FROM DIXIE TO THE DOMINION: VIOLENCE, RACE, AND THE TIME OF CAPITAL

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Jade Roslyn Ferguson
August 2009
From Dixie to the Dominion: Violence, Race, and the Time of Capital

Jade Roslyn Ferguson, Ph. D.
Cornell University 2009

From Dixie to the Dominion: Violence, Race, and the Time of Capital explores the transnational expressive impact of the US South on the Canadian cultural imaginary in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While recent comparative approaches to studies of the Americas have had an emphasis on the spatial, this dissertation examines the temporal coordinates underwriting the relation between the US South and Canada. Each chapter of this dissertation examines the contemporaneous turn to the US South by Canadian and US writers and artists, who use scenes of racial violence to critique the temporality of commodified abstract labor. Informed by Saidiya Hartman’s argument that the black body enabled white US subjectivity to negotiate its own self-possession and self-making within the increasingly abstract and immaterial world of capitalism, this study examines the ways in which scenes of subjection from the US South functioned in overlapping, although different, ways in the Canadian context. Representations of racial violence culled from the US South in Canadian cultural productions functioned, I argue, as moments of white enjoyment in the midst of anxieties and fears of white dispossession by the time of capital. Donald Pease and Robyn Wiegman argue that the heterogeneous insurgent time present in “anti-imperial” discourses is politically progressive, but the transnational politics accompanying Canadian and US literary contestations of the time of capital can be and usually are regressive in their discursive constructions of white supremacy. Examining racial violence comparatively, this dissertation contests the regionalism often associated with racial violence that Malcolm X aptly notes when he says, “the
Mississippi is anywhere south of the Canadian border.” This study contributes to scholarship in New Southern Studies, and Hemispheric Studies more broadly, as it traces not only the ways in which “Mississippi” is in fact everywhere in Canada, but also the ways in which Canadian imaginings of the US South provide a genealogy of southern roots and routes that intimately locate Canada within “our Americas.”
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jade Ferguson received her B.A. in English literature at the University of British Columbia, and completed her M.A. and Ph.D. in English literature at Cornell University. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the School of English and Theatre Studies at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada.
For Kate
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my dissertation advisor, Kate McCullough, for her careful and generous readings of my dissertation. She has shown the utmost patience with me as I have made my way through graduate school, not only challenging me to be a better writer, but also a better teacher. Mary Pat Brady has shared her amazing depth of knowledge and seemingly endless resources with me, which have expanded and complicated my thinking. Nicole Waligora-Davis saw the value of this project in its early stages, and has been a constant source of encouragement and support. Together, they have helped elevate the level of scholarship and intellectual rigor of this dissertation, and have given me excellent models to strive for in the future.

At Cornell, two specific groups of faculty and graduate students have shaped my thinking and writing. I would like to thank members of the Comparative Race Workshop (Shelley Wong, Derek Chang, Viranjini Munasinghe, Danielle Heard, Kate Hames, and Julian Lim), which meet from 2006 to 2008, and the Dissertation Writing Group (Mary Pat Brady, Angela Naimou, Ariana Vigil, Toni Wall Jaudon, Alicia Munoz, Shital Pravinchandra, and Mohit Chandna), which meet from 2006 to 2007. From 2003 to 2006, my work was financially supported by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

I am fortunate to have met some amazing people who have become life-long friends while in graduate school. They have each made graduate school easier with their humor and generosity of spirit: Sze Wei Ang, Nadine Attewell, Megan Brodie, Ryan Canlas, Susan Hall, Julie Joosten, Angela Naimou, Suyapa Portillo, Hadas Ritz, Shirleen Robinson, Alice Te Punga Somerville, and Susan Wyche. Jon Smith and
Daniel Coleman have become valued colleagues and resources from afar, and I want to thank them both for reading earlier versions of this dissertation.

I want to give a special thanks to my family and my partner, Kate Hames. My family has supported my academic journey with the utmost patience, sacrifice, and pride. Kate has been a source of inspiration throughout writing this dissertation. Her support and belief in me have been invaluable. She is my best friend and the love of my life.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Biographical Sketch*  
*iv*  

*Dedication*  
*v*  

*Acknowledgments*  
*vi*  

*List of Figures*  
*viii*  

**Introduction**  
"Why do you hate the South?"  
1  

**Chapter One**  
Sketching Scenes of Subjection: The Aestheticization of Black Fright in T.C. Haliburton’s *The Clockmaker* and Southwestern Humor  
25  

**Chapter Two**  
Whipping Tom: Imaginative Sympathy, Southern Black Bodies, and White Enterprise in Susanna Moodie’s *Roughing it in the Bush* and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*  
61  

**Chapter Three**  
From Dixie with Love: Standardized Time, Main Street, and Lynching Photography  
93  

**Chapter Four**  
Documenting Lynching: Labor and A Critique of Capital in Dorothy Livesay’s “Day and Night” and *Day and Night*  
142  

**Epilogue**  
“I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!”  
183  

**Works Cited**  
187
# LIST OF FIGURES

1. Jeff Wall’s *After ‘Invisible Man’* by *Ralph Ellison, the Prologue* 21
2. The Lynching of Joe Brown, March 18, 1909, Whitmer, West Virginia 108
3. The Lynching of Allen Brooks, March 3, 1910, Dallas, Texas 114
5. Main Street, Crossfield, Alberta, 1907 126
6. Main Street, Crossfield, Alberta, 1912 126
7. The Canadian Bank of Commerce, Crossfield, Alberta, 1911 127
8. Ontkes & Armstrong General Merchandise, Crossfield, Alberta, 1908 132
10. Main Street, Crossfield, Alberta, 1912 135
11. Main Street, Crossfield, Alberta, 1912 136
12. Mock Lynching, Calgary Exhibition Grounds, Alberta, Sept. 1901 138
INTRODUCTION

"Why do you hate the South?"

Southern man

I saw cotton and I saw black
Tall white mansions and little shacks
Southern man, when will you pay them back?
I heard screamin' and bullwhips crackin'
How long? How long?

Southern man, better keep your head
Don't forget what your good book said
Southern change gonna come at last
Now your crosses are burning fast.

Southern man.

Lily Belle, your hair is gold brown
I've seen your black man comin' round
Swear by God, I'm gonna cut him down
I heard screamin' and bullwhips crackin'
How long? How long?

- Neil Young, "Southern Man" (1970)

Soon after Black Boy's publication in 1945, African-American writer Richard Wright spent the summer on the Ile d'Orléans, located about twenty kilometers east of Quebec City in the St. Lawrence Valley. During his two months vacation on the Ile d'Orléans, Wright found the environment inspiring and energizing.¹ In a letter to Gertrude Stein, Wright describes the Quebec countryside as a refuge from the industrial, urban life of New York City: “Quebec is slow and ripe and organic and serene...but when one returns to New York one is struck by the hurried, the green and the frantic...In Quebec, man has found a way of living with the earth; in New York we live against the earth” (Fabre 176). In “The Literature

¹ He wrote an article on juvenile delinquency in Harlem, wrote lectures for the Bread Loaf writers' school, read the galley of Black Metropolis, a sociological study of black Chicago by Horace Clayton and St. Clair Duck, and wrote an accompanying introduction.
of the Negro in the United States," published in his 1958 essay collection *White Man Listen!*, Wright’s fond memories of his time in Quebec are recalled in his descriptions of French-Canadian life and culture: “As you no doubt know, the Province of Quebec represents one of the few real surviving remnants of feudal culture on the American continent. It has a Catholic culture, a close, organic, intimate, mainly rural, way of life. For more than three hundred years, many of the customs and habits of life of French Canadians have not changed” (106). Wright takes a comparative approach to understanding the ways in which “the Negro, like everybody else in America, came originally from a simple, organic way of life, such as [he] saw in French Quebec” (108). He writes, “I saw French Canadian culture with two pairs of eyes: I saw the Catholic culture of French Quebec, and at the same time, I saw how different that culture was from the culture of industrial Protestant, American” (106-7). Wright uses Quebec as a “cultural ideal” not as a measure of what African-American culture should strive to be, but as “the end of an imaginary line to serve us as a guide, as a yardstick against which we could measure how well or ill men adjusted themselves” (111). Wright imagines French Canadian life and culture as being far removed from the racism and racial violence of US industrialization, modernization, and capitalism. In a letter to Ralph Ellison from Quebec, Wright confidently tells him: “There is no race prejudice here, none whatsoever” (Rowley 320).

Wright’s descriptions of Quebec’s pastoral life and culture reiterate the depictions of Canada on the Hollywood screens. In *Hollywood’s Canada: The Americanization of our National Image*, Pierre Berton describes the explosion in the 1930s of the subgenre of Mountie films originally known as Northerners. Canada’s filmic geography was “positively primordial: mountains older than time, far more ancient than man” (75). Berton cites the promotional material for the film *Silent Years,*
which "was described as being set 'in the picturesque region of the St. Lawrence Valley, where dwell the French-Canadians. Their primitive ways of living in the open forest country combine in picturesque background'" (75). The French-Canadian trapper/guide/farmer/habitant was a key figure from the very beginning to the very end of the Canadian-content movies. Berton argues that "untutored children of the forest" with enormous fur hats or peaked habitant caps were standard features of these movies going into the 1950s (82). Significantly, the first French-Canadian characters appeared in D.W. Griffith's 1908 one-reeler, _A Woman's Way_, which Griffith advertised as "A Romance of the Canadian Woods." In this short film, the bad French Canadian, sporting a shaggy mustache and beard, kidnaps the heroine; the un-named hero, clothed in pure white buckskins and coon cap, gives chase; pistols are fired, and the hero saves the heroine (77). Griffith's unnamed hero "shown in a full suit of fringed buckskin topped by a coonskin cap," writes Berton, wears a "costume [that] belongs to another place and another time" (77). Hollywood's Canada has "crowded the north with platoons of men dressed up to look like Davey Crockett" (77). Berton's genealogy of the filmic creation of the French-Canadian by a southern film director and modeled on the Tennessee folk hero suggests that US southern history and culture have influenced and informed transnational cultural productions of "Canada."

*From Dixie to the Dominion: Violence, Race, and the Time of Capital*

examines the US southern roots and routes of Canadian literature and visual culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This study examines the proliferation of "scenes of subjection," a phrase coined by Saidiya Hartman, that are culled from the

---

2 Berton contends that not only has the Tennessee folk hero been transplanted to the Canadian "Great Woods," but also southern racial ideology that applauds the gallant hero's protection of the pure white woman from the villainous half-breed. "The half-breed in Hollywood's Canada," writes Berton, "served the same purpose as the mulatto villain in Griffith's _Birth of a Nation_ (and with much less public uproar)... the half-breed is living proof of miscegenation, a sin in the eyes of most movie audiences, and was to be treated accordingly" (87).
US South in the Canadian imagination. Canadian musician Neil Young’s 1970 song “Southern Man” is one of the most popular examples of Canadian depictions of the US South. In the vivid lyrics, Young tells the story of the Southern man (as representative of the entire region) who has violently terrorized and brutally murdered blacks. Young sings, “I heard screamin’ and bullwhip’s cracking,” and asks, “Southern man, when will you pay them back?” While Young may have been following other musicians in the 1960s and 1970s that “harangued the South and its white citizens in song” (Kemp 90), this dissertation sees Young’s turn to the US South as a more recent iteration of Canadian writers, artists, and critics’ fascination with re-enacting scenes of black suffering and pain. I argue that these scenes of subjection are far less innocuous than we may want to believe given Wright’s claim, for instance, that “there is no race prejudice” in Canada (Rowley 320). I examine representations of racial terror in Canadian cultural productions – from the whipping post and auction block to the lynch mob and lynching tree – as moments of white enjoyment and self-making. Black writers have long connected the use of terror with the enjoyment of whiteness. The terror of the trade in black bodies and the violence of slave control and racial exploitation have been essential, they argue, to the experience of whiteness. As David Roediger writes, “white identity is premised on and maintained through terror” (15). Following Toni Morrison’s claims that white US writers used black slave bodies as “surrogate selves for meditations on human freedom,” I argue that the violent subjugation and subordination of southern black bodies in white Canadian cultural productions have been essential to Canadian

3 For instance, protest singer Phil Ochs’ 1964 ballad “Here’s to the State of Mississippi” levels a number of charges against the citizens of that state: “Here’s to the people of Mississippi...Oh, the sweating of their souls can’t wash the blood from off their hands...Where they smile and shrug their shoulders at the murder of a man” (Kemp 90).

articulations of white self-mastery and self-possession in a modern capitalist social order (37).

I argue that literary and cultural productions of the US South heavily influenced Canadian culture because of the economic, geographical, and political similarities between the two spaces. Here, I am deconstructing the commonly held belief in the antithetical binary between Canada and the US South, which Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1852 anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* seared into the global imaginary. Instead, I am tracing Canada’s racializing roots in US southern ideology as well as the literary routes that connect the US South and Canada. I argue that Canada’s turn to the South emerges from the rise of market capitalism and rampant anxieties, ambivalence, and fears of white dispossession within commodity culture. In *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, Saidiya Hartman links the slave auction and other nineteenth-century scenes of black amusement to commodity culture in the United States; wherein, the black body enabled white subjectivity to negotiate its own self-possession and self-making within the increasingly abstract and immaterial world of capitalism. “The fungibility of the commodity,” writes Hartman, “specifically its abstractions and immateriality, enabled the black body or blackface mask to serve as the vehicle of white self-exploration, renunciation, and enjoyment” (26). Extending Hartman’s argument transnationally, I examine the ways in which similar re-enactments of scenes of racial violence and terror to black bodies function in different, although overlapping, ways in the Canadian context. In each chapter of this dissertation, I examine the contemporaneous engagement with southern scenes of subjection by US and Canadian cultural producers. In doing so, I contest the regionalism often associated with racism and racial violence, and instead foreground transnational responses to consumer capitalism
that can be seen to instigate and legitimate racial violence as an adequate and appropriate form of action or behavior.

In the preface to a special edition of *American Literature*, titled “Violence, the Body, and the South,” Houston Baker and Dana Nelson draw attention to the ways in which racial violence in the US is often understood as a dynamic of race and region. They write, “As one of us quipped during the call, ‘Every time a shocking act of racist violence occurs in New York, Illinois, or Pennsylvania, you can bet another movie on Mississippi will appear within six months’” (231). Challenging received histories and conventional definitions of the South and southernness, Baker and Nelson contest the regionalization of racial violence through recalling Malcolm X’s “pithy summation of U.S. regionalism”: “Mississippi, Malcolm declared, is anywhere in the United States south of the Canadian border” (231). Most recently, Scott Romine, in *The Real South: Southern Narrative in the Age of Cultural Reproduction*, reiterates the claims made by Baker and Nelson through reciting the same Malcolm X line:

Why, moreover, tell about the South as the stage or scene of American civil rights in the first place? Because the tactic serves, as any number of commentators have argued, a national project of disavowing racism as a “southern problem”? Because the South really was – is – worse? The obvious answer (“both”) is suggested by Malcolm X’s famous assertion that “Mississippi” was anywhere in the United States south of the Canadian border; that he chose Mississippi and not Minnesota was not arbitrary. (133)

While Baker, Nelson, and Romine employ the Malcolm X assertion to reconfigure racial violence as a national problem, the assertion also presents a transnational comparative framework to understand racial violence. Here, the Canadian border functions in similar ways to Wright’s use of Quebec as an “end of an imaginary line” to “measure how well or ill men adjusted themselves,” (111). Placing “the South” in
scare quotes, Baker and Nelson call for “new southern studies”\textsuperscript{5} scholarship that comparatively traces southern flows of people, goods, and capital “beyond traditional boundaries” and “into often neglected territories of the Americas” (234). However, the ease with which the Malcolm X assertion has circulated within new southern studies\textsuperscript{6} is disturbing for its failure to trouble the mythologization of Canada as a safe haven for blacks even as it calls for an examination of racism and racial violence beyond the geographical boundaries of the regional South. Like Wright, who confidently tells Ellison that racial discrimination does not exist in Canada despite

\textsuperscript{5} Baker and Nelson argue that “new southern studies” works “to reconfigure our familiar nations of Good (or desperately bad) Old Southern White Men telling stories on the porch, protecting white women, and being friends to the Negro” (232). This reconfiguration has meant a rethinking of identity, space, nation, region, abstraction, and the body in the US South that is evident in the titles of recent U.S. Southern literary and cultural scholarship, such as Leigh Anne Duck’s \textit{The Nation’s Region: Southern Modernism, Segregation, and U.S. Nationalism} and Riche Richardson’s \textit{Black Masculinity and the U.S. South: From Uncle Tom to Gangsta}. New southern studies has also turned its critical lens to the global south in such works as Barbara Ladd’s \textit{Nationalism and the Color Line in George W. Cable, Mark Twain, and William Faulkner} which extends the “South” of Twain, Cable, and Faulkner into the Caribbean rim, and Deborah Cohn’s \textit{History and Memory in the Two Souths: Recent Southern and Spanish American Fiction} which examines the shared regional histories of the US South and Spanish America, pairing authors from each region such as Faulkner with Mario Vargas Llosa, and Katherine Anne Porter with Juan Ruflo, Cohn’s comparative analysis applies traditional U.S. Southern paradigms to Spanish America. In \textit{Postslavery Literatures in the Americas: Family Portraits in Black and White}, George Handley’s comparative analysis of the U.S. South and the Caribbean uses Caribbean paradigms to examine the relationship between the two regions. For example, Handley describes George Washington Cable and Cirilo Villaverde as “New World Creoles who negotiate between the centers of power (Spain and the US North, respectively) and emergent mestizo cultures” (47).

\textsuperscript{6} Baker reiterates the Malcolm X quotation in his call for a “new southern studies” in \textit{Turning South Again}: “Malcolm X averred that “Mississippi” was anywhere in the United States south of the Canadian border. Searching revisionarily the geography, economics, race relations, demographics of the United States at our turn-of-the-millennium moment is vital work, not only for an energetic new southern studies, but also for a new – and expansive – American cultural studies” (10). In the recent publication from the “New Southern Studies” series published by the University of Georgia Press, \textit{Disturbing Calculations: The Economics of Identity in Postcolonial Southern Literature, 1912-2002}, Melanie Benson writes, “Few northerners would want to admit that Malcolm X was right when he claimed that “Mississippi was anywhere in the United States south of the Canadian border,” but the best work on regional studies is acknowledging that the power of region is increasingly irrelevant and impotent in a world of global capitalism and injustice” (203). In \textit{Reconstructing the World: Southern Fictions and U.S. Imperialisms}, 1898-1976, Harilaos Stecopoulos writes, “In 1965, Malcolm X would claim that Mississippi could be found anywhere in the United States south of the Canadian border – a claim that extended the racism associated with the South to the entire nation” (157).
knowing otherwise, these scholars reproduce an antithetical binary between Canada and the South, wherein absolutely nothing – history, literature, and culture – is shared between them.

This disavowal is evident in much of the critical analyses of William Faulkner’s Absalom, Absalom! (1936), where the Canadian Shreve McCannon and the Southerner Quentin Compson tell the story of Thomas Sutpen, who arrives in Mississippi from West Virginia in 1833. For some critics, Shreve is an absolute outsider to the South. David Staines argues that Shreve is the Canadian par excellence: he is “a dispassionate witness, secure in his or her own world and capable of observing, with careful and caring objectivity the dreams and disintegration of the United States” (36). François Pitavy claims that Shreve is “a perfect stranger who can provide a broader perspective on the story” (192). Ben Raitlin argues that Shreve’s upbringing in Alberta makes him “almost a polar opposite of Quentin” (46). Shreve is “even more important to Quentin’s development,” writes Raitlin, because he can “treat the South and southern history – and thus the Sutpen story in particular – objectively, with detachment and irony” (46). Hortense Spillers similarly claims that “It is almost as if Quentin, without knowing it, needs someone to watch with him, to invigilate his thinking, and Shreve is just the man for the job, in his inquisitive, even nosey, urge to fill in all the gaps” (363). While Spillers figures Shreve’s interest in the South as an intellectual endeavor to “fill in all the gaps,” Scott Romine argues that Shreve’s interest is purely consumptive: Shreve is “the original outsider....an eager consumer

---

7 In another letter to Ellison, Wright tells him about an African-American doctor and his wife who are told that they are not allowed to eat in a Quebec hotel dining room because of a complaint made by some US guests. Hazel Rowley writes, “The couple, hearing that Wright was in town, came to discuss the matter with him. They sued the hotel, but this cost them a thousand dollars. ‘The Dr. and his wife remain trembling in the hotel, eating or trying to eat in the dining room,’ Wright wrote to Ellison. ‘The woman told me that she could not make her food go down; the Dr. says that he lost 3 ½ pounds from worry and tension’” (320).

8 David Staines argues that “Canadian literature discovered its path to literary selfhood within North America” through the trope of the dispassionate witness (62).
of southern narrative production” (61). Thadious Davis writes, Shreve’s “picture of the South” is “constructed from wild theatrics (“Jesus, the South’s fine....It’s better than theatre...It’s better than Ben Hur””) and melodrama (probably Uncle Tom’s Cabin)” (218-19). In all of these readings of the Canadian’s role in the novel, Shreve is represented as being removed from the “real” South because of geographical distance, cultural differences, and/or historical ignorance.

