture" recognizes this tendency of instrumentally reorganizing human activity within a burgeoning system of capitalism as a process of reification. See Jameson, *The Jameson Reader*, 124.

has to become in reality” (225-6). What a systematized projection of justice belies, then, is its attempt to manage and remake all human labor subject to a new type of sovereignty—a radical reduction of all people as commensurate under the moniker citizen, with codified rights, responsibilities, freedoms that are granted and taken away at the command of the new sovereign on a global theater. The emergence of systematized criminal justice in late nineteenth-century America hinges on consumption as the inscription of citizenship.

The material representations of the cultural imaginary at this juncture exemplify the precarious theme of justice and social order as inherent in reality—a term I will here use to describe productions of the public mind, in varying degrees of stability, that make policing a grounds for narrating and constructing subjectivity, foreground the correctional/ debt repayment idea of justice/reciprocity for acts marked criminal (for the violator of the law is rendered in economic terms a negative—owing a debt to the social whole), and deal with a potential for collective action within the new imperial/industrial-national trajectory.

The tenor of the strategy of social maintenance on (and into) a national scale is the notion of realism as a culture of surveillance, but a surveillance intuited by the new Taylorist automaton, the industrial-national citizen, a citizen of both the nation and the world-as-potential-marketplace. Critics like Kaplan and Mark Seltzer have applied Foucauldian notions of surveillance and panopticism to the literary period termed *realism* as a dynamic relation in which “the realist participates in the panoptic forces which both control and produce the real world by seeing it without being seen in turn” (Kaplan 7). The strategy of realism, in order to make an explanation for these social dissonances or changes in the social fabric, is to make itself as transparent as possible to immerse itself into the cultural logic. In order to promote a unified sense of national identity as authentic, realism hides its structure and makes its artistry

disappear—to make itself into documentary, to choose to mask itself in a more epistemological or scientific approach toward understanding and reasoning human behavior. But in so far as realism can be described as a conscious movement, a blueprint for representation, the concept of the realist project presents a distinct paradox: when confronted with the popular, melodramatic, and sentimental, the professional, disciplined author—the Realist—demonstrates that her or his work is without authorial embellishment. Invoking the term “realism,” thus suggests both professional authorship and a fundamental absence of authorship. While much of Kaplan and Seltzer’s analysis is confined to texts commonly categorized as works of American literary realism, I want to expand the definition of a cultural production that participates in the logic of an attempt to narrate emergent social antagonisms into collective consciousness, one that defies the normalized assumptions about authorship that contributes to, indeed advances, social divisions of labor so as to maximize individualization at the expense of the social whole. Realist authors recreate themselves as realist authors as professionals, distinct from unskilled labor, rather than recognizing that those who produce are part of surplus labor. For example, the popular culture texts of the late nineteenth century—the dime novels and story papers purchased and read by so many working-class people, the early motion-picture shorts that had been quite popular in nickelodeons and old vaudeville theaters, or the attractions meant for a general public like the numerous world fairs and exhibitions that wrote technology as the potential utopian solution to the labor question and social antagonisms—also contribute in significant ways. Furthermore, I’m not merely asking how did people live their everyday lives in that period and location, but how a particular way of understanding presented itself as a technology that resulted in a very real product or commodity—identity—as it was invested within this new, massive plan for managing the spaces and relations of production in order to exponentially grow wealth.

However, the literary movement “American literary realism” was itself also intentional in that it saw itself as an aesthetic (and thus political) response to the technologies that immersed the literary market with mass-produced texts. At this time, as Nancy Glazener’s work on this particular literary period *Reading for Realism* notes, professional authorship arises in response and contradistinction to more popular literature, an effort that seems to parallel a rise in professionalism in general to distinguish itself from unskilled labor.⁶ The aforementioned paradox of American literary realism thus presents itself with a distinctly political effect: remaking authorship into a science of observation, the project of realism serves to give the professional, absolutely distinct from the masses of unskilled labor, privileged access as to what will count as political. Invoking the term “realism” already links any debate and discussion over cultural production to the social divisions and political anxieties within and/or against a projection of imperial-citizenship, and as Bill Brown remarks in *The Material Unconscious*: “popular culture itself promoted an understanding of its popular potential, envisioning new modes of affiliation within a new public sphere—and thus prefiguring the desire within the field of cultural studies, to re-imagine mass culture as genuinely popular” (22-3). It is here where these high culture narrative projects of a realist movement place their stamp on what composes an official marketplace/nation. Priscilla Wald in *Constituting Americans* expounds upon the importance of narrative in this setting: “official stories are narratives that surface in the rhetoric of nationalist movements and initiatives. [...] Official stories constitute Americans [...] because] they determine the status of an individual in the community” (2). Canonized realism already intuits the colonizing project of industrial advance by its attempt to dissociate itself from a

⁶ Burton Bledstein’s work in *The Culture of Professionalism* analyzes the rise of higher education at particular Universities across the Midwest as an apparatus to create “professional,” distinct from unskilled, general human labor. See Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America*, New York: Norton, 1976.

popular production— professionalism will index all fields of human activity in order to deflect the question of labor against capital, and thus efficiently secure industrial-national growth.

Further, the anxieties of the period that grappled with the economic and social antagonisms fragment and compartmentalize the lives of the population. According to Brown, recreation literally became something deemed necessary to re-create the worker as worker, yet distinct from what counted as work, and thus in Marxian terms secures the reproduction of the social relations of production (29). In a similar vein, but on a macro level, the cultural project compartmentalizes social space, measuring a public space by redrawing its boundaries as privatizing space advances, the two poles apparently necessary to advance social health and growth. My project here traverses these spaces and social divisions, high and low culture, literature versus other manifestations of communal imagination (such as early film and even planned company towns), work versus amusement, public versus private, as those divisions come into play in defining what really counts as crime as it is used to bring the population under one system conducive to commodity culture.

It is no accident that this period sees the rise of what we understand to be the modern criminal justice system which regulates the spatio-temporal relationship of its subjects to one another; the field of criminology traces its historical origins to this period as well. The shift in the legal discourse, as Foucault states in *Discipline and Punish*, locates both the subject—the individual to whom the laws apply—and justice —the means and grounds for punishment of offenses—into a spatio-temporal fixed avatar of the body. Enlightened (i.e., appearing fair and reciprocal) punishment fits the crime when it enacts its process of establishing a truth of the transgression upon the body of the offender. The form of power *par excellence*, then, according to Foucault, remains a function of the legislator, and its mode of action, “is of a juridico-

discursive order” (*History of Sexuality* 83). The body becomes the location through which all these social divisions contend, the medium through which technical advance is measured, the field which is targeted for scientific suppression, and in turn becomes as Brown posits, “a visceral sensation reducing the self to an agentless sensorium” (46). As a result, the discourse of crime and punishment has both 1) made itself over as one absent of human agency and influence, as well as 2) allowed a shift in the perspective of citizenship as a function of the spatio-temporal embodying of the subject. Hence, citizenship in imperializing America starts on the micro level, making the individual human body and its every action the location for compliance with the law, and the medium through which “debts to society” will be repaid.

That mechanism of systematized justice has been employed to cover the area which has been debated on what counts as public space. Whether it serves to show the weight of the crime, to reinitiate and rehabilitate the offender back into the wounded community by making the society more acutely aware of the offender’s regret and re-education, or serving to deter further offenses against the community, responses to “crimes against society” and “repaying one’s debt to society”—thus assumed as *social* violations under an economic vocabulary—have always occurred on a public stage. But Adam Hirsch points out that in the nineteenth century, “the social context of rehabilitation was altered subtly: instead of seeking to draw the offender back into the community, as had the old public punishments, carceral punishments wrenched the offenders out of a subculture that commentators perceived as inimical to honest society” (45). Michael Welch argues that earlier in the nineteenth century, during the Jacksonian period, American politics was characterized by a growing anxiety concerning crime and corruption as a threat to social order (4). It is this initial anxiety concerning crime and the social order, and what even will count as public that the country finds itself within as industry developed.

To Be a Criminal

Resulting from this shift in perspective on the relationship between social maintenance and citizenship, a number of tropes materialize in the cultural public and furnish the social sphere with a new significance. Gunning points out in her study *Race, Rape, and Lynching* that this era saw the rise of the trope of the black rapist, white avenger, white innocent woman, and black prostitute. But alongside these new codifications (all products of this new imperialism) about constructions of race, gender, and citizenship lay anxieties of collectivization—of identities contradistinct from the masses —anxieties about moral turpitude catalyzed by unchecked mob action and violence. Such representations permeate the texts like Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Howells’s *The Rise of Silas Lapham* and *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, Chesnut’s *The Marrow of Tradition*, Norris’s *The Octopus*, and Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie*. But they also permeate the texts of other, less well-known authors: Rebecca Harding Davis in *Life Among the Iron Mills*, Mary Wilkins Freeman in *The Breadwinners*, Allan Pinkerton in his numerous memoirs of being a “private eye,” the nameless house authors of corporate pulp libraries, and authors like Thomas Edison and George Pullman (in either the technologies they produced or the company towns they planned.) The texts produced by these authors within the political context of realism debate what is understood to be public spaces within a setting that increasingly rakes space as a possible locus for investment and return, accumulation, and privatization.

In the midst of working through his critical analysis of what he would later term both “some fundamental aspects of the economy” and “the current crisis,” Marx wrote to Engels in a correspondence dated December 18, 1857 the following: “I am writing like a condemned man. Sometimes until 4 o’clock in the morning.” The urgency which goads Marx to work tirelessly is for Antonio Negri a radical theoretical, and at the same time practico-political, synthesis. The “work of the condemned,” Negri writes, “in the area of theory is an impatient refusal of eclipses

in practice: if this practice is not given [...] analysis must discover it as it occurs, in so far as analysis brings out the revolutionary subjectivity implicated in the crisis” (2). For Negri, the immanent crisis is a crisis for, not of, capital, particularly the “development of communist subjectivity,” and “revolutionary will and organization” (2).

However, the two separate registers in Marx’s description of his critical situation, between one’s work and one’s status as condemned, suggest another illumination for politico-theoretical activity that Marx and others immerse themselves in. Being condemned is, of course, a juridical situation, and image of the writer condemned is most certainly an apt description for the relationship between the hyper security state and its constituted radical subject. The urgency of Marx’s work as analyst—a union of practico-political theorist, of writer, of activist—seems itself a product of an intense awareness of radical subjectivity of the self imperiled by the converging jaws of imperial capitalism (governed by free-market principles, but essentially indirectly coercing the worker to labor in order to survive) and its various apparatuses (like coercion through juridical means). For, if these apparatuses work to constitute a new array of people on the continuum of citizenship—including those who are law-abiding and those who are marked as deviant criminals, Marx’s insight here recognizes that the proper place of the analyst—the lived experience of the political-theoretical activist—much more closely resembles the latter side of that continuum. That is, the critical, radical subject is constituted and imperiled by the very counter-revolutionary structures that have been haunted by collective organization and radical equality. The critical theoretician, like many of the authors of this study, bears witness to lived social life within a reactionary wave of intensifying disciplinary structures. While paying only glancing attention to the “writing of the condemned” may be exceedingly easy to contemporary audiences, it is the final hope of this project to revisit the histories in which

new structures of justice, citizenship, imperialism, global and local capital, and public versus private spaces would themselves yield a rich description of radical subjectivity within nascent imperialism and a context for which the notion of “writing as if condemned” makes cultural sense.

CHAPTER 2.
“THE ROAD FROM THE MINT AND THE PATH TO THE MELTING POT”: “REAL”
CURRENCY AND “NATIONAL” CIRCULATION IN HERMAN MELVILLE’S *THE*
CONFIDENCE MAN

*The different national uniforms worn at home by gold and silver as coins, but taken off again when they appear on the world market demonstrate the separation between the internal or national spheres of commodity circulation and its universal sphere, the world market. The only difference, therefore, between coin and bullion lies in their physical configuration, and gold can at any time pass from one form to the other. For a coin, the road from the mint is also the path to the melting pot. [...] The natural and spontaneous tendency of the process of circulation to transform the coin from its metallic existence as gold into the semblance of gold, or to transform the coin into a symbol of its official metallic content, is itself recognized by the most recent laws on the degree of metal loss which demonetizes a gold coin, i.e., renders it incapable of being circulated. (Marx, *Capital* Vol. 1, 222).*

An 1886 installment of one of the more popular detective dime novel serials in the nineteenth century provokingly titled “Shoving the Queer: Old King Brady on the Scent of the Counterfeiters” opens in a rural New Jersey tavern frequented by work-gangs engaged in construction of a new railroad line. The railroad company’s paymaster, who also happens to be the son of the principle investor in the company, seats himself in the tavern for a quick cigar and respite from the day’s cold weather. The tavern’s conversation quickly turns to the state of the community’s railroad project, and we learn that the present business troubles of the line arise from the refusal of a local bank to turn over company bonds. As the day passes, the tavern’s other patrons gossip over the son of the recalcitrant banker, recently released from Sing-Sing State Prison for passing counterfeit bills. Growing weary of this idle talk the railroad prince departs, but not before paying the tavern owner by leaving a ten-dollar bill on the bar.

As if on cue, the banker’s prodigal son enters through the tavern door. Berating the people of this community and the tavern-owner in particular for their role in his arrest, the banker’s son shares with this crowd his story since his release: “I have slept in places your dogs would not sleep in,” he states. “I have eaten food your hogs would reject, and now in desperation

I have returned among you. This town has caused all my trouble, and of this town I demand work—no matter how laborious—work to enable me honestly to earn my daily bread” (3). The barkeeper draws a silver coin from his own pocket in response and places it in the young man’s hand with instructions to leave the tavern and the town. Eyeing the coin and then the barkeep, the banker’s son indignantly throws the coin back at the bar and storms out of the hotel.

Following this scene one of the patrons of this tavern, a stranger whom none had recognized as being from the community, rises to ask the barkeeper for change for a twenty-dollar bill. When the barkeeper offers him the ten given him by the railroad’s young paymaster, along with a five and five ones, the stranger refuses the change on the basis that the paymaster’s bills are all counterfeit. Exasperated, the barkeeper empties his till with the money given him by the line’s employees for work of the of the day, only to learn that every one of these bills, the pay of a day’s work for the laborers of this new railroad line, are all bad. The stranger announces himself as the New York detective Old King Brady, and begins his investigation that will form the principle plot of the rest of this popular dime novel.

What is the nature of the crisis that occasions this particular detective narrative, of currency entering and leaving the regime of a public sphere defined by economic valuation? The astonishment of those within the tavern—those day-laborers huddled around the stove after their working-day is done—emphasizes the impact of this type of crime that has been perpetrated: as if by magic, the mere presence of a potential counterfeiter conjures a destabilization of the economic basis of the community of railroad workers by mysteriously transforming the entire currency into fake money.

But even more, this scene reveals the chilling portrait—the uncanny negative—of exchange that arises from the contradiction of money-as-sovereign-measurement for all values.

Our dime novel here first operates within the parameters of agency legible in a market economy: day-laborer (animated/politicized by a “demand for work”), barkeeper, paymaster and potential counterfeiter/criminal (the latter two are within the narrative the heirs of capital)—any sort of human activity registers through a clear sense of where these entities fall in the fable of exchange. Just as the scene presents a challenge to the legitimacy of the company itself through the possibility that false bills have been exchanged for real value-creating labor, so too does the scene comment on the system itself which *derives* subjects/agents. In one sense, the detective novel here illuminates the extent to which “subjectivity” is a negation, an abstraction from a larger, social whole.¹ For while the banker’s-son-as-potential-counterfeiter’s appearance correlates to the poisoning-of-the-well of economic circulation, the effect of this disease-like spread of counterfeit bills is that the system which makes legible this negation—market circulation—breaks down to mere speculation. Everyone’s pay in the entire tavern, indeed the people within this local community, are all now suspect, and any attempt to assert a material presence—a function of the logic of immediacy within exchange relations—by passing these bills becomes the means to the unraveling of the evaluative conditions and presuppositions necessary for exchange in the first place; or, in Marx’s wording, the road from the mint becomes the path to the melting pot.²

¹ This fragmentation of a self as deriving from a larger social whole is a key argument in Henri Lefebvre’s *Critique of Everyday Life, volume 1*, although Lefebvre would locate this effect more within the regimes of production than the regime of market exchange. Lefebvre writes “[T]he fragmentation of labour provides only a negative foundation for individuality; in this world of production, individuals have an effective self-consciousness, but of a kind which makes them lead inward-looking lives, centered upon their particular skill and specialization. As regards to the rest of social and human life, they are conscious of it only in so far as they reject it, despise or transpose it to a level of unreality. They tend towards individualism” (149).

² Marx is, of course, referring to the deterioration and oxidation of precious metals in this phrase, a subject to which he devotes much energy in the *Grundrisse*. The indissoluble contradiction of money as facilitator of exchange can be traced to this corruptibility of the material of which money is made. For money to work as the sign of value, according to Marx, it needs to be emptied of all its physical properties, have no use-value inherent to its material. Still, its presence must be apparent, it must exist *in reality* for the purposes of reciprocity. Hence, the very characteristic of money as facilitator of exchange also catalyzes money’s collapse as a sign of value.

The appearance, then, of a potential counterfeiter—a harbinger for what is becoming economic disease—demands narrative, explanation, *detection* to solve the crisis. The social mythos of money has opened up a new realm of critical possibility, a new way to read and question the emerging basis for establishing communal order. In this sense passing spurious money is the primary crime committable in a community that bases itself on the dynamics of investment capitalism.³ Put another way, the potentially criminal act of passing spurious money—“shoving the queer” in nineteenth-century colloquial terms—defines the limits and the contours of a legal fiction of citizenship based upon capitalist principles of actors within exchange.

It is within these parameters that we may be able to view Herman Melville’s challenging final novel, *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (1857) as a “failed” detective narrative—a text which will, like the detective narratives so ubiquitous at the time depend upon an epistemological promise of repayment, only to confound the assumed reciprocity involved in the economics of exchange. And Melville’s failed detective novel does this by offering us currency directly as text to be read and decoded.⁴ Melville’s character the Black Guinea instantiates a production of “common-sense” that capitalism’s market invests into the fibers of everyday life,

³ Most fitting, then, is the role of counterfeit currency in establishing modern policing apparatuses. Midway through the nineteenth century, in one small rural community just north of Chicago, a young Scottish immigrant switched his trade from that of a cooper for Chicago’s meet packing industry to seeking out counterfeit banknotes that had been ubiquitous in the region. Allan Pinkerton soon formed his cadre of professional detectives to detect and then eliminate these spurious promissory notes (Morn 20-1).

⁴ One famous scene which starkly depicts this power of money occurs in the exchange between Charlie Noble and Frank Goodman, spanning chapters 30 through 32. After discussing friendship and geniality, Frank breaks the mood between the two “friends” by asking Charlie for a loan. Charlie’s indignant response—“Beggar, impostor!—never so deceived in a man in my life—” is countered by Frank removing ten gold pieces from his coat, “stooped down, and laid them, one by one, in a circle round [Charlie]; and, retiring a pace waved his long tasseled pipe with the air of a necromancer, an air heightened by his costume, accompanying each wave with a solemn murmur if cabalistic words. [...] ‘Reappear, reappear, reappear, oh my former friend! Replace this hideous apparition with thy blest shape, and be the token of thy return of the words, “My dear Frank”’” (241). Charlie’s genial attitude towards Frank returns with the incantation, and Mitchell points out that it is Charlie’s attention paid to these gold coins that reconjures his former self (60).

only to plant the seeds that such a logic cannot wholly contain and might not even be an accurate, “realistic” depiction of the social landscape. Thus Melville acutely calls into question the multiple regimes of value upon which capitalism will establish, develop and secure sovereignty, order, and the nation-state as global subject, all through the hint of a counterfeit coin. By extending the meditation on the implication of market exchange and the supernatural power of money in an imperializing economy of speculation, *The Confidence-Man* as detective novel (and itself a decidedly “queer” text) is finally a novel about security in an age of the commodity sign.

Melville’s Exceptional Coin and the Affected Value of Currency

As market forces developed their haste to stage an ever-increasing amount of products of labor (and indeed the humans whose labor power was the source of these objects) for the purposes of exchange, so too did the import of what Marx terms the “general equivalent”—an object excepted from normal circulation that would serve as the token of universal value and thus facilitator of all potential exchange. Briefly, in his analysis of exchange Marx demonstrates how the market-as-the-site for social exchange engineers a relationship in which elements meet and weigh-in against each other in a judgment of value or worth. This act of commensurability—the very notion that disparate elements can even be made comparable in a calculus of value—adds a new dimension to those objects: to some degree all commodities contain a common element of negotiable magnitude. A “supersensuous,” transcendent element beyond that object’s own material features now becomes fundamental to that object’s own “being,” and the object-as-commodity has been apparently abstracted, alienated, from its origins in living human labor (*Capital* 144). Within this deterritorialization and recoding of material objects into elements and components of the market, currency or money seems to hold special privilege. If two disparate objects share an element in common and can be made commensurate with each other, then a sign

of that equivalence can be constructed, replacing the material presence of the commodity, in order to facilitate and develop exchange (*Capital* 127).

Marx's philosophy of the commodity fetish offers an explanation for all human interaction through market dynamics: only as owners of these objects-for-the-market do humans express their will, express themselves as transcendent beings (*Capital* 178-9). But further, a general equivalent form manifests this abstracted value as "will" and takes the stage to govern and facilitate the actions that demarcate this entity we know as "the market." The social quality of labor, fragmented, effaced from the immediate "presence" (prescience) of the commodity at the event of the exchange, can best be traced in the form of the money commodity.⁵

In their difficulties our commodity-owners think like Faust: "In the beginning was the deed." They have therefore already acted before thinking. The natural laws of the commodity have manifested themselves in the natural instinct of the owners of commodities. They can only bring their commodities into relation as values, and therefore as commodities, by bringing them into an opposing relation with some one other commodity, which serves as the universal equivalent. [...] The social action of all other commodities, therefore, sets apart the particular commodity in which they all represent their values. The natural form of this commodity thereby becomes the socially recognized equivalent form. Through the agency of the social process it becomes the specific social function of the commodity which had been set apart to be the universal equivalent. It thus becomes—money. (*Capital* 180-1)

The commodity as both the elemental object that defines capitalistic exchange and as the determinant and governor of all social relations is, of course, the basis upon which Georg Lukács builds his critique of reification.⁶ Yet Lukács's description of reification gives only passing

⁵ Ernest Mandel writes "Under conditions of generalized commodity production, social labour cannot be immediately recognized otherwise than through its exchange against money" (74).

⁶ Lukács writes "at this stage in the history of mankind there is not problem that does not ultimately lead back to that question [of the fundamental nature of a capitalist society] and there is no solution that could not be found in the solution to the riddle of commodity-*structure*. [...] That is to say, the problem of commodities must not be considered in isolation or even regarded as the central problem in economics, but as the central, structural problem of capitalist society in all its aspects" (83).

reference to the import of money within commodity culture.⁷ Still, it would seem that, as the passage from Marx hints, the money commodity would hold special place within the reified social conditions of the nineteenth century: what we understand as money is only identifiable as such as the commodity itself ascends out of circulation and loses all of its own definitive features that might possibly give it value-in-itself, and yet this special commodity would seem to hold the mirror to read social codes under capital development. As Jean-Joseph Goux has noted, money ascends to sovereign commodity and facilitates and governs the circulatory momentum defining the market only insofar as it is *excepted* from the circulation of all other commodities.⁸ It would seem that this excepted status from the regime of the commodity in circulation offers special insight into the concept of reification that governs social life.

The difficulty in explaining the phenomenon and function of money within the market is thus also based on the concept of value as an exception, extracted from value-creating living human labor, to the point that the market can apparently be self-sufficient and generate value through the money commodity. This is the criticism lobbied by Lukács towards certain “bourgeois economists,” who “divine these empty manifestations from their real capitalist foundation and make them independent and permanent by regarding them as timeless models of

⁷ Lukács quotes volume 3 of Marx’s *Capital* to describe the reification process as a way that the bourgeois economists measure the creation of value, or money as the measurement that bourgeois economists use to illustrate the ways in which capital apparently reproduces itself. Lukács brings us to this quote in Marx in particular: “While interest is only a portion of the profit, i.e. of the surplus value, which the functioning capitalist squeezes out of the laborer, it appears now, on the contrary, as though interest were the typical product of capital, the primary matter, and profit, in the shape of profit of enterprise, were a mere accessory and by-product of the process of reproduction. Thus we get a fetish form of capital, and the conception of fetish capital. In M-M’ we have the meaningless form of capital, the perversion and objectification of production relations in their highest degree, the interest-bearing form, the simple form of capital, in which it antecedes its own process of reproduction” (Marx, *Capital Vol. 3*, 384-5; Lukács 94).

⁸ Goux writes “Whether the accession to power is by conquest or by election, it is accompanied by an *excommunication*. The sovereign element, as universal equivalent, itself has no equivalent; it is *out of the ordinary*, placed for this reason outside the community it governs. It is cut out, substituted, withdrawn. It legislates *as an exception*. [...] What becomes the site of law itself [...] is thus what is by nature into the bargain; more than bargained for, excessive, transcendent” (31, emphasis in the original).

human relations in general. [...] But they do not go further than a description and their ‘deepening’ of the problem runs in circles around the eternal manifestations of reification” (94-5). Money, by bringing unlike material entities into relation at the same time, produces a mystifying characteristic beyond the material by which value is to be judged. Reinserted from outside into the systems of exchange, the excepted commodity, the universal equivalent, money, bears the will of the sovereign market and the enforcement of an alien—i.e. *external*—law on the contours of everyday life. In this sense, currency excepted from the level of commodities on exchange not only serves to facilitate that exchange, but also to govern the social body. Money thus is a strikingly imposing, evident example of what Giorgio Agamben recognized as the authority of legal and juridical apparatuses because it bears witness to the activity of exception that defines modern sovereignty itself.⁹

One of the most exceptional characters on a ship brimming with them—a steamer that Melville describes as market-like in its “dashing,” “fusing” and “pouring along, helter-skelter” of disparate entities in “the all-fusing spirit of the west,” yet also like the reified social stage in that production has been submerged—is *The Confidence Man*’s “Black Guinea,” a crippled African American fellow who makes his living by catching with his mouth coins thrown at him by the passengers of the *Fidèle*.¹⁰ Note, however, the subtlety of Melville’s transformation of the Black

⁹ More precisely, Agamben identifies the definitive characteristic of sovereignty as exception that can be more properly viewed as a type of exclusion but still bearing relation to the rule, a type of suspension of the rule: “The exception is a kind of exclusion. What is excluded from the general rule is an individual case. But the most proper characteristic of the exception is that what is excluded in it is not, on account of being excluded, absolutely without relation to the rule. On the contrary, what is excluded in the exception maintains itself in relation to the rule in the form of the rule’s suspension. *The rule applies to the exception in no longer applying, in withdrawing from it*” (17-8, emphasis in the original).

¹⁰ The particulars of this image of the Black Guinea presented by Melville probably resonated strongly with his nineteenth century audience, for the actions of this character conform in strict detail to the legendary origins of the entertainment associated with blackface minstrelsy. In *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, Eric Lott cites a 1867 *Atlantic Monthly* article, appearing ten years after the publication of *The Confidence-Man*, about T.D. Rice’s “first” famous performance almost 40 years earlier in Pittsburgh:

Guinea from object of charity to facilitator of economic flow that is itself marked by an *excess*, an *oversignification*:

Thus far not very many pennies had been given him, and, used at last to his strange body looks, the less polite passengers of those in that part of the boat began to get their fill of him as a curious object; when suddenly the negro *more than revived* their first interest by an expedient which, whether by chance or design, was a singular temptation at once to *diversion* [emphasis in the original] and to charity, though, even more than his crippled limbs, it put him on a canine footing. [...] Still shuffling among the crowd, now and then he would pause, throwing back his head and opening his mouth like an elephant for tossed apples at a menagerie, when making a space before him, people would have a bout at a strange sort of pitch-penny game, the cripple's mouth being at once target and purse. (11-2)

The Black Guinea's activity here revives the failing moneyed interests of the Faustian passengers and draws all signs of value to him. The Black Guinea as centerpiece of this enterprising vessel, this ship carrying "merchants on stock exchange" (to which Melville had likened the *Fidèle* on page 7), ascends to the point of convergence and synthesis for all the values; part of what defines the "dashing" and "all-fusing" quality of the steamer is the extent to which passengers have one and all been induced into participation in Black Guinea's—money's—game of a market that generates its own value.¹¹ Furthermore the Black Guinea's actions can be recognized through the

There was a negro in attendance at Griffith's Hotel, on Wood Street, named Cuff,—an exquisite specimen of his sort,—who won a precarious subsistence by letting his open mouth as a mark for boys to pitch pennies into, at three paces, and by carrying the trunks of passengers from the steamboats to the hotels. Cuff was precisely the subject of Rice's purpose. Slight persuasion induced him to accompany the actor to the theatre, where he was lead through the private entrance, and quietly ensconced behind the scenes. . . . Rice, having shaded his own countenance to the "contraband" hue, ordered Cuff to disrobe, and proceeded to invest himself in the cast-off apparel. . . . [Onstage] the extraordinary apparition produced an instant effect. . . . The effect was electric. . . . (cited in Lott 18).

The *Atlantic Monthly* goes on to describe how this "Cuff," who, like Melville's Black Guinea, works aboard a steam ship as baggage-carrier for passengers, hears the just-arrived vessel signal at the Monongahela Wharf. Anxious to return to the wharf to earn his daily wage, Cuff interrupts Rice in his performance, imploring the performer return Cuff's dress. According to the *Atlantic Monthly*, Cuff's interruption of Rice's act "was the touch, in the mirthful experience of that night, that passed endurance" (cited in Lott 19).

¹¹ Salazar associates the sense of "strangeness" aboard the *Fidèle* to "late antebellum society that made 'confidence' between strangers an increasingly necessary, yet precarious, condition of economic and social exchange" (55).

principles of exchange particular to capitalism's accumulation of surplus value—adding “diversion” to charity, becoming at the same time target and purse.

Written alongside this character as the certificate of socio-economic interaction is the possibility that the Black Guinea is counterfeit; his “wordy” (worthy) character floods the market of value so as to hasten its collapse.¹² The scene offers as axiom the notion that the excepted commodity's transcendence into the general equivalent is based on some social, unstable contract; “real value” is far from intrinsic feature of the excepted commodity. To a certain extent, the functionality of equivalent exchange and the possibility of the creation of capital surplus depends upon this confidence game: Guinea's affected role, affected value as centerpiece for circulation, “more than revives” dying interest and induces *excessive* participation in a system of reciprocal exchange which belies the incongruity that would govern market principles themselves. The hint of something “excessive” in exchange provides a whisper of surplus-value: something exchanged has been more than what has been bargained for.¹³

Unexamined by the orthodox principles of reification, then, is the question as to how money in this sense induces participation without direct, coercive force. The charges brought by the former custom-house officer that the Black Guinea is some “decoy” meant to ensnare the

¹² Reader of this novel have traditionally noted the correlation between an economy of words and the governing context of finance capital in which the novel is set. Dominique Marçais is quick to point out Melville's play on words—*wordy/worthy*—in this description of the Black Guinea: “Black Guinea, punning on worthy/wordy, calls attention to himself as ‘dis poor ole darky, well wordy of all you kind gentlemen’ in a context where ‘a good word’ is opposed to ‘valuable papers,’ hinting at the primacy of oral discourse over the written word” (187). The abundance of words here seem to play a vital role in the obfuscation of “true value” at this point in the novel, and as is discussed later offer an endless string of payments deferred rather than realized in the event of exchange. For critics such as Clark Davis, the correlation between money and words in this texts demarcates “a growing concern with the transformation of human values into commodities” (43).

¹³ Wai-chee Dimock's assessment of the novel draws a somewhat similar conclusion, although Dimock does not locate any “excess” in exchange through the Black Guinea. “[C]onfidence in the crudest sense [...] seems to signify money. Money is what changes hands as confidence changes hands. [...] And yet something less tangible, harder to account for, seems to have changed hands as well. [...] The loss somehow seems greater, not so easy to calculate” (191).

(white) passengers on the ship offers as subtext the question “from where does legitimacy of value come? Who is its guarantor?” Even more, in what sense does the minted coin also bear the will, the desire, the constructed need of a multitude reconstituted as actors for the market? Consider “Billy Budd, Sailor,” for example (yet another in the Melville cannon described by critics as being a decisively “queer” text), in which Melville dabbles in the introduction of the money commodity as it relates to notions of politicized unrest and channels people into a confidence in market relations marked by a sense of *security*. As Barbara Johnson and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick have noted elsewhere, the axis around which the reader is called to interpret and judge the events aboard the *Bellipotent* is based upon the relation between two of the principal characters—Billy Budd and John Claggart—and what each supposedly signifies; for Johnson, “Billy seemingly represents the perfectly motivated sign; that is, his inner self (the signified) is considered transparently readable from the beauty of his outer self (the signifier)” (236-7). Claggart, as Sedgwick, has shown, is defined as the negative of Budd, “depraved because he is, in his desires, a pervert, of a sort that by 1891 had names in several taxonomic systems although scarcely yet, in English, the name ‘homosexual’” (219). The narrative space of the ship is abuzz, then, with what circulates between these two key, polarized figures, each of whom cannot seem to get the other out of his respective thoughts (Budd for the life of him cannot figure out why “Jemmy Legs is down on him,” while Claggart for his part is obsessed with “getting” Billy); circulating aboard this ship, then, is an economy of desire, a play between two figures whose motives lie in the relation between the (sexualized) links between signifier and signified.

But while these critical views point to character motive and desire based on a primarily linguistic level (the “motivation” between the signifier and what is signified), what we must not

forget are they ways in which the narrative also deploys a *material economics of detection* to establish the tempo for an economics of desire. Budd, the “uncommonly handsome,” young sailor impressed into duty aboard the *Bellipotent* in Melville’s novella, catches the eye, and thus the antipathetic passion, of the master-at-arms of the warship and the chief security officer, Claggart. Much of the officer’s information concerning the sentiments of the common sailor come from his corporal, “Squeak,” “so nick-named by the sailors on account of his squeaky voice and sharp visage ferreting about the dark corners of the lower decks after interlopers, satirically suggesting to them the idea of a rat in a cellar” (40). At once in this passage a mouse, a weasel and a rat, Squeak is the junction of both information and an “implicit tool” for the security chief in “laying little traps” to snare the targets of Claggart’s envy. The success of Claggart as security chief depends ultimately on this agent circulating among the population that is to be policed.

Awakened in the next chapter by an unknown figure, Billy is invited by this otherworldly voice to sneak away while his ship-mates sleep to the lee forechairs, “for there is something in the wind.” The voice attempts to gain Billy’s sympathies by pointing out that he, like Budd, had been impressed into duty aboard the *Bellipotent*. But we learn also of a confederation of impressed sailors aboard this ship who may need Billy’s “help—at a pinch” (42). To secure Billy’s sympathies, the mysterious figure offers Billy “two small objects faintly twinkling in the starlight” (42). Although we never learn the identity of this conspirator, we, along with Billy, wonder in the next chapter how anyone would be able to obtain two guineas at sea. Whatever the case, the warship seems to be overseen by some external “martial law”; that is, the occurrences aboard this ship are not an organic, autonomous outgrowth of the vessel’s own society left to develop itself but are a product of some “outside” source just out of sight, both in economy and

justice. The guineas here are employed in an economy of detection in “Billy Budd,” and we suspect they are offered to him by Claggart’s deputy in order to gage, isolate for the purposes of measurement and control, monitor, and discipline the ship’s population. In this scene from Melville’s novella (telling subtitled “An Inside Narrative”), currency here appears surreptitiously, attempting to seduce Billy into participation in a plot “in a pinch.” Through the two sparkling guineas in the moonlight, security itself becomes something exchangeable, a commodity for-the-market like all others, and thus subjected to the marketing practices systemic to these methods of exchange. Money thus also, as the market sovereign, bears the seal of a carefully and intricately constructed system of social desire that has been synchronized, and in this case, bears the seal of the social desire for security; all desires and motive circulating aboard this ship are now re-written, redirected within an economics of security. The phrase that repeatedly haunts Billy, “Jemmy Legs is down on you,” ripples with the cross-cutting meanings that seem to channel all desires—economic (down on Billy as if he were a public stock), disciplinary (“Jemmy Legs” being the colloquial term for the policeman’s baton used to subdue rioting masses), and sexual (implying the attraction Claggart holds for Billy)—into one that will lay the foundation for the social bond of the public sphere in which the population will find its subjectivity under the imperializing nation-state. This is to say that the social order and laws codified to guarantee it confront the subject/citizen in a very similar way as do commodities—as an alien force emanating from some extra-human origin. For a political system nominally based in principles of democracy, in which the laws and codes governing daily life are generated and developed by the equal participation of those who compose the community, the commodity and the general equivalent that is money threatens to rupture this fable of political autonomy.

It would seem in both of these Melville texts, the Guinea participates in a new function of the general equivalent—a textualization of the opacity of social relations, or what Jean Baudrillard in *The Political Economy of the Sign* understood as the sum total of all social relations—of production and “the reality of the division of labor” (65). In both examples, the Guinea appears on the stage of the market from a place not legible within the contours of normalized everyday circulation. Nothing explicit to the logic of reciprocity, commensurability and exchange should allow for an excess of value to be written into the act itself; yet this phenomenon—to contain more than signified value common to the market in which it circulates—is precisely what gives money a special quality. Money moves from being facilitator of exchange to object of accumulation, and marks a transformation of market relations from participation underwritten from the centered subject of investment capitalism from a complex of needs to an array of desires engendered to assure no one would willingly want to leave its grasp. With the emergence of the sovereign coin, the link between social relations and the histories in which they had been born and crafted has become opaque. Social relations forged out of the try-works of a living human history that has been deeply submerged, return to make an uncanny appearance on the stage of collective consciousness through money, but in altered form that now whispers “you are most yourself when you give yourself over to the market and participate in capitalist exchange.”

The accelerated process of exchange catalyzed by currency effaces the status of human agency in this system; market, currency, and sovereign power seem a “natural development” of human history. Human agency has only been readmitted into this system to confirm market sovereignty, i.e. as a means to securing a naturally ordained “reality.” As a concept that acts as guarantor of new social relations of exchange, *security* itself circulates on the market, has its use

value superseded by its exchange value, becomes commodity, and has attached to its newfound existence properties that have become a target of newly engineered shibboleths of need and desire. By the final chapter, the confidence man and the old man consider one such embodiment of security commodified—the Counterfeit Detector the two discuss was a common periodical publication that offered patrons insight as to how real money might be discerned from false specie. These desires, as have been demonstrated numerous times elsewhere, materialize and become conscious through some form of narrativization; but just as easily both counterfeit coin and narrative may act as textualized countercurrency and through material history made legible ground a now vibrant opportunity to criticism.¹⁴

The Social “Myth” of Debt: Desire and the Narrative Currency of Investment

“Something queer about this darkie, depend upon it.” (The Confidence-Man 19)

Conductive to the proper function of money, then, is that the general equivalent chosen from all other commodities must be emptied of all features that are “its own,” or characteristics particular to itself. This is partially behind Marx’s obsession with money and the oxidation rates of various precious metals found in the drafts of the *Grundrisse*: as metals decay, they falter in their ability to be representative of an abstract value, of the supersensuous characteristic that measures and evaluates all commodities.¹⁵ In fact, the Guinea coin historically marked a significant moment in the metallurgical production money as the first coin to be mechanically reproduced and thus “more perfect,” more uniform, and less susceptible to shavings, ragged

¹⁴ Fredric Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious* presents this most directly:

We would therefore propose the following revised formulation: that history is not a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise, but that, as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, and that our approach to it and the Real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious. (35)

¹⁵ See especially Notebook I from *The Grundrisse*’s chapter on money, pages 174-86.

edges (as Melville in “Billy Budd” would later describe narratives that strived to present “truth uncompromisingly told”), and other corruptions common to coins made of precious metals.

Melville’s Black Guinea, a commodity without origin, without a readily available history, a “dog without a master,” has had his own features suspended, if not completely emptied: “whatever his own emotions, he swallowed them” (12). The image is subtle, yet profound in its precision:

Guinea suppresses anything that would be his own or particular to his character in the very same act in which he becomes the center of circulation. Yet as living reference to an artifact that itself was a mechanism meant to guarantee economic security, he makes splashes among the waves of the “confident and cosmopolitan tide” when the possibility that he is himself is counterfeit has been introduced by the suspecting discharged customhouse officer. It is an authority of judgment once again coming from outside the parameters of the desiring “community” (read: market) that is shared by the detective-as-stranger from our nineteenth-century dime novel:

While this game of charity was yet at its height, a limping, gimlet-eyed, sour-faced person—it may be some discharged custom-house officer, [...] after sundry sorry observations of the negro, began to croak out something about his deformity being a sham, got up for financial purposes, which immediately threw a damp upon the frolic benignities pf the pitch-penny players. (12)

Both prophet and profit in these two different scenes—the custom-house officer represented here in terms antithetical to the geniality of the pitch-penny game and the Black Guinea in Melville’s text, and the detective-stranger and the counterfeit ten dollar-bill in our dime novel—speak their words defining the contours of *real* versus feigned currency from unperceived locations, out of the sight but not from outside of shouting distance to those participating in the business-as-usual activities of the community of exchange.¹⁶

¹⁶ As Dimock has observed, speech imposes itself upon, rather than is uttered by, the characters in this novel, but does not tie this observation directly into the fetishes proposed by and inherent to investment capital. “From the first scene till the last,” Dimock writes, “disembodied voices are made to deliver oblique comments on the actions of the story. All in all, we have the eerie sense that speech imposes itself on a character—rather than issuing from him—

The effect is one shared with our earlier, disease-like dime novel and reflects the new, urbanizing cultural logic of paranoia emerging in the middle of the nineteenth century. In many cases, the figure of the confidence man was portrayed in early antebellum America as a benign trickster whose ubiquitous presence on the urbanizing landscape offered acumen into human social relations changed by the expanse of the market (Mitchell 53). As the urban centers grew larger, so too did the implications for social life. As historian Karen Halttunen has noted the trope of the confidence man that was abundant during this period developed from a specific fear of contagion: that young people, usually young men, re-locating to urban centers that facilitate market circulation at a higher rate, would not only be susceptible to swindlers themselves, but through exposure to such practices, might themselves forget the values taught them in their rural upbringings and become swindlers of others (5). Fears of disease and contagion—the new poles of signification made legible by the development of human social contact and exchange—are hereby foundational moments for new apparatuses of security.¹⁷

Against these registers of meaning and value dictated by the logic of accumulation, Melville's work seems a decidedly "queer" text. This final novel, written by one who ten years later himself was employed by the city of New York as a customs officer, circulates within the literary marketplace much the same way as does the Black Guinea aboard this favored steamer; or put differently the text illuminates the extent to which the cultural activity of reading has

and that in the long run, it makes little difference who this character is. Characters are interchangeable. They are no more than the medium in which words circulate" (208).

¹⁷ As Michael Rogin notes "The problematic identity of the confidence man spreads to the other characters. Just as Bartleby's language infects the lawyer and his employees, all the characters on the *Fidèle* wear costumes; none has a self. "A modest man thrust out naked into the street, would he not be abashed? Take him in and clothe him; would not his confidence be restored?" the cosmopolitan asks the barber (239). He is defending clothing in the name of the authenticity of wigs, to assuage the barber's anxiety that men are not what they seem. Men are not what they seem on the *Fidèle*, but that is not because they have true selves hidden under their clothing. There are only the costumes with no one inside. Clothes have lost their connection to a self, even to a hidden one revealed by the clues they provide. Once clothing is cut loose from its moorings in the self, the unembodied interior dissolves. *Pierre* and *Bartleby* imagined a split between exterior and interior. There is only an absent self on the *Fidèle*" (243).

collapsed to mirror the speculative games of traders on the stock exchange. One early review of the novel from the *New York Dispatch* dated April 5, 1857 describes his disappointment in revealing metaphor:

When we meet with a book written by Herman Melville, the fascinations of *Omoo* and *Typee* recur to us, and we take up the work with as much confidence in its worth, as we should feel in the possession of a cheque drawn by a well-known capitalist. So much greater is the disappointment, therefore, when we find the book does not come up to our mark.

This trajectory mapped out by narrative expectations work within the established auspices of an economy of investment seems itself a nineteenth-century project that weds aspects of the literary to the specifications of investment capital. Other reviews of the text looked on with suspicion, sensing the immediate act of reading left something unfulfilled in the exchange between author and audience. Consider the review from the *London Literary Gazette* dated April 11, 1857:

It is, of course, very possible that there may be method in all this madness, and that the author may have a plan, which must needs be a very deep one indeed. Certainly we can obtain no inkling of it. It may be that he has chosen to act the part of a medieval jester, conveying weighty truths under a semblance antic and ludicrous; if so, we can only recommend him for the future not to jingle his bells so loud. There is no catching the accents of wisdom amid all this clattering exuberance of folly. Those who wish to teach should not begin by assuming a mask so grotesque as to keep listeners on the laugh, or frighten them away. Whether Mr. Melville really does mean to teach anything is, we are aware, a matter of considerable uncertainty. [. . .] [T]his caldron, so thick and slab with nonsense, often bursts into the bright, brief bubbles of fancy and wit. The greater the pity to see these good things so thrown away.

In the hint of the unreadable (a reviewer from the April 25th edition of *The London Illustrated Times* describes it as “indigestible”), wasteful, excessive, affected, inscrutable, *inexchangeable*, counterfeit novel, the possible excess that has been psychologically, socially feared defines the reading experience.

Jacques Derrida’s analysis of another narrative of false currency, Baudelaire’s short story “Counterfeit Money,” illuminates this tendency of dominant business practices to dictate the

literary lexicon. Baudelaire's narrator in this short text seems scandalized when his companion reveals to him that he intentionally has passed a counterfeit coin to a common beggar; Derrida posits this exchange between narrator and friend is something that itself creates a feeling within the narrator—the possibility of (counterfeit) exchange is *the source* of the “realistic” narrative.¹⁸ The narrator/narration “in the age of value as monetary sign” becomes an infinite game, a source of whimsical fancy which can easily slip into the same bourgeois uncritical awe as the power of “real” money; currency, counterfeit or no, can produce real capital all by itself, without the aid of living labor behind it (124). As a result of this literary co-opting of the money-fetish, narratives such as these introduce an aleatory, incalculable consequence—speculation—of counterfeit currency.

What takes shape here is the infinity or rather the indefiniteness of the “bad infinite” that characterizes the monetary thing (true or counterfeit money) and everything it touches, everything it contaminates (that is by definition, everything). What takes shape here is the quasi-automaticity of its accumulation and thus of the desire it calls forth or engenders. (158)

The Black Guinea's presence rather early in this novel demonstrates the level to which humans in this age of value as a monetary sign have been lost in the economic infinite. The possibility of feigned value in the symbol against real, value-creating labor, creates the speculation that will generate and advance the narrative. “Reading a novel” becomes a monolithic approach that presumes the novel itself produces, as Frederic Jameson has noted in the development of realistic prose, the world, the cadences, and the animations of commodity life *as reality* (152).

Whether or not speculation can in and of itself fuel a “novel” or even be sufficient evidence to judge a text as a whole, unified entity “text,” “novel,” “work/product of an author,”

¹⁸ “That which happens here is not the content of a story, those events that a narrative relation generally reports,” Derrida writes. What happens happens to the narration, to the elements of the narration itself, beginning with the fiction of its supposed subject” (121).

etc., is also at least suspect, as Peggy Kamuf has argued about *The Confidence-Man*.¹⁹ Precisely this uncertainty, this infinite open-ended possibility of *The Confidence-Man*, serves as the power by which Melville illuminates the tenuous social cohesion and the confidence that holds together the *Fidèle*'s "cosmopolitan and confident tide."²⁰ Kamuf's assessment is that Melville's "work" does much to lead towards the expectation of a "resolution" as some promise of payment infinitely deferred. "What is important, indeed imperative, to acknowledge is that this effect of suspension is no less calculated than the other effect of doubt sustained concerning the probity of certain characters who may be the masquerades adopted by just one character" (170). This calculated incalculable opens up in this text, for Kamuf, a potent literary horizon, that which confounds the insistency fostered by a market synchronized by the event of instantaneous exchange and instead resides in the aleatory future. For Kamuf, this narrative temporality deploys a resolution always anticipated but never made present, in infinite deferment in which literature and the novel dwell, running counter to, counterfeiting, the cadences of a real defined by immediacy, present, *exacting* payment.²¹

¹⁹ Beginning her analysis with the difficulty editors have had in introducing critical editions of the text, Kamuf states "the possibility opens up that the editors have described not the object 'itself' which they concede remains itself in question as precisely an 'itself'; rather they have described but a *belief* concerning that object and shared by certain mainstream of Melville scholars, the belief that *The Confidence-Man* is held together by the notion of a self who is selfsame" (169).

²⁰ For at least one reader, the text's complete denial of absolute knowledge and extreme skepticism is itself a new source of community bound together by "charity" or "faithfulness." Gustav Van Cromphout argues that the novel "demonstrates that knowledge of the other is so highly problematic that it cannot serve as a valid determinant of one's relationship to them. What is needed is a more satisfactory mode of being in the world with others. The proposed alternative is charity, urged emphatically in chapter 1" (48). Charity, then, for Van Cromphout will provide the moral axis upon which the rest of the novel revolves (49). Of course, this highly problematic reading of the novel denies any possible subtext that would even hint at "charity," "credit," or any other feelings describing a new social relation drawing actors to exchange as exploitative.

²¹ Kamuf uses the critical language *differance*, located here specifically in terms of capitalist principles of exchange. "*The Confidence-Man*, in this sense, comes to us, if it comes at all, from the future. Its temporality is that of an always-yet-to-come, and it issues what may be called literature's unlimited credit card" (171).

This view of Melville's text implicitly relies upon an assumption of the literary artifact—the “novel”—as a bourgeois institution, fulfilling a specific expectation that accepts, indeed flourishes under a particular economic philosophy of payment, exchange, value, and capital. Along these lines, the introduction of the possibility of feigned or affected value, suggested by the discharged custom-house officer of *The Confidence-Man*, entrenches the presumed veracity of value vital to the market's function not within a system of immediate reciprocity or payment but instead in a seemingly endless possibility of credit in which exchange can be deferred for a time. The rupture in this continuum becomes an extraordinary site in which much of workings of investment capital, and narratives employed in its service, begin to engineer the subjectivities—Wai-chee Dimock identifies this phenomenon in Melville's novel as an emerging “economy of the self” (186, 196)—necessary for surplus accumulation to develop more rapidly. In *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism*, Walter Benn Michaels notes that a new concept of bourgeois desire as the proper feature of subjectivity on the market stage—a new desiring character—is involved in reassuring the confidence of the economy of investment capital: a desire to conflate, or at least de-emphasize the two regimes of value, use versus exchange value, into one value remakes people not into workers but consumers.²² The definition of value according to this economic ideology, that objects have a synchronic, apparent, present value, as well as a projected, exchange value, creates a schizophrenic effect with respect to the object, for the possibility exists that the object as commodity is nothing more than what it appears to be at that moment, a feeling that always haunts the constitution of that object as commodity. What if,

²² In the novel of naturalism, according to Michaels: “the desire to live up to the look on your face (to become what is written on your face) is the desire to be equal to oneself,” to unify both the use-value and exchange-value which, “in the logic of the gold standard, is the desire to make yourself equal to your face value, to become, gold” (20)

after all, Michaels reminds us, that dollar bill in your hand is really a “worthless piece of paper?”²³

Not coincidentally, stringing together a procession of elements linked together into a line of extended payment is also precisely a key role money plays in an economic continuum according to Gerog Simmel: “Every act of consumption initially breaches the continuity of the line of development. [...] Into this stream, which pervades the strictly separated objects and controls their value significance, money now enters in order to compensate for the threatened interruption” (124). Money intervenes at this moment to facilitate exchange as narrative—not only to represent value, but direct the desires of exchange as the social cohesion keeping this particular social relation together. But to return to our exceptional character, the Black Guinea; through the offering of an infinite procession of possible payments, of those who could potentially vouch for his real value, the Black Guinea lays out the sequential pathway to serve a monetary purpose that will also structure our narrative. When pressed to find someone to vouch for him, the Black Guinea will name in succession the characters who will embody the persona of the title character in the novel’s following episodes.

“But is there not someone who can speak a good word for you?” [...] “Oh yes, oh yes, ge’mmen. [...] Der is aboard here a werry nice good ge’mmen wid a weed, and a ge’mmen in a grey coat and white tie. Oh, find ‘em, find ‘em” he earnestly added, “and let ‘em come quick, and show you all, ge’mmen, dat dis poor ole darkie is werry well wordy of all you kind ge’mmen’s kind confidence.” (14-5)

²³ The naturalist novel produces an attempt to raise into consciousness capitalism’s hand in projecting subjectivity, for, according to Michaels, in these novels

it becomes, of course, impossible to keep capitalism out—not only because capitalism provides the objects of fear and desire but because it provides the subjects as well. For every commodity created (on, say, the Chicago future’s market), a desire can be created (in advertising, by art): for every worthless bit of paper that can be transformed into an object of desire (greenbacks) some impersonal entity can be transformed into the subject that desires it (corporations). Indeed, one must go a step further and say that the logic of capitalism produces objects of desire only insofar as it produces subjects, since what makes the objects desirable is only the constitutive trace of subjectivity those objects bear. (20)

The veracity of exchange lies both in Black Guinea's presence but also upon his absence, as if his real value is abstracted, infinitely elsewhere, never to be materialized in the immediate *event of payment* upon which the systemic rule of reciprocity has been founded. This seemingly limitless procession of people who will vouch for him dictates the tempo by which the proceeding pages will turn, seeking (re)payment in the event of reading and thus fulfilling the promise governing social exchange.

But what Melville's text offers us here is an illumination to the racialized markers that had increasingly been a part of the new logic of exchange and development. As Susan Ryan has demonstrated, the search for a verification of Black Guinea's identity closely mirrors strategies employed by other mid- to late-century texts that relied on white-authored prefaces as testimonials to the truthfulness of individual slave narratives. In this context, white speech "is less alarming—and perhaps more trustworthy—than black flesh" (699). This formulation expressly correlates flesh with the mechanical reproduction of the surface of the coin/general equivalent, and makes legible a formulation for racialized identities that cannot be extracted from diachronic, expansive, animated economic logics of "realism," "credit," and U.S.-style colonialism.

Kamuf's assessment of an indefinitely deferred future through which the act of reading hopes to exact payment removes "the moment of payment" from the immediate, or at least independent of time, *event of exchange* now infinitely deferred. Of course, Marx's analysis of the money-form identifies this as a peculiarity and potential problem within the system of capitalist exchange; money serves here both as the instigator of an exchange that needs to be instantaneous (for commodities change and alter values—i.e. "age" through time, but money is by its definition, not subject to such material corruptions, i.e. timeless) and itself a fulfillment of the

promise of repayment. Marx's initial foray into an analysis of circulation—of commodities exchanged for money so that a different commodity with a different use-value may be acquired (C-M-C)—itself illuminates a contradictory foundation for money: money also may be utilized in a process not just to exchange different commodities (and thus as a mere placeholder for value), but is vital to a process of exchange in which a surplus of value may be created *through the exchange itself* (M-C-M', or money exchanged for a commodity, to be exchanged later for a higher cost, to buy in order to sell more dear—money has thus been used to increase its own quantity). The general equivalent, supposed as a squaring-of-the-account, a synchronization of time remade by the dynamics of exchange value, has also in its own being a sequence, a narrative of surplus accumulation. Money thus becomes the consummate text of U.S. Literary Realism, a form emerging in this particular era of American investment capitalism.

Time, of course, holds particular import for Marxian notions of value as the measure of the amount of human labor socially necessary in commodity production. But for other attempts to explain the peculiarity of money, time is at the behest of money as an instrument of payment, as a means to fulfill desires created by certain barriers. Simmel writes in his *Philosophy of Money*, “the opportunity of choice which money as an abstract instrument provides applies not only to the goods offered at any one time, but also to the date when it can be used” (213). Simmel's notion of money as a type of technology depends on the view of value as the extent to which objects resist human possession and consumption.²⁴ Temporal differences become just one barrier established that measures a commodity's resistance to be consumed, and as such measures its value; enjoyment and consumption are themselves immediate moments for

²⁴ Simmel writes “We desire objects only if they are not immediately given to us for our enjoyment; that is, to the extent that they resist our desire. The content of our desire becomes an object as soon as it is opposed to us, not only in the sense of being impervious to us, but also in terms of its distance as something not-yet enjoyed, the subjective aspect of this condition being desire” (66).

Simmel.²⁵ The economic system, consisting of objects bound together through an exchangeability expressed in money, becomes a complex negotiation of acquisition and sacrifice of values (Simmel 84, 120). Under this view of money and the economy, the engine that drives a system of exchange that is the market is human desire. “Objects are not difficult to acquire because they are valuable,” Simmel writes, “but we call those objects valuable that resist our desire to possess them” (66). Of course, such a view ignores the extent to which notions of need and desire are themselves products of a systemic method of exchange that mediates, moderates, and governs all social modes of production and reproduction—as if need and desire are elements anterior to modes of capitalist accumulation and the creation of surplus value.²⁶ Lukács’s critique of Simmel’s *Philosophy of Money* seems especially useful in discussing this Melville text: Simmel’s analysis of the money commodity is no more than description, rewording the spectral phenomena that is the effect of money in a commodity society rather than attempting to get at its root (94-5).