However, Faulkner seems to suggest that there are shared roots and routes between white Canadian and Southern identities: “the two of them not moving except to breathe, both of them young, both born within the same year: the one in Alberta, the other in Mississippi; born half a continent apart yet joined, connected after a fashion in a sort of geographical transubstantiation by that Continental trough” (208). Shreve explains his interests in the US South as not merely an intellectual endeavor or act of cultural consumption, when he says to Quentin:

I just want to understand it if I can and I don’t know how to say it better. Because it’s something my people haven’t got...We don’t live among defeated grandfathers and freed slaves...and bullets in the dining room table and such, to be always reminding us to never forget. (289)

The US Civil War and the South’s defeat provide another place and time through which Shreve can better understand Canada. Despite the commonly held belief that Canadians supported the Union, Canadian sympathies were with the South. “British North Americans,” writes Robin Winks, “proved to be anti-Northern, opposed to a war fought to preserve the Union, in fact rather inclined to the Southern position once they saw that Lincoln was not, as he said, fighting to end slavery” (270). Confederates would find sanctuary in Canadian homes throughout the US Civil War, such as the Denison family homes in Toronto, which became places of refuge for exiled Confederates during the last two years of the war. “Colonel Denison’s sympathy for
the Southern cause in the Civil War,” writes Carl Berger, “was indeed instinctually rooted in the loyalist tradition of his family. He adhered to the same values that legend and propaganda had attached to the plantation life and the Confederacy – the marital values and chivalric codes of honour; the adulation of conservative, landed society; and the detestation of capitalistic business” (15-16). When Jefferson Davis, the late President of the Confederate States of America, arrived in Toronto in May 1867 to recuperate, he was welcomed by a cheering crowd of Canadians. “In the United States, the railway coach Davis traveled in had been pelted with rotten fruit and crowds had jeered as he passed,” writes Adam Mayers; “In Canada, he was hailed as a tragic, even noble, fallen hero” (20). In *Absalom, Absalom!* Shreve seems to have an instinctual awareness (“I don’t know how to say it better”) that Southern history and culture are somehow intimately linked to his own sense of self.

Faulkner provides a southern genealogy for the white Canadian that situates Canada firmly within the Americas. However, Canadian literary scholars have been reluctant to examine Canada’s hemispheric relations. Many Canadian Studies scholars have perceived the hemispheric turn in American Studies as a form of US cultural neo-imperialism. In *Borderlands: How We Can Talk About Canada*, for instance, W.H. New expresses fear that Richard Rodriguez’s reading of the North American continent along a north-south axis will efface the symbolic importance of Canada’s West and “enmesh Canada in a grand continental [read U.S.] design” (75). In a recent issue of *Comparative American Studies* on “Canada and the Americas,” co-editors Rachel Adams and Sarah Phillips Casteel argue that Canada has been overlooked by American and New World studies scholarship that has focused almost exclusively on the relationship among the US, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Canada’s omission

---

9 In *Absalom, Absalom!*’s closing genealogy, Shreve’s is the last entry with the story of Sutpen finding its home in Edmonton, Alberta.
confirms, Adams and Casteel write, “that from south of the 49th parallel, Canada is not simply uninteresting; it is virtually invisible” (6). Significantly, Adams and Casteel note, however, that it is Canadians that “have largely absented themselves from critical conversations about a hemispheric American studies” (6). While Adams and Casteel provide four preliminary points of comparative interventions, they do not fully address the reasons for this Canadian reluctance beyond institutional fears: “Acutely conscious of how recently the battle was fought to establish Canadian Studies, they are understandably protective of its integrity and desirous of maintaining its independence” (6-7). I would add that this reluctance in Canadian Studies is also tied to an unwillingness to challenge the mythology of Canadian exceptionalism – that the Malcolm X assertion affirms – in regard to race relations, racism, and racial violence in the Americas.

In “Subtitling Can Lit: Keywords,” Peter Dickinson provocatively asks, “Where is our Playing in the Dark?” (47). Toni Morrison’s seminal text on whiteness in the US literary imagination argues that “the fabrication of an Africanist persona” has functioned as “an extraordinary meditation on the [white] self; a powerful exploration of the fears and desires that reside in the [U.S.] writerly conscious” (17). This study is critically informed by whiteness studies in the United States and Canada. The works of labor historians David Roediger, Noel Ignatiev, and Thomas Allen have all influenced the ways in which I understand the tight imbrications of race and class in the formation of whiteness in the US in the nineteenth century. The works of literary and cultural studies scholars, including those of Eric Lott, Toni Morrison, and

\footnote{Attempting “to redress that imbalance by locating Canada within the history and culture of the Americas and, in doing so, to provide a compelling rational for the inclusion of Canada in current articulations of a hemispheric American studies,” Adams and Casteel present four preliminary points of comparative intervention: 1) Canada’s history of slavery and the black diaspora; 2) Canada’s official polices of bilingualism and multiculturalism and its struggles over linguistic and cultural diversity; 3) the U.S.-Canadian border; and 4) Canadian discourses of racial hybridity (8-10).}
Saidiya Hartman, have all influenced the ways in which I understand the importance of cultural productions to the normalization of white supremacy within the national consciousness. Canadian literary scholars have addressed many dimensions of racial and ethnic conflict in Canada and their articulations in literary texts. Daniel Coleman, Terrence Craig, Leslie Monkman, Terrie Goldie, Cecily Devereux, Helen Hoy, and Jennifer Henderson are only a few scholars who have extensively examined racist representation of non-white, non-English “others” in Canadian literature by white English-speaking writers.

An Africanist presence has also been a central framing figure for some of Canada’s most canonical and highly celebrated literary works: the black slave that appears at the beginning of John Richardson’s *Wacousta* (1832) and at the end of Phillipe Aubert’s *Les anciens Canadiens* (1863); the Pullman Porter that appears at the beginning of Stephen Leacock’s *Sunshine Sketches of A Small Town* (1912) and Gabrielle Roy’s *Streets of Riches* (1955); the jazz musician that appears at the beginning and end of Morley Callaghan’s *The Loved and the Lost* (1955) and Leonard Cohen’s *Beautiful Losers* (1966), to name a few. In “‘Treason in the Fort’: Blackness and Canadian Literature,” Richard Almonte examines the pervasiveness of black characters in early Canadian literature, and contends that “Morrison’s injunction that Blackness in white-authored American literature is by definition ‘reflexive’ must be changed, in the Canadian context, to ‘defensive.’ Blackness signals not so much what whites might be, as what they do not want to be” (24). The underlying assumption of Almonte’s argument is that Canadian whiteness pre-exists the “troubling” entrances of the black characters that pose a threat to its integrity, and that its “defensive” response to blackness occurs only out of a need for self-preservation and does not assertively seek to violently exclude blackness.
In *Imperial White: Race, Diaspora, and the British Empire*, Radhika Mohanram argues that black bodies have been missing from whiteness studies despite their centrality to the comprehension of whiteness. Mohanram writes, “Underpinning their work [of whiteness scholars such as Allen, Roediger, Ignatiev] is the understanding that whites can become whites only by not being blacks. Blackness functions as the residual effect, the spoor of this upward mobility within modernity” (xvi). In *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada*, Daniel Coleman similarly focuses on the ways in which “Canadianziation” for European immigrants is determined by one’s degree of assimilation to this so-called universal ideal represented by white civility. In the one instance wherein Coleman discusses the role of black characters, he reads their inclusion as attempts by white Canadian writers to affirm Canadian benevolence: “the Canadian brother’s championing of the just causes of Africans and Natives distinguishes Canadian virtue from American greed and perfidy” (73). Both Almonte and Coleman defer any genuine engagement with the Africanist origins of the Canadian self through eliding the ways in which reproductions of racial violence and terror in the Canadian literary imaginary undergird Canadian white civility.

In *From Dixie to the Dominion*, I challenge the mythology of Canadian exceptionalism within the Americas by examining the ways in which “Mississippi” is in fact everywhere in Canada. While comparative approaches to studies of the Americas have had an emphasis on the spatial,\(^\text{11}\) I argue that the coordinates underwriting a shared racial landscape between the South and Canada are temporal. In

---

\(^{11}\) The plantation has provided the most common spatial lens through which the South, the Caribbean, and Latin America have been compared. Locating the South within the interconnected, complex histories of the Americas, Jon Smith and Deborah Cohn argue that “the plantation – more than anything else – ties the South both to the rest of the United States and to the rest of the New World” in the introduction to *Look Away!: The U.S. South in New World Studies* (6).
the introduction to *The Futures of American Studies*, Donald Pease and Robyn Wiegman foreground comparative approaches that give accounts of temporal subversions that contest the “national mythos” (16). In particular, Pease and Wiegman examine discrepant or subversive temporalities that contest the “imaginary homogeneity out of discrepant life worlds” or what Benedict Anderson calls “the empty homogenous time” of the nation (16). In “Marxism after Marx: History, Subalternity, and Difference,” Dipesh Chakrabarty examines what he calls the “time of capital,” which he defines as the temporality of commodified abstract labor that, in his view, underpins imperial history writing. Chakrabarty argues that the time of capital cannot quite contain the heterogeneous temporalities of subaltern “real” labor (60). While Pease and Wiegman argue that the heterogeneous insurgent time present in the “anti-imperial” discourses, upon which New American Studies scholarship focuses, is politically progressive, I argue that the transnational politics accompanying Canadian and US Southern literary contestations of the time of capital can be and usually are regressive in their discursive constructions of white supremacy.¹²

In chapter one, “Sketching Scenes of Subjection: The Aestheticization of Black Fright in T.C. Haliburton’s *The Clockmaker* and Southwestern Humor,” I examine Nova Scotian humorist Thomas Chandler Haliburton’s intertextual engagement with Georgia humorist Augustus Baldwin Longstreet’s *Georgia Scenes* (1834). In their sketches, Haliburton and Longstreet address the anxieties and ambivalences surrounding the emergence of market capitalism in their respective regions. In *The Clockmaker* (1835), Haliburton illustrates to white Nova Scotians the dangerous dispossession of whiteness that occurs under capitalism and stages white resistance to

¹² In *The Sound and the Fury*, Quentin shares his Harvard door room with Shreve. One of the central concerns of the novel is with time, and Quentin’s attempts to escape the dictates of the clock—“Because clocks slay time. He said time is dead as long as it is being clocked off by little wheels; only when the clock stops does time come to life” (85). While Quentin cannot stop the clock, he does seem to believe that his Canadian roommate might as he leaves his broken watch for him.
capitalist speculation in the region. I look specifically at the ways in which Haliburton appropriates scenes of subjection from the whipping post to the auction block in anti-slavery literature. Aestheticizing black fright, Haliburton mobilizes white Nova Scotians into action through a racial nationalism that pits Nova Scotian notions of “home and heritage” against the “empty, homogenous time” of commerce. While southwester humorists, such as Longstreet, provided Haliburton with a model for Nova Scotian resistance to New England economic colonialism, southwestern humorists, such as George Washington Harris and Mark Twain, would employ Haliburton’s aestheticization of black fright to similarly mobilize southerners in the post-Reconstruction era.

Chapter two, “Whipping Tom: Imaginative Sympathy, Southern Black Bodies, and White Enterprise in Susanna Moodie’s Roughing it in the Bush and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin” examines the ways in which Stowe’s novel and Moodie’s autobiography, both published in 1852, employ the whipping scene to critique capitalism’s inhumanity and indifference to suffering. I examine the ways in which Moodie’s depictions of the Upper Canadian backwoods and Stowe’s depictions of the southern plantation similarly represent these colonial spaces as moral and spiritual wastelands. Both Moodie and Stowe contest the moral and spiritual peril accompanying the secularization of market capitalism by providing an accounting of time that implies the interaction and mutual constitution of subjects and objects, selves and others, bodies and souls, heavens and hells. Employing features of the sentimental novel and the anti-slavery narrative, Moodie and Stowe foreground the role of mothers and the domestic sphere for producing citizen subjects who can redeem the nation through imaginative sympathy. Particularly, Moodie and Stowe use the whipping of black bodies as pedagogical moments to produce civil subjects that infuse emotion and obligation into the time of capital. While Moodie and Stowe call
for the abolition of slavery, I argue that they both maintain whiteness as a superior race.

Chapter three, “From Dixie with Love: Standardized Time, Main Street, and Lynching Photography,” continues this dissertation’s examination of racial violence as a response to capitalism’s dispossession of white “freedom” and agency. I examine the building of Main Street in small towns in the US South and Canada in the first decade of the twentieth century. I attempt to understand the meaning and function of a lynching photograph from Crossfield, Alberta in relation to lynching and lynching photographs in the US. I read the Crossfield lynching photograph alongside two other Main Street lynching photograph from Dallas, Texas and Whitmer, West Virginia to examine the ways in which lynch law’s aura provided the white participants and spectators of the lynching scene with a sense of authenticity and uniqueness that contested the replication and seriality of modern life. Through a reading of these lynching photographs and Stephen Crane’s “ Twelve O’Clock,” I argue that Main Street lynchings were not anti-modern responses to time discipline’s extension from the factory to everyday social life, but were, rather, choreographed events occasioned by town boosters in order to quell white anxieties and fears of consumer capitalism. Lynching simultaneously functions as a palliative to white dispossession and creates the social cohesion produced by boosters’ Main Street phantasmagoric aesthetic.

In the final chapter, “Documenting Lynching: Labor and A Critique of Capital in Dorothy Livesay’s “Day and Night” and Day and Night,” I examine the proliferation of lynching imagery in the 1930s and early 1940s writings of Canadian poet Dorothy Livesay. I place Livesay’s documentation of lynching in “Day and Night” within the politics and poetics of the Popular Front (through her engagement with U.S. leftist poets such as Langston Hughes, Sol Funaroff, Muriel Rukeyser, and Kenneth Fearing), and argue that we must understand Livesay’s depiction of lynching
not as a single anomaly, but as a scene of subjection that gets repeatedly documented in her re-visions of the southern landscape in *Day and Night*. Her examination of racial injustice and violence in the South, evident in her intertextual engagements with the Scottsboro case in Alabama and the Hawk’s Nest Incident in West Virginia, provide occasions in which Livesay critiques capitalism. Livesay links the physical and psychological subordination and subjugation of white women and black men by white men through references to temporality, and imagines a new social order for the revolutionary classes through the halting of clock time. While lynching imagery in Livesay’s *Day and Night* serves as scenes for white self-reflexivity, it does not produce white enjoyment, but rather white shame. In *Day and Night*, Livesay uses the South as a lens through which to recognize and understand the workings of racial violence and terror in Canada.

In conclusion, I want to take a turn to the contemporary moment in order to understand the ways in which these tactics of the past in relation to the time of capital continue in the present. Jeff Wall’s *After ‘Invisible Man’ by Ralph Ellison, the Prologue* (1999-2000, printed 2001) can perhaps be understood as an “unconscious” repetition of Canada’s turn to the South. Canadian photographer Jeff Wall is considered to be one of the most innovative and influential artists of his generation. Since 1977, Wall has consistently relied on a recognizable format, that of large scale, backlit transparencies commonly associated with billboard advertising found in contemporary urban spaces. One can understand Wall’s borrowing of advertising format as part of his larger commentary on consumer culture; Wall’s art performs, writes Toni Ross, “a moral and political interrogation of the social conditions and frictions of late capitalism” (562). Wall’s medium of choice makes him a hard artist to label: for instance, Richard Lacayo considers Wall’s work to be rather sculptural than photographic, and Arthur Danto likens Wall to a cinematographer or director who
produces single-frame movies. Rejecting modernist abstraction, Wall prefers instead a more conventional pictorialism in order to develop visual narratives about modern life, but unlike the realism of documentary or street photography, Wall uses crews to construct sets and stage actors who pose for the camera. In Jeff Wall, Peter Galassi notes that every one of Wall’s pictures makes an isolated statement (13). But despite this lack of a dominant theme, Wall has noted that his art assumes an “image of capitalist modernity as regime of unfreedom and empty suffering,” which is reflected in the numerous pictures he has created, writes Ross, of “scenes of oppressed or marginalized people set within the industrialized and urban landscapes of late modern societies” (103, 561).

Why would Wall, an artist concerned for the most part with the urban and late capitalism, turn to the South in After ‘Invisible Man’ by Ralph Ellison, the Prologue? In “Postmodern Geographies of the U.S. South,” Madhu Dubey argues that “Since the mid-1970s, U.S. historians, sociologists, novelists, literary critics, and cultural commentators... seem to have become obsessed with the South, reviving the enduring debate about what makes the region distinct from the rest of the nation” (351). The region’s status as a hinterland, “left behind by uneven national process of modernization bolsters contemporary clams that the South constitutes an ‘elsewhere’ to a fully globalized capitalist system” (352). The US South emerges as a romanticized underdeveloped geographical region that becomes an “effective site of social critique” in much the same way that Fredric Jameson’s turn to “third-worldism” functions as “the most appealing strategy for opposing advanced capitalism” (367). Dubey argues that “given that the self-definition of European modernity has monopolized time,” writers and cultural critics have turned to the space, and in this case the South, as “a way of interrupting modernity’s global march” (351). However, Wall’s After ‘Invisible Man’ by Ralph Ellison, the Prologue figures a temporal, rather than spatial, turn to the
South that suggests an attempt to awaken his viewers to the disposessions of consumer capitalism, and capitalist modernity’s “regime of unfreedom and empty suffering” that is beautifully explicated in Ellison’s novel (103).

Published in 1952, Ellison’s Invisible Man interrogates the destructive and deathly consequences of clock consciousness and time discipline for blacks. The mechanistic model of clock time first emerges with the novel’s introduction of Northern financier and industrialist Norton who has returned to the southern university he has helped fund since its inception. Norton describes his “real life work” not as finance but the “first-hand organizing of human life” (42). Norton situates the narrator within his mechanistic ordering of human life, which the narrator initially believes to be a system of mutual recognition: “You are important because if you fail I have failed by one individual, one defective cog” (45). However, Norton’s temporal narrative is marked by exclusions and marginalizations, which becomes evident during his encounter with a sharecropper named Trueblood. Even before Trueblood tells Norton of the incest scandal that has brought much white attention to him, Norton is fascinated with Trueblood and his family as he imagines them to be “outside” to time. The Invisible Man tells Norton that Trueblood’s log cabins “were built during slavery times” (47). Norton comments, “I would never have believed that they were so enduring. Since slavery times! (47). While Norton refers to the cabins, he is actually “looking across the bare, hard stretch of yard where two women...moved with weary, full-fronted motions of far-gone pregnancy” (47). Norton appears to see these black women as caught within the historical past of slavery, a time not yet taken over or incorporated into the temporal synchronization and spatial serialization of corporate capitalism.

Wall’s After ‘Invisible Man’ by Ralph Ellison, the Prologue (Figure 1) has been exhibited throughout Europe and North America. Wall meticulously replicates
the unnamed black protagonist’s “hole in the basement, [where] there are exactly 1,369 lights,” described in the prologue to *Invisible Man* (7). It is perhaps fitting that Ellison’s self-conscious deployment of the terms of “visibility” and “invisibility” to map out the trajectories of the gaze from positions of racial domination and marginalization would appeal to Wall’s own creative interests in representing the power mechanisms of the gaze. Concerned with how racial identities are configured within discourses of the visible, Ellison’s *Invisible Man* shows that the condition of being marked, and the simultaneous condition of being invisible, cannot be reduced to the evidence of skin color because difference is not produced by the body of the other but by the eye of the beholder. Wall reproduces this underground space, covering the ceilings and walls with hundreds of light bulbs, and including other objects essential to the narrator’s life, from the radio-phonograph on which he listens to Louis Armstrong’s “What Did I Do to Be so Black and Blue?” to the pieces of paper that give the narrator a sense of self-possession and self-affirmation through the act of writing. The objects displayed in Wall’s *After ‘Invisible Man’ by Ralph Ellison, the Prologue* include a small bust, lucky horseshoes, a crucifix, a blackface ceramic mask, a few illegible old photographs, a torn picture of Christ as a shepherd, and an American flag. All of these objects are important to Wall’s visual narrative and framing of Ellison’s novel.

While Wall meticulously reproduces the setting of *Invisible Man*, the visual narrative Wall provides betrays the ideological work of Ellison’s novel. In *From Uncle Tom to Gangsta: Black Masculinity and the U.S. South*, Riché Richardson explores the ways in which the figures of Uncle Tom and the black rapist link the South to some of the earliest national ideological scripts of black masculinity in the United States. “Ideologies of white masculinity in the South,” Richardson argues, “were consolidated by forcing black southerners to live under subjection while
obstructing their claims to citizenship and by nationalizing a script of the black male body as pathological and bestial in the nineteenth-century” (4). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the narrative of the black rapist “complemented the caricatures of the black male body as an Uncle Tom, which also worked saliently in shaping a national discourse on race, masculinity, and sexuality” (5). In her reading of Ellison’s Invisible Man Richardson writes, “The novel presents an epic counternarrative to the regional and ultimately national myth of an abject and sexually perverse black masculinity that, emerging in the nineteenth century, was designed to confine and rationalize the conservation of citizenship and democracy for white men, which was steeped in the fantasy of a pathological black masculine body” (154). Wall’s cinematographic photograph participates in the literary and visual narrative of black masculinity, but rather than reproduce Ellison’s counternarrative to the stereotypical portrayals of black masculinity, Wall represents the unnamed black protagonist within the genealogy of Uncle Tom.

(Figure 1 has not been reproduced due to copyright permissions)

Figure 1: Jeff Wall’s After ‘Invisible Man’ by Ralph Ellison, the Prologue (1999-2000, printed 2001)
The torn picture of Christ and the blackface ceramic mask frame the ways in which we are to understand Wall’s re-presentation of the narrator’s black subjectivity within the Uncle Tom genealogy. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom is a Christ-like figure whose suffering at the hands of his white master leads to spiritual struggle and resistance. Blackface productions of Uncle Tom’s Cabin on stage and film transformed the strong, muscular man of Stowe’s novel into “an innocuous and neutered model of black masculine sexuality [that] came to be signified primarily in relation to an aged, black masculine body” (Richardson 3). In Ellison’s novel, the narrator is an anti-hero. He steals power from Monopolated Light & Power that is described as “an act of sabotage” against corporate monopoly capitalism (7). More importantly, the invisible man is able to affirm and possess his subjectivity through the act of writing; however, Wall denies him this self-possession as the pieces of paper bear no meaning in relation to the narrator as they lie strewn about on the table and armchair. Wall makes the invisible man passive and domestic. As Régis Michel argues, the activities of Wall’s narrator are far more modest than self-assertion as he sits on the edge of the chair wiping a metal object that looks like a coffee pot or saucepan, some sort of kitchen utensil: Michel writes, “With Wall, the black man exists by wiping. He is a housekeeper, whose pen is replaced by a cloth” (58). Wall produces a visual narrative that veers far from the ideological work of Ellison’s counter-narrative by “reproducing the specific narrative of black masculinity in the South as apolitical and counterinsurgent” (Richardson 15). But why does Wall so meticulously reproduce the underground scene in Invisible Man only to betray Ralph Ellison? Why does Wall transform the basement of the invisible man into the postmodern cabin of Uncle Tom?

The answers may be in the advertising or billboard format that Wall is so known for using. In Time and the Western Man, Wyndham Lewis is particularly
critical of advertising’s relation to time. He complains that advertising “dwell in a one-day world” where the “average man is invited to slice his life into a series of one-day lives, regulated by the clock of fashion” (11). Advertising presents a temporal frame for the self that has the form of capitalist value. He writes, “It is the glorification of the life-of-the moment, with no reference beyond itself and no absolute or universal value; only so much value as is conveyed in the famous proverb, Time is money” (11-12). In The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man, Marshall McLuhan echoes these sentiments in his discussion of the “mechanical strait jackets” of clock time that constrain modern man through engineering a collective, psychological state of an unconscious form proper to capitalist culture (33). He writes, “The monks were the first begetters of methods of abstract finance, and the clockwork order of their communal lives gave to the tradesmen of the growing towns the great example of systematic time economy....The object of this systematic process is now production and finance rather than God. And evangelical zeal is now centered in the department of sales and distribution rather than in preaching” (33). In The Mechanical Bride, McLuhan’s goal is not to have us live in harmony with capitalism and technology, but to awaken us from our “somnambulistic trance” in order to recover our humanity.

At the end of the twentieth century, Wall would employ the advertising format itself to awaken his viewers from the “mechanical strait jackets” of the time of capital. The Invisible Man is initially blinded and obliging to Norton’s mechanistic time, but by the time he has taken up his place in the basement in Harlem, he has discovered the “unfreedom” of the time of capital. In the basement, the narrator searches for freedom within an alternative temporal mode that leads him back to black southern folk life and culture. Ellison’s invisible man speaks of a “different sense of time,” and Wall appropriates this scene of black empowerment for his own ends (8). Much like
Thomas Chandler Haliburton’s appropriation of scenes from anti-slavery literature in the 1830s, Wall appropriates Ellison’s novel to emancipate his viewers from the reaches of capitalism. Over a hundred and fifty years after Haliburton’s aestheticization of black fright in *The Clockmaker*, Wall’s representation of black subordination and subjugation once again enables a moment of white self-mastery and self-possession, but this time within the postmodern world of late capitalism. Wall’s *After ‘Invisible Man’ by Ralph Ellison, the Prologue* repeats Canadian literary and cultural turns to the US South in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and suggests the continued importance of understanding the US South and scenes of subjection in the white Canadian imagination.
CHAPTER ONE

Sketching Scenes of Subjection: The Aestheticization of Black Fright in Thomas Chandler Haliburton's *The Clockmaker* and US Southwestern Humor

He was neither an Englishman nor an American, having been born 'along shore' in Nova Scotia: but he was free on that occasion to say, that he shared in the prejudices generally entertained by Americans regard to Negroes; and could not reach such feelings as unnatural or unjustifiable, but as inevitable. The idea of mixing with Negroes was naturally, to a white man, altogether and unconquerably repellent. I do not profess to give Judge Haliburton's words, but I think those who heard them will admit that I give his ideas. He made another point, about the ruin of the West India planters by emancipation, which showed but too plainly, that to the heart’s core, he was entirely with and for slavery, and that it was next to impossible to find a more malignant enemy to the Negro than the Honourable [T.C.] Haliburton.


You know very well where we found our ideas of class struggle; we found it in the work of the French historians who talked about the race struggle.

- Karl Marx in a letter to Friedrich Engels, 1882.\(^{13}\)

African-American anti-slavery activist, Samuel Ringgold Ward, describes a rather unpleasant meeting in London with the famous Nova Scotian judge and writer, Thomas Chandler Haliburton, in 1853. During this meeting of mostly anti-slavery activists, Haliburton rejected the idea of a college for blacks in the British colonies, because higher education should be reserved for the education of gentlemen and “a gentlemen, among the race [blacks], was entirely out of the question” (260).\(^{14}\)

Infuriated by Haliburton’s comments, Ward links Haliburton’s sentiments to the sayings of Sam Slick; he says, “That is like Sam Slick (Judge Haliburton) saying, ‘a Negro gentleman is out of the question.’” (156). Sam Slick was one of the most

\(^{13}\) Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975-76* (New York: Picador, 2003), 79.

\(^{14}\) In his own account of the London meeting in *Nature and Human Nature* (1855), Haliburton writes, “I gave them a dose of common sense, as a foundation to build upon. I told them niggers must be prepared for liberty, and when they were sufficiently instructed to receive and appreciate the blessing, they must have elementary knowledge, first in religion and then in the useful arts, before a college should be attempted, and so on, and then took up my hat, and walked out” (15).
discussed literary figures of the nineteenth century, and was created by Haliburton in 1835. Here, Ward seems to be specifically referring to Haliburton’s 1838 sketch “Slavery” in which Sam Slick debates with an abolitionist “English gall” whether or not blacks “if emancipated, educated, and civilized, are capable of as much refinement and as high a degree of polish as the whites” (269). Sam Slick provides a story about a bet his brother, Josiah Slick, made with his southern planter friends that he could turn ten of his black slaves into black gentlemen; Sam Slick says,

Next day at ten o’clock, the time fixed, Josiah had his ten niggers nicely dressed, paraded out in the streets a facin’ of the sun and brought his friends and umpires to decide the bet. Well, when they got near ‘em, they put their hands to their eyes and looked down to the ground, and the ears ran down their cheeks like anything. Whose cheeks? said she; black or whites? This is very interestin’. Oh, the whites to be sure, said I. (271)

Intrigued by this scene of black civility and white southern remorse, the abolitionist vows to “record the mark of feelin’ with great pleasure – I’ll let the world know it. It does honor to their heads and hearts” (271). However, Sam Slick has made a fool of her as the men’s tears are not a “mark of feelin’,” but a mark of blindness: “What the devil have you got there, Slick? says they; it has put our eyes out: damn them, how they shine!” (271). Josiah demonstrates the polish of his slaves by lining them up in the noonday sun and blinding everyone with the sun glinting off their polished skin.\(^\text{15}\)

Ward surmises that Haliburton is a “more malignant enemy to the Negro,” and

\(^{15}\) In the sketch, Haliburton seems to align himself with Josiah, as Sam Slick’s description of his brother’s literary biography mirrors Haliburton’s: “he’s a lawyer by trade – Squire Josiah Slick; he is a considerable of a literary character. He’s well known in the great world as the author of the Historical, Statistical, and Topographical account of Cuttyhunk, in five volumes; a work that has raised the reputation of American genius among foreign nations amazin’, I assure you. He’s quite a self-taught author too” (270).
Haliburton’s literary career that spans the period of intense debate over slavery seems to confirm Ward’s belief.

Born in Windsor, Nova Scotia in 1796, Haliburton was a lawyer and circuit-judge before he began his writing career in the early 1820s. A historian of local repute, his two histories of Nova Scotia – *A General Description of Nova Scotia* (1823) and *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia* (1829) – provided the historical background for Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s epic poem, *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie* (1847).\(^\text{16}\) Between September 1835 and February 1836, Haliburton published a series of comic sketches entitled “Recollections of Nova Scotia” in *The Novascotian*, a local Halifax newspaper published by Joseph Howe. In the series, an English gentleman known simply as “the Squire,” unwittingly falls in with Sam Slick. They travel the Nova Scotian countryside together with Sam Slick selling his wares and expounding his views on colonial life and Nova Scotia’s relations with the United States and Britain. Upon its immediate success, Howe published the twenty-one sketches, supplemented with twelve unpublished or new sketches, in book form under the title *The Clockmaker; or, the Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville* at the end of 1836. The following year, *The Clockmaker* was published throughout the United States, from Boston to Nashville, and Europe, from Britain to France. Sam Slick’s immense popularity would lead to a second and third *The Clockmaker* series published in 1838 and 1840 respectively. Haliburton’s literary success would lead to further Sam Slick sketches throughout the 1840s and 1850s: two volumes in the series entitled *The Attaché, or Sam Slick in England* (1843-44), two volumes in the series entitled *Sam Slick’s Wise Saws and Modern Instances* (1853), and Sam Slick’s final appearance in the two volumes entitled *Nature and Human Nature* (1855).

\(^{16}\) In the 1850 deluxe illustrated edition of *Evangeline*, the publisher includes an appendix with a dozen pages of “historical material” including a lengthy excerpt from Haliburton’s *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia* (1829).
Significantly, Haliburton’s Sam Slick is modeled on the Yankee clock peddler in Davy Crockett’s *Sketches and Eccentricities of Col. David Crockett of West Tennessee* (1835). Crockett captures public sentiment of the Yankee clock-peddler, when he describes the “itinerant class of gentry, now identified in every new country, whose adventures are as amusing as they are annoying to its inhabitants. I allude to the tripe yclept Clock Pedlers, which terms implies shrewdness, intelligence, and cunning” (151). For Crockett, the Yankee clock peddler functions as an economic and social interloper in rural US southern communities: “Reader, did you ever know a full-blooded Yankee clock peddler? If not, imagine a tall lank fellow, with a thin visage, and small dark grey eyes, looking through you at every glance, and having the word *trade* written in his every action, and you will then have an idea of Mr. Slim” (151). In *The Clockmaker*, Haliburton transforms Crockett’s Mr. Slim into Mr. Slick, and infuses this Yankee figure with his own regional purposes. Haliburton’s familiarity with US southern and southwestern writing is evident in his two-volume anthology, *Traits of American Humor* (1852), and his three-volume anthology, *Americans at Home* (1854). US southwestern humorists included in these anthologies include Davy Crockett, Augustine Baldwin Longstreet, Joseph G. Baldwin, James Kirke Paulding, William Tappan Thompson, and Johnson Jones Hooper. Haliburton’s interests in the US South are most often articulated through the clash between Yankee capitalism and Southern agrarianism. In southwestern humor, Haliburton finds a model of regional resistance to New England economic colonialism.

In this chapter, I examine Haliburton’s intertextual engagement with southwestern humorist Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, and the ways in which they both address the threat of Yankee economic colonialism in their respective regions. I argue that Haliburton’s *The Clockmaker* shares many of same concerns and anxieties about market capitalism that are present in Longstreet’s *Georgia Scenes* (1834). Following
Longstreet’s militant sketches against northern oppression, Haliburton’s *The Clockmaker* attempts to ward off the threat of New England economic domination of Nova Scotian land, resources, and labor through mobilizing Nova Scotian independence. Haliburton asserts a Nova Scotian modernizing politics of its own that contests capitalist ideologies of progress and development. In *The Clockmaker*, Haliburton uses scenes of subjection to make or form Nova Scotian subjects, and to produce social relations within the state (the political) that predominate over social relations with the market (the economic). Appropriating the horrific scenes of the slave auction and the whipping post in anti-slavery writings, Haliburton attempts to unify Nova Scotian subjects through their shared possession of whiteness. Through re-staging scenes of subjection, Haliburton mobilizes working- and middle-class white Nova Scotians into necessary economic, political, and technological reform for Nova Scotian emancipation.

*****

Haliburton’s literary achievement from the “colonial frontier” was made possible by the availability and accessibility of the literary sketch to a wide variety of writers as well as a diverse mass audience in the nineteenth century. The explosion of the literary sketch genre in the 1830s and 1840s was due in large part, Kristie Hamilton contends, to the explosion of magazine and newspaper publication. Filling the pages of periodicals, the sketch became one of the most widely accessible forms of American literature for readers of the laboring and professional classes as well as middle-class women. In *America’s Sketchbook: The Cultural Life of a Nineteenth-Century Literary Genre*, Hamilton argues that as periodical readership grew rapidly the “market for sketches was opened to writers who might otherwise have been unable to gain access to a national audience (Euro-American women, African-Americans, Westerners, Southerners)” (16). Within this literary marketplace, writers outside the
literary centers, such as Haliburton, could reach a diverse audience in the city and the country. The commercial demand for literary sketches made it easier for Haliburton’s “Recollections of Nova Scotia” and The Clockmaker series to make their way quickly to the United States. In November 1835, for instance, the Boston Courier reprinted in both its daily and semi-weekly issue “Yankee eating and horse feeding” from The Novascotian. In December 1840, the Nashville Union printed a selection from The Clockmaker third series, which contained, according to the newspaper, “many humorous things.”

For Hamilton, the accessibility of the literary sketch genre – “as a reading matter, as written form, and as salable literary commodity” – made it a key player in nineteenth-century American cultural production (33). The extension of literacy to men and women on the social margins prepared the way for the diversification of the literary community. Hamilton argues that middle-class aspiration to leisure was inscribed in the genre, with the sketches’ distinctiveness emerging from the middle class’ need to fashion a place for themselves in a Jacksonian culture in which they had increasingly less privilege (27).

The domestic policies of Jacksonian democracy, such as its handling of land grants, its refusal to renew the charter of the Bank of the United States, and its imposition of tariffs against the will of certain states, as well as its aggressive foreign policies regarding the border dispute between Maine and New Brunswick and the severing of Texas from Mexico, all worried Haliburton. In “Cumberland Oysters and Melancholy Forebodings,” Sam Slick describes the political and economic turmoil in the United States:

The Blacks and the Whites in the States show their teeth and snarl, they are just ready to fall to. The Protestants and Catholics begin to lay back their ears, and

---

turn tail for kickin. The Abolitionists and Planters are at it like two bulls in a pastur. Mob law and Lynch law are working like yeast in a barrel, and frothing at the bung hole. Nullification and Tariff are like a charcoal pit, all covered up, but burning inside, and sending out smoke at every crack, enough to stifle a horse. General Government and State Government every now and then square off and sparr, and the first blow given will bring a genuine set-to. (56)

Haliburton’s apocalyptic descriptions of the United States would echo Augustus Baldwin Longstreet’s sentiments in Georgia Scenes. Born in Augustus, Georgia in 1790, Longstreet was a lawyer, judge, and politician. His collection of sketches, Georgia Scenes, appeared anonymously in 1834, and was an immediate success. The collection consists of nineteen sketches that follow two gentleman narrators’ (Lyman Hall and Abram Baldwin) travels through the backwoods of Georgia and their encounters with various working-class whites along the way. In Minstrelsy and Murder: The Crisis of Southern Humor, 1835-1925, Andrew Silver writes, “Augustus Longstreet wrote his stories for a Jacksonian America in which he alleged every member of the body politic was diseased, his letters creating a near apocalyptic national vision in which ‘the wise and the good [are] superseded by the ignorant and depraved…merit despised, and corruption honored…integrity calumniated and infamy extolled’” (13). Haliburton and Longstreet’s apocalyptic sketches share a similar distrust of Jacksonian democracy and the emerging capitalist market economy.

Haliburton knew Longstreet’s Georgia Scenes well, and included the sketches “The Horse Swap” and “The Shooting Match” in his 1852 anthology of American humor. In Inventing Sam Slick, Richard Davies compares the structure and purpose of Haliburton’s The Old Judge (1849) to Longstreet’s Georgia Scenes:

Georgia Scenes contained twelve sketches presented by one narrator, Lyman Hall, and six by another narrator, Abram Baldwin: “two sanctimonious halves
of a single personality,” as one critic has expressed it. Haliburton adapted the two narrators of *Georgia Scenes* for his own purpose in *The Old Judge*. Together, they induct the English visitor into the Masonic mysteries of colonial life...In the words of Kenneth Lynn, Longstreet was attempting to “impose the political opinions of the author and his aristocratic friends on the Georgia community, and beyond Georgia, on the whole south.” Haliburton’s own aims in *The Old Judge* with respect to Nova Scotia and England were identical.

(117)

I agree with Davies that Longstreet’s *Georgia Scenes* informed the structure and content of Haliburton’s writings, but will demonstrate this influence much earlier through examining *Georgia Scenes* as an intertext in *The Clockmaker*. However, I disagree with Davies’, and by extension Lynn’s, accounts of the political purpose of Longstreet and Haliburton’s sketches as Davies fails to recognize the class anxieties that are abound in their writing. In *Georgia Scenes* and *The Clockmaker*, Longstreet and Haliburton represent the precariousness of their “new” professional middle-class status, and link their class security not through political solidarity with the aristocracy, but with the working-class.

Both Longstreet and Haliburton link the precariousness of their middle-class status with the abolitionist struggle for black emancipation in the US South. Nothing alarmed or amazed Longstreet more than the “apathy and indifference” with which Southerners greeted “the encroachments and the pretensions of the Abolitionists” (55). In his pro-slavery pamphlet, *A Voice From the South: Comprising Letters from Georgia to Massachusetts, and to the Southern States* (1847), Longstreet doubts that another people “would have seen the fires of destruction kindled around them, as they have been kindled around us, with so little resistance, with so little emotion” (55). In “The Character of a Native Georgian” from *Georgia Scenes*, Longstreet writes into the
text the appropriate response to the possibility of black equality when Ned Brace pretends to understand an elaborate funeral procession as being for a black man. He plays upon the hierarchy of race when, having joined the funeral procession to stand beside a very short man who provides a “ludicrously striking” contrast to his great height, he feigns deafness and pretends to hear incorrectly the man’s identification of the dead person’s name (35). Instead of “Mr. Noah Bills,” he pretends to hear “Mrs. Noel’s Bill” (a slave’s name), and then, affecting great indignation that “white persons pay such respects to niggers in Savannah,” he stalks off (35). The mourners who hear the exchange between Ned Brace and the short man are overcome with laughter, as the possibility of whites treating a black man with honor and respect becomes comic. Longstreet incites white southerners to adequately respond to (and intervene in) the abolitionist movement by turning black equality into a comic performance that is not unlike a blackface minstrel show.

In *Minstrelsy and Murder*, Silver argues that minstrel shows, and US southern humor in general, played an integral role in recasting black terror as a comic trope for white audiences. “Especially popular,” writes Silver, “was the virulently racist convention of minstrel fright, which delighted white audiences by depicting African-Americans’ declarations of impossible bravery consistently undercut by white fantasies of their sudden and irrefutable cowardice” (10). Similarly, Haliburton’s sketches often represent black cowardice as comic; his sketch “Slavery,” in the second *Clockmaker* series, features a teary-eyed comic figure named Scip, who laments the loss of his southern plantation home and master. The sketch begins with Sam Slick and the Squire stopping at an inn, and handing their horses to a “black man,” Scip, at the stables. Scip recognizes Sam Slick as the brother of his former master; Scip had previously escaped the South by boarding a Boston vessel at his master’s estate. Describing the encounter between the two men, the Squire says, “he suddenly pulled
off his hat, and throwing it up in the air, uttered one of the most piercing yells I think I ever heard” (266). While the prospects of being captured by slave-catchers produced much fear for fugitive slaves in the North and Canada, Scip’s recognition of his former’s owner brother and his subsequent screams are followed with gratitude for being caught. Scip “throw[s] himself upon the ground, seiz[ing] Mr. Slick round the legs with his arms. Oh, Massa Sammy! Massy Sammy! Oh, my Gor! - only tink old Scippy see you once more! How you do, Massa Sammy? Gor Ormighty bless you! How you do? (266-67). A sobbing Scip laments leaving the comforts and security of the plantation, and “blames himself for leaving so good a master and so comfortable a home” (267). Haliburton makes this moment of black fright – a fugitive slave’s capture – comical, and thereby undercuts any notion of black equality through black self-subjugation.

In “White Niggers, Black Slaves: Slavery, Race, and Class in T.C. Haliburton’s The Clockmaker,” George Elliott Clarke links Haliburton’s comic representation of blacks to those in southern plantation romances. Clarke reads Haliburton’s 1838 “Slavery” sketch as presenting “slavery as a type of benign, communitarian institution” (29). “Scip’s ecstatic welcome of his ex-master’s brother,” writes Clarke, “parallels similar accounts in plantation romances” (29). Clarke points to a similar scene in Virginia slavery apologist Nathaniel Beverly Tucker’s plantation novel, George Balcomee (1836), wherein a “master records the pathetic sycophancy of an aged slave” (29). Clarke aligns Haliburton’s portrayal of black characters in The Clockmaker with those depicted by Southern apologists of “the pastoral plantation tradition” (28). For Clarke, the “forces of modernity” were collapsing Haliburton’s world-view and, like the paternalistic slave-holders, Haliburton “seized upon the promotion of racist stereotypes and caricatures as one strategy by which to defend
their [southern planters’] interests...using these images not only to ‘sell’ slavery and a hierarchical social order, but also to lampoon threatening ideas” (28). Clarke writes,

Slavery was one of the issues upon which Haliburton decided to make a last stand in defence of the vision of the good – that is to say, of the traditions – upheld by his Planter and Loyalist forebears. For them, as for himself – along with his paternalistic slave-holder confreres, the institution of slavery was a vital bulwark against the dangerous, modern forces of egalitarianism. (26)

Clarke is certainly right in characterizing Haliburton’s sketches as racist and pro-slavery. Haliburton believed in the race (as well as class and gender) hierarchies undergirding slavery that were under attack by those championing emancipation and market capitalism. However, Clarke places Haliburton within the wrong southern literary tradition - “the pastoral plantation tradition” - as his sketches do not defend or recreate the South as a pastoral republic (28). Instead, I place Haliburton’s writing in the US southwestern humor tradition, and its emphasis on the white working-class on the colonial frontier.18

In Pastoral and Politics in the Old South, John M. Grammar examines the ways in which Virginian politicians and writers, such as Nathaniel Beverly Tucker, John Taylor, John Randolph, and George Fitzhugh sought to represent the South as a refuge of pastoral and republican order in a period in which industrialization and immigration in the North, the agrarian expansionism of southerners into the

---

18 Here, I follow Constance Rourke who places Sam Slick within a southwestern humor tradition in her seminal book, American Humor: A Study of the National Character (1959). She writes, “If the backwoodsman become the Yankee, the Yankee of legend also absorbed the character of the backwoodsman. Sam Slick declared, ‘Many’s the time I’ve danced ‘possum un a gum tree’ at a quirtin’ frolic or huskin’ party with a timberful of cider on my head and never spilt a drop.’ The song and the feat and the boasting belonged to the West, as did Slick’s leap over three horses standing side by side” (73). Sam Slick’s backwoodman’s characteristics suggest the ease with which Haliburton could transpose “poor white” life on the southwestern frontier to the Nova Scotian countryside because of their cultural, political, and economic similarities in relation to the US North.
Southwest, and the nation-splitting agitation of abolitionism reflected the nation’s instability and uncertainty. For southern writers, such as John Taylor, the plantation was set in opposition to the urban world of commerce, politics, and corruption. In *The Dispossessed Garden: Pastoral and History in Southern Literature*, Lewis Simpson writes, “Taylor saw an entirely false ethic coming into being; between it [the society of “paper and patronage”] and the agrarian way there could be no compromise. In Taylor a pastoral purification of modernity reaches pictistic heights. Not only does he envision agriculture as the source of union of practical affairs and modern principles and thus the best architect of a complete man, it is the only source of man’s redemption” (40). In plantation romances, such as Tucker’s *George Balcomee* and William Gilmore Simms’ *Woodcraft*, the plantation served as a symbol of stability and order that sought to offset the chaos and restlessness of market capitalism. In this view, the pastoral plantation expressed a viable economic system that included slavery, and provided a real and permanent refuge from the corrupt world of getting and spending.