Further still, it would seem that Kamuf’s analysis of *The Confidence-Man* may be susceptible to a similar critique that itself sheds light on a reified process of reading for an end—the fulfillment of some social contract for reading “realistic texts” as a return on an investment. Kamuf’s likening to this infinite deferment of payment to a sort of “literary credit card” is a revealing metaphor, not just for the ways in which it conjures an image of payment disassociated

²⁵ “The moment of enjoyment itself, when the opposition between subject and object is effaced, consumes the value. Value is only reinstated as a contrast, as an object separated by the subject” (Simmel 66).

²⁶ Ellen Meiksins Wood, for example, defines the distinction between precapitalist and capitalist modes of production as the effective isolation of human workers from property, from the means of production, and even from the means of their own labor by appropriators for the express purpose of creating surplus labor. By legally constituting these producers as “free” as opposed to those held in chattel slavery, appropriators who control these means of production can compel producers to exchange their labor-power for a wage without using means of direct coercion. The market governs all social relations, “not only a simple mechanism of exchange or distribution but the principle determinant and regulator of social reproduction.” Market forces, according to this view, intervene and influence the elements of social reproduction creating needs and desires that will guarantee, develop, and expand the level of human participation in a system geared towards unlimited accumulation (96-7).

from the event of exchange, but for an element which Kamuf ignores in her analysis—the desire to further immerse oneself in the social situation of the market and its correlative in accumulation of debt. To say that the cultural practice of composing and reading fiction in this period resembles the now dominant mode of capital in the later portions of the nineteenth century is not enough; the economic primacy of investment instead here seems to be the basis for new cultural practices like reading fiction as a “realist” with an implicit understanding of the deeply buried yet still volatile conflicts and antagonisms that act as a subtext for the limited perspective granted citizenship. Kamuf’s assessment of Melville’s text as a deployment of a “literary credit card” thus immerses any activity of reading as a matter of class privilege, for while the infinite procession of objects meant to satisfy the desire for equal exchange defines the writing process, this economy (of signs) imposes itself on the exploited of the market, particularly on those who rely on the “marketing” of their own living labor. (We will encounter a strong example of this at Pullman in chapter 2.) A definition of literature as a system of credit all too easily masks its counterpart—a system of debt, one which will even assure against the autonomy for the worker, guaranteeing she or he cannot leave this system by which surplus is accumulated the more she has been alienated from her own efforts.

The infinite procession of objects of “payment” offered by the Black Guinea points to a fundamentally new paradigm and approach to “reading” the “novel” as artifact, for “reading” now relies on an essentially bourgeois notion of value: a series of signs placed in sequence is enough in itself to generate the promise of payment, the fulfillment and successful transmission of a coherent idea. For it is precisely this procession of commodities introduced by the Guinea—the gentleman with the weed, the gentleman with a grey coat and white tie, etc.—which unite the text temporally into a “novel” by compelling the turning of the pages, drawing readers into what

Baudrillard identified as a “series of more complex motivations.”²⁷ And this rhetoric of this procession and offering of future payment serves as invitation to piece disparate objects together which Baudrillard suggests to us will inflate a sense of need and desire in the human remade into consumer, all in order maximize the purchasing impulse:

It is evident that objects are never offered for consumption in absolute disorder. They may, in certain cases, initiate disorder the better to seduce, but they are always arranged to mark out directive paths to orientate the purchasing impulse towards *networks* of objects in order to captivate that impulse and bring it, in keeping with its own logic, to the highest degree of commitment, to the limit of its economic potential. Clothing, machines and toiletries thus constitute object pathways, which establish inertial constraints in the consumer: he will move *logically* from one object to another. He will be caught up in a *calculus* of objects. (*Consumer Society* 27).

On this “favored steamer,” and in reading this novel, the expected approach of reading that the surface parallels simple commodity exchange—commodity sold for money, money purchasing a different commodity, or C-M-C, gives way to the hint, made even more palpable by the Black Guinea that the exchange actually generated unrequited, uncompensated value at the expense of the reader-made-consumer, or M-C-M'. Thus, workers who first come to this system with the only commodity they have at their disposal will always lose in this valuation process—the same processes which reworks their agency into that of mere purchasing power—i.e. that of a consumer, obfuscates the fact that it is value generated by their own living labor which creates the potential for this surplus in the first place. The quest for equal exchange is itself the system which draws those even further into debt.

²⁷Baudrillard writes that the human, through the infinite procession of commodities, “no longer relates to a particular object in its specific utility, but to a set of objects in its total signification. [...] The shop-window, the advertisement, the manufacturer and the *brand name*, which here plays a crucial role, impose a coherent, collective vision, as though they were an almost indissociable totality, a series. This is, then, no longer a sequence of mere objects, but a chain of *signifiers*, in so far as all of these signify one another reciprocally as part of a more complex super-object, drawing the consumer into a series of more complex motivations” (Baudrillard, *Consumer Society* 27).

“It’s Everywhere You Want to Be”: The Money Fetish and the Development of Imperial Security

What then is the extent to which we may say narrative represents this inertia to the market? Of course, the enthusiasm to which the people of the ship defend the guinea reaches an apex when a Methodist minister threatens the doubting custom-house officer—referred to unflatteringly as a “Canada thistle” (16)—with violence. From the very beginning of Melville’s novel, the parameters of a system of exchange through which humans will be engaged has been established. The first act aboard this ship sees a post offering a reward that will lead to the capture of some “mysterious impostor.” “As if it had been a theater-bill, crowds were gathered about the announcement, and among them certain chevaliers, whose eyes, it was plain, were on the capitals, or, at least earnestly seeking sight of them from behind intervening coats; but as for their fingers, they were enveloped in some myth” (2). Passages such as these are full of multiple trajectories; the word *capitals* a conduit for those directions, referring both to the draw of the theater advertisement and the draw of money; and it is here in which the novel begins to carve out a description of what we now recognize as the cite of the contradiction of the development of exchange, namely the money fetish. The descriptive language Melville deploys to describe a particular situation—“earnestly seeking sight of the capitals from behind intervening coats,” “fingers enveloped in some myth”—presents the subtlety of social relations remade under developed circulation, an ominous countertext offered against positivist exchange in a very real yet shadowy “myth.” The pickpocket (chevalier/gentleman) here is the paradigmatic subject of this ship of “merchants on ‘change’”—the desire to accumulate the capital embodied in the money fetish. The “myth” that operates parallel to the masterplot of development is the money fetish—the sense that money is more than symbol and facilitator of exchange, but the most powerful and desirable commodity on the market because of its privileged position as governor

and overseer of all commodities. In the rise of “realism” as a literary demand that accents what Jameson recognizes as the limited perspective of “centered subjectivity,” a corresponding collective logic brings a new social power of “unrealistic omnipotence” into view. Finally money emerges as the gateway to reality—because if all perspective is limited, or more precisely, the reliance on perspective is precisely what defines real narrative, money thus is perspectiveless, and has the air of omnipotence. Imagining a negative is part of the creation of a centered subject, an unrealistic omnipotence met with a realistic perspective. Realism here is situated by a limited, but centered subject.²⁸ Melville’s scene here oscillates between an emphasis on realistic perspective—the chevalier eyes seeking the capitals from behind intervening coats—and transcendent omnipotence—the “myth” which can be revealed through the grasping of that capital. Desire thus constructed is what names this newly constituted subject of the real—a definitive, finite position within the whole social fabric, to the porthole of social power that is the money commodity.

The reified identities of actors on the market—with capital as the fulfillment of their subjective desires becomes, then, the grounds for the establishment of the newest safeguards. “[D]uring a chance interval, one of these chevaliers somewhat showed his hand in purchasing from another chevalier, *ex-officio* a peddler of money belts, one of his popular safeguards” (2). The money-belt peddler is both typical and atypical “chevalier,” threatening the “myth’s” collapse by producing a guard against such other “chevaliers”; and even suggesting certain safeguards against the draw of the money fetish necessarily “shows his hand.” The narrative

²⁸ “‘Symbolic texts’—entertain a far more difficult and implacable conception of the fully realized fantasy: one which is not to be satisfied by the easy solutions of an “unrealistic” omnipotence or the immediacy of a gratification that then needs no narrative trajectory in the first place, but which on the contrary seeks to endow itself with the utmost representable density and to posit the most elaborate and systematic difficulties and obstacles, in order the more surely to overcome them, just as a philosopher imagines in advance the objections his triumphant argumentation will be summoned up to confute” (Jameson 183).

offered by these apparatuses of security whispers that myth across this faithful Mississippi steamer.

The next peddler in Melville's line of gentlemen "hawks" a different type of safeguard—*narrative* tales of various thieves, bandits, crooks who achieved popular icon (read: *mythical*) status.

Creatures, with others of the sort, one and all exterminated at the time, and for the most part, like the hunted generations of wolves in the same regions, leaving comparatively few successors; which would seem cause for unalloyed gratulation, and is such to all except those who think that in new countries, where the wolves are killed off, the foxes increase. (2)

These narratives as commodities of security also indulge in the mythical, or something beyond the everyday of the real market, to explain human activity transgressing the social order. A sort of exceptional state—the popular myth—becomes one proper realm of narration. Note that the limits of subjectivities these famed criminals have—fame through their traversal of the borders of citizenship granted through capitalism—is represented as a penultimate horizon, a dying practice that is itself becoming legendary rebelliousness recoded as spectacle, emptied of its politically threatening potential. Crime as spectacle is at once both outside of circulation and in the process of being included into circulation. And yet this mythical notion of "foxes" contriving to short-circuit the laws of the market begins our *narrative*; narrative becomes the direction to which these deferments will be settled, and the gap or irreconcilable payment, of excessive value that was itself a product of exchange develops.

The endless procession of objects made for exchange establishes a new system of living social life *as if by proxy*: rather than humans in direct social interaction with each other, humans interact with each other indirectly, filtered through the tranquilized, secure social contract of the

commodity form.²⁹ And this indirect connection with what is “really behind” the Black Guinea—the endless procession of characters that represents security-as-certainty contingent upon a distance from realized value—will offer us the vehicle that carries us from the beginning of this novel, with the advertisement warning of overzealous pickpockets with their eyes on capitals, through the final pages that culminate in the discourse on Counterfeit Detectors and Money Belts. *The Confidence-Man* finally is a novel about security in an age of the commodity-sign.

This futurity, this expansive trajectory evinced by characters like the Black Guinea, is now, for Dimock, the axis around which revolves a notion of selfhood and citizenship in the world in which investment provides have become normative practice. Dimock writes “The incorporation of time into the self is crucial for the logic of penalty, we can now see, for what results is a self ‘accountable’ not only for wrongdoings already accomplished but also for wrongdoings he can be counted on to commit” (200). Dimock notes that infused into the logic of the self and character, as demonstrated by this novel, is the idea of accountability, and is this notion of accountability—that somehow value within the market can be exacted through the human material that composes it—which defines the legal fiction of those subjectivities of the new economic relation. Of course, this idea of credit/debt mapped on to a notion of security illuminates the privilege granted to some within the legal apparatus that exacts payment through a calculation of value based on these trajectories.³⁰ What the character the Black Guinea

²⁹ “[S]igns are sources of security,” Baudrillard writes. “A miraculous reality: when we look at the images of this world, who can distinguish this brief irruption of reality from the profound pleasure of not being there? The image, the sign, the message—all these things we ‘consume’—represent our tranquility consecrated by the distance from the world, a distance more comforted by the allusion to the real” (34).

³⁰ According to Lukács’s definition of the law under reification, “It requires no further explanation to realize that the need to systematize and abandon empiricism, tradition and material dependence was the need for exact calculation. However, this same need requires that the legal system should confront the individual events of social existence as something permanently established and exactly defined, i.e. as a rigid system” (97). For Lukács, this sets up a

textualizes in the money commodity is the tendency to manipulate and compel bourgeois participation in these exchanges, conceptualizing needs and desires on an individualistic level; under one logic presented here, *security* becomes a defining feature of the human remade consumer, an end to the means.³¹ Yet the indissoluble antimonies of class struggle present themselves here: too easily does this animation of social life continue to extract value from its participants, while further saddling them with ever-accumulating debts. If Mitchell is correct in his assessment of the text, that *The Confidence-Man* “explodes reified subjectivity—as represented by the rational static self—through a type of irrational behavior centered in the body” (54), we need only to consider various classed-challenges to legal structures (the altered mug-shot from the Rogue’s Gallery is just one glaring example) to see how the body becomes a site of class struggle, recoded within a discourse of legality/criminality, in the nineteenth century.

The corollary of the Black Guinea, his logical development, as the novel implies, is the cosmopolitan, the figure who dominates the final half of Melville’s work. This “true citizen of the world,” who is never stranger in any one place where capital has already cut a path. In this novel, we have moved from a character named after a mechanically produced coin first minted by the British Empire in 1663 to commemorate the commencement of colonial trade with Africa (and which also becomes the colonizer’s term for an entire continent-as-raw-material for imperialism),³² to a model for what can only be described as citizens for a world paved for a

possible conflict between the law and the continuous revolution wrought by capital; yet the synthesis is able to adapt the law to fit its own ends, all of which reveals the extent the development of the law is based on changing power relations between classes (Lukács 101).

³¹ Baudrillard posits that needs and desires “are better defined as a *function* induced (in the individual) by the internal logic of the system: more precisely, not as a *consummate force liberated* by the affluent society, but as a *productive force* required by the functioning of the system itself, by its process of reproduction and survival. In other words, they are only needs because the system needs them” (*Political Economy of the Sign* 82).

³² As William Pietz points out in his essay titled “The Problem of the Fetish,” *guinea* was the term becoming evoking specific spaces/poles along the circulation of the slave/triangle trade. “Guinea,” Pietz writes, “was the word used to designate black Africa—a non-European, nonmonotheist land not covered by the histories and cultural codes

return on investments. Of course, the figure of the cosmopolitan is not without its own rich social history as John Bryant's read of *The Confidence-Man* illuminates: attitudes toward *cosmopolitanism*, particularly as it had been decoded as a consumer of "cultures" differentiated by racial markers, had dramatically shifted between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Whereas the eighteenth century viewed cosmopolitanism as the potential for "political, economic, and spiritual communion of all races and nations," the nineteenth century cast a distinctly suspicious eye on the figure. "In Melville's America," Bryant continues, "the character type was invariably aligned with international merchants, speculators, opportunists and other such 'operators'" (21). The difference seems to be one of intense suspicion attached to modes of capital, now with the rest of the world subjected to the false sincerity that was inevitably linked to speculation and the creation of surplus value.

Our cosmopolitan—the narrative descendent of our Black Guinea—is represented at the very first by Melville to be a "taster of races," and presents a different view of race than that which had been dominant during the apex of chattel slavery in the United States. Rather than depending upon a synchronous determination, race latches on to the diachronic, "logical sequence" of narrative realism and a credit/investment economy, more proper fitting for nascent imperialism in which, as Salazar has argued "character replaces racial identity" (72). In Marx's descriptive precision of the differences between global versus national markets, gold as the

of old Europe or classical antiquity" (205). The Guinea itself as a text alludes to a host of significant historical events, evoking colonialist histories and technologies of security as the first currency manufactured by the means of mechanical reproduction, and therefore especially resilient against debasement by clippings, shaving about the edges, or other defilements that would render the metal incapable of performing its monetary service. This mechanized currency, "perfect" in that it would be a uniform general equivalent that would have its own material uniqueness erased by necessity, would be replaced in 1817 by the *sovereign*.

Pietz argues that this double meaning of the coin is a "psychogeographical fusion of the term and thus into consciousness: an interference, dialectic of meaning that locates, literally, the power of the money-form, and its ontological effect on those who wield it. "It is almost as if between these two psychogeographical poles of the distant strange land and the new mysteriously monetized Europe, all natural objects with commodity value appear in a new, exotic light, almost a new field of consciousness" (205-6).

universally recognizable money commodity “can at any time pass from one form to the other.” The dual quality of money, depending upon the sphere in which it circulates, is exactly the situation of Empire: an imperialism that invests an omnipotence into “global money” while retaining its hegemonic—in this case white—center of dominance. For while all desiring individuals have their subjectivity defined by and contained within the market, money is by definition *boundless*, and under global literary realism, omnipotent when placed against the limited capitalist subject. If human agency can only be made legible as it has been staged through action-on-the-market, with the minting of the currency that animates human interactions the nation-state explicitly remakes those within its borders into economic subjects of its sovereign power. Through the minting of money, an idea of modern citizenship within U.S. Empire begins to sediment into its more familiar form. And yet, at the same time, through the contradiction of money as both place-holder and epitome of abstract value, the coin’s possible counternarrative provides an intense criticism of and a material history for that nascent pattern of global order.³³

The body of the Black Guinea at last becomes the final mirror for a form of exploitation that can best be described as a type of ventriloquism. When asked by a curious onlooker “who is your master, Guinea’s rejoinder “what ge’men want to own dese here legs?” destabilizes the logic of ownership in a free market: for both under the logic of American slavery and the logic of American capitalism, ownership of bodily labor is the demarcating principle in operation and essentially dehumanizes the person into a laboring conglomerate of moveable parts. As a dog with no master, Black Guinea is still in position where the activity of his legs, his bodily labor, still needs to be understood via a rhetoric of ownership. Marx reminds us that, under market capitalism, the only commodity a worker can offer is labor-power; such labor power as a

³³ Marx points out that in the money form, we have encountered a technology that at once exerts a global economic taxonomy, yet at the same time through its means of circulation, erodes that difference. See *Capital*, 235-6.

commodity can also not escape the rhetoric of ownership. Under both paradigms, the body of Black Guinea is subjected to ownership by privileged whites. The logic of capitalism, with its requirement of free labor, offers no definite alternative to the logic of chattel slavery. Guinea as currency is something owned by the entire system of global investment capital that turns a profit on human flesh; the limbs that in part compose his being are merely satellites or objects themselves that can be “owned,” or more descriptive of the situation of nineteenth-century security: of living “reality” via proxy/colonized.

CHAPTER 3.
WAS BARTLEBY BLACK?: RACE, WORK, AND “EMINENTLY SAFE” COMMUNITIES IN
THE LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY INDUSTRIAL CITY

“Gentlemanly Cadavers” and Social Deaths

“Dead letters! does it not sound like dead men?”

The opening to Herman Melville’s “Bartleby, the Scrivener” offers, like many of the works by that author, a questionable, if not affected, narrative voice. Three paragraphs spent chiseling out the narrator’s persona of “efficiency,” founded on the “profound conviction that the easiest way of life is the best,” do little to quell the conspicuousness of a narrator who by his own words, “an eminently safe man,” is noteworthy for being un-noteworthy. One could easily turn to the well-rehearsed axioms of formalist criticism that comment on the interpolation of narrative with these odd, seemingly contradictory, declarations; that the opening paragraphs call both narrator and the narrative walls of Wall Street into existence, diagetically cordoning off the spaces of investment and circulation as the eminent domain of nineteenth-century safety. Yet the narrative voice of eminent safety hardly suppresses, indeed is conspicuous in its suppression of, an alternative inertia that threatens these diagetic walls of Wall Street; that is, reader and author alike cannot bury an ambiguous “something else” that roams Wall Street, that haunts the political project of a narrative of investment capital in circulation.

By the conclusion of this narrative, this business-professional narrator, frustrated by his former employee’s unresponsive behavior, desperately takes refuge in the rumor-made-epilogue he creates through a philosophical treatise on the relation between life and labor, between (in)action and occupation. Upon visiting the title character for the second time in “The Tombs,” New York City’s infamous jail, the narrator poses this question in a way that would seem an exoneration of both narrator and reader from any culpability in the employee’s fate.

Unsurprisingly, critical response has attempted to grapple with that possibility for exoneration.¹ In its asking, the eminently safe narrator poses circulation as the norm for everyday social life; that human death—Bartleby’s death—should be now grasped and understood via a set of “rules of engagement” for capitalist exchange. For many of these critics, the narrator’s comparison of Bartleby to “dead letters” would then offer a vexing moment where capital appears astute in its recognition of its own flaws—a moment of rare perceptiveness for a dim narrator whom is characterized up until this point by his lack of perception, particularly when reading the class divisions of New York.²

The conclusion of the story of Wall Street in which the narrator-become-social-critic displays a curious sense of sympathy toward Bartleby evades the difficult, intensely political and historically specific, and most importantly *unasked*, questions behind the presumptions about Bartleby-at-rest: Why has Bartleby been imprisoned? What offense, what state-sanctioned crime has Bartleby committed? Rather than close this narrative with a critical inquiry into sovereign

¹ Michael Gilmore’s argument concerning the legibility of class antagonism seems particularly astute, and an accurate description of the “knowledge” of the narrator. According to Gilmore’s argument, this epilogue is more evidence of an increasing opaqueness between classes. “Confinement in the Tombs seems but the logical conclusion to an economic revolution which segregates and walls off from view the impoverished worker of the city” (141).

Gillian Brown further articulates an absolute inability for the narrator to make Bartleby “comprehensible” in the language of circulation and desire that are available to him. Brown reads the epilogue as this final moment of class “illegibility” in which Bartleby has removed himself from the rigors of circulation (and desire) fostered by the world of Wall Street. Or, more precisely to Brown’s point, Bartleby represents an “anorexic” tendency to “wall off”/protect a notion of the self from the radical commoditization of the human that has been made possible by mass-scale exchange. “These are the anorexic politics of Bartleby’s radical employment of immobility. Stringently restricting the agoraphobic imagination to its ethic of immobility, Bartleby elaborates death as the best method of self-preservation. He leaves the world in order to keep himself” (148). The narrator then misunderstands Bartleby, or, more precisely cannot fathom a removal from the contours of circulation; thus, the closing paragraphs of the narrative attempt to recuperate Bartleby within circulation: Bartleby’s condition seems to the narrator an intensified experience of human mortality. He therefore commemorates Bartleby’s passage as a testament of the human tragedy, joining the man and the crowd in his closing lament” (148).

² For example, Naomi C. Reed argues that “Bartleby’s sad fate is another lesson in capitalism, one Bartleby himself never learns. If the seemingly equal exchanges of circulation conceal injustices, we cannot respond to these injustices by attempting to get out of circulation. Bartleby’s fate makes his critique of circulation all the more pressing, for the story reminds us that a response to the capitalist logic of the lawyer lies not beyond circulation but within it” (259-60).

rule of law with regard to the new urban order of property rights, labor, and distinctions between workspace and “home”—distinctions which themselves must also be markers for social divisions of labor in the imaginary space of Melville’s New York, for those who do not appropriately participate in those divisions are now officially comprehended as *homeless* [the German *unheimlich*]*—*this narrator voices a resolution that suppresses those questions by aesthetically rendering Bartleby within a tragedy of circulation. Bartleby’s fate is here, then, a regrettable, but apolitical, withdrawal from the social sphere, akin to and resulting in “social death.”

Conceive a man by nature and misfortune prone to pallid hopelessness, can any business seem more fitted to heighten it than that of continually handling these dead letters, and assorting them for the flames? For by the cartload they are annually burned. Sometimes from out of the folded paper the pale clerk takes a ring—the finger it was meant for, perhaps, molders in the grave; a bank note sent in swiftest charity—he whom it would relieve nor eats nor hungers anymore; pardon for those who died despairing; hope for those who died unhoping; good tidings for those who died stifled by unrelieved calamities. On errands of life, these letters speed to death. (143)

The sequel explanation leaves us with a narrator contemplating information flows on a mass-scale bracketed within a discussion of tragic death. Articulated by examples of uncompensated exchanges, the narrator imagines the “occupation” of Bartleby—that of an employee who works for an organization that facilitates such exchanges and indeed makes such exchanges on this massive scale even possible, but who actually *works* when circulation fails—actually hastens the scrivener’s withdrawal.

This “Story of Wall Street” marks an expansive trajectory of Bartleby-as-social-metonymy (we know, after all, that Bartleby is “not particular”) to the point that his story has meaning on a much broader, collective level; that is, Bartleby has been recast as the tragic hero of this Wall Street vision of New York, the unfortunate victim of the logical extension of general business investment practices. The parting grandiloquence “Ah, Bartleby! Ah, humanity!” synthesizes labor, poverty, property, and human interactions in a market and investment

economy into an apparently coherent narrative of professionalism, vagrancy, crime, and communal living modeled on efficient, “functional” social relations.³ Forty-one years after the publication of “Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street,” the normalization of social life as circulation, the associative spectacle of “dead letters sounding like dead men,” would uncannily warrant new practices of state intervention in the struggle between capital and labor.

In this story, written in 1853, Bartleby has been arrested for inactivity, immobility made discernible as a deviation from normative behavior by the actions of those around him which have been proscribed as properly participating within, and directed toward, a specific mode of production. Ralph James Savarese has likened this “standstill” inactivity of Bartleby as symptomatic evidence of the traumas associated to the stresses of industrialization (20), a symptom that is made even more peculiar when located directly at the heart of where unending progress seemed most likely in the promise of capital—namely Wall Street (21).⁴ In this light, we must importantly note that the story of Wall Street is located, as Barbara Foley has described, within a period of intense labor antagonism in New York, which “suggest that Melville’s imaginative process in ‘Bartleby’ required him to blend events from the early 1840s with events

³ Reed’s argument, then, counters the positions of Giorgio Agamben or Gilles Deleuze. While Agamben argues that Bartleby’s abandonment of work emphasizes a human potential beyond the constraints of capital exchange and circulation, Deleuze takes a similar approach that Bartleby’s formulaic resonances (“I prefer not to” and its complementary “I am not particular”) “stymies all speech acts” and creates a vacuum, an empty space that cannot be comprehended under the aegis and logic of capital’s epistemological identifiers: “Bartleby is the man without references, without possessions, without properties, without qualities, without particularities: he is too smooth for anyone to be able to hang any particularity on him. Without past or future, he is instantaneous” (74). While I tend to think this resolution of Bartleby is dangerous—to assign Bartleby a positionality outside the confines of fathomable human history will of course not satisfactorily challenge, indeed even gives license to, the actions culminating in the sovereign reign of capital—I’m not satisfied in Reed’s argument that capitalism offers its own contradiction and thus the tools by which such structures could be dismantled.

⁴ Savarese writes “Bartleby seems uncannily to perform Benjamin’s idea of a traumatic [dialectical] standstill, and he seems to do so at the very center of what Marx called ‘value in motion’: namely, Wall Street” (21). While Savarese’s argument looks at medicine, then, as it developed alongside industrial modes of production in the nineteenth century as a way to mollify workers for the new modes of capitalist production, I am more interested in what this text presses even further—namely, an escalation of matters to assure participation in the modes of production that have an implicit understanding of what counts as productive work in the mid to late nineteenth century.

occurring later in the decade and perhaps into the 1850s” (89). Likewise, David Kuebrich has attempted to place the narrative within the transformative years of the middle Nineteenth Century.⁵ Looking at this text as an artifact of a moment animating these new modes of human interactions allow Foley and Kuebrich the opportunity to discuss the underlying ideological assumptions of property rights, an emerging sense of public space apart from private space, and new cultural logics of living in rapidly expanding urban centers of capital production.⁶

However, as much as this narrative should be viewed within the historically significant events of Astor Place and other intensified class antagonisms of the middle century metropolis, so should it also be located within the social logic manifested in celebrations of technologies and ideologies that forge a unidirectional communal order by sanctioning “official” action, movement, and expansion at this time; this is to say that if we are to take this as a “Story of Wall Street” we must also take into account the trajectories that will mark the “shorthand realism” of spatial and temporal investment, expanse, growth, hauntingly prone to being read in reverse. Precisely the same logic underlying technological developments of circulation and investment of the period—most notably the telegraph of 1844 and its descendent the stock ticker of 1867—register Bartleby’s presence as Wall Street worker a “gentlemanly cadaver” (the narrator’s own term for Bartleby), an uncanny specter of industrial and investment capital, a “social death” for a character that is industrially tone-deaf. If Michael Gilmore’s final assessment of this narrative is correct—if the inability to read across class lines is the determining feature of living in this new

⁵ “The story’s primary concern is not to explore underlying economic structures, mirror the mid-century New York workplace, or advance a particular ideology. Rather, Melville practices what might be termed a “short-hand realism” that assumes or merely intimates the existence of certain economic conditions so that he can concentrate on his chief interest, which is to disclose the underlying ideological assumptions (that is, the largely unconscious modes of thought and behavior) that new conditions engender” (Kuebrich 389).

⁶ “Bartleby’s conduct becomes less freakish and idiosyncratic, more plausible and historically significant, I would argue, when seen in the full context of contemporaneous struggle and discourses over property rights” (Foley 96); “Underlying all these ideological themes is the more fundamental assumption of the primacy of the rights of private property—the right to unlimited acquisition of property and its unregulated use” (Kuebrich 398).

city⁷—then not only is a this story about the particular cadences of industrial progress and efficient advancement into one coherent social whole, but it is also a narrative haunted in its “reality” by the negative presence of its title character, the invisibility of lower and working classes, the homeless, *unheimlich*, uncanny unsuccessfully repressed in the social space of the urban nineteenth century.⁸ Bartleby, understood by this logic has been deemed inactive, unprogressive, and conscribed to “social death”; the walls of Wall Street may be littered with ticker tape, but not enough to bury the trajectories of the counternarrative of investment capital.

Thus, inasmuch as it is a narrative of the alienation of one worker on Wall Street, “Bartleby, the Scrivener” is also a study of the work of narrative to submerge important political and historical questions of community into the synthesizing project understood as Nineteenth-Century Modernity.⁹ But how can this novella help us comprehend those Nineteenth-Century urban industrial locales for capital production? More to the point, how can this narrative encapsulate the changing relations between humans that mark the spaces of social “life” through its negative, a social withdrawal? In what ways do the introductory words of our eminently safe narrator delimit a new conceptualization of urban social space, teeming with a life struggling against the endeavor to remake it according to the contours of circulation? Or, to echo Kristin

⁷ “Melville’s tale is concerned, then, with the invisibility of one class to another. [...] One even gets the impression from the story that this invisibility extends into the structure of the city: in other words that the marketplace has imposed its ‘rationality’ on the disposition of urban space” (Gilmore 140).

⁸ The German term *unheimlich* refers of course to Freud’s description of the uncanny, but my intents are also partly to link it to Freudian interpretations of urban anxiety, most notably found in *Civilization and its Discontents*. Whereas Freud argues that urban social relations direct desires in a way acceptable to “civilization,” my attempt to describe an urban malaise follows more closely Marxian definitions of alienation—that is humans alienated from their own labor. Such a concept may be built into Freud’s description of the uncanny as a “vague notion of automatic—mechanical—processes that may lie hidden behind the familiar image of a living person” (135), or the haunting uncertainty of the distinction between the inanimate and the animate that confounds any attempts at suppression (138).

⁹ Marxist interpretations of this narrative originally focused on this allegorical quality of the narrative to depict individual worker alienation. “Defined only by his job and becoming increasingly dissociated with it, Bartleby sums up the worker’s plight. Given systems committed to profits the only alternative to working under such dehumanizing conditions is death” (Barrett 379).

Ross's words in the description of the events of the Paris Commune, in what ways can we conceive of urban space as revolutionary space (4)?

In an analysis of human interaction and responses to the stimuli fostered by the new urban experience, Georg Simmel writes of how the nineteenth century began to change the parameters for what a concept of “social death” would mean. According to Simmel in “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” while the eighteenth century cultivated freedom from the social ties of politics, religion, morality, and economics, the nineteenth century promoted not just individual freedom, but furthered the concept of *individuality*, a complex outgrowth ultimately connected to a division of labor and of qualities “which make him unique and indispensable but which at the same time make him so much more dependent on the complimentary activity of others” (30). The creation of a “metropolitan type”—discernible as a “calm rationality” mediating the discrete shocks on the consciousness offered by the street that brings multifarious elements into relation with each other—results from a reaction to the pace of new urban stimuli characteristic of market relations.¹⁰ The “purely objective,” calm, rational, *efficient* sentiment necessitated by the money economy parallels, and is advanced by, the ways in which the city engineers a “community” by forging new social interactions and relationships. But while this correlation of market to community seemingly ignored relations of production, Simmel quickly asserts a very Marxian point about commodities in circulation: the modern city-as-market remakes social space by bringing the products of work into contact with unknown producers. Social discourse is mediated not through subjective interactions between people directly, but through the “objectivity” of the products of labor disembodied from their origins in human living

¹⁰ “The metropolis has always been the seat of the money economy because the many-sidedness and concentration of commercial activity have given the medium of exchange an importance which it could not have acquired in the commercial aspects of rural life. But the money economy and the domination of the intellect stand in the closest relationship to one another. They have in common a purely matter-of-fact attitude in the treatment of persons and things in which formal justice is often combined with an unrelenting hardness” (Simmel 32).

labor, reassembled as commodities via the tendency of the market to weigh commensurate those disparate phenomena. Furthermore, the industrial urban centers ground a new politics, a social struggle in which “seller must seek to produce in the person to whom he wishes to sell ever new and unique ends,” a remaking of the agency of urban citizenship as dependent upon this circulation (41-2). This new social complex is staged in the urban locales which will bring scores of people into new contact with each other and will thus for Simmel become the ground for the “resistance of the individual to being leveled, swallowed-up in the social-technological mechanism” (30).

But must we recognize the only possibility for community through an increasingly repeatable, systematized, commodified set of behaviors? Jean-Luc Nancy in *The Inoperative Community* offers another possibility by which community can be comprehended and realized. Nancy’s axiom, that community is dependent upon people “producing in essence their own essence as their work, and furthermore producing precisely this essence *as community*” would seem to point to a recognition of what Marx would call a realization of the social quality of humans bound together by the nature of their capacity to labor. Community here would depend upon a willingness recognize human *immanence* as a social quality, and would thus be dependent upon a reaffirmation (not an alienation) of labor to the human (Nancy 2-3).

The antagonism of social life/social death that is expended in the dialectic between “eminently safe” narrator and his “gentlemanly cadaver” would seem to exemplify a struggle in forging community. Efficiency governs the lawyer-narrator’s worldview to the point that we see a transformation of the day into the “working day,” run like clockwork. Not only does the lawyer recognize the actions of his two operatives Turkey and Nippers based on the circadian increments of the working day—“12 o’clock meridian” repeated so insidiously as is the more

familiar “prefer”—but the narrator/manager is able to coordinate the efforts of these two workers that will become the basis for that working day: “Their fits relieved each other like guards. When Nippers was on, Turkey was off; and vice versa” (112). When describing the work activities of those in his employ, the eminently safe narrator is exceedingly proud, almost giddy, of the systematized, mechanical, demeanor of Turkey and Nippers. The narrator gleefully celebrates his technical innovation of social engineering—his own law copyist office; in other words, the workshop as his own creation is a wonderful invention for the ways it recodes his employees *as operatives*. The makeover extends beyond the workshop and into the contours of daily life to portend a social innovation of an entire operative community—a “working day” that renders a “day” subordinate to industrial work. This celebrated project of social engineering in the reterritorialization of public space would be an ideological endeavor particular to many other cultural projects of late Nineteenth-Century America.

The concluding paragraph of *Dead Men* recognized as such by being excised from social life remade as living-for-circulation, then, would seem to draw attention to a contemplation of the meaning of community solidified by such processes. What strikes through this epilogue is not Bartleby’s death, but how this “eminently safe man” animates the new disciplines of life.¹¹ The

¹¹ Gilmore begins to analyze these new relationships as becoming more and more regimented too, disciplined, objectified. “Obligations, generally between strangers were now purely contractual and traditional habits of sociability yielded to a new emphasis on regularity and discipline” (134). Dan McCall has argued against such interpretations of this narrative based on textual evidence that suggests the narrator attempts to view Bartleby and sympathize with him beyond those objectified relationships of the capitalist city; therefore, McCall argues, a Marxist read of the class antagonisms of the novel are somewhat dishonest. But, as Rosemarie Garland-Thomson argues, precisely the failure of any sympathy to have any real transformative effect establishes the axis around which this narrative revolves: “‘Bartleby’ supports [a] connect between modern commerce and benevolence in that benevolence is the primary discourse the narrator turns to in his desperate attempts to contain the threat Bartleby presents to his ordered world. [...] In the end, benevolence collapses under the weight of its own contradictions, throwing the narrator into crisis and casting him back upon a desperate and evacuated religiosity rooted in the apprehension of suffering. Benevolence thus ultimately yields the narrator despair rather than comfort” (786-7). Like this argument by Garland-Thomson, which ultimately posits that the tragedy of the narrative is in the failure of benevolence, Reed argues against McCall in that the problems posited by new social relations of the urban setting transcend individual cases: “The motor of capital is the exploitation of the worker to produce surplus value and thus does not depend in the personal characteristics of any one individual” (248).

supposedly profound revelation thus voiced ripples with the possibility of being swallowed-up by the social-technological mechanism. The epilogue is haunted by a subtext that mediates the singular entity—worker—to a social life remade the proper medium for the practices of investment, exchange and accumulation. That Bartleby has apparently fallen victim to one “social death”—i.e. withdrawal from the rhythms of labor exchange—due to a previous occupation does little to draw attention away from the submerged rumble of the countertext: another kind of *occupation*—the politically charged term describing a reclamation of the spaces of work—leads directly to another kind of “social death”—confinement and imprisonment in an legally-sanctioned human warehouse.

The narrator’s reluctance to utilize legal force and coercion to compel Bartleby to conformity remains for readers today, 150 years subjected to the cadences of industrial and post-industrial discipline, a confounding, if not frustrating moment in the text. Significantly, when the lawyer decides to remove his offices “closer to City Hall,” a suggestion of the law-as-last-resort enters into the narrator’s consciousness:

Something severe, something unusual, must be done. What! surely you will not have him collared by a constable and commit his innocent pallor to the common jail? And upon what ground could you procure such a thing to be done?—a vagrant, is he? What! he a vagrant, a wanderer who refuses to budge? It is because he will *not* be a vagrant, then, that you seek to count him *as* a vagrant. That is too absurd. (135)

The hint of Bartleby as being consigned by the narrative of the law as *vagrant* is abruptly dismissed by this calm, rational, *safe* narrator. As apparition, or “gentlemanly cadaver,” Bartleby flutters in and out of a legal definition, traversing the limits of such a definition precisely because he refuses movement; however, this is exactly the offense Bartleby is charged with and the reason why he is removed to the Tombs.¹² The apparent contradiction in the legal

¹² Central to Naomi Reed’s argument is this haunting presence of Bartleby which will attest to the “spectrality of capitalism, its complex intertwining of the material and the immaterial” (251).

logic of the narrative is not further contemplated by our lawyer-narrator, yet the implication suggests that movement is not quite the defining offense in the crime of vagrancy; the offense is more a disinvestment of labor from the socially prescribed exchanges that govern investment communities, a disinvestment that deeply troubled elites in both North and South, particularly in the years following emancipation. To ask a question as I do in the title of this essay—“Was Bartleby Black” is not to ask if the character described and animated by Melville personifies racialized tropes, but rather is to bring to the forefront the historically specific anxieties of the nineteenth century that were at the heart of struggle of work, community, capital, and how it was rendered “eminently safe” by a disciplinary apparatus determined to police the way people acted to exchange their disembodied labor. Perhaps alternately, while the question “Was Bartleby Black” cannot reasonably be answered with to any definitive end beyond speculation, the implicit question, “is the eminently safe narrator of this tale white?” can be more to the point. For emerging from these negotiations of specialized labor, technological-cultural innovation and the project of forging public spaces made safe is an axiomatic proposition about race and citizenship.

The national railroad strikes of 1877 mark a moment which would be the genesis of a new and unsettling possibility for social revolution grounded in what would become part of how people began to perceive a “labor problem.” Significantly, as Carl Smith has pointed out, the trouble was not seen as that existing *between* labor and capital, but apparently labor alone, and the class of people composing its ranks an enigmatic catalyst of the moral outrages that took place across the Atlantic earlier in the decade in the uprising in Paris of 1871. One of Allan Pinkerton’s first novels, titled *Communists, Strikers, Tramps, and the Detectives*, put the

situation succinctly, advancing an unambivalent perception of a fluid workforce on curious relation to the current of community: “The effect of tramping upon any person,” Pinkerton writes, “is to make him keenly arrive to the fair generalship of living without work, and existing when work cannot be secured. He cannot but become a sort of guerilla on the outskirts of civilization” (45). In viewing those of the laboring classes whose relationship to industry was more “portable,” “fluid,” and “unstable,” and thus confounding the fixity that increasingly defined “work” within the ascendancy of industry at the end of the century, Pinkerton’s description of these masses fuses romantic nostalgia with a palpable fear of violent struggle; somehow, the compulsion to sell one’s labor has had no affect on these “tramps,” these warlike apparitions both mobile and peripheral to “civilization.” Indeed, in the beginning of Pinkerton’s novel, the narrator describes the anxiety pervading the bourgeois and propertied classes in this century: “Revolution was nowhere; revolution was everywhere.” The mobility that defines this class’s marginality, the sense of being out-of-synch temporally and spatially is symptomatic of the withdrawal of labor.

However, the development of industry and investment capital *depended* upon its creation of a flexible and fluid workforce of unskilled labor. As David Montgomery has argued, the advancement of “labor saving devices”—the presence of which helped create and advance new modes of production—promoted the need for “casual labor.” Exemplifying the extent to which portable common labor had increasingly occupied an oblique relation to official accounts of work—implicitly proscribing the relation of work to “society”—Montgomery demonstrates how economists at the time began to rewrite the contours of a culture-at-work that held new emphasis on professionalism and discipline. Censuses taken in the final three decades of the nineteenth century began to track and classify the population’s engagement in the market of labor-exchange

by indexing occupations via specific divisions of the economy. These sectors—agriculture, professional and personal service, trade and transportation, and manufactures and mechanical and mining industries—all did have common, unskilled laborers working within them, but were not really distinguished from the general heading of “professional service” because, as Montgomery has noted in quoting Margo Conk, common, unskilled workers were “assumed to be in a personal, almost feudal relationship to an artisan (a mason’s laborer, for example), or to the society as a whole (a road laborer or day laborer)” (59). The perpetuation of portable, unskilled labor suggests that the advent of “labor-saving machinery” facilitated a thorough casualization of labor—work disembodied from the human via a more thorough commodification process, now completely at the disposal of the drive to large-scale production. By 1877, the advent of technological progress embodied in the introduction of machinery would necessitate new measures for subjugating the masses made identifiable as such through the new possibilities offered by the social quality of living labor. In many of the labor outbreaks of the final quarter of the nineteenth century, frustration was often taken out against the machinery itself, apparently seen as *the source* of much worker oppression.

According to Pinkerton’s text the dangers that the refugees of the Paris Commune presented to America lay in an alternative model of the relation of labor to a community.¹³

Measures to further secure appropriate labor discipline began to populate the American

¹³ As Kristin Ross points out in her study of the 1871 Paris Commune titled *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune*, reaction to the commune typically condemned what was seen as the violence exercised by the communards. In fact, it was the regular state army at Versailles that initiated the bloodshed. When on March 18, 1871, working-class Parisians (many of them women) seized control of the city and barricaded themselves within it in response to the resolution of the Franco-Prussian War for which the working people of Paris were made to pay, the state army at Versailles responded with terrible force. Among the casualties of the attempt to destroy the commune were twenty-five thousand, mostly working-class Parisians, a larger number than any of the casualties of the battles of the Franco-Prussian War “or than any of the previous ‘massacres’ (for example, the Terror) in French History” (Ross 4-5). Still, the popular strategy to historicize the Paris Commune by portraying the Communards in such an intensely negative light as perpetrators of uncontrollable violence was most definitely employed by American writers, Pinkerton’s text just one example.

landscape after 1877. Citizen associations such as the “Law and Order League” and others formed in reaction to the ubiquitous news accounts of rowdy and intoxicated youths—many if them explicitly marked as immigrant agitators—taking arms against the police (Adelman 2, Buder 33). The general strike that had begun with a labor action by the workers of the Baltimore-Ohio Railroad touched off numerous clashes on a national scale. On one level, the growth of the “labor problem” itself turned on an axis of assumptions about a new community faced with aggressive, invasive ideas. Popular presses rushed to publish stories that hinted of a threat of a “Red War” being waged within and against the whole nation, and began outcries for national counterrevolutionary measures (Buder 35).

In Chicago, these citizen boards and “Law and Order Leagues” did more than give new emphasis to the enforcement of laws prohibiting the sale of liquor to youths by targeting the violating saloons (Buder 33); they also spearheaded a campaign to increase the firepower of the police. Business leaders sought to protect free enterprise from violent dissent such as those that occurred in 1877 by increasing the militia-like capacities of local, state, and federal law enforcement. “The elite, normally bearish on government spending,” Thomas Philpott writes, “lobbied for more National Guard Armories and more federal forts (Fort Laramie was too far away). And the city’s most prestigious reform group, the Citizen’s Association, gave the police department money to procure a small but modern arsenal ‘for city defense’” (44). Among the purchases were 100 new handguns and rifles, four 12-pound Napoleon cannons with carriages and caissons, some lighter artillery pieces, one ten-barrel .50 caliber gatling gun, and 1000 rounds of ammunitions. All of this was given by the Citizen’s Association with the understanding at the time that it was to be used where “the public order” was threatened, a shibboleth that betrays the extent and scale of the class antagonism that permeated a delicately

balanced social sphere. Noteworthy is the fact that most of these Public Citizens Associations were not “public” in the strictest sense; instead, numerous industrialists who had lost property in the outbreaks composed these boards. Chicago’s Citizen’s Law and Order League, for example, had as its chair George M. Pullman, president and founder of the corporation that produced, among other things, the world-famous Pullman Palace Cars.¹⁴

As a businessman, George Pullman was widely seen as one who dealt with his employees as a capitalist-citizen best should—that is, objectively, without emotion, efficiently. Beginning his career in physically elevating properties when threatened by floods or other water-type damages, Pullman soon turned his attention to luxury railroad travel when, on a particularly long and incommensurable business trip, he decided to himself that surely people would pay top-dollar to travel in comfort. As the Pullman Palace Car Company grew, each employee, from the manufacturers through the conductors and porters that manned the cars themselves were strictly monitored, their tasks closely regimented. In order to ensure this efficiency, Pullman hired “spotters” who traveled on the cars in disguise to test the honesty of each worker (Buder 17).

Not all attempts to stem the supposedly rising red tide relied on overtly militaristic measures. The events of 1877 spurred in industrialists like Pullman a concern for the causes behind labor agitation (Buder 35). Such an impetus would propel Pullman to begin in 1880 construction of a model company town that would distance his workers and his factories from the “evil influences” offered by the metropolis and the “rioting immigrant neighborhoods” (qtd. in Adelman 2). When asked much later what drove him to build his famous company town located far enough south of Chicago, Pullman responded

¹⁴ In 1877, Pullman himself had been invited to participate in a lawsuit to recover damages that resulted from the violence of 1877. In the Pullman Company Archives at the Newberry Library in Chicago is a letter from the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, inviting George Pullman to participate in a lawsuit against Allegheny County in Pennsylvania for the destruction of property from damages done on July 21 and 22, 1877.

such advantages and surroundings made better workmen by removing from them the feeling of discontent and desire for change which so generally characterize the American workman; thus protecting the employer from loss of time and money consequent upon intemperance, labor strikes, and dissatisfaction which generally result from poverty and uncongenial home surroundings. (qtd in Adelman 2)

The planned industrial-company town targeted labor unrest by entombing it into a narrative that dictates labor's appropriate relation to the social whole. Underlying this solution of the new industrial town-without-a-labor-problem is an argument about the meaning of belonging to that community—of what the meaning of “citizen” is under industrial production. No longer will *community* be concerned with or derived from principles associated with democracy—representative or direct—or of autonomy in which social groups will be forged in order to determine their own course of action based on common interest. In Pullman's solution, “community” is rendered in terms industrial efficiency—a maximization of the possibility for surplus wove into the fabric of everyday life and social discourse. Pullman's response to the unrest symbolized in cultural consciousness by the Paris Commune and 1877 was to create a commune for capital; citizenship invoked by the extent to which human labor has been thoroughly disembodied, commodified. Citizenship in this mercantile-democratic society, or more precisely, mercantile democracy has been redefined to the extent that workers are stripped of their living labor—undead (living-dead) automatons interacting in eminently safe discourses.

This new “suburb” just south of Chicago would be completely engineered and managed by the company underwritten by a philosophy that “practical philanthropy”—that workers would gravitate to a locale in which everything was “made beautiful for them” by their employers—would both solve once and for all the troublesome “labor problem” and also generate steady production of capital.¹⁵ The Pullman Company's plan called for full corporate ownership of

¹⁵ According to Adelman, “Pullman believed his ‘practical philanthropy’ would generate profits with fewer problems from his workers who were selected from those ethnic *groups which he considered the least undesirable*”

everything in the town—from the arcade-stores at which residents could purchase food, to the libraries where the inhabitants could borrow books, to the churches where the residents could collectively worship, to the individual tenement houses where his workers would live, to the utilities by which citizens could pipe heat and water into their residences (Pullman tenements, all brick structures, were some of the first to use running water and gas lines—but each had to be purchased at an extra cost beyond rent), to the parks and recreation clubs where his workers would spend their down-time. In addition, Pullman’s plan called for close screening processes for potential inhabitants; specifically, Pullman intended to populate his model town with workers selected from ethnic backgrounds which he considered the least undesirable (Adelman 2). Revealingly, according to the logic of Pullman, the combination of the emerging field of landscape architecture with corporate community management and selective living practices would need no overtly repressive apparatuses common to its larger metropolitan brethren for controlling the masses—no police, no courts, no lockups or penitentiary system.¹⁶ Pullman famously bragged that law professionals—police officers, lawyers, judges—would not find much work in his town. The legal arm of the Township of Hyde Park, in whose jurisdiction the town of

(2, emphasis added). This selective process in effect makes the corporate town of Pullman a narrative negotiation of the “labor problem,” and defines what would count as the “labor” element of the equation—cultural consciousness begins to view “labor” officially, as I will argue, as “white,” primarily of Northern European descent.

¹⁶ The field of landscape architecture had emerged at this time as a microcosm of the effort to engineer space for the social purposes that married aesthetics with utility. Nathan Barrett designed the parks, the laws, the walkways, the winding paths that would mollify the citizen-worker of Pullman, making him appreciate his surroundings, and thus lifting his mind from and removing the temptations of the more vulgar tendencies associated with urban locales. The discipline was also used in other urban-planning situations, most notably by Barrett’s contemporary Frederick Law Olmstead in New York’s Central Park and even at Chicago’s World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893. Andrew Silver and David Scobey have pointed out the expressly political means exhibited by Olmstead in his engineering of urban landscapes. Olmstead, in designing Central Park “in part to mute social divisions and quell working-class resentment, [attempted to hide] class boundaries just as he attempted to hide the boundaries of the park itself. The goal of Central Park, in Olmstead’s own words, was to ‘completely shut out the city’” (Silver 111). See also Scobey, *Empire City*.

Pullman fell, generally left the company town alone, its services deemed wholly unnecessary by this “revolution in social engineering.”¹⁷

Pullman presented not just a solution to the historically specific contentions that seemed to be brought up by disgruntled labor, but also an alternative model for what would count as politics in civil discourse. Pullman, visited often by journalists from foreign countries, became a global experiment in the question of community, democracy, and sovereignty within the era that seemed hopelessly doomed to unending class antagonism. While most reporters enthusiastically heralded the successes of Pullman to the rest of the world, including Carroll D. Wright who would soon become the nation’s first Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor, less sanguine were the submerged reports from the worker-citizens themselves that would bubble up to the surface of popular consciousness in numerous letters to the editor of local periodicals (most notably the labor-friendly *Chicago Herald*) and an 1885 report by Johns Hopkins economics professor Richard Ely, who argued in *Harpers Magazine* that the Pullman method more closely resembled feudalism than democracy.

To a certain extent, Ely was correct, as the town of Pullman must have appeared to the economist a feudal hamlet in which all subjects were in absolute deference to the lord of the manner, the community’s sovereign power. Still, I argue that Pullman offered a distinctly modern idea of community through industrial production and a civic duty-to-work that promoted the principles of a commodity market, centered around a mechanism for mass production—the industrial factory—and governed by the principles of the maximization of surplus value through human activity (no matter how difficult the national economy would get, Pullman demanded that

¹⁷ As Buder has pointed out, “by and large the township left the model town alone, which was exactly what George Pullman wanted. It provided the use of Hyde Park’s courts and jailhouse and the service of two policemen, one working the dayshift, and the other the night” (110). Even after the town had been successfully annexed into Chicago in 1889, the company still more or less dictated community policy.

the town return at least a 6% profit). In this sense, the planned company town of Pullman more closely resembles the community that Marshall Berman has described as a “Faustian tragedy of development,” that “aims less for immediate profits than for long-range development of productive forces, which it believes will produce the best results for everyone in the end” (74). The community begins to resemble the same industrial machinery that sought to coordinate previously fragmented and competitive forces, and, in so doing, this technological state presents a new model for capitalist sovereignty and authority. Manipulation of communal relations now were in service of the need for progressive, unending development (Berman 74). By 1894, an even greater contestation to the sovereign authority of capital that had taken place in 1877 centered around this model town of Pullman: the national strike by the American Railway Union headed by Eugene Debs protested not just the company’s lowering of wages while maintaining rental costs (and other “cost of living” prices the company/town controlled) in the midst of a severe depression, but also challenged this specific idea of capitalistic hierarchy in the politics of community-building.

Most importantly, Pullman represents an enlightening study of the both role of governing apparatuses that monitor the social interactions of civil society at the apex of industrial capital’s power and the ascent of capital’s sovereignty through its creation of “an eminently safe” community. Pullman exemplifies the emergence of a radically different sovereign power that polices and governs these newly constituted communities and those citizens within in a way evocative of what Walter Benjamin (and later Giorgio Agamben) would identify as the state of exception. Briefly, the modern state is defined by an exception, or rather the role of the sovereign to govern, to create and preserve social order according to laws under which that sovereign body

is not subject.¹⁸ For Benjamin, the state of exception turns on the role of violence as political potential, and a legal system that will constitute and define the state serves to “erect, in all areas where individual ends could be usefully pursued by violence, legal ends that can only be realized by legal power.” Banning the use of violence on the individual level, while simultaneously deploying it for its own ends, this exception becomes the face of the modern state. It is precisely this exception which will be distributed throughout the landscape, codified into an apparatus of professional criminal justice—a legally-sanctioned violence—that will advance to assure that social relations are at all times, (eminently, conspicuously) safe; for violence wielded for individual ends “threatens [the state] not in the ends it may pursue but by its mere existence outside the law” (Benjamin 281-2). In Pullman, in *Bartleby*, we get the historically specific collapse of the distinctions between the principles that will organize communities and the principles that will superordinate the production of industrial capital; the specter that walks Wall Street, the specter that haunts late Nineteenth-Century Chicago, is the implicit knowledge that the promotion of the legal fiction of mercantile democracy cannot erase the contradictions of an industrializing nation-state.

¹⁸ According to Benjamin, this exception is grounded in the legitimacy of violence: “since the acknowledgement of legal violence is most tangibly evident in a deliberate submission to its ends, a hypothetical distinction between kinds of violence must be based on the presence or absence of a general historical acknowledgement of its ends. Ends that lack such acknowledgement may be called natural ends, the other legal ends. The differing function of violence, depending on whether it serves natural or legal ends, can be mostly traced against a background of specific legal conditions” (280). A legal system will try to “erect, in all areas where individual ends could be usefully pursued by violence, legal ends can only be realized by legal power. [...] Law sees violence in the hands of individuals as a danger undermining the legal system. As a danger nullifying legal ends and the legal executive? Certainly not; for when the violence as such would not be condemned, but only that directed to illegal ends. It will be argued that a system of legal ends cannot be maintained if natural ends are anywhere still pursued violently. In the first place, however, this is mere dogma. To counter it one might perhaps consider the surprising possibility that the law’s interest in a monopoly vis-à-vis individuals is not explained by the intention of preserving legal ends but, rather, by that of preserving the law itself; that violence, when not in the hands of the law, threatens it not in the ends that it may pursue but by its mere existence outside the law. The same may be more drastically suggested if one reflects how often the figure of the ‘great’ criminal, however repellant his ends may have been, has aroused the secret admiration of the public. This cannot result from his deed, but only from the violence to which it bears witness. In this case, therefore, the violence of which present-day law is seeking in all areas of activity to deprive the individual appears really threatening, and arouses even in defeat the sympathy of the mass against the law” (281-2).