However, in “The Minister’s Horn Mug,” Haliburton challenges the “pastoral republicanism” championed by paternalistic slave-holding southerners. The sketch begins with Sam Slick describing the ways he would “improve” Nova Scotia: “This country, said Mr. Slick, abounds in superior mill privileges, and one would naturally calculate that such a sight of water power, would have led to a knowledge of machinery” (153). Sam Slick likens Nova Scotian “ignorance” about technological developments to those in the South as he recounts a conversation he had with Mr.

---

19 In *Pastoral and Politics in the Old South*, Grammar coins the term “pastoral republicanism” as the set of values that made up the collective myth that united the South (11). “Pastoral republicanism” encompasses the political ideology and elegiac literary mode that exalted the virtues of rural life.
Howell on a Charleston steamer. Predicting the corrupting effects that commercial and manufacturing industries will have on the agrarian South, Mr. Howell says,

I vow, them factorin towns will corrupt our youths of both sexes, and become hotbeds of iniquity. Evil communications endannify good manners, as sure as rates; one scabby sheep will infect a whole flock – vice is as catchin as that nasty disease the Scotch have, it’s got by shakin hands, and both eend in the same way – in brimstone. I approbate domestic factories, but nothing further for us. It don’t suit us or our institutions. A republic is calculated for an enlightened and virtuous people, and folks chiefly in the farmin line. That is an innocent and happy vocation. Agriculture was ordained by Him as made us, for our chief occupation. (155)

Mr. Howell sets up an opposition between the farmer and the trader and the farm and the city familiar in the writings of John Taylor and John Randolph. Like Taylor, Randolph was a practitioner of “pastoral politics” and defended the agrarian life throughout his public career. Taylor and Randolph saw the issues dividing the nation as a contrast between a republican, pastoral vision of America and a tyrannical and commercial one, in which they identified the South with the former vision and the North with the latter.

Haliburton connects Mr. Howell’s thoughts on these economic and technological developments to Randolph’s pastoral republicanism. Sharing his tobacco with Sam Slick, Mr. Howell says, “Well, says he, I think myself a pipe wouldn’t be amiss, and I got some real good Varginy, as you een almost ever seen, a present from Rowland Randolph, an old college chum” (157). The name “Rowland Randolph” suggests the public persona Randolph gave to himself in the later years of his political
career, “Randolph of Roanoke.” Haliburton’s fondness for Randolph may be connected to Randolph’s opposition to waging war with Britain, the War of 1812. In his “Speech Against War with England, December 10, 1811,” Randolph points out that the war would benefit the minority engaged in commerce at the expense of the agrarian majority. War favored commerce, which for Randolph meant corruption; peace favored “the people,” which was to say farmers and planters; it meant preserving an older, pastoral vision of America (Grammar 52). While Sam Slicks likes Mr. Howell, calling him “an uncommon pleasant man,” he ends the sketch critiquing Howell’s agrarian ideal (157).

Sam Slick argues that “agriculture is not only neglected but degraded here” in the US South (158). Pointing out that “young folks” are “a ridin about, titivated out real jam, in their go-to-meetin clothes, a doin nothing,” Sam Slick argues that “idleness and extravagance” have taken young people away from “their business” (158). Sam Slick continues to argue that not only are young people disinterested in the farming business, but parents have no desire to see their sons continue the agricultural heritage. Old Drivvle asks Sam Slick what he thinks his son, Johnny, should do with his life; Sam Slick tells him to give “his good farm [to] him, let him go and aim his bread...but putting him to the plough, the most natural, the most happy, the most innocent, and the most healthy employment in the world!” (159). Here, Sam Slick echoes the agrarian rhetoric, but the farmer responds, “not looking over half pleased,” sayings that “markets are so confounded dull, labour so high, and the banks and great folks a-swallerin’ all up so, there don’t seem much encouragement for farmers” (159). The farmer’s wife, Marm Drivvle, equally responds displeased with Sam Slick’s

---

20 Robert Dewidoff writes, “In his last years, Randolph abandoned himself to the character known as “Randolph of Roanoke,” the eccentric and prophetic figure of the old-fashioned times which democratic America was fast supplanting” (242). Grammar writes, “Randolph identified himself as a Cassandra, a Quixote, as ‘the warden of the lonely hill’; he boasted that he had stood siege ‘against the whole power and patronage of the Government’ and opined that ‘to fall in such a cause was no mean glory’” (63).
suggestion of “Make[ing] her Johnny a farmer, eh! I guess that was too much for the like o’ her to stomach” (159). While “more honest than traders, more independent than professional men, and more respectable than either,” the farmer is all but an ideal that bears no relation to the real life drudgery and poverty of agricultural life.

In “Minister’s Horn Mug,” Haliburton engages with pastoral republicanism discourse, but does not paint agriculture as a viable economic system that can sustain itself against industry and capitalism. In The Clockmaker, Haliburton articulates his own ambivalence and anxiety about technological advances and the emerging market capitalism.21 Haliburton does not attempt to hold onto a “cherished old order,” but rather advocates for “modern change” and “technological advance.” Unlike its original title, “Recollections of Nova Scotia,” The Clockmaker insists that Nova Scotians engage with the time of capital in order to maintain Nova Scotia’s economic independence from the United States. Haliburton uses Sam Slick as a medium of critique to mobilize economic and technological reform in Nova Scotia, but also uses him as an object through which to critique capitalism.

Sam Slick articulates the imperatives of capitalist moneymaking; he represents “the ethic – and indeed the science – of profit, the commitment to increasing the productivity of labor, the production of exchange value, and the practice of enclosure and dispossession” (Wood, 189). Sam Slick rides across Nova Scotia on a horse

---

21 For Clarke, Haliburton’s thoughts on industrial economy were no different than “the more paternalistic slave-holders” for whom “the resultant dissolution of the cherished old order, moreover, led to their adoption of reactionary positions” (26). Clarke argues that Haliburton’s “quixotic tilting against the windmills of modern change won Haliburton a deathless reputation as the last ‘fundamentalist’ Tory” (26). However, Richard Davies suggests that Haliburton’s social conservatism marked a more “ambivalent” response to modernity.

William R. Harbour reminds us to define conservatives in terms of their ‘critique of modernity’ rather than their role as reactionary defenders of the status quo. Being a conservative does not preclude the sort of fascination that technology held for Haliburton, a fascination we can see in Slick’s advocacy of bridges, railways, and steamships. Haliburton himself sensed that his attraction to these things conflicted with his otherwise conservative instincts. Through Sam Slick the clockmaker, Haliburton could both criticize and advocate technological advance. (96)
named “Old Clay” after his favorite US politician, “our senator, who is a prime bit of snuff, Senator Henry Clay” (108). Clay’s “American System” frames the ways in which Sam Slick interprets the value of Nova Scotia’s land and the productivity of Nova Scotians. The American System was an interlocking three-part program designed to hasten industrial development in the United States, which included a national bank to foster commerce, a tariff to protect and promote United States industry, and federal subsidies for the building of roads, bridges, canals, and railroads to develop profitable markets for agriculture. In his 1832 Congressional speech, titled “The Defense of the American System,” Clay responds to his mostly southern critics, who opposed what he describes as “this transformation of the condition of the country from gloom and distress to brightness and prosperity.” He predicts that without the adoption of the American System, the British will destroy “our iron foundries, our woolen, cotton, and hemp manufactories, and our sugar plantations,” and “the destruction of these would, undoubtedly, lead to the sacrifice of immense capital, the ruin of many thousands of our fellow citizens, and incalculable loss to the whole community.” Clay argues that the American System contests the commercial dominion of Great Britain over the United States, and warns that doing nothing will “lead substantially to the re-colonization of these States.” Sam Slick advocates the expansion of Clay’s American System in Nova Scotia as he describes the building of bridges, roads, and canals in order to increase productivity, trade, and profit.

Most importantly, Sam Slick sees these improvements as saving labor time. Sam Slick concludes that “the substitution of mechanical for human and animal labour....saves what we hain’t got to spare, men, horses, carts, vessels, barges, and what’s all in all – time” (35). The Yankee clock peddler views Nova Scotia through the lens of industrial “improvement” and its inhabitants through their productive use of time. Sam Slick repeats Benjamin Franklin’s summation that “time is money,”
when he tells the Squire that in the United States “[w]e reckon hours and minutes to be dollars and cents” (13). Despising any sort of waste in time, the Squire describes Sam Slick’s “peculiar” way of “driving” Old Clay when “he wished to economize the time that would otherwise be lost by an unnecessary delay” (133). In contrast to New England industry, Sam Slick contends that Nova Scotians waste time with idleness as “they do nothing in these parts, but eat, drink, smoke, sleep, ride about, lounge at taverns, make speeches” (13). Describing Nova Scotia as a clock and in need of a good “wound up,” Sam Slick argues that with the right kinds of improvements, such as a railroad, “the activity it will inspire into business, the new life it will give the place, will surprise you” (35). These improvements will not necessarily beget other railroads, he argues, but “will beget a spirit of enterprise, that will beget other useful improvements” (35). It will teach Nova Scotians that they cannot “stand stock still,” but must “go ahead...[and] nullify time and space” (35). Sam Slick imagines Nova Scotia as an imagined community moving together through time, and the clock becomes a central metaphor for shaping modern consciousness according to patterns of the capitalist market.

In “Marxism after Marx: History, Subalternity, and Difference,” Dipesh Chakrabarty argues for the co-existence of different temporalities within the time of

\[22\] In The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Max Weber explains why Protestant, rational asceticism could promote a sense of time thrift, through the counting of clock hours, in a society that looked to God and nature for much of its understanding of time. Weber writes,

> Waste of time is thus the first and in principal the deadliest of sins. The span of human life is infinitely short and precious to make sure of one’s own election. Loss of time through sociability, idle talk, luxury, even more sleep than is necessary for health, six to at most eight hours, is worthy of absolute moral condemnation. It does not yet hold, with Franklin, that time is money, but the proposition is true in a certain spiritual sense. It is infinitely valuable because every hour lost is lost to labour for the glory of God. Thus inactive contemplation is also valueless, or even directly reprehensible if it is at the expense of one’s daily work. (104)

In Britain as well as the US North, the adoption of clock time became a legitimate arbiter of work and social organization. According to E.P. Thompson, this sense of Puritan time thrift, the imperatives surrounding the saving and pietistic application of God’s time, were the same imperatives drawn on by industrial capitalists to mold and control their workforce.
capital. In his view, the temporality of commodified abstract labor does not fully contain the heterogeneous temporalities of subaltern “real” labor that capital subsumes and overcodes. He writes,

If ‘real’ labor... belongs to a world of heterogeneity whose various temporalities cannot be enclosed in the sign History... then it can find a place in a historical narrative of capitalist transition (or commodity production) only as a Derridean trace of something that cannot be enclosed, an element that constantly challenges from within capital’s and commodity’s— and by implication History’s claim to unity and universality. (60)

As Sam Slick travels the Nova Scotian countryside, his capital self-narration allows him only to view the province as pre-capitalist. The heterogeneous social forms that differentiate Nova Scotia from New England are subsumed and overcoded in Sam Slick’s imaginary by the time of capital. Sam Slick deterritorializes Nova Scotia in order to reterritorialize it under the American System. However, in “The Clockmaker,” the Squire notes that while Sam Slick is able to sell clocks to Nova Scotians, the clock peddler is unable to persuade these local inhabitants that clock time’s value lies only in capitalist moneymaking. He says to Sam Slick, “What a pity it is, Mr. Slick (for such was his name) what a pity it is, said I, that you who are so successful in teaching these people the value of clocks, could not also teach them the value of time” (13). Here, the Squire notes Nova Scotian resistance to “the temporal code within which ‘capital’ comes into being,” reminding “us that other temporalities, other forms of worlding, co-exist and are possible” (Chakrabarty 62).

Nova Scotian resistance to the temporality of commodified abstract labor is evident in “Conversations at the River Philip.” The sketch begins with Sam Slick describing Nova Scotians as lazy, and predicts that they would not last long as laborers in the United States. He tells the tale of Pat Lannigan, an Irishman, who leaves Nova
Scotia to find better paying work in the United States only to return. Pat exclaims, “the poor laborer does not last long in your country; what with new rum, hard labour, and hot weather” (24). Sam Slick responds,

We have two kinds of slaves, the niggers and the white slaves. All European labourers and blacks, who come out to us, do our hard bodily work, while we direct it to a profitable end; neither rich nor poor, high nor low, with us, eat the bread of idleness. Our whole capital is an active operation, and our whole population is an active employment. (24)

Within this economic system, there is a dedifferentiation of labor as the “active operation” is indifferent to any distinctions, be it between European or black laborers, rich or poor, high or low (24). The system is only interested in directing “hard bodily work” to a “profitable end” (24). It is important to note that the American System was also the name that referred to the mass production of interchangeable parts that could be assembled cheaply and easily into commercialized products in the early nineteenth century, and that clock manufacturing was one particular field that pioneered assembly line production. Pat’s return to Nova Scotia marks not only his resistance to this temporal organization of his labor, but also his refusal to be blackened. Significantly, part of Haliburton’s task in *The Clockmaker* is to convince

---

23 In the introduction to *Grundisse*, Karl Marx writes, “This abstraction of labour as such is not merely the mental product of a concrete totality of labours. Indifference towards specific labours corresponds to a form of society in which individuals can with ease transfer from one labour to another, and where the specific kinds is a matter of chance for them, hence of indifference. Not only the category, labour, but labour in reality has here become the means of creating wealth in genera, and has ceased to be organically linked with particular individuals in any specific form. Such a state of affairs is at its most developed in the most modern form of existence of bourgeois society – in the United States” (77).

24 In *Wages of Whiteness*, David Roediger argues that the imperative for the Irish to “define themselves as white came from the particular ‘public and psychological wage’ whiteness offered to a desperate rural and often preindustrial Irish population coming to labor in industrializing U.S. cities” (137). In 1829, Roediger notes that blacks and Irish were the co-victim’s of a Boston ‘race’ riot (134).
poor whites, such as Pat Lannigan, that Nova Scotia must modernize in order to avoid the extension of the American System into Nova Scotia.

The threat of US economic colonialism is evident in the comparisons Sam Slick makes between white Nova Scotians and other racialized minorities. Commenting on Nova Scotian ignorance of monetary value, Sam Slick says, “A little nigger boy in New York found a diamond worth 2,000 dollars; well, he sold it to a watchmaker for 50 cents – the little critter didn’t know no better. Your people are just like the nigger boy, they don’t know the value of their diamond” (19). For Sam Slick, Nova Scotians’ lack of capitalist resolve and ingenuity resembles the supposedly pre-capitalist existence of blacks. Sam Slick asks, “do you know the reason monkeys are no good? Because they chatter all day long – so do the niggers – and so do the blue noses\textsuperscript{25} of Nova Scotia – its all talk and no work” (19). Here, Haliburton uses Sam Slick’s comparison between white Nova Scotians and blacks to agitate Nova Scotians into partaking in the necessary reforms. Haliburton warns that if Nova Scotians do not modernize they will not only be dispossessed of their bodies and labor but also their land. Refusing to follow Sam Slick’s appeal to “recede before our free and enlightened citizens like the Indians,” Haliburton mobilizes Nova Scotians to defend land and culture from Yankee imperialism (64). Haliburton insists that Nova Scotians must awaken themselves and modernize in order to maintain their provincial rights and independence. I argue that Haliburton’s plan of action is modeled on the militant resistance Longstreet proposes in \textit{Georgia Scenes}.

As a leading supporter of states’ rights, and the new owner of the \textit{States Rights Sentinel}, a newspaper dedicated to the cause of nullification, Longstreet’s mission as an editor and writer was to convince his fellow Georgians to reject federal authority and instead celebrate statehood. “The actual sufferings of the people of Georgia, from

\textsuperscript{25} A blue nose is a native Nova Scotian.
the direct and immediate operation of the Tariff,” he writes in 1832, “[are] weighty enough in my humble conception, to justify her in hazarding the perils of War for relief; if she cannot obtain it, and speedily too, by peaceful means” (26). Silver argues that “his sketches worked to counter opposition opinion that the States Rights Party members were traitors by portraying certain acts of rebellion as productive” (26). In one of his most anthologized sketches, “The Fight,” Longstreet describes the fighting spirit of working-class whites on the colonial frontier. The sketch describes the violent clash between two long-time friends Billy Stallion and Bob Durham. The narrator describes the horrific wounds on each fighter’s body as they continue to fight; a “large piece” of a left cheek is taken, an ear “entirely lose,” a finger is chewed off entire, and a portion of a nose is bitten off. It is a hideous spectacle, in which “sympathy,” writes Silver, “for these two is suspended, laughter or amusement at the carnivalesque scene ensues, and the audience is never punished for their laughter with the death or significant injury to either of the combatants” (16). For Longstreet, the fight highlights the resistive spirits of the white-working class that, given political direction, could be mobilized to protect state rights.

Longstreet’s “The Shooting Match,” the last sketch in Georgia Scenes, provides a model of collaboration between working-class fight and middle-class political acumen. In “The Shooting Match,” the gentleman narrator Lyman Hall comes upon a “swarthy, bright-eyed smeky little fellow,” Billy Curlew, and attempts to engage Billy in conversation. He asks Billy if he is “going driving” or hunting, and Billy jokingly responds that it would be hard to hunt without hounds. Upon this first exchange, Longstreet sets up class antagonisms between the working- and middle-classes. Billy’s resentment is acutely felt by Hall, whose lack of common sporting knowledge betrays his class standing, and Hall feels the need to make a decent “retreat” (182). Despite Hall’s desire to flee, the narrator stays and learns to match
Billy in the banter that follows. As Scott Romine describes, the language game they play involves each participant “attributing literal significance to a word or phrase where none is intended; by thus improperly attributing literality to the other’s language, Billy and Hall are able, in turn, to make a fool of each other” (56).

For Romine, Hall’s mastery of the game resolves the antagonism between the two. After he demonstrates his understanding of the game, Billy renews their exchange as a way of affirming mutual respect for each other. When Hall asks Billy to “give me your name,” the latter replies,” “To be sure I will, my old coon – take it – take it, and welcome. Any thing else about me you’d like to have?” (183). In the end, the dialogue between the two, Romine argues, works not to affirm difference but to define mutual participation within a community. Romine writes, “Hall demonstrates his facility at language games; marked as different by his clothing and fancy speech, he adapts his speech to demonstrate that he is one of them” (60). Hall and the working-class whites “find common ground.” James Kiebler writes, “There is absolutely no class ‘struggle’ or resentment because these ‘simple’ men have the dignity of possessing values in common with the ‘high and mighty of land’ the same values that matter more than the trappings of wealth, power, and fame. It is thus finally these shared values that bond them and bind the community into an organic whole” (qtd in Romine 60). Longstreet envisions a united front between the two classes that ends with the “common people’s” unilateral support for Hall’s ascendency to political office. While finding common ground, Longstreet paradoxically proposes an egalitarian alliance that is run from the top down.

The southern poor white was of interest to Haliburton; in 1854, he commented upon the poor whites on the southwestern frontier: “The peculiarities of the people, their modes of thinking, living, and acting, are principally to be sought for in the rural districts, where unrestrained freedom of action, and the incidents and requirements of
a forest life, encourage and give room for the development of character in its fullest extent" (52). In his *Georgia Scene* sketches that feature the character, Ransy Sniffle, Longstreet introduces to his middle-class readers the southern “clay eater,” a comic character known for “his poor diet, his physical deformities, his laziness, apathy, low intelligence, and his oddly colored skin, which was described as ‘talleded-colored’” (Wray 40). Haliburton’s own depictions of blue noses in Nova Scotia are similar to Longstreet’s depictions of clay-eaters. Both writers ridicule these poor whites, representing them as amusing, and at times disgusting, to their middle class readers, but also representing poor whites as possessing a fighting spirit – their “unrestrained freedom of action” – that needs to be marshaled to maintain regional or provincial independence. For Haliburton, the appropriate and necessary response to the threat of northern economic colonialism required not only working-class mobilization, but also political solidarity between the working- and middle-classes.

In *The Clockmaker*, Haliburton uses the rhetorical tropes of the abolitionist movement to stage his class struggle. Aware of the success the anti-slavery movement was having in emancipating black slaves, Haliburton appropriates these rhetorical strategies to secure white Nova Scotian independence and rights. In *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, Saidiya Hartman examines the ways in which “crimes of slavery are not only witnessed but staged” in abolitionist writings. Using abolitionist John Rankin’s descriptions of the coffle in letters to his brother, Hartman writes,

By providing the minutest detail of macabre acts of violence, embellished by his own fantasy of slavery’s bloodstained gate, Rankin hoped to rouse the sensibility to those indifferent to slavery by exhibiting the suffering of the enslaved and facilitating an identification between those free and those enslaved.... In letter after letter, Rankin strove to create this shared experience
of the horror in order to transform his slaveholding brother, to whom the letters were addressed, as well as the audience of readers. In this case, pain provides the common language of humanity; it extends humanity to the dispossessed and, in turn, remedies the indifference of the callous. (17-18)

In abolitionist discourses, “the crime of the trade was seen as the crime of the heart – ‘the outrages of feelings and affection’- “, and was reproduced in the style of the “melodramatic tableau” (27). The staged accounts of whipping, rape, mutilation, and suicide functioned to assault the barrier of indifference, and these scenes of terror, ranging from the coffle to the whipping post, would ideally give rise to a shared sentience between those formerly indifferent and those suffering (18). Employing similar scenes of subjection, particularly the whipping post and the auction block, but shifting the racialization of such scenes, Haliburton appropriates the rhetorical strategies to produce empathy for the newly dispossessed – poor whites –, forming an inter-class, rather than inter-racial, identificatory relation.

In “American Eagle,” Sam Slick argues that the only way to move middle-class Nova Scotians from “ignorant slothfulness into active exertion” is by “shaming them” (64). Sam Slick recounts a story about his Uncle Enoch’s efforts to stop his Virginian neighbor from flogging her slaves:

There was a lady that had a plantation near hand to hisn, and there was only a small river awxt the two houses, so that folks could hear each other talk across it. Well, she was a dreadful cross grained woman, a real catamount, as savage as a she bear that has cubs, an old farrow critter, as ugly as sin, and one that both hooked and kicked too – a most particular onmarcifful she devil, that’s a fact. She used to have some of her niggers tied up every day, and flogged uncommon sever, and there screams and screeches were horrid – no soul could stand it; nothing was heerd all day, but oh Lord Missus! Oh Lord Missus! (64)
In this scene of subjection, Haliburton juxtaposes the lady’s callousness to the spectacular character of black suffering. Drawing upon “the moral of feelings” in abolitionist discourses, Sam Slick describes Enoch as a “tender hearted man,” who appeals to his neighbor’s human sensibilities – “‘they are flesh and blood as well as we be, though the meat is a different color’” – to stop the whippings. She refuses, and Enoch becomes “determined to shame her out of it” (65). He tells one of his black overseers to “muster up the whole gang of slaves, every soul, and bring ‘em down to the whipping post” (65). The slaves are, of course, terrified of what will happen to them at the whipping post, and “they fell to a cryin, wrinin their hands, and boo-hooing like mad” (65). Enoch orders Lavender to pick four of the loudest slaves, and when Lavender hesitates Enoch threatens to “have you [Lavender] triced up, you cruel old rascal you” (65).

Significantly, Haliburton transforms this familiar scene of racial violence into an unfamiliar one of racial resistance. Enoch orders his four slaves to “sing out as loud as Niagara” the following song,

Don’t kill a nigger, pray,
Let him lib anoder day.

*Oh Lord Missus – oh Lord Missus.*

My back be very sore,
No stand it any more,

*Oh Lord Missus – oh Lord Missus.* (65-66)

The slaves’ cry of mercy to their owner during their beating is made subversive in its re-contextualized collective reiterations: “The black rascals understood the joke real well. They larfed ready to split their sides; they fairly lay down on the ground, and rolled over and over with lafter” (66). “Oh Lord Missus” no longer signifies suffering but laughter, and a laughter that is so subversive that the slaves in the neighbor’s
house “thought there was actually a rebellion there” (66). In this re-staged scene of subjecting, Enoch is able to shame the plantation owner by ridiculing her own practices. He is also able to assert an “alliance” between himself and his black slaves, in which the “power” of black resistance is used by Enoch for his own ends. It is not that he wants his neighbor to stop flogging her slaves, but that he wants her to “find out some other place to give your cattle the cowskin” (64). Enoch is able to assert his white patriarchal authority by contrasting his “benevolent” subjugation of his black slaves to the violent abuses of his white female neighbor.

Haliburton’s representation of the failures of women in charge and the benevolence of paternalistic slavery under the control of men is similar to Longstreet’s depiction of benevolent patriarchy in “The Mother and Her Child.” Mrs. Slang’s affectionate gibberish to her baby is contrasted with the angry profanity that she uses towards her slave, Rose.26 Unable to discern what is upsetting her child, Mrs. Slang blames her slave, beating her verbally with profanity. The comic force of this sketch occurs with Rose’s attempts to avoid her mistress’ blows. Mrs. Slang’s husband must intercede in the commotion between his wife and her slave by methodologically discovering the cause of the child’s cries. He is able to identify the problem—a feather is caught in the child’s ear—, and order is restored in the house with the establishment of patriarchal authority. Longstreet characterizes this order as kind and paternalistic: “the Cause removed, the child soon changed its tears to smiles, greatly to the delight of all, and to none more than to Rose” (133). In Haliburton’s “American Eagle” and Longstreet’s “The Mother and Her Child,” verbal and physical abuses against blacks are represented as not a part of the paternalistic ideal master/slave

26 Haliburton’s sketch “Fire in the Dairy” is also very similar to Longstreet’s “The Mother and Her Child” in form and content. Sam Slick visits the home of a middle-class family and is greeted by the woman of the house, who plays the perfect host, but her language of gentility is interrupted with the profanity that she uses to address her female slave (170-171).
relationship. Both Haliburton and Longstreet link racial violence to the modern social and economic shifts that were empowering blacks and women.  

In “The White Nigger,” Haliburton makes the familiar scene of slave auction in anti-slavery literature unfamiliar through substituting poor whites for black slaves, and in restaging this scene of subjection, Haliburton attempts to shame middle-class men and women into political alliance with the working-class. The “elasticity of blackness enables its deployment,” writes Hartman, “as a vehicle for exploring the human condition…the utility of what Toni Morrison has described as the ‘Africanist persona’ resides in these reflexive capacities; in short, it enables meditation of the self and explorations of dread and desire” (34). In “The White Nigger,” the slave auction becomes the scene of subjection par excellence to meditate on the “human condition” of Nova Scotians. Sam Slick describes seeing the “trade in white slaves” – “I have seed these human cattle sales with my own eyes” (162) –, and provides an account of “the pageantry of the trade, the unabashed display of market’s brutality, the juxtaposition of sorrow and mirth, and the separation of families” that dominated anti-slavery writings account of “the most horrible feature of the institution of slavery” (Hartman 32).

Sam Slick describes coming across this annual sale of poor whites on his way to Partridge Island. Hearing festivities and seeing “an amazin crowd of folks” at Old  

---

27 Haliburton and Longstreet perhaps prefigure the arguments made in the 1930s by the southern agrarians in I’ll Take My Stand, where blacks and white women are seen as part of the threat to white masculinity and the nation in a period of chaotic and threatening change. To the southern agrarians, writes Susan Donaldson, “African-Americans and white women, after all, stood to gain from the very changes linked with industrialism that the authors of the manifesto found so unsettling, in particular, demographic dislocation, expanding economic opportunities, and the destabilizing of racial, gender, and social hierarchies in increasingly anonymous urban surroundings” (xvii). In his contribution to I’ll Take My Stand, John Crowe Ransom holds women responsible for the nation’s infatuation with progress and the pressures facing modern (white) man. In “Reconstructed but Unregenerate,” Ransom writes, “If it is Adam’s curse to will perpetually to work his mastery upon nature, it is Eve’s curse to prompt Adam every morning to keep up with the best people in the neighborhood in taking the measure of his success. There can never be stability and establishment in a community whose every lady member is sworn to see that her mate is not eclipsed in the competition for material advantages; that community will fume and ferment, and every constituent part will be in perpetual physical motion” (9).
Furlong’s house, Sam Slick hitches Old Clay to a fence and enters the house: “wat on airth it the meanin of all this? Is it a vandew, or a weddin, or a rolin frolic, or a religious stir, or what is it?” (162). Sam Slick makes his way through the celebratory crowd, and discovers deacon Westfall, at the center of the crowd’s attention, selling Jerry Oaks:

I see but deacon Westfall, a smooth faced, slick haired, meechin lookin chap as you’d see in a hundred, a standin on a stool, with an auctioneer’s hammer in his hand; and afore him was one Jerry Oaks and his wife, and tow little orphan children, the prettiest little toads I ever beheld in all my born days. Gentleman, said he, I will begin the sale by putting up Jerry Oaks, of Apple Rivers, he’s a considerable of a smart man yet, and can do many little chores besides feedin the children and pigs, I guess he’s near about worth his keep. (162)

Following abolitionists’ accounts of slave auctions, Sam Slick’s descriptions of the auction’s festivities are juxtaposed to the cruelty of the practice, in which mirth is accompanied by sorrow. Jerry begs Westfall to not separate him from his wife: “Fifty years have we lived together as man and wife, and a good wife has she been to me...do sell us together” (163). Westfall responds to Jerry’s pleas with “such a smile as a November sun gives, a passin atween clouds” saying, “Can’t afford it, Jerry – can’t afford it” (163). The deacon proceeds to sell Jerry causing “the poor critter to give one long loud deep groan” (163). Jerry’s wife begs, prays, and cries, and when she faints in exhaustion, she is carried onto the auction block and “sold in that condition” (163).

Hartman describes the slave auction as the “theatre of the marketplace,” wherein “the simulation of good times and the to-and-fro of half-naked bodies on display all acted to incite the flow of capital” (37-38). The slave auction demonstrates the workings of capitalist production, and in staging the poor white sale within this
context, Haliburton teaches poor whites about the production and exchange of value under capitalism. In “The White Nigger,” Haliburton shows the brutalities of the marketplace. Jerry is given an exchange value that is expressed as a monetary price of 7s.6d. In this production of exchange value, Jerry has no power as his appeals to the capitalist Westfall are silenced by the deacon’s response, “Can’t afford it, Jerry – can’t afford it” (163). Jerry’s life is in the hands of Westfall, and he is not only rendered valueless but also devalued as he is sold for less than he is worth. Comparing the slave and wage-laborer in Grundisse, Karl Marx writes,

As a slave, the worker has exchange value, a value; as a free wage-worker he has no value; it is rather his power of disposing of his labor, effected by exchange with him which has value. It is not he who stands towards the capitalist as exchange value, but the capitalist towards him. His valuelessness and devaluation is the presupposition of capital precondition of free labor in general. (288-289)

Haliburton teaches poor whites about modern production and exchange, and reveals the ways in which their “valuelessness and devaluation” is a precondition of capitalism. Sam Slick says, “Blue Nose approbates no distinction in colors, and when reduced to poverty, is reduced to slavery, and is sold - a White Nigger” (165). The wage-laborer has no value within capitalism, and is reduced to an object of property that is no different (for Haliburton, in fact worse) than the black slave. Revealing capital’s dispossession of “whiteness as property,” Haliburton attempts to incite poor whites into action against wage-labor capitalism.

In “Whiteness as Property,” Cheryl Harris argues that whiteness has been so tied to the right to own property as to come to constitute itself a legally recognizable, usable, and cherished form of property, possessed by all whites. The attempted reduction of blacks, but not whites, to “objects of property” in slavery “established

53
whiteness as a prerequisite to the enforceable property rights,” and created, Harris argues, an enduring set of expectations that whiteness had a value as property (1721, 1724). Whiteness not only becomes associated with owning property, but it also becomes itself what she calls “status property” (1729). The status property of whiteness guarantees its wages, and these wages provide the legal protection of class privilege and the right to expect upward social mobility (1759). Haliburton contends that capitalism dispossesses whites of their rights and privileges, and uses whiteness as shared property that binds working and middle-class Nova Scotians. Haliburton uses the slave auction to shame white middle-class Nova Scotians into a political identification with Nova Scotia’s poor whites.

Haliburton depicts the hypocrisy in the “moral feeling” guiding efforts to abolish slavery in Nova Scotia, which was formerly abolished in 1833. While Nova Scotians had sympathy for black slaves, Haliburton suggests that the “moral feeling” guiding Nova Scotians does not extend to poor whites. While Sam Slick “feels” for Jerry and his wife, Nova Scotians show no “outrages of feelings and affections” (164). The hypocrisy is most evident in the man who sells Jerry into slavery, deacon Westfall. When Jerry begs Westfall not to separate him from his wife, Westfall’s response is economic rather than religious: “Can’t afford it, Jerry – can’t afford it” (163). The hypocrisy of the deacon’s actions are further highlighted when Sam Slick tells the Squire that the “forehanded and sponsible man there, deacon Westfall,” was the richest man of them all (164). Haliburton foregrounds the ways in which the professional middle-class was symbolized in part through its “habits of consumption, habits made possible by the rapid expansion of markets” (Wray 52). However, throughout the sketch, Haliburton ridicules professional middle-class Nova Scotians’ understanding of capitalism as they misunderstand the workings of the slave auction. John Porter tells Sam Slick that “we always sell the poor for the year to the lowest
biddor. Them that will keep them for the lowest sum, gets them”’ (164). While deacon Westfall and other Nova Scotians take part in commerce, they are ignorant of the actual workings of capital, and Haliburton attempts to show them the precariousness status of their class. While middle-class Nova Scotians believe themselves to be a separate class from the poor whites, Sam Slick surmises that “the feller that bought him [Jerry] is a pauper himself, to my sartan knowledge” as “it appears to me the poor buy the poor here, and that they starve together” (164). Haliburton suggests that there is no distinction between the middle- and working-class on the colonial frontier, and by using the rhetoric of pain and suffering to shame middle-class identification with poor whites, he attempts to produce an alliance between the two groups.

In *The Mind of the South*, W.J. Cash argues that the relation between poor whites and the planter class, which Cash understands as a middle-class group, took the form of patronage. Any scorn felt for the poor white was so “softened and attenuated” that in public gatherings the poor white would seldom encounter “naked hauteur” (41):

There would nearly always be a fine gentleman to lay a familiar hand on his shoulder, to inquire by name after the member of his family, maybe to buy him a drink, certainly to rally him on boasted weakness or treasure misadventure...in short, to patronize him in such fashion that to his simple eyes he seemed not to be patronized at all but actually deferred to, to send him home, not sullen and vindictive, but glowing with the sense of participation in the common brotherhood of white men. (41)

---

28 Cash argues that the so-called planter aristocracy was mostly comprised of financially successful plain folk who adopted the physical trappings of the upper class, but in attitude and outlook bore no relationship to the *true* aristocracy.
Haliburton’s “The White Nigger” reinforces this sense of “common brotherhood” between poor whites and the middle-class Nova Scotians. Thus, it is not surprising that Haliburton engages with southwestern literary sketches that also articulate an inter-class political solidarity. The sketch in which Davey Crockett introduces Mr. Slim involves poor whites on the colonial frontier pledging support for Crockett’s run for political office. While at first resistant to voting Crockett into political office, the narrator describes Crockett’s ability to eventually change these men’s minds by forming a union of “kindred spirits” (149). Neither “rich or...descend[ed] from some proud family,” Crockett appeals to these poor whites through “the ennobling virtues of our race” (162). They yielded with a “good grace, and swore that they ‘would live or die in defence of Crockett’,” says the narrator (150). In The Clockmaker, Haliburton similarly asks Nova Scotians to “live or die” for Nova Scotia through defending the virtue of its white race. Haliburton’s son, R.G. Haliburton, would further Haliburton’s racial nationalism in the 1860s. In “We are the Northmen of the New World” (1869), R.G. Haliburton asserts, “As long as the north wind blows, and the snow and sleet drive out over forests and fields, we may be a poor, but we must be a virtuous, a daring, and if we are worthy of ancestors, a dominant race...Let us, then should we ever become a nation, never forget the land that we live in, and the race from which we have sprung” (155). Haliburton (and later his son) advocates a militant protection of Nova Scotian independence from New England economic colonialism through forging a collective white Nova Scotian identity.

*****

In The Clockmaker, Haliburton’s white nationalism emerges from his engagement with US southern racial ideology. His literary sketches are intertextually informed by southwestern humorists, such as Longstreet and Crockett, who provide a model of white resistance that is constituted in part by the continued subordination of blacks to
white patriarchal authority. Haliburton aestheticizes the black fright often associated with scenes of subjection – the whipping post, the auction block, the slave capturer – in anti-slavery literature, and undermines the political force of these horrific scenes of violence for abolitionists. In the reversal of positions in the scenes of subjection, Haliburton’s comparison of white Nova Scotian bodies with black slave bodies works to awaken Nova Scotians to their fate under US economic colonialism and agitate them into the necessary economic and political reform. Scenes of black subjection are made comic in Haliburton’s *The Clockmaker* as readers are meant to recognize that whites are not the appropriate objects of capital’s violent dispossessions.

I want to suggest in brief that Haliburton’s aestheticization of black fright informs the later writings of the South’s most prominent humorists, such as George Washington Harris and Mark Twain. Daniel Royot argues that “Sam Slick prefigures Sut Lovingood, the Southern rogue inspired by George Washington Harris” (132). Like Sam Slick, Sut functions as the comic other in Harris’ sketches; Royot writes, “Sut is an outcast in his native South where he ranks ‘between the common people an the ‘possussm’. A more reprehensible rascal than Sam, he excoriates the system which has excluded him” (132). Roughly half of Harris’s stories, most of his Sut Lovingood sketches, were written after the Civil War. In his antebellum sketches, Harris uses Sut to exaggerate class differences between the professional middle-class and the white working class. Like Haliburton’s sketches, these earlier sketches told by the middle-class frame narrator foreground the ways in which the resistive energies of the poor whites could be used to protect middle-class interests. However, in the aftermath of the Civil War, Harris uses Sut less as a comic other and more of a medium through which the ideals and values of the old South are re-articulated. Harris uses the black body in his postbellum sketches to reverse anxieties about black emancipation and the loss of white political control.
In “Old Skissim’s Middle Boy” (1867), for instance, Sut helps a white family wake their extraordinarily apathetic and lazy son by rigging an intricate device of torture to the chair in which he sleeps. Sut ties him to his chair, screws iron hand vices on his ears, ties a gridiron to one of his ankles and a pair of fire tongs to the other. Sut pours red-pepper flakes down his back, turns loose a pint of June bugs in his shirts, ties a basket full of firecrackers to his chair back, and buttons up an angry rat into his pants. Harris places the white boy within a series of scenes of subjection that is reminiscent of Haliburton’s placing of Nova Scotian poor whites in the place of blacks in the slave auction in “The White Nigger.” The irons on his ankles mimic the slave’s chains, and the various tortuous items, such as fire tongs, all link this scene of subjection with black bodies. Harris attempts to awaken the boy through fear, pain, and humiliation in much the same ways Haliburton attempts to awaken Nova Scotians. Before setting the firecrackers off, Sut paints the boy’s “face the culler ove a nigger coal-burner, scept a white ring roun his eyes; an’ frum the corners ove his mouf, sorter downwards, slouch-wise...ef a white strip” (68). By blackening the boy, Harris positions the black body as the appropriate object of terror and violence. Harris’ sketch continues Haliburton’s aestheticization of black fright through the reversals of bodies in this scene of subjection, and renders racial violence against black bodies as an appropriate response, in fact a comic response, to black empowerment and equality.

In his biography of Twain, Cyril Clemens describes Twain’s purchase of The Clockmaker as a young boy in Hannibal, Missouri from a “Yankee pack-pedler”: “For weeks after that,” says Mrs. Frazer, “every chance he got – even in church on one occasion! – he was reading that old book and laughing aloud” (38). Twain’s admiration for Haliburton continued into his adult-life, as a study of his notebooks and journals reveals that in 1880 he planned to include “Sam Slick” in an anthology, and in 1881, he listed “Haliburton” in a compilation of American humorists’ names (Kelly
147). In “Tom Sawyer’s Conspiracy,” Twain attempts a sequel to *Huckleberry Finn* that interestingly evokes Haliburton through his use of the term “white nigger.” In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), Twain narrates Huck and Jim’s journey down the Mississippi in 1845. Prior to Huck’s escape, he listens to his father’s complaints about the rights of personhood granted to blacks by the US government:

> “Oh, yes, this is a wonderful government, wonderful. Why looky here. There was a free nigger there, from Ohio; a mulatter, most as white as a white man....And to see the cool way of that nigger – why, he wouldn’t a give me the road if I hadn’t shoved hurn out o’ the way. I says to the people, why ain’t this nigger put up at auction and sold? – that’s what I want to know” (26).

Huck’s father complains about his own dispossession as black Americans’ “whiteness” becomes culturally validated. In the 1844 sketch “English Niggers,” Sam Slick advocates working-class’ resistance against their dispossession, and suggests stringing up “some of the cotton lords with their own cotton ropes” (224). Twain re-enacts this scene of poor white resistance in *Huckleberry Finn*, as Huck witnesses the attempted lynching of Colonel Sherburn, the owner of “the biggest store in town,” by a mob of poor whites (129). The assertion of white supremacy in this moment finds its basis in a scene of subjection in which poor whites can secure their racial superiority over blacks. While Huck witnesses the attempted lynching, he is not removed from this securing of race and class privilege. Huck begins his journey down the Mississippi with Jim uttering his first words in fright – “Whar is you? Dog my cats ef I didn’ hear sumf’n” (35). Twain’s characterization of Jim reiterates tropes of black fright allowing Huck to become, even for a moment, the authority figure in the novel. Like Haliburton, Twain uses “black fright” to mobilize and secure old property relations.