With the advances of technological reproduction, large-scale conflict seemed to have been made an inseparable part of industrial society. As Montgomery has argued, the collective, coordinated effort of thousands of hands in iron and steel manufactures wrought new organizations of social labor wherein “technical expertise and intense physical exertion were applied to ever-more imposing furnaces, rolling mills, molds, and transfer machinery, all of which were legally owned by other men” (44). At the hilt of this example of newly-forged community-as-solution-to-urban-problems of crime, vice, and riot (and serving to constantly remind the place of the worker in this new style of social organization) stood Pullman’s main factory; watching guard over its territory and mediating all social interactions of the community would be the immense and intimidating factory clock tower—the monolith of the industrialized working day by which all worker-citizens would synchronize their lives so as to be “better, more productive neighbors.” By bringing these masses into new social relations, these immense, imposing structures of industrial production served as important locations for class identification and mobilization to action (Montgomery 160). Extrapolating from the refrain from Marx’s *The Poverty of Philosophy*, if “the handmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam mill, society with the industrial capitalist,” the factory clock tower gives you society with the industrial sovereign. Marx’s demonstration of the process through which living labor is commodified via the creation of factory-time and the working day most explicitly laid out in chapters 7 and 10 of *Capital*,¹⁹ offers insight on our example of the significance of the factory

¹⁹ This important passage reads: “The value of a day’s labor power amounts to three shillings, because on our own assumption, half a day’s labor is objectified in that quantity of labor-power cost half-a-day’s labour. But the past labour embodied in the labour-power and the living labour it can perform, and the daily cost of maintaining labour-power, the latter is its use-value. The fact that half-a-day’s labour is necessary to keep the worker alive during 24 hours does not in any way prevent him from working a whole day. Therefore the value of labour-power, and the value which labour-power valorizes [*vertwertet*] in the labour-process, are two entirely different magnitudes; and this difference was what the capitalist had in mind when he was purchasing that labour-power. The useful quality of labour-power, by virtue of which it makes yarn or boots, was to the capitalist merely the necessary condition for his activity; for in order to create value labour must be expended in a useful manner. What was really decisive for him

clock tower governing community relations in Pullman: not only did it serve to remind inhabitants of the subordination of their everyday lives to the shifts of the workshops, but with every passing minute also advances the alienation of one's labor into a commodity with exchange value under the logic of mercantile democracy.

This project in social engineering for the purposes of efficient industrial production and maximization of capital must be noted for how it built community by an "orderly arrangement of race relations"—or the extension of social segregation of "Black" from "White" that had been inherited from the antebellum division of labor. Indeed, as Montgomery has shown, a racialized discipline was, if implicitly, attached to the emergent rhetoric of factory efficiency and scientific management (177). In response to Chicago's problems that seemed particular to the period, the town of Pullman not only prohibited alcohol and coordinated patriotic celebrations, but also attempted to bar people whose ethnic or racial backgrounds did not fit the company's idea of one who would be a model citizen/worker. As certain skilled industrial jobs were used in effect to define *whiteness*, Pullman as a planned town also would be a *white* communal solution.²⁰

Scholars cannot agree on the extent to which Pullman worked to make his industrial utopia a thoroughly "white" one. Philpott posits that Pullman expressly forbid African

was the specific use-value which this commodity possesses of being a source not only of value, but of more value than it has itself. This is the specific service the capitalist expects from labour-power, and in this transaction he acts in accordance with the eternal laws of commodity exchange. In fact, the seller of labour-power, like the seller of any commodity, realizes [*realisiert*] its exchange-value, and alienates [*veraussert*] its use-value. He cannot take one without giving the other. The use-value of labour-power, in other words labour, belongs just as little to its seller as the use-value of oil after it has been sold belongs to the dealer who sold it. The owner of the money has paid the value of a day's labour-power; he therefore has the use of it for a day, a day's labour belongs to him. On the one hand the daily sustenance of labour-power costs only half-a-day's labour, while on the other hand the very same labour-power can remain effective, can work, during a whole day, and consequently the value which its use during one day creates is double what the capitalist pays for that use; this circumstance is a piece of good luck for the buyer but by no means an injustice towards the seller" (*Capital*, Vol. 1, 300-1).

²⁰ "Afro-Americans were rare in the trade. Nineteenth-century descriptions of black workers in machine shops usually portrayed them in one of two ways: as ingenious mechanics performing amazing repairs with hand tools in small rustic shops, or as helpers who assisted white machinists in preparing and setting up large, cumbersome, and often greasy work, usually in southern railroad repair shops" (Montgomery 198).

Americans from taking up residence in his company town; Janice Reiff takes a less absolute stance. Evidence does allow for the possibility that African Americans were not banned outright from living within the town. However the fact that the numbers of African Americans living in municipalities adjacent to Pullman, especially Chicago, had been on steady increase in the final two decades of the nineteenth century, yet hardly any record can be produced of African Americans living within the planned town, suggests that something was afoot. What our primary object of interrogation should be here is not (yet) segregation in the letter of the law— we will not find any codified laws of the town of Pullman that will say “whites only.” Instead, our objective here is the interrogation of the way that “culture” writes into “common sense” the antagonisms and anxieties about work and social life with a particularly racialized tone—a read of “culture” that is more an analysis of the unwritten codes through which people identified their social lives and forged communities, and in so doing allowed for a system of citizenship that contributed to racialized segregation and systematized social death.

Most of the type of work done by the factories owned by the Pullman Palace Car Company had commonly and traditionally been performed by “white” labor, or more accurately labor that had become growingly comfortable with identifying itself as “white.” If African Americans were employed by the company, their position would usually be that of a sleeping car porter or possibly even a worker for the town’s Hotel Florence (named after Pullman’s daughter). Interestingly, over thirty years after the town had been founded, it would serve as the epicenter for A. Philip Randolph’s struggle to organize the first African American labor union in the nation in the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Still, the idea behind the planned town as solution to the conflict between labor and capital, in which skilled factory work rendered as a means towards achieving industrial harmony—a modern “civilization”—must be questioned for

the ways in which it makes an argument about race. A contented operative, one who could be best affected by the aesthetic and utilitarian methods of this social engineering project, would not be the typical inhabitant of the new industrial metropolis like Chicago—a metropolis now teeming with immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe and newly emancipated slaves from the South. A contented, docile operative would be ambitious, industrious, apparently unlike those who shirked steady work and “proper” appearance, demeanor, even homelife itself (as apparently occupied Chicago). In short, this narrative of labor and community—of skilled work, factory life, and “secure” social relations—must be understood for the ways in which it creates a new identity for citizenship based on “an occupation” for the role race will play in the nascent industrial nation.

Arguments about the role of racialized identities within this period pose an idea that racial identifiers served as a marker that would accelerate social divisions of labor; rather than challenging the sovereignty of capital, nineteenth-century racism emerges as a way to stave off, comprehend, and resolve competition among general social labor, or as a way to reinstate some agency within a system of absolute subjugation.²¹ Borrowing from the works of Herbert Gutman and George Rawick, David Roediger argues that a concept of “whiteness” as a racialized trope emerges within industrialism when workers will write “Blackness” as something that “could permanently embody the pre-industrial past they scorned and missed” (97). All of the anxieties and ambivalences concerning time-management, leisure-time/work-time/home-time divisions of daily life, bridled sexuality, and work in general is channeled, according to this argument, into

²¹ This idea of race affecting class struggle and solidarity is one of the central themes to W.E.B. DuBois’s *Black Reconstruction*. Taking as his subject the idea that chattel slavery debased “free labor” that had come to be identified as “white,” DuBois’s history of the nineteenth century illustrates organized labor’s vexed position concerning work and race. On the one hand, many leaders of organized labor disapproved of racial equality and interracial solidarity among working peoples for an admittance of equality would have meant, according to their arguments, increased competition among the working-classes. On the other hand, allowing racial distinctions to debase labor itself was compromising labor’s power by threatening to level all labor to the position of absolute subjection (17-31).

racist perceptions and practices. Roediger cites the examples of the outbreaks of 1877, particularly looking at the epicenters of St. Louis and San Francisco, as examples that might have begun as integrated struggles of labor against capital, becoming opportunities to vent racist anti-Black and anti-Chinese sentiment (167-8).²² Manifested in Pullman's management of social relations by imagining who would be the contented, chosen workers to form this utopian community-for-capital, late nineteenth-century American culture reveals its assumptions about race, docile social labor, legality and sovereignty, official citizen and "criminal outlaw": Pullman constructed his model industrial town immediately within a period of anxiety about non-work that had a distinct racialized tone within the national discussion that had as its key terms "Black Vagrancy," which had particular currency in developing industrial centers, and its corollary in the "Convict Lease System." This would be the ground upon which a modern Criminal Justice System would build its lexicon.

In the cases of many Southern communities who wished to secure industrial productivity, the trope of the Black Vagrant was invented to warrant the use of coercive, disciplinary force in order to assure constant labor application to the creation of industrial capital. But many of the fears about race and labor were not confined to the South. In fact, as Amy Dru Stanley has shown, the situations of the impoverished, casualized workforce in the North and the freed slaves in the South came to be seen in strikingly similar, if not reciprocal, terms (119). At the very same time reformers in the North were writing anti-vagrancy laws to prevent idleness, the white South had enacted the infamous Black Codes to target freed southern blacks (Stanley 126). The Black Vagrancy Laws of the South and the micromanaged social engineering solution of Pullman

²² Nevertheless, Roediger observes a new attention on the part of labor to integrate its forces to the extent that was unmatched in the antebellum period. Beginning his study into the post-bellum years of labor's new-found desire to integrate political action, Roediger speculates that "the Civil War and emancipation removed the ability of white workers to derive satisfaction from defining themselves as 'not slaves' and called into question self-definitions that centered on being 'not Black'"(170).

narrate the same tale about race, labor, community, and sovereign power.²³ Chicago in the later portions of the nineteenth century, particularly the period bracketed by the Paris Commune and Chicago's own urban conflagration of 1871 and the Pullman Strike of 1894 offers one snapshot of the struggles within industrialization. "The period between the fire and the Pullman Strike witnessed the emergence of an outlook," writes Carl Smith, "in which reality, city, and disorder became closely related, if not interchangeable terms" (8). The late nineteenth-century industrial urban centers like Chicago speak a brand of realism haunted, the hint of the echo that escapes the synthesis of capital relations, that which like a "guerilla on the outskirts of civilization," to revisit Pinkerton, remains the ever-present *negative* of a mercantile democratic possibility.

Toward the "White City": The Operative Community

The fire that destroyed much of the property of Chicago in 1871 did little to slow the city's rapid growth; indeed, the successful emergence from this particular conflagration furthered the opinion that this once little-regarded outpost on the western banks of Lake Michigan best exemplified American communal resolve when confronting the new questions presented by living in an industrially-dominated world. The popular press from numerous other U.S. cities reported the events and aftermath of the Chicago Fire with unprecedented zeal, and thanks to the availability of new technologies that could communicate news over long distances the ways in which media reported on the fire did much to build a network of communities concerned with "national" events (Smith 29). Chicago seemed to hold much of the spotlight in this era, and it became the conduit for an ambitious discussion on the perceived problems of modern "reality," a site to navigate the new antagonisms of industrial social life.

²³ As Bryan Eustice Wagner has observed, the field of legality that defines the contours of the social relation in a community revolving around industrial production and capital accumulation "is a question, in other words, of understanding how the ideology of universal citizenship and the practice of state-sponsored racial violence came to coexist and even depend upon one another for their existence. [...] It is, finally, then, a question of the formation of the modern racial state" (19).

Despite the profound economic destruction wielded by this fire, the city's growth-rate accelerated after 1871. By 1890, more than one million called Chicago home, making it the second-largest city in the United States in a phenomenally short period of time—the fastest growing city in the western hemisphere in this period despite the dearth of jobs immediately available to its citizens and the subsequent homelessness problems the city periodically faced (Smith 101).²⁴ Such growth was not always received enthusiastically, for by 1890 Chicago's teeming masses had gained for the city an international reputation for “colorful wickedness” and labor radicalism. Such an incredible influx of people in close proximity seemed to foster new relationships with a specifically political end. The social structure of the urban metropolis accented, made immediate, a strained divide between those who had modest-to secure financial means and those who were struggling for a living wage and an eight-hour workday. Economic depressions coupled with a sense that these relations of production increasingly impinged upon the social customs and traditions of everyday life for the exhausted common laborer, would periodically bring these antagonisms to a boil, and the extent to which the poorer classes fought earned the city a reputation for instability (Gutman 73, Drake 21). Conditions in Chicago exemplified to the international community a “Western Progress” laced with kindling for large-scale catastrophe.

Up until 1871, Chicago's burgeoning population created the need to quickly and inexpensively house the cheap labor upon which much of the city's prosperity would be driven. Many of the poorer communities consisted of little more than shabbily-constructed shacks made of wood. Such neighborhoods were prone to large and uncontrollable outbreaks of fire; in the unusually dry summer of 1871, more than two dozen fires broke out in these communities that

²⁴ Smith notes that often economic times would be so poor that Chicago's homeless would every-so-often be forced to live in the city's police stations.

consisted of buildings made of board (Smith 19). When a particular fire broke out in one of these poor communities on October 8, Chicago's elites looked on in horror as this blaze spread with such vehemence that it jumped bodies of water and in no time took hold of buildings considered to be "fireproof." The offices of the *Chicago Tribune* and homes of those same elites were among those that proved not to be safely beyond the fire's wrath (Smith 21). The perception of the tragedy and loss centered not on the relatively low number of casualties (roughly 300 people died in a fire that completely destroyed over two thousand acres of heavily-populated residential areas), but instead on the destruction of private property. Stories of catastrophe emphasized that the fire destroyed eighteen thousand buildings, and measured an economic cost that stretched to almost two hundred million dollars, or roughly a third of the city's worth (Smith 22). The literature of the fire hardly touched at all on the losses and the hardships of the lower-classes and ethnic neighborhoods that this fire leveled (Smith 52). Apparently, the city presented a new concern to the economic prosperity of the moneyed classes at least as much as it expressed a concern with general public safety.

The prevalent view of the fire held the teeming masses of Chicago responsible for the economic destruction wrought by the fire. Some accounts went as far as to suggest the fire had been set by foreign, working-class inhabitants of the poorer districts that had been influenced by the events in Paris earlier in the year (Smith 55). If Chicago were to be rebuilt, more attention must be paid to ensuring such a disaster would not happen again. Because the economic destruction of property was seen to have constituted the real disaster of the fire, a new project of imagining the social space of the city—one which saw the relatively close proximities of rich and poor communities as a major concern—was deemed necessary to handle the urban "disorder." Chicago after 1871 occasioned a new large-scale attempt to forge order by quelling

these antagonisms—recreating social space as that which can be grasped as “eminently safe.” Under this logic, Smith writes, Chicago stood in new global significance, “an epic moment that made it pure, heroic, and modern” at the same time (35).

The substantial increase in the number of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe fueled in no small part this anxiety and fears about labor unrest. In 1850 half of Chicago’s inhabitants were immigrants, fifty years later 80% of the city was composed of immigrants and their children, most from locations other than Northern or Western Europe. Other western cities saw similar increases in immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe; Detroit, for example, counted 77% of its population in 1880 as children of at least one foreign born parent (Montgomery 49). By 1880, an influx of “newer” immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe began to change the social landscape of the city with a steady stream into the Metropolis of the Midwest for work (Philpott 117). The area on the western periphery of the business and wealthy district in Chicago became referred to colloquially as “Little Prague.” In nearly every expanding city, immigrant labor—largely from those not from Northern and Western Europe—composed the majority of the manual and unskilled, casualized workforce.

The flood of living labor which facilitated the production of capital propagated larger unemployment numbers, and a common view emerged that identified many of the modern social problems of the city were due to “idle hands.” Some advocated for an increase in services and in employment opportunities as “a guard against trouble,” for it was apparent that idleness was a primary source of the wild behavior of urban disorder (Smith 73). Still, as Herbert Gutman has recognized, the press of these cities themselves opposed such efforts, and even the relief agents held those who were jobless in low regard as belonging to “the degrading class . . . who have the

vague idea that the world owes them a living” (qtd. in Gutman 86). According to the very agents who supposedly served them, unemployed workers were shiftless and lazy.

This disdain for the unemployed and unskilled workers in post-conflagration Chicago was evident in the priorities the city placed on constructing houses for its citizens put out by the catastrophe. By placing high priority on building single-family houses for Chicago’s skilled workers, rather than quickly constructing temporary barracks—which was sometimes done for common, unskilled workers—the city posited an argument of what it would mean henceforward to be a legitimate inhabitant of an urban community. Consider, for example, a report of the Chicago Relief and Aid Society, the association charged with reconstructing many of the private residences of those affected by the blaze, that made palpable an anxiety of putting a large number of people “into promiscuous and involuntary association” that “would almost certainly engender disease and promote idleness, and vice, and be dangerous to themselves and to the neighborhood in which they might be placed” (qtd. in Smith 74). Employing a rhetoric thick with anxieties of improprieties sexual, biological, and economical, urban municipalities took as their subject the regulation of the associations of its inhabitants, and the construction of homes, of neighborhoods, or urban pockets based on a social division of labor.

Along with the usual conflicts over wages and hours required by the industrialist, this new urgency to closely manage and monitor the lives of many of its population became a stasis point for the rewriting of the fault-lines within urban locales, indeed helped redefine the players in a conflict between what had been recognized as “labor” and “capital.” As St. Claire Drake recognizes, the antagonisms between the foreign-born and native whites revolved around this axis of intervention into social associations such as the passage of Sunday Blue Laws and the general struggle for control of City Hall. Despite the fact that African Americans were more

commonly consigned to the place of the unskilled worker in this industrial age, Drake argues that African Americans did not participate as often or to the extent as did “new” immigrant workers in the agitations for an eight-hour workday primarily because they had been driven to work in service capacities (50). Such an observation is not insignificant, for while not growing in numbers to the extent that the Eastern and Southern European immigrants did, the city limits of Chicago did also see a substantial increase in its African American population in these decades. The determination to manage the social landscape in light of these population growths forms the basis of racialized divisions of citizenship founded upon the type of work performed; this axiom would go into the creation of what Philpott recognizes as the development of a “Black Belt” within the city of Chicago.

When Chicago had incorporated in 1833, only a few of its residences were Black. In these first few decades, the size of the Black population was insignificant when compared against the rapidly expanding numbers of Chicago’s “white” population. Yet the numbers of African Americans who called Chicago home continued a steady increase decade by decade, tripling in the 1850s, nearly quadrupling in the 1860s, then doubling in each of the following three decades (Philpott 116-7). In 1860, US census reports—which have to be conservative estimates at best in the traditional under-reporting of the numbers of African Americans within the population—measured the total population of Chicago at 109,260; 955 (.9%) of which were Black. In 1870, the census reported 298,977 Chicagoans with a Black population totaling 3,691 (1.2%). In 1880, 503,185 people called Chicago home, 6,480 (1.3%) of them were Black. In 1890, Chicago had grown to a city of 1,099,850 people, 14,271 (1.3%) were Black. By the turn of the century, 1,698,575 lived in Chicago, 30,150 (1.8%) were Black (Philpott 117). What this tells us is that alongside Chicago’s unprecedented population boom, the rate of African

Americans in the city either kept pace with or grew faster than other demographics during this timeframe; Chicago's expanse was at least in part due to the increase in the numbers of African Americans coming to this Midwestern industrial hub. But Black Chicagoans, more than any other group during this time, found themselves more and more the subjects of the intensive project to manage urban social space, evidenced by the fact that large pockets of Chicago emerged as a "Black Belt." By the turn of the century, this reorganization of poor Black people into urban pockets was nearly complete. While certainly many Blacks chose to live close to and associate – indeed forge a community—with those who shared a common history, the extent to which African Americans had been isolated within the city had been so thorough so as to suggest a much more elaborate project of communal engineering taking place on perceived racialized differences. African Americans were not allowed to vote in the city through 1870, and public schools had been racially segregated in the city up through 1874. By 1900, sixteen Chicago wards were 99.5 to 100% white. Over half of the city's black population lived in three congruous South Side wards (Philpott 131). Racial consideration also went into the construction, or at least the "containment" of "red light districts." Black communities also had to deal with the authorities' willingness to build a "vice district" adjacent to their own homes.²⁵

Perhaps the most international attention was paid to the attempt at urban social engineering and management in an experiment located 20 miles outside of Chicago. George Pullman, who had in the years leading up to 1880 had been quietly purchasing prairie land south of the burgeoning metropolis, claimed publicly the need to move his workers so relatively far from Chicago to escape the vice that he felt plagued these urban centers, particularly in terms of

²⁵ "No white people, not even the sort who patronized whores and gambling tables, cared to live next door to bordellos and casinos any more than they wanted to live near Negroes. Because it was not possible, or at least not politic to suppress vice, the police segregated it. Black people were helpless to prevent the authorities from locating the red light district where they lived, just as they were unable to stop whites from segregating them" (Philpott 159).

crime, vice, and labor unrest. While Pullman touted the idea of a planned community to solve the haphazard and chaotic expansion of Chicago that contributed to its social problems, company towns came with additional benefit to capitalists of isolating workers from labor unions and larger, powerful solidarity organizations and from alternative sources of employment.

What must it have been like to inhabit such a community? Pullman took extraordinary measures to engineer the physical landscape of his company town, employing a landscape architect to produce a “natural,” aesthetically pleasing effect for his worker that would be a stark contrast to the concrete slums of the metropolis. “With such surroundings and such human regard for the needs of the body as well as the soul,” Pullman said, “the disturbing conditions of strikes and other troubles that periodically convulse the world of labor would not be found here” (qtd. in Buder vii-viii). Pullman’s insistence on absolute cleanliness in all aspects of his settlement was the manifestation of a major underlying principle behind the town (and also, significantly, behind his general corporate ethic)—that aesthetics and beautiful surroundings had above all commercial value.²⁶ The industrial city, dirty, mechanical, inorganic, haphazard, disorderly, needed to be met with an community where every possibility had been calculated and scientifically managed (to maximize profit).

Consequently, the Pullman company controlled every aspect of life for its workers residing in the town. From guaranteeing that no one owned property within the city’s limits besides the company itself, to controlling the water and gas utilities (available in the tenement for an extra cost, of course), to disallowing any saloons or shops that sold alcohol, Pullman attempted to manage his workers lives so as to assure none of the problems that had occurred in a

²⁶ This term, “the commercial value beauty” was famously attributed to the genius of George Pullman himself. According to Buder, Pullman believed “beauty improved the individual, and that the businessman who understood this profits from his insight. [...] The success of his company and now of the town would demonstrate the importance of aesthetics as a civilizing force which had commercial as well as social implications” (43).

haphazard, chaotic, lawless metropolis would disrupt industrial production.²⁷ Still, the forging of “community” in this period is a dynamic undertaking, and any critical inquiry into the racialized component of communal identities must look at how the citizen-workers viewed their civic roles and their work within the town—to look at Pullman as a formation *in solution*.

The level of company surveillance on the lives of the population (the company reserved the right to inspect the residences at any time “to look at any damage” (Adelman 26)), coupled with the worker’s sense of being on display for the rest of the world often graded on many of the citizens of Pullman. Although most accounts of the city reported a general sense of contentment of the workers, a few accounts detailed the growing resentment: The *Cleveland Post* reported on March 2, 1885 “The company owns everything and it exercises a surveillance over the movement and habits of the people in a way to lead one to suppose that it has a propriety interest in [workers’] souls and bodies” (qtd. in Buder 99). The *New York Sun* reported on October 11, 1885 that the workers of Pullman “secretly rebel because the Pullman company continues its watch and authority over them after working hours. They declare they are bound hand and foot by philanthropic monopoly” (qtd. in Buder 99). While the plan of Pullman was to show that the solutions for the industrial antagonisms of the nineteenth century were not solely to be found in diageitic narrative of “scientific management” and efficient organization within the factories themselves but also outside the walls of the factory into spatial geographies of private and public life, of being “at work,” “at home,” and “at leisure,” that plan was met with a new type of resentment and resistance.

Flats for the workers of Pullman were somewhat comfortable, in not affordable, especially when viewed in relation to the difficult living conditions for many workers in

²⁷ The Hotel Florence—the pricey resort in the town Pullman named after his daughter—did sell alcohol, but at prices much beyond the means of the town’s inhabitants.

Chicago. Average rents were reported at \$2.50 per room per month, which would make most rents fall between \$15 and \$17.50 per month. While this may sound only somewhat oppressive when wages were set to around \$1.85 per day early on in the town's history, renters were also required to pay extra for services such as water, garbage collection, fire protection, and gas. Furthermore, many anonymous inhabitants of the planned community wrote into local newspapers to scoff at the reportage of these rents. A letter to the *Chicago Herald* dated February 10, 1883 from "a mechanic" begins "A number of us would like to know where you struck the 'house' you describe for \$12 a month. We fail to find the like for less than \$18 and \$20." Sanitation facilities remained outside the apartments, and sometimes families in adjacent apartments had to share. Next to these facilities was a community sink—no water was directly pumped into the apartments themselves. Up to six families took all their water for cooking, cleaning, bathing, and drinking from the same tap. Gas for lighting was available in each apartment, but for an extra cost. Residents used heat from stoves to warm their tenements during Chicago's infamous winter cold-snaps (Philpott 51). Living in Pullman often caused the economic ruin of many, now completely prostrated and indebted to the industrial behemoth.

Furthermore, not only was it the Pullman company who paid wages that received the rent, but it also owned the town's shops at which goods could be bought. In Pullman's early years, the company would pay its workers with checks that deducted rent, taxes, water rates, and other fees incurred in living in the company town. After these deductions, a worker might have only eight cents to show for two weeks of work (Philpott 36). In times of severe economic crisis that would periodically affect the national economy, the company traditionally cut wages but maintained rental costs and prices on goods and services. In these harsh economic stretches, the company argued that workers should not confuse the company as landlord with the company as employer.

This distinction was difficult for the workers to swallow, though, because those same company-owned banks at which workers could cash their checks “strongly encouraged” workers to sign their paychecks immediately upon receipt back over to the Pullman company. By the time of the Pullman Strike in 1894, the town saw many of its population on the brink of starvation.

Analyzing the extent to which the corporation governed and synchronized the social lives of its inhabitants to ensure at least a 6% return on the investment cannot ignore the design and layout strategy of the town’s watchful and imposing structures. The immense factories of the Pullman works, or more precisely the shadow that these structures cast on the residential portions of the town, are what often struck visitors immediate with a sublime awe. Indeed, this industrial sublime might be said to register an implicit understanding of the new subordination and subsumption of humans to the mechanical monsters of industry. One article appearing in the February 1883 edition of *The Agricultural Review* described the design of the city in these terms:

In every particular the architect has planned his work that it might present when completed an attractive and harmonious effect. Especially is this noticeable in the design and arrangement of the workshops. These are immense buildings, occupying a central position in the city, and are the first to attract the eye of the visitor as he approaches the station. The main building is a majestic structure of pressed brick and stove. [...] It is three stories in height, and is surmounted by a handsome clock tower.

The factories of the town—surmounted by an immense clock tower that stood watch over the entire city—governed by synchronizing the community into “harmonious association.” Pullman would manifest the principle of economic stability through the temporal efficiency—the discipline of the industrial factory extending beyond its own walls into the community through the objectification of value—economic and social—via the time of the factory. City/citizen time that oversaw the community becomes a function of application of one’s labor to factory work. Most tellingly, when the labor riots in his town reached its height in 1894, Pullman argued that the *loss of time*, not the pay cuts themselves, had been the primary reason behind the decline in

employee earnings (Buder 159). While the company refrain to agitation said that workers could attain and even advance past their original earnings by speeding up performance and productivity, in reality workers were subsequently coerced to speed up productivity in order to get out from under the crushing debt that had become part of their daily lives.

Additionally, as Montgomery has shown in an analysis of one Pullman worker's testimony, leader of the American Railroad Union local 261 Jennie Curtis, foremen of the town's workshops would often manipulate piece-rates to speed-up worker production (128). In other words, Pullman foremen could materially affect piece rates to the point that workers expecting to take home a dollar a day might have to work faster than they had previously (Montgomery 129). When the company that orchestrates those rates also sets the standards for worker expenses like rent and utility costs, an elaborate system emerges that manipulates worker production while assuring the creation of surplus value for the company. One journalist, albeit unwittingly, put the situation in these terms that reflected the absolute subjugation of everyday life of the worker-citizen, when in the February 1, 1882 edition of *The Christian Register* published an article that marveled over how the town had been run "like clockwork," powered by the technologically legendary Corliss Engine that generated enough energy to assure the functionality of this community-for-capital. (We'll revisit this famous cultural marvel the Corliss Engine later.)

This community-run-like-clockwork was designed to minimize any and all waste in the name of maximum efficiency. The town removed excess sawdust and woodshavings from the carpentry shops to fuel the boilers that fed the Corliss. One machine powered by the Corliss brought the town's sewage to a farm three miles away as fertilizer for vegetables that would later be sold in the markets at the town's arcade building. When the town was built, the dredging of Lake Calumet yielded the clay that would be turned into the brick for the town's buildings

(Smith 182). Visitors often enthusiastically remarked on the efficiency and resulting cleanliness of a town dedicated to, indeed revolving around, industrial production; and the pristine appearance of the town by association influenced a “wholesome atmosphere” that guided communal relations. That same *Christian Register* from February 1, 1882 reported “Nowhere is there the sign of any filth or decay. The streets are perfectly clean, the atmosphere is wholesome.” Links between the cleanliness of the community, the efficiency of a social sphere “run like clockwork,” and the community free of social unrest were commonly made. Towards the end of the same article, this association is made explicit: “‘Where are your policemen?’ we asked. ‘We don’t have any,’ was the reply, ‘and we don’t need any.’” Such was the refrain of many commentators—the orderliness and pristine layout of the city forged an orderly social discourse. Another example from the August 4, 1883 edition of *The Commercial Gazette*:

I was surprised to be told that [the citizens of Pullman] are a happy and contented class; that when night ends they appear on the streets, dressed like gentlemen and with the manners of gentlemen; that they don’t go around in their shirt-sleeves, squirting tobacco juice on the pavements and slouching along with the air of men who feel that there is nothing ahead for them but hard work and poor living.

For other observers, though, the newer modes of production become almost indiscernible from “civilization” itself, as if civilized communal discourse collapses from its own history as something that could have only existed in the industrial age. For example, another article from the February 3, 1883 edition of the *Agricultural Review* celebrated Pullman as “The Arcadian City”:

In a word, a thriving, industrious, prosperous city, full of life, activity and enterprise; beautiful in point of architecture, because every wall, angle, any turret, every street, park, and lake were designed at the same time and by the same mind; perfect in a sanitary point of view, because of the same reason; happy in the procession of a perfect law and order, because of a total absence of the element which creates disturbance and gives birth to crime; a city in which there does not exist a single lawyer because there are no laws to enforce; no constabulary because there is no disorderly element; no edicts issued, no restricting rules or injunctions, because each individual is left to act according to his own

idea of prosperity and morality—a city which is at once a social phenomenon and an industrial study.

Note here that industrial logic is community logic at degree zero, in its most perfect, pure form. Laws are superfluous under this understanding of community—or at least extraneous to communal relations. Because dissent is here outside of normalized relations, the need to police communities is inherently outside those relations.

The actual “policing” of this community really was a composite of attracting and hiring “acceptable” workers used in conjunction with efficient ways of cataloguing and thus fragmenting socialized labor into specialized sectors. The company kept intense watch over who it hired as its operatives in detailed demographic system based on national origin *in conjunction with* the classification of worker based on the skill level of labor. So obsessed was George Pullman with a precise index of the town, he took census counts that measured the population ten times in the first four years (Buder 78). The company also spent unprecedented resources to measure with painstaking precision the type of work done at Pullman. Operatives at Pullman could be car builders, cabinetmakers, and painters (the most numerous, according to Montgomery). In a memo to company executives dated August 1, 1890, city manager and factory boss (the two jobs were essentially the same) Duane Doty reported the types of work being done by the workers at Pullman’s factory: 3782 employees labored in the car works, 389 worked for the town of Pullman itself, 504 in the foundry, 226 in the iron and steel works, and 66 in the standard knitting mills.²⁸ Of the 5223 workers, 1985 resided in a place other than Pullman, “and their \$4000 a day in earnings are not used here.”²⁹

²⁸ Doty did not keep as detailed a record as to the gender demographic of Pullman’s workforce, although, as Montgomery notes, some departments and divisions like the carpet, upholstery, glass-embossing, laundry, and linen departments were seen as “strongholds of the girls union” ARU 261. Montgomery also surmises that the relatively low wages of four other departments—the mills, wood machine, tanners, and streetcar divisions—suggest women

Even more revealing is the extent to which the company kept close record of the national origin of its employees. Early on, circumstances favored a town make-up that consisted of relatively better-off employees than were generally seen in urban centers. As the town matured alongside industrial production, the needs for more immigrant labor also made its way to Pullman.³⁰ Much of this was due in part to the increasingly dangerous number of jobs done by the heaviest of industrial machinery. But also significant was the emergence of machinery in the factory that forged a new idea of skilled labor with a racialized tone. In 1885, 46.6% of Pullman inhabitants were native-born; by 1892, that number had declined to 28% (Buder 80). *The Chicago Tribune* reported on December 28, 1884, 8,513 residents of Pullman: 4,205 US-born; 527 from Canada, 425 from England; 596 from Ireland; 170 from Scotland; 85 from France; 851 from Sweden; 953 from Germany; 297 from Norway; 212 from Denmark; 55 from Italy; 137 listed as “other.” The very same memo from Doty in 1890 that gave a detailed breakdown of the types of labor done at Pullman also measured the ethnicities of the workers and demonstrates the extent to which city and community management had been envisioned: 1738 were US-born; 967 from Sweden, 581 from Germany; 557 from Holland; 372 from England; 318 from Ireland; 206

may have held some of those jobs. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, Montgomery estimates the number of women working at Pullman ranged between 250 and 590 (172).

²⁹ According to Doty, of those 1985 non-residents, 177 were employed in the car works, foundry, wheel works, iron and steel works, and the town of Pullman itself.

³⁰ The face of labor did not always reflect its true composition. Gutman and Berlin point out that the formation of an American “working class” was quite different than its own development, with the turning-point being 1840 (382-3). While the importance of recognizing a native white-stock contribution to the foundation of any American working-class “movement” (and here I mean a self-conscious, political, collective entity), after the Civil War years, Gutman and Berlin point out, the primary contribution to political agency to an identifiable American working-class was given by immigrants and their children and African Americans (385). Furthermore, by 1880, “the *children of immigrants* had become the dynamic element in the working class. They often outnumbered either white workers of native parents or foreign-born workers. An analysis by occupation emphasizes the relative insignificance of workers of native white stock in the manufacturing, processing, and mining industries. Such workers remained important in the skilled building trades (especially in the older Eastern and Southern towns and cities) and in the operating railroad crafts, but few labored in the iron and steel industry, the coal mines, and those processing and manufacturing industries that sustained single-industry towns” (386).

from Canada; 108 from Norway; 80 from Scotland; 62 from Denmark; 57 from Italy; 39 from Austria; 31 from Poland; 27 from Wales; 24 from Switzerland; 23 from France; 9 from Belgium; 8 from “Bohemia”; 6 from Hungary; 4 from Russia; 2 from Mexico; 2 from Australia; 1 from Haiti; 1 from Greece, bringing them total number of workers to 5223. Alongside those numbers, Doty left certain remarks in the ledger for the president in order to give a sense to Mr. Pullman (who lived in his estate in the posh Prairie Avenue district of Chicago) of the type of worker populating his city. Native-born US citizens were “good and versatile workmen of superior executive ability.” Scandinavians were “good workmen, good citizens, frugal, industrious, and as a rule, religious.” Doty considered the British (whom he counted from England, Scotland, Wales, and Canada) “intelligent, industrious, progressive, and desirable citizens.” Germans and the French (including those from Belgium and Switzerland) were also “industrious” and “good citizens.” However, Doty viewed the Irish as “never a desirable element here. We may have been unfortunate in our allotment. They control all politics here as elsewhere in Chicago.”

As stated earlier, scholars cannot agree on whether or not African Americans did, or were allowed to, take up residence at Pullman, although Doty’s detailed account seems to suggest that they did not. According to Philpott, the town barred African Americans because the company president could not imagine African Americans in a role other than menial labor, whereas elevated, highly-skilled (and by association, most industrious citizens) working people would be the best inhabitants of this Arcadian industrial community.³¹ Janice Reiff’s study of the ways the community has existed in collective, political consciousness of the mapping of social space

³¹ According to Philpott, the absence of African Americans at Pullman “was peculiar, because George Pullman was famed for his paternal solicitude for Black people. He hired them to serve as passengers on his luxury sleeping cars. He thought they made ideal porters. Then why were the tenements and the workshops in the town lily-white? Pullman never stated his reason for excluding Blacks. None of the histories of the town or of Black Chicago has discussed the question. The answer here is conjectural, though obvious. The porters, uniformed, well-mannered, dripping with decorum, gave a flavor of the old plantation South to the palace cars. Pullman could not picture Blacks in any role but that of menials. The elevated working force of his town had no place for ‘darkies’”(53).

through history has argued that Pullman had been populated by a handful of African Americans, albeit those who held service jobs.³² The strength of Reiff's insight, and the subject of our further analysis, is the inquiry into the ways in which communities lived their racialized existences, cultivating certain tropes and distrusts within the interactions that began to define who people were within a community. Even the documentation supporting the presence of African American citizen/workers reveals the extent to which the work to define a community based on labor antagonisms is tinged with assumptions about race and labor. Consider for example an article from the (revealingly) pro-labor newspaper *The Chicago Herald* from May 7, 1883, which spoke of the outrage of the Pullman company of evicting a Mrs. Bucklin, a recent widow with four young children, from her company-owned tenement:

The Pullman Car Company, who owned every foot of ground in Pullman, and who do not permit any one to purchase any real estate there, happened to have a better tenant for the Bucklin premises. It was a negro; but what difference did that make to the Pullman Company, as long as they got their house?

The next week the company responded in an editorial by denying that Mrs. Bucklin had been evicted, but rather had agreed to leave for less-expensive quarters; the company did not respond to charge of the supposed racial affront. The synthesis of the antagonisms that were involved in the forging of an "eminently safe" industrial community was meant to be lived by workers who participated in a definition of industrial citizenship as lily-white and simon-pure.

³² Reiff writes "Although Pullman had always been racially integrated by a handful of company employees who worked in various service jobs in the model town, racial distrust had been gradually cultivated in the larger community in a variety of ways. In its earliest forms, it focused on the Italians. The growing Jewish community also attracted negative attention from certain elements of the community. By as early as 1909, however, the idea that African Americans ought to be excluded from Greater Roseland/Pullman was starting to take form. That year, a traveling minister from the South spoke to the West Pullman Men's Club, warning them of what only a southerner familiar with African Americans could know and encouraging his audience to keep African Americans out of their neighborhoods, according to the *Calumet Index*, 27 November 1909. By 1917, the *Calumet Index* had begun to identify 'negro' criminals who invaded the community. Black-faced minstrels became high points in local performances that rarely failed to point out their similarity to the 'famous Pullman porters on parade,' according to the *Calumet Index*, 9 March 1917. In March 1917, *The Birth of a Nation* began a long run at the National Theater on Michigan Avenue in Roseland" just outside Pullman (20).

If the guiding principle of industrial community has been the rationalized, efficient factory, it would stand to reason that the model citizen for said community would be the highly-skilled operatives appropriately disciplined by that system of production. Gutman and Berlin offer one explanation for the paucity of African Americans in these positions of skilled labor: because many industries like the iron and steel industry developed in the North and West prior to 1880, African Americans by and large were unimportant in them (386). This explanation seems insufficient to explain a systematic, cultural exclusion in the political unconscious; as Bobby Wilson has shown, African American contributions to the iron, steel, and coal-mining industries were vital to the development of those sectors by the close of the century. I posit that an even more definitive answer lay in the idea of “labor” remade as subordinate subject for an industrializing nation-state that trumpeted democratic participation as the onus for government, but practiced something else. “Labor” must be disciplined, tamed, made absolutely docile before capital. “Labor” could not be free to disentangle itself from industry, but must be recognized as acting as it should—in safe and normalized relations—when it is at every moment subservient to, or at least compelled to prostrate itself before—capital interest. Within this governing principle, African Americans seemed to be excluded from what would count as “labor,” or at least occupied a very unstable ground within “labor” so defined, and thus also a very unstable ground as who would be bequeathed the title of “citizen” for a modern community.

A Whited Sepulchre

Perhaps one of the most illustrative examples of the intersections of race, labor, and the place of “proper consumerism/citizenship” within a nation of developing industry was the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893, which helped draw world-wide attention to the promise of utopian projects that celebrate mechanical and architectural, and by implication aesthetic and cultural, development. Any in-depth discussion of the planned company town should consider

the World's Columbian Exposition—named to commemorate the 400-year anniversary of European colonialist expansion and described by historian Robert Rydell as “Victorian America's equivalent to the modern-day Olympics and Disney World rolled into one” (xi)—for not only were many of the same notions of “progress” on display here (indeed, George Pullman was a major financier of the fair, and the Pullman Company ran a major display that showcased both its palace cars and its planned community at the fair's Transportation Building), but the major national strike that hastened the collapse of Pullman's dream occurred just one year following the fair's celebration of techno-cultural modernity.³³ Many international journalists who came to report on the fair stayed to visit and gave glowing reports on the successes of the industrial utopia of Pullman. The company printed for its exhibit a pamphlet titled “The Story of Pullman,” whose main theme portrayed the company's patriarch in a way that would today resemble the mythology perpetuated for Walt Disney—as a “pioneer of progress” who while lacking the technical and mechanical knowledge, was very “hands on” in getting the engineers to realize his dreams.³⁴

This booklet told both the story of the palace car company and the company town, but the only photographs included were that of the town, emphasizing that Pullman felt people would pay more for luxury and aesthetics not just in mode of transportation but also in the surroundings of their everyday lives. The pamphlet declared

that the Pullman men are the best type of American workmen, who stand solidly and firmly on their own feet and will work out valuable and well-rounded lives just in

³³ Critic Christopher Reed is more to the point when he states: “Pre-modern, agricultural America culminated its transformation into the last phase of becoming modern, urban, industrial America on the shores of Lake Michigan” (xxi-xxii).

³⁴ In fact, Larsen points out that Disney's grandfather was a common worker at this World's Fair. Larsen's conjectural rendition of the people of the *Fair in The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America* imagines Disney's vision being shaped by the stories his grandfather told of this Chicago's World's Fair.

proportion to their opportunities. [...] To measure the actual effect of conditions which exist at Pullman, it is only necessary to look at any representative assemblage of the Pullman workmen. During the eleven years that the town has been in existence, the Pullman workingman has developed into a distinct type—distinct in appearance, in tidiness of dress, in fact in all the external indications of self-respect. (“Story of Pullman” 23)

At this celebration dedicated to the implications technological progress had on sociological and cultural advance, what became apparent in its marriage to the Pullman project was the extent to which those technological products were the new workers of the industrial world, or at least the socially-engineered, mechanical daily interactions that constituted the new docile worker-citizen. Drawing attention to the feats of human engineering and labor that had been objectified into industrial machinery and architecture, the World’s Columbian Exposition offered an enthusiastic and absolute definition of progress. The final thesis of this World’s Fair of 1893 was the same argument about work that threaded through Pullman itself, and this argument also serves as the axis around which Melville’s novella operates. This Columbian World’s Fair, perhaps most famous as the site for Frederick Jackson Turner’s lamentation of the closing of the American Frontier, may have wrote the transition to a newer era of U.S. expansion and imperialism.

Commentators who visited the fair were struck by the effect it permeated of a “unified whole,” a complex enclave which taken together appeared itself like a “city.” That this space could be comprehended in terms usually reserved for social spaces in which people actually live, that this fair could be seen as a “city,” itself is a unique phenomenon.³⁵ The overarching theme of symmetry and order became the mantra for this model of social engineering, most strikingly displayed at the fair’s Court of Honor. Here on a symmetrical layout were placed the monuments

³⁵ Alan Trachtenberg’s assessment of the fair recognizes this feat: “as a model city, [the World’s Columbian Exposition] taught a lesson in the coordination of spaces and structures in some 400 buildings covering almost 700 acres of once-swampy lands dredged and filled and inlaid with canals, lagoons, plazas, and promenades and a preserve of woods. Based on [Fredric Law] Olmstead’s unifying ground plan, it taught the public unity if beauty, the coordination of art with the latest mechanical wonders: railroads, dynamos, electrical bulbs” (209).

to architectural prowess, and through this, “symmetry asserted itself as an unmistakable [... and] conquering presence” (Trachtenberg 212). This Court of Honor centered the fair in its highly-refined structures in perfect symmetry, offering a clear hierarchical distinction—indeed a nascent narrative for global relations—from the fair’s Midway Plaisance. While many of America’s most respected features were reserved for the Court of Honor, the Midway Plaisance stood literally in the periphery as an “exotic” space that situated its own exhibits in subordinate relation (Trachtenberg 213). This thoroughfare, which was seven-eighths of a mile long and 600 feet wide, became the strip in which the rest of the world would exhibit its contribution to the technological utopian city, and thus “combined celebrity, notoriety, and popularity in bringing exposure and information, if not knowledge, about the Earth’s immense cultural and racial diversity” (Reed xxvi). Still, by virtue of the superordinate position of the Court of Honor to the Midway, coupled with the novelty and near pure spectacle of the exhibits of the Plaisance, the narrative of a global people had been posited with a distinct idea of who would be at the center of this model civilization.³⁶

One popular moniker for the World’s Columbian Exposition was “The White City”—so named because of the effect of uniform whiteness that the paint that had been applied to all fair structures had on its guests. The uniform white paint that adorned these structures aided in the bedazzling spectacle, a whiteness that helped remake the citizen visiting the White City into a consumer. Perhaps even more striking in the first-hand accounts of the fair were the distinct sensations of “cleanliness” in contrast to terms reserved for “real” urban settings, a “plaster-of-Paris dreamland, full of power and splendor, where grime was whitewashed away, and, as one

³⁶ Reed is more sanguine concerning the relation of the Midway Plaisance to the rest of the fair, and expressly counters any notion that the layout of the Exposition itself intended a hierarchical relation: “The Midway did not exist as a panorama of ethnic or racial shame, and the foreign visitors were not part of a show—they [were the essence of] the people themselves, just more part of a highly-differentiated global humanity” (xxvii).

visitor put it, there was no place for poverty” (Philpott 21). Common logic of the time focused on the living conditions of the working poor within the burgeoning metropolises of the nation and building new assumptions about poverty and citizenship within these new locales; during the Exposition the U.S. Department of Labor had been engaged in a protracted study of “slums” in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Chicago, defining “slum” as “an area of dirty black streets, especially when inhabited by a squalid and criminal population” (qtd. in Philpott 21). With the White City, the readily apparent associations of urban living at the end of the nineteenth century and the intense poverty that resulted from the ruthless restructuring of social labor had been completely reworked by a new forward vision of the techno-political social fabric; whiteness-as-cleanliness becomes the unifying theme of the ideal city in this technological utopia.

The labor disputes that had come to be one of the defining characteristics of urban living at the end of the century have also been completely “whitewashed” in this metropolitan narrative. Work has been nearly completely displaced at the White City, and the human concern for social relations had in part been recoded as an everyday consumerist ethic. Trachtenberg’s analysis of the autobiography of Walter Wyckoff titled *The Workers: An Experiment in Reality*, a narrative depicting a young college graduate who for adventure’s sake decided he would join a construction crew in building the foundations for the fair, yields a portrait of the place of work within the White City. The writer/worker is almost paralyzed by the emerging spectacle not only of the nearly sublime beauty, or at least symmetry, of the fair’s layout. Intertwined with this sublime awe lay an intense level of discipline, as the writer/worker notes the structures occupied by sentries which will protect them from “unsought contact with all beyond” (qtd in Trachtenberg 210). The word-choice reveals an inherited “inclusion/exclusion” dynamic involved

with this level of industrial discipline, especially with respect to the social place of the fair-as-celebration of a new social text. Labor's presence lies beyond the walls of this new technologically savvy city. Thusly, White City indexes that new social fabric and the law by which living human labor operates now in absolute subordination to the interests of industrial capital.

Typical to this and other World's Expositions of the late nineteenth century were the inventions that demonstrated the technological prowess of the industrial age. The very same Corliss Engine that powered Pullman in its early years and was famously introduced at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1875 was put to use at the Chicago Fair, powering the entire White City with the electricity it produced, contributing to the uniform-feeling of the city by coordinating its machinery, and thus, coordinating the White City on a mechanical idea of time. For example, one of the marvels this Corliss Engine was its ability to run a 7,000 pound electrical pendulum clock which governed twenty-six smaller clocks at different locations at the fair (Trachtenberg 41). Other devices facilitating industrial production found their way more frequently into social consciousness, and the popular fictions that set their stories within these fairs animated their protagonists through the new social minefields of awe-inspiring technology. A deeply submerged notion settled into a collective unconscious that machinery hauntingly become the front upon which antagonisms and conflicts came to be waged. Furthermore, Allan Trachtenberg has argued that the abundance of dime novels, popular detective novels, and utopian science fictions that had been cropping up at these fairs made the concept of repeatability and automation commonplace, innocuous.³⁷ I would contend, however, that this interchangeability and mechanization that grounded the narrative logic of storytellers in the era

³⁷ "The interchangeability of plots and characters in dime novels," Trachtenberg writes, "parallels the standardization of machine production that became a central feature of factory life in the 1880s" (46).

was itself a moment of ambivalence, for the portraits of the objectifications of repetition found in popular fiction were themselves often painted with a deep-seeded suspicion, if not outright hostility. As often as machinery was utilized to glorify dime-novel protagonists and bedazzle their audiences, so too was machinery portrayed as “taking over” in situations where human agency—decision-making, labor, etc.—had once been prominent. Additionally, numerous narratives of the Chicago World’s Fair depicted inexperienced visitors to the White City as helpless prey to “those who knew the system well” who commonly fell victim to the new types of crimes popular in these new urban centers.³⁸ Human knowledge, as commentators from Marx to Trachtenberg have shown, in this period appears more remote, more mechanical in its repeatability, alien to the people from once it socially originated, and the machine as a figure seems in its access to that alienated knowledge the vehicle of that alienation; thought, a product of human social history, now appears as the essence of machinery.³⁹

Within a year of each of the three World’s Fairs in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century—in Philadelphia in 1876, in New Orleans in 1885, and in Chicago in 1893—wide-scale labor unrest that often saw attacks directed against both industrialists and their machinery defined a new era for the industrial-political landscape. In 1877, labor unrest stemmed from the use of the “iron horse” to disrupt normalized social relations.⁴⁰ By 1894, the reaction

³⁸ Larsen’s recent best-seller is a contemporary example in this vein, intertwining chapters of the architectural planning with the activities of a serial murderer utilizing the attraction of the White City to lure his unsuspecting victims.

³⁹ Trachtenberg writes “The social distribution of knowledge began a major shift, a transference (as far as technology and technique are concerned) from bottom to top, in these years of extensive and intensive mechanization. Just as important, and as a symbol of the process, *thought* now appears often in the dumb, mystifying shapes of machines, of standing and moving mechanical objects as explaining themselves to the unknowing eye, as the standing stones of ancient peoples” (69).

⁴⁰ According to Trachtenberg, “Industrial unrest reached a climax and a momentary catharsis in July 1877, when fears of a new civil war spread across the country during the great railroad strike. Provoked by a 10% wage cut announced without warning by the Baltimore and Ohio Line, a measure to halt a declining rate of profit, the strike spread like wildfire to other lines, reaching from Baltimore to Pittsburgh, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, and San

seemed against the normalized relations of mechanical life itself, or a much more broad culture of technology and a life subordinated in every respect to corporate profits.

Just as frequently, these ambivalences were registered along racialized lines; if “civilization” told a tale of citizenship by narrating work into a progressive, advanced notion of production, it did so also by making similar assumptions about race. The White City’s presentation of the harmonious relation between labor and capital, or more appropriately, the labor “knowing its place” within a culture geared toward producing capital, defined “work” as White, especially as the United States began to distance itself from its slave-owning past in favor of a colonizing power and its imperial future.⁴¹ Within this context, the express exclusion of African Americans from the planning of the World’s Columbian Exposition, and the explicit segregation and containment of African Americans within many private, corporate representations and exhibits that projected images of African Americans as “savages” in distinction from “civilization,” takes on a more important meaning. One famous *corporate* caricature originated at the fair: the R.T. Davis Milling Company, a wealthy flour milling firm,

Francisco. The apparently spontaneous work stoppages met with approval and support from local merchants, farmers, clergy, and politicians, tapping reserves of anger and wrath against the railroad companies. Workers in other industries joined the walkout, and for a short spell it seemed that the United States faced a mass rebellion, a recurrence of the Paris Commune of 1871 on an even vaster scale. In some communities (St. Louis, for example) committees of strikers briefly assumed control of government and railroad services” (40).

⁴¹ In *The Wages of Whiteness* Roediger points out the republican dichotomies of free versus slave impinged upon one’s ideals of citizenship, of full agency within the ideal republic, and this dichotomy imposes itself on a pervasive idea of race, the formation of the “white worker”: “as reference to bonds and chains should sharply remind us, it was impossible to think about dependency on wages merely in comparison with the position of labor in an ideal republic; the comparison with the truly enslaved also loomed. Such a comparison cut hard, and it cut in two ways. On one hand, the specter of chattel slavery—present historically in no other nation during the years of significant class formation—made for a remarkable awareness of the dangers of dependency and a strong suspicion of paternalism. On the other hand, hard thought about ‘the hireling and the slave’ could make the position of hireling comparatively attractive. The white hireling was usually a political freeman, as the slave, and with very few exceptions the free Black, were not. The comparison could lead to sweeping critiques of wage labor as ‘white slavery’ but it could also reassure wage workers that they belonged to the ranks of ‘free white labor.’ In their early attempts to develop a language of labor, working Americans therefore expressed soaring desires to be rid of the age-old inequalities of Europe and of any hint of slavery. They also expressed the rather more pedestrian goal of simply not being mistaken for slaves, or ‘negers’ or ‘negurs.’ And they saw not nearly so great a separation between these two goals as we do” (46-7).

employed Nancy Green as “Aunt Jemima” as a living corporate advertisement to sell its product. Race becomes corporate marketing strategy within the new mercantile democracy, and as such, also serves to alienate humans from their labor, promoting a racialized ethic of consumerism. By the time Ida B. Wells, Frederick Douglass, Irvine Garland Penn, and Ferdinand L. Barnett published their collaborative pamphlet which offered both a contest to the White City’s racially motivated underpinnings and an alternative narrative for racial relations titled *The Reason Why the Colored American is not in the World’s Columbian Exposition*, fair organizers had after much debate decided to mollify offended African Americans with “Colored Americans Day”—a day in which racist depictions abounded on the Midway Plaisance. Douglass, himself invited to speak at the fair not by his own nation but as a representative of Haiti, began his introduction to this pamphlet by calling “this World’s Columbian Exposition, with its splendid display of wealth and power, its triumphs of art and its multitudinous architectural attractions” a “whited sepulcher” (9). The biblical reference in Douglass’s criticism paints an acute picture of race, technology, and community that had been embedded within the fair; the pallid mechanical, inorganic façade entombs the social life of those who labor to make the advances possible. White City becomes an undead city in its whiteness, the uncanny negative presence that will haunt the moribund interweaving of technology and culture.

With an increased reliance upon African American labor in the productivity of industrial culture, the possibility for African American participation in this particular World’s Fair exceeded the opportunities of the previous two American editions.⁴² Barnett, in his portion of the pamphlet, writes

⁴² As Reed posits, “As the result of a rapidly expanding population with numbers exceeding 16,000 persons, three times the total for 1876, it exhibited [...] a desire among some for participation in the very mainstream of the fair’s activities. Importantly, with or without the involvement of the local citizenry, the appetites of African Americans

In two of the states of the South the colored exceeds the white population, and so far as the production energy of the Southern states is concerned, almost the entire output of agricultural products is the work of negro labor. The colored people therefore thought that their numbers, more than one-eighth of the entire population of the country, would entitle them to one Commissioner-at-Large, and that their importance as a labor factor in the South would secure for them fair representation among the Commissioners appointed from the states. But this was not so. (76).

Of further insult to Barnett was the Exposition's setting aside August 25th as "Colored People's Day." "In this wonderful hive of National industry, representing an outlay of thirty million dollars and numbering its employees by the thousands, only two colored persons could be found whose occupation were of a higher grade than that of janitor, laborer, and porter, and these two only clerkships" (80). Barnett's criticism, that African American labor was only recognized as menial, unimportant to industrially advanced production, illustrates the extent to which citizenship and productive, skilled labor had become nearly synonymous. If the fair celebrated the transformative power of technology on social relations—if it was meant to show how technology itself, divested and alienated from any origins in living human beings, could solve the social problems of the old and carry us into a new era—the systematic exclusion of African Americans from any meaningful participation in the fair unveils the racialized component of the alienation involved in forging proper citizenship of this mercantile-technocratic democracy. In essence, the exclusion of African Americans from what "counted as labor" became akin to the authors of the pamphlet an erasure of African American labor from the pages of history.

The agency and rationale of that kind of segregation must be interrogated for the ways it imagines African American labor outside this dialectic of the contested culture of the industrial revolution and its synthesis in a new technopolitical civilization, outside of the crisis of history. As Reed observes, "during a time of labor-capital confrontation, while the immigrants engaged

throughout the nation were whetted at the opportunity to show their progress since the end of chattel slavery 1865" (13-4).

in revolutionary or reform efforts aimed at ameliorating their economic plight, the ostracism of African Americans from a political economy that was built on an industrial and commercial base eliminated the possibility of interracial labor conflict or cooperation” (14). A contestation of these assumptions is precisely the project Ida B. Wells intended in her portions of the pamphlet.