Twain shared Haliburton’s interests and investments in modern technological advancements. Twain invested the money he made from writing into such modern
innovation as a new type of steam engine, the kaolatype, and the Paige typesetting machine; however, these were all bad investments. By the 1890s, Twain had squandered all his money and declared bankruptcy. In the version of “Tom Sawyer’s Conspiracy” that Twain left unfinished in 1899, Tom “blacks up” to impersonate a slave so that he can sell himself to a local trader, Bat Bradish, and then scare the villagers of St. Petersburg by having himself fictitiously run off by “abolitionists.” Similar to Huck’s father discussion about the “whiteness” of the “free nigger” in Huckleberry Finn, Twain asserts the whiteness of Jim in the later novella, where Huck goes so far as to say that Jim is “the whitest man inside that ever walked” (214). In opposition to Jim’s internal whiteness, Tom’s whiteness is caught up in the proliferation of commodity-forms that threatens to cancel even the most apparently essential “human” values. Tom becomes a “white nigger” (174). “Unlike Jim’s ‘blackness,’ which is filled with a culturally validated whiteness equivalent to personhood,” Stephanie LeMenager writes, “Tom’s ‘whiteness’ is empty, ‘nigger’ or non-person – as that abusive term implies (200). Twain’s evocation of Haliburton’s “White Nigger” sketch in “Tom Sawyer’s Conspiracy” identifies a continued white nervousness about the alienability of property and fear of white social death within commodity capitalism. Haliburton’s intertextual engagement with southwestern humor and his influence on southwestern humorists figure an important dialogic relationship between the South and Canada, in which white anxieties and ambivalences to an emerging market capitalism are alleviated through an aestheticization of black fright.
CHAPTER TWO

Whipping Tom: Imaginative Sympathy, Black Bodies, and White Enterprise in Susanna Moodie's Roughing it in the Bush and Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin

"[T]he tick of the old clock could be heard, measuring with silent touch, the last minutes of mercy and probation.... Then, Legree, foaming with rage, smote his victim to the ground. Scenes of blood and cruelty are shocking to our ear and heart. What man has nerve to do, man has not nerve to hear. What brotherman and brother-Christian must suffer, cannot be told us, even in our secret chamber, it so harrows the soul!"

- Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin.

When we consider that ignorance is the fruitful parent of crime, we should write with heart and voice to banish it from the earth. We should devote with what means we can spare and the talents with which God has endowed us, in furthering every national and benevolent institution set on foot for this purpose; and though the progress of improvement may at first appear slow, this should not discourage anyone from endeavouring to effect a great and noble purpose.

- Susanna Moodie, Life in the Clearing Versus the Bush.

In "Sparing the Rod: Discipline and Fiction in Antebellum America," Richard H. Brodhead argues that in "the 1830s, then even more prominently in the 1840s and early 1850s, the picturing of scenes of physical correction emerges as a major form of imaginative activity in America," with the anti-slavery movement as "one of the headquarters for the antebellum imagination of the lash" (67). Slave narratives of the 1840s and 1850s made "whipping not just a memorably experienced scene but specifically the scene of initiation into slavery itself" (67). The huge circulation of Theodore Dwight Weld's American Slavery As It Is - it sold 100,000 copies in the first year and was the national bestseller of 1839 - "in which whipping scene are multiplied with truly Boschian iteration" (67), as well as the general popularity of the slave narrative, demonstrates the sensationalistic interest in whipping scenes. In a letter dated 27 September 1852, Stowe notes the "coarser bodily horrors which have constituted before the staple of anti-slavery books," and hence her desire not to
describe “one scene of bodily torture” in her 1852 novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (Parfait 86). Despite the generative importance of Uncle Tom’s beating in Stowe’s imagination, Stowe refuses to describe scenes of whipping in the text of the novel. In the climatic scene of Uncle Tom’s murder at the hands of his owner Simon Legree, she writes, “Scenes of blood and cruelty are shocking to our ear and heart. What man has nerve to do, man has not nerve to hear” (358). In her letter, Stowe expresses her objection to the illustrations of the whipping scene given her desire “to make more prominent those thousand worse tortures which slavery inflicts on the soul”; she writes, “It was therefore directly in opposition to the spirit of my intention to have a whipping scene on the very cover” (86). However, Stowe’s objections would not stop “the developing iconography of the Tom story,” writes Linda Williams, “— an iconography that would eventually flood the world – the image of white-on-black beating would eventually become a staple of Tom iconography in the more explicitly abolitionist works mounted before the Civil War” (52).

In a letter to her London publisher in 1853, Susanna Moodie would compare her pioneer autobiography, *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) to Stowe’s novel. Moodie writes, “*Roughing It in the Bush* keeps its popularity in the States. Several Americans have told me that is sells nearly as well as Mrs. Stowe’s *Uncle Tom*” (Ballistadt 136). Moodie’s autobiography received favorable reviews, including one from Lydia Sigourney, who “sent Moodie an affectionate fan letter asserting that *Roughing It* was able to create more interest than a work of fiction could” (Peterman xvi). Very different in form and content than *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Moodie’s *Roughing It in the Bush* is a collection of sketches about pioneer life in the Upper Canadian bush.29 Her sketches focus on the backwoods people, frontier living, and the adjustment to frontier

---

29 The province of Upper Canada was a British colony located in what is now the Canadian province of Ontario.
life by upper middle-class colonists such as the Moodies. Michael Peterman compares Moodie’s book on pioneer life in the Upper Canadian bush with Caroline Kirkland’s similar book on pioneer life in Michigan, *A New Home – Who’ll Follow* (1839). Peterman examines the similarities in Moodie and Kirkland’s “subject matter, outlook, and tone,” such as “the devastations of ague or lake fever to rural customs like the borrowing system...keeping good servants in a democratic environment...the absence of necessary commodities [and] the terror of being a woman and alone for a night in the backwoods home” (520). In this chapter, I focus on an under-examined scene in Moodie’s autobiography that links Moodie’s pioneer autobiography with Stowe’s anti-slavery novel. In “The Charivari” chapter, Moodie describes the beating death of a black man by a mob of white men. While Moodie’s own comparison of *Roughing It in the Bush* to Stowe’s novel may be due to her own desire to have a book as immensely popular as *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, my decision to compare these two seemingly disparate books arises from their similar use of the whipping scene not only to critique the “peculiar institution” but also to critique the indifference to violence engendered by the secularization of the marketplace.

While Stowe focuses on the US southern plantation and Moodie on the Upper Canadian backwoods, they both examine the dehumanizing effects of commodity exchange on social relations. In the climatic scene of Uncle Tom’s murder, Stowe draws attention to the split between “brother-man and brother-Christian” (358). I argue that Moodie and Stowe use the whipping of black bodies as pedagogical moments in what I will call “colonial spaces” to produce civil subjects that infuse emotion and obligation into the time of capital. Employing features of the sentimental novel and the anti-slavery narrative, Moodie and Stowe foreground the role of mothers and the domestic sphere for producing citizen subjects who are religiously redeemed through imaginative sympathy from capitalism’s inhumanity and indifference. Both
Moodie and Stowe contest the moral and spiritual peril accompanying market capitalism by providing an account of the interaction and mutual constitution of subjects and objects, selves and others, bodies and souls, heavens and hells. I examine the ways in which Stowe and Moodie describe their respective spaces through a colonialist perspective, in which Stowe’s New England characters and Moodie’s English characters attempt to reform or civilize the space and its inhabitants. Significantly, they measure progress differently from capitalist ideology; for Moodie and Stowe, progress is not quantitative and additive, like the mechanical flow of a clock, but is qualitative and intensifying. Progress is not a process of becoming, but a process of fulfillment. Moodie and Stowe reconfigure imperial and capitalist aspirations of colonization by foregrounding moral obligations and Christian duty to others.

*******

Many literary critics have noted the antithetical relation Stowe presents between the South (and the US at large) and Canada through her depiction of the differing journeys and fates of her African-American characters in Uncle Tom’s Cabin. Uncle Tom’s journey deeper into the South results in his further bondage and ultimate murder by his master; Eliza and Harry’s journey into the North and finally to Canada results in their ultimate freedom from slavery. In “The Dispassionate Witness,” David Staines writes, “For Stowe, Canada is the alternative to the United States, a better land where freedom and prosperity are available to all races” (45). However, Moodie’s autobiography challenges the mythic representation of Canada as a “better land” through its depiction of racial discrimination and violence against blacks in Canada. Rather than an alternative to the South, Moodie represents Canada as being formed in part by its relation to the US South and the transnational circulation of southern goods, peoples, and cultures. The region’s influences on Canadian sensibilities is evident, for instance,
when Moodie says, “Their [Canadian] taste in music is not for the sentimental; they prefer the light, lively tunes of the Virginian minstrels to the most impassioned strains of Bellini” (136-37). In her depiction of the murder of a black man named Tom Smith by a group of whites in “The Charivari” chapter, Moodie also foregrounds southern influences on Canadian practices. In Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South, Bertram Wyatt-Brown writes, “Charivaris and sometimes the firmly controlled extralegal killings of individual (usually black) deviants were often stylized affairs...Although the fully unleashed mob and the ritualized charivari aroused strong hostile feelings, both were ecstatic events. The mingling of justice with bacchanalia, centering about the scapegoat, whether a lowly black or an unpopular member of the ruling class, released social tensions in spectacle” (437). While very different in form and content, Stowe’s novel and Moodie’s autobiography intertwine in their depictions of the murder of black men each named Tom by white men.

The murder of Tom Smith in Moodie’s “The Charivari” chapter in Roughing It in the Bush has often been cited as historical evidence of racism occurring in early Canada. Constance Backhouse references “the vicious response to interracial marriage in the local community. She [Moodie] recounts how a group of white men dragged the newly wed Black man from the home in which he lived with his white wife. They ‘rode him along the rails’ until he died” (182). Dieter Miendle writes, Moodie’s “sketch points to the possibility that racial prejudice against blacks in Upper Canada could become intense before the black fugitive’s great migration there had finally set in” (87). George Elliott Clarke refers to this scene of racial violence as a “lynching”: “In Canada, blacks were free from slavery, but not white racism,” he writes, “thus, Susanna Moodie records the lynching of a black man, Tom Smith, who dared to marry

30 E. P. Thompson also writes, “the rituals of rough music and charivari, transposed across the Atlantic contributed not only to the good-humored ‘shivaree’ but may also have given something to lynch law and the Ku Klux Klan” (308).
a white woman in Upper Canada (Ontario) in ‘The Charivari’ sketch” (65 n9). I want to complicate these sociological or historical readings of the murder in Moodie’s autobiography by examining the ideological work of this scene, and by linking Moodie’s depiction of this murder to scenes of whipping that abounded in antebellum slave narratives. Moodie was very familiar with these scenes of subjection because of her active involvement in the anti-slavery movement. A close friend to Thomas Pringle, the secretary of the British Anti-Slavery Society, Moodie served as an amanuensis to two black slaves, Mary Prince and Ashton Warner; she recorded their stories in autobiographical pamphlets that quickly became controversial publications in Britain upon their appearance in 1831.31

Framed by the political demands of the emancipation campaigns and the evangelical views of abolitionists, Prince’s narrative (the more famous of the two that Moodie transcribed) exhibits many of the literary conventions designed to establish the authenticity of the account and to elicit pity and sympathy from its readers. The History of Mary Prince includes a catalogue of injuries committed against Prince and other slaves, culminating in the particularly gruesome description of the treatment of the slave “old Daniel”:

Poor Daniel was lame in the hip, and could not keep up with the rest of the slaves; and our master would order him to be stripped and laid down on the ground, and have him beaten with a rod of rough briar till his skin was quite red and raw. He would then call for a bucket of salt and fling upon the raw

31 Moodie, then Susanna Strickland, transcribed Mary Prince’s slave narrative at the request of Pringle, who decided to publish it in response to Prince’s owner’s efforts to discredit her. In a letter to her friends, James and Emma Bird in January 1831, Moodie writes,

I have been writing Mr. Pringle’s black Mary’s life from her own dictation and for her benefit adhering to her own simple story and language without deviating to the paths of flourish or romance. It is a pathetic little history and is now printing in the form of a pamphlet to be laid before the House of Parliament. Of course my name does not appear. Mr. Pringle has added a very interesting appendix and I hope the work will do much good. (qtd. in Whitlock 18)
flesh till the man writhed on the ground like a worm, and screamed aloud with agony. (64)

The story of Daniel serves as the perfect amalgamation of evidence for the claims Prince makes about “the horrors of slavery.” The narrative represents the “unthinkable scene” of whipping to reflect the dehumanizing effects of slavery on both victims and perpetrators.

In the nineteenth century, imaginative sympathy functioned as a conceptual category to narratives and aesthetic structures in which the idealized community was predicated, at least in part, on each member having the capacity to establish an affective connection with its other members. In Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Stowe places great faith in sympathy’s efficacy to transform the novel’s readership from a nation of slaveholders to one united in sympathetic love. In her preface, Stowe states that her attempt is to “awaken sympathy and feeling for the African race” (xiii). Critics argue that sympathy and sympathetic love are fundamental to Stowe’s account of abolitionist reform and are what ultimately motivates, Stowe contends, one’s opposition to slavery. Jane Tompkins argues that Uncle Tom’s Cabin is “summa theological of nineteenth-century Americans’ religion of domesticity” because it retells “the culture’s story about itself – the story of salvation through motherly love” (125). Since Tompkins, scholars have continued to assert the centrality of sympathy and sympathetic love to the affective foundations of Stowe’s abolitionist and domestic politics. Cindy Weinstein argues that when Stowe implores her readers to “feel right,” she is effectively asking them to cultivate a sympathetic connection with others, a connection whose origin can be traced back to a disfigured domestic order (67). The “right sentiment” requires feeling for and grieving with others who are suffering; Philip Fisher writes, “[c]ompassion is, of course, the primary emotional goal of sentimental narration”: it “exists in relation to suffering and makes of suffering the
primary subject matter, perhaps the exclusive subject matter, of sentimental narrative” (105). Following much of this criticism, I examine the ways in which Stowe, and later Moodie, use suffering to more broadly critique capitalism and the dehumanizing effects of commodity exchange on both products and producers.

In the novel’s opening pages, Stowe introduces Haley, a slave trader, who has come to the Kentucky home of Mr. Shelby to collect on an outstanding debt. Describing Haley’s manners and clothes, Stowe focuses on his obsession with material possessions: “He was much over-dressed, in a gaudy vest of many colors, a blue neckerchief, bedropped gayly with yellow spots, and arranged with a flaunting tie...his hands, large and coarse, were plentiful bedecked with rings; and he wore a heavy gold watch-chain” (1). In Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America, Michael Taussig explains what Karl Marx calls the “fetishism of commodities”:

In the case of commodity fetishism, social relationships are dismembered and appear to dissolve into relationships between things – the products of labor exchanged on the market – so that the sociology of exploitation masquerade as a natural relationship between systemic artifacts. Definite social relationships are reduced to the magical matrix of things. (31-32)

Haley’s fetishism of commodities obscures the violent relationship that structures capitalism generally, and more particularly the Atlantic slave trade in human beings and natural resources that made the dominance of capitalism possible. While he prides himself on the “humanity” of his slave “management,” Haley all too quickly reveals the ways in which he sees slaves as merely “many things belonging to a master” (5, 8).

32 Situating Mr. Shelby’s payment of his debt through the selling of his slaves to Haley within the Kentucky home allows Stowe to also explicitly link the domestic sphere to the marketplace. Throughout Uncle Tom’s Cabin, the domestic sphere is not a refuge from marketplace activities, as it is constantly under pressure from market forces. In Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America, Gillian Brown writes, “The distinction between work and family is eradicated in the slave, for whom there is no separation between economic and private status” (15).
He claims that the slave trade has not hardened his feelings, but is unable to see that his brutal and violent treatment of his slaves has been naturalized by his dissolving of social relations into relations of things (5). Stowe’s original subtitle to her novel, “The Man That Was a Thing,” suggests the ways in which the dismembering of social relations by commodity exchange was a central concern of the novel. It is, Mark Seltzer writes, “the uneasy pertinence of the analogy between slave and chair or table that leads Stowe, at this point, to reassert the absolute difference that forms the more fundamental subject of her story: put simply, the difference between a person and a thing” (47).

Stowe’s examination of the secularization of capitalism focuses on the moral and spiritual wasteland of Simon Legree’s plantation. Stowe describes the “mouldering, torn and discolored” damp walls of Legree’s home, defaced by “chalk memorandums, and long sums footed up, as if somebody had been practicing arithmetic there” and “slops of beer and wine” (320):

The estate had formerly belonged to a gentleman of opulence and taste, who had bestowed some considerable attention to the adornment of his grounds. Having died insolvent, it had been purchased, at a bargain, by Legree, who used it as he did everything else, merely as an implement for moneymaking.

(298)

Legree’s capitalist concern for profit only has produced a moral and spiritual wasteland (consisting of prostitutes, alcohol and atheism) that reflects the dire state of his soul. During his child rearing in New England, Legree’s mother had “led him at the sound of Sabbath bell, to worship and to pray,” but this “gentle woman has wasted a world of unvalued love” on a son who would follow in his father’s steps as “boisterous, unruly, and tyrannical” (322). When he left her to find his “fortunes at sea,” Stowe describes his mother “yearning of a heart that must love something, and
has nothing else to love, clung to him, and sought with passionate prayers and
entreaties, to win him from a life of sin, to his soul’s eternal good” (323). The earlier
sounds of the Sabbath bell during his childhood organized life around worship and
prayer, but the time of capital now guiding Legree’s life organizes it solely around
profit and productivity.

Transplanting the northern factory to the southern plantation, Legree’s
plantation is a modern New England mill town, inhabited by brutalized, debased
workers entirely under the power of a vicious capitalist. Legree’s plantation system
extends the working day, and Legree works his labor more intensely through the whip.
He rationalizes his use of violence as the only way in which to produce a strong
system of labor in the South: “That’s the way I begin with my niggers...It’s my
system to begin strong, - just let ‘em know what to expect” (294). There is nothing
natural about this capitalist labor system as its modes of production are mechanized
and its hours of operation extend beyond the rhythms of the day or season: “To a late
hour in the night the sound of the grinding was protracted; for the mills were few in
number compared with the grinders, and the weary and feeble ones were driven back
by the strong” (301). Labor is divided and repetitive: “no means was left untried to
press every one up to the top of their capabilities...with monotonous succession, on
the same sport; and work, in itself not hard, becomes so, by pressed, hour after hour,
with unvarying, unrelenting sameness” (301). In Mastered by the Clock, Mark M.
Smith argues that the northern factories provided a model for labor productivity on the
southern plantation:

    planters tried to import factory methods directly to the plantation...Lowell
mills, for instance, became models of efficiency, and planters were encouraged
to emulate the factory’s use of clock-regulated labor. The Southern
Agriculturalist, for example, published one southerner’s account of a visit to

70
Lowell in 1845, and advised “all those who are politically or otherwise unfriendly to the factory system, to read the following article.” The visitor, from Kentucky, was impressed by the fact that “[t]he very few persons that were occasionally seen at all, hurried to and fro, as if their time was precious,” enthused over “the most perfect order, system, and regularity...everywhere exhibited.” (56)

However, Stowe charts the moral and spiritual peril that accompanies the transplantation of this labor system onto the southern plantation. In the climatic scene of Uncle Tom’s murder at the hands of his owner, Simon Legree, “the tick of the old clock” does not measure the power of clock time to regulate, organize, and discipline workers, but rather its ability to violently separate, differentiate, and destroy social relations between “brother-man” and “brother-Christian” (358).

Stowe figures the inhumanity and indifference to violence as a moral and spiritual peril threatening “white enterprise.” In White, Richard Dyer describes the ways in which the idea of progress is deeply informed by a central value of whiteness that he calls “spirit” or “enterprise.” According to Dyer, enterprise is often presented as the sign of white spirit – that is the “energy, will, ambition, the ability to do things and see things through – and of its effect – discovery, science, business, wealth, creation, the building of nations, the organization of labour (carried out by racially lesser humans)” and especially leadership (31). “The idea of leadership,” he writes, “suggests both a narrative of human progress and the peculiar quality required to effect it. Thus white people [are understood naturally to] lead humanity forward because of their temperamental qualities of leadership: will power, far-sightedness, and energy” (12). Noting Stowe’s repeated use of the word, “enterprising” in Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Dyer writes, “Stowe deplores its unrestrained exercise (and gives women the task of such restraint), especially insofar as it fails to recognize the
humanity and rights of those not so endowed...The most important vehicle for the exercise and thus the display of this dynamism, this enterprise, is imperialism (of which, of course, the world of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is a part)” (31). The nightmare world of Simon Legree is a version of many other “Dark Places” that he has created in the West Indies as he made his fortunes. Legree’s commercial aspirations that guide his colonial practices reflect a general imperialism that produces colonial unrest across the globe.