Part of her larger project to argue, as Hazel Carby has shown, that the modernization of the South’s economy and infrastructure was due both to Northern industrial investment and the labor of African Americans (112), Wells prefaces the pamphlet by asking both the reason and the meaning behind African American exclusion: “The wealth created by [African American] industry has afforded to the white people in this country the leisure essential to their great progress in education, art, science, industry and invention.” Because “[t]he labor of one half of this country has always been, and is still being done by them,” Wells makes this question of the evisceration of labor—particularly African American labor—from the celebration the centerpiece around which the pamphlet’s challenge will orbit (3-4). Exclusion seems to enter here as a feature of alienation; that is, African American labor has always been an indelible part of the technological progress celebrated at the White City, but the apparent divestment of that labor from its originators to the point that it seems absolutely alien defines for Wells the “whiteness” of the White City. The pamphlet’s critique of the Exposition illuminates the ways in which racialized alienation has been ingrained into the everyday social relation of the industrial metropolis.

But Wells’s method in challenging the racial narrative of industrial culture posited by the fair is especially noteworthy. Wells’s sections of the pamphlet at first glance seem to explain only obliquely the reason for the exclusion, instead concentrating on institutionalized forms of political segregation in the Jim Crow South, the social terror of lynching, and the rise of the

convict lease system after emancipation. For the overarching project of the pamphlet suggested in its title—promising to give the reason why the celebration of technological progress had been recoded and blanched white—such chapters by Wells hardly focus directly on any subject of industrial production, yet offer a key critical insight into the workings of an overarching, complex structure understood broadly as *culture*; Wells’s writings herein offer an innovative and rich device of cultural criticism.

The chapter on the Convict Lease System in particular develops Wells’s critique of racialized alienation: “The white Christian and moral influences have not only done little to prevent the Negro from becoming a criminal, but they have deliberately shut him out of everything which tends to make for good citizenship” (24). The trope of the Black criminal was already a developed figure in the American landscape at the time, and was a primary fuel for the Convict Lease System as a structure that was also key to the modernization of an industrial South. Wells gives weight to this argument by noting the racial disparities in convict demographics. In 1892, Wells notes, “[i]t is an astounding fact that 90 per cent of [Georgia’s] convicts are colored; 194 white males and two white females; 1710 colored males and 44 colored females” (24). Wells’s observation about poverty, race, crime, and “security” in normalized social discourse recoded as industrial “civilization” offers a new dimension to the overarching question of *The Reason Why...* . These same racial disparities are involved in the production of “civilization,” of “citizenship,” and of “culture” that had been offered by the World’s Columbian Exposition. Unrecognized for the contributions their labor had in the development and advance of industry, African Americans could more easily be considered exceptions from the aegis of worker-as-citizen and the agency implied therein, and thus more easily fodder for systematized

institutions that furthered racist practices while still capitalizing on the social quality of work for continued production and accumulation.

The development and deployment of the Convict Lease System in the postbellum South marked a new moment in the role of state intervention in securing the requisite labor market for modernization, and is a key feature in understanding industrial culture at the end of the century.⁴³ This system by which the labor of African Americans was recaptured and applied to the project of modernization needed new ways to conceive of the freed slaves as transgressors of the law. New codes outlawing the refusal to work began to specifically target African Americans, essentially making being Black a potential crime. Through an analysis of this institution, one sees that the question of the role of government with respect to its population morphed to both enforce the rights of its citizens—the so-called “free labor” ideal—as well as to guarantee the duty to labor, and racial demarcation of a public sphere became the field by which these new state structures derived their operational authority.⁴⁴ The legal trope of Black Vagrancy in particular is one such apparatus that bridges a specific logic of racialized labor in relation to state sovereignty from the antebellum period into the Gilded Age while at the same time hides the contradictions inherent in the system of industrial development. As Bryan Eustice Wagner’s argument in *“Disturbing the Peace”: Black Vagrancy and the Culture of Racial Demarcation* points out, the antebellum slave patrols just morphed into “modern police departments with standard issue uniforms, bureaucratic command structures, and around-the-clock patrol schedules” (2). Even the logic of “free labor”—which as James Schmidt has argued was a

⁴³ As Schmidt has argued, “Marxist historians spend a good deal of time talking about the state’s role in the creation or destruction of private property, but they spend less effort on the role the state played in the creation of a labor market” (3).

⁴⁴ In the South, antebellum vagrancy laws persisted to reiterate the legitimacy of the idea of forced labor (Schmidt 82). “In the Antebellum North and South, Vagrancy Laws became a way for elites to affirm their status and control others on the basis of class” (Schmidt 91-2).

complex legal construction of a worker “free to quit” a given employer based on individual discretion—relied on a fully-developed labor market in which “free labor was unfettered to circulate to the highest bidder” (4). But the transition after emancipation did not so easily lead to an absolute commodification of labor.

Efforts to build a coherent challenge to the traditional distributions of wealth had to confront both the economic might of the employing classes and the mutual distrust of the white and black workers, in addition to, as Montgomery has argued, the “ultimate bulwark of white supremacy and segregation: the state” (84-5). As the “professional policing structures” (see chapter 3) began practices designated to bring freed slaves back into (in many cases their former master’s) custody, the court system also began to concentrate not on offender rehabilitation but on the extraction of as much labor as was possible from convicts. The constitutional amendment forbidding coerced labor except “as punishment for crime” was met with the response of making it a crime to be Black. The new vagrancy laws that were legislated in the South stipulated that persons “with no lawful business or occupation” would be heavily fined or subjected to imprisonment; these laws were obviously aimed at freed African Americans, as “lawful business or occupation” meant without exception having a white employer (Wagner 3, Stanley 126).⁴⁵

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the organization and social makeup of abstract labor was substantially altered in both the North and the South. Previously, in both regions, longer-term labor agreements served as the infrastructure of social labor and used primarily to keep laborers for key moments in the work cycle (for example, a harvest in rural locations). But due to

⁴⁵ The threat of Reconstruction as an attempt at wide-ranging redistribution of wealth was, as Bobby Wilson notes, a possibility that “sent tremors through the ruling elites. Reconstruction achieved the goal of reconstructing the South for industrial capitalism, but it failed to provide economic and democratic rights for Blacks. It left the labor problems unresolved, and the ruling elites appealed to white solidarity against Blacks. They sought no new alliances with the lower classes but wanted instead to exploit them and extract surplus value from their labor in the most efficient manner possible” (62).

advancing mechanization, the need for contract, longer-term bound labor, particularly in agricultural fields, decreased (Schmidt 196). Mechanization's effective casualization of labor in which labor can be consumed according to the express needs and schedule that best suits the accumulation of surpluses also facilitated an anxiety that people could possibly leave the labor market completely. As a product of the economic panic and collapse of the 1870s, the presence of "industrial tramping," which was seen to be elevated to epidemic proportions, created a crisis for the arguments of free-labor and free-labor law in the post-bellum North. The economic crises of the 1870s served as the impetus for industrialists to write and enforce new punishments for people who had appeared to leave the labor market altogether by joining the growing numbers of "industrial tramps" (Schmidt 208). A good number a vagrancy laws and tramp acts had been written in the antebellum period; however, in the 1870s and 1880s, newer incarnations of these codes intended to secure a constant labor market and a perpetual source of labor needed to create and maintain industrial capital development became considerably more virulent and exploitative (Schmidt 209). After 1880, after much of what has been described as "the tramp scare" in the North had simmered, the powers of the state that been established through older vagrancy laws to restrict movement by making loitering, previously a misdemeanor, a felony that punished offenders by long terms of incarceration and hard manual labor (Schmidt 213). By the end of the decade, it became clear to many working poor peoples that the state which had been propped up by these vagrancy laws was a cynical attempt to ease the now explicit crisis and contradictions of industrial capital, and many resented and challenged these laws as an unfair punishment to people for simply lacking the means of support. "Knowing firsthand the stimulus of hunger," Amy Dru Stanley writes, "laboring men testified to the opposition between the ideal of free contract and the coercive provision of the vagrancy laws. They claimed that necessity itself was a

dreadful compulsion which compromised the legal right to choose when, for how long, and for whom to labor” (120-1).

Because of the relatively stronger reliance of agricultural labor moving towards modernization, and the effects emancipation had on a labor market, these fears and official responses were amplified in the South. Perhaps the most interesting case study of the modernization process and the effort to glean over the crises attendant to such transformations was the place coerced Black labor and the trope of the Black Vagrant played in Alabama, particularly in the rise of Birmingham, a city that did not exist before emancipation. Following the same ethic of the town of Pullman and even much of the logic behind the White City of the World’s Columbian Exposition—namely the beneficial effects on social life that were to be had through industrial modernization—officials felt that a newly-founded urban center of industrial production was necessary if the South was to progress into the twentieth century.

In the aftermath of the war, machine technology was much more abundant in the North than in the South. For example, in 1880, the percentage of all occupations engaged in mechanical pursuits in Pennsylvania was 36.3%, while in Alabama at the same time the percentage of all occupations engaged in mechanical pursuits was 4.6% (Wilson 110). The implementation of a factory organization of labor would present new demands on those whom would be supplying that labor; at the very least it would need a “free-labor” system in which people were compelled to sell their labor at all times. As Montgomery had pointed out, the deployment of legal, state force to compel work was most commonly used in direct relation to wages that were unstable: when wages were high, African Americans worked least because they would only make enough money to keep their families afloat.⁴⁶ The origin and development of vagrancy laws along with

⁴⁶ “Local sheriffs were sometimes called on to arrest Black workers who had quit on charges of violating boarding house laws” (Montgomery 65).

the introduction and evolution of the figure of the Black Tramp were meant to counter Black labor conscious of its own political position (i.e. against work stoppages, demands for higher wages, or even the ability to quit mid-job) (Wagner 82-3) as well as to assure the complete commodification of labor so as to be more properly consumed by industry.

Laws to bring newly-freed African Americans back into the custody of the authorities for the purpose of the extraction of living labor began to spring up as the vehicle for southern modernization.⁴⁷ By 1894, 10% of the entire revenue for the state of Alabama was generated through the convict-lease system (Wilson 115). Northern investment, intending Birmingham to be the “Pittsburgh of the new industrial South,” increased to the point that by 1896, Birmingham was the largest producer of pig iron in the U.S. and the third largest in the world, thanks largely to coerced, mollified African American labor (Wilson 93). So industrial investment in the hopes of expanding capital production developed and supported a system that not only mollified labor into the commodity appropriate for industrial consumption, but also vastly increased the ranks of inexpensive labor. Convict labor, made possible through the Black Codes and Vagrancy Laws was the essential force that transformed the agrarian organization of labor into an industrial one (Wilson 114), a fact that Ida Wells was quick to point out had been the key element in building the industrial city-on-the-hill, the epitome of industrial progress, the White City.

⁴⁷ Florida wrote into its codes a statute against vagrants by defining the offender as some who in “wanton impudence” had abandoned his place of employment. Virginia defined vagrants as those who “live idly and without employment” and those who “refuse to work for the usual common wages given to laborers [...] in the place where they were.” Georgia’s Vagrancy Laws were quite elaborate, defining a vagrant as “All persons wandering or strolling about in idleness, who are able to work and who have not property to support them; all persons leading an idle, immoral, or profligate life [...]; all persons able to work having no visible and no known means of fair, honest, and respectable livelihood; all persons having a fixed abode, who have no visible property to support them, and who live by stealing or by trading in, bartering for, or buying stolen property; and all professional gamblers living in idleness” (qtd. in Wagner 15-6). Georgia prisoners convicted of vagrancy were bound to work for some person, assigned them by the state, for one year. Mississippi Black Codes defined vagrants as “anyone who was guilty of theft, had run away [from a job], who was drunk, was wanton in conduct or speech, had neglected job or family, handled money carelessly, and [...] all other idle and disorderly persons” (qtd. in Davis 29).

In order to create and sustain a labor force at all times available for industrial production, the state had been expressly involved in the writing of fears of Black freedom from work and the rise of the cultural significance of “vagrancy.” In effect, “vagrancy” enters the collective lexicon as a new term that draws attention away from the antagonisms and contradictions of a new post-bellum social relation that created and perpetuated a casualization of labor.⁴⁸ These laws were enforced inconsistently, in testament to their main objective to extract and exploit as much cheap labor from African Americans as possible; the moment African Americans had been subjected to this arbitrary enforcement of the law, they became, to use Wagner’s term, “legible to the general public as vagrants—as shiftless, unruly, and threatening” (5). The practice of forging a sociopolitical term with racialized markers into the collective lexicon began to more-rigidly define the contours of industrial citizen; to be Black was to be placed on the edge of the normative national order.

The trope of the Black Vagrant—a device that popular media and official state apparatuses consistently reflected back against and in dialogue with one another—had started to enter the common sense through numerous popular narratives and media such as *The National Police Gazette* which brought news of crime stories from all across the nation to the saloons and the streets of New York. The role of media representations of African Americans as material for crime reportage had been itself a subject identified by Ida B. Wells for intense scrutiny in *The Reason Why ...*. Wells asserts that popular representations of Black Crime were so sensationalized the “newsworthiness” of the events was questionable; that is, Wells noted the role the owners of these popular presses played in authoring a public perception that makes certain associations between race, work, and criminality (30).

⁴⁸ Schmidt observes this much in his assessment as well when he notes that the “crime of vagrancy emerges as a structure to work out or at least hide, the contradictions of bourgeois culture” (61).

Perhaps no medium better exemplifies the interactions of popular fiction and state apparatuses to fuse a racial demarcation of citizenship for the entire nation and its disparate regions than the *Gazette*. One of the most popular narrative papers of the era, and a medium that was published for much of the later portions of the nineteenth century by former New York City Chief of Police George Matsell, the weekly story paper contained general news of crimes in New York and other locations throughout the U.S. (Gorn 12). In fact, even though the bulk of the items printed in the *Gazette* were taken from New York, and even though the readers of the *Gazette* were wage-earning, working class New Yorkers, the paper consistently saw itself as a national institution, and cobbled together news events from different regions to project a national composite of crime and community. The *Gazette* must be recognized in the project to forge a national community built upon that narrative base that told a story about Blackness and labor.

Referred to colloquially as the “barber’s bible” because it was often read by the clientele at barber shops as well as saloons, liveries, hotels, and anywhere else men congregated, the *Gazette* circulated at least 150,000 copies per week (Gorn 11). The fears attendant to those who “shirked responsible and respectable work” permeated much of these stories that composed its sensational pages; consider, for example, the lead story from the May 18, 1878 edition, which detailed a rape in a small Massachusetts community.

Just as she entered the thicket, and by the way, it is one of the loneliest places in that locality, she was somewhat surprised to see sitting at the base of a tree a man who seemed to belong to the tramp class. He appeared to be about thirty years of age, with dark eyes, sallow complexion, with black chin whiskers and mustache. In build he was short and thick-set. His clothes were well-worn and of light color, his pants being tucked in his heavy rawhide boots.

The *Gazette*’s news articles features numerous descriptions of this sort in which a respectable, bourgeois or upper-class white woman attacked out in public space—“one of the loneliest places”—by a typical member of the “tramp class” distinguishable in dress and complexion.

When Richard Kyle Fox took over publication of the *Gazette* from Matsell in the 1870s, the paper employed a larger stable of artists who would recreate the scenes depicted in many of the racially-charged narratives, and in-so-doing further accented racial caricatures into the socio-legal construction of being Black (Gorn 12). What is particularly interesting in these depictions of the criminal acts of a nascent “tramp class” is how it grounds concepts of idleness, dishonesty, and visibility into a specific spatial location. Read today, the *Gazette*’s stories are challenging to decode because of the apparent multi-directional portrait they paint concerning the social landscape of the late nineteenth century. We have in this narrative’s creation the racially-charged spectacle of crime, a recreation of common, “public,” space in the period of industrial production as “one of the loneliest places,” signifying on an assumption that those spaces are already in some way ripe with alienation. Such narratives fraught with divergent trajectories illuminate the sense of the vexed political consciousness on the part of the typical readers of this medium: for the *Gazette* contained stories, often printed adjacent to each other, of the crimes of the shiftless, lazy tramp as well as the salacious actions committed by the upper classes. Other critics have commented on the social anxiety made palpable by popular renditions of beggars and the abject poor as a way to understand the stories bourgeois culture told about its own privilege in light of an economic system that so obviously and so readily gave ample evidence of inequity.⁴⁹ Still, the sympathies expressed for lower- and working-class people did not extend beyond racial lines. For example, even when the *Gazette* would expressly criticize the Southern implementation of the Convict Lease System, it still disparaged African Americans as ignorant automatons who

⁴⁹ Schmidt recognizes these contradictory impulses embedded within popular renditions of beggars and those identified as “vagrants”: “When seen in terms of social theory, vagrants and beggars seemed strangely perverse. Their behavior defied expectations about relationships between people and the state. In addition, in their clothing or lack of cleanliness, beggars emphasizes the gap between themselves and respectable classes” (54-5).

sold their labor too cheap.⁵⁰ Furthermore, as an article from the June 22, 1878 *Gazette* shows, suspicions of African American collective organization for political ends were especially charged; just one year proceeding the general strikes of 1877, fears of a Parisian-style revolution materialized that warned of a communist-style philosophy would “find soil in the negro heart.”

The *Gazette* writes

Just now, [the African American] has come to the fore, away down in the Louisiana lowlands, to exhibit a bit of unwholesome knowledge, derived from his colorless brother, in the Communistic line. With the workings of the idea in the North, where capital is made the distinction and those who are without it are arrayed as the natural foes of those who have it with the attendant principle that the latter have no rights which the former are bound to respect, and that, in the event of success the non capitalists shall be privileged to distribute among themselves whatever goods the capitalists shall happen to possess, Sambo is excessively charmed.

The fear generated by these narratives aids in the rewriting of class antagonism into potential racial violence. In answering the question, “whose space is public space?” a burgeoning popular culture herein does much to help the conflicts of capitalism fade to white.⁵¹ The potential to be recognized as belonging to that community, to have agency against such a background similarly faded for African Americans while increased the likelihood that they would be fodder, swallowed up by the developing State machinations and systems of white capital.⁵² Or worse,

⁵⁰ Gorn cites an October 1886 issue of the *Gazette* to argue that the politics of the paper were often progressive; the *Gazette* criticized the Georgia Convict Lease System “as one of pure exploitation by the State’s wealthy businessmen to extract the labor of ‘ignorant negroes’” (14).

⁵¹ In Vogel’s words, the media became the location where the political rights of citizens, indeed the raced definitions of what it meant to be citizen, had been in play since the outbreak of the Civil War: “The laissez-faire economy in the North and a slave economy in the South left a free Black population with a crisis over the relationship between labor and citizenship. A population defining itself and American political rights as ‘white’ threatened to permanently lock out free Blacks, and they had no place to turn but to themselves (39).

⁵² When seen in conjunction with the decisions of specific court cases of the late nineteenth century, a clearer image emerges of the extent to which African Americans were in effect being excluded from the confines of citizenship. By 1893, as Reed notes, the Supreme Court had ruled against the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which further disenfranchised African Americans in the South. A parallel increase in the number of lynchings and the establishment of debt peonage contributed to a sense that the antebellum legal decisions that had rejected the argument that African Americans could be considered citizens “seemed to gain renewed popularity in the rarified atmosphere of the 1890s” (Reed xxiv-xxv).

they could be seen as *anticitizens*, the directional counter to the trajectories mapped out by industrial democracy, potential enemies of the state, and thus logically the object of new apparatuses of social discipline.⁵³

Epilogue: The Politics of an Occupation

Historical accounts of the Pullman Strike of 1894 portray the aftermath of the violent conflict as a watershed moment in the American political outlook. Pointing to one of the strike's primary cast-members, American Railroad Union President Eugene V. Debs, criticism has looked wistfully at the aftermath of the Pullman Strike for a new potential for socialist ideology that rose from the ashes of the smoldering mechanical wreckage. Debs in particular saw his imprisonment for his actions in calling for the general strike as a turning point; henceforward Debs would spend his energy working for governmental control of means of production. He would be the Socialist Party's candidate for President five times in the first two decades of the twentieth century; his last attempt in 1920 from his cell in an Atlanta prison gathered him nearly one million votes.

Still, I am concerned for the logic of community, work, and citizenship within a state that emerges from this era. The artifacts I have chosen for an analysis of the cultural climate—an odd-tic of a narrative by Herman Melville; a planned community as secure space free of crime, vice, and political unrest; a sublime technospectacle of a World's Fair; and a formalized legal institution of Black Vagrancy—have been hauntingly threaded with the shadow of a more rigid social stratification, a stronger social division of labor that had been based on new ways people

⁵³ David Roediger's argument about the citizenship status of African Americans—that they were not just excluded from the rights defining citizenship but were *anti-citizens* whose otherness reveals the contours of citizenship—seems especially instructive of the industrial situation. “That Blacks were largely noncitizens will surprise few, but it is important to emphasize the extent to which they were seen as anticitizens, as ‘enemies rather than members of the social compact.’ As such they were driven from Independence Day parades as ‘defilers’ of the body politic and driven from their homes by the Sons of Liberty and Minute Men. The more powerless they became, the greater their supposed potential to be used by the rich to make freemen unfree” (57).

defined themselves as “workers” and understood their agency as citizenship within an institution of Empire. As Marx identified twenty years earlier in his reaction to the Paris Commune, this same cast-iron social division would serve as the basis for the state as it had operated under the reign of Napoleon III. Rather than supporting the Hegelian notion that the State is the apotheosis of social life, Marx realized that the worker occupation of Paris served as complete antimony for the French State as it had been conceived as relegating the political as a specialized activity, separate from everyday life.⁵⁴ Rather than criticize this increase in specialization and fragmentation of the social fabric of industrial community, newly forming trade unions seemed all too willing to assert and accept the privileges granted through the deployment of the rigid social division of labor.

What did/does it mean to identify oneself as a “worker”? All four artifacts of the cultural logic I have here studied share a refrain to this question. Perhaps the most definitive answer enunciated by this logic could be unearthed in the contorted language of the Nineteenth-Century Freedman’s Bureaus that decreed “all freed people must enter into voluntary contracts with employers of their own choice” (qtd. in Schmidt 104); the limits of “freedom” and “democracy” are contained within and subordinate to the system of production. The legal fiction of a public community operates as a dialectic—a false “peace” or secure space in which capitalist production is allowed to go on uninterrupted. With the interventions of the state apparatuses to guarantee perpetual engagement of labor to the production of capital, the logic of government morphs from representations and manifestations of a collective, social “will,” to one that acts in a

⁵⁴ Kristin Ross points out as much about Marx’s writings in a post-Paris Commune, 1972 edition of *The Communist Manifesto*: “Political emancipation means emancipation from politics as a specialized activity. [...] The state is not merely an instrument of the bourgeoisie; its detachment from civil society, its status as a distinct organism, is attained only *through and by means of* the social divisions of labor. The organs of centralized state power – the standing army, the bureaucracy, the police, the clergy, the judiciary—are ‘organs wrought after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labor’ (197)” (qtd. in Ross 24).

way that can be more accurately described as a capitalist subject that presents itself as having an inalienable right to its citizen's labor. But in consenting to the social division of labor, "citizens" allow themselves to be contained as capitalist subjects. The growing influence of these trade unions, of people whose conception of their own political agency depended on a close relationship to specialized labor apart from general unskilled workers, helped define the contours of the developing mercantile-democratic state. One's relation to the state, how one defines citizenship, becomes a dyad of being at work/not at work, of having an "occupation."

The public horror at the intense violence of the Pullman Strike—numerous popular presses could not reprint fast enough the stories of workers setting fire to the Pullman cars they had constructed—coupled with the fact that the American Railroad Union refused to handle any US Mail locomotive cars that had Pullman cars attached, thus threatening the assumption of safe, public space *as circulation*—warranted new interventionist strategies of state apparatuses to secure the public peace. Ironically, the spectacle of "dead letters" and "dead men" returns to become the onus for new interventions that would define the violence properly exercised by the sovereign state. Overriding the authority of Chicago's popular mayor Patrick Hopkins—who had once himself been an operative for the Pullman factories and was a strong supporter of Pullman's striking workers—and Illinois governor John Altgeld, President Grover Cleveland deployed federal troops to end the strike. As Benjamin notes in "The Critique of Violence," part of the constitution of the modern state involves a systematic means of resolving the violence attendant to class conflict. The right to violence that is usually reserved for the state has also, through historical struggle, been granted to organized labor in the right to strike. But the proposition that the right to strike is a right to exercise violence cannot completely escape the objection that a

collective refusal to work is not precisely an exercise of “violence”: how can an abandonment or collective withdrawal from labor be properly described as “violence”?

This objection seems especially pertinent in the situation of the Pullman Strike. Support for “democratic” interventions in the Pullman strike hinged on the perception of a violence in excess on the part of organized labor—both in the destruction of property and the objects of their own labor (and also of their alienation), and in the threat against social circulatory order. The portrait of labor violence in excess hid the fact that the strike’s organizers had been targeted by the law for their success at organizing a withdrawal of labor from a broad coalition that cut across the lines of labor specialization. The declaration that Debs’s sympathy strike transgressed the law became the grounds for federal intervention and the definition of a new type of imperial sovereignty. In other words, the modern state dictates that organized labor could exercise violence in its right to strike so long as that violence does not recognize general solidarity amongst a broader version of labor and that does not supersede the specialized contours of the social fabric of Empire.⁵⁵ The threat of the general strike is the withdrawal from those rigid social divisions necessary for capital accumulation, another sort of “occupation” of social life in defiance of the striated social fabric. This type of occupation—a radical protest of specialized social space by putting one’s person in defiance of these differentiated locations geared to the facilitation of productivity—had been receding as a form of struggle through the end of the nineteenth century.

⁵⁵ Benjamin argued “the right to strike constitutes in the view of labor, which is opposed to that of the state, the right to use force in attaining certain ends. The antithesis between the two conceptions emerges in all its bitterness in face of a revolutionary general strike. In this, labor will always appeal to its right to strike, and the state will call the appeal an abuse, since the right to strike was not ‘so intended,’ and take emergency measures. For the state retains the right to declare that a simultaneous use of strike in all industries is illegal, since the specific reasons for strike admitted by legislation cannot be prevalent in every workshop. In this difference of interpretation is expressed the objective contradiction in the legal situation, whereby the state acknowledges a violence whose ends, as natural ends, it sometimes regards with indifference, but in a crisis (the revolutionary general strike) confronts inimically” (282).

In those final decades of the century, the political organization of specialized labor relied heavily on perceptions of racial difference. In the 1870s and 1880s, as Montgomery notes, trade unions commonly did not permit African Americans into their unions, and the American Federation of Labor refused to allow Chinese immigrants working on railroads in the west to join AFL-affiliated organizations (26-7). With the rise of these trade organizations and the decline of unskilled labor unions like the Knights of Labor and the United Mine Workers, racial stratification became more stringent (Wilson 142-3). In the instance of the Pullman Strike, these racial codifications of class conflict become even more evident. Philpott quotes a sentry in the U.S. Seventeenth Calvary as he surveyed the faces of the “Hunkies” and “Polacks” in the crowds near the Union Stockyards; he turned to a fellow peace-keeper and remarked “the things ain’t human.” Skilled workmen were known to have quit Pullman, one remarking that laboring alongside factory operatives for Eastern and Southern Europe no longer seemed to be “white man’s work” (qtd. in Philpott 119).

While the concept of an “occupation” helped determine one’s agency, one’s defining characteristic within the rising industrialist nation, the concept also comes to be a way to comprehend and measure time; or more precisely “occupation” also describes an apparatus to capture time in the service of industry. In many respects, the process by which modernization reorganized labor and the social landscape was as much a revolution in the conception of time. Time is a new site for struggle, conflict, and resistance in the era as it measures the extent to which living labor has become commodified and consumed for the purposes of maximizing surplus value. This conception of time fundamentally changes in the factory organization of social labor, for as the factory operative became bound to repetition of similar tasks in a static place, the issue of compensation for work done oscillated between a hourly-wage scale and a

piece-rate method (Montgomery 115). The oscillations due to repletion of labor opened up new spaces for conceptualizations of time, the most famous being “discovered” by Frederick Winslow Taylor in his time-motion studies to demonstrate how time could be used to maximize production as a function of “efficiency.” Taylor’s studies resulted in his advocacy of the phasing-out of the piece-rate method for labor compensation. Piece-work, Taylor writes in *The Principles of Scientific Management*, is too susceptible to “soldiering”—which Taylor defines as the worker deliberately altering the amount of time needed to complete a task or product.⁵⁶ Time under the rationalization of labor through the factory organization of labor, must be removed from the control of labor and instead be a measure of the magnitude, or even the means, of alienation. Time must be “occupied” by industrial interest—the occupation of time presents the cadences for those communities-for-capital.

The Vagrancy Laws of the nineteenth century explicitly merged industrial conceptions of time and work into an “occupation.” In Birmingham, for example, investors in the project of southern modernization employed these coercive means to make modes of living that were outside of the cadences of industrial life extralegal.⁵⁷ Increasingly, industrial time also began to be comprehended in terms of race. As Bobby Wilson and Mark Smith have argued, the management of the antebellum plantation introduced the clock as bearer of industrial time into seasonal and diurnal rhythms in order to discipline labor. The plantation organization of labor differed from the factory model, along this line of argument, in its facilitation of an environment

⁵⁶ Taylor writes “Under piece-work [...] the art of systematic soldiering is thoroughly developed; after a workingman has had the price per piece of the work he is doing lowered to two or three times as a result of his having worked harder and increased his output, he is likely to lose sight of his employers side of the case and become imbued with a grim determination to have no ore cuts if soldiering can prevent it” (23).

⁵⁷ Wilson points out that “to instill the industrial notion of time onto black workers’ everyday routine, Birmingham capitalists sought to make other modes of living difficult, if not impossible. Industrialists, like the planters with sharecroppers, supported laws to control behavior and enforce a rigid work schedule.” By the turn of the century “Birmingham waged an unrelenting campaign against vagrants giving them the choice of going to jail or to work” (99).

geared towards the completion of a task or product and not strictly dependent upon time intervals (Wilson 97). In the modernization of the South, exemplified by Birmingham, this shift in the concept of production needed coercion to achieve temporal conformity of its working populations.

In both North and South, labor often rejected these new cadences of industrial discipline. Schmidt offers the example of freed slaves in South Carolina, who had traditionally attended to specific tasks during morning and took the rest of the day off—a system that had been carried over from the plantation. Schmidt retells an anecdote given by Freedmen’s bureau agent A.J. Willard to demonstrate the extent of the conflict over industrial time:

A sawmill owner who had contracted for twenty five dollars per month plus rations came to Willard to solve a dispute. The two workers in question, “very intelligent and good laborers” in Willard’s opinion, claimed an hour off between 8 and 9 AM for breakfast and another between 12 and 1 for lunch. Trying to resolve the situation, Willard explained to them that “laborers in the North got less wages and worked from sunrise to sunset, this season of the year, only having an hour at noon.” The workers’ answer was “We want to work just as we always worked.” (177)

The anecdote illuminates the differences that underlie a major conflict—each side understands the relation between time and production in radically different ways. To quell this potentially explosive fault-line, industrial capitalism required a structure by which workers and industrialists could speak the same language.

When these negotiations and adjustments in time and labor’s compensation became one of the key issues that sparked the Pullman Strike in 1894 (Pullman worker/citizens expressed outrage at a cut in pay for the same amount of work, yet the rates on rent and other everyday expenses of living at Pullman remained the same), the *langue* of industrial production, time manifested in the clock tower at the hilt of the Pullman factory that oversaw and governed the planned community, was thought to have been a specific target of the violence. Standing

prominently over the rest of the town as the community's tallest structure, the factory clock tower became the beacon for "eminently safe" industrial citizenship, broadcasting its cadences about the fragmentation of daily-life for people living within the community for capital. This same compulsion to work through the language of industrial time, the new rhythms of progress, efficient investment, and cultural growth are precisely the same cadences that serve as tempo for the logic of Melville's "eminently safe narrative," and that will manifest themselves in cultural institutions like the narrative of technology, work, and citizenship (and its dyad in criminality) within emergent American national imperialism. "Bartleby" understood within this new narrative cadence has been deemed inactive and is consigned to "social death" of the Tombs by the extradiegetic bond—the assumptions about work—the narrator shares with his reader. That is, the novella "works" by creating an eminently safe world in a complicit understanding between narrator and reader as citizens of the same industrial nation-state. To read "Bartleby" is to experience the ways in which investment capital has affected reading as a social activity.

CHAPTER 4.
POLICE ACTIONS AND WAR ZONES: “THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW” AND THE
GEOPOLITICS OF PROFESSIONAL POLICING

One of the most critically scrutinized chapters from Theodore Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* (1900) depicts G.W. Hurstwood’s attempt to earn money set against the backdrop of a rather volatile streetcar strike in Brooklyn. The first interaction between Hurstwood as replacement worker and the crowd of strikers occurs peacefully enough: “‘Come off the car, pardner,’ said one of the men in a voice meant to be conciliatory. ‘You don’t want to take the bread out of another man’s mouth, do you?’” The attempt at engagement, conversation, and possibly even solidarity between these two workers pitted against each other cuts through the walls—embodied in the officers of the law assigned to guard Hurstwood and the streetcar on its run—working to “secure labor.” The officers of the law reply “‘Clear out of this now. Give the man a chance to do his work.’” This attempted rhetorical bar to the connection between two (or more) workers here uttered by the law, almost by the badge itself rather than those behind it, is one that once again pits the commodified labor-power of one worker against another, but couched in a rhetoric that places security as a means to “protect/save labor.” The voice from the strike, though, responds “‘Listen, pardner,’ said the leader, *ignoring the policeman* and addressing Hurstwood. ‘We’re all working men, like yourself. If you were a regular motorman, and had been treated as we’ve been, you wouldn’t want any one to do you out of your chance to get your rights, would you?’” (308, emphasis mine). The address from the collective speaks directly to the worker here and completely ignores the officer of the law, *as if the officer were not present*. In fact it is only after the violence initiated by the police that the collective body of the strikers—the voice of labor—even acknowledges the presence of these other two men, as if these two men’s presence did not count them among labor’s number.

Once the violence does begin in this scene, the epithets begin to reign down—“scab,” “sucker,” “coward,” “murdering thief”; except that once the violence begins, it is hard to discern the target of these invectives: Hurstwood and his two police officers/guards are here almost one and the same:

“Work, you blackguards,” yelled a voice. “Do the dirty work. You’re the suckers that keep the poor people down!” “

May God starve ye yet,” yelled an old Irish woman, who now threw open a nearby window and stuck out her head. “Yes, and you,” she added, catching the eye of one of the policemen. “You bloody, murtherin’ thafe! Crack my son over the head, will you, you hard-hearted, murtherin’ devil? Ah, ye—”

But the officer turned a deaf ear.

“Go to the devil, you old hag,” he himself muttered as he stared round upon the scattered company. (309)

Somehow the words of the mob, particularly the old woman’s accusation, launched at these officers of the law cuts through the façade of their office, perhaps due to the notion that one of those officers is himself identified earlier by Dreiser as Irish, or perhaps referencing an earlier passage in which the “bluecoat” (significantly in this novel, clothes have as much interiority as do living beings) struggles to maintain the outward appearance of neutrality despite sympathizing with the strikers and hating this “scab” “in his heart of hearts” (300). Thus the violence this “bluecoat” once wielded has transformed into shame. The implications of this strike scene, then, hinge upon an oscillation on the part of these officers of the law—at once collapsing into the landscape that disciplines the collective body of living human labor, at another time drawn out from the stoic, metallic, statuesque office of the professional badge by the epithet “scab,” charging these officers of the law with attacking and emptying the history of the human material behind any and all occupations.¹

As did many of the strikes of the late nineteenth century, the streetcar strike depicted in Dreiser’s novel seemed to take much of its wrath out against the technological apparatuses that nominally “saved labor.” And the violence both perpetuated by and directed against the officers

¹ Stephanie Smith’s historical analysis of the word “scab” as a visceral attack on the strike breaker highlights the extent to which the role of labor ascends to become the defining element of the social fabric. “Just as a scab is a physical lesion,” Smith writes, “the strike breaking scab disfigures the social body of labor—both the solidarity of the worker and the dignity of work. [...] Moreover, if, as classic Marxism insists, labor under capitalism is that which is most one’s own yet most taken away, scabbed labor is a site of trauma” (98). Smith observes that the word today has been emptied of much of its political weight by the expansion of global capital, partly because realists narratives like *Sister Carrie* animate the possibility for social change while simultaneously containing neutralizing the potential through narration. Essentially, the text limits an idea of what would count as work, which, Smith writes “in turn colludes with an emergent middle-class common sense [...] that associates knowledge and knowledge production with leisure and consumption (and even disease), rather than with labor or production” (112).

of the law itself seems to partake in this tradition if we note the extent to which emerging professionalization tactics of these officers—their “labor-saving” strategies—increasingly removes them from partaking in that idea of “labor”: more uniform, regimented, repeatable, professional, indeed *technological*. As critics of the novel have posited, one possible source for this scene was the Brooklyn Streetcar Strike of 1895 (Pizer 427). That same year, Theodore Roosevelt had been appointed president of the Board of Police Commissioners in New York City. One of the major tasks undertaken by Roosevelt in this position, aided in no small part by his friend and journalist Jacob Riis, was the modernization and development of a *professional* disciplinary regiment, a philosophy for securing the social landscape by emptying the office of any traces of the history of the human material that composes it. The development of a professional police as such—as a human disciplinary apparatus (and product of human labor explicitly uncomfortable with its human (i.e. subjective) origins)—lodges and hides itself into the very fibers of social relations which in the recreation of community as subordinate to the capitalist nation-state. After years of development in the late nineteenth century United States, the concept of a professional disciplinary apparatus—a modern police—will serve as a vehicle for expanding the practice of constituting whole populations as “workers” prostrate before industrial modes of production— takes its next step by going “global.”

Walking Softly through New York City: A Domestic Ethic of Nascent Imperialism

In a letter dated February 9, 1898, the newly-appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy Roosevelt spelled out his plan for American foreign policy that would be a rationale for U.S. expansion into the affairs of Cuba and the Philippines in the Spanish-American War:

I should myself like to shape our foreign policy with a purpose ultimately of driving off this continent every European power. I would begin with Spain, and in the end would *take* all other European nations, including England. [. . .] What I want to see our people avoid is the attitude taken by the great bulk of Americans at the beginning of this century, and the end of the last, when the mass of the Jeffersonians put the interests of France above the interest and honor of America. I am not hostile to any European power in the abstract. I am simply an American first and last, and therefore hostile to any power which wrongs us. (qtd. in Bishop 79-80, my emphasis)

An aversion to “foreign interests” projecting a presence into territories “destined” by the American imagination as fertile land for U.S. development grounds Roosevelt’s self-identity as an “American first and last.” Significantly, this aversion to foreign influences bases itself on an understanding of proximity as potential national property; already within this logic of the threat these European entities pose to Roosevelt’s “America” is an understanding of “nation” as outward *momentum*.

Of course, by the time Roosevelt published his reflections on his diverse career in 1905’s *The Strenuous Life*, many of his techniques and philosophies behind the relations between labor, discipline, the nation-state, and imperialism had become explicit. Beginning with a deeply gendered understanding of labor, Roosevelt proceeds to criticize “over-civilized man, who has lost the great fighting, masterful virtues” and shrinks “from seeing us do our share of the world’s work, by bringing order out of chaos” through U.S.-style democracy to “the great fair tropic islands” (24). Roosevelt warned that national timidity threatened to make the U.S. into a new China “content to rot by inches in ignoble ease within our borders, taking no interest in what goes on beyond them,” shirking responsibility and work “until suddenly we should find, beyond a shadow of question, what China has already found, that in this world the nation that has trained itself to a career of unwarlike and isolated ease is bound, in the end, to go down before other nations which have not lost the manly and adventurous qualities” (21-2). In terms that would startlingly mirror the racist practices of the police, the imperial project of professional discipline that would be born in the streets of New York and other urban, industrial centers in the United States would increasingly be rendered in terms of sexual exploitation.

This policy of barring and checking European nations from locations designating America’s future (Roosevelt menacingly uses the verb “take” in a way the OED describes as “confront with physical force” or “assault,” but also implicitly “to arrest for oneself”) sets the tone for the United States as global policeman, and itself has a genealogy in the history of policing in America at the end of the nineteenth century. Not coincidentally, the Spanish-American War, an event that has been viewed as both a continuation of the American Civil War and an

initial outward momentum of national presence abroad that signifies a foray into imperialism, is preceded by a strenuous remapping of the working classes in urban centers by burgeoning industrial and investment capital.² Both conflicts are understood as the proper field for “police actions,” effectively defining the contemporary imperial nation-state with this logic. This is to say that while much of the nineteenth century witnessed a tireless U.S. expanse westward (that was itself driven by racist and genocidal sentiments), these moments in the final decade of the century mark something new—an attempt to bring U.S. style “law and order” to other “nations” by freeing them of their European influences and which also tells a story about how the U.S. narrated itself as a protagonist in a stage thoroughly mapped by global capital.

One of Roosevelt’s most controversial activities as police commissioner was the full enforcement—many argued the “over enforcement”³—of New York’s “Blue Laws,” barring alcohol from being sold on Sundays. The enforcement of these laws, as Amy Kaplan has shown, pitted Roosevelt’s police force against local saloons and beer gardens of immigrant communities. “Blue Laws,” according to Kaplan, “would have contributed to the Americanization of immigrants by denying their autonomous cultural practices” that depended on social and communal activities, communities often forged in European homelands (230). This specific practice teases out a historical account of the conflicts trying the new industrial nation (by 1900, according to Michel Beaud, America had become the world’s largest industrial producer) in its relation to the world stage: conflicts of “foreign presence” contest the terms of understanding

² Amy Kaplan’s essay, “Black and Blue on San Juan Hill,” in *Cultures of U.S. Imperialism* explicitly makes the argument that the Spanish American War over Cuba and the Philippines was intended to heal specifically masculinist wounds in the aftermath of the Civil War and Reconstruction. See Kaplan 219.

³Bishop narrates the controversy over the rigorous enforcement of the blue laws as one of a conflict between the old, corrupt policies of Tammany Hall and the new progressives exemplified by Roosevelt:

When, therefore, Roosevelt declared his intention to enforce the Sunday-closing law rigorously, the outcry from all political quarters was tremendous. The politicians and the newspapers that they were able to control were as furious in their wrath as their kind had been when Roosevelt began to enforce the Civil Service law. They declared that the attempt was pure foolishness, that the law was obsolete, a mere “blue law,” and was never intended to be enforced anyway. A Tammany spokesman said, “We believe the law should be enforced, but with intelligence and discrimination,” to which Roosevelt retorted: “That is a good deal like believing in truthful mendacity.” (61)

sovereignty, both nationally and globally.⁴ The national effort to maintain an order has at its heart

a global teleology—a sense that the global *is* the local, or rather that the local is just an instance or example for how the world “works.” Attendant to this activity of “working out the world” is a remaking of an order which is a “totalizing”— appearing any place where human labor exists, or a teleology that operates as does the local but on a vastly different scale. The new activities of managing/“taking” populations, carved in the clashes of labor and capital in the industrialization era, understand and remake differences as that of scale.

It is a gross understatement to say that the Roosevelt of the 1890s was an active “statesman.” Not only was Roosevelt busy protecting the west from foreign influence, but he was just as busy creating the systematized government apparatus needed to carry this out— in effect rethinking the ways in which policing were viewed. Roosevelt, in a meeting of the Baltimore Civil Service Reform Association in 1892, conversed with Charles Bonaparte, bragging to the Baltimore Lawyer (and future Attorney General under the Roosevelt administration) that his border patrolmen (Roosevelt was national Civil Service Commissioner at the time) were so well-trained that they could out sharp-shoot any other law officer in the nation. The two continued discussing the proper presence and training of law enforcement in a nation where technological advances, particularly in the field of transportation, confounded typical disciplinary devices by increasing mobility, eventually coming up with the idea that some national police force must be formed— an idea that was the germination of the FBI’s founding by Bonaparte in 1908.⁵ The investment of officers of law enforcement with specialized, national-disciplinary powers can be

⁴Census reports illustrate the boom in immigration rates and shifts in nationalities of those immigrants over the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. For example, between 1871 and 1880, over 1.5 million immigrants were from western and northern Europe, while only 181,000 were from eastern and southern Europe. Between 1891 and 1900, however, 1.1 million were from western and northern Europe, while almost 1.85 million were from eastern and southern Europe. Between 1901 and 1910, government estimates report that just over 1.05 million came from western and northern Europe, while 5,789,000 came from eastern and southern Europe.

⁵This history is part of the FBI’s view of itself, posted on its own web page: <http://www.fbi.gov/libref/historic/history/origins.htm> .

viewed as a strategy to manage the “unprofessional,” unskilled “rabble” that threaten to turn the formerly “tranquil” America into a war zone.⁶ Sovereignty embodied in this new view of imagining particular spaces to be disciplined conflates police actions and war zones, and in this re-imagination, grounds its rationale as a means of restoring order and peace to those zones which only it is allowed to freely traverse.⁷

The law that brought this first professional national police force into existence itself suggests a revision of race, gender, and labor along a globalized scale—the 1911 Mann Act—also known as the “white slave law.”⁸ This particular law negotiates a number of cultural anxieties rising out of swift changes produced by industrial and investment market ideology: anxieties attendant to women working in “public” spaces (like factories and other places of work

⁶Burton Bledstein’s analysis of professionalism in Nineteenth-Century America, *The Culture of Professionalism*, analyzes the desire of one set of laborers to forcefully distinguish themselves from another set through a identification of class: “finding themselves in public competition with their neighbors, Americans began to segregate themselves socially, to turn inward voluntarily, and to define their private lives by associations based upon race, ethnicity, and religion” (16). “In a country in which every self-reliant white man increasingly thought he had a little something to lose— if only a financial debt and a nervous investment in dreams of respectability, comfort, and a sense of superiority over others— the image of middle-class society as the most progressive in history animated the Northern imagination” (25). One particular means of distinguishing oneself within the harsh world of capitalistic competition was to improve and secure one’s position by defining oneself as a “professional”— a term which would institutionalize and formalize attitudes that the middle-class thought defined its own existence (31), as well as promote its value to capitalism as “skilled,” “efficient,” indisposable living labor. The stigma attached to being “unprofessional” thus implied a specific relation to the exploitative activity of capital to labor, which Bledstein analyzes in the word *amateur*:

The word “amateur,” which earlier in the eighteenth century had simply referred to a person who pursued an activity for the love of it, increasingly acquired negative and pejorative references as the nineteenth century developed. *Amateurish*, a new midcentury word, connoted faulty and deficient work, perhaps defective, unskillful, superficial, desultory. (31)

⁷To sharpen the distinctions between the figures of law enforcement and the mass of unskilled laborers that “need management,” Frank Morn points out that the late nineteenth century saw a shift in how policemen were paid. No longer wage earners, law enforcement officers were beginning to be seen as skilled labor apart from the masses, and thus should be salaried. So, one key means of defining the contours of class, demarcated in the term “professional” as opposite “amateur”/“unskilled” labor is the shift from the wage to the salary payment method. See Morn 73.

⁸Some language worded into the law, passed July 25, 1910, explicitly makes itself into one that manages and “regulates interstate and foreign commerce.” In order to legitimate itself as a national police, the FBI needed at its origins to be seen as overseeing exchanges and circulations on a mass level. Section 6 of the law also requires those who harbor immigrant women

for any immoral purpose [. . .] shall file with the Commissioner General of Immigration a statement in writing setting forth the name of such alien woman or girl, the place at which she is kept, and all facts as to the date of her entry into the United States, the port through which she entered, her age, nationality, and parentage and concerning her procurement to come to this country.

in urban centers) as a threat to ideas of “virtue”⁹; anxieties about immigration and the exploitative role of capital to labor¹⁰; anxieties about commerce circumventing the sovereignty of the nation-state grounded in liberal democracy.¹¹ Written in response to the widely held fear that women— both considered “native”/locals (i.e. women moving from rural to urban centers in the United States) as well as eastern European immigrants— were being lured by American capitalists with false promises of work only to be sold into prostitution, the law itself allowed for a new national police force to track criminals that traverse the boundaries of individual states.¹² The cultural logic of the nineteenth century was in the process of reviewing common-sense

⁹As demonstrated in a report published by the *Massachusetts Commission for the Investigation of the So-Called White-Slave Traffic* in 1914:

In former times girls worked at home under their mothers’ watchful eyes, and seldom went abroad unless accompanied by women of mature years. [. . .] Present conditions are vastly different. Modern invention and business methods have transferred industry and its products from the home to the factory, the big store and the office. The great majority of our people now live in large towns and cities. (66)

¹⁰Anxieties over labor and immigration, both that immigrant men were participating in degrading “native” white women, and that immigrant women were themselves being captured and sold into slavery (and also thus contributing to the degradation of “white womanhood”), can be seen not just in the wording of the Mann Act (see note 8), but also in a 1911 exposé on the supposed phenomenon, written by former police commissioner of New York Theodore A. Bingham and titled *The Girl that Disappears*:

There is absolutely no question of the existence to an appalling extent of women who are veritable white slaves. At least 2,000 of them are brought into the country every year. [. . .] They are enticed from their homes by deceit, by promises of big pay for easy work in the United States, the land of gold. Generally the picture of what they are to find in this country is painted by their countrymen, a man who has been in the United States and has returned for the fixed purpose of finding girls to take back with him. [. . .] My observation and the police records convince me that fully ninety-five per cent of all the so-called white slaves are foreigners, principally girls from France, Italy, Germany, and Hungary. [. . .] (15-6)

See also Bingham, 32.

¹¹ As evidenced not just in the language of the Mann Act explicitly making itself as a means to regulate interstate and foreign commerce (see note 8), but also in the congressional debates over the enactment of the “White Slave Traffic Law”: “Transporting innocent girls . . . from the country districts to the centers of population . . . in order that the image in which they have been created shall be defaced *is commerce*” (Congressman Edward Sanders from Virginia, quoted in Lowenthal 14, my emphasis). “The police power exercised by the state and municipal governments is inadequate to prevent [white slavery]— particularly when girls are enticed from one state to another” (Congressman James Mann from Illinois, quoted in Theoharis 6).

¹²“The White-Slave Act”—as a decree from the federal government—which is itself a space in which ambivalences about gender, race, and the role of labor, and the professional disciplinary powers of the emerging bourgeois state converge is a striking example of modern, twentieth century ideas and practices of sovereignty. What is most striking about this particular act of congress is not just the immorality wrought into the activity of prostitution, but the fact that such a morality could violate prescribed spatial practice; that is, it is not merely the activity of prostitution being marked as criminal here, but the possibility of intraspatial criminality herein suggested.

notions of gender, race, and work under a new teleology, and new procedures for management redefined the terrain for mapping, containing, and policing conflict.

Roosevelt's ambitions for revitalizing America through a disciplined, professional activity of policing a particular space were at least influenced by, if not directly resulting from, conversations had with good friend Jacob Riis. The close friends often walked together through the streets of New York as if on tour, and Riis's impact on Roosevelt's plan for national maintenance had been noted by Roosevelt himself. After Riis's 1890 publication, *How the Other Half Lives*, Roosevelt communicated to Riis personally the profound impact the work had on the then-current civil service commissioner. When Riis died in 1910, Joseph Buckin Bishop, longtime friend to Roosevelt, points out that Roosevelt thought of him

as next to his father the best man he had ever known, saying of his book that it had been to him both an enlightenment and inspiration for which he could not be too grateful. In company with Riis he visited the tenement house regions, often at midnight, *in order to see for himself* just what conditions were, just what the police were doing in regard to them, and what the Health Department was doing to regulate and improve them. (67, my emphasis)

What must be meditated upon here is the privileged perspective this method of "seeing," this particular "scaling of New York," as a shift to an organized, methodical, aggressive, ambitious—i.e. "professional"—means to contain the crisis created by the stresses of rapidly advancing capital. This method of configuring the new urban space by cutting New York's streets down to scale involves narrating and understanding the real New York by aggressively walking through it (Riis often barged in to tenements unannounced to snap his photos); a specific activity of traversing its differentiated fields. Such a professional momentum through New York exemplifies Benjamin's *flâneur* walking purposefully through the city of nineteenth-century Europe: "With each step the walk takes on a greater momentum; ever weaker grow the temptations of shops, of bistros, of smiling women, ever more irresistible the magnetism of the next streetcorner, of a distant mass of foliage, of a street name" (417). Walking though the city in effect carves the grooves for circulation into that city: unwilling to be distracted from his purpose/direction, the city walker/narrator immerses himself within a city of circulation, of

unresisted movement that interpolates himself as “good traffic” (as opposed to a “gaper” who is slowed from the *purpose* of circulation).

Roosevelt, writing the introduction to Riis’s autobiography, *The Making of an American*, celebrates Riis because the latter stood for “kindly good citizenship.” What most notably demonstrates this virtue, according to Roosevelt’s introduction, is apparently aggressive direct action: Riis “was one of the few great writers for clean and decent living and for upright conduct who was also a great doer. He never wrote sentences which he did not in good faith try to act whenever he could find the opportunity for action. He was emphatically a ‘doer of the world,’ and not either a mere hearer or preacher” (xi). Riis embodies for this former President, Naval Secretary, and New York Police Commissioner a new logic of imperial sovereignty which grounds itself in an aggressive resolve to re-unify specific, differentiated locations under one “professional,” rational, and omnipresent vision— to become a “doer of the world.”

Jacob Riis’s 1890 study of tenement houses in the poorest districts in New York, a city Riis metonymizes and scales as “the principle city of the Unites States,” is instructive in the history of the rise of the professional disciplinary force in America. Riis’s strategies of arrangement constitutive of narrative— a means to imagining a functionality of one’s surroundings—imply specific stratifications, particularly of gender, race, and labor that necessitate an “objective force of social maintenance.” Riis, a police reporter for the *New York Tribune* since the 1870s, does not merely and transparently relay events in *How the Other Half Lives*; rather, he conjures a taxonomic order—literally consolidating a mass of diverse peoples into “an other half” within and through the function of narrative, through a “coherent” arrangement of words and characters. The text proceeds as if on tour, a chronological imagination which the author and reader descend into the ghettos of the Metropolis, all of which situates the reader of this text in a specific position vis-à-vis the “landmarks” that make up the content.

Readers of Riis’s text tend to have described it as unsure of its own authority, and thus unstable in the “reality” it works to produce as a negotiation between the “eye witness” and the

object on the other side of the narrative lens.¹³ However, I argue that Riis, no matter how he reads to contemporary critical audiences, orchestrates the text, and by association himself, from an “amateur” photographer maturing and “progressing” into a professional sociologist. The narratological structure that fuels the text—“Let us turn down ____ Street”—relies on an assumption of absolute spatial differentiation and identifies physical markers to plot that progress. The foundational aspect which will at first be the means of differentiation between various classes in this text will of course be economic, but translated into how an assumed conglomerate of the masses, an “other half,” practices and utilizes space.¹⁴ The activity of “living” at this initial moment is first maneuvered into an understanding of a spatialized practice.

Riis began what he termed his life’s work when he had been appointed police reporter for the *New York Tribune*.¹⁵ Significantly, Riis’s reporting covered also the Health Department, the Fire Department, and the Coroner’s Office. In Riis’s own words, “The police reporter on a newspaper [. . .] is the one who gathers and handles all the news that means trouble to someone: the murders, the fires, suicides, robberies, and all that sort, before it gets to court” (qtd. in Leviatin 16). This occupation, officed across from police headquarters on Mulberry Street, afforded Riis the opportunity to freely explore the tenements of the city. Riis entered his self-styled “battle”—his autobiography describes his reaction to his new assignment as police reporter as akin to praying before Mars: “In my soul I commence my work and myself to the God of battles who gives victory” (128)—against the poverty and squalor of the tenements (and also to expand his own readership) with a new narrative weapon called the “detective camera.” On a number of occasions, Riis carried this detective camera, smaller and more portable than its

¹³ Cindy Weinstein argues that Riis’s text is not an artifact of stable authority, and does not work to structure a coherent “reality” (196).

¹⁴ Henri Lefebvre’s important work, *The Production of Space*, illuminates the ways in which the concept of space needs to be seen as a social practice “which embraces production and reproduction and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation” (33). As a practice, according to Lefebvre, space serves to unify a given community. “In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society’s relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*” (33, emphasis in the original).

¹⁵ This according to his autobiography, *The Making of an American*, first published in 1901, on page 128.

predecessors, underneath his coat for “undetected” pictures and thus actively “capturing” moments, situating the operator of said technology in a new relation to time.¹⁶ The technology of flash powder, coupled with reduced exposure times thanks to the advent of gelatin plates finally allowed the photographer to bring to light a new representation of *action*— the lived practice of the “other half.” This technology of “capturing” action, cutting across and through temporal linearity, must also be viewed as a new ontological construction: “stilling” action isolates a newly produced image, making it the reified property of the person who wields the technology of detection.

A strategic, efficient reorganization of snapshots along a means/end split that Fredric Jameson argues attaches itself to the image through the logic of capitalism—wherein an object now becomes a means to its own end in consumption— presciently describes Riis’s narratological activity. When encountering a vagrant in chapter seven titled “A Raid on the Stale Beer Dives,” Riis describes an encounter with a typical “tramp” on one of these “raids”

who sat smoking his pipe on the rung of a ladder with such evident philosophic contentment in the busy labor of a score of rag-pickers all about him, that I bade him sit for a picture, offering him ten cents for the job. He accepted the offer with hardly a nod, and sat patiently watching me from his perch until I got ready for work. Then he took the pipe out of his mouth and put it in his pocket, calmly declaring that it was not included in the contract, and that it was worth a quarter to have it go in the picture. [. . .] The man, scarce ten seconds employed at honest labor, even at sitting down, at which he was an undoubted expert, had gone on strike. He knew his rights and the value of “work,” and was not to be cheated out of either. (111)

Wielding a technology that takes as its ingenuity an ability to isolate images from their temporal existence, Riis’s endeavor to “capture the moment” of tramping, an attempt to commodify “tramping” in New York, is confounded by the control the object of reification recognized in this particular system of production. A recognition of labor power runs counter to this technological

¹⁶ As David Leviatin notes, these technological advances had a specific ontological effect on Riis’s mission: The gelatin dry plates Riis exposed, more sensitive to light than the collodion or wet plates they would soon replace, reduced exposure time significantly, allowing Riis to freeze action instead of recording moderate movement as an indecipherable blur. Additionally, unlike the wet plates, the dry plate did not have to be prepared by the photographer in the field or developed immediately after it was exposed; sensitized by the manufacturer, it could be stored either exposed or unexposed for months. This helped eliminate one of the major burdens of location work. (24)

activity of commodification-through-(spatial and temporal) isolation and draws the ire of the cameraman/detective. We see in this scene the logic of *How the Other Half Lives*: Riis builds with these snapshots a narrative to be consumed for the benefit of its own ideas, “capturing the moment” for its own end of obtaining a “realistic” feel for how “tramps” live.

A rendition of crime-as-spectacle also permeates Riis’s attempt at technologically acquiring— Riis calls “taking” (which meant to take one’s picture, but also recalling Roosevelt’s menacing use of the verb “take”)— “reality.” For Riis, the securing of the streets within a system of *circulation* by channeling the Other into “safe” patterns for the middle class, essentially channeling figures safety as a degree of utility (Twigg 370). With these photographs the image of crime also extends from its temporal realm to produce an idea of “crime” that exists for the benefit of its own consumption— that is, concocted to show how crime “ends.”¹⁷ Riis’s foray into the criminal gang regions in chapter 19, “The Harvest of Tares” relates a scene in which Riis convinces a gang of toughs to re-create their criminal actions before his detective camera.

One of them tumbled over against a shed, as if asleep, while two of the others bent over him, searching his pockets with a deftness that was highly suggestive. This, they explained for my benefit, was to show how they “did the trick.” The rest of the bend were so impressed with the importance of this exhibition that they insisted in crowding into the picture by climbing upon the shed, sitting on the roof with their feet dangling over the edge, and disposing themselves in every imaginable manner within view, as they thought. (205-7)

Notable in this scene is again the ability to recreate an instance so that it may break down activity into a hodgepodge of body parts, of limbs hanging into the frame, of partial beings populating an activity that has been recreated by the detective camera and rebuilt into a narrative of criminality. Crime now is reproduced, and its reproduction ends by rendering those on one side of the technology/product/narrative to a specific relation to those on the other side.¹⁸ The vexed relation

¹⁷As Ernest Mandel argues, “The detective story is the realm of the happy ending. The criminal is always caught. Justice is always done. Crime never pays. Bourgeois legality, bourgeois values, bourgeois society, always triumph in the end. It is soothing, socially integrating literature, despite its concern with crime, violence, and murder” (26).

¹⁸Jameson uses the narrative of detection as the most demonstrative example of “reading for an end”: “the bulk of the pages becoming sheer devalued means to an end—in this case, the ‘solution’ which is itself utterly insignificant insofar as we are not thereby in the real world and by the latter’s practical standards the identity of an imaginary murderer is supremely trivial” (“Reification” 146).

of detective fiction to “reality” demands meditation: authors and reporters of a “reality” of crime, of the contours of urban landscapes, must first have a specific idea of that which they are looking for in their observations prior to the activity of discerning the “real.” A dramatic effect of this logical inversion in a nineteenth-century understanding of technology in that the devices used to capture and lead to a “real” only count as technology insofar as they produce a product already packaged for consumption.

It is the contention of this essay to argue that the historical rise of a professional police— a genealogy of the modern state apparatus— relied on the technologies that produce reality through narrative; that a new (technological) activity of discerning and policing class works through isolating entities from their spatio-temporal existence, only to reinscribe those entities within that nexus through narrative. Such an activity is an example also of a shift in perspective; no longer viewing entities on an individual basis, the genealogy of the logic of modern discipline also postures entities on a larger scale, metonymically drawing conclusions about mass sets of people through the particular case.

The necessity for the logical shift bases itself on a rhetoric of emergency: that populations within the city live their daily existence in an area that needs some sort of rational, meticulously planned order, to which a “professional” civil servant can lead. A number of points within Riis’s text read as an expert actively navigating a mass audience on a “raid”; yet an audience is still marked by class—itself interpolated as “primary” folk by an “other half” through the tenements, remade now as the proper field for policing— i.e. entering a “war zone.”

Suppose we look into one? No. ___ Cherry Street. Be a little careful please! The hall is dark and you might stumble over the children pitching pennies back there. Not that it would hurt them; kicks and cuffs are their daily diet. They have little else. Here where the hall turns and dives into utter darkness is a step, and another, another. A flight of stairs. You can feel your way, if you cannot see it. Close? Yes! What would you have? All the fresh air that enters these stairs comes from the hall-door that is forever slamming, and from the stairs their sole supply of the elements God meant to be free, but man deals out with such niggardly hands. That was a woman filling her pail by the hydrant you just bumped against. The sinks are in the hallway, that all the tenants may have access—and all be poisoned alike by their summer stench. Hear the pump squeak! It is the lullaby of tenement-house babes. In summer when a thousand thirsty throats pant for a cooling

drink in this block, it is worked in vain. But the saloon, whose open door you just passed in the hall, is always there. (88)

Riis, who explicitly makes himself as a “war correspondent” in chapter 7 interpolates the field which he moves about in his occupation through this description as the proper “battleground” for sovereign action. A specific effect of this narrative technique employed by Riis is to isolate specific characters—the children, the woman with the pail, the tenants sharing the hydrant, as well as himself and the audience— within a practice that utilizes spatial surroundings as a way for understanding one’s own social position: the narrator explaining the various observances an “audience” perceives, an audience clumsily bumping into objects due to both unfamiliarity and not being able to “see,” and an “other half” going about its daily life. The activity of “seeing” here is rendered by Riis’s specific words to have a dual function within the construction of narrative: Riis acts as the eyes for an audience on tour through the dark tenements, but Riis also uses the words to construct the ontological activity of seeing “the picture” to an audience accustomed to reading words an imagining of a picture on their own through the words that comprise the text. Riis’s text produces a new way of “seeing”: the author-expert both creating and bringing the phenomena to the person of the audience-novice, as well as explaining what that phenomena itself means. The fact that Riis makes this “battlefield” absent of a particular enemy, save perhaps in the last sentence on the open doors of the saloon, founds an important counterforce to the horrors of the tenements. Such a subtle, yet aggressive force oppressing the tenements requires like subtlety, like aggression, through a methodic, organized, efficient civil service apparatus. Policing thus emerges under the guise of serving the community by plowing through it.

Technologies of Detection: From Private to Prosthetic Eyes

The segmentation of individuals within a “proper place” becomes the grounds upon which narrative logic in this case imposes an expression of viewing someone in relation to their spatial surroundings, thus melting characters into the zones of contention. Keith Gandall’s observation on the “excess” of Riis’s photographs, that these pictures “cannot help reproduce

‘irrelevant’ details along with the subject at hand” (65-6), must be taken further. The text is not just a passive representation of the lower classes as an amusement, as Gandal posits (71), but is much more invested as a work that actively, socially divides the people of New York into either private or public. Thus, the text carves out the grounds for “appropriate” policing actions; the people of the bowery are herein *becoming* the war zone. Mike Davis provides a wonderful example of how specific practices “interpolate a demonic other” in a specific relation to “upstanding citizenship.” Davis’s essay “Fortress L.A.” also foretells a particular construction of space, particularly in the constitution of public buildings as hyper-secure fortresses that *dare* the public to defy the authority it “reflects back on the surrounding streets and street people” (240). Likewise, Riis’s products of poverty exposed reflect back onto the streets of New York. While many of the snapshots of people within the tenements were taken on police raids, the people of the tenements are always seen posing. Riis does not afford “the people of the streets”—the tramps, beggars, “street Arabs” sleeping on the street corner—the same opportunity, often “capturing” them while asleep. Thus a key moment in the history of the police in America, on the rise of professionalization within that particular vocation, relies on a spatial configuration and division of people on the streets versus “private citizens” in their own houses. The internalization of space becomes vital in distinguishing class, as Benjamin notes. At the threshold of the private space, that is, that which delimits private versus public spaces, are possessions and *properties*.

Threshold magic. At the entrance to the skating rink, to the pub, to the tennis court, to resort locations: *penates*. [. . .] Of course, this same magic prevails more covertly in the interior of the bourgeois dwelling. Chairs beside an entrance, photographs flanking a doorway, are fallen household deities, and the violence they must appease grips our hearts even today at each ringing of the doorbell. (214)

Already, distinctions of spatiality materialize under a specific relation to properties *as accumulation*; the more one owns, the more one interiorizes and becomes a private individual. The detachment into an interior is often an abrupt and violent one, and the rigid line between public and private, between middle and lower class, sharpens with each personal accumulation.

As a result, these properties are guarded on the highest terms: a threat to property becomes a threat to the middle-class self. Burton Bledstein's *The Culture of Professionalism* points out that attendant to the aggressive outward push of professionalism was also an aggressive "cordoning off" or interiorization of spaces now marked private.¹⁹ The power on the one side of the detective technology reflects back onto the objects in the streets an inherent division implicitly based on, but never voiced thoroughly as, class by making the product of that technology the property that lies at the threshold of public/private and lower/middle-class divisions. The activity of melting the distinction between people and the streets— a people without an interior— determines a mass relation, or a relation of people on a massive scale as to how certain people marked "public" relate to those on the other side of the camera/technology— the "private." As Bill Brown notes in an essay provocatively titled "The Prosthetics of Empire," "technology" "is and has been an objectification of divisions within society" (132). The technology of policing, of a legal apparatus defined by outreaching into sectors determined "public," herein becomes the line of division that distinguishes middle from lower classes, and "the Law" clearly takes a particular residence on one side of that distinction.

The collapse of that spatial division for Riis constitutes the possibility for social calamity. For instance, in chapter three, titled "The Mixed Crowd," in answer to the question "where is the typical American among these tenement houses?": "They are not here. In their place has come this queer conglomerate mass of heterogeneous elements, ever striving and working like whiskey and water in one glass, and with like result: final union and a prevailing taint of whiskey" (16). The metaphor Riis uses here, comparing the "queer conglomerate" tenements to a mixing of water and whiskey marks a definitive anodyne to Riis's objective, *sober* professional, as well as ominously forecasting a national union possibly "tainted" with the breath of immoral excess if left unmanaged. This paranoia of the porousness of spaces rhetorically shifts into this passage as a threat to *security*; it will be a paranoia over the evaporating of security invoked again and again

¹⁹"In the period, the enclosure and definition of private space received even more attention than public. The appearance of Yale locks, burglary and fire-alarm systems, lighted streets, and anti-tramp legislation indicated the extent to which Americans were becoming concerned with protecting their private spaces" (Bledstein 61).

to delimit the contours of class division, as Ernest Mandel notes (26). An anxiety about the collapse of security has always managed to create the fervor necessary to retreat inward, to interiorize, to distinguish oneself along class lines. Placing doubt over security that works to delimit and cordon off space calls middle-classness into being.

One specific result of this strategy is that the expert/author as cartographer bases an authority that is not just an ability to correctly identify and territorialize districts within the city (and the city here again functions as metonymy for the nation, under Riis's expressed logic), but also an ability to effortlessly traverse these spatial divides, thanks to "technological objectivity" of the mechanical "eye" of the detective camera. What emerges is a type of new citizen/subject grounded in specialized experience, and the professional social scientist/ war correspondent into whom Riis remakes himself knows without the possibility of dispute "how the other half lives," for his views can be demonstrated, related, repeated (in that everyone else can also see through this prosthetic eye), and thus proved via a dexterity at adapting spatial practices into a composite whole.

The finished product is a coherent mapping of the city's various "compartments, divisions, and neighborhoods" into a fully functional (and thus prescient taylorist logic of) "city." Riis and the tenements are both citizens of the city; however, the logic of *How the Other Half Lives* works to illustrate how the whole cannot fully function without reform in one of its parts. That is, the logic of relations in this text seems a taylorized understanding of *scale*: by understanding how the parts work, one can understand the whole. The reporter, walking through the streets of New York, detective camera in hand, partitions the streets off into particular zones which he comprehends (and "handles") as smaller communities defined by ethnicity:

A map of the city, colored to designate nationalities, would show more stripes than on the skin of a zebra, and more colors than any rainbows. The city on such a map would fall into two general halves, green for the Irish prevailing in the West Side tenement districts, and blue for the Germans on the East Side. But intermingled with these ground colors would be an odd variety of tints that would give the whole appearance of an extraordinary crazy-quilt. From down in the Sixth Ward, upon the site of the old Collect Pond that in the days of fathers drained the hills which are no more, the red of the Italian would be seen forcing its way northward along the line of Mulberry Street to the quarter

of the French purple on Bleeker and South Fifth Avenue, to lose itself and reappear, after a lapse of miles, in the “Little Italy” of Harlem, east of Second Avenue. Dashes of red, sharply defined, would be seen strung through the Annexed District, northward to the city line. On the West Side the red would be seen overrunning the old Africa of Thompson Street, pushing the black of the Negro rapidly uptown, against querulous but unavailing protests, occupying his home, his church, his trade and all, with merciless impartiality. (19)

The rhetoric implied here again maps a terrain of contention, supposedly pitting various locations marked by a specific ethnic identity against others, by employing the verbs “forcing,” “overrunning,” “pushing.” By defining ethnicity here as national origin, Riis reconstructs the smaller communities of New York on a global scale populated by “warring nations” (and thus partaking in the same logic that Roosevelt himself espoused)—almost as if somehow the nations themselves, through the immigrants in the city, push up against one another. It is thus the activity of detection that can best identify and study, and therefore completely police, this potential war zone.

In a narrative that begins (significantly, at least, from a labor perspective) early on the first day of May, with the discovery of “de most bootful corpse dat I eber seed,” the dime novel detective story “Black Tom, the Negro Detective, or Solving a Thompson Street Murder” commences. This particular story is taken from *The Old Cap Collier Library*, a five cent library that was published by George Munro between 1883 and 1899, and is believed by dime novel scholar Gary Hoppenstand to be penned by W.I. James.²⁰ The entire library collection of dime novels narrated a shift in subject matter from rural to urban story. A few western adventures appeared in this library from time to time, but the vast majority presented detection as an activity associated with the emergence of urbanization. The popularity of the detective in the urban scene was undeniable. By 1893, the year “Black Tom” was published (which would locate it squarely between the Homestead Strike of 1892 and the Pullman Strike of 1894), the Half-dime Library

²⁰ Michael Denning’s contends that authorship for these mysteries of the city remains a bit foggy; often a given library would employ a number of “house” authors whose names would be absent from the pages of the text.

was able to declare at the top of each issue “Largest Circulation of any Five-Cent Library Published.”²¹

Our first introduction to the detective/hero Nick Miller, who “blackens up” at times to become “Black Tom, the Negro Detective,” in this first chapter is through dialogue: two African American women discussing the discovery of a murdered white woman’s body in the vicinity. The narrative, significantly enough, opens from the perspective of those it would eventually manage and discipline. The embodiment of new professional citizen for these two women living on Thompson Street, a predominantly black neighborhood within New York (as Riis marks it) exists, in Raymond Williams’s terms, *in solution*: there is a specific entity known to them through rumor as “Black Tom,” commonly thought to be a detective, but what that means is still in the midst of being actively formulated and shaped by lived practice.

The narrative opens with a conversation between “Fat Hannah” (so named at every moment she appears in the text) and her friend in a chapter titled “Black Tom the Sleuth,” and presents the dialogue in stereotypically racist terms. After a brief conversation on the identity of the murder victim, the dialogue turns to the question of the mysterious black man walking around whom “they say is a detective.” The “they” of this statement locates the persona of detection on a social discourse, and Hannah responds: “He mighty fresh, he am; an’ jist look how he pull aroun’ tings” (1). The mystery this particular figure of the Law offers to a predominantly white audience seems to advance the narrative.²² A “freshness” attaches to this particular black

²¹ According to Hoppenstand, “in a sense, the *Old Cap Collier Library* can be seen as a microcosm of dime novel rural story to urban story shift in general. Occasionally an Indian adventure (by “Wild Bill”) or a Frank James outlaw Western appeared in the *Library*, and yet each excursion into the Western was followed by dozens of detective stories. It appeared as if the publisher was testing the waters from time to time, only to discover that the readership did indeed prefer the detective story to the western” (70).

²² Michael Denning points out that the bulk of the readership for these “mysteries of the city” were white (oftentimes immigrant), young working class people, primarily of Irish or German ethnicity. However, it was not uncommon for a more “professional” laborer to purchase and read one of these texts. “The evidence suggests that the bulk of the dime novels audience were young workers, often of Irish or German ethnicity, in the cities and mill towns of the North and West; and that dime novels and story papers made up most of their reading matter. On the other hand, the dime novel was certainly not the self-creation of these craftworkers, factory operatives, laborers, and servants; it was a commercial product of a burgeoning industry employing relatively educated professionals . . . Nor were dime novels limited to working class readers; they were read by professionals” (45).

body “pulling around things” would seem to invest “Black Tom” with a sexualized fascination, an access to things not imagined granted to the white reader. Also, like Riis’s text, the narrative here again offers us with these introductory words a tour of space that is specifically marked: the peculiarities of dialect and word choice signal the reader a racial difference, the jarring discovery of a murdered white corpse (the most beautiful ever seen), the possibility that one of the characters has something to hide, and the emergence of the mysterious sleuth Black Tom. The scene demarcates a sense of a definitive space actively being produced by the ways in which the inhabitants live and communicate on a daily basis. Not only were presentations of dialect and vernacular conspicuous in the deviation from “proper grammar,” but representations of dialect this way are also thus spatial distinctions— means to further “interiorize” a middle-class self.²³ Further, this particular dialogue marks a racialized spatial division as well. By presenting dialect in such a distinguishable way, this text narrates the desire to interiorize, to cut the “grammatical” reader apart from the communicating subjects. While written with a working-class audience in mind, the representation of dialect plants the seeds of a logic of wanting-to-be middle-class into those on the other side of the pages. By interjecting a reader into this scene, this narrative not only differentiates and marks space—“an other half”—but also represents professional detection “as distinct from other social semantical formations which have been *precipitated* and are far more evidently and more immediately available” (Williams 133-4), in the process of interiorizing space. The strategy employed here then, that is, the rhetoric of the text, emerges as a movement and a phenomenon *still actively being formed*, existing within a zone of contention defined as a lived practice by those whom apparently need disciplining and are in the midst of being interpolated as the proper field of police actions.

The rest of the detective narrative proceeds and is fueled by a contrast in spatial practice. Consecutive chapters in this narrative oscillate between the bowery of New York and the parlors

²³ Alan Trachtenberg’s argues that a presentation of dialect and vernacular that “appeared within a grammatical framework [. . .] made clear it was intended for a grammatically proper reader” (189).

and hotels of the city's elite. These contrasting chapters, these settings in conflict, are brought into contact with one another through a particular crime that has been placed strategically in the narrative. The traffic of New York, the people that populate the street, are rhetorically scaled as people within this rabble-filled war zone; emptying the social and political conflict, the rhetoric of crime and detection that loops through these contradicting spaces configures against sovereignty— into a relation to the Law as either citizen/potential victim, or criminal/conspirator— that is immanent in the pages of the detective narrative.

The novel's opening scene describes the disguised detective as “a mysterious individual, who came and went into and out of the negro quarters of the city *like a phantom*. [. . .] The only name that he was known by was Black Tom, and no other man or woman in that locality had been able to discover anything about him” (1, my emphasis). What adds to the effect of detection, what makes detection *work*, is this shared understanding of spatial practices as absolute and definitive characteristic of racial difference. If the work both presents and assumes race to be a means through which people utilize their surroundings—a notion that was implied by Riis's mapping strategy— then the narration of “crime” shifts temporally and spatially; it is no longer a singular event but, like Riis's picture of the toughs “re-creating their crime,” is rendered as a complex series that spans a cultural logic of space and time, of gender, race, and class.

These aristocrats looking to secure their fortunes through a lucrative marriage, organize the murder and assume that the social barrier of racially marked identities cannot be traversed: “David told me that there is a detective called Black Tom scenting around.’ ‘Is he a negro?’ ‘Yes; he has the reputation of being one of the shrewdest detectives in the city. *All his work they say is confined to the scenes where his own race live*” (9, my emphasis). Yet, the *practice* of detection strikes against criminality in its adaptability, in its “outward momentum.” The figure of discipline exists as an apparition— a projection outward into spaces where it is supposed that it does not logically belong. Suspicious people seem to exist at every corner—“the detective moved about among them and listened to their conversations” (6). The narrative places the professional officer of the law squarely in the midst of a spatial, textual practice—moving about

the features of the landscape just as would a member of that particular class. Within the narrative itself the detective emanates a presence throughout the story despite oscillations in setting in consecutive chapters within the novel. Yet, because “detection” emerges as a practice that defines its proper field as the zone of contention, potentially everywhere, its antecedent “professionalism” transcends the confines of textualization as well, haunting the urban locales it gentrifies and works to recreate. A narrative cohesion, a synthesis of warring, oscillating spaces that is part of a perception of industrial and urban capital in this era thus has been embodied, mapped into the figures of crime and detection.

Cleaning the Streets: Traffic Control in the “Circulation revolution”

The presence of the dime novel as a form in the late nineteenth century itself recreates a stress, “a frequent tension between the received interpretation and practical experience” (Williams 130), not fully available to be articulated and defined at the time. The dime novel of the late nineteenth century itself schizophrenically alternated narrative settings between the western frontier and the urban locations of the eastern United States, and in so doing marked a period of change in which the dialectical spaces of the rural and the urban register in the collective unconscious. Such shifts are, according to Williams, “changes of presence” and “in that although they are emergent or pre-emergent, they do not have to await definition, classification, or rationalization before they exert palpable pressures and set effective limits on experience and on action” (132). The dime novel portrays a tension in the ways through which people actively created, engaged in, and practiced a relation to their surroundings. As Michael Denning helps illustrate, an analysis of popular culture entails the history of social relations that help produce mass entertainment and recreation. Popular culture analysis demands a look at elements that are working themselves out, and analysis of this field reveals tension wrought by the industrialization of the culture, a re-organization of the social code that emerged into one defining a specific protocol and manner for how the classes did indeed interact.²⁴ What pushes

²⁴ “The history of popular culture is not simply an antiquarian collecting and cataloguing of nostalgia artifacts; it is the history of the social relations between the industries producing cheap commodities for mass entertainment and

these texts to the level of critical import is precisely this imprint, this echo voiced in the narratives of a working-class de-territorialized, or, more precisely, *in the process of being recoded as an industrial proletariat* within a developing, systematized, bourgeois nation-state.²⁵ These particular narratives mask a deterritorialization of the laboring class, a recoding into industrialized proletariat.²⁶

As with every industrializing nation, the corrosion of one structure of production and accumulation that used to map a distinction of class results in tensions crisscrossing the landscape to achieve a normalized, “safe” social order, and an “initial proletarianization” of the laboring classes within this industrial shift. For example, the defining crisis of the nineteenth century was the actualization of “free labor”—of a proletarian class based both upon the emancipation of Black slaves and the ebb of wage labor throughout the landscape. This drawn-out general shift imbued the “free labor” and “wage labor” system with anxieties, and became a ripe, contested social field (Denning 55-6). The creation of a free-labor, industrialized proletariat accompanies a “proletarianization of space”—an attempt to regulate and discipline the proletariat by defining how space will be practiced. This recoding of space is recreated and lived in the

recreation, the symbolic forms and practices, both traditional and newly-invented, of working class communities, and the attempts by the dominant culture to police and reform the culture of the “lower classes.” (Denning 4)

²⁵ Furthermore, the production of dime novels reflects an interesting dynamic of production that characterizes the intra-class and social atmosphere. Although many narratives were carved by middle-class authors, they were without question producers looking to satisfy lower-class demands, or fulfilling a socially necessary conceit. For example, when faced with unpopular responses, to the western stories included in some issues of *Old Cap Collier's Library*, the writer returned to write the mysteries of the city that his audience sought out. Denning points out that “the contested terrain at the intersection of the culture industry and the cultures of the working classes remains the terrain of our conflicts, and the precondition for a ‘new literature as the expression of moral and intellectual renewal,’ a new culture” (5).

²⁶ An historical analysis of industrialization in Great Britain by Michel Beaud lays the roadmap to this process: In Great Britain the relative importance of production of the means of production within the whole of industrial production, which did not greatly change between 1783 (when it was 29% of industrial productions as a whole) and 1812 (when it was 31%) rose to 40 percent in 1851 and 47 percent in 1881. [. . .] During the same period, the nature of “occupations” and their relative importance changed: a new structure of classes was established. (Beaud 94-5) In the United States, recoding into an industrial proletariat occurred a bit later. In 1880, the U.S. produced 65 million tons of coal. In 1890, the U.S. was just behind Great Britain in coal production at 143 million tons, and by the turn-of-the-century, the U.S. was the world’s largest producer of coal, producing 245 million tons of coal. The same time-span saw the U.S. grow to the world’s biggest producer of cast-iron and steel, more than doubling the nearest country in production of both cast iron and steel by 1900 (Beaud 140-1).

records of this five-cent narrative, and is measured and marked with the imprint of the activity of detection. The recoding of a new industrialized class defined by the wage system of human labor working for a leisured class through the commodification of human activity fuses with racialized anxieties that permeate post-bellum America. These anxieties attendant to “wage slavery” are recoded through an emerging structure of city discipline, voiced in the popular detective dime novel of the nineteenth century. Thus a city-landscape cannot be imagined hereafter without attention paid to the element of order wrought by the apparatus of policing. The detective of the city in this particular dime novel melts into the buildings and streets that define the urban; no one *knows*— or rather no one *is*— the city more than the professional city detective of the late nineteenth century. The fully-mapped city, mapped by the emerging occupation of professional disciplinarians, works to deploy a proletarian voice through an “unreal” “mystery,” and the word of the Law re-emerges within this space as the mystery’s “resolution.” These narratives produce a view of the world in light of industrial and investment capital in need of a new worldly order, and sovereignty becomes a type of *traffic control*.

In a system of sovereignty that on its surface advances its own legitimacy according to the “will of the people,” the emerging community of the nation-state must have its hands actively involved in producing such a will. In effect, disciplinary structures and practices that gather a legitimacy to exercise a practice on behalf of the masses actually testify to this non-identity with those same masses.²⁷ We must look at the voiced anxieties that seep through this dime narrative in this case as such a practice: how, in the “identification” as a mass-produced cultural artifact,

²⁷ Susan Buck-Morss argues any sovereignty that bases its legitimacy on the “will of the people” encoded into law is confronted with a crisis when it comes into contact with the masses in whose name it supposedly acts. “It is the premise of liberal-democratic philosophy that the monopoly of violence by popular sovereignty is legitimate because, mediated by law, popular will and popular sovereignty are one and the same. But this theoretical grounding, seemingly the most secure, is inherently precarious. The criterion of law that separates the “good” state (embodying sovereignty) from the “bad” state (which escapes the people’s control) implies a circular logic, because the state as law defender is itself the constructor of the law. [. . .] When democratic sovereignty *confronts* the people with all the violence that it monopolizes as the legitimate embodiment *of* the people, it is in fact attesting to its *nonidentity* with the people.” (Buck-Morss 5-7)

does sovereignty in effect confront the very people it purports to represent?²⁸ The narrative structure of a mass-cultural production like the dime novel— striving to represent the “real people” and targets those people as an audience, in the confrontation with those masses— works to suppress them through a specific mode of representation in the name of nationalist sovereignty.

Of course, the adolescence of industrial and investment capital in the United States in the later portions of the nineteenth century was seen to have necessitated a new rationale for maintaining social order. Mass production needed a very different landscape of labor to produce surplus-value (thus the conglomeration of living labor in industrial centers and communities). With a more tightly-spaced and regimented labor force, burgeoning capital was confronted with a new crisis—the crisis of organizing amongst the workforce itself, culminating in major strikes in 1877, 1886, 1892, and 1894. In 1880 alone, there were 760 strikes in the United States, a testament to the contested field produced by advances in industrial and investment capital (Morn 97). David Scobey’s analysis of guidebooks, magazine sketches, and lithographs of New York from the nineteenth century depict the tensions wrought up in the contact with these densely packed people of the streets (174). Scobey argues that the streets were a “place out-of-place: a promiscuous shambles where all the repressed and unspeakable conditions of metropolitan life might erupt into visibility” (175). The streets of New York had the potential for commercial and class warfare—of all against all, of a contest for what the street would be used for—as a means of easy transit or as a place for wage work, relief, food, and leisure.

If the logic of the topographical polis is re-defined by the streets, by the modes and contours of circulation, the measure of harmony within such a setting is understood in terms of “efficiency.” What altered everyday, common activities were, then, certain technological advances meant to economize the everyday by allowing human activity to be “saved.” If

²⁸ It is with these understandings that Jameson argues in “Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture,” that a mass aesthetic “manages” “fundamental social anxieties and concerns, hopes and blindspots, ideological antimonies and fantasies of disaster” via a “narrative construction of imagining resolutions and by the projection of an optical illusion of social harmony” (138).

Bledstein is correct in his argument that we are to view this particular era in the late nineteenth century as a “communications revolution,” we must ask the effect of these technologies on the social sphere and how they work to rationalize the activities of exchange through various people to scale, through a management not just of people, but of whole populations. Between 1876 and 1900, the numbers of telephones increased from 3000 to 1.3 million. Between 1870 and 1900, post offices increased their numbers nationally by three times, the sale of ordinary postage stamps increased eight times, and newspapers increased their circulation by seven times (Bledstein 47). Not only are these increases indicative of a “communications revolution,” but, because of the nature of these types of media— facilitating and greatly expanding the possibilities for exchange— this period is more aptly termed “the circulations revolution.”

If the city were to best operate as a technological advance as part of the communications revolution, the city managers thought that its streets should best follow ideals of efficiency. As Kristin Ross points out, a taylorist logic that prefigures “technology” as that which “saves” labor so as to maximize value, making sure no labor is “lost,” rhetorically associates *functionality* with cleanliness (*Fast Cars* 89). Policing the urban sphere, the place in which business transactions occur at a scale never before seen, took on a characteristic of maintaining functionality, of keeping the streets “clean” for easy exchanges, rationalizing circulation. A city apparently defines itself thereafter as a theater for circulation by eradicating the diseased elements, the “germs” that inevitably settle into the circulatory process that clutter, stifle functionality and becoming a *traffic* hassle. The word *traffic* in this period, as the OED demonstrates, shifts now to be synonymous with “rabble”— with unskilled labor, with a person becoming synonymous with the flows of the street. Already *traffic* registers people under a newly systematized, taylorist “scaling” of people into populations. (And again, the image of a globalized “traffic in women” is something that the reactionary apparatus of professional police forces looks to manage in the “White Slave Law.”) In many ways the layout and contours of the city in this period define the urban landscape as one of constant movement. The term “traffic” becomes a description for the characteristics and properties of daily city life. In consequence, *criminality* also morphs in this

period into a type of contagion—a type of flow which circulates throughout the veins of the community. Crime is the pathogen, and the streets are the public threat that makes this new activity possible.²⁹

The role of the law enforcement officer as professional takes population management and hygienic upkeep as its new challenge. Throughout Riis's text, the professional police force of New York is referred to as "The Sanitary Police."³⁰ In effect, what determines the degree of "honesty" amidst a given populace in Riis's New York is nearly a direct function of that populace's attempts at cleanliness. "The true line to be drawn between pauperism and honest poverty is the clothes-line. With it begins the effort to be clean that is the first and the best evidence of a desire to be honest" (Riis 35). Because a clean body does not distract the senses, in effect hiding the body, a cleaning of the body can be seen as a commodification of that body, making it into something that facilitates quick and easy circulation.³¹ An idea of citizenship in

²⁹Donna Haraway's arguments about how pathogens have been rendered and understood under a logic of capitalism is instructive here: the communications revolution as means to handle population, as a means to population control (although Haraway locates an attempt to manage populations much later, after World War II.) Part of guaranteeing the proper function of the network—of an "informatics of domination" as Haraway states it—entails a prevention of overflow, a spatial maintenance—that elements remain *where* they are supposed to remain. Riis's text and the dime novel itself rely on this assumption in order to build the new character and power of the police apparatus, for while citizenry is defined by proper place, professional discipline, and has been granted the ability to traverse space freely in the name of sovereignty. Riis, imagining a place where traversal of space is a threat, all the while as a police-beat reporter, traversing and transcending space itself:

The border-land where the white and black races meet in common debauch, the aptly- named black-and-tan saloon, has never been debatable ground from a moral stand-point. It has always been the worst of the desperately bad. Than this commingling of the utterly depraved of both sexes, white and black, on such ground, there can be no greater abomination. (161-2)

Note that it is on the ground where these people meet that is the abomination. Haraway's point concerning a paradigm shift from a white capitalist patriarchy to one of managing information flows bases itself in a logic of an acceleration in the modes of communication. The preferred method of disciplinary maintenance with the advance of new communication technologies shift to one of population management and strategies for shepherding the masses. I argue this begins to happen in the late nineteenth century.

Also, Karen Halttunen's argument in *Confidence Men and Painted Women*— that the city became the site of the possibility for contagion and that individuals who moved to urban centers were susceptible not only to crime, but to the disease of debauchery characteristic of the city— helps us understand the terms of the "criminality" within the city as a type of contagion.

³⁰It should also be mentioned that before Roosevelt was offered the office of Police Commissioner by Mayor William L. Strong, he was first offered the office of Street Cleaning Commissioner. See Bishop 58.

³¹ Twigg analyzes Riis's obsession with cleaning as *the disciplinary activity* of the middle-class. "Cleaning disciplines the body by hiding it, denying it its presence" (323-4).

effect welds cleanliness with an idea of functionality, and social maintenance of the largest scale—of the necessity to fortify hierarchies that would economically engender social function—requires professional, minuscule, atomic, policing activity, a type of disciplinary action that in effect parallels germ warfare. Note, for instance, this passage in Riis’s text describing “The Bend,” one of Riis’s zones of criminality

Where Mulberry Street crooks like an elbow within hail of the old depravity of the Five Points is “the Bend,” foul core of New York’s slums. Long years ago the cows coming home from the pasture trod a path over this hill. [. . .] In the memory of man the old cow-path has never been other than a vast human pig-sty. There is but one “Bend” in the world, and it is enough. The city authorities, moved by the angry protests of ten years of sanitary reform effort, have decided that it is too much and must come down. . . . Around “the Bend” cluster the bulk of the tenements that are stamped as altogether bad, even by the optimists of the Health Department. Incessant raids cannot keep down the crowds that make them their home. In the scores of back alleys, of stable lanes and hidden byways, of which the rent collector alone can keep track, they share such shelter as the ramshackle structures afford with every kind of abomination rifled from the dumps and ash-barrels of the city. Here, too, *shunning the light, skulks the unclean beast of dishonest idleness.* “The Bend” is the home of the tramp as well as the rag-picker. (41-2, my emphasis)

The very first line defines spatial practice as a formation of cleanliness. Riis’s descriptive terms employed in this passage-- “foul core,” “vast human pig-sty,” “ramshackle structures,”-- couples with spatial metaphors-- “crooks like an elbow within hail [. . .] of the Five Points,” “trod a path,” “scores of back alleys,” “stable lanes,” and “hidden byways.” Conflating these two categories of description into one cultural logic of city-scape echoes the “modernizing” practice described in Ross: cleanliness matures a moral logic to a logic of functionality—that these definitive spaces within the market are “depraved” “abominations,” degrading the city by their mere presence. What is worse is that these degraded locations have agency in creating “unclean beasts”—the *tramps* and the *rag-pickers*. But the conflation of hygiene and proper circulation into a *type* of transgression is also embodied in these particular characters. Riis describes the depravity of these figures as “dishonest idleness,” a term that would evoke emergent feelings of prescient taylorism: that somehow, what makes these figures “tramps,” and “dishonest” is idleness, a lack of proper movement within the pace of the city. Criminality and citizenship is packaged in this passage as degrees of functionality within the pace of the urban market.

But when do the people that populate the streets of New York stop being characters in-transit and start being “traffic”? Scobey’s analysis notes that New Yorkers had been envisioning themselves as characters at some major terminal in a systematized mobility or flow of power since architecture of Grand Central Depot in 1871.³² Characters *are figured, configured* in relation to the city movement, or movement within the city by the architecture and engineering of the cityscape itself. The new technological developments of the city “effected a revolution in urban circulation, transforming the inner-city street from a communal form, an open-air store, a garbage dump, and a sort of Darwinian free-for-all into a specialized instrument of movement. Like the concurrent innovations of subway travel and the ‘union’ stations, the business street of the gilded age came to embody new Progressive ideals of efficiency, cleanliness, and social discipline” (Scobey 142-3). If this is the case, then the advent of detection must be seen in much more broad aspect as being similar to something in the custom-house manager, and crime viewed in light of these racialized tensions, a process of regulating the flow and identity of whiteness in the social field— of managing *traffic*, a noun that itself implies some sort of global flow of commerce. (The OED traces the word to European trade in the Mediterranean and Middle East by claiming a genealogy in the Arabic verb *taraffaqa*, “to seek profit.” Thus etymological and logical associations can be made between the noun and another that suggests global commerce: *tariff*.)

The Color of Money

“The new color of money: safer, smarter, more secure.” TV ad for a new \$20 bill.

Within these proscriptions and atmospheric conditions in which the dime novel comes into prominence, the characters of the narrative “Black Tom, the Negro Detective, or, Solving a Thompson Street Mystery” speak with inflected tongues. The discourse represented in that

³² Scobey points out that such structures “impelled New Yorkers and visitors to construe the cityscape as a unified, complex, and theoretically limitless artifact, subject to systematic processes of development and, potentially, to unified governance” (68). The train shed that housed the cars before they were used was itself at the time thought to be the largest interior space in the world. In effect, Grand Central’s physical vastness reminded visitors that they were at the nexus of a great “concentration of money, machinery, movement, and corporate authority” (76).

opening scene situates the characters in relation to one another on the basis of crime and punishment—the words emanating from their mouths locate them in relation to each other, a particular act (the crime) and the body of a new sovereignty, the detective. And one particular intonation that echoes throughout the landscape of this particular narrative is presented as race.³³

If this particular detective narrative animates the lived practice of emerging racialized identity, it details the germination of *race* as proper zone of sovereign action. Once Hannah, the quick-tempered woman from the first scene, learns that Black Tom (who turns out to be Nick Miller, a white New York detective in blackface) is on the case, she runs to tell her lover, “Foxsey Bill,” who also is one of the perpetrators of the crime (and one figure in what will turn out to be a conspiracy that extends beyond the spatial limits of class and race). Bill responds with, or, more precisely, the narrator attributes to Bill, a self-assurance that ripples with aporia: “Foxsey Bill was more afraid of a white detective than he was of Black Tom” (8). Already, a construction of crime and of its supposed anodyne in the Law is wrought with racial conflict; or the conflict boiled into proletarianization gets displaced into one of *criminality* that revolves around race.³⁴ The presence of a Black Detective, as opposed to a white one, is somehow more reassuring to Bill, primarily because he understands the legal potency of “Tom,” as a black man and not a white man, is limited. The Law, the reciprocity assigned for a specific act (and in a

³³ Denning, in his assessment of dime novels as the whole in the latter portions of nineteenth-century America, at times seems rather dismissive in regards to projections and echoes of race—claiming that no dime novels were “aimed at blacks” (30). But it is precisely this field of differentiation within the working class that must be analyzed, and this particular dime novel narrative offers the material through which emerging structures and attitudes about race and citizenship, legality, statesmanship, and criminality will be grounded. After all, it was the emergence of a new free labor force, comprised in large part by a people for whom the only justification presented us to their enslavement was a field labeled racial difference—coordinated with a rise in industrial production that came to define the period.

³⁴ Mandel points out that the genre of detective fiction, through a narration of social conflict into a logic of crime and discipline, obscures the social conflicts of capital and labor wrought into the being of the culture. “Clues have to be discovered because tracks have been covered. Instead of human conflict, there is competition between abstract intelligences. This competition is like that of the marketplace, where what is involved is a struggle over cost-prices and sales-prices, and not between complex human beings.” The crime narrative would seem here, in dis-covering clues because traces have been “covered” to be, again, emptying culture of history and refilling it with a conflict of property disputes. But, just like the supposed conflict of the marketplace between people over value and price, embodied in the money form, so too does the social conflict of capital and labor seep through the mask of crime and punishment.

capitalistic system reciprocity correlates to justice *systematized*), and indeed sovereignty itself, is remade “white.”

I have alluded to the presentation of what comes to be considered “crime” as an activity that can possibly leap the specified spatial borders ascribed to class and race. Thus the solution to this social problem must also circulate freely amidst the landscape/jurisdiction.³⁵ This dime novel marks this fluidity by reading it into the body of the detective-in-disguise. Reminiscent of Foucault’s discussion of the body of the king and sovereignty in *Discipline and Punish*, sovereignty is dispersed to the person of Nick Miller/Black Tom in this depiction. After Hannah attacks Tom for insinuating her involvement in the murder, she apologizes for the attempt. The detective-in-blackface responds to this attack with “I am glad you recognize the majesty of the law”(5). This portion of the dime novel asks the meaning of an attempt on the life of a officer of the law at-work, but whose work is defined as to “practice a specifically raced and classed identity,” only to answer that such an attack on the body of the detective is a much larger political attack on “the majesty of the law.”

Situating this economic circulation of social control in the “Black Tom” narrative is a representation of physical location in New York City. Much of the narrative is a mapping of “the principal city of the United States,” and individuals consistently are presented *as traffic, as characters in circulation*—walking down specific avenues, into and out of neighborhoods that must have been familiar to the audience. But what delimits the flows of that particular traffic, what defines itself as the medium of movement, are specific entities inflated with specific values by the activity of narration within this novel. The victim is described in the dime novel story as

a beautiful young woman. She was not more than 20 or 21 years old. Her hair was light brown. Her hands were small and delicate, and the finger-nails were the color of pale pink coral, well-manicured, and tapering, indicating that the woman had not been used to any kinds of hard work. She was dressed in a light brown street-dress, and what part of

³⁵ Baudrillard’s assertion, that discipline *circulates*, takes specific meaning in this view of the professional police wrought in the late nineteenth century: a fluidity between constructed poles of race and class becomes the premise for an economy of detection and social maintenance and social control. Baudrillard is primarily talking about nuclear deterrence here: “Deterrence is not a strategy. It circulates and is exchanged between nuclear protagonists exactly as is international capital as the orbital zone of monetary speculation” (33).

her underclothes could be seen was of the finest linen, and with expensive embroidery on them. Silk stockings covered her feet. (1)

The act that sets this particular detective in motion, a murder of a white, young woman (the title page jarringly blurts out “she was an heiress!”), extends beyond, or at least cannot be objectively contained within a typical understanding of “offense.” For it is not just a murder that fuels the anxiety of criminality, but somehow a violation of the purity white womanhood. So many descriptors fill this passages to mark this woman as “pure” victim of some sort of sinister criminal plot. Reverberating throughout this description is a specific class marker, or, more precisely, the identification of the victim *as victim in relation to labor*. What marks her body as pure is that it had not “been used to any kinds of hard work.” Compounding the outrage is her dress— finest linen, expensive embroidery, silk stockings. Riis also had been obsessed with the presence of gender in the labor force, most notably in the chapter immediately following “The Harvest of the Tares”— “The Working Girls of New York.” Beginning this chapter with an image of two women sitting in chairs sewing (the caption reads “in a sweatshop”), the chapter proceeds to document, as Twigg points out, Riis’s anxieties about the sexual behavior of these “working girls” (315). An 1888 caption to the same picture that Riis presented in a lecture, as Leviatin notes, read simply “white slaves.” By 1890, Riis had replaced the caption, but the anxiety over the bodies of women working had been already becoming a particular zone in need of disciplinary action. The configuration of crime as a violation of the purity of women only has narratological force, can only fuel this sensational dime novel, if the victim is classed a specific way.

And once again the rhetoric of cleanliness appears in this passage, this time attaching its Taylorist logic of functionality onto the body of the white woman, whose clean fingernails—a clear marker of class distinction in revealing how much often and how laboriously this victim worked—somehow amplify this criminal transgression. Evacuating “crime” of any ambiguities, this passage presents a definitive threat to the operation of “nation” via the categories of gender and race. The threat posed by anxieties about work in gendered terms to national function

necessarily don a global teleology, as demonstrated in Riis's writing of the most sinister threat of immigration.

The site of the white female body emerges as potential location for the contestations of capital and labor, deflected and funneled into an understanding of "crime." Whiteness, particularly the anxiety of "white slavery," is etched into the contours of criminality in Riis's text as well, but can only be understood when the dimension of immigration is thrown into the frame, as depicted when Riis enters Chinatown in chapter nine. Riis's comments about the neighborhood pay particular attention to the cleanliness of the place—immeasurably different from the rest of New York. Whereas every tenement, every stale-beer-dive has been represented as cluttered, Riis's observation that people of this particular district named "Chinatown"—a completely different nation within the city—are "as clean as a cat" (123) heightens a construction of absolute evil in this passage. For it is here that "the women, all white, girls hardly yet grown to womanhood, worship [. . .] nothing save the pipe that has enslaved them body and soul" (122). In this passage, the white woman's body and soul constitute the proper field of contention arising from anxieties about work and immigration.

What is perhaps most notable in this depiction is that it ultimately presents us with a white victim so emptied of life that it, along with the officers of the law—in particular our white detective in blackface, becomes nearly indistinguishable from the city landmarks that participate in the social differentiation of space. The dime novel continues: "there was a certain expression on those *cold, marble-like features*, which indicated the purity of the victim" (1, my emphasis.). Sandra Gunning's study of "crime" through a nineteenth-century gendered construct of race in *Race, Rape, and Lynching* reads how an affirmation of white male supremacy is built upon the binary characters of a black, criminal beast alongside a white woman-as-victim and in constant need of protection. Gunning comments that the white woman-as-victim in Thomas Dixon's narratives heightens and re-empowers white masculinist logic, as a grounding for white masculinist aggression. The presence of the female docile body—literally emptied of life in Dixon's case and in the case of this particular dime novel—is the catalyst for white patriarchal

violence (Gunning 37, 43, 45-6). The effect of this mode of narration, a valuation of docile, literally dead, white female bodies, turned from flesh into marble, made over into a symbol of purity, heightens the tension that will act as catalyst for the new sovereign rule of Law. The body of white womanhood is remade to scale into the location for policing, and the (globalized, recalling the word *traffic* and its relation to the White Slave Law) activity of policing this gendered war zone is itself marked as strictly masculinist in this context.

The murdered white woman stands as a reference point around which the rest of the narrative will circulate: it is a violation of that whiteness, of that understanding as to what counts as value, or what is literally value-able, that necessitates detection and a professional practice in the first place. “Solving the crime” in this particular sense is to make an assumption of whiteness a public reality. Already, within the confines of New York as emerging industrial metropolis, circulation configures a gendered logic of “race” onto the logic of capitalist circulation. In the circulation of discipline, whiteness at this point seems to ascend to the place of capital—whiteness as an accumulation of specific properties that depends upon an extraction of value from a surplus of labor. And thus, what seems to mark the victim as white are her *properties*. To secure that logic of accumulation, the detective, Nick Miller, disguises his appearance: when in affluent surroundings, Miller is dressed as a well-to-do white aristocrat. When attempting to acquire information in the poorer communities on Thompson Street, Miller “blackens up”—dons the disguise of “Black Tom, the Negro Detective.”

Tensions and antithetical relations between the lower classes and those better off, necessarily revolve around questions of race.³⁶ The anxiety presented in this particular dime narrative about the status of whiteness figures onto class conflict here and teeters on dissipating

³⁶ Eric Lott’s argument in *Love and Theft* is to this point: anxieties in race ground anxieties about class. In his analysis of the popularity of the minstrel show amidst the working classes in antebellum America, Lott points out that one of the functions of the phenomena of minstrelsy was to “bring various class fractions into contact with one another, to mediate their relations, and finally to aid in the construction of class identities over the bodies of black people. [. . .] Similarly, a new discourse of race, employed largely by workers themselves, also helped mute newly created class conflicts. . . . the insecurity that attended class stratification produced a whole series of working-class fears about the status of whiteness” (67, 70).

in the narrative into a mere question of criminality. In other words, the racialized tension that the narrative on one level attaches to a tension between workers and those with capital, is almost completely effaced by a question of criminal transgression. Yet the social conflicts of race and class still whisper through the contours of detection. Anton Couvier, Adolph Lafarge, and Constance Lafarge, the three white aristocrats that mastermind and orchestrate the crime in order to assure a lucrative inheritance, hire two African Americans from the bowery to enact the crime. The three aristocrats do not deal with Foxsey Bill Johnston and Mugsey Pell directly; rather, Couvier's racially diverse valet, David Morris, acts as the go-between for the orchestrators.

In chapter three, "Black Tom," in order to learn more about the crime, decides to "throw a banjo over his shoulder" "dressed as a decrepit old negro" and enters a saloon in the bowery neighborhood to listen to Foxsey Bill and Mugsey's conversation. After strumming a few notes, the detective decides to sit a table near Bill and Mugsey. He notices sitting with the two is a third stranger, a man who had been trailing the black detective across the city until the detective's most recent disguise. The stranger's dress, according to the narrative, gives the impression that this man sitting with Bill and Mugsey, whom we later learn to be Dave Morris, looks to be a house servant, and that "one would have concluded that he had white blood in him" (6). Morris begins the conversation with Bill:

"I saw Couvier."
"Wha' he say?"
"He gave me some money for you and Mugsey."
"Let's see de color ob it." (6)

Foxsey Bill's remark to Morris to show him "the color of money" maps the exchange—money originating from a white aristocrat Couvier, to two African-Americans from Thompson Street mediated through an African-American servant "with white blood in him"—and latches a rhetoric of racial relation onto a system that would also come to define class distinctions. Herein, economic flows are regulated by conscriptions and rationalizations of race— that money indeed has a color. The hierarchies involved in the economic transaction make racial domination common economic sense. A similar strategy for distinction is seen within the confines of this

exchange. But “the color of money” seems especially vexed with aporia: we have a white detective dressed as Black Tom, disguised even further as a decrepit banjo player, watching Dave Morris, who is represented as having both “white and black blood in him.” Morris mediates the exchange between the white aristocracy and the black working class.

Recalling our discussion in chapter two of the Black Guinea, the presence of money here tells us something about the composition of “common sense” racial identities that participate in monetary exchange. Once again, the ability to freely circulate, to function as equivalent form, as Marx makes clear in the *Grundrisse*, means that money, in order to function as money— as the measure of value— needs to be emptied of its physical properties:

As a value, a commodity is an equivalent for all other commodities in a given relation. As a value, the commodity is an equivalent; as an equivalent, all its natural properties are extinguished; it no longer takes up a special qualitative relationship toward the other commodities; but is rather the general measure as well as the general representative, the general medium of the exchange of all other commodities. As value, it is money. (141)

In order to function as the equivalent form, as the standard bearer of value, the money commodity within circulation needs to be emptied of any physical properties that exist for itself/in itself. But— and this is one of the crises inherent to the idea of money— in order to remain as *general measure of value*, to mediate, define, and facilitate exchange, money needs to make a physical appearance.

The oscillating quality of commodities within a market relation between sensuousness and supersensuous *beings* also takes place in the figure of the detective in this particular narrative, helping illuminate the fantastic (and phantasmagoric) quality of professional discipline within the space of the national landscape. Nick Miller and “Black Tom” oscillate between existing as *real* and as *unreal persons*— as special commodities within circulation. Miller remarks to himself after listening to Couvier and Lafarge talk, “can it be that these people know anything about the murder of that beautiful girl; or have they been up to some other scheme, and employed Foxsey and Mugsey to help them? Well, whatever it is, Black Tom and Nick Miller must find out” (8). Speaking of a self in third person, the detective has been emptied of a

common identity and remade into the money-form/token. Miller here steps out of himself to review and remake himself into the form of detection. This bizarre comment by Miller empties the professional of humanity; he is a text that Miller reads and is read by stepping outside of himself here. “Miller was possessed of a wonderful gift. He could change his countenance with the movement of a few of the muscles of the face so that his most intimate friends would not be able to recognize him” (8), and the money commodity as detective gains the air of formlessness, only to be inflated with a new body, in this case, the figure of the law emptied into the body of the detective in blackface. Miller, as the new body of sovereignty, is voided of any physical, personal properties. What marks the detective as detective in this system of exchange is his body’s malleable, but newly constructed physical presence.

The bodies of the newly emerging working class against the rise of industrial and investment capital become more and more the actual sites for working out, understanding, and controlling the tensions and dynamics of this new regime of control. Specifically, those bodies marked “black” emerge as the medium for an exchange and ascendance of value or worth. As Lott points out, paralleling anxieties about labor’s increasingly precarious position in the technological and industrial accelerations were anxieties about “racial identities,” “blackness,” and ambivalence of “hard labor” in uneven, opposing relation to industrialization which seemed to fuse into an understanding of “race” and “hard labor” in this particular period of the history of American capitalism.³⁷ The bodies of black people, as represented in the contours of this particular dime narrative become the medium for exchange for a new type of value within this period of “realism.” As medium of circulation— as money form in Marxian terms— the bodies of black people move within and define the circulatory activity that comes to be known as the temporal and spatial coordinate/coordination: the Law.

³⁷ Lott points out that “precisely when anxieties about the advancements of industrial capital, working people felt they were becoming ‘blacker’ in direct proportion.” “Blackness” and anxieties about the place of work in rapidly advancing industrial capital were tied together—this anxiety was countered with a language and violence of white supremacy—wrought up in the word “blackleg”—a predecessor for the word “scab” (71).

But this process of exchange does not fully work to re-establish normalized and defined roles for the everyday lives of the classes. The fact that exchange is grafted onto a practice of race seems at least a destabilizing, if not rupturing, moment in the narrative. The tensions imagined into this special commodity, the contradictions that define the money commodity, can also be said to define the emergence of the professional officer of the law circulating within the city. The history of this systemization and rationalization of criminal justice not coincidentally matures and thrives within the expansion of capitalism. Prior to 1840 the maintenance of society was left to private citizens, or nightwatchmen who had full-time day jobs. According to Frank Morn, before the middle of the 18th century, the state maintained social order through thief-catchers and through citizens “ratting each other out.” Advances in circulations which came to facilitate capitalistic exchange in the late nineteenth century, while eliminating the physical difficulties and limitations which inherently complicate trading in values (i.e. needing to be physically present for an exchange), seemed also to heighten an intuited, antagonistic relation of worker and employee. For instance, the rise of *embezzlement* as a crime demonstrated an anxiety that employees, in this case ticket-takers on interstate passenger train cars, cheated proper market circulation by intercepting money “that was not theirs”(18). Advances in technologies like these, making it possible for the train car owner to collect from a mass consumer by not necessitating his presence in the exchange, instead heightened human agency and unpredictability within the process. With the rise of urban centers along the landscape came an outcry for a public police force, policemen paid by the state on salary. (In the US, this happened in the 1850s, after a number of riots in urban centers against abolitionist movements.) Criminal justice now morphed into a career possibility-- a *profession* in the sense that it was characterized by patrolmen wearing uniforms as a means of appearing as professionals, distinct from “rabble,” unskilled, wage labor in need of management, and as a means of deterring crime by the presence of order in the person/presence of the officer. The newly established police departments began employing professional techniques that define professionalism for this field, “detecting” crimes through “spying.” This emergence of professionalization within the discipline of the police resulted in a

huge increase in people who increasingly came into contact with what was now a fully-functioning criminal justice system. The emergence of this new professional figure of discipline had two particular assumptions as consequence: 1.) detection is the one way in which crime can be understood and thus stopped, and 2.) that there must be a “type” of criminal that must be understood (Morn 13-4, 33).