Protesting his nephew, Henrique’s, use of the whip to manage his new slave, Dodo, the slave owner Augustine St. Clare brings to his brother’s attention the threat of unrest and colonial overthrow. Describing the necessity of the whip to regulate and control laboring bodies and work time for efficient productivity and greater profit, Augustine’s brother says, “I’m not afraid to sit on the escape-valve, as long as the boilers are strong, and the machinery works well” (233). Augustine’s brother links the brutal management practices of the southern plantation to the northern factory. In the cotton fields, the slave becomes a “hand” that exists only as a machine, or part of a larger machine or technology, powered by the whip. However, Augustine challenges his brother’s confidence in this capitalist system of labor; he says, “We are breaking all humanizing ties, and making them brute beasts; and, if they get the upper hand, such we shall find them” (233). Augustine reminds his brother of the outcome of the Haitian revolution to strengthen his warning against using factory-like tactics, “our calculating firmness,” with slaves on the southern plantation (234). Stowe links the black uprising in Haiti to a rejection of the modern factory-like conditions of plantation life.\(^{33}\) The “modern technological form of large-scale agricultural production” required, David Scott writes, “the slaves to relate themselves to

---

\(^{33}\) In *The Black Jacobins*, C.L.R. James writes, “working and living together in gangs of hundreds on the huge sugar-factories which covered the North Plain, they were closer to a modern proletariat than any group of workers in existence at the time” (66).
themselves, to each other, and to their slave masters in new and essentially modern ways” that were informed by “modern ideas about property, about personhood and individuality, about time and its economic organization and efficient uses” (128, my emphasis). For Stowe, the time of capital – the temporality of commodified abstract labor underpinning imperial practices – does not contain, subsume, or overcode the heterogeneous temporalities of subaltern “real” labor.34

Uncle Tom’s resistance to Legree’s time of capital reflects the challenge from within capital’s and commodity’s claim to unity and universality. Mr. Shelby first describes Tom as “an uncommon fellow; he is certainly worth that sum anywhere, steady, honest, capable, manages my whole farm like a clock” (1-2). While Tom is obedient to clock time, he models a time discipline that is determined by spiritual concerns. In one of the novel’s most dramatic encounters between Legree and Tom, Legree asks what he considers to be a rhetorical question, “‘An’t yer mine, now, body and soul?’” (309). Tom replies:

In the very depth of physical suffering, bowed by brutal oppression, this question shot a gleam of joy and triumph through Tom’s soul. He suddenly

34 Mark Smith argues that resistance to clock time is perhaps best illustrated by the masters’ need to constantly whip in order to enforce slaves’ obedience to the clock. The measure of time’s punctuality on the plantation was implemented by the whip: “At half past four, a horn was blown by the overseer, which was the signal to commence work; and every one that was not on the spot at the time, had to receive ten lashes from the negro-whip” (“Old South” 62). Clock time and time discipline would be a part of black life, evident “in their songs and riddles, in their attitudes toward death and God, even in their definitions of freedom”; Smith writes, “American behaviour patterns and value systems were littered with the images of the clock and watch” (Mastered by the Clock 146). Former slaves recall in surprising numbers, writes Smith, the time freedom came: “For Mary Anderson, for example, freedom dawned at ‘nine o’clock’ on her North Carolina plantation, while for Steve Jones of Texas, the ‘day we is set free it was bout 8’o’clock in the morning’” (150). While these moments are indicative of a modern time sensibility, Smith argues that “former slaves tended to interpret their freedom in terms of having the right to regulate and define their own work and rest hours, in other words, to lay incontrovertible claim to their own negotiable time” (150). Smith argue that resistance to clocks and time discipline is an important feature of anti-slavery narratives, and the need to whip in time demonstrates that most slaves were far from internalizing the assumptions and values accompanying mechanical time discipline (or at least such discipline for someone else’s profit).
stretched himself up, and looking earnestly to heaven, while the tears and
blood that flowed down his face mingled, he exclaimed, - "No! no! no! my
soul an't yours, Mas'r! You have n't bought it, - ye can't buy it! It's been
bought and paid for, by one that is able to keep it; - no matter, no matter, you
can't harm me!" (309)

In this moment, Tom denies possession of his body to not only Legree but also to
himself. Instead, he acknowledges God as his first and last owner. He rejects the
cruel self-interests of Legree, who wants to assert ownership, not for himself, but in
the interest of protecting God's benevolent claims to ownership. In this final moment
of life, Tom's industry serves the interests of God and not the interests of capitalism.
Unlike the pocketbook that Haley carries that records his material gains and losses,
Tom carries the Bible that records his spiritual gains and losses. For Stowe, time is
something given to us by God, and its proper use is determined as much by spiritual
concerns as by the secular needs of capitalist moneymaking.

The measuring of time's value and progress only in profit and productivity or
material accumulation is contested by the unsuccessful transplantation of Miss
Ophelia's northern time discipline to Augustine's southern home. Despite her moral
sensibilities against slavery, Miss Ophelia agrees to offer her domestic skills to order
the domestic disorder in Augustine's home. His kitchen, managed by the slave Dinah,
is in complete disarray and bursting with material objects: "the rolling pin is under the
bed and the nutmeg grater in her pocket with her tobacco - there are sixty-five
different sugar bowls, one in every hole in the house" (181). Ungoverned by any
"systematic order," Dinah's "mode of doing everything was peculiarly meandering
and circuitous, and without any sort of calculation as to time and place" (180). Miss
Ophelia's approach to ordering the southern home is almost mechanistic: the narrator
says, "in punctuality, she was an inevitable as a clock, and as inexorable as a railroad
engine; and she held in most decided contempt and abomination anything of a contrary character” (137). As a northern “manager,” Miss Ophelia admonishes the female slaves for their idleness: “Jane and Rosa, what are you wasting your time for, here? Go in and attend to the muslins!” (188). Responding to Miss Ophelia’s management style, Augustine declares, “My dear Vermont, you natives up by the North Pole set an extravagant value on time! What on earth is the use of time to a fellow who has twice as much of it as he knows what to do with?” (184). In the southern home, Miss Ophelia puts into place a system of efficiency that, Sarah Mee writes, is the “feminine version of the factory ideal” (39).

However, the unruly behaviour and body of her guardian Topsy challenge Miss Ophelia’s valuing of time through productive output. Miss Ophelia attempts to teach Topsy the domestic arts, but Topsy refuses to follow her model of thrift and industry. Instead of making the bed, Topsy scatters the sheets and spreads the feathers, and mounts a similar assault against needlework: “Though Miss Ophelia could not help feeling that so many accidents could not possibly happen in succession, yet she could not, without a watchfulness which would leave her no time for anything else, detect her” (216). Topsy believes that she will only have the time discipline that Miss Ophelia desires if she is whipped: “Law, Missis, you must whip me; my old Missis allers whipped me. I an’t used to workin’ unless I gets whipped” (217). Here, Stowe figures the naturalization of violence within capitalist production. Tired of Topsy’s insubordination, Miss Ophelia tells Augustine that she may have to use the whip to discipline Topsy. However, Augustine reminds her of the several whippings Topsy has already received: “I’ve seen this child whipped with a poker, knocked down with a shovel or tongs, whichever came handiest, & c.; and seeing that she is used to that style of operation, I think your whippings will have to be pretty energetic to make much impression” (214). When Miss Ophelia contemplates using the whip to
“manage” Topsy, the abolitionist Ophelia begins to resemble the slaveholder she so despises, and Stowe implicates Miss Ophelia’s New England sense of “order, system, and regularity” (56) with the violence of plantation slavery.

Miss Ophelia’s orderly, disembodied Yankee outlook does not allow her to forge a social relation with Topsy that is not dictated by calculative rationalism. However, when Miss Ophelia finally faces Topsy naked in the bath, Miss Ophelia is deluged with conflicting sensations: “the great welts and calloused spots, ineffaceable marks of the system under which [the girl] had grown up thus far” made the woman’s heart grow “pitiful within her” (209). Once Miss Ophelia sees Topsy as a human and not as a “hand,” pity enters the economic rationalism of Miss Ophelia’s mind, and feelings begin to serve as guideposts to her actions. Stowe links Christian precepts to the free market, and follows the Protestantism invoked as a justification for capitalism from its inception by Adam Smith. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Smith argues that we know right from wrong because we feel disgust when we look at a thief, and Stowe expands this further to suggest that we know slavery is wrong because we feel disgust when we see a slave owner, and pity when we see the wounds from whipping on the body of a black slave.

Through Eva, Ophelia begins to recognize the importance of time as conduits for the salvation and the development of virtuous character formation. While the time of capital fails to regulate Topsy’s behavior and body, Eva is able to convince Topsy of the value of time through linking time to what Richard Brodhead describes as “God and the Good” (87). Eva believes that Topsy’s unruly behavior is an outcome of not having a mother, and “Eva not only cast her love around Topsy,” writes Brodhead, “but also infuses that love with moral expectation. ‘I love you, and I want you to be good’” (86). Brodhead writes, “Eva instantly succeeds in getting Topsy to internalize such expectation as an inwardly felt obligation” (86). Touched by Eva’s love and her
moral vision, Topsy begins “trying to be a good girl” (245). After Eva’s death, Ophelia becomes a mother-surrogate to Topsy, and “from that hour.... [Ophelia] acquired an influence over the mind of the destitute child that she never lost” (262). Stowe appeals to the power of feeling to recover the slumbering objects of capital.

It is in this “magical matrix of things” that Legree has committed the worst atrocities, and Stowe foregrounds the importance of mothers to the creation of a uniquely moral and spiritual version of modern life (Taussig 32). The slave Cassy says,

“He’s learned his trade well, among the pirates in the West Indies. You wouldn’t sleep much if I should tell you things I’ve seen...I’ve heard screams here that I haven’t been able to get out of my head for weeks and weeks. There’s a place way out down by the quarters, where you can see a black, blasted tree, and the ground all covered with black ashes.” (326)

Stowe describes Legree and his “bad soul” entering “the shadowy world of sleep” (327). In his dream, he hears voices whisper to him, “whispers that chilled him with horror,” and finds himself “on the edge of the abyss” (327). A veiled figure is pulling him over, and when the veil is drawn aside he discovers that it is his mother: “she turned away from him, and he fell down, down, down, amid a confused noise of shrieks, and groans, and shouts of demon laughter, and Legree awoke” (327). The metaphor of “awakening” that Stowe employs in the preface to Uncle Tom’s Cabin appears in this passage, and figures hope for Legree’s spiritual redemption (xiii). However, he is unable to hear the voice that declares “Behold! Thou hast one more chance! Strive for immortal glory!” as “he woke with an oath and a curse” (326). For Stowe, the metaphor of awakening is a break with the slumbering that marks commodity capitalism. Throughout Uncle Tom’s Cabin Stowe foregrounds the interaction and
mutual constitution of subjects and objects, selves and others, bodies and souls, heavens and hells.

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe presents Canada as an outside to the capitalist marketplace, untouched by modernity. Stowe’s mother-surrogate, Eva, harkens to Longfellow’s *Evangeline*, where Acadia (modern day Nova Scotia) is described as “the forest primeval” (44). However, Moodie’s *Roughing It in the Bush* presents the moral and spiritual peril facing Upper Canada, with its land and people governed by the imperatives of trade and profit, rather than God and the Good. Before emigrating to Upper Canada in 1832, Moodie published her only independent collection of poetry, *Enthusiasm* (1831), which was a defense of spiritual ardor. In her blank verse poem “Enthusiasm,” she begins by defining enthusiasm as an innate passion for meaningful activity, the “Parent of genius” to whose “soul-awakening power we owe / The preacher’s eloquence, the painter’s skill, / the poet’s lay the patriot’s zeal” and so on (30-34). While she devotes most of the poem to non-religious enthusiasts (such as the poet and the painter), she does have an evangelical agenda. She wants to demonstrate the ultimate dissatisfaction inherent in all earthly pursuits. Despite her sympathy for all the enthusiasts that she describes, Moodie argues that their secular interests are just “base and joyless vanities which man / Madly prefers to everlasting bliss!” (68-69). In “Enthusiasm” Moodie intends to prove the superiority of religious enthusiasm to other varieties, and to defend Christianity in particular (503). The soul awakening power that she attributes to God frames the ways in which she describes her encounters and experiences in the Upper Canadian bush.

The fact that many members of the British upper middle-class were moving to Upper Canada was seen by some as representing a transition from “emigration,” which reflected the mass migration of the working-class poor, to “colonization,” which signified a more organized and willful departure. Throughout *Roughing It in the Bush*,

78
Moodie possesses a colonialist mentality that attempts to civilize the land and its inhabitants. Upper Canada was an attractive colony to upper middle-class Britons because it was believed to be familiar. One could still maintain one’s national allegiance, unlike in the US, and Canadian culture was thought to be largely informed by British culture. However, Moodie soon discovers that loyalty to the British crown is hard to find among the Yankees (US northerners). Moodie recalls a conversation with her “thin, weasel-faced Yankee” neighbor, Uncle Joe. Describing how he acquired his tract of land, Uncle Joe tells Moodie about his New England father’s acquisition of the land through his dubious attachment to the cause of the United Empire Loyalists. Uncle Joe surmises that his father acquired the land not because of his “attachment to the British government,” but because “[h]e drank up a good farm in the United States, and then he thought he could do better than turn loyal, and get one here for nothing. He did not care a cent, not he, for the King of England” (84).

Moodie’s Yankee neighbors do not share her belief in the good of the British Empire or her belief in the all-encompassing powers of God. Moodie describes her attempts to teach Uncle Joe’s dying eldest daughter about Heaven to her mother’s dismay. Unaware of a “future state,” Moodie endeavors to tell Phoebe about “the nature of the soul, its endless duration, and responsibility to God for the actions done in the flesh” (107). When Phoebe asks her mother if she can teach her how to pray, Mrs. Joe responds, “Why should you trouble yourself about such things? Mrs. Moodie I desire you not to put such thoughts into my daughter’s head. We don’t want to know anything about Jesus Christ here” (108, emphasis in book). For Moodie, it is Mrs. Joe and others’ interest only in earthly things (commodities) that is of grave concern.

In “The Land Jobber,” Moodie describes the “power and profits of storekeepers” in Upper Canada (155). She describes the land jobber, and the ways in which he takes advantage of the influx of emigrants by getting a number of farmers
deeply in debt (through selling retail goods to the farmer at high prices on a credit
system) and taking mortgages on their farms. She writes,

By this means, instead of merely recovering the money owing to him by the
usual process of law, he was enabled by threatening to foreclose the
mortgages, to compel them to sell their farms nearly on his own terms,
whenever an opportunity occurred to re-sell them advantageously to new
comers. Thus, besides marking thirty or forty per cent. on his goods, he often
realised more than a hundred per cent. on his land speculations. (155)

She describes one particular land-jobber, Mr. Clark, who was exceptionally talented at
this trade. She writes, "His face, when well watched, was an index to his self and
unfeeling soul. Complexion he had none, except that sempiternally enduring red-and-
tawny mixture which is acquired by exposure and hard drinking" (156). Described as a
drinker and an accomplished gambler, with a "hard head" and a "hard heart," Moodie
concludes that "no virtuous man, who employs every passing moment of his short life
in doing good to his fellow creatures, could be more devoted and energetic in his
endeavours to serve God and mankind, than Clark was in his endeavours to ease them
of their spare cash" (156). Here, Moodie emphasizes a mercantile culture where the
body is not yet rendered abstract and ultimately illegible. Moodie's cultivation of the
bourgeois self in the Upper Canadian bush is established through a class
differentiation that is clearly racialized.

Much like Stowe's depiction of Haley, Moodie foregrounds the exterior of the
body to draw conclusions about interior character; wherein, the virtuous is beautiful,
and the vicious is ugly. Throughout Roughing It in the Bush, Moodie describes the
lack of religion and education as producing degenerate racial conditions. Describing
her Yankee neighbor, Moodie writes,
Imagine a girl of seventeen or eighteen years of age, with a sharp knowing-looking features, a forward, impudent carriage... The creature was dressed in a ragged, dirty purple stuff gown, cut very low in the neck, with an old red cotton handkerchief tied over her head; her uncombed, tangled locks falling over her thin, inquisitive face, in a state of perfect nature. (62)

In the Upper Canadian backwoods, the Yankee girl has become more animal ("creature") than human. Her dirty clothes and tangled hair figure her lack of domestic care placing her in "a state of perfect nature" rather than culture and civilization. In *Life in the Backwoods*, Moodie would quote the claims of an itinerant preacher that "The farther in the bush, say I, the farther from God, and the nearer to hell" one is (62). In *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1854), Stowe similarly regards the US South's poor whites as barbaric and criminal: a "miserable class of whites [that] form, in all the Southern States, a material for the most horrible and ferocious of mobs. Utterly ignorant, and inconceivably brutal, they are like some blind, savage monster, that, when aroused, tramples heedlessly over everything in its way" (368). For Stowe, the cause of poor white depravity is not to be found in the degenerate body of the poor white, but in the economic and political system of the plantation South.35 The entire South suffered, according to Stowe, from the absence of a dignified free white labor, with poor whites suffering primarily from a lack of education and religious training.

Moodie's own figuration of the Canadian backwoods as a space of the moral and spiritually degenerate is tied to the extortive practices and customs of her Yankee

---

35 The slave system, Stowe argued, established three important conditions for the ongoing degradation of southern poor whites:

1. Distribution of the land into large plantations, and the consequent sparseness of settlement, make any system of common school education impracticable. 2. The same cause operates with regard to the preaching of the Gospel. 3. The degradation of the idea of labor, which results inevitably from enslaving the working class, operates to a great extent in preventing respectably working men of the middling classes from settling or remaining in slave States. (365)
neighbors. Moodie does not limit the extortion to only the marketplace, but rather extends this system of extortion into the domestic sphere. Moodie describes the system of “borrowing” she encounters with her female Yankee neighbors. Carrying an empty decanter asking for milk, Moodie’s Yankee neighbor informs her that “in this country we all live by borrowing. If you want anything, why just send and borrow from us” (65). The newly immigrated Moodie believes this is the case, and fills the decanter with milk. When Moodie asks her to borrow milk much later, the woman replies, “Milk! Lend milk? I guess milk in the fall is worth a York shilling a quart. I cannot sell you a drop under” (65). Moodie discovers that this “borrowing” system is merely a “wicked piece of extortion”; she is unwilling to accept this system of commodity exchange, and concludes that “this method of living upon their neighbours is a most convenient one to unprincipled people, as it does not involve the penalty of stealing; and they can keep the goods without the unpleasant necessity of returning them, or feeling the moral obligation of being grateful for their use” (65). Moodie foregrounds the absence of “feeling” and “moral obligation” within this market economy transplanted from the US North to the Upper Canadian bush (65).

In contrast to her unfeeling Yankee neighbors, Moodie sheds copious tears on no less than twenty-three occasions; her Yankee neighbor tells her “the drop is always on your cheek” (95). Roughing It in the Bush employs many of the features of the sentimental novel’s structure and moral slant. Children are touchstones of sensibility in sentimental novels, and there are few moments in Roughing It in the Bush when Moodie appears without one or more of her children. Even on the occasion of the first visit of Old Satan’s daughter, the first borrower, the scene opens with a crying child. “Moodie’s exposition on the borrowing system is further accentuated,” writes Bina Freiwald, “by the very tangible presence of the ‘poor weanling child’ who wants for milk, and the borrower’s unfeeling mockery” (476-77). Freiwald writes, “The chapter
closes with the episode of the borrowed candle, occurring years later, yet partaking of
the same quality of maternal anxiety; the youngest boy is sick, and as Tom the cat has
made away with the borrowed candle, the chapter ends on a sinister note only slightly
alleviated by the temporal distance between the narrator and the narrated instances:
‘My poor boy awoke ill and feverish, and I had no light to assist him, or even to look
into his sweet face, to see how far I dared hope that the light of day would find him
better’” (477). Interestingly, it is this moment of maternal anxiety that ties to the
imaginative sympathy that is central to both Moodie and Stowe’s remaking of the time
of capital. In a letter to Eliza Follen from December of 1852, Stowe discloses that
Uncle Tom’s Cabin was born out of a moment of sympathetic identification: “It was at
his dying bed, and at his grave that I learned what a poor slave mother may feel when
her child is torn away from her…I felt that I could never be consoled for it, unless this
crushing of my own heart might enable me to work at some great good to
others…[M]uch that is in this book (‘Uncle Tom’) has its roots in these awful scenes
and bitter sorrows of that summer” (Life and Letters 173).

The domestic sphere and the raising of children become essential to Moodie’s
insistence on “obligation” and virtuous character formation. In Race and the
Education of Desire, Ann Stoler writes,

British conducts books and novels during this period [the nineteenth century]
antedated the bourgeois way of life they represented, we might read the
colonial guides to European survival in a similar light….These were not
reflections of a common shared knowledge, but creative sites of a new kind of
knowledge that tied personal conduct to racial survival, child neglect to racial
degeneracy, the ill-management of servants to disastrous consequences for the
carer of rule. They register how much a lack of self-discipline was a risk
to the body politic…the attributes of a ‘modern white mother’ … and this
micromanagement of domestic life might be seen less as an affirmation of bourgeois hegemony than as a contested and transgressed site of it. (109)

Mothering is an essential part of Roughing it in the Bush. Moodie highlights child rearing as essential to producing the moral values essential to the governing of the self, with religious discipline, racial superiority, and middle-class respectability. Moodie’s support of a strong didacticism is evident in an 1851 article, entitled “A Word for the Novel Writers” in Literary Garlands, where she writes, “Every good work of fiction is a step towards the mental improvement of mankind” (qtd. in Fowler 105). Discussing the sentimental qualities of Roughing It in the Bush, Marian Fowler writes, “Susanna interrupts the main narrative of her backwoods struggle to tell a number of unrelated stories guaranteed to affect the reader’s sensibility...Some of the digressive stories in Roughing It in the Bush occupy whole chapters and others only a page or two: the whole helter-skelter collection reproduces the usual meanderings of the sentimental novel” (105).

Occupying only a few pages in “The Charivari” chapter, Moodie’s description of the murder of a black man named Tom Smith functions as a scene of subjection that attempts to produce a new community that is predicated on each member having the capacity to establish an affective connection with other members. In “The Charivari” chapter, Moodie addresses the “ultra-republican spirit” that has severéd “the tie of mutual obligation which social relations bound you together” in the Canadian backwoods (133). The charivari figures on a micro-level the extortive dynamics of the market. The charivari was an aggressive ritual directed against marital deviants, in which newly wed couples would be publically shamed and made to pay a charivari fine, a monetary penalty, for the charivari to stop. Moodie begins the sketch proper describing the social disorder and disunity among the British bourgeoisie, the Irish settlers and “Yankee squatters” (131). Moodie uses the charivari to illustrate the ways
in which the severing of obligation in the market economy has produced various communities unbound because they have "no feeling in common" (131). Moodie's previous work with the anti-slavery movement, and particularly as an amanuensis, provided her with particular scenes of subjection that were commonly used by activists to produce feelings of pity and sympathy in readers.

Moodie spends an extended period describing the murder of Tom, but does it through quoting the account of her neighbour. This distancing from the scene of subjection enables Moodie to maintain her moral purity or superiority from the horrors of this unthinkable scene. Moodie maintains her moral uprightness and denounces the charivari as a "lawless infringement upon the natural rights of man" (139). She implies that her own sensibilities have not been blunted or worsened in the bush nor does she possess any taste for the reproduction of these cruelties. Quoting her neighbour, Moodie writes,

"There was a runaway nigger from the States who came to the village, and set up a barber's poll, and settled among us. I am no friend to the blacks; but really Tom Smith was such a quiet, good-natured fellow, and so civil and obliging that he soon got a good business. He was clever, too, and cleaned old clothes until they looked almost as good as new. Well, after a time he persuaded a white girl to marry him. She was not a bad-looking Irishwoman, and I can't think what bewitched the creature to take him.

"Her marriage with the black man created a great sensation in the town. All the young fellows were indignant at her presumption and her folly, and they were determined to give them the charivari in fine style, and punish them both for the insult they had put upon the place.