We are pressed at this critical moment in the analysis of this particular detective work to ask the role of “darkening” up in a social activity for “detection,” for “solving a mystery,” for producing a “truth.” Somehow, Nick Miller’s ability to convincingly “play black,” or even “play varying degrees of *blackness*” has a particular use-value in the production of truth, or more specifically in the social maintenance of order that is the new (global) epistemologies of detection. Miller’s ability to adequately circulate—to “fit in” within the various classes in order to “find out” and attain information about the crime, that is, Miller’s use-value as professional detective, is quite literally his exchange value; he exists for the sole purpose of obtaining information through the uncanny ability to circulate. For Marx, the commodity-thing that exhibited these qualities is the universal equivalent—i.e. the money form. Like the money-form, detection emerges as a *socially accepted value*: in this case, there is a particular socially accepted value of maintaining order through the ability to circulate amongst the classes.

And, like money, there are a number of contradictions literally *embodied* into the figure of sovereignty, molded into its being. As equivalent form, the standard-bearer of value ascribed to law-abiding citizenship, the body of sovereignty must maintain a level of transcendence and mysteriousness generated by a mere presence. The uncanny ability, the supernatural potency of the professional detective as demonstrated here in his fantastic practices of race/class mutability—a mutability that is made even more fantastic in the eyes of a community that does not believe these specific categories to be malleable—leads to the embodiment of the sovereign this metaphysical characteristic. Yet, just as the money-form must somehow maintain a physical presence as a commodity, so too must the detective-in-circulation maintain a sensuous as well as supersensuous presence in the text. This added element of detection, of disguise as a professional

practice, adds a new understanding to previous conception of minstrelsy. Not only is “darkening-up” disguising the detective as an instance of expressing repressed desires and emotions on and through the black body, not only is it a social commentary on how white middle-class Americans lived and rendered their whiteness, but it is also a social activity, that is, an establishment and traversal of definitive, *real*, spatial, social, and racial practices. It gives license to, and brings forth the possibility of, a large-scale community that functionally shepherds all classes and races within its bounds.

What becomes advertised as “natural” and “real” is a specific production of rationalized practices defined in this time as “professional.” Yet this “professionalization” is grounded in an assumed logic of capitalism. In effect capitalism’s market is assumed to be “natural and real” and extends its logic into national practices such as the criminal justice system, arising as “naturally” as does the sovereignty which wields it. These new technological practices, methods for rationalizing and ordering the new layout of populations on a large scale, construct a “real” which posits itself as an absolute unquestionable logic.

The rise of professional police and detection often in this period *demand*ed subterfuge in order to secure the information necessary to define skilled apart from unskilled labor. Such tactics to accurately understand the functionality of specific classes in order to cure certain social ills are commonly employed in dime novel detective fiction. “Black Tom, the Negro Detective, or, Solving a Thompson Street Mystery” is a particular instance of this. “In the resorts which Joel Harris frequented, it was not known that he was connected in any way with the detective force. If it had been, he never would have been able to have *secured* an entrance into these places. He would have been watched, and not given a chance to *secure the information* which he did” (19, my emphasis). In this passage, the rhetoric of detection is security of information flows. Joel Harris, the apprentice of the hero master-detective, Nick Carter, in this chapter ventures into an opium joint to listen for information that happens to pass by, not just to gather, collect, and sort information into some coherent order, but to *secure* it. Within these narratives classified as popular culture can quite possibly emerge the face of hegemony, as Denning is quick to assert:

“not only can the popular classes, the ‘subaltern classes’ in Gramsci’s phrase, transform the meanings of the signs of a dominant culture, but the dominant culture can repossess the signs of the ‘people’” (143). Hegemony is by definition a *disguise*—an attempt to wield the signs of the “people”—a mask donned to gain the sympathies of the very same people that are the telos of domination.

Concerning the role of disguise, Denning ponders that the logic of disguise relies on a sense of *property as identity*, a sort of “possessive individualism.”³⁸ The role of disguise in these texts has to be understood alongside a shifting perception of “property” that is tied into this particular movement in the history of capitalism. A trajectory is created by narrative, its concomitant partner in bourgeois power—identity and subjectivity understood through ownership (Denning uses the formula x owns the identity x). Narrative encapsulates life into a readable, commodifiable product that can be read with an eye toward the ending, for it is in the ending were the absolute product, identity and subjectivity, makes its presence felt. But in dime novels, “low brow” texts, identity is not diachronic but synchronic (x is x and x is y) (147). “Properties”—languages of ownership which will locate people on a logic of capital— can also collapse the method of taxonomy. To understand this collapse and deflation of property, one needs to have already inherited a logic of differentiation of scale and space. Denning’s point, that the fact of disguise functions metaphorically, is not lost, but what needs to be emphasized is the privilege wrought within the application of metaphor: a fluidity of identity in the definitive tool of hegemonic practice, the ability to be both x and y operates as an apology for sovereignty— manifesting itself as professional Law, and also becoming the possibility of the Law’s fragmentation.

³⁸ Denning is quick to point out that this logic of disguise does not completely describe the device within sensational fiction. The activity of disguise works metaphorically, investing the particular characters within a specific system of valuation. “To say that x is y does not mean that x is not x ; x is y *and* x is x . Or to invest these terms with their present content: to reveal that the mechanic is a nobleman is not to deny that he is a mechanic, the characters all continue to insist on their characters as mechanics. This is why so little narrative time and energy is spent on explaining why the nobleman is pretending to be a mechanic in the first place: the metaphoric juxtaposition of mechanic and noble is what is important, not the story of the noble’s pretense” (146-7).

The oscillating qualities between physical presence and formlessness, supersensuousness within the figure of the detective itself, generates a crisis situation: a specific anxiety emerges in the use of disguise and scheming in order to gain that security. Talking to Carrie, a young woman dancer at an opium joint with whom Adolph Lafarge had been in confidence about his activities and the murders, Joel Harris gains her trust in that he makes Carrie believe Adolph has betrayed her. Note the anxiety with which the author relates this scene: “ ‘[Carrie], you might be [afraid] of someone else but never of me.’ Joel looked sweetly across the table at Carrie. Oh, the young hypocrite.” (20). Joel, in the process of becoming a professional as a detective-in-training, projects a value of trustworthiness without actually fulfilling that credit. At this moment the narrative invites speculation as to the motives of Harris. Projection as to his true worth overlaps and comes in to crisis here. The irony ingrained in the mysterious statement made by the detective as money-form that he can be “trusted” is immediately met with a statement of scorn by the narrative. Both real and unreal, the professional-detective-in circulation *is* the conjunction where the crisis of value, the crisis of sovereignty and thus a possible crisis in the cohesion that is disciplined in the name of unity for the producing boundaries that define the nation-state.

This anxiety of “professionalization” is also present in Riis’s texts. He at times seems to disparage the activities of the contemporary police in his creation of the city.

One cannot take many steps in Cherry Street without encountering some relic of past or present prominence in the ways of crime, scarce one that does not turn up specimen bricks of the coming thief. The Cherry Street tough is all-pervading. [. . .] There goes one who was once a shining light in thieftom. He has reformed since, they say. The policeman on the corner, who is addicted to a professional unbelief in reform of any kind, will tell you that while on the Island once he sailed away on a shutter, paddling along until he was picked up in Hell’s Gate by a schooner’s crew, whom he persuaded that he was a fanatic performing some sort of religious penance by his singular expedition. Over yonder, Tweed, the arch-thief, worked in a brush-shop and earned an honest living before he took to politics. (30)

The “unbelief in reform” narrated by Riis that is characteristic of professionalism sours and is tinged with a sense of hypocrisy in this passage. Once an escapee from “The Island,” this professional, whose denial of reform marks his status, is himself a model testament to “reform,” as long as reform is understood as conformity under the Law. Not only is the passage ironic with

this reformed individual's unbelief in reform, but a suspicion of unbelief in reform that haunts Riis's professional narrative— that Riis also, through the logic of his own narrative depiction of “toughs,” is guilty of the same doubt as the policeman on the corner— heightens an anxiety that is to be located onto this new type of sovereignty. Immediately linking this character to the former mayor of New York, a mayor associated with corruption, escalates the questionable relation between the official law as an anodyne to criminality. Speaking about *honesty*— a term vital for the security of circulation— for a figure of the Law is just as dicey and precarious as trusting the people when circulate and thus discipline. Policing at this point may not be about civil service, but may instead be about *something else*.

But the crisis most evident in this new mode and practice is found in its method of disciplining the black male body. The fact that the detective is in disguise only when he is circulating in spaced marked racially black, and *is* Nick Miller in spaces marked racially white lends to this emerging practice of professional discipline its hidden, racialized quality: as an implicit strategy for containment via its re-appointment and projection into the public sphere. The sovereign's practice of minting and pressing into circulation equivalent-values functions as a strategy of containment through commodification of living labor as product of the human body. The detective narrative replaces the logic of entertainment offered by the minstrel show to direct its anxieties and “play” on racialized divisions of labor within a policing apparatus given license to traverse the heterogeneous spaces of the social situation of Empire.³⁹ And the teleological product this particular detective narrative produces is one which empties the contradictions into the machinery to which the professional disciplinarian is skilled at handling— the systemization of criminality within a specific understanding of the nation-state as global traffic cop.

In Nick Miller's activity as detective, the body as the site for creating value is at once

³⁹ In Lott's study of the social practice of entertainment through blackface minstrelsy, the activity of simulating the presence of the black male body serves to project and manage the place of the black male body: “the body, [. . .] becomes a central problem in justifying or legitimizing a capitalist (or indeed a slave) economy. The rhetoric of these economies must insist that capital has the magical power of multiplying itself or that slaves are contented, tuneful children in a plantation paradise; in reality, of course, it is human labor that must reproduce itself as well as create surplus value. In these societies the body is a potentially subversive site because to recognize it fully is to recognize the exploitative organization of labor that structures their economies.” (117-8)

managed—that is, re-made as the example of an “efficient” practice. The body of the black worker is mimicked and captured via the “epistemological science” of detection. The narrative treats the characters Mugsey and Foxsey Bill as of secondary importance: their presence and the realization that they committed the crime on orders from the white aristocrats situates a specific logic of production and reproduction—the labor/management logic is not only assumed here, but is itself reinforced. The “true” crime has been posited by a logic that transcends the physical, actual crime. In the final pages, the narrative brings this to light: The capture of Mugsey Pell and Foxsey Bill functions *as a means to* capturing the white criminals. Narratologically, this capture is treated as an afterthought, treated in the penultimate chapter. The final pages tersely relay the fate of the characters: “Mugsey Pell and Foxsey Bill Johnston were both executed. Hannah was the principal witness against them, and she got off without serving any time. She was afterward killed in a street fight and her murderer escaped” (29). The narrative hardly meditates on the fate of Foxsey Bill, Mugsey, or Hannah. (It is not altogether clear what crime Hannah has committed, besides being black.) But the final pages spend much energy on the fate of the white aristocrats. (In fact Constance Lafarge and her son Adolph return to live in the South.) That the black, poor characters are handled so violently, treated as insignificant afterthoughts, speaks volumes on the assumptions implicit to the cultural logic of the text. As workers for the aristocratic criminals, the living labor embodied into their being must be contained, obliterated, subjected to the modernization of the nation as global police.

CHAPTER 5.
IN JUST TIME: THE PENITENTIARY AND THE MOTION PICTURE AT THE TURN OF
THE CENTURY

In short, by the introduction of machinery the division of labor within society has been developed, the task of the workman within the factory has been simplified, capital has been accumulated, and man has been further dismembered.
Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*

“False Dawn”: The Flashpoint of the Buffalo Pan-American Exhibition

The Pan-American Exhibition held in Buffalo, New York in 1901 has commonly been dismissed as just one in a litany of exhibitions that celebrated the industrial progress of nineteenth-century Europe and United States. Indeed, as Walter Benjamin’s meditations on exhibitions’ place in the industrializing nation-state speculate, an examination of the evolution of the exhibition offers insight in the political development of the nation within a system of global capital. While national exhibitions had been a cornerstone of France in the early nineteenth century—the first taking place on the Champ de Mars in 1798; three taking place during the imperial years 1801, 1802, and 1806; three during the restoration of 1819, 1823, and 1827; and three during the July Monarchy years of 1834, 1837, and 1849—the first two International Exhibitions, 1851 in England and 1855 in France, were seen by many as a testing ground for the place of the nation-state in global capital.¹ But could an exhibition in the city of Buffalo offer any insight in this tradition?

While many of the contradictions of the nation-state as subject of global capital did indeed take place on these international stages, particularly an oscillation between the display of

¹ On this subject, Benjamin’s *Arcades Project* sites Julius Lessing to portray the extent of this debate:

The world exhibitions have lost much of their original character. The enthusiasm that, in 1851, was felt in the most disparate circles has subsided, and in its place has come a kind of cool calculation. In 1851, we were living in the era of free trade. . . . For some decades now, we have witnessed the spread of protectionism. . . . Participation in the exhibition becomes . . . a sort of representation . . . ; and whereas in the 1850 the ruling tenet was that the government need not concern itself in this affair, the situation today is so far advanced that the government of each country can be considered a veritable entrepreneur. (quoted in *Arcades Project* 183)

national progress and extra-national modes of production, critical attention should not bypass the ways in which these exhibitions attempt to distract from the social antagonisms that accompany industrial advance. This diffusion of social tensions into a celebration of technology that circumscribes the industrial nation plays a vital role in the mystification of working people.

Arguing that the exhibition arises out of the need to keep the working classes amused, Benjamin notes that

World exhibitions glorify the exchange value of the commodity. They create a framework in which its use-value becomes secondary. They are a school in which the masses, forcibly excluded from consumption, are imbued with the exchange value of commodities to the point of identifying with it: “Do not touch the items on display.” World exhibitions thus provide access to a phantasmagoria which a person enters in order to be distracted. (*Arcades Project* 18)

Benjamin’s point that the exhibition stages on a mass-scale the processes typically associated with the fetish over and ultimate identification with the commodity also extends to the exhibition’s fetishization of the means of production. The once stark contrasts between the masses and the means of production fade in indistinction with the exhibition, and the excitement over industry settles into what was emerging as popular culture.

The diffusion of this distinction between the human and machinery functions, then, as a “premature synthesis” which for Benjamin bespeaks “a persistent endeavor to close up the space of existence and of development. To prevent the ‘airing-out of classes’” (*Arcades Project* 175). The origins of an entertainment industry can be found in these exhibitions for Benjamin by refining and managing this mystification and elision of antagonism that defined the masses’ position as labor (*Arcades Project* 201). If these exhibitions, then, had a “premature synthesis” of class antagonism as the objective, this particular avatar of burgeoning popular culture in Buffalo is to actually prevent history by accelerating past it. And the future which exists as the focal point of this acceleration past history has been marked out by the technologies, the inventions,

the moments of “civilized progress” that populated World Exhibitions like the one in Buffalo. These monuments of progress only answer a question posed by capital—namely, how to create markets most conducive to the accumulation of surplus value: capital clears the path for the inventor and serves as the final judge as to whether something is a technological advance or “just junk.”² The exhibition seemed to stand as a thorough rejection of the notion that history must be lived, not just viewed. For Marx, the presence of technological advance furthered the social divisions of labor, and “each advance in the division of labor brings in its turn new mechanical inventions” (151). In this vein, the events of the Pan-American Exhibition in Buffalo 1901 must occupy a special place in the cultural memory of modern politics.

Many of the initial reactions to Buffalo’s Pan-American Exhibition would seem to support the fascination of “technology” and its popular celebration of mechanization. Certainly the most celebrated industrial advance at this fair was the promulgation of electricity to its ubiquitous position in the urban United States, prominent at Buffalo because of its proximity to Niagara Falls, which helped generate the amounts of power necessary for the mystical attractions portrayed as approaching the sublime at the exhibition [see figure 5-1]. The September 1901 *Cosmopolitan* records the awe at the Buffalo Exhibition with regard to the illumination of the Electric Tower at night:

The time fixed for the ceremony of illumination is half-past eight, just as the summer twilight is deepening into darkness. A few moments before the appointed hour, one

² As Herbert Marcuse reminds us, “It has been frequently stressed that scientific discoveries and inventions are shelved as soon as they seem to interfere with the requirements of profitable marketing. The necessity which is the mother of invention is to a great extent the necessity of maintaining and expanding the apparatus” (144).



Figure 5-1. Buffalo's Electric Tower. Photograph taken from Engineering Magazine, 1901.

perceives the bulbs of electric light along the paths and in the buildings diminish in intensity until they become mere tiny specks of flame which fade away. There is a deep silence, and all eyes are riveted on the Electric Tower. Suddenly, in the splendid vertical panel with four brooches which decorate its center, there is a faint glow of light like the first flush of sunrise from behind a mountain-peak. It mounts and spreads, at first gradually, with dignified celerity, then with a swifter effulgent pervasiveness until the entire territory of the Fair has been metamorphosed into a gorgeous vision of dazzling towers, minarets and scintillating gardens. The Spanish Renaissance scheme of color is gone, and in its stead we have a veritable fairy-land; the triumph not of Aladdin's lamp, but of the masters of modern science over the nature-god, Electricity. (454)

Other journals at that period share the sentiment of awe of electricity as a sign of cultural development: *Engineering Magazine* championing “the progress of civilization arising from the applications of art and science to industry” (838); *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* exclaiming “it is appropriate therefore that the close of the nineteenth century and the dawning of the twentieth should be marked by a great exposition of all that has been accomplished in the past in the domain of electrical science and of those marvels of recent discovery and invention which will be the commonplace a generation hence” (316); and *The Atlantic Monthly*: “perhaps, on its industrial side, the most prophetic thing about the Pan-American is seen in certain exhibits in electro-metallurgical and electro-chemical lines. [...] They are, in fact, an industrial fourth dimension” (91). This celebration of the new advances in industry, of a mastery over electricity, of a discovery of an “industrial fourth dimension” would seem to link technological progress to the everyday of the political in one particular way. In effect, one could view the celebration of the apex of industrialism at Buffalo's Pan-American as the creation of “politics” as the complete evisceration of the labor's voice in production in favor of consumption, fascinated with a new form-giving fire—electricity—as the simulation of living human labor.

As the Buffalo Exhibition was drawing to a close on a September afternoon in 1901, Leon Franz Czolgosz, an out-of-work machinist and child of Polish and Russian immigrants

acted in a way that he would later reportedly describe as “heroic for the cause [he] loved” by shooting William McKinley as the president greeted fellow exhibition-viewers. The assassination of the president at an exhibition dedicated to the celebration of the new heights of industrial progress offers a very different portrait of the status of the politics of production in this period—one that demonstrates both the intense socio-economic antagonisms that exhibitions strived to mask but actually prolong, and the sense that economic development for some means extraordinary poverty to those on the other side of the “fourth dimension of industrialization.”

Czolgosz, portrayed afterwards as a “labor radical” and an avowed anarchist, was treated as no ordinary criminal. Soon after his swift trial and execution—he was put to death by the state of New York forty-five days after McKinley had died—biologists eagerly requested Czolgosz’s body for examination. Weary of creating a martyr for labor’s cause, the warden of Auburn Penitentiary soon sealed Czolgosz’s remains in a thick pine coffin, poured acid over those remains (in order to assure that the body would fully dissolve in less than 48 hours), and buried those remains without customary ceremony. All clothes and possessions of the executed convict were burned or otherwise destroyed.

Buffalo’s specific contribution to political history of the exhibition in an emerging industry of amusement and entertainment must also be recognized, particularly the extent to which its attractions and celebrations of industrial and electro-metallurgical advance helped ground a new logic that brought the motion-picture into the popular lexicon. The same fascinations with electricity that dazzled the popular print also seemed to call attention to a new medium, a new way for representing progress. Certainly any celebration of commodity culture will lend itself to particular narrative media, and the motion picture conforms to our definition of

“technological progress” as an answer to the question posed by capital. In this sense exhibitions illuminate the ways that the motion picture participates in the reconstitution of the human as a citizen of consumerism by inflating one’s whole being with a momentum of desire by which “subjectivity” can be understood. The panorama shot, so popular at these exhibitions, offers the subject a whole store of commodities, lays them before the centered subject, placing them within the desiring reach of the camera’s eye. [see figure 5-2] The cinematic relation negotiated between the eye of the kinoscope and the “real” objects it re-creates is the narrative realm of consumerism. Hence, as Frederic Jameson reminds us the cinematic narrative form is the narrative form of realism.³

Numerous motion-picture shorts taken by Edwin Porter of the Electrical Tower, portrayed by the print culture as part of what was colloquially referred to as a “false dawn” illuminating the night sky and other exhibitions at Buffalo, represented a new way of capturing and recreating that fascination with progress, and in itself also represented industrial advance [see figure 5-3]. But Buffalo’s fascination with electricity offers a different setting in the fusion of industrial advance and nascent systems of criminal justice: ten years earlier, the city of Buffalo was the setting for the crime that would result in the first use of the electric chair. That particular device—an invention of the corporate laboratories of Thomas Edison—would be the means to the execution of Czolgosz as well, and this execution also would serve as the subject matter for one of the first motion-pictures of the kinoscope— yet another invention of the corporate laboratories of Edison: Edwin Porter’s three minute long motion-picture titled *The*

³ Jameson writes “Not coincidentally, the emergence of such narrative centers is then at once accompanied by the verbal or narrative equivalences of techniques characteristic of film (the tracking shot, the panning of the camera from Carrie’s position as observer to that of a telescopic keyhole glimpse of the ultimate interior, with its enclosed warmth and height)—that medium which will shortly become the hegemonic formal expression of late capitalist society” (160).



Figure 5-2. Circular Panorama of Electric Tower. Entire motion picture may be viewed at the Library of Congress website. <http://memory.loc.gov>

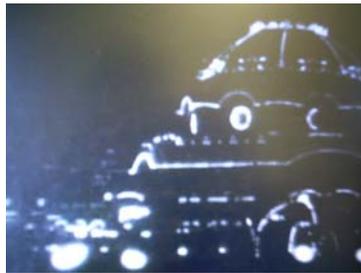


Figure 5-3. Esplanade at Night. Entire motion picture may be viewed at the Library of Congress website. <http://memory.loc.gov>

Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison (1901). This motion picture artifact seems both inheritor of many of the late nineteenth-century panoramic celebrations of technological commodity culture and radical departure from the ways the genre negotiated the relation between humans and the mechanical landscape. The turn-of-the-century's individual advances—including the new uses of electricity—appear at this point to structure a new situation of the human to the machine that will ground a popular conception of technology.

This motion picture belies an intense antagonism of social relations that results from a new means of production and accumulation, an antagonism that threatens to seep through the façade of the Pan-American Exhibition. An analysis of this motion-picture offers an interrogation of the history of citizenship, criminality, labor and technology as it navigates the contours of the social relation, particularly the establishment of certain poles of human relations within the industrializing, imperializing nation-state. In specific, this motion-picture text leads into the execution of the “labor radical” with a minute-and a-half panorama of an exterior view of Auburn Penitentiary looking eerily similar to a turn-of-the-century industrial factory. Taking a cue from Benjamin's “Art in the Age Mechanical Reproduction” in which he argues that the reading of one particular frame in the motion picture is directed by the frames leading up to it, I ask what, then, is the caption to the reproduction of the execution of Czolgosz when it is preceded by a meditation on the penitentiary-as-factory. The phantasmagoric quality that the modern penitentiary holds in collective consciousness can be traced, at least in part, to the fetishistic comprehension of the means of production that also helped bring about the celebrations for mechanical progress at the national and international stages of exhibitions. This film speaks to its audience as if pointing to the factory to say “*here* is where the value of the

commodity originates,” only to re-mystify through the fiction of citizenship that capital tells via the “democratic punishment” of the distinctly American institution of the penitentiary.

American Technocracy: “Shock” and Sovereign Control of a World Without Work

How are we to read, then, this final frame [see figure 5-4] in this Edison/Porter text? How can we look at the portrait of living human labor in measured relation to mechanical production? The culminating scene in the Porter film, the shot which grants fulfillment to the promise of its title, the scene which reproduces the complete subordination of labor to the authority of the state (and by association, capital) concludes a very intricate political and narratological assemblage. What is the caption for this scene of resolution? Why does this reproduction of Czolgosz’s execution—both by the motion-picture-as-medium, and the electric chair’s mechanical reproduction of death (and thus the life preceding it)—include as a signpost for this text the panorama of the penitentiary which uncannily seems to resemble the industrial factory?

Edison/Porter’s motion-picture, which begins by depicting a locomotive passing by the outer walls of the Auburn penitentiary, must have offered a different portrait of humans and technology than other motion pictures of the time. Yet, to be audience to this motion picture already presupposes a collective shared consciousness, one molded by the prevailing modes of production of the mechanical, electrical age. In his essay “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” Benjamin applies the Freudian conception of consciousness as the suppression and management of shock to an understanding of daily life under mechanization (161).⁴ Consciousness

⁴ Quoting Freud Benjamin understands that

“For a living organism, protection against stimuli is an almost more important function than the reception of stimuli; the protective shield is equipped with its own store of energy and must above all strive to preserve the special forms of conversion of energy operates it against the effects of the excessive energies of work in the external world, effects which tend toward an equalization of potential and hence toward destruction.” The threat from these energies is one of shocks. The more readily consciousness registers these shocks, the less likely are they to have a traumatic effect. (161)



Figure 5-4. Final frame, Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison. Entire motion picture may be viewed at the Library of Congress website. <http://memory.loc.gov>

Undergoes a vast revisionary process thanks to the features of mechanized production, whose new rhythms situate the human to history and thus consciousness and everyday life in a new way (177).⁵ Under mechanization, every human activity and movement is broken down, isolated, repeated, specialized to maximize productive efficiency, so much so that the products of the method of economic efficiency recede from its apparent origins in human labor. This appearance of a product emptied of its characteristic of “belonging” to its producers is for the worker a particular shock that defines a feature of experience under a culture of mechanization.

Consciousness under classical Marxist thought is often described as something mediated by the commodity, typically associated with capitalism’s management and deployment of exchange values which infuse a perception that the commodity has a supersensuous existence—appears as a sentient entity. Of course, Lukács’s important work on the concept of reification which advances the marxian idea of the commodity fetish to understand how commodity exchange serves to objectify the human—where the human becomes thing-like—is vital to a critical interrogation of mechanized culture. Yet, Benjamin’s analysis here serves as a reminder that this particular evisceration of history does not allow us to abstract consumption from production. Indeed, Marx’s introduction to the *Grundrisse* cautions against this tendency to cut out consumption from the particular modes of production:

Production, then, is also immediately consumption, consumption is also immediately production. Each is immediately its opposite. But at the same time a mediating movement takes place between the two. Production mediates consumption; it creates the latter’s material; without it consumption would lack an object. But consumption also mediates

⁵ As Benjamin points out:

The jolt of the movement of a machine is like the so-called *coup* in a game of chance. The manipulation of the worker at the machine has no connection with the preceding operation, for the very reason that it is its exact repetition. Since each operation at the machine is just as screened off from the proceeding operation as a *coup* in a game of chance is from the one that preceded it, the drudgery of the labor is, in its own way, a counterpart to the drudgery of the gambler. (177)

production, in that it alone creates for the products the subject for whom they are products. The product only obtains its “last finish” in consumption. (91)

In this way, the specific product of mechanical production grounds and makes possible an idea of the human confronting the commodity; and likewise the product of mechanical organization instantiates what can be understood as subject-consciousness. A casualty of the phenomenon of mechanized culture is living human history, which also confronts the worker as an alien entity. In effect, the worker in commodity culture is cut off from any agency in history. The emergence of what amounts to a technocracy—the tenor of which has as its final manifestation the subjugation of the human to the rhythms and thus the structure of mechanical organization—seems to define a pattern of consciousness as that which manages the shock of the possibility of an improvised, living history.

To a certain extent, one can identify many activities of the state within this period of increasing mechanization as explicitly maintaining and controlling the “shocks” attendant to industry’s advance. The history of the penitentiary as a state apparatus, as I hope to show in greater detail later, is tied to an explicit attempt to forge compliance to industrialized sovereign law by controlling stimuli, beginning with the experiments and practices of the devices of Benjamin Rush, and continuing through the establishment of the first penitentiaries in the world at Walnut Street and Cherry Hill jails in Philadelphia, and Newgate, Auburn, and Ossining Prisons in New York State. If the emergence of the penitentiary is explicitly tied to the management of “shock” to the human sensorium, the rise of the state in this period must be interrogated for the ways it structures and distributes consciousness throughout the social landscape, especially as the history of the penitentiary draws ever closer to another specific apparatus for organizing and managing production and consciousness—the industrial factory of the gilded age. We approach the notion that the social relations have been determined by the

forces of production; citizenship as the walking dead divested of their labor has been determined by the penitentiary modeled after the prevailing site of production—the industrial factory.

Of course, if one is to argue that the emergence of mechanization structures consciousness in a new way, one must turn to the collective imagination and the ways it brings consciousness into being; in this sense, new techniques of situating the human in a social relation can be seen by the ways the social is narrated into consciousness. Benjamin recognizes the emergence of the motion-picture as a medium in this vein:

Technology has subjected the human sensorium to a complex kind of training. There came a day when a new and urgent need for stimuli was met by the film. In a film, perception in the form of shocks was established as a formal principle. That which determines the rhythm of production on a conveyor belt is the basis of reception in the film. (“Some Motifs in Baudelaire” 175)

Presenting individual photographs—a development that also has its origins in nineteenth-century culture—in rapid succession to simulate motion and thus reconstruct a sense of time, the motion-picture participates in this phenomenon of mechanized consciousness, infusing a given object that had been abstracted from time back within time—albeit the time of the machine: the time of the locomotive, the time of the factory press, the time of the electric chair.

If consciousness is indeed structured by time-as-mechanical-assemblage, the political battles fought against the human subordination to technological production seem to materialize in a different assemblage—that of narrative. I take as my mode of inquiry into the emerging modes of production and accumulation an extended meditation on two “texts” whose identification of, participation within, or resistance to these material conditions is negotiable. Still, Rebecca Harding Davis’s *Life in the Iron Mills*, as well as Porter’s motion-picture for the Edison corporation will serve as sites for a “dense materiality” in which the political minefield of industrial production, prison/factory-life, labor’s situation within technology, and indeed the

cultural “objectification” of time demonstrates narrative’s participation in the politics of justice masking the politics of production.⁶

Almost immediately after Czolgosz’s death via the state of New York’s electric chair, Edwin Porter began work on a motion-picture for the Edison corporation that would recreate and reproduce this execution. This motion-picture would on one level participate in a corporate advertising war between the Edison company and Westinghouse Electric. Indeed as many historians have demonstrated, Edison Laboratory’s invention of the electric chair was an attempt to discredit the Westinghouse model of electrical current, suggesting the Edison model of direct current was “safer” to the general (read: domestic) public. Yet this recognition of the conditions surrounding the device’s invention ignores the intensely political antagonisms inherent in the reproduction of the circumstances surrounding this emergence of a mechanical deployment and management of the laboring human body that is at the heart of this three-and-a-half minute motion-picture, and at the heart of the emergence of the motion picture as a medium.

Benjamin recognized that the motion-picture emerges as the battleground for intense political struggles deriving from the accelerations of industrial capital. Thanks to the relative

⁶ As John Frow has attempted to explain in his grasping of the marxian conception of the commodity fetish, because of the expansion of equivalence exchanges to the structure of social relations, people become “thing-like” and the causal relationship between labor and value becomes unstable. This reversal highlights the opposition between the immediacy of relations among direct producers of use-values and the highly mediated and abstract structure of commodity relations. What characterizes things in capitalist production and exchange is thus not at all their thinginess but the opposite, an abstraction which *takes the form* of a dense materiality. (“A Pebble” 350)

Frow’s understanding of commodity fetishism as a “dense materiality” of an abstract social relation is instructive to a reconstruction of consumerist time—the synchronization of the human to the commodity that places all human labor in a social, commensurable relation. Still, the distinction between this fantastic, privileged location of the commodity in the cultural landscape and the concept of alienation—implicitly marked by Frow here as a distinction of the poles of capitalist accumulation, namely production and consumption—participate in a mystification that Marx critiqued as characteristics of bourgeois economics, namely a recognition that the two concepts may somehow be related, but a failure to elaborate and meditate on those links, and thus an abstraction of those concepts from the material conditions of production from which they emerge. What needs to be undertaken here is a serious reflection of the rise of mystification of those supposedly discernible zones that present themselves as the determining features of industrial capitalism.

ease by which art can now be reproduced and distributed *en masse*, the political significance of “art” that emerges as its reproducibility increasingly liberates it from its original confines in space and time—confines which Benjamin equates to ritual. Whereas art prior to the advances in industrial production was in part defined by what Benjamin terms its “aura”—an aesthetic affect of it really existing as art in one location spiritually and temporally, the dissolution of a work’s “aura” via the act of reproduction brings “art” to the politics of the everyday. For an example of this, Benjamin writes of the new technologies of the nineteenth century—photography and motion-picture.

It is no accident that the portrait was the focal point of early photography. The cult of remembrance of loved ones, absent or dead, offers a last refuge for the cult of value, of the picture. For the last time the aura emanated from the early photographs in the fleeting expression of a human face. This is what constitutes their melancholy, incomparable beauty. *But as man withdraws from the photographic image, the exhibition value for the first time shows its superiority to the ritual value.* (“Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” 226, my emphasis)

What is the nature of this “withdrawal” from the photographic image? The phrase does not read “as the subject matter of the photograph ceases to be the face of the human portrait.” Rather, withdrawal suggests activity of movement, as if the human loses interest in the aestheticization of the portrait. But in favor of what? Benjamin continues:

To have pinpointed this new stage constitutes the incomparable significance of Atget, who, around 1900, took photographs of deserted Paris streets. It has quite justly been said of him that he photographed them *like scenes of crime*. The scene of a crime, too, is deserted; it is photographed for the purpose of establishing evidence. With Atget, photographs become standard evidence for historical occurrences, and acquire a hidden political significance. [...] They stir the viewer; he feels challenged by them in a new way. At the same time picture magazines begin to put up signposts for him, right ones and wrong ones, no matter. For the first time, captions have become obligatory. [...] The directives which the captions give to those looking at pictures in illustrated magazines soon become even more explicit and more imperative in the film where the meaning of each single picture appears to be prescribed by the sequence of all preceding ones. (“Art in the Age Mechanical Reproduction” 226)

The withdrawal of the human from the photographed scene is an intrinsically politicized moment, one that is key in grasping the social relation of the human in an automated, mechanized world. Human labor is no longer just something that commands the camera's eye, but it is also something that, through automation, can be read so as to offer pedagogical platform for ideological contestation. The trace of the withdrawn human, present in the impress of technology, demands interpretation of the photograph. When coupled with a simulation of time through the literal rapid-fire technique of the early motion-picture, the mechanical subject of late nineteenth-century narratives seems to invite one intensely political read.

The first twenty seconds of the Porter/Edison motion-picture depict Auburn Prison as both the background for and destination of a particular technology—the prison here is marked as a series of smokestacks behind concrete walls and barbed wire, being passed by the mobile smokestacks associated with the freight train [see figure 5-5]. Evidently, the rhythm and tempo of this motion-picture is made evident not just by the motion of the train, but also the mounting smoke that billows from beyond the prison's walls. In the next fifty seconds, the train has stopped completely, and motion here takes on the characteristics of the sweeping eye of the camera over the apparently barren concrete buildings that make up Auburn Prison [see figure 5-6]. Significantly, the human body has *withdrawn* from these opening images: no humans are to be found either aboard the train or even on the prison grounds. But the trace of the human, particularly humans at work, permeates the motion-picture-as-text, and in essence composes the illusion of motion when we recognize that the train and the smoke from the prison's structures are the products and the traces of living human labor.

The abstraction of the human presents the shock of this ghost town of technology; yet, its animation and reconstruction of time, of a total whole cannot be understood without the trace of



Figure 5-5. Feight train frame, Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison. Entire motion picture may be viewed at <http://memory.loc.gov>



Figure 5-6. Panorama of Auburn Prison, from Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison

the human. Time and motion under technical reproduction is contingent upon the physical removal of the human in favor of the trace of living labor—the human body has been removed, but it is also simulated as temporal progress. In this sense, a critical analysis of the penitentiary, the factory, and the motion-picture must also encompass an inquiry into what these supposedly distinct apparatuses suggest about a politics within a nascent technocratic culture.

Attempts to locate the emergence of the motion-picture within a technological and political context of imperial capital are not particularly new. In her studies on the formative years of motion-picture culture, Amy Kaplan has advanced the argument that the new medium of the motion-picture itself is founded upon a logic of imperialism, providing a “submerged foundation on international terrain for a history that charts not only internal bonds of national unity but also the changing relations between the domestic and foreign” (*Empire of Anarchy* 147). Kaplan’s argument turns on a point she makes about the fascination with motion within a collective logic: the activity and appearance of motion is the focal point of emphasis in these early manifestations of the new media. Historians of early cinema have linked the emerging medium to new experiences of space and time, associating its rise to the responses to railroad travel and walking through the modern metropolis (150). What Kaplan does not meditate upon, however, and what this particular Edison/Porter film assumes, is a transformation of a logic of time and space as both a product of human labor and yet becoming divested of that activity of production. Before we can point to the imperialistic, expansionist logic behind film, I contend that we must first look to understand why it was granted cultural privilege, why the formation and the possibility and imaginability of “motion-picture” as fathomable “technology” depends on the abstraction and transformation of human labor within new structures of organization and production as the basis for “motion.” To this extent, the cultural logic that allows for motion pictures in specific and

technology in general has already pushed human labor to the background, “off screen,” in favor of the consumption of human labor by machines—in short a logic of technology that characterizes a specific portion of modernity. Even to those workers in which the exploitative relation is most readily available to their everyday lives, human labor recedes to appear as a completely subordinate entity, to put down their labor in order to wave the nation’s flag.

City of Fire: The Time of the Commodity and the Regime of Automation

This recession from the face of the political landscape instantiated by this motion-picture offers an avenue of insight to modern cultural logic in the way it participates in the practices of a commodity economy. An idea of time as reworked through the commodity is for Guy Debord vital to comprehending capitalism’s development as the dominant mode of thought.⁷ The intense energy emptied into sites of productivity like the industrial factory contributes to a commodification of time, according to Debord: “The time of production, time-as-commodity, is an infinite accumulation of equivalent intervals: each segment must demonstrate by the clock its purely quantitative equality of all other segments. Thus time manifests nothing in its effective reality aside from its exchangeability” (110). The snapshot action photograph captures such a conceptualization of the “moment” of time: an accumulation of these equivalences can be presented in such a way so as to simulate time, completely imbued with commodities at time’s fiber. That is, commensurable equivalences linked together project accumulation in rapid succession. The woof of pre-industrial time is remade into that which grounds equivalence as sequence and consequence.

⁷ “The victory of the bourgeoisie was the victory of a *profoundly historical* time—the time corresponding to the economic form of production which transformed society permanently, and which transformed society permanently from top to bottom. [...] History, which had hitherto appeared to express nothing more than the activity of individual members of the ruling class, and had thus been conceived of as a chronology of events, was now perceived in its *general movement*” (104)

Commodity culture's tendency to effect a new synchronization of consciousness has often been a subject for meditation in works of canonized American Literary Realism. Chapter 11 of Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* demonstrates a specific example of what has been understood as commodity fetishism—which in this scene seems to be a result of that novel's protagonist, Carrie Meeber, as she transforms into consumer, a revision of herself as participating in a scene in which the objects are the other actors within the new metropolis repopulated by objects in discourse with each other as commodities. Commodity exchange transforms into urban living:

Carrie was an apt student of fortune's ways—of fortune's superficialities. Seeing a thing, she would immediately set to inquiring how she would look, *properly related to it*. Be it known that this is not fine feeling, it is not wisdom. The greatest minds are not so afflicted; and, on the contrary, this lowest order of mind is not so disturbed. Fine clothes to her were a vast persuasion; they spoke tenderly and Jesuitically for themselves. When she came within earshot of their pleading, desire in her bent a willing ear. The voice of the so-called inanimate! Who shall translate for us the language of the stones?
“My dear,” said the lace collar she secured from Partridges, “I fit you beautifully; don't give me up.” (75, emphasis mine)

This extract from Dreiser's novel grants insight into Carrie as she remakes herself into an actress for the theater. Dreiser's management of this scene parallels that of an auteur directing a motion-picture. The discourse is with formerly inanimate objects, the movement within earshot to the pleading of these inanimates, the re-envisioning of herself in proper relation not to other people, but to now-sentient things. The tempo and re-animation that is a result of commodity culture seems to be of import in narratives within the advancing moment of mechanical production.⁸ The

⁸ This “social relation of things” has often been the subject of critical debate, Rey Chow recently suggesting the marxian description of commodities as “false representations of the real relations of production” may have led to a “thing phobia” which catalyzes a series of book-burning events in communist China. “Ironically,” Chow writes, “in the retrospective assessments of the Cultural revolution, scholars and writers have tended overwhelmingly to interpret such destructions of things as part of a larger violence against humanity—when, strictly speaking, such destruction was genealogically consistent with the Marxist critique of dehumanization as made manifest in the processes of reification and commodification” (Chow 364-5). Chow's reading of Marx's theory of the commodity fetish seems to melt into a critique of that idea itself, assuming the commodity is a representative sign marking the exploitation of human labor. But can commodity fetishism as a system be reduced to semiotics in a political action

emergence of a commodity culture, Dreiser's novel seems to hint, is intensely cinematic. *Sister Carrie*'s recognition of social-life as no longer a relation between people but between things hints at the tendency of "reality" becoming more "filmic"; the obsession with animation and navigation through a metropolis of commodities—the objective trace of a social relation—participates in the continued subordination and removal of human labor frames "real life."

The town which serves as setting for Rebecca Harding Davis's novella presents a portrait of the social relation *and* the poles between which desires circulate. Written approximately forty years before Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, Davis's narrative expresses the extent to which production itself plays a specific role in the exploitation of living labor. Leading the reader through the streets of the town towards the iron mill at the town's heart, Davis writes:

Not many even of the inhabitants of a manufacturing town know the *vast machinery of system by which the bodies of workmen are governed*, that goes on unceasingly from year to year. The hands of each mill are divided into watches that relieve each other as regularly as the sentinels of an army. By night and day the work goes on, the unsleeping engines groan and shriek, the fiery pools of metal boil and surge. Only for a day in the week, in half-courtesy to public censure, the fires are partially veiled; but as soon as the clock strikes midnight, the great furnaces break forth with renewed fury, the clamor begins with fresh, breathless vigor, the engines sob and shriek like "gods in pain." (19, my emphasis)

A subtle shift has thus been involved in this formulation of Davis's narrative. Rather than the citizenry governing the mechanizations and functions of the town in which they live, Davis's description flips that relation to the point that this "vast machinery of system" itself drives production, "governing the bodies of working peoples." Davis's narrative begins with this stark inversion—the horror that will become the situation of technology within industrial production—in which the products of human labor have somehow warped the structural logic of "ownership."

proscribed by this identification of commodity fetishism really to destroy the commodity; that by wiping out the signifier you've undone that system of signification? Or does not such a proscribed action advance and participate in the belief that commodities hold special status?

The form of Davis's narrative emphasizes animation, or at least prefigures an emerging fascination with that which will allow motion to be the subject of pictures. The town in which the narrative takes place seems engulfed in the flames of the iron mills—a city literally *of fire*.

The road leading to the mills had been quarried from the solid rock, which rose abrupt and bare on one side of the cinder-covered road, while the river, sluggish and black, crept past on the other. The mills for rolling iron are simply immense tent-like roofs covering acres of ground, open on every side. Beneath these roofs, Deborah looked in on a city of fire that burned hot and fiercely in the night. Fire in every horrible form: pits of flame waving in the wind; liquid metal flames writhing in tortuous streams through the sand; wide cauldrons filled with boiling fire, over which bent ghostly wretches stirring the strange brewing; and through all, crowds of half-clad men, looking like revengeful ghosts in the red light, hurried, throwing masses of glittering fire. It was like a street in Hell. Even Deborah muttered, as she crept through, “ ‘T looks like t’ devil’s place!” It did,— in more ways than one. (20)

This situation presents something in the realization of labor that leads to its own evisceration, or at least a disquieting feature that organizes and divides political consciousness into hermetic spaces of an audience—a space for consumption, and the activity of production—a space of living labor.

Scholarship on Davis's novella has argued that Davis's text works to confound this social division. Andrew Silver, for example, has argued that Davis's text reworks and criticizes the popular picturesque fiction of the time by de-eroticizing working-class labor, explicitly rejecting a narratological fetishization of “hard work”: “the androgynous narrative voice and the disabled and grotesque bodies it details serve to de-eroticize middle-class spectatorship, writing against the gaze that had provided the sexual novelty of hypermasculine bodies” that characterizes much popular, picturesque narratives of the middle nineteenth century. “The narrative does not focus on fulfilling the reader's anonymous desires, but on providing a reading experience which confounds easy spectatorship” (107). My point of contention with this line of argument is not precisely that Davis does or does not work to counter the fetish of “hard work.” Indeed, Davis

does at times play with gender and labor, at times referring to Hugh Wolfe, the protagonist and one of the workers before the flames of the iron mill, as “Molly” Wolfe—a nineteenth-century colloquial term for a male prostitute. Still, my point is to illustrate the pervasive effect a characteristic of industrial capitalism structures narrative. Androgyny does not mean de-eroticization but itself participates in the eroticization of labor. What Davis’s text marks instead is an attempt to grapple with the ways in which to tell the story of industrial labor, and in this effort under the terms of commodity fetishism, which effects an abstraction of “just looking” from active work, an attempt at narrating the story of industrial labor that *depends upon* an eroticization of elements, of manufacturing and manipulating desires into new narrative forms. What is most telling about this picture of fire is that it radiates in such a way so as to illuminate and project a specific relationship between worker/object and viewer/subject, a relationship that serves as an apt description of “realism.” We can see in Davis’s mode of narration a logic that will bring new technologies of narration into existence.

Davis, ever concerned with the “vast machinery of system” and with making this life of labor before the mechanical inferno “a real thing to you,” works as narrator through this perspective of projection. And it is a relationship that is itself thrust into the narrative with a specific tinge of class, for just as the audience looks on at the laboring city, so too do the owners of the iron mill look in and wonder in awe at the site of the mill hands laboring before the company’s inferno, the view of capital upon labor. Kirby, the owner of the mill, upon viewing his workers laboring before his machines, exclaims: ““if I had the making of men, these men who do the lowest part of the world’s work should be machines,— nothing more,— hands. It would be kindness. God help them!”” (36). One of his companions responds: ““Money has spoken! [...] And so money sends back its answer into the depths through you, Kirby!”” (36). Kirby’s

comment upon witnessing this city of fire demonstrates the extent to which “life” has become a series of measured, repeatable, indeed mechanical actions. The solution toyed with here is the utter pacification and literal objectification of those “who do the lowest part of the world’s work.” Furthermore, the social relation apparently manifests a spatial relation of economic exchange—money verbally responding to labor. In other words, a solution to the stultifying situation of labor, voiced here by “money” in Davis’s narrative, is the construction of sites of consciousness—subjectivity centered within a system of consumption, mediated by a desire that depends upon the differentiated spaces carved out by capital’s quest for new markets.

The product of Hugh Wolfe’s labor—the korl woman figure carved out of the scrap metal—literally circulates not only throughout these differentiated social spaces within the novella’s primary narrative, but also throughout the narratological structures of Davis’s text. The figurine-commodity then exists in-itself as a marker and medium of the differentiations in consciousness, and thus appears as, in marxian terms, the literal objectification of all social relations. Still, the nature of the commodity reveals an aporia, a reverberation that threatens these neatly differentiated sites within capital, and reminds that the consumer is a worker, albeit a worker divested from her work. In this way, the commodity as objectification of social relations, also registers the anxieties and understandings of work in this period and the technologies used to capture and represent that relation:

Nothing remains to tell that the poor puddler once lived but this figure of the mill-woman cut in korl. I have it here in a corner of my library. I keep it hid behind a curtain; it is such a rough, ungainly thing. Yet there are about it touches, grand sweeps of outline, that show a master’s hand. Sometimes,-- to night, for instance,-- the curtain is accidentally drawn back, and I see a bare arm stretched out imploringly in the likeness, and an eager wolfish face *watching mine*. (64)

The relation condensed and objectified within the korl figurine here at the end of Davis’s text seems to mark the product of the mill-hand’s labor as necessary catalyst and conclusion for the

narrative moment, for its appearance at the beginning of the novella begins a reminiscing moment prompting the narrator to “lead us down into the iron mills” to “make it a real thing to you.” The commodity stands guard over the differentiated zones that define the diegetic moment of narrative realism, and as such defines the threshold dividing the site of production from the sites of consumption (and between “confinement” and its rhetorical opposite “freedom”).

The commodity also keeps time in the synchronization of these differentiated spaces in discourse (read *exchange*) with one another.⁹ Davis’s novella implies as much in Hugh’s realization of his *fate* under this system, seeing what Davis marks as “the reality of the world and the business of it” after he thinks to himself of the possibility of creativity. Richard Hood’s observation about Davis’s text examines a temporal realignment through the act of narration. “Here it is clear that the reader, though ‘present’ in the narrative frame of the story is somehow removed from the narrative setting; the reader cannot enter the story except by ‘hearing’ it. The reader is present ‘now’ in the dialogue of the narrative, but is not present ‘here’ in the mill-town” (74). Space remains here something of absolute difference, but a play with time can somewhat corrode this difference (Hood 75). Spatial difference in this context is merely the medium of desire; the political energies delimited by the subjects of capital exchange are enough to move Kirby to “want to look,” as they are enough for a cinematic reader to “realize” Davis’s subject matter.

The fact of commodity production as the dominating socio-economic principle necessitates a rethinking of the concept of isolation at the foundation of the penitentiary within industrialism. This mode of enacting justice does not rely on the concept of “isolation” *per se* but instead a very regimented, precise system of absolute division that accompanies or patterns itself

⁹ As John Frow argues elsewhere, “Time and space now too become entirely abstract categories, the architecture of a world which, ‘is at once *here* and *elsewhere*’” (*Time and Commodity Culture* 7).

after the divisions of labor necessary for the commodity.¹⁰ While Marx is quick to point out that a social division of labor preceded the historical appearance of the commodity under capitalism, we must look to see how commodity culture secures and guarantees its own existence by reproducing the conditions necessary to its own existence, namely a complex division of labor.

The presence of the kohl woman does not just appear at the bookends marking Davis's diagesis but also at the point of contact for the differentiated spaces *within* the new social relation under industrial production. Most memorably, its appearance to the mill owners visiting the iron mills is quite literally unsettling, its haunting presence serving to collapse assumptions about those who make up the differentiated space of the mill. More pressingly, though, the logic of production and accumulation and the desire that mediates these new social relations, that logic of commodity creation Hugh Wolfe has known his whole life, will structure the logic of his punishment and imprisonment.

It was market-day. The narrow window of the jail looked down directly on the carts and wagons drawn up in a long line, where they had unhooked. [Hugh] could see, too, and hear distinctly the clink of money as it changed hands, the busy crowd of whites and blacks shoving and pushing one another, and the chaffering and swearing at the stalls. Somehow, the sound, more than anything else had done, wakened him up,-- made the whole real to him. He was done with the world and the business of it. (54)

¹⁰ The totality of heterogeneous use-values of physical commodities reflects a totality of similarly heterogeneous forms of useful labor, which differ in order, genus, species, and variety: in short, a social division of labour. This division of labour is a necessary condition for commodity production, although the converse does not hold: commodity production is not a necessary condition for the social division of labour. Labour is socially divided in the primitive Indian community, although the products do not thereby become commodities. Or take an example nearer home, labour is systematically divided into every factory, but the workers do not bring about this division by exchanging their individual products. Only the products of mutually independent acts of labour, performed in isolation, can confront each other as commodities. [...] [T]he use-value of every commodity contains useful labour, i.e. productive activity of a definite kind, carried on with a definite aim. Use-values cannot confront each other as commodities unless the useful labor contained in them is qualitatively different in each case. In a society whose products generally assume the form of commodities, i.e. a society of commodity producers, this qualitative difference between the useful forms of labour which are carried on independently and privately by individual producers develops into a complex system, a social division of labour. (*Capital* 132-3)

The sound of the market which “makes the whole real to him” has been presented here as a punishment, reminding that he has been restrained from full participation in what counts now as social life. “The free world” comes into view through its opposite—isolation and confinement—and marks punishment through unfulfillable desire. The distinctions between Hugh’s spatial confinement, marked by the clink of money in exchange, takes on a temporal tone a few passages later:

He looked out of the window again. People were leaving the market now. A tall mulatto girl, following her mistress, her basket on her head, aroused the street just below, and looked up. She was laughing; but when she caught sight of the haggard face peering out through the bars, suddenly grew grave, and hurried by, a free firm step, a clear-cut olive face, with a scarlet turban tied on one side, dark, shining eyes, and on the head the basket poised, filled with fruit and flowers, under which the scarlet turban and bright eyes looked out half-shadowed. The picture caught his eye. It was good to see a face like it. He would try to-morrow, and cut one like it. *To-morrow!* He threw down the tin, trembling, and covered his face with his hands. (57-8)

This exchange between Hugh behind bars and the enslaved woman, and a complex discourse about what distinguishes “free” from “imprisoned,” seems particularly odd—somehow, this woman is remarkable to Hugh because of a “free, firm step”—but in a time of slavery, that free firm step traces that of her mistress. Both individuals in this scene become much more melancholy; that is, the scene becomes extraordinarily ominous when these two exchange glances and thus share an understanding that the other’s situation perhaps all-too-closely resembles their own. The trigger for Hugh’s despair revolves around a notion of time, triggered by the desire to produce. Somehow, Hugh has made the realization that the cultural logic of time here *is* in fact his punishment, the reciprocal equivalent in a discourse of justice.

The dialogue between these two separate spheres is mediated by the possibility of time as an objective measurement. Time brings these poles into a field in which they can be compared, can exchange and be rendered commensurate. Time for Hugh defines the incarceration of his

creative capacities—that he has no real “to-morrow” in the same sense as the “world outside the jail.” What Davis demonstrates here is the pervasive logic of commodity culture to differentiate zones of production and consumption through an objectified, measurable time within industrial production that begins to dictate and raise into being the penitentiary as absolutely distinct to the “free” public space. Effectively, “freedom” has been interpolated by the absolute exploitation of labor within the jail through the objectification of time, and thus the market becomes associated with “freedom.”

But somehow the distinction between the “free world” and the jail is the same as the dialectic between the market and the industrial factory. Mapped onto an image of the “free world” of the market and the confines of production is a portrait of modern jurisprudence. That is, what makes Hugh’s situation *undesirable*—the fate of the criminal—is his isolation from the market, his withdrawal from what counts as “social life.” The differentiated zones—factory and market, jail and the “free community” outside—are opposed to each other through the desire “to make it a real thing to you,” the cinemagraphic desire that will synthesize these antagonisms into a modern concept of industrial citizenship. Under the logic of Davis’s narrative, all those not imprisoned are marked culturally “free,” even though the novel seems to conjure a register where this idea does not seem thoroughly accurate, nor completely descriptive. As a result, an entity that is supposed to present an objective unit for measurement—the standard of time—which really is dependent upon human labor, in turn works further to divide and contain labor within an apparatus that looks to comprehend the social relation as a complex of citizen-automaton acting in negotiable degrees of compliance to the conscripts of law that constitute the nation-state.

The collapse of the distinctions between the nineteenth-century factory and the industrialized penitentiary was a phenomenon that troubled a number of journalists of the period.

An 1877 article appearing in *English Illustrated Magazine*, for example, described an excursion to Auburn's sister Ossining Prison, colloquially referred to as "Sing-Sing," thusly: "At first appearance, Sing-Sing presents more the aspect of a large factory than anything else; its tall chimney and blocks of many-windowed buildings heightening the illusion, while the sound of machinery and the hissing of steam helps to give it an air of life and liberty which is somewhat unexpected" (Price 57). A large steam horn would sound the commencement of work in these prisons, as it would the industrial factory. At times, the article slips into actually referring to the prison as a factory, especially when describing the bootmaking, tailoring, stonemasonry, and other types of labor performed therein (Price 59). Prisons-as-factories, the author implies, can be understood as a specific productive entity within the capitalist system, defined by its complete sustainability in producing a value. In fact, at the beginning of this article, the author's comparison between the penitentiary and the factory seems charged with pleasant surprise—apparently factory work signifies an "air of life and liberty." Still, when the journalist examines the prisoner's cells away from the workrooms, his hopefulness that this prison was a site of the heights of industrial production latched onto domestic politics changes dramatically:

All the conclusions I had jumped at as to the over-lenient treatment of the prisoners vanished when I saw how this was counterbalanced by the reverse of the model. There were six tiers of cells, or accommodations for 1200 prisoners. At the time of my visit there were 400 more prisoners than cells, so many had to be "doubled-up." This does not sound so very dreadful till one learns the dimension of each cell. As they struck me not being larger than cupboards, I took the trouble to measure one for myself, and found its exact dimensions were 3 ft. 6 in. wide, 7 ft. long, and 6ft. 6 in. high, and these dismal holes are only lighted and ventilated by a grating in the door. I got the warden to shut me up in one for a few seconds, but I felt such an overpowering sensation of suffocation that I was glad to get out; yet two big men are often shut up in such a space. I was informed that every day at half-past five, after their work is done, the men are locked up until a quarter past six the following morning. (60)

At this moment, the critique seems to argue that the prison is merely a contradiction, a poorly run factory; that is, there seems nothing innately "inhumane" or even retributive about factory work

itself, a view that belies a deeper cultural anxiety toward the machine, the factory, and the prison that allows the three to combine in one apparatus overseeing security and justice across the collective psyche. Displaced onto the horror of living conditions apart from factory-work, the dominant cultural assumptions hide that each is part of the same logic of production.

Other testimonials in this “reformist” vein show similar outrage as to the conditions prisoners of Sing-Sing and Auburn were subjected to daily, *Charity and the Commons* going so far as to say living in Auburn “is far worse than living in a sewer” (680-1). Such testimonials—the descent into these horrifying space—worked both to mortify and tantalize the reader. This feature arises only because of the narrative it tells about human labor under industrial capitalism. That is to say, the collapse of systems of justice into apparatuses maximizing and exploiting human productivity comes to define the narratological/scopophilic quality of the modern prison system.

If the marker of the emergence of the modern penitentiary system is the inherent collapsibility of imprisonment into factory work, the method of punishment in industrial U.S. culture is inherently *metadiagetic*—i.e. always beyond the frames in which it is encased and extending “outward” into “free public space.” The formation of the motion-picture as a fathomable, technological product of this inertia is kin to this early formation of a prison industry. In this sense, the Edison/Porter film is remarkable for both what it contains and simultaneously collapses. The corrosion of the apparatuses, spaces, and means of production into what had been emerging as a modern labor warehouse actively extracting surplus labor is a fundamental characteristic shared by both the penitentiary-as-factory and the motion picture as technological medium. In this spirit, Horkheimer and Adorno recognize:

Real life is becoming indistinguishable from the movies. [...]The old experience of the movie-goer, who sees the world outside as an extension of the film he has just left

(because the latter is intent upon reproducing the world of everyday perceptions) is now the producer's guidelines. The more intensely and flawlessly his techniques duplicate empirical objects, the easier it is today for the illusion to prevail that the outside world is the straightforward continuation of that presented in the screen. (126)

I would advance a notion here that what Horkheimer and Adorno are identifying in the culture industry most easily located in modernist (i.e. early twentieth-century) Hollywood is something that precedes film, or at least clears the space for such an industry to flourish. The accelerations of circulation of the commodity affect consciousness to the extent that the differentiated zones of commodity production and exchange become permeable and metadiagetic; a feature that itself will at least be a vital, if not constitutional, element of early motion-pictures like this one.

The Penitentiary, the Individual, and the Invention of Productivity

The metadiagetic reach that characterizes the structure of the relation between the public (market) and the prison also frames the fascination with the "realistic" aims of the motion-picture in that time-as-commodity stretches through the boundaries between film and audiences, between work and consumption. This reach is necessarily one that reenacts and reanimates class as a social division of labor. "Man in prison," write Horkheimer and Adorno,

is the virtual image of the bourgeois type which he still is to become in reality. [...] The prison is the image of the bourgeois world of labor taken to its logical conclusion; hatred felt by men for everything that they would themselves wish to become but is beyond their reach, is placed as the symbol in the world. [...] Since de Tocqueville the bourgeois republics have attacked men's souls whereas the monarchies attacked his body; similarly, the penalties inflicted in these republics also attacked man's soul. The new martyrs do not die a slow death in the torture chamber but instead waste away spiritually as invisible victims in the great prison buildings which differ little in name from madhouses. (226-8)

The discourse that the fact of the penitentiary presents grounds a new type of class-consciousness in industrialism.¹¹ Unsurprisingly, the new topic of being at work/being imprisoned, itself as a

¹¹ As Michael Ignatieff has observed on penitentiaries in England in the 1850s, reformers had to confront the typical problem that accompanied the new social relations re-written by the factory mode of organizing labor. Numerous strikes and sit-ins protesting convict imprisonment as a substitute for transportation to Australia occurred in British houses of discipline. Furthermore, reformers were just as horrified at the level of solidarity among the lower

subject for contemplation, also becomes an object for amusement in a narrative marked for the ways it produced class distinctions through the motion-picture. To make this shift in the cultural logic, the “common sense” idea of time and motion—which I argue governs narrative and allows for the possibility of motion-pictures as technology—must change, and the history of the emergence of the criminal justice system reflects that passage of the concept of time as commodity, payment.

The history of the emergence of the penitentiary as the material objectification of, and the main apparatus and location for, the punishment end of “justice” illuminates a political consciousness grounded in many of the principles of the Enlightenment. This history animates into consciousness the human being in the social world by offering a meditation on, and thus bringing into being, an individual in discourse with a social, an inner-soul in discourse with one’s outer acts, and proper civilized behavior in discourse with moral society. If as Angela Davis has argued in an essay titled “From the Convict Lease System to the Super-Max Prison,” the current prison system “has abandoned the goals of individual rehabilitation and social reintegration in favor of increasingly harsh forms of punishment and retribution” (60-1), what we must then interrogate is the emergence of these logics of executing justice that has born the impress of that shift. What we find is, as Otto Kirchheimer and Georg Rusche have observed, that “every system of production tends to discover punishments which correspond to its productive relationships” (5). This correlation between productivity and punishment fundamentally links the factory and the prison as manifestations of time in service to apparatuses of accumulation. Whereas early U.S. Punishment systems, such as those adopted by religious groups like the Quakers at the first penitentiaries in Pennsylvania, viewed time as the medium to

economic classes which broke through the divisions of the justice system, particularly between convicts and those assigned as their guards (202-3).

reform—i.e. individual convict work as a means of preparing the offender for a return to society—later versions, corresponding to the ascent of industry, see time as a means of debt repayment, as sentence, and the penitentiary as a place of custody and reciprocity/commensurability.

A new, inherited logic of time as a commodifiable, objective quantity made flexible by shifts in production emerges as a “thing” which can be isolated for “technological” and narratological experimentation. If, as film scholar Andre Gaudreault asserts, temporality became a phenomenon which was standardized, synchronized by filmic narrative after 1907 (326), this is because the experiments in the association between temporality and productivity (manifested in apparatuses like the penitentiary and the motion-picture) had been exhausted.

Much scholarship of *Life in the Iron Mills* has concentrated its efforts on the religious motifs underlying the text, and directs a critical eye toward the “Quaker Angel” who offers narrative closure. Such a figure is important when confronting the history of the penitentiary, which itself was a Quaker invention in the constitution of the Pennsylvania colony. Sheila Hughes, for example, interprets Davis’s narrative as an attempt to advance secular and religious vision that “does not neatly categorize as realist, reformist, or religious. [Instead . . .] the principle of liberation opens up the complexities of Davis’s text in unique ways. The biblical cry for liberation can be heard in Davis’s novella which also prefigures developments by twentieth century theologians in other contexts of race, class, and gender oppression” (114). The religious principles that Hughes demonstrates are characteristic of Davis’s narrative, that would have been identified by readers of such popular religious and sentimental narratives of the nineteenth century, personified by the Quaker “angel” with whom we are left at the resolution of the story, itself has a particular history in the method of control over human productivity submerged within

a rhetoric of community and dissent through a penitentiary system. That is, the narrative *telos* of Davis's allegory, concluding in the prison with the Quaker woman administering to the convicts foregrounds the history of the penitentiary as such a space for "religious conversion." Davis's narrative thus participates in a political struggle that pits various forces of labor and capital, subjectivity and law, that mark the industrializing landscape of a technocratic nation. Put differently, the "religious experience" supposedly used in such "liberatory practices" has always been a part of the subsumption of human labor, and the history of such an apparatus reveals the historical changes in how human productivity is managed, maximized, and exploited.¹²

The first "character" in this Porter film, Auburn State Penitentiary, holds a special history in commodified justice in the U.S.; a critical inquiry into the history of Auburn offers a flashpoint in the history of labor subsumption and the production of modern industrial capital.¹³ Certainly, before the advent of the first penitentiary established in the late eighteenth century, methods of enacting justice through punishment did entail detention. However, the establishment

¹² According to Max Weber, the absolute denial of the worldly, the concentration of inner-light over outer appearances did in a way help foster the development of capitalism in the U.S.

The immense importance which was attributed by the Baptist doctrine of salvation to the role of the conscience as the revelation of God to the individual gave their conduct in worldly callings a character which was of the greatest significance for the development of the spirit of capitalism. [...] we have already called attention to that most important principle of the capitalistic ethic which is generally formulated 'honesty is the best policy.' Its classical document is the tract of Franklin quoted above. And even in the judgment of the seventeenth century the specific form of the worldly asceticism of the Baptists, especially the Quakers, lay in the practical adoption of this maxim. (Weber 151)

Also recall that much of the writings of Benjamin Franklin lay at the foundation of Weber's study of the rise of capitalism out of a particular protestant ethic.

¹³ As Dario Melossi and Massimo Pavarini point out about the history of justice's production:

The transition [...] to retributive punishment, that is, the transition from an almost "biological" phenomenon to a juridical category, requires as a necessary precondition for the cultural dominance of the concept of equivalent based upon an exchange value. [...] Under a socio-economic system such as feudalism—in which the historic development of "human labor measured in time" (read: wage labor) was still incomplete—retributive punishment determined by an exchange value, was not in a position to find in the privation of time the equivalent of the crime. (2-3)

That maturation to the point in which time becomes the compensatory element in this new industrial production of justice, a time made standard by the capitalist sovereign with a specific view toward human labor, emerges in the contested field of the nineteenth century.

of these institutions becomes a study in the use rise of the nation-state as specific apparatuses to secure the well-being and growth of capitalism. Pre-penitentiary workhouses had been established by local governments as an apparatus that reorganizes the landscape in preparation for the large-scale productivity that became the aegis of nascent industrial production. As Rusche and Kirchheimer demonstrate about the political economy of the early mercantilist state, the capitalist mode of production needed (and still needs) to keep wages low in order to compel work. The state, then, emerges as the site for the management of this in “civil society”—i.e. a manifestation of the social relation, but seen here as a way to assure and secure its productive systems of surplus accumulation.¹⁴ The first houses of correction then, accompany an attempt to remake the landscape of the general population into “productive labor.” These early institutions had the dual objective of not only forcing “unwilling” persons to work, but also as instruction, preparing the person to sell their labor.¹⁵ The earliest houses of correction appeared in nation-states where this principle had most highly developed—England and Holland—a feature that immediately illuminates the link between houses of correction and capital accumulation. The first “correctional” facility (and here I must note the rhetoric of “correction” as advancing an idea of proper relation to “civil society” as one in which the person was willing to sell labor) used to handle the poor and the vagrant classes that populated many country sides in England was the Bridewell in 1555 (Kircheimer and Rusche 42).¹⁶

¹⁴ “The state established maximum wage scales in order to halt the rise of wages resulting from free competition in the labor market. Wage policy was governed by the principle that a country cannot become rich unless there is a large body of people forced to work out of sheer poverty” (Kirchheimer and Rusche 31).

¹⁵ “The Thomastic doctrine of the necessity of labor as an indispensable, natural condition of life meant that man has a duty to work only to the extent required for the preservation of the individual and society” (Kircheimer and Rusche 35).

¹⁶ The concentration on the inner-self of those deemed deviants often saw hard labor as a means of spiritual reform. In this view, hard, manual labor replaces corporal punishment.

The workhouse was an institution that had been used in several European nations as a means of controlling poor people. Primarily successful in the Netherlands, it had been used experimentally in the Dutch

The original uses of imprisonment prior to the penitentiary were also tied with managing social life as a means for controlling threat by isolating agitators and catalysts from the masses.¹⁷ In fact, as Adam Jay Hirsh has argued, the logic behind the establishment of habeas corpus was intended not to keep prisoners out of custody, but to keep them in it: because custody was intended only to hold the offender for trial or until the punishment could be enacted, and because housing the prisoner was a comparatively hefty expense, sheriffs did everything they could to accommodate the offender's release (8).

Foucauldian scholarship, particularly that of critics like Thomas Dumm, argues that the particular philosophies of the Quakers emerging from enlightenment principles of dualities of the soul versus the outer works of the body mark an important shift in the historical significance of

administration of justice, but not as a primary means of punishment. In England, the workhouse, also known as the Bridewell, was designed to impress upon poor people work habits that would lead to their acceptance of employment in textile mills. [...] Throughout the more advanced mercantile countries, workhouses were being used to supply labor for manufactories of all sorts. (Dumm 79-80)

With this shift in punishment, while apparently concentrating on the reform of the individual transgressor, the shift to hard labor as punishment in effect projects the necessary rewriting of public as a working public.

The ritual of public executions of punishments traditionally called for communal participation in the offender's humiliation; the activity of castigating the individual by society of ostracizing the offender from society by society could be said to be an act that calls the cohesion of society into being. However, as Dumm illustrates that clear structure that dictated the terms of the relationship between the communal whole and the individuals that compose it—in effect enforcing a philosophy of community that states the social is mediated through an idea of the individual as transgressor—was in its implementation filled with potential complications. Dumm's argument that

[t]he social relation that was an integral part of the old system of punishment, however, was not important, and indeed could be counterproductive, to the goal of just punishment defined by Beccaria, because the measure of punishment could vary greatly depending upon the mood of the public. In Philadelphia, the citizenry responded to the spectacle of chain gangs dressed in ragged clothing, working under armed guards in the streets, in the manner prescribed by tradition; they harassed and taunted them, sometimes threw stones and vegetables at them, and generally made sport of them in an attempt to humiliate them. It has been recorded that at times a prisoner would manage to break free and assault his tormentors, sometimes using his ball and chain to strike passersby. [...] Because the new law demanded a length of time in confinement as a part of the sentence, and because the punishment was public [the wheelbarrow law was the first attempt at refining the penitentiary code, but prisoners were forced for a time to also work chain gangs], the overall effect was merely to make the [older] English Code apply to a broader category of convicts than before. (Dumm 97-8)

¹⁷ “Like the Tower of London in England, Massachusetts jails also occasionally held political prisoners. Indian sachems, Quakers, Jesuits, and Loyalists took their turns in colonial cells. In all such cases, the purposes of incarceration was negative. It prevented the persons from causing political or moral harm to the community” (Hirsh 7).

houses of correction. In the seventeenth century, figures like William Penn had begun to theorize that the isolation and division of inmates would be the solution to the social problem of violations to the codes of civil society. The Pennsylvania model utilized an intricate system of isolation and division of prisoners “according to an articulated typology and envisioned forced confinement for vagabonds and the idle” (Melossi and Pavarini 103). By 1785, Castle Island Prison, guarding Boston Harbor, began holding *convicted* criminals (Hirsh 10). But historians of the penitentiary trace its birth to Pennsylvania in 1786 with the founding of Walnut Street Jail, defined by a systematic substitution of corporal and public forms of punishment with sentences of time and hard labor and confinement *as the punishment* (Dumm 97).

The establishment of the penitentiary as a systematic means to handling deviations from the moral code of civil society is a result, according to Dumm, of enlightenment principles that allowed for religious tolerance, specifically a view of the human as a division between inner belief and outer “works” (66).¹⁸ The location for civil discipline and justice moves under this new technology to the “inner soul” of the human, as the Quakers “increasingly devoted their efforts to the project of developing individual autonomy through techniques which would encourage the establishment of self-discipline. Such internal discipline, necessary for the reception of Inner Light, was to be shaped through prayer and silent meditation” (70). For the Quakers, according to Dumm, discipline that concentrated on “external coercion” was not capable of touching “the inner-self” (70). Under this logic, the method of imprisonment swerved

18 The Quakers enshrined tolerance not only as a principle, but as a policy. More specifically, the separation between inner belief and outer work established by the Lockean liberals as a means of protecting the freedom of religious belief, also enabled authorities to influence the actions of subjects and, more fundamentally, actually to construct these subjects as liberal individuals. The doctrine of tolerance was directed against the use of coercion by the state in regard to matters of belief, but the separation of inner from outer contributed to a new correspondence between public and private that was to greatly enhance the capacity of civil society generally, and government as a servant to civil society, to exert social control. (Dumm 66)

from being the preferred method of retribution for political crimes to being the central method for realizing justice. This method was desirable because not only did it preserve the offender's life, but it promoted inner reflection, a means to individual self-improvement. Imprisonment encouraged the cultivation of selfhood that, as Dumm points out, was "responsive to persuasion" (78).

Walnut Street helps identify the moment of a collective cultural logic that not just moved emphasis from reform through physical coercion to "friendly persuasion" and spiritual recuperation, but demonstrated also how this method was vital to the construction and appearance of the individual completely divested of any social bond, thus clearing the way for an industrial organizational model of labor. Benjamin identifies this tendency with the increased mechanization of nineteenth century urban life.¹⁹ The establishment of an intensive system for the reform of the individual that imagines an interior-soul as its contested field, this mechanization of the human being to the extent that it figures entire populations as isolated sites for varying degrees of moral conformity, acts as the real hallmark of a switch in the execution of civil and social reciprocity.

This concept would ground the conditions for discussions and conflicts over coerced labor throughout the nineteenth century. After abolition, "individual free choice" became the mantra for a system which compelled the worker to labor. Of course, such rhetorical maneuverings of individual freedoms are necessary for capitalism's expansion. That is,

¹⁹ Quoting Paul Valery, Benjamin writes

Valery, who had a fine eye for the cluster of symptoms called "civilization," has characterized one of the pertinent facts. "The inhabitant of the great urban centers," he writes, "reverts to a state of savagery—that is, of isolation. The feeling of being dependent on others, which used to be kept alive by need, is generally blunted in the smooth functioning of the social mechanism. Any improvement of this mechanism eliminates certain modes of behavior and emotions." Comfort isolates; on the other hand, it brings those enjoying it closer to mechanization. (*Arcades Project* 174)

fluctuations, exploitation, imbalances that arise in this new social relation of production are matters of individual happenstance, not characteristic to systematic problems.

Against this backdrop, we can view Benjamin Rush's attempt to recreate a population as a series of what Dumm calls individualized "republican machines"—citizens that would best be suited for a republican form of government (Dumm 83).²⁰ Rush's philosophy proclaimed that controlling the patient's environment by monitoring and controlling the patient's motions was the quickest path to curing deviant behavior (Dumm 91). One of Rush's inventions for his asylum was designed to do just that: Rush's tranquilizer eerily calls forth an image that emblemizes the path through which criminal justice will be distributed *en masse* [see figure 5-7]. Because of the division of the human into a dialectic of inner thought and outer works, curing the social ills of the mind must first embody techniques that would control the stimuli that influenced those mental faculties. As Dumm points out, Rush took the position that if those stimuli were controlled, so too could particular ills that supposedly had been caused by the overstimulation of the senses. Extreme cases required extensive control of an array of stimuli; the penitentiary emerged as the overarching site of the complex project of moral reform through scientific, mechanized stimulus control (92). One key characteristic of this new paradigm of punishment is the principle of solitary confinement, a principle that Dumm argues was developed by Rush's asylum as a means of modifying socially incorrect behavior. The eighteenth century produced jails that "didn't work" because of a tendency to overstimulate the offenders, and thus prison and legal reformers wrote provisions for controlling stimuli into Pennsylvania law. Every minute detail of the convict's life—diet, sleeping patterns, grooming habits, and other daily

20 The proper training for their roles in the great machine of government was indeed to be accomplished in these institutions where morality was traditionally formed, namely, the church, home, and school. [...] But when these institutions failed—and in the disruptive circumstances of the revolutionary era they were bound to fail from time to time—others were needed to inculcate those internal checks and balances. (Dumm 91)



Figure 5-7. Benjamin Rush's Tranquilizer Device.

activities and social interactions—became the material for imagining reintegration of the individual into civil society (Dumm 101). With this establishment of the Walnut Street Prison way of handling convicts, work becomes the means and ends of punishment; or put another way, hard work was seen as in a fundamentally new way, had an new place in the logic of emerging criminal justice and a panacea for new social ills of individuals that compose abstract labor.²¹

This example of the penitentiary-as-factory, in which the human is made into discrete, abstract components which fall under increasingly automatized attempts to manage behavior, participates in the development of capital and the contradictions that lie at its very fibers. The fragmentation of the human into a complex of organs examinable in isolation contributes to the cultural feature of alienation.²² The definitive logic marking the birth of a system of criminal justice within an industrializing nation-state turns on the fact of alienation. This advances distinctions and anxieties towards criminality with respect to a law-abiding citizenship—the situation of the completely alienated worker has as its final personification the convict in the

²¹ In April 1790, in large part because of the sentiment that convicts had too much contact with each other, hindering the means of reforming the violator's behavior, the act initiating this first modern penitentiary was passed, reading "the laws heretofore made for the purpose of carrying the said provisions of the constitution into effect have in some degree failed of success, from the exposure of offenders employed at hard labor to public view, and from the communication with each other not being sufficiently restrained within the places of confinement" (quoted in Dumm 102). The act called for the construction of cells "six feet in width, eight feet in length and nine feet in height, [...] separated from the common yard by walls of such height as, without unnecessary exclusion of light and air will prevent all external communication, for the purpose of confining therein the more hardened and atrocious offenders, who [...] have been sentenced to hard labor for a term of years" (quoted in Dumm 102).

²² Marx writes:

The fact that in the development of the productive powers of labor in the objective conditions of labor, objectified labor, must grow relative to living labor [...] appears from the standpoint of capital not in such a way that one of the moments of social activity—objective labor—becomes the ever more powerful body of the other moment, of subjective, living labor, but rather—and this is important for wage labour—that the objective conditions of labour assume an ever more colossal independence represented by its very extent, opposite living labour, and that social wealth confronts labor in more powerful portions as an alien and dominant power. The emphasis comes to be placed not on the state of being *objectified*, but on the state of being *alienated*, dispossessed, sold. (*Grundrisse* 831)

modern system of criminal justice in the United States, a situation which will ground communal participation. As the founding of the first penitentiaries in Philadelphia saw reform and creation of “inner-light” as the fundamental element of the human condition, any anxieties concerning incarceration may now be more easily brushed aside. And as the penitentiary developed under U.S.-style industry working in tandem with (or rather deploying as its guarantor) U.S.-style democracy, so too did a notion of the human living within the industrial community. The rhetorical shift of carceral punishment as reciprocity for acts against “the people” was meant to empty any challenges to the disciplinary authority, an authority to which the people themselves were also subject as citizens. The fact that the penitentiary arises out of the modes of production betrays the idea that productive work before the machine becomes the fundamental precondition of U.S.-industrial democratic citizenship.

We can also mark Auburn Prison as a point of departure from the original model of Walnut Street and Cherry Hill, in that the concept of “productivity” is introduced as part of the establishment of modern penitentiaries. In one sense, this whole concept of productivity morphs an understanding of work in the prison beyond a solely rehabilitory effect; the isolation of the prisoner now seems eradicated, for that prisoner’s labor seems a part of something that goes beyond the individual cell—something in communion with all other workers. In this sense, the penitentiary begins to occupy a staunch shift in the cultural logic of what will count as “productivity.” A footnote in notebook three of Marx’s *Grundrisse* directs the point:

What is *productive labor* and what is *not*, a point very much dispute back and forth since Adam Smith made the distinction, has to emerge from the dissection of the various aspects of capital itself. *Productive labor* is only that which produces *capital*. Is it not crazy, asks e.g. (or at least something similar) Mr. Senior, that the piano maker is a *productive worker*, but not the piano player? But this is exactly the case. The piano maker reproduces *capital*; the pianist only exchanges his labor for revenue. But doesn’t the pianist produce music to satisfy our musical ear, does he not even to a certain extent produce the latter? He does indeed: his labor produces something; but that does not make

it *productive labor* in the economic sense; no more than the labor of the madman who produces delusions is productive. Labor *becomes productive only by producing its own opposite*. (305)

Because the whole conception of “work” was beginning to shift, insofar as capital advances and develops to find new means of accumulation of surpluses through advances in automation and machine production, a new appropriation of the social quality of work begins to dominate the landscape—i.e. the industrial factory.

Marx’s thoughts of the new arrangement of labor given spatial meaning in the concept of the factory can be seen in the *Grundrisse*’s fragment on machines: the spatial relation of the factory to the market situates a new relation of living versus objectified labor. Citing Andrew Ure, a proponent of the factory system of production, Marx begins to concentrate his critical faculties on the factory as a cooperation of several different workers, becoming the material location for labor in abstraction.

“In its most vigorous sense, this term conveys the idea of a vast automaton, composed of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs operating in concert and without interruption towards one and the same aim, all these organs being subordinated to a motive force which moves itself.” (Quoted in *Grundrisse* 690)

The factory stands for Marx as a radical shift in the productive process:

Once adopted into the production process of capital, the means of labor passes through different metamorphosis whose culmination is the *machine*, or rather, *an automatic system of machinery* (system of machinery: the *automatic* one is merely its most complete and most adequate form, and alone transforms machinery into a system), set in motion by a an automaton, a moving power that moves itself; this automaton consisting of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs, so than the workers themselves are cast merely as its conscious linkages. (*Grundrisse* 692).

As a new means of organizing labor, the factory stands as a social location that apparently fragments labor as a collective force, and at the same time a system which enables the worker to give more of her time to capital (701). More than that, the factory as the site and situation for individual productivity and of the exchange of labor (and thus also market) exists as a field for

resistance, a text into which can be read, when the factory overlaps into the justice system through the penitentiary, the situation of the human against a nation-state.

The method of isolation invented at Walnut Street assumed that solitary confinement was the best means to reforming individual behavior. But Walnut Street, because it bases its daily operations on an absolute segregation and elimination of all contact, was ill-prepared for industrial organization. As Melossi and Pavarini observe, “in a system of solitary confinement, labor could not be economical since it was of an artisan nature. On the other hand, in the conception of the penitentiary, work, even in ideal terms, was not endowed with any economic functions; on the contrary, it was seen as a purely therapeutic instrument” (127). The advance of industry that enlisted new organizational strategies for human labor put this system in which work was for purely “therapeutic,” i.e. correctional means, into crisis. The shifts in modes of production brought the accusation that the Walnut Street Penitentiary system’s method of solitary confinement deprived the open market of labor, and actually, because of the un-economic nature of the labor performed there, was detrimental to the reform of the offenders by reducing their working capacities (128). Reform for the prisoner was no longer enough to justify this system, or rather, the system was challenged because the production going on at these sites was not “productive enough” and thus not “labor”—outside of capital’s reach for the productive process. Importantly, the logic of “productive work” which was determined as such in direct correlation to the dominant modes of production in the culture was introduced to the penitentiary system.²³ Machinery and the social organization of collective labor in the factory forced a

²³ “The chronic deficit which local authorities incurred in running those institutions resulted, as we have seen essentially from two causes: the high cost of supervision and the non-productiveness of institutional labour. This in abstract terms, there were two possible solutions: to find a system which was more economic to run or to raise the productivity of institutional labour” (Melossi and Pavarini 125).

reconceptualization of the relation between the penitentiary and “reform” or “productivity” (Rusche and Kirchheimer 91).

By the 1820s, because of the demands of industry, the State of New York overhauled and refined the original ideas of the Pennsylvania mode of total isolation. In the “free market world,” labor was becoming more automated, specified, and outfitted for efficiency. New technologies of manufacturing made forced labor, which had previously been the norm to workhouses prior to industrialization, less and less viable (and by association less valuable). Methods of production began to outstrip the utility of labor-in-isolation. Because of the differences in productivity between the penitentiary and the “outside world,” the house of correction began to partake in a segregated universe—wholly apart from the new “real world” of productivity—a social anachronism. Being confined to the prison takes on an added dimension on being condemned to exist *outside* of time—a feature which still is residual in contemporary cultural attitudes towards the penitentiary. Because, however, the activity within the early penitentiary counted less as “work” under industrial rule, and because this prison institution itself had to exist in the “new real world” of industrial capital, the institution risked fading out of the grasp of time-for-capital by losing its economic status. This made the penitentiary’s economic viability a financial burden for the authorities: Auburn had to “be more economical” in its maintenance and operation, and the cost-cutting measures yielded disastrous results. Dumm observes that those cells at Auburn were much different than their Pennsylvania counterparts, having no yards, stacked on top of each other in the interior of the building, and were so small “that the prisoners barely had room to turn around in them, much less exercise.” In 1821, New York condemned 80 new prisoners to Auburn’s new wing. Within six months, five of those new prisoners were dead and over half

were deemed “unhealthy enough, emotionally or physically, to be in danger of losing their lives” (116).

Auburn at this juncture employs what historians of criminal justice term “the silent system”—solitary confinement by night and communal work by day, under complete and absolute silence and total supervision by guards, some with whips and lashes. In this way, a new system of distributing punishment and thus enacting justice had a reciprocal relation to the modes of production, of “factory work” that brought an ever-more refined and complex division of labor into being. The activity of work in the Auburn system itself frames and morphs labor into a way of maintaining surveillance over the prisoner, now working with other convicts in common work rooms, a new way which as Dumm points out was meant to solve the sanitary and health problems of the large-scale penitentiary while simultaneously participating in the logic that isolation was conducive to reform (116). Auburn, while nominally showing the same rehabilitative objectives as its Pennsylvanian predecessors—work as means of rehabilitation, enforced new practices that enabled it to become an institution geared toward a mass population of potential convicts.

Auburn’s silent system succeeded in implementing a sense that swept away the social and shared quality of labor from the surface of the idea of work in the abstract. One of the defining characteristics of this new method, Dumm points out, were the substitution of systematic surveillance in place of cell walls, hard labor under constant watch of the lash to maintain silence, guards and wardens as workshop supervisors (116-7). This method of implementing order which Foucault has famously placed alongside the factory system to ingrain habits of obedience within the cultural collective psyche is vital to understanding the place of the prison system under industrial, factory organization; while it touts as its mantra social reform and

progress, it effectively shackles human labor to a position of absolute, unquestionable servitude in preparation for its own exploitation.²⁴ This breakdown into individuals is a feature Melossi and Pavarini recognize in both the Philadelphian and Auburn models as well, the “destruction of every *parallel relation* (between prisoner-workers, between ‘equals’)” (151). Instead, work is mapped onto a vertical relation, one of hierarchies, not equality and solidarity. Dumm’s analysis here leads into an exposition of human labor that is mechanized, specialized, isolated, extracted from a totality. As Debord has observed, “the triumph of an economic system founded on separation leads to the proletarianation of the world” (21). Time here seems to be a vehicle for that isolating activity—no longer does time seem integral to the human life, but abstracted and recreated as the newly “objective” mode by which the part of human activity can be measured and synchronized to maximize efficiency. Time-as-sentence in the penitentiary-factory appear as the machine that drives productivity. The penitentiary is the state-sanctioned means to segregation *tout-court*; it had as its reason for being the isolation the human from the communal, the alienation of worker from her work, and the creation of proletarians within a working definition of “productivity.”

Auburn emerges as a reminder, an objectification of the state imposing itself within the social relation, becoming the material association between warehousing humans and the new division of productivity, the place where human labor is subsumed under a systematic industrial organization, the most pressing, uncanny psychological, subconscious reminder of human

²⁴ As Dumm observes:

The penitentiary isolated the inmate, yet did so in such a way as to emphasize that isolation was a shared characteristic of all inmates. [...] The disconcert for the interior reform of the inmate, the simple teaching of habits in order to shape behavior was echoed in the factory discipline of repetition and specialization that was to be the hallmark of U.S. industrial practice. Citizens were broken down into isolated individuals whose social purpose was the accumulation and expansion of wealth. [...] The petty rules, the intricate procedures, the schedules, and finally the silence were born of an expressed desire as the part of responsible citizens to make responsible citizens out of others. Thus democratic despotism is born, the woof of time was broken, only to be reshaped into the regular and predictable time of the prison workday. (140)

alienation that takes place under this specific mode of productivity. Inheriting some of the assumptions of the discipline of labor and its role on “normal” social human behavior, Auburn fused this Quaker model with a method of organizing the new “individual” into a system of production under the auspices of industrial progress—in short, remade the activity of the penitentiary back into what would count as productive labor. The penitentiary should not be seen as a mere side effect of the fractures and unaccountable gaps and contradictions of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century capitalism, but a vital means to understanding the invention and management of industrialized workers, a fundamental aspect in the development of wide reaching capital. By redefining the social landscape as a population of citizens cast before the potential of the factory/penitentiary, isolation and individualism settles into the cultural subconscious.²⁵ Capital reaches through the cells of the penitentiary to restructure the prisoner as worker, divesting the human from her own labor, and at the same time marking every carrier of living labor *as subject*, that is, always at risk or in contact with this tomb of industrial production. The penitentiary is this absent presence—a chilling effect indexed by Davis’s novella – and mark a ruthless reorganization and manipulation of collective, social labor under a new logic of industrial production and exchange.

Stepping Out of Time: The Mechanical Reproducibility of Life and Death

Porter’s motion-picture text points to a new rhythm of production based on the technological relationship that subordinates humans to automation. The penitentiary-- a site where human labor is made available en masse, and thus lends itself more quickly to becoming labor abstracted, and which exists in negotiation with the most developed modes of production-- wedges into this

²⁵ About the concept of how prisoners were organized on the new penitentiary model, Melossi and Pavarini write inmates ‘confined to short sentences’ were separated. The latter group was assigned to special institution in which work organization was more productive, requiring a higher grade of ability and thus a longer period of confinement. [...] The most important objective achieved by the introduction of productive work in the prison was the possibility (exploited for the whole of the nineteenth century) of lowering the cost of production in certain industrial sectors and of restraining rising wage levels through competition. (129-30)

structural transformation of time. The penitentiary is both an experiment in time and the dense materiality of a logic that calls forth new mediums for distributing equivalences and commensurability. The penitentiary and the motion-picture share the same assumptions of time objectified.

If the objectification and commodification of time results from the dynamics of production, exchange, and accumulation, and the penitentiary as a system of reciprocity, justice, and segregation of those marked criminal from a “law-abiding public” is distinguishable from that public through its differences in time, such a neat separation and objectification will run into trouble when an analysis of objectified labor-time is undertaken. In order to calculate value, a common temporal unit of measure becomes necessary to place concrete labor as a degree of abstract labor. Time-as-measurement seems a particular apparatus of industrial state-capital. This aspect seems a fundamental law of narrative “realism” made problematic, the aporias within this rubric for capitalism’s production of value that breaks the rational mode, seemingly “unreal.” Time *per se* is not outside capital, if we solely understand time as measure of living labor. The *excesses* of labor, or more precisely, that which steps out of time, run counter to this mechanization of daily life. The possibility of an outside of commodifiable labor-time is subject of Antonio Negri’s analysis:

In Marx, time is given to us as the matter of equivalence and the measure of the equivalent. Bit by bit, however, alongside the abstract development of social mediatization and of the subjectification of abstract labor, time itself becomes substance, to the point that it becomes the fabric of the whole of being, because all of being is implicated in the web of the relation of production: *being* is equal to *product of labor*, *temporal being*. [...] At the level at which the institutional development of the capitalistic system invests the whole of life, time is not the measurement of life but life itself. (34-5)

Time as measure of human productivity ripples with the same fantastic qualities of a commodity, at once appearing external, having an intrinsic value, but at the same time having that external

value undermined by the nature of labor itself. Because time becomes the measure of value that is necessary for an object to be comprehended as a commodity, time functions simultaneously as a medium to value and a thing that has value. Negri's analysis begins with this axiom that time under industrial and post-industrial modes of production measures the amount of labor exerted within a given object, and thus its value, while also reducing labor to one homogenous substance by presenting it in commensurable relations.²⁶ If time then is measure for human labor, it must therefore appear external to human labor, external to production. But, according to Negri,

“external” can only be understood with reference to use-value. The measure of exchange-value is determined from outside, that is by temporal quantities formulated on use-value, determined immediately. The *immediacy* of the determination, considered in relation to the function of *mediation* that the quantitative unit determines, is a real enigma. (24)

Ultimately, Negri argues, because the “productive force of human labor is irreducible to pure temporal measurement,” in and of itself enigmatic in describing productivity, a labor theory of value and time would seem to be wrought with a specific paradox: using an apparently extrinsic element, the use of time as measurement, to comprehend what for Marx is most intrinsic to human labor (25).²⁷ When time reigns down from a sovereign power as the direct conclusion for social transgression, that is, when it is reanimated as the artificial force for production, a new emphasis will meditate on the question of time married to narratological technologies of consciousness. Specifically, the motion-picture, as is illustrated in this Edwin Porter film, attempts to demonstrate the reign of time as measure of commodity value, as guarantor of the

²⁶ “Therefore, time measures labor insofar as it reduced it to homogenous substance but it also determines its productive power in the same form: through the multiplication of average temporal units. Therefore, in relation to labour, time is at once *measure* and *matter, form* and *substance*” (*Time for Revolution* 24, emphasis in the original).

²⁷ The aporia of time-as-measurement of productivity can be recognized when
(1) in real subsumption all use value is drawn into exchange value; (2) but with that the external origin of the measure of time (based on the externality of use-value) recedes and measure is flattened into the process itself, (3) if measure measures itself, it follows that the process of value concludes in that of command, in tautology and indifference; (4) the trend of productive forces (increase, decrease, transformation) bears no relation to the magnitude of value; (5) complex, productive scientific labor is definitively irreducible to elementary temporal units; (6) productive force is inexplicable. (Negri 27)

social division of labor. If the tranquilizer is the image associated with the establishment of the penitentiary, it is not just the electric chair as the emblem of the modern system, but the *moving image* of an electrocution *passing through time* within the activity of industrial work that best describes the modern situation, synchronizing the human body to the machine of fixed capital, subjecting it to abstracted, reanimated, commodified time [see figure 5-8].

This motion-picture, therefore, participates in a fascination with time and animation as new elements of factory production. The hallmark for this new activity of capturing the remarkable quality of living labor is the motion-picture as technology; in this sense, I modify Gina Dent's thesis (as cited in Angela Davis's *Are Prisons Obsolete*) that the modern penitentiary is made for cinema. The assumptions that bring the penitentiary system into being, that of a narrative of human productivity, the creation of values and surplus value under industrial organization, commodity production, are the means through which *time* becomes a *progressive alienation*. The human is put to death by the machine, completely at the mercy of mechanization: this is the new literary logic of *realism*.²⁸ Commodity logic flattens the activity of narration into the activity of industrial management, particularly concerning how it restructures and reshapes the possibility of time as something manageable. This grounds particular technologies of "realism"—that "reality" becomes graspable as a subject for literary meditation because time "comes out joint" as a result of new "shocks" and stimuli. At a fundamental level, and strictly speaking, the motion-picture has to derive its requisite motion

²⁸ I take my cue here from Gilles Deleuze in his text on time and cinema: an inorganic conception of time—time as falling under specialized practices of management, has at its formulation the conception of motion-picture as technology (132).



Figure 5-8. Execution frame, Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison

placed upon it by the human mind immersed in automatic movement.²⁹ Death by machine as the first moment in the narrative of industrial criminal justice serves as reminder to which life is almost completely automatic living. The strapped down electrified body is stripped of its own life, reanimated by an electricity that now comes from a new “spirit”—that of electro-metallurgical advance.

Film historians have propped-up the argument that a manipulation of spatial and temporal orientation acted as the starting-point of the early motion-pictures, grounding and structuring the rise for such a technology. Lynn Kirby, for example, links the emergence of a fascination with the motion-picture to the changes in spatial and temporal consciousness that resulted from locomotive technology as “the annihilation of” or “a machine vision for conquering” space and time (2, 7).³⁰ The motion-picture technology immediately presents this case. In this way, time seems to be measured in film also by the activity of the human body in motion, a movement contingent upon machines, a “cog” in a complex whole of a mechanism, living labor at the behest of an inorganic monstrosity. The motion-picture at this juncture serves as a reminder of the anxiety *en masse*, projecting the relation into the general public.

If the early motion-picture was a study in the playful association between how humans experience temporal and spatial relations, the fact that such elements could be abstracted and subjected to “experimentation” offers a fundamentally radical and telling shift: time and space are merely isolated variables and, as abstracted units of measure, become the proper object of

²⁹ “It is only when movement becomes automatic that the artistic essence of the image is realized: *producing a shock to thought, communicating vibrations to the cortex, touching the nervous and cerebral system directly* [...] *automatic movement* gives rise to a spiritual *automation* which reacts in turn on movement” (Deleuze 156).

³⁰ Both panoramic perception and the radically new time consciousness were premised on a fundamental discontinuity and instability: the experience of shock. Besides the shock of temporal disorientation in relation to speed, acceleration, and simultaneity the spectator-passenger was susceptible to the shock of surprise during the train journey (as emblemized by the accident) and the film journey (exemplified by rapid point-of-view shifts within the frame and across different shots) (Kirby 7).

technology, oftentimes presenting themselves as barriers that must be overcome. Andre Gaudreault presents an illuminating example of this ambitious project to colonize time: examining a sequence of frames which depict a man falling through a window, Gaudreault's acumen lies in the fact that the film shows the man falling through a window from one perspective, then replays the action from the other side, rather than following the action itself.³¹ Time here in this example is fungible, negotiable, repeatable; no fidelity to temporal continuity exists. Rather the overcoming of time is also a mastery of space, a potential ubiquity via the new technology. Motion-picture presupposes a new temporality, or in positioning a new temporal logic, objectifies time as the field for experiment—giving it an autonomous structure abstracted from the human.

Running alongside the development of time abstracted from human labor, as objective measurement, up through the aporia of the conclusion to *The Execution of Czolgosz*, the body, while at once marking time through its own labors at producing a commodity of value that can be easily turned into capital, seems measurable by a “time” now wholly abstracted from the human; time seems the property, as does the human body, of the machine. In this context, deviations can be made commensurate through new state-enforced legal codes: “there is no crime other than time itself.” Deleuze writes, “If normal movement subordinates the time of which it gives us an indirect representation, aberrant movement speaks up for an anteriority of time that it presents to us directly, in the basis of the disappropriation of scales, the dissipation of centers and the false continuity of the images themselves” (37).

³¹ Gaudreault concludes:

early filmmakers were more or less consciously considering each shot as an autonomous, self-reliant unit; the shot's objective is to present not a small *temporal* segment of the action but rather the totality of an action unfolding in an homogenous *space*. Between unity of point of view and unity of temporal continuity, the former takes precedent. Before releasing the camera to a subsequent space, everything occurring in the first location is necessarily shown. Spatial anchorage prevails over temporal logic. Stability, persistence, and uniqueness of point of view remain so important that they supersede anachronism. (322)

This formulation would seem to explain the specific anxiety and fascination that is focused into “the person of Czolgosz”³²: as a labor activist, presenting a very real threat to that time, “Czolgosz” the character in the motion-picture short seems in the collective psyche to step out of industrial time, something absolutely other. The strapped-down body of Czolgosz before the electric chair, before the kinoscope, is the guarantor against aberrant movement—or at least in the celebration of the achievement of the state to successfully control aberrant movement as social deviations from the rhythms of “civilized society.”³² In death—in this case the death of a threatening worker—that is produced by machinery, the body is represented as being the perfection of normalized movement.³³

However, as Nancy Cartwright has demonstrated, such an appropriation and establishment of time through the indexing of movement is not just what motion-picture works toward.³⁴ With the body as its centerpiece, cinematic time does not just emphasize and recreate the standard bearer for value in industrial capitalism, but reenacts the particular logic of human subsumption and alienation, subordinate to “something alien.” “As a laboratory technique,”

³² Deleuze writes,

It is still necessary for movement to be normal: movement can only subordinate time, and make it into a number that indirectly measures it, if it fulfills conditions of normality. What we mean by normality is the existence of centers: centers of the revolution of movement itself, of equilibrium of forces; of gravity of moving bodies, and of observation for a viewer able to recognize or perceive the moving body, and to assign movement. [...] Now aberrant movements call into question the status of time as individual representation [...] because it evades the relationship of number. [...] A direct presentation of time does not imply the halting of movement, but rather the promotion of aberrant movement. (36)

³³ Bodies no longer have centers except that of their death when they are exhausted and return to the earth to dissolve there. Force no longer has a center precisely because it *is* inseparable from its relation to other forces. [...] Weights have lost the centres of equilibrium around which they were distributed; masses have lost the centres of gravity around which they were ordered, forces have lost the dynamic centres around which they develop. (Deleuze 142)

³⁴ “As a mode of knowledge,” Cartwright argues, “the film motion study is interesting less for what it showed researchers about the mechanics of human life than for what it tells us now about the cultural desires, pleasures, and fantasies surrounding a modernist dynamic of ‘life’ generated in physiology and medical science and advanced through technologies like the cinema” (4).

Cartwright argues, “cinematography did not simply record or document movement; [...] it regulated discipline and transformed the body studied” (20). The lifeless body of Czolgosz strapped to the electric chair at the end of a panoramic view of Auburn prison grants us a glimpse of the chronology of systematized justice at the turn-of-the-century. An ever-increasingly specialization of all living labor to maximize capital accumulation of surplus. The penitentiary/factory becomes the ultimate labor-saving device; Auburn as factory, industrial production as punishment—the contours of existence within an emerging nationalist technocracy.³⁵

What we witness in correlation to the shift in temporal logic that structures modern, systematized justice is the invention of proletarians, the invention of work as we know it, in dialectical relation to industrial surpluses. “*Virtual man* (or ideal man, product of the re-educative process) which came to be imposed through subordinate work was no longer a *dependent-artisan*, a worker, of/for manufacture and the workshop, but a *worker*, a disciplined operative, subordinated by/to the factory” (Melossi and Pavarini 138). Motion-picture is no mere accidental witness to this project, but is a child of the same totalizing logic of the proletarianization of people. Productivity, value, “reality” ascend to concepts essentially alien to that of living, working people, confronting those very people as a dense materiality of a systematic, oppressive project.

35 the Auburn penitentiary theory, however, puts forward a model of labor subordinated on industrial lines. Where the silent system prevails, labor-saving machines and communal works are introduced along with factory discipline. The contract system thus provides the model to accommodate this. The contractor enters the prison, efficiently organizes production, industrializes the workshops, partially pays for works done, manufactures noncraft goods and personally handles the distribution of these goods on the free market. (Melossi and Pavarini 137)

Class and Technology: Popular Mechanics and Participatory Science

If we have in the final frame of this Edison/Porter motion-picture a synchronization—the two distinctive technological devices collapsing into one larger abstraction, “technology,” that has as its definitive characteristic the reduction of the human body to mere part, and not the whole, of production—we must look at Marx’s view of the factory and machinery as intensely ideological:

A machine which is not active in the labour process is useless. In addition, it falls prey to the distinctive power of natural processes. Iron rusts: wood rots. Yarn with which we neither weave nor know is cotton wasted. Living labour must seize on these from merely possible into real and effective use-values. Bathed in the fire of labour, appropriated as a part of its organism, and infused with a vital energy for the performance of the functions appropriate to their concept and to their vocation in the process, they are indeed consumed, but to some purpose, as elements in the formation of new use-value, new products, which are capable of entering into individual consumption as means of subsistence or into a new labor process as means of production. (*Capital* 289-90)

The machine, in this passage by Marx, cannot be conceived apart from the human element -- “bathed in the fire of labor.” But the concept of the machine now ascends to a sublime moment in the history of management as depicted in this particular motion-picture. The two formerly distinct elements seem to fade into one fetishized image of production—the machine and human labor as one. The disturbing image here suggests the objectification of living labor, thus also suggesting a much more weighty, thorough, and all-encompassing power of the nation-state in league with capitalism. Those who do not seem a part of this technological monstrosity, those who seem to be able to control it are marked here as either professionals, the two doctors measuring the heartbeat and rate of the prisoner, or personifications of the technocratic state—the guardsmen/wardens/technicians who strap labor down and who pull the switches. The machine here lies at the point of contact between class formations, and such a relation is compounded by the situation of screening this motion-picture, necessitating a disidentification with labor, the suggestion that to view oneself as worker is to live in subordinate relations to

machinery. I argue that this apparent confrontation between worker and machine, this evasion and disidentification, is the situation of technology.³⁶

Of course, technology here seems to become the site of labor fragmentation in favor of industrial citizenship. That is, the construction of citizenship *depends upon* the mechanical fragmentation of humans in concert with each other through their capacity to labor. Technology has commonly been criticized as the place where labor is degraded and fragmented into intellectual power of production in opposition to manual labor.³⁷ Labor in this culminating image has been disembodied, or at least the laboring body has been rendered just another machine. The bare elements of the human body, life and death, can be created mechanically by one monolithic technology operating in concert whose components here are the electric chair and the kinoscope. Under the technological fragmentation of labor at the behest of the machine—animating life and mechanically reproducing death, living labor, what really creates value, has been approximated and no longer seems to originate in the human body alone but in electricity.

In this sense, any and all types of “technology” must take into account specific divisions of labor that foster any and all types of production in conjunction with the recreation of human labor subjected to what it had originally created in labor-time. In shorthand, we can speak of a “classness” that is impressed onto the mass understanding of “technology.” Early motion-pictures exemplify this new technological situation, both in production and reception. Robert C.

³⁶ Paolo Virno’s interpretation of Marx’s fragment on machines is useful in the vein: “Abstract knowledge,” which can be, but is not necessarily “scientific, technical knowledge,” by nature of its increasing abstraction and distancing from production ascends to direct production, “becomes the principle productive force, thus relegating repetitive and compartmentalized labor to a residual position” (265). Knowledge thus exists as “technology” as both objectifies and incarnate, abstract, yet fixed. This seems to remove material human agency from labor, placing it “alongside the productive process, instead of constituting its principle agent (266).

³⁷ As Ronald Takaki has observed, technology (particularly innovations in steam power) seemed a way for people to replace their own bodies as sources of labor. However, in the process of mechanization, “technology actually did not eliminate bodily labor; rather it degraded labor, separating the intellectual power of production from manual labor” (151-2).

Allen points out that the early motion-picture exhibits were primarily a part of inexpensive amusement for the working-classes in vaudeville programs prior to 1906. Between 1897 and 1901, these motion-picture shorts had oftentimes been given the title of a “chaser”—acts which supposedly bored the theatergoer so that vaudeville managers used them to “chase” patrons from the theater in order to make room for new ones. Allen’s argument is rather persuasive and instructive though: the purpose of these “chasers” was “not so much to drive the audience from the theater as it was to announce that the program had run its course. The chaser in this sense was not a particularly bad act, but the repetition of the act” (“Contra” 107). Between 1887 and 1891, kinetoscopic motion-picture technology was confined to individual peep-show devices in penny and phonograph arcades and hotel lobbies. By 1895, Allen writes, Edison had demonstrated the economic practicability and commercial utility of the motion-picture as popular entertainment (“Vitascope” 144-5). Materially, it is true that Edison added only his own corporate name to the invention of the kinoscope; yet he offered corporate backing—the legal and commercial promotional team, necessary for its success (“Vitascope” 148, 152).

The advent of motion-picture technology as it became a mass-cultural phenomenon is indelibly linked to the emergence of an imperialist sovereignty, and, as has been referenced above, played more than a coincidental role in the ascent of an “American public” within a global capitalistic design. Charles Musser writes on the links between motion-picture technology and the new imperialism of the industrialized nation-state: “With the Cuban Crisis, most theaters showed pertinent ‘war films’ for weeks and months without interruption; in many cases, moving pictures became a standard feature. This sudden increase in demand gave exhibitors like American Vitograph new opportunities to big-time showmanship” (32). This supply-and-demand neoclassical economic logic, though, assumes that the emergence of the motion-picture as a

cultural phenomenon that emerged as a reaction, a passive phenomenon, without recognizing the agency of motion-picture technology and the way it created a certain means of productivity, or a logic of what will count as productive, and what will count as *progress* within a medium that is structured on a class-based conception of time. Repetition and circulation seems in part to become ingrained onto the daily lives of those whom frequented these exhibitions, and seems also to become a class-differentiated characteristic. Film historian Alan Williams has brought attention to the idea that a significant number of early motion-picture productions also were documentaries that filmed factory work and work-related activities (155). Under the short motion-picture, historicity is abstracted and reanimated—the desire to know, which is a historical desire, is fulfilled without the act of critically thinking through history.³⁸ Essentially, the motion-picture technology’s participation in the technological, class-compositions helped define the interactions, social relations, and activities of everyday life.³⁹

Many of the first motion-pictures made their object the activity of labor because the emphasis of motion as fetish emphasized mechanical production. By 1883 trains had so affected

³⁸ “Silent cinema continually showed civilization, the city, the flat, everyday objects, objects of art of cult, every possible artifact. However,” Deleuze writes, “it passes on a kind of naturalness to them, which is as it were the secret and beauty of the silent-image [...] The visual image shows the structure of society, its situation, its places and functions, the attitudes and roles, the action and reaction of the individuals, in short, the form and the contexts” (225-6).

³⁹ This fragmentation in daily life in industrial culture must most certainly be interrogated along class lines, for it allowed for the possibility of leisure-time which gave rise to the possibility of such a mass-art form. Film Scholar Garth Jowett argues “The single-most important reason favoring the growth of all recreational activity was the increase in available leisure time. The decline in the work of American workers meant more time for reading and other forms of self-improvement. Thus in nonagricultural industries, the work week decline by about the hours between 1850-1900 from 66 to 56 hours” (197). Jowett’s study points to an increase in “amusements” in distinguishing and segmenting the daily existence of the urban (often immigrant) worker at the turn of the century: numerous urban recreational facilities such as dime museums, dance halls, beer gardens, saloons, bowling alleys, and billiard parlors began to spring up in the latter years of the nineteenth century (159). Jowett argues that motion-pictures could transcend some of those bounds because vaudeville theaters that also showed motion-pictures were very cheap, and they could be enjoyed despite the language barriers found in many neighborhoods comprising of newly immigrated workers. The material conditions for the motion-picture at the very end of the century presumes a social relation composed of intricate and complex divisions of the social stratification.

the landscape that a standardized time was established to accommodate the first “truly national railroad network” (Kirby 51).⁴⁰ Because the advent of motion-pictures occurs at the end of the era that Kirby correctly identifies as mechanically and temporally defined by the railroad, we can see the railroad as a “protocinematic phenomenon, a significant cultural force influencing the emergence and development of the cinema in both the United States and Europe” (2-3). The locomotive remained the sign not only of the coordination and establishment of a new type of time, but also the sign of the advance of individual capital in the fields of coal, iron, steel, lumber, livestock, and other industries of manufacture (Kirby 4). Furthermore, the motion-picture offered an embodiment of the new techniques of perception that had been bathed in the fire of industrialism. The railroad situated passengers prefigured cinema by situating “viewers” into a relation which prepared them for participation in a new public as the fodder for the new regimes of industrial production.⁴¹ Kirby argues that the train image includes an anxiety of threat and “terror,” but does so as a film image, shocks viewers and passengers into mere spectators (62). However, Kirby does not explicitly link this relation of humans made double through the railroad/motion picture precisely to the relations of production as do I. In this sense, David Sowell’s reminder that the railroad system’s presence in industrializing space proved more than

⁴⁰ Both Alan Trachtenberg and Lynne Kirby have written on the railroad’s influence on the establishment of nationalized, standardized time. “With the rationalization of time came the rationalization of markets coordinated by the railroads—which could now steam through the last remaining local obstacles that impeded the efficient pursuit of profit on a national scale. People and goods could not be regulated as a single unit, as the country could be regulated in relation to the city, and all territories could be bound together in the post-Civil War era” (Kirby 52).

⁴¹ “As *perceptual* paradigm, the railroad established a new specifically modern mode of perception that the cinema absorbed naturally. In other words, the kind of perceptions that came to dramatize the experience of the passenger on the train became that of the spectator in the cinema,” Kirby writes. “The perceptual paradigm of cinematic spectatorship includes a charge in temporal consciousness—an orientation to synchronicity and simultaneously embodies in the railroads’ industrialization of standard time in 1883. Simultaneously as a mode of consciousness infected cinematic spectatorship form the beginning and became institutionalized in the classical system of alternation and parallel editing” (7).

merely contentious—but was the starting point of new anxieties about industrialization in the communities of class sects—is useful. The locomotive, a technological device that many geared emblematic of an impending, violent revolution, especially in 1877 and 1894, was a dense materiality of these slippages, fears, and contradictions felt at the expense of industry. The locomotive becomes in many ways the emblem of nineteenth-century class war *tout court*: a material condition for the social antagonisms of capital wealth and labor-shackled-in-iron.

This particular motion-picture explicitly links the locomotive to the electric chair—one particular technology that embodies the anxieties and antagonism of one era morphs into the technological relation of production of another. *The Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison* straddles two different eras of conflict, offering a transition and resolution of the conflicts of one particular mode of production with the “technologies” of a new generation that breathes a new fire into new apparatuses of absolute development and alienation of humans from their labor. Here, “technology” exists as “progress,” effectively mapping out the body as a site of colonization, as again this film would demonstrate with the body of Czolgosz stretched out before the law, to see the role this technology plays in a new type of sovereignty. The message sent here is labor is for the machine, human bodies are for the penitentiary or the market.