"Some of the young men in the town joined in the frolic. They went so far as to enter the house, drag the poor nigger from his bed, and in spite of his
shrieks for mercy, they hurried him out into the cold air – for it was winter – and almost naked as he was, rode him upon a rail, and so ill-treated him that he died under their hands.” (140-41)

Contrary to stereotypical portrayals of black men as immoral and sexually licentious, Moodie has her neighbor admit that the “poor nigger” was a good, “civil and obliging,” citizen of the community. Narrating this scene of subjection in the voice of a racist neighbor, Moodie represents the deterioration of moral value and social obligation in the bush. 

In opposition to this “good-natured fellow,” Moodie presents the white men in the town as morally and spiritually degenerate. Their viciousness and debauchery is written on their bodies as they “blacken their faces, put their clothes on hind part before, and wear horrible masks, with grotesque caps on their heads adorned with cock’s feathers and bells” (139). Their actions are cruel and unjust, and are sanctioned by the community’s silence. The neighbor says,

“They left the body, when they found what had happened, and fled.
The ringleaders escaped across the lake to the other side; and those who remained could not be sufficiently identified to bring them to trial. The affair was hushed up; but it gave great uneasiness to several respectable families whose sons were in the scrape.” (141)

The community chooses not to speak about this uncivil “affair,” holding no one responsible for Tom’s murder. However, the “great uneasiness of several respectable families” holds the promise for the colony’s redemption. Moodie suggests that the respectable family possesses “the mind and manners” necessary to avert the colony’s further moral degeneration. She insists on mothers’ responsibility to establish and maintain civility by attending to the “tie of mutual obligation” in their domestic spaces (133). Moodie contends that morality can be felt and seen in the body, and figures
manners as a new means of showing the legitimacy and cultural authority of the white British middle-class in the Upper Canadian backwoods.

“The Charivari” chapter ends with an encounter between Moodie and her Yankee neighbor, Mrs. D-, who challenges Moodie’s egalitarianism. The neighbor suspects that Moodie may “not [be] a good Christian” given her refusal to dine with her servants; Moodie replies, “There is no difference in the flesh and blood; but education makes a difference in the mind and manners, and till these can assimilate, it is better to keep apart” (143). While not advocating social relations that makes everyone equal because of the “difference in mind and manners,” Moodie denounces racism, and chides her neighbor for refusing to recognize that she is “of the same flesh and blood” of her black servant. Horrified by Moodie’s comparison, “the colour rose into [Mrs. D-’s] sallow face” (143). Moodie’s neighbor’s inability to imaginatively sympathize with others of the “same flesh and blood” is figured as a “colour[ing]” that makes her less than white. Moodie asks, “Which is more subversive of peace and Christian fellowship – ignorance of our own characters, or of the characters of others?” (143); the answer for Moodie is ignorance of our own character, and her sketches lay out the ways in which “we should devote with what means we can spare and talents with which God has endowed us with” to banishing ignorance from the earth through “the progress of improvement” (Life in the Clearing 58). Moodie attempts to unify women from different social classes through a shared project of “whitening” the colony that also attempts to sustain a class hierarchy.

In White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada, Daniel Coleman writes, “the English language’s concept of civility combines the temporal notion of civilization as progress that was central to the idea of modernity and the colonial mission with the moral-ethical concept of a (relatively) peaceful order” (10). In the poem-epigraph that begins “The Charivari” chapter, Moodie insists that the English
colonialist must turn her attention to civilizing the colony by transferring fond affections for the English home country to Upper Canada:

Our fate is seal’d! 'Tis now in vain to sigh
For homes, or friends, or country left behind.
Come, dry those tears, and lift the downcast eye
To the high heaven of hope, and be resign'd;
Wisdom and time will justify the deed,
The eye will cease to weep, the heart to bleed.
Love's thrilling sympathies, affections pure,
All that endear'd and hallow'd your lost home,
Shall on a broad foundation, firm and sure,
Establish peace; the wilderness become
Dear as the distant land you fondly prize,
Or dearer visions that in memory rise. (128-29)

The speaker records the settler's homesickness and her desire to return to the country left behind, but insists that the settler turn her attention from the past to the present and future. The speaker commands the settler to dry her tears and to place her faith in "wisdom and time" (129). "Love's thrilling sympathies, affections pure" provides the moral and spiritual "broad foundation" upon which a future Canadian nation is to be formed: a nation as "Dear as the distant land you fondly prize" and populated by civil subjects bound by affections of love and sympathy that will "establish peace" (129). Moodie identifies sympathy as fundamental to establishing affective connections, and imagines a Canadian future where "kindly civilities and gentle courtesies" dictate the social relations of the market (131).

In White Civility, Coleman argues that the "temporal concept of progress and the moral-ethical ideal of orderliness were demonstrated by cultivated, polite
behaviour (most commonly modeled on the figure of the bourgeois gentleman), which, in turn, made these concepts fundamental to the production and education of the individual citizen” (10). However, Moodie demonstrates the importance of the bourgeois woman in producing citizen subjects who are religiously redeemed from capitalism’s inhumanity and indifference. In one of her digressive character sketches, Moodic describes the miserable fate of Tom Wilson, “the son of a [British] gentleman, who once possessed a large landed property” (43). The youngest of six sons, Tom, is left with “nothing after an extravagant and profligate expenditure of the income” (43). Following the emigration craze, Tom first moves to New South Wales where he is left financially ruined by his “convicts servants [who] rob him of everything, and...burn his dwellings” (45). Tom returns to England, and, despite failing in New South Wales, he emigrates to Canada. When the Moodies meet up with Tom in the Upper Canadian backwoods, he is not only financially ruined, but also physically weakened. The British gentleman is not only economically vulnerable in this market economy, but also physically vulnerable. Moodie explicitly links Tom’s physical degeneration to the Yankee market economy when she describes Tom seeking his reflection in the “miserable looking-glass that formed the case of the Yankee clock” (57). For Moodie, the emptying out of time, the abstraction of the uniqueness in the name of a relentless homogeneity of products and producers as well as time itself, is accompanied by a physical and spiritual emptying of the human. In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx writes, “time is everything, man is nothing”; in *Roughing It in the Bush*, Moodie insists on the power of feeling to recover man from being “at most, the carcase of time” (Marx 57). For Moodie, progress is not quantitative and additive, like the mechanical flow of a clock, but is qualitative and intensifying. Progress is a process of fulfillment in which God and the good order the life of a nation.
While incredibly different in form and content, Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and Moodie’s *Roughing It in the Bush* are similar in their critique of the secularization of the capitalist marketplace and the moral and spiritual peril that accompanies commodity culture. Both Moodie and Stowe depict the degenerative effects of commodity capitalism on social relations, and figure the whipping of black bodies as symptomatic of an indifferent and inhuman economic order. The crime of capitalism is that it engenders violence and indifference to suffering, and the whipping of Tom functions in each of these texts as pedagogical scenes in which to produce a civil community joined together through affective bonds. Mothers and the domestic sphere are represented as being central to restraining white enterprise. For Stowe and Moodie, colonization is a reflection of white enterprise, and they contest the imperial and commercial aspirations that have governed colonial policies. In their subsequent writings, Stowe and Moodie continue to foreground moral obligation and Christian duty as central characteristics of all kinds of social relations, including colonial ones.

Stowe provides an alternative colonial configuration to Legree’s West Indian and Southern commercial aspirations. In *The Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Stowe articulates a benevolent colonialism that employs the rhetoric of brotherly protectionism. She writes, “when the white race shall regard their superiority over the colored one only as a talent intrusted for the advantage of their weaker brother, then will the prejudice of caste melt away in the light of Christianity” (33). Stowe advocates a form of benevolent domination whereby “the higher class,” inspired by a “Divine Spirit,” will watch over the lower ones, “their weaker brother” (33). Stowe justifies colonialism by imagining it as a divinely sanctioned system in which the superior white race comes to the aid of the “weaker brother” because of God and the good. In “Manifest Domesticity,” Amy Kaplan argues that Stowe’s “delineation of
domestic space, as both familial and nation, relies upon and propels the colonization of Africa by the novel’s free black characters” (602). Liberia, Kaplan argues, is “a kind of feminized utopia, that is strategically posed as an alternative to Haiti, which hovers as a menacing image of black revolutionary agency” (602). In contrast to the upheaval of black resistance to colonial rule in Haiti, Liberia is set up as a utopic colonial space – an alternative to the United States – in which social relations are determined by a greater good (than money-making) and sanctioned by a great God. For Stowe, colonialism provides a source of spiritual regeneration for the US that effaces internal conflict or external resistance.

In the introduction to *Roughing It in the Bush*, Moodie argues that it is not through the “instruments” of capital that Canada will be awakened, but through the works of Providence who “will reclaim the waste places of the earth, and make them subservient to the wants and happiness of its creatures” (11). The “souls and bodies of men” will follow God and the Good: “These men,” writes Moodie, “will become wealthy and prosperous, and form the bones and sinews of a great and rising country. Their labour is wealth, not exhaustion; it produces independence and content, not home-sickness and despair” (11). Moodie figures progress as a qualitative life measure of social affects and relations. In her 1871 introduction to the Canadian edition of *Roughing It in the Bush*, Moodie imagines Canada’s “commercial and political importance” on a global scale:

She [Canada] has outstepped infancy, and is in the full enjoyment of a strong and vigorous youth. What may not we hope for her maturity ere another forty summers have glided down the stream of time. Already she holds in her hand the crown of one of the mightiest empires that the world has seen, or is yet to see. (347)
Moodie sees Canada as central to the regeneration of the British Empire as she predicts that Canada will someday possess "the crown of one of the mightiest empires" (346). Canada represents an alternative social ordering that is governed by spiritual as well as secular concerns.

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe situates Augustine St. Clare's family origins in Canada. Augustine stands in opposition to the capitalistic values and machinations that Legree exemplifies. He tells Miss Ophelia, "To hold slaves as tools for moneymaking, I could not" (342). Despite his death, Augustine symbolizes an alternative leader — the benevolent gentleman — to the capitalist. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Roughing it in the Bush*, Canada and the South are not diametrically opposed spaces. Both Moodie and Stowe imagine the rearing of white men in their regions who can redeem the nation. While the whipping scenes in Moodie and Stowe’s writings do not function as occasions for white enjoyment as they do in the writings of Thomas Chandler Haliburton, it is important to note that they do function as scenes of white self-making in which whiteness itself must be saved from the moral and spiritual blackening of the time of capital in order for white enterprise to fulfill the global expansion of the nation.
CHAPTER THREE

From Dixie with Love: Standardized Time, Main Street, and Lynching Photography

It is well known and widely conceded that black death has made good spectacle for audiences who have relished it historically in every form from fatal floggings to public lynchings.


Cast as a chivalric drama lynching appealed as a tactic to restore patriarchal power on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line not simply because it offered white men (and those white woman who preferred the privileges the status quo provided them) the chance to put “uppity” blacks and unruly white women in their proper subordinate places. Rather, the allusions to the medieval past created a time lag in which the jolts caused by these new social arrangements might be understood and redefined. Lynching was culturally logical, then, because the violence dramatized how fully different freedom was from what Americans – white and black, men and women, North and South – had known before. (57)

- Jacqueline Goldsby, A Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature

In recent years, literary and cultural scholars, such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Cheryl Harris, bell hooks, Robyn Wiegman, Paul Gilroy, Nell Irvin Painter, and Trudier Harris, have described the connections between the pervasiveness of terror and the development of white collective identities. As David Roediger notes, this turn in contemporary scholarship to examine the relation between violence and white identity formation is not new. Nineteenth-century slave autobiographies emphasized not only the ways in which whiteness is often experienced as terror by non-whites, but also “showed how watching and committing acts of racial violence incorporated children, women, and the poor unequally but surely into the white population and kept them there” (23).36 In Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America, Saidiya Hartman argues that black suffering and terror produced moments of

---

white self-making in the United States. The re-enactment of scenes of subjection occurred “by way of coerced agency, simulated contentment, and the obliteration of the other through the slipping on of blackness or an empathetic identification in which one substitutes the self for the other” (7). For Hartman, the degradation of the other was a moment for white self-reflection rather than a scene or event that one witnessed in order to register the truth of another’s experience. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the spectacle of lynching prompts us to examine what the exposure of the violated body yields for its white participants and spectators.

In “Spectacles of Whiteness: The Photography of Lynching,” Shawn Michelle Smith argues that the white spectators in lynching photographs must be examined and accounted for in order to not repeat or reinforce the spectacle of black death. Smith asks a series of questions regarding the motivations guiding a white spectator to watch and hear the “sights and sounds of torture”: “Where are the stunned and sickened faces of shock? Why are the children not confused and overwhelmed? Why have so many people returned to the scene of their crime, or remained there for the documentation?” (125). Smith argues that “the spectacle of lynching enabled members of the mob to seize whiteness, and the subsequent representation of that spectacle in lynching photographs further encouraged them to invest in whiteness as their own embodied possession” (141). Smith interrogates whiteness in relation to the spectacle of lynching, examining the faces and bodies of white men, women, and children in lynching photographs. Significantly, Smith’s examination of the spectacle of whiteness does not examine the relation between whiteness and the modern technological features of the lynching scene, such as the electric streetlights, telegraph poles, and suspension bridges, that contest white embodied possession through their abstractions and homogenizations of human life. In A Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature, Jacqueline Goldsby argues that “The ever-lurking
symbols of American progress deployed in the mob murders of African-Americans...denies us refuge in the presumption that lynchings were always retrograde, atavistic displays of racial aggression” (21). Goldsby contends that we must further examine the “visual grammar—the recurring motifs of murders at railroads, light poles, and bridges; the look of the white mob-crowd; the visual attention paid to the victim’s body—” of the lynching scene (221).

This chapter examines local lynching violence within the context of the increased synchronization of national life through a standardized corporate time initiated by railroad companies in 1883. Telegraph and telephone companies were essential to the dissemination of a standard time to locales across the United States and Canada, with the Western Union Telegraph Company having a monopoly on the selling of time signals by the 1890s. In my reading of Stephen Crane’s “Twelve O’Clock” (1899), I examine Crane’s critique of the social and economic transformation of Main Street life and culture by corporate standardizing time that joined the local into the national. I argue that mob violence in Crane’s short story is an eruption of local tensions, ambivalences, and anxieties to the time of capital. Following this reading of Crane’s short story, I focus on lynching photographs depicting scenes of violence on Main Streets across the United States and Canada in the first decade of the twentieth century. In Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940, Amy Louise Woods notes that the most “spectacular lynchings took place not in the countryside but in those newly urban places, where mobs hanged their victims from telegraph and telephone poles and where streetcars and railroad brought crowds to witness the violence” (5). I examine these lynchings as local responses to the time discipline of corporate capitalism that was redefining the social arrangements of Main Street life and culture. Following Goldsby’s evocation of Homi Bhabha’s concept of the “time lag,” I examine the co-
existence of lynching’s seemingly “archaic” displays of white supremacy and the prominence of modern technological innovations in lynching’s visual grammar.37

In this chapter, I examine Main Street lynching photographs – from Whitmer, West Virginia, Dallas, Texas, and Crossfield, Alberta – from the first decade of the twentieth century, and provide readings of the lynching photographs that focus on the transformation of Main Street life and culture through the extension of factory time discipline into Main Street’s spaces of consumption. In Society of the Spectacle, Guy Debord argues that while in the primitive phases of capitalist accumulation the proletarian was only seen as the worker, the ideas of the ruling class were reversed as soon as the production of commodities reached a level of abundance, which required seeing the worker outside of production and in the guise of a consumer. He writes, “the commodity takes charge of the worker’s ‘leisure and humanity,’ simply because now political economy can and must dominate these spheres as political economy. Thus the ‘perfect denial of man’ has taken charge of the totality of human existence” (22). Debord argues that the consumer and consumption must be understood as

37 In Location of Culture, Bhabha contends that the coherence of the modern nation is threatened by two incommensurable temporalities of meaning. He argues that Benedict Anderson “fails to locate the alienating time of the arbitrary sign in his naturalized, nationalized space of the imagined community” (231). While “empty, homogenous” time is the naturalized ideal worked towards by the nation, Bhabha argues that the time of the nation is “double and split” (206). The people as performative subjects disrupt national time through enacting heterogeneous, local temporalities that assert the tradition of particular local, regional, or proto-national cultures. Bhabha describes this temporal break or disjunction as a “time lag.” Interestingly, Bhabha examines Anderson’s disavowal of heterogeneous temporalities that threaten the “homogenous” temporality of the nation through Anderson’s discussion of racism. Bhabha writes, “For Anderson racism has its origins in antique ideologies of class that belong to the aristocratic ‘pre-history’ of the modern nation. Race represents an archaic ahistorical moment outside the ‘modernity’ of the imagined community” (356). Anderson further universalizes his homogenous, empty time of the ‘modern’ social imaginary by relegating the “social fantasy of racism to an archaic daydream” (357). Bhabha argues that Anderson resists a reading of the modern nation as a hybrid colonial space because to understand racism as not merely a “hangover from archaic conceptions of the aristocracy” is to see racism as a constitutive “part of the historical traditions of civic and liberal humanism” of the modern nation (359). Bhabha contends that by privileging the ambivalence in the imaginaries of the nation we are able to understand the “coeval, often incommensurable tension between the influence of traditional ‘ethnicist’ identifications that coexist with contemporary secular, modernization aspirations” (359).
functions of production. I argue that these lynching photographs document local ambivalences and anxieties to these new time disciplines that are viscerally experienced in Main Street’s built environment. The Main Street lynchings create a time lag, I argue, in which there is a re-signification of white “freedom” and agency within commodity culture. Significantly, the white supremacist identifications in these lynching scenes are not incommensurable but in fact coeval, as Bhabha suggest, with contemporary modernization aspirations (359). I argue that these Main Street lynching scenes may be understood as being staged by town “boosters” attempting to produce the social coherence necessary to give the modern illusion of an imagined community.

*******

In *Legacies of Lynching: Racial Violence and Memory*, Jonathan Markovitz reminds us that “lynching dates back as far as the American Revolution, but before the Civil War, the term ‘lynching’ referred to a variety of forms of punishment, including beating, whipping, tar-and-feathering, and, only occasionally, killing” (xxiii). Before the Civil War and Reconstruction, the primary victims of mob violence in the United States were not blacks, Markovitz notes, but “whites who violated community standards; whites who held unpopular moral or social beliefs or who engaged in behavior that was deemed inappropriate were likely targets of the mob” (xxiii). From 1882 to 1930, cases of lynching were recorded with ever-increasing frequency across the nation and lynch mobs began to exercise further degrees of cruelties. Stewart Tolney and E.M. Beck have identified nearly three thousand victims of lynch mobs in the US South in this period. In “The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origins of Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928,” William D. Carrigan and Clive Web provide comprehensive documentation and systematic analysis of lynchings of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the United States. Identifying 216 Mexican
lynch victims, Carrigan and Webb argue that we must not understand this number in relation to the thousands of African-American lynching victims, but in relation to the rates of lynching. They write,

The figure of 27.4 Mexican lynching victims per 100,000 of population for that period exceeds the statistic during the same time for black victims in southern states and nearly equals that in others. Between 1880 and 1930, for instance, the lynching rate for African-Americans in South Carolina and North Carolina respectively was 18.8 and 11.0 per 100,000 of population. In Alabama, the figure was 32.4. These figures suggest that Mexicans faced a similar risk of lynching as African-Americans in some states of the deep South. (414)

Ken Gonzales-Day also contributes to this broader trans-racial understanding of lynching in *Lynching in the West, 1850-1935*, where he documents 350 instances of lynching in California, with the majority perpetrated against Latinos, Native-Americans, and Asian-Americans. While lynching historiography has focused on lynching as a black-white southern phenomenon, Goldsby argues that “the lynching murders of Mexicans and Chinese in the West, Southwest, and far North ought to be a first clue that we need to develop sustained analyses that posit lynching to evince more than the South’s economic provincialism or its perverse will to racial dominance”

---

38 A significant contribution of Gonzales-Day’s research is his archiving of lynching photographs and postcards of lynchings in the West scattered throughout regional, institutional, and national archives. Gonzales-Day’s archive extends and expands the *Without Sanctuary* archive, a collection of lynching photographs and postcards collected by James Allen and John Littlefield. The *Without Sanctuary* archive has been exhibited since 2000 at a number of U.S. galleries and has been reproduced in print and online. The book, *Without Sanctuary*, presents 98 lynching photographs and postcards that depict murdered men and women, black and white, in states across the United States from 1870 to 1960s. Carrigan and Webb use the *Without Sanctuary* exhibition and book as an example of the still dominant black-white southern lynching paradigm: “Forty-five of the images depicted the corpses of African-America lynching victims. Seven other photographs showed Anglo fatalities. Images and artifacts relating to mob murder of Sicilian, Jewish, and Chinese immigrants were also included. Yet neither the exhibition nor the accompanying book contain any reference to Mexicans” (411-12). Carrigan and Webb’s complaint brings to light methodological questions about how we read lynching photographs in the archives without necessarily reproducing the dominant lynching narrative, as well as the problematic that occurs when lynching photographs outside the traditional racial and/or regional paradigm have yet to be found.
(21). These works are recent examples that reconfigure the racial and geographical boundaries of lynching.

In the last decade, lynching scholarship has also provided a rich historiography of the links between lynching and modernity. Amy Louis Wood contends that “racial violence surged at the turn of the century, however, not because southern communities were cut off from the modern institutions and customs but because they were undergoing an uncertain and troubled transformation into modern, urban societies” (5). Goldsby argues that lynching is fundamentally a “modern” phenomenon intimately connected to the developments of mass-culture, technological advancements, and corporate monopoly capitalism (5). Understanding lynching within the context of expanding commercial markets and the rise of new industries, Goldsby and Wood link lynching practices to the new social arrangements that were transforming towns and cities and threatening white social dominance at the turn of the century. In *A Spectacular Secret*, Goldsby provides an examination of lynching in Stephen Crane’s *The Monster* (1898) that subverts the archetypal southern roots of the phenomenon. While the novella avoids any direct mention of lynching, the plot focuses on the 1892 lynching of Robert Lewis in Port Jarvis, New York that Crane’s brother witnessed. Goldsby argues that what makes a town like Port Jervis a prime site for lynching is not any sort of regional racism or backwardness, but rather “its grand ambitions to join this economic movement” (112). Goldsby argues that the lynching