However, through the reproducibility of the execution as subject for the motion-picture, a pervasive “overflow” or excess in signification grants this final scene and the whole in which it partakes a surreal quality. I hesitate to argue that *The Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison* is wholly an advertisement of one corporation over another, for it recreated the electrocution of one whose body was, after his execution, the object of scientific experimentation in the service of objective knowledge. After the execution, Czolgosz became an example for

turn-of-the-century modern justice, or at least how such an ideal should function. *The Nation* lauded the swift trial and execution of McKinley's assassin, for

before the memory of the wretched Czolgosz rots with his body, it behooves the American people, and especially citizens of New York, to lay to heart the true lesson of his trial and punishment. The vindication of justice in his person has been in every way credible to the bench and bar of this state. He was swiftly brought to trial. His prosecution was pushed without clamor or malice; the solemn duty of seeing that he enjoyed all his legal rights was undertaken by two members of the Buffalo Bar of the highest standing; there was no unseemly wrangling in court; the condemned man was held in close confinement and executed without any sensational display. The whole affair shows what justice is when it is most impressive. It is as if the law embodied in its sworn ministers in New York had lifted the sword without passion, and let it fall with the sure and undelayed stroke necessary to make the process of the courts appear dignified, impartial, and just as inescapable as the finger of God. (332)

This particular instance in which a labor radical assassinated a U.S. president that inaugurated and oversaw some of the most ambitious imperial projects has been granted a special status in the literal apotheosis of justice achievable through mechanization: the machinery of death as the "finger of God." Time is here the measure for an enactment of reciprocity, explicitly linking *justice* as something not to be delayed. But also herein, justice is linked explicitly to desire to identify "a people." For while other capital cases, to the frustration of prosecutors and government officials alike, tended to get slowed in appellate courts, "an alert, vigilant, jealous public opinion was behind the trial and behind [this] court. The people wanted only justice on a miscreant, but they wanted it, wanted it speedily and surely. They got it; and it is safe to say that if an equally aroused and watchful public opinion pressed upon all our courts at all times, we should not see justice so baffled so often as we do" (333).

The threat of Czolgosz seemed to preoccupy, fascinate, and horrify the public mind to an extent similar to that reserved for those like Damians the Regicide detailed in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. Yet, the telling difference lies in the fact such public attention was focused on the body as the site of punishment *after the execution*. To this end, the cultural

situations of punishment is the divestment and disembodiment of living labor—the logical development to an enlightenment principle that built up an individual and against a social, separated inner-thought from outer-act—the body as mechanism becomes the ritual. A postmortem examination report of Czolgosz’s electrocuted body that had circulated among the well-respected medical periodicals of the time measured the exact state of the body of the criminal in order to come to a new understanding and comprehension of the crime that had been committed. But as usual, such a report tells us more of the full development of enlightenment philosophy of human action and transgression wedded to an explicitly capitalist project. A new scientific fidelity of breaking the body into infinite organs and measurements, length of mouth and chin, size of the skull—combines with rebuilding it as a thing that straddles an organic and inorganic divide. The body fades into the machine in this examination, concentrating on the angle at which the electrodes had been attached to the body of the convict, the degree to which the skin had been charred by the chair, the temperature of different locations on the lifeless cadaver. Technology no longer measures what Benjamin would point out as the *trace* of the human, but something else—of machine and human worker *together*—the monstrosity of industrial death. This is the bourgeois fear that fuels modern justice. Here, the objectification of the body goes beyond Foucauldian notion of sites of production of truth and knowledge, but a social relation of objectified versus living labor, of “technological sovereignty,” the rationale to which the human body is made subject to the social industries that brought them into existence.⁴²

The postscript to the execution, i.e. the peculiar circumstances of the autopsy and burial of this

⁴² The autopsy, performed by officials from New York City, concludes

It had been the writer’s purpose to make a fuller anatomical and anthropological investigation upon the assassin, but the peculiar circumstances which arose in the matter of the disposal of the body, and the anxiety of the prison’s warden to put the body under earth, forced me to conclude my researches after having obtained the most essential data for the purposes of record and future study. (Spitzka 22)

“labor radical” demonstrated the conflicted social attention paid to this embodiment of industrial conflict, a bizarre conflation that merges science with ritual superstition.

As Cartwright points out, early motion-picture also participates in this recreation of the subordination of the body to mechanical, objectified, “scientific” knowledge:

It is finally Edison’s *Electrocuting an Elephant* that best describes the place of “scientific” looking in public culture. [...] It documents an extreme intervention in the living process of a test subject [...] and] it reflexively documents the complex place that technologies of representation had come to occupy in the repetition and control of life and death. Here we see science as experiment as popular cultural ritual. (46)

Observation as a particular part of the motion-picture experience allowed for mass-scale “participation” in the “scientific” activity of visual analysis “and thereby vicariously exerting control of a living being’s life and death” (18). The displacing of tension and anxiety into the fetish of the objectified motion-picture image synchronizes the living, moving body.⁴³ If it is both the case that the sciences, as per the usual Foucauldian refrain, participate in the writing of the body as object, evidence, and the site of truth, and the motion-picture sciences particularly reauthor by changing not, as Kirby and Cartwright might say, the subject matter, but recreating the spectator as consumer, I argue that it does this in such a way so as to specifically submerge human labor as subordinate to the mechanical, repetitive, actions of production. In this motion-picture in particular, we have two distinct Edison inventions, with each particular mechanical device reflecting off the other. Not only is the event of the execution of Czolgosz itself a repeatable, mechanically produced phenomenon, but so is the death administered by the machine, and so is the particular relationship of sovereign domination that describes the particular situation of “technology” in the late nineteenth century. This new form is open,

⁴³ A point Deleuze was quick to recognize: “the body is never in the present, in contains the before and the after, tiredness and waiting. [...] The daily attitude is what puts the before and after into the body, time into the body, the body as the revealer of the deadline” (189).

however, to the slippages and disidentifications in one's own participation of the social, the filmic negative of the Porter motion-picture.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Benjamin refrains:

Mechanical reproduction changes the reaction of the masses toward art. The reactionary attitude toward a Picasso painting changes into the progressive reaction toward a Chaplin movie. The progressive reaction is characterized by the direct, intimate fusion of social and emotional enjoyment with the orientation of the expert. Such fusion is of great social significance. The greater the decrease in social significance of an art form, the sharper the distinction between criticism and enjoyment by the public. With regard to the screen, the critical and the receptive attitudes of the public coincide. The decisive reason for this is that individual reactions are predetermined by the mass audience response they are about to produce, and this is nowhere more pronounced than in the film. The moment these responses become manifest the control each other. Again, the comparison with painting is fruitful. A painting has always had the chance to be viewed by one person or by a few. The simultaneous contemplation of paintings by a large public, such as developed in the nineteenth century, is an early symptom of the crisis of painting, a crisis which was by no means occasioned exclusively by photography but rather in a relatively independent manner by the appeal of art work to the masses ("Work of Art," 234)

The advent of film seems to thus synchronize the viewer to each other—everyone comes to the motion-picture disoriented, forging a new possibility or solidarity of experience. While the mask of mass-subjectivity herein is dictated and graspable only through new technological devices, thus handed down as discrete compartments of a "vast machinery of system"—the recursivity of the technologies in opposition here would seem to expose this evisceration of social relation of production and accumulation to an audience oriented and synchronized to a coming community.

CHAPTER 6.
“GOING PUBLIC”: ALAN PINKERTON’S NARRATIVE OF “GENDER TERROR” AND
“PEACEFUL SECURITY”

In a plenary session at 2003’s *Rethinking Marxism* conference titled “Postcolonialism Post-9/11,” Economics Professor Eiman Zein-Elabdin argued that Marxist critiques could not be used to explain the attacks on the World Trade Center because those who were a part of the plot were themselves of a professional, middle-class. Of course, involved in this attempt to disqualify Marxist critiques from an apparently contemporary phenomenon “terrorism” views “class” as a reified thing, a characteristic of an identity extracted from history, a snapshot rather than a description of a dynamic relation.¹ Still, Zein-Elabdin’s argument turns on an intuition that a specific materialist analysis to historical events in fact *should* have much to say about “9/11” as political act, yet the terms of the subject of analysis have been posed so as to void specific critiques of their explanatory potency: political upheaval apparently must not come from economic hardship because the “actors” in this historical event were of the empowered economic “class.” Conversely, precisely what should be undertaken is an interrogation about “public” and security while recuperating the dynamics of social and economic divisions, and how these divisions structure the imagination, creating a narrative logic of debt that will foreground an idea of public space as proper subject for Nineteenth-Century American Literature. To do so, we need to rearrange the terms of the question and interrogate the relation of “terror” and “public safety” to the history of the liberal-democratic state, an entity that is born in a particular era that not

¹ E.P. Thompson, for example, argues that class should not be viewed in a static but instead a dynamic way, that class is a relationship and not a “thing.” Instead, Thompson argues that class needs to be recognized in the animation of history: “It does not exist, either to have an ideal interest or consciousness, or to lie as a patient on the Adjustor’s table. [...] If we stop history at a given point, then there are no classes but simply a multitude of individuals with a multitude of experiences. But if we watch these men over an adequate period of social change, we observe patterns in their relationships, their ideas, and their institutions. Class is defined by men as they live their own history, and, in the end, this is the only definition (11).

coincidentally oversees the development of new, large-scale means of production, exchange, and accumulation.

The historical use of that word “terror” as a term with political weight belies a specific, if inherited, assumption about “class” within the system that defines the modern state as the relation between a governing regime and a “public.” “Terror” or “terrorism” as concepts are often wielded by those whom can stand secure within a supposedly uncontested “public” ground in order to vitiate political violence. “Terror” has been grasped in this reified view as a phenomenon with only an opaque political influence on what counts as “public”; the historical conditions that give rise to a logic of “public” and that comprehend specific acts as “terrorist” have been strategically removed from critical inquiry.

The intent of this essay is to interrogate a history of *terror* in order to best understand how that term has been employed in narrative forms and imaginations of what counts as *public*, and how best to understand the narration of political legitimacy in response to what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in *Empire* describe as “a crisis” resulting from the contradictions of, and thus defining, modernity (76).² *Terror* traces a political significance back to the origins of this “crisis of modernity,” to the attempt to establish a new way of governing that proscribes actions and initiatives of organizing society based on mass, popular sovereignty. What interests me is how these contemporary views of *terror sans class*, Zein-Elabdin’s being just one readily available example, enact a “political forgetting” of that particular concept’s genealogy in the struggles between labor and capital, and how that concept marks the historical terrain through which the State arises to secure as “public” a specific social relation of production in a

²“Modernity itself is defined by crisis,” Hardt and Negri write, “a crisis that is born of the uninterrupted conflict between the immanent, constructive, creative forces and the transcendent power aimed at restoring order” (76). This crisis that defines modernity comes to fruition when humans realize their transcendent potential, termed by Hardt and Negri as “immanence,” and yet this radical immanence needed at the same time to be checked and corralled.

remarkably *gendered* fashion. That is, through an analysis of products of an American literary imagination, we can see a new concept of *State* as a specific relation between what was constituted as “public” and apparatuses meant to govern that sphere. This essay looks at how an emergence of that particular state apparatus navigates through nineteenth-century polar coordinates that constitute the *state in modernity*. I use Allan Pinkerton’s narrative of detection in 1877’s *The Mollie Maguires and the Detectives* as a genealogy of modern justice as it attempts to govern and recast social calamities brought on by the contradictions of burgeoning industrialism—wildcat strikes, forced shutdowns of factories and collieries, the mass organization of labor against the interests of the owners of the means of production, and the large-scale labor actions of the 1870s—into a logic of citizenship deriving subjectivity and autonomy through “law-abiding” subjugation to the nation-state-as-system. “Security” and “terrorism” are thus catch-words whose histories reveal middle-class heteronormativity remaking itself into a “public.”

Of course, the rich social genealogy of the collective unease with the secured social relation—coined in the highly-ideologically charged term “terror”—has recently all but been forgotten, a memory lapse that is definitive of bourgeois transformation of a collective, political will into a form of consumerism. Most attempts to recuperate a modicum of this social history links to the aftermath of the French Revolution’s “Reign of Terror” and its actions in the name of public safety. Jeffery Clymer is just one critic to trace the U.S. deployment of the term back to the French Revolutionary Period (5). However, contemporary uses of the term can reach back to its U.S. origins in the inextricable developments of the modern state and its juridical deployment into the lives of its citizenry/subjects.

Take for example The Great Law of Pennsylvania approved by the colonists in 1682, which as Thomas Dumm has argued was a pivotal moment in the establishment of the penitentiary system in the ways it rendered criminality as a degree of subjectivity under the state. This law established a definition of the state as a duality: “first, to terrify evildoers; secondly, to cherish those who do well” (qtd. in Dumm 75). The state’s deployment of terror here cannot be made distinct from its role in its promotion of behaviors it was designed to accept. “Terror” remains at the heart of the bourgeois notion of “man in prison” (to return to Horkheimer and Adorno), and is in this sense what a state properly does to those whom it governs. This opens up the term for radically divergent trajectories associated with bourgeois ideology, a condition which remains at the heart of Marxist critiques of the state and political action/revolution. If Susan Buck-Morss is correct in her assertion that the French Revolution’s import lay in an inauguration of “the political project of modernity” in which “notions of power residing equally in all the people rather than in the monarch” marked a new moment in the political imagination “to found legitimate power on a popular basis, without recourse to divine explanation or unquestioned obedience to authority” (14-5), we must also look at this particular project that resulted in the establishment in the modern state with a similar disappointment as did Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, as an overthrow of one particular regime of exploitation in favor of another. The idea of state that had been established in the 50 years following the events of 1789, Marx writes, had established a political entity that asserted itself as “represented of the will of the masses,” but had a specifically classed tinge in the way it was actualized:

The heroes as well as the parties and the masses of the old French Revolution, performed the task of their time in Roman costumes and with Roman phrases, the task of unchaining and setting up modern *bourgeois* society. The first one knocked the feudal basis to pieces and mowed off the feudal heads which had grown it. The other created inside France the

only conditions under which free competition could be developed, parceled-out land properly used, and the unchained industrial productive power of the nation employed; and beyond the French borders it swept away feudal institutions everywhere, to provide, as far as necessary, bourgeois society in France with an appropriate up-to-date environment on the European continent. [...] Wholly absorbed in the production of wealth and in peaceful competitive struggle, it no longer remembered that the ghosts from the days of Rome had watched over its cradle. But unheroic though bourgeois society is, it nevertheless needed heroism, sacrifice, terror, civil war, and national wars to bring it into being. (16-7)

Marx's initial assertion in this passage about this new political entity—founded under the guise of popular sovereignty but actually precipitated in order to best serve a specific mode of production—swerves to an assertion about “peace” and revolutionary violence as it relates to “civil society”—a descriptive term that has been associated with an Hegelian delineation of a governing regime regulating a “public” that is defined by the social bond of human labor.³ The state has an interest in productions of wealth, to the point that “competitive struggle” must be guaranteed via a “peace” negotiated on terms dictated by bourgeois terms. “Peace” and “violence” have been descriptors deployed by this new stately regime to secure its own existence. “Heroism,” “sacrifice,” “civil and national wars” and “terror” are for Marx terms that animate this “peaceful relation” into political consciousness. The State enacts a stance toward revolution of “thus far, and no further,” and secures itself against such further revolution with its conception of the idea of political “terror.” Thus, in the terminology deployed by the State in service of a “public safety” (and here it is important to remember that “the Terror” of the French

³For Hegel, as he is read by Herbert Marcuse, “civil society” becomes a term and idea activating the political role of the state. Labor here is a concept grounding Hegel's understanding of the development of “civil society” (Marcuse 78). What apparently binds humans in a social relation is the capacity of labor which “transforms the particular work of the individual, pursued for the gratification of his personal wants, into ‘general labor,’ which operates to produce commodities for the market. Hegel calls this last ‘abstract and quantitative’ labor and makes it responsible for the increasing inequality of men and wealth. Society is incapable of overcoming the antagonisms growing out of this inequality; consequently, the ‘system of government’ has to concentrate on the task” (Marcuse 57-8). Hegel goes on, in Marcuse's view, to identify various stages of government in an attempt to regulate equality in “civil society,” for the social bond has the negative consequence of completely subordinating people to the “demon of abstract labor,” perpetuated by the conditions of exchange. For Hegel, a state needs to step in to free people from the terms of this subjugation.

Revolution has been used to describe the late eighteenth-century activities of the Jacobin *Committee of Public Safety*) lies not an anxiety in an uneasy relation not between public citizens versus “terrorist” threats, but an uneasy anxiety of established regimes of power confronting potential revolution.⁴

⁴ The contemplation of revolutionary responses to the absolutist government of society, and the French Revolution as a particular example of this response, marks for Marcuse the beginning of German Idealist philosophy. “This does not imply that Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel furnished a theoretical interpretation of the French Revolution, but that they wrote their philosophy largely as a response to the challenge from France to recognize the state and society on a rational basis, so that social and political institutions might accord with the freedom and interest of the individual” (3). If Marcuse is correct in this assessment that German Idealism is an attempt to respond to the challenge of sovereignty reworked by the French Revolution, its successes and failures, we could also look at this “school of philosophy” as a contemplation of the political as it attempts to negotiate *modernity’s* contradictions. To that end, it may be useful to look at how Hegel’s philosophy of history comprehends “terror” within this negotiation of crisis.

Hegel grounds his observations on the French Revolution as a mediation of the difference between German conceptions of *Spirit*— of thought and contemplation in communion with “the world”— and the *abstraction of ideas* detached from the materiality of things. Freedom consists of the former, for “except when he is thus engaged [in thought] he sustains a relation to the world around him as to another, an alien form of being. [. . .] Thought is the grade to which Spirit has now advanced. It invokes the Harmony of Being in its purest essence, challenging the world to exhibit the same Reason which Subject possesses” (439). The “Romanic nations” (opposed to the Germanic nations) are the first to enact an abstraction of ideas, and it is this abstraction which can be seen in an alienation of humans to the world, or more precisely, allows humans to see the world as *objective, separate*. For Hegel, the tragedies of the French Revolution are examples of the abstraction of ideas, and this is the historical point in which he questions the differences between the German and the French models of human freedom. The French Revolution, Hegel admits, receives its first impulse from philosophy, “but this philosophy is in the first instance only abstract Thought, not the concrete comprehension of absolute Truth— intellectual positions between which there is an immeasurable chasm” (446). Revolution happens at the stage in which the absolute freedom of human will had, for Hegel, historically asserted itself against “existing Right,” i.e. the current State-structure and its rule of Law. It is the aegis of State-as-contrary to the concept of human Freedom that Marcuse argues characterizes Hegelian calls for revolution: “I shall demonstrate that, just as there is no idea of a machine, there is no idea of the State, for the State is something mechanical. Only that which is an object of freedom may be called an idea. We must, therefore, transcend the State. For every State is bound to treat free men as cogs in a machine. And this is precisely what it should not do; hence the State must perish” (qtd. in Marcuse 12).

François Furet uses an interpretation of Hegel’s conception of state to demonstrate where Marx had grounded much of his own political-philosophical writings in a misread of Hegel, and thus in error. Furet does admit that much of Hegel’s principle criticism was directed toward *political economy*— a term which Furet tellingly defines as “the utilitarian conception according to which the state is the guarantor of the property and safety of citizens” (8)— but Furet’s Hegel apparently foresaw “the Terror” as a necessary result of a revolution brought about by an abstraction. Where Marx had taken a turn from Hegel was in a similar abstraction, in which Marx *prioritizes* civil society to the state; that is, he saw the structures that made up each as abstractions and psychological particulars: “Left to itself, indeed, civil society is only capable of defining a political end consisting of the protection of liberty and property— a sort of optional citizenship according to individuals’ expectations. But nothing could be further from Hegelian thought. [. . .] Hegel’s state transcends proprietary individualism. It alone allows for the reconciliation of the constitutive abstraction of modern society— that which defines need, labor, class— with historicity. [. . .] It is only through the state, this superior form of history, that society is organized according to reason” (64). The implication here is that a movement against this “superior form of history” is counter-historic, and necessarily leads to terror.

And in the context of the developing U.S. imperialist state, these anxieties of politically charged revolutions in part seem a direct result of the implication of “democracy” applied within a juridical system that disenfranchises and marginalizes in order to further the economic, monetary mission. Robert Ferguson, for example, points to Jefferson’s writings over the revolutionary spirit of humans as the *de facto* property of the elite class (which in part had been realized in 1800 by the planned slave insurrection of Gabriel Prosser): “[I]f something is not done, and soon we shall be the murderers of our own children [for] the revolutionary storm now sweeping the globe will be upon us” (qtd. in Ferguson 204-5). For Ferguson, this visceral response settles into the political lexicon similar to that which is socially created by the uncanny—an element according to Freud which has been repressed in the collective unconscious yet jarringly returns to consciousness (202-3). The politically-jarring familiar seems especially descriptive of a State that holds these contradictions as its constitutive element.

The history of what Marx views as an “organic” relation between this new governing formation and its construction of a “public” becomes the narrative history of “safety” and “terrorism” of industrial and investment capital in America, and it is precisely that narrative construction of *public* in service to the governing regime that needs to be analyzed with a critical

Significant in this assessment of Hegel’s state and a critique of Marx’s call for revolution is the role, as Furet has defined it, of political economy as the idea through which the state is the guarantor of human property and safety. While political economy is explicitly rendered in Furet’s understanding as a utilitarian concept, and thus a reduction of institutions to particulars, and thus necessarily not in line with a Hegelian idea of the state, the ways in which he speaks of “the Terror” as an unfortunate result of revolution in which “heads fell like cabbages” (10), seems also to place his idea of state as one that guarantees individual securities and properties. By using “the Terror” as a proof that “revolution” is misguided, Furet shares an assumption of the concept of “state” not with Hegel, but with the political economists.

It is here that Kristin Ross, in her book *May ‘68 and Its Afterlives*, lodges a critique against Furet’s famous claim that revolution necessarily leads to totalitarianism, in which any thought that would seek systematic social change is a move backward, counter to what supposedly is a Hegelian view of history(151). While Ross’s intent is to point out how this view of the French Revolution, of political time, was used specifically in a commemoration that laments the student and worker uprisings in May ‘68, my intent here is to illustrate the appropriation of “political time” in deference *against* revolution. This appropriation is warranted by a view of “terror” as anathema to “safety,” and thus the terms themselves are rhetorically deployed in service of the political economy of capitalism.

historical eye. For, if by the beginning of the nineteenth-century, “terror” predominantly described an activity of a specific arm of state government against rational, civil society, by the end of the century, the term had been completely reversed to mean a threat against the governing structure in “normative,” “peaceful” discourse with a docile conception of *public*. This shift in the objects of political feeling cannot be divested from the histories of industrial development and its effect on political, radical subjectivity. An analysis of the narrative use of the term *terror*, which begins to belie a particularly anti-labor tone in the contentious period of the late nineteenth century reveals the extent to which a system of *security* shapes political logic. An 1887 article appearing in *The Nation*, for example, sounded the alarm thusly: “Labor overawed the sheriffs, defied the courts, intimidated the juries, and marked out its enemies for assassination literally by the dozen. It reduced a large and populous district to a condition of terror and disorder which it would have been hard to match outside of Central Africa” (70). Popular accounts often took the particular events of the previous decade in Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania—the same events that compose Pinkerton’s detective novel—as an opportunity to describe what it saw as “the Conspiracy of Labor” which threatens the peace. The shift in the subjects of this politically-charged, uncanny feeling also finally reveals the extent to which the normalized social relation becomes textualized in the State as vehicle to economic exploitation of the public it simultaneously constitutes and polices.

The form and content of Pinkerton’s 1877 detective memoir rearranges the political poles of action into one of public civil service, indeed calls a new idea of *public* into being by actively funneling political threat into a unified corpus. I push further back into the contentious history of labor and capitalism than does Clymer, who argues in *America’s Culture of Terrorism: Violence, Capitalism, and the Written Word* that the contemporary political understanding of the term

“terrorism” begins with the Haymarket incident of 1886. I argue that the historical events upon which Pinkerton’s novel is based, and Pinkerton’s narrative of criminal justice, did much to influence the political lexicon and thus political consciousness. A new descriptor of political action, “terrorizing,” is employed within much of the popular print media of the 1870s, exemplified in the reports on the Mollie Maguires found in numerous dime novels and periodicals. An article appearing in *Macmillan’s Magazine*, for example, spells the conditions of terror and security in this period out nicely, looking back at the *Mollie* case as the founding of a new, professional state apparatus which evokes a “Reign of Terror” as a concept in order to shape a normative, safe public in desperate need of protection against this new type of political intimidation. The logic of the 1870s expressly situates the political and “social Reign of Terror”- - marked by the threat not by state dominance, but organized labor power-- against a need for a new, strong, repressive professional force whom would operate efficiently through “military surveillance.” This rhetorical shift not only calls into being new policing apparatuses, but the formulation of this new apparatus of policing whose object and target is organized labor calls a specific idea of *the people* into being as well. In this sense, a project interrogating what has been meant by *public* and *civil society* as a management of human labor is sizably different than that which Jurgen Habermas undertakes in his study *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Whereas Habermas approaches a contemporary idea of *public* in the eighteenth century as, in principle, an *inclusive* dynamic emerging from a conglomeration of autonomous, “private” individuals (37, 55) and thus de-emphasizes Labor as the social bond of “civil society,” the narrative of nascent professional detection in burgeoning industrialism depicts the process by which human activity had been contained, or in a Foucauldian sense, deployed— what I will

argue *financed*— into an intensely confining idea of *public*. As a product of *finite* relations, *public* and the justice administered becomes the object of a narrative of finance capitalism.

So, what are the contours of this narration of *public*? How particularly is it narrated into the collective imagination? How does it become part of a political consciousness? An analysis of this diffusion of the tensions and contradictions felt by the social division of labor into a rhetoric of “public safety” practiced in the concept of policing must be recognized in the ways it divides along its own notions of gender. This is not to say that there is a gendered “component” of policing, but that this division is itself gender, an index used to efficiently extract productivity by reifying the working human body and its attractions and desires. It is therefore no coincidence that the indexing of human sexual activities into gender categories accompanies the emergence of the security apparatus of the state at this moment in the social history of capitalism. I use Pinkerton’s 1877 novel to understand the historicity of *security* and its complement *terror* in how it produces a *public* as a gendered, rhetorical apparatus to quell emerging structures that challenge the sovereignty of capitalism. As Stephanie Smith has noted, and as I have shown earlier, what has been emerging as a sense of shared social space—a location made legible as public—increasingly entails the production of (sexualized) identities made into commodities so as to define public space as the proper locale for capitalist circulation. “Instead of an increased politicization of the private, we’ve seen an increasingly commodified, depoliticized, individualized personal. And this new personal is made increasingly available for public consumption, if not, as Foucault might say, available for inspection and regulation” (167). The colloquial phrase “going public”—which is explicitly tied to the rise of the corporation and the expansion of capitalism into the everyday lives of the population through the invitation to participate in the stock market (businesses “go public” when they begin to sell stocks for general

investment)—marks the path along which the social bond upon which any notion of shared social space is actually becoming more privatized, uniform, subject to disciplinary measures that guarantee the subordination of the mass of workers.

Keeping a Private Eye on the Public Sphere

Historians have traced the rise of what is understood today to be the new, professional, modern-day police to the Pinkerton National Detective Agency.⁵ As Frank Morn notes in his analysis of the agency, titled after the Pinkerton business slogan *The Eye that Never Sleeps*, forms of social maintenance that had been passed on through the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century were not, according to late nineteenth-century logic, equipped to deal with newer forms of dissidence, resulting from new relations of production and exchange. Thus advances in the accumulation of surplus-value necessitated a new plan for advances in social control (11-2, 24-6, 33). Calls for an efficient, restrained, disciplined, highly-trained, salaried (as opposed to waged), uniformed, and educated state apparatus marked this turn towards a modern-day practice of policing (8, 13, 72). Crime detection became the specialization of this new profession—now able to approach and view crime in covert ways by infiltrating suspect organizations, or by disguising themselves so as to catch an unassuming perpetrator in the act (70). Detection as a professional field wielded a new social, epistemological power, and became elevated to the status of cultural legend, invested with a new “enlightened” sovereign authority. For example, an article by General R.B Marcy, father-in-law to Pinkerton’s longtime friend George McClellan, in the 1873 edition of *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* celebrates the prescient abilities of Allan Pinkerton, at once “an astute craftsman” and almost superhuman. Adequate detectives must “possess the ability to read at a glance the complex workings of the

⁵ James D. Horan going so far as to call them “the nineteenth-century prototype of the present Federal Bureau of Investigation” (x)

human mind in all its phases, and [display] the skill to decipher the infinite variety of emotional permutations of the facial muscles, which [...] are understood only by the initiated” (720).

The professional, highly-skilled methods of the Pinkerton agency that are not the only elemental ancestors to the contemporary disciplinary apparatuses of the State, but just as important are what “professional detection” suggests about the State as the normative, “peaceful” interaction between one particular regime of power in discourse with one idea of “the people.” Contemporary structures of the terms of enacting justice trace back to these “private eye” narratives for how they view as their narrative object an idea of *public* in order to legitimize one regime’s own privileged position in a systematized, indexed, social transaction.

Professional discipline embodied in the practice of detection carried with it a sense of mystery; as Christopher Raczowski points out, a sense of invisibility ordained detection with a new cultural authority. Manifesting what Foucault would later identify as the dispersal of the panopticon into the *culture*, Pinkerton recognized that the possibility of being watched would create more “safety,” for people who suspected that they were being watched will internalize a disciplinary gaze. An initial reduction in crime on those railroads that employed Pinkerton’s private security forces contributed to the mystification and growth of the detective legend as a practice that somehow “works.” As Morn points out, fare theft on the railroads in some cases decreased by as much as 40% after Pinkertons had been hired by the given railroad company (78). A primary axiom of a new style of systematized, efficient criminal justice had been therein established: sovereign authority/authorship of actors in a “normative,” “peaceful” public setting effectively erases its own traces from that act of narration. This is a particular tactic that will characterize Pinkerton’s own novel: the traces of authorship are an uneasy presence that the text will try to hide from audience view, as we shall see.

If Morn is correct in his assertion that this particular detective agency serves as ancestor to the police as we know them today, the conceptualization of *security* as a catch-word for this era can potentially deteriorate from a conflict between the guarantors of public safety versus criminal threats to that order to one of “the knights of capital” versus “the knights of labor.”⁶ Pinkerton, a Scottish immigrant and former chartist whose first foray into professional detection was to capture producers of counterfeit money and wildcat specie, hired out operatives to large businesses to circulate amongst employees so as either to quell individual criminal activity against the employer, or to suppress union organization and work actions. The examples of Pinkerton infiltration and detection chronicle the development of activities marked “criminal” in discourse with a closed “public” as an increasing anxiety to control labor and organized unrest, especially after the general strikes of the Paris commune of 1871, for general strikes and labor unrest heralded revolution.⁷ Whereas Pinkertons in the formative years of the 1850s and 60s had often been employed, significantly, as either divorce detectives or by railroad tycoons to ensure that individual conductors were not pocketing fares (the word “embezzlement” begins to enter the lexicon of criminal justice at this time), in the final years of the nineteenth century, Pinkertons targeted a *mass body* of workers. The apotheosis of this shift in mass security had occurred by 1892, when 376 armed Pinkertons were hired by the Carnegie Steel Company’s plant manager Henry Clay Frick to retake the steel works in Homestead, Pennsylvania, from the workers who had occupied it to prevent replacements from taking their jobs after a lock-out in a

⁶.Indeed this is exactly the terms that Morn uses as the title of his fifth chapter, in which he details the rise of a labor war that began with the Mollie Maguire incident, and continued throughout the later portions of the nineteenth century, as unions and laborers explicitly expressed an anxiety about spies for the employer provoking criminal activities. See Morn 96-101.

⁷.Morn notes that this period marked the rise of interest in National Guardism in 1877 to stem and suppress organized work actions; between 1877 and 1892, the National Guard had been called in to end 33 labor disputes and 14 labor riots (97).

collective-bargaining dispute. After a day-long siege, in which a barge carrying the Pinkerton operatives engaged in a fierce gun battle with thousands of steelworkers of the township/commune, scores of steelworkers (and a few Pinkertons) had been killed.⁸

This new profession which primarily used surveillance as its defining characteristic brought every aspect of every person's life into contact with the State. Popular fears of a police state, in which every acquaintance could possibly be a Pinkerton spy for the employer, as well as an anxiety that operatives worked not to detect crime, but to entrap common working people, lead many to view this new organization with scorn. Anxieties persisted that such hyperactivities of security, embodied in techniques all too close to practices that had been associated with American fears of monarchical tyranny—were infringing on individual rights by becoming “moral scavengers” (Morn 70-1). In some cases, famous outlaws who had successfully evaded the Pinkerton police became cult heroes. Consider the elevation to legend the activities of Frank and Jesse James. Acting on a tip that the James gang, whom Pinkerton had for years pursued for train robberies as well as for the murder of two of his own agents, had been hiding at their mother's farm, Pinkerton operatives threw a flare into the residence attempting to force the brothers into the open. The flare accidentally exploded, killing Jesse and Frank's eight-year-old half-brother and wounding the outlaws' mother. The James brothers were not, in fact, in the residence, and the railroad robbers, as Morn puts it, “emerged now as romantic, glamorous, and

⁸.Paul Krause's study of the Homestead “incident” takes a detailed look at the years that lead up to the conflict—the 1889 strike, the rise and decline of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steelworkers union (at the time, the largest union of its kind in the world), Andrew Carnegie's and Henry Clay Frick's antipathy towards labor organizations in general and their particular quest to break the steelworkers union in specific, and the cultural phenomenon of steel production and consumption itself as one heralding “progress” to give a composite of “Homestead” not as a singular conflict between Pinkertons and labor (indeed, as Krause suggests, Frick's use of Pinkertons in the conflict was not to have *them* occupy the company's Homestead plant, but to sacrifice them in what he hoped would be such a public outcry that government troops would have to intervene on Carnegie's side), but a symbol of a long-brewing social conflict (14). Horan also offers an analysis of the cultural significance of the Homestead incident not just as one between Pinkertons and labor, but a new struggle of labor versus mechanization and automation, for the negotiations between Carnegie and the union were some of the first that discussed this innovation in production (337-49).

somewhat justified in their actions. America had its first real ‘social bandit,’ a special form of outlawry that represented peasant protest and rebellion against oppressive authority” (79). A glance through the titles of popular dime and detective novels at the time reveals such titles as “The James Boys as Guerillas and the Train Robbers,” “Frank James, the Avenger,” and “Hunted for Ten Years; or, the James Boys’ Fight Against Fate” (Hoppenstand). With these popular narratives crime takes on a new, political potential. *The New York Detective Library*, a library in which 801 dime novels were published between 1882-98, dedicated almost 300 dime novel narratives to the exploits of the James gang, helping to elevate to legend the defiant acts of these marked “criminals” as social rebels.

To combat this problem in popularity, the agency employed a number of house authors to work on public relations and ideology production. Between 1874 and 1884, Allan Pinkerton published sixteen popular detective novels, narrating the activities of various operatives to capture criminals that had to be presented as a threat to the general public’s well-being. While the title pages indicated “Allan Pinkerton” as author, and while the narratives were told in his own voice, historians have long suspected that Pinkerton may have dictated the stories of these narratives to a number of professional writers that worked to produce the novels. Thus, Pinkerton’s professional agency-as-security-firm annexes a fiction factory into the corporation by *investing* Pinkerton’s voice into the stable of authors employed in writing “his memoirs.” This fiction factory was charged with promoting the importance of police detection; the conjoining of private, formal business practices and public social control into the contemporary capitalist State marks the birth of criminal justice in industrial America, demonstrates the extent through which narrative plays an indelible role in suppressing dissent and creating ideology.

Gender and the Narrative Logic of Public-as-Debt

The form of Pinkerton's 1877 novel mimics the structure through which a logic of *public* in discourse with governmental regimes within popular sovereignty shapes a conception of a "secured" or "safe" state. In the interest of safety, a governing regime apparently acts in subordination to the people. This logic is made explicit in Pinkerton's novel, manifested in the scene in which F.B. Gowen asks Pinkerton to halt the activities of a clandestine labor organization. The novelist-as-character, in a scene anterior to the primary narrative of the Pinkerton operative in the coal mine, responds to Gowen's request accordingly:

It had always seemed to me that it was a sacred duty which Pennsylvania owed to herself, to her own citizens, and to the country at large, to clear her garments of the taint resting upon them and bring to punishment the persons who, for so many years, habitually outraged decency, spilt human blood without stint, and concerted the richest section of one of the most wealthy and refined of all the sisterhood of States into a very Golgotha—a locality from which law-abiding men and women might soon be forced to flee, as from the threatened cities of the plain, or from a spot stricken with plague and pestilence. (16)

The dynamics of the relation between sovereign regime and public appear to exact a logic of balance and reciprocity, a logic of interaction that is specifically gendered. The distance between the two spheres has been minimalized; this act of securing is something the people *owe* to *themselves*, or, more interestingly, something Pennsylvania *owes* to *herself*. Debt and duty are the terms and ideas that apparently erase the traces of difference—that the executive wing of the governing regime and "the people" are somehow one—masking any undue influence, masking "authorship," of one particular regime over what counts as "people." And yet within this logic of debt is an inhered logic of gender as an index of difference that permeates and makes the dynamics of the transaction possible. The author-character Pinkerton, weighing the case in this manner, immediately agrees to send an operative down into the coal mines to articulate this *terrorist* threat to the "peaceful" (normative) relation.

The narrative effect of the text produces the characters of a given public with “gender” traits presented as “real,” once we recall the notion of realism as ways most conducive to “safe” social relations in that everyday life and human discourse are lived *by proxy*. That Pinkerton the author narrates his hired stand-in’s experiences, insights, and *attractions*, creates an uncomfortable sense that, Raczkowski argues, the operative infiltrating the coal mine is a mere host for the agency’s consciousness, watching the events of Schuylkill County from the secured location of the agency’s Chicago headquarters (673). This “eeriness” for the reader, exemplified in a reading like Raczkowski’s, is, I argue, an effect of the narrative logic of *investment*: consciousness is never “on location,” never a part of the operative’s immediate experiences down in the coal mines. Human consciousness and human desires herein are portrayed as traversing the distances delineated by security, traversing the strict bureaucracy of the Pinkerton detective agency-as-business-corporation, as criminal justice incorporated. The fact that Pinkerton at times will stray from the primary tale of James McParlan, the Pinkerton operative, attempting to find out the Mollies’ next move, to the unnecessary, almost affected tale of McParlan’s own personal attractions to one miner’s sister suggests the possibility that these heterosexual desires come from somewhere beyond McParlan, and even beyond Pinkerton himself.

Despite his best policing efforts, Pinkerton “the novelist” cannot completely eviscerate residues that would challenge the innocuousness of this new professional apparatus. The seams of anteriority, not of a public-as-author of government sovereignty, but just the opposite, a regime as author of that “public” subject, become obvious when we highlight the dynamics of labor at work underlying the form of this type of sovereignty. In this case, I would go further than Raczkowski to point out that it is not just the operative-as-host for a consciousness of

justice, but that the logic of justice-as-host for capitalistic consciousness that haunts this narration of public security against terror. That is, retracing the dynamics of the relationship between labor and capital exposes the “narrativity” of the system, exposes the layers and directions or ordination and anteriority that allow us to see public as object of a particular way of narration.

The novel’s preface insists that the events of the text be understood as being relayed as without embellishment. But the dynamics of labor exerted in the production of consciousness mark the layers and exertions of influence on a public as narrative subject. The preface’s first paragraph explicitly portrays the narrative product as the result of the intensive labor of authorship: the author

is aware that, in many places, the selection reads much like fiction, and that it will be accepted as romance by very many who are totally unacquainted with the country and the people attempted to be described. It has been the constant endeavor to adhere closely to facts, and if the incidents are, in a great degree, novel and absorbing it is due to these facts, and they were worked out, through arduous labors, in sleepless nights and undivided attention to the ends to be gained. (ix)

The immediate situation of this novel in producing a coherent narrative places an embellished portrayal of events against the author *as worker*, but in a counter-intuitive manner: the author *works harder* to demonstrate that the narrative events are not embellished. The realist text explicitly becomes the product of the author-as-laborer. In this particular context, though, the product of safety and security as narrative object oscillates between something being made, and something that exists on its own. That is to say, the labor of authorship in this genealogy of contemporary policing, apparently relying on balanced exchanges and circulations between authoritative sovereignty and a “people”-as-narrative object in whose name it acts, threatens to rupture the balance to show a particular type of sovereignty anterior to any such understanding of *public*. A disciplinary author labors to control and secure these currents.

But it is not for mere “realism” as an end in itself that this detective-narrator labors. In a striking passage in the initial chapter titled “An Extraordinary Proposition,” the moment that precipitates the narrative act of “public” production reveals for whom “the action of the Law” represents. After being called to F.B. Gowen’s office, the head of the detective agency must be convinced of the social necessity of the work: “I considered the proposition for a moment,” Pinkerton writes, “turning over in my mind the magnitude of the labor to be performed” (14). Interactions between these spheres reverberate with a mediation of exchange, understood as work done for someone else. But “the labor to be performed” here is unstable: the work of the security agent collapses into the work of the author in this introductory chapter. While the interest of public safety supposedly presents and describes how these entities interact, conditions of labor and capitalist exchange underlie that system of security.

Industrialism as a system that utilizes and attempts to manage and thus make efficient collective labor, labor on a mass scale, matures through the concept of *interest*, a term that describes a narrative act circumscribing and writing a “public” into being for the purposes of extracting and securing value for an anterior sovereign regime, as a critique of Pinkerton’s narrative reveals. For example, Gowen, acting as prosecuting attorney, has an explicit *interest* in framing Pinkerton’s account of the Mollie “terror”: the novel begins with Gowen, the former District Attorney for Schuylkill County, hiring Pinkerton to investigate a secretive, militant labor organization “terrorizing” (Gowen is the first in the novel to use this term) the community, and concludes with Gowen’s closing argument for the court case of the State of Pennsylvania against alleged members of this organization. The narrative plays down, but cannot hide, the fact that Gowen-- the man who had hired the detectives, the man who had prosecuted the “terrorists” in court, the man who had publicly pronounced a judgment on them in his closing argument—was

also the *president* of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad and Coal Company, and hired the novel's detective protagonist after some of the most contentious coal mine strikes in 1871 (the same year of the general strikes composing the Paris commune).

But what must be interrogated in this narrative encasing of an idea of “the people” are the attendant attitudes and assumptions about gender that are written into a normative idea of *public*. Pinkerton's novel concludes with 30 pages of Gowen's closing argument in the trial of the Mollies, in which he recounts the history and origins of the organization. The Mollie Maguires, Gowen argues, sprang from organized resistance of Irish-Catholic tenants against protestant landlords:

Their object was to intimidate and hold in terror all those whom they owed money or who were employed in its collection [... and] that, in the perpetration of their offenses, they dressed as women, and generally ducked or beat their victims, or inflicted some such punishment as infuriated women would be likely to administer. (518-9)

If this particular text marks a new era in state-sponsored repression in league with forces of accumulation of a surplus of value, it must also be remembered for what it engenders as a “heteropublic” that needs to be secured, for what the extent of that security means. What is at stake in this narrative recasting of the contradictions wrought by capital into one of actors in this particularly gendered way? What counts as “labor” within this normative product called “public,” and how is it policed so as to secure the normative structures of production and accumulation? How are humans and their living labor recast into subjects whose activities, loves, attractions, and desires with and for other workers do not threaten the capitalist state?

The first chapters in this detective novel expressly enact a particular gendered division of labor, as Gowen tells Pinkerton: “[w]e want the miner to go forth cheerfully to the slope [...] void of the fear in his heart that when he parts from his wife at the cottage-gate in the morning, that it may be their last farewell on earth” (17). Under this logic, labor begins when the “worker”

leaves the cottage-gate. “Workers” do indeed make up a part of this idea of public as a space that needs to be secured, but it is a gender-specific idea of how that public space functions, of who are “workers.” A recollection of Lefebvre’s critique of the mode of production that fragments everyday life into specific segments here seems tinged with a gendered account as to what counts as work with regard to the social bond that constitutes a *public* (96). Certainly, much critical energy has been spent pointing out how these discourses on work render labor commonly done by women as invisible. I want to press further to point out that this novel renders a specific public, social relation as that which is, to borrow terms from Rosemary Hennessy’s *Profit and Pleasure*, a reification of sexual identity in conjunction with a particular view of labor that serves capital.

Like many narratives of the time, this detective narrative derides the affinity and attraction that bonds workers in solidarity, and, in so doing, actively produces a normative public which proscribes appropriate desires and needs. Recalling John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman’s point that interventions into the intimacies of working people takes place upon this contested field of class formation in which “worker” comes to mean something entirely new under industrialism (142), we can begin to see the evolution of securing a public into one in which a specific gender identity is rendered commensurable, commodifiable, a field in which humans can be related to, and are in commerce with, one another. An article written by John Morse for *The American Law Review* in 1876 retells McParlan’s narrative of how he gained the favor of the Mollies by telling them “his favorite occupation was to ‘shove the queer.’ As an occasional murderer and a professional counterfeiter he not only secured a warm and ready welcome to this loving fraternity, but it was deemed worthy of more especial trust and honor” (239). The activities of McParlan as Pinkerton operative infiltrating the “warm and loving fraternity” is

hereby depicted on a level of reified exchanges and commensurability, the process of these exchanges that motivate market relations rendered in terms that conceptualize desire in a very specific, economic way. In the nineteenth century, “showing the queer,” vernacular for passing counterfeit money, was one of the first crimes investigated by the new professional police; it was also the first crime investigated by Pinkerton himself, as Horan details (15-8). With the narrative of professional discipline, in which the economic logic of commensurability embodied in the money commodity had gravitated toward descriptions of everyday human activity, an economic terms comes to have sexual, political meaning on proscribing the interchanges and relations amongst human beings. This particular rendition of gender-terror and security exchanges must be seen as revolving around a question of economics, for according to nineteenth-century vernacular, a “Mollie” was also a male prostitute. *Public* is narrated into consciousness by masking the history of modern-day *security* and its anodyne of *terror* within these gendered, economic terms, exemplified when McParlan “gets in with the Mollies” at their local hangout in a chapter titled “The Detective Sings, Fights, and Dances Himself into Popularity.” [see figure 6-1]

Appearing to gather inspiration from the lively squeak of the fiddle, [McParlan] advanced to the middle of the floor, where remained a few square yards of vacant space, struck an attitude, and, without further prelude, began his best Irish break-down. [...] Dormer [a lieutenant for the Mollies] gradually absorbed the *magnetism* of the dance, and the music made by feet and bow and string, and, seating himself on a convenient chair, held his face between his two brawny hands, the elbows resting on his knees, and *interestedly* scanned McKenna’s [McParlan’s alias] movements. [...] The agile shuffling evidently gave him pleasure, and turning to the sleepy musician he loudly ordered him to “play faster!” The request was instantly obeyed, and quicker and quicker came the inspiring notes, faster and faster were the maneuvers of the dance executed, and the more fantastically the dancer turned and whirled, and threw out leg and arm, in gesticulations more grotesque than graceful. (74-5, my emphasis)

This passage, which I’ve quoted extensively, occupies a vital moment in the narrative as the contact zone between two discrete spheres, and the *consummation* of the relationship revolves



Figure 6-1. The Detective Sings, Fights, and Dances Himself into Popularity. Image taken from Pinkerton's *The Mollie Maguires and the Detectives*

around the concept of *interest*. That word, *interest*—which defines the particular exchange in which the apparatuses of the State infiltrate the spaces of labor solidarity and speculates upon the projected presence of gender “identity”—itself leaves much space for accumulations of surplus value, and thus exploitation. The cast in this story of nascent normalcy is arranged in a very specific way—the Pinkerton operative, on behalf of the “lawful” domestic public descends into this tavern and exchanges his body for membership into the Mollie Maguires. But that exchange is never commensurable—there is an excess of value in that exchange, just as Marx notes there is an excess of value in the circulation of money, here represented by the State’s circulation and investment into this organization, an investment that must by definition not only be paid back in full, but with the investors getting a return on what they invested. Any attractions and affinities these workers share with one another is commodified within a logic of security and justice. With the advent of a professional police, the State, to use Negri’s words, here becomes a capitalist subject—a guarantor of an assumed equilibrium between labor and capital (41).

The implication of this scene suggests a motive of affinity toward the commodified, dancing detective that runs underneath surface exchanges. We need not delve too far into the well-rehearsed points of Marxian notions of commodity fetishism, but the tenets of this fetish/desire towards commodities are more than rehearsed in Pinkerton’s text. Capitalism has so infused the cultural logic with an understanding of value beyond that which is readily available at first glance, that the author steers whom he takes to be his audience towards an understanding of labor militancy that has an “hidden” desire. Marx argues that this hidden quality of a commodity, or the consumer’s sense of something qualitatively hidden within that commodity, yet somehow understood to be part of that commodity’s *essence*, is the amount of human labor power expended in that commodity’s production. But here, in Pinkerton’s genealogical narrative

for the modern state, we have something closer to what Rosemary Hennessy interprets as commodity fetishism: something “perceived and yet not seen.” For, in Pinkerton’s narrative, what is perceived but not “seen” by “the private eye that never sleeps” is desire—more specifically labor-power-as-queer-desire. Such a perception haunts the rest of the text for the detective of the Mollie Maguires—the narrator takes “forced” moments to reiterate that the detective *as Pinkerton operative*, *as outsider infiltrating militant labor spaces*, and thus as agent for “normal” “domestic” public that works to ensure and encapsulate a specific type of mode of production, reproduction, and accumulation, still holds heterosexual attractions. Pinkerton “closes” the question of the operative’s sexual preferences by writing heterosexuality into his being as one who is on the side of a “peaceful public.” Yet, his situation and “duty” as infiltrator of organized, collectivized, shared labor leaves him no choice but to “conform to the social mores of this terrorist group,” according to the logic of the narrative. Furthermore, this reification of attraction and affinity into interest and exchange by the logic of this security narrative guarantees the gendered social division of labor, for desire is now in service to capitalism, making the State a policing agent for a “heteropublic.” The Mollies as criminal threat to the social order of “civil society” are marked as such through the category of sexual attraction and desire *in deviation*. An understanding of gender desire has been reworked to ground an understanding of criminal justice-as-economic-transaction in which attractions become reified, *evaluable* (in the sense that gender becomes a value and becomes a means of comparison), exchangeable descriptors for a normative public at peace; and a logic of the verb *secure* morphs into descriptor for the narrative action of the governing regime obfuscating this gendered implication of justice as “repayment” and “return on an investment.”

Financial Time and “Heteropublic” Interest

Marx’s analysis of the anatomy of the state in the fifty years proceeding the French Revolution as inauguration of the transactions and exchanges between the sovereign government and the populous is a mode of analysis that would characterize his critique of market relations decades later. The interactions between the pose that compose the contemporary State mirror those within capitalist exchanges to the point in which “State,” as an idea flowing from the French Revolutionary tradition, has for Marx devolved into a bourgeois republic that has been in the process of becoming a mass-scale market, in which *citizens* have been constituted as such with all the rights and protections proper to them as potential merchants and consumers *in competition* as it is understood under a logic of capitalism:

For each of these liberties is proclaimed as the *absolute* right of the French *Citoyen*, but always of the marginal note that it is unlimited so far as it is not limited by “the equal rights of others” and the “public safety” or by “laws” which are intended to mediate just this harmony of the individual liberties with one another and with the public safety. (*Eighteenth Brumaire* 30)

“Mediate,” balance,” “reciprocate”; these verbs that apparently describe the active exchanges between these actors themselves are not stable, as Marx uses the term “organic” to characterize that view of *public*: the counter-revolutionary (or, more precisely, finite-revolutionary, for “revolution” under the bourgeois republic ends in a very specific place) brings an “organic” view of “the people” with respect to the mediating activity of Law

in such a manner that the bourgeoisie in its enjoyment of [rights] finds itself unhindered by the equal rights of other classes. Where it forbids these liberties entirely to “the others” or permits enjoyment of them under conditions that are just so many police traps, this *always happens solely in the interest of “public safety,”* that is the safety of the bourgeoisie. (30, my emphasis)

What would apparently describe the interaction between spheres made definite, absolute, static, i.e. *the Law*, hides an *interest* one governing regime holds over the public-space-as-market. In this sense, authorship towards what counts as public explicitly serves the needs and desires of

accumulators: the Law, overtly made absolute and not arbitrary (for it is an arbitrary enforcement of laws that had been used to describe “the Terror” of the French Revolution in the early part of the century, and an arbitrariness that described the whims of “terrorist” groups like the Mollie Maguires in the latter portions), is in fact quite organic in how it is executed by the state, so as to not interfere in specific with exchange.

“To purchase so that later one may sell dearer”—this axiom defines Marx’s analysis of commodity exchange within the market, the M-C-M¹ of circulation. Along the temporal axis, when no equivalent for a given commodity is given immediately, but promised at some later time, Marx point out *money*—the commodity that socially “stands in” for a determined value—no longer functions solely as facilitator of exchange and interactions, as measurement of reciprocity. *Money* also assumes a new form as a method of payment. With this temporal delay in the actions that define capitalist interactions and exchanges, we have entered into a logic where human relations function under the categories of “investment,” “speculation,” and “interest” from one perspective (the perspective from which one begins with capital), “debt” and “repayment” from the other (in which one has only her labor power to sell). If labor, as Hegel and Marx understood it, is the social bond that demarcates “civil society” and *public*, what constitutes Pinkerton’s distinctly heteronormative narration of security is a rendering of “public”—the labor that constitutes the social fabric— as operating under the logic of *repayment*, *finance*.

If we are to understand the relation of political *safety and security* that govern the terms of human interactions within what counts as *public* as a logic of reified exchanges *passing through time*, as something that eventually will be rendered reciprocal, the model of criminal justice that this particular narrative embeds into consciousness must be recognized as a system of

finance. That is, *finance* as a concept materializes through the narrative as capital invests itself in Pinkerton, in McParlan the Pinkerton detective, in the coal mines; the narrative concludes when every value has been extracted from the sites of production. And one senses with this judicial conclusion of the narrative, capital will move on, has already moved on, to other sites where value can potentially be extracted. Frederic Jameson is only partially correct in his essay “Culture and Finance Capital,” in which he notes that the features that lend finance capital an air of mobility are understood as the logic of speculation and investment. But Jameson only narrates one half of that feature, calling speculation a

withdrawal of profits from the home industries, the increasingly feverish search, not so much for new markets (those are also saturated) as for the new kind of profits available in financial transactions themselves and as such [...] is the way in which capitalism now reacts to and compensates for the closing of its productive moment. Capital itself becomes free-floating. It separates from the concrete context of its productive geography. (259)

It would seem that this understanding of speculation and finance as historical phase, capitalism is merely a *reactive* force, maneuvering itself against “other forces” that through time deteriorate the amount of value that can be extracted. But Pinkerton’s narrative of emergent professional criminal justice as a system details *finance* as inherent to industrial management as an attempt to coordinate and discipline a mass body of labor-power: value in Pinkerton’s text can be quantified by a *definite* limit placed upon it, by *defining* the potentiality of mass-scale human labor, not organized by itself but organized by capital, into an actual product. The system of value production needs a consumable end, needs static, finite actors in a controlled transaction. Pinkerton’s narrative provides such a limit, for the court case in which Gowen, the railroad and coal mine president, argues on behalf of the State assures that the logic of crime will be mapped onto a logic of debt; “justice enacted and consummated” becomes *finance proper*, in which all

debts have been paid in full, the account settled, *public safety* the resulting product ready for consumption.

Finance as a term traces its significance once again to a temporal understanding of investment and exchange of debt and (re)payment. Originally used as a term describing the closure or complete repayment of debt, under the logic of industrial capitalism that dictates the day-to-day operation of the contemporary nation-state, gender has been *financed*, “public” has been *financed*, “safety and security” have been *financed*, “terror” has been *financed*. Beyond Jameson’s articulation of finance capitalism as flight, “the disinvestments, the pondered or hasty moving on to the greener pastures of higher rates of investment return and cheaper labor” (260), remains the notion of capital’s *foreclosing*, draining every last ounce of vitality from a specific entity in order to exchange a value, accumulating a surplus of values as it leaves the wreckage of labor power in its wake—while the overt act of delimitating, engendering specific spheres “public” and “government.” It is thus not criminal justice, “terrorism,” “national and homeland security,” as discrete entities in and of themselves, but as descriptors of a complex relation and a way of working out cultural relations that result in productions and additions of value that more accurately describe the being of the contemporary nation-state. The “heteropublic” it authors is impossible to be separated from the terms of production and reproduction, as “public” becomes a guaranteed return on a particular investment.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Todd Reynolds was born on the west side of Chicago, approximately one mile away from Waldheim Cemetery, where the remains of the eight Chicago Haymarket Martyrs, Emma Goldman, Lucy Parsons, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn have all been laid to rest. At the University of Florida, Todd had been a participant in and conference organizer for the Gainesville Marxist Reading Group. In addition, Todd has been a labor organizer for Graduate Assistants United, the labor union for the 4000 graduate teaching and research assistants at the University of Florida. He served as co-president on GAU from May 2004 through May 2006, and is currently the lead organizer and chief steward for GAU. Todd also has been an organizer and activist for Critical Resistance Gainesville, a local prison abolition group that challenges the prevailing cultural logic that the security offered by an increased police presence and exponential growth in the number of incarcerated working peoples actually does not serve to make our communities safer. This dissertation, as a product of Todd's life's labor, attempts to bridge those segregated learning environments—the academy and the community—in the hopes of working toward a more equal society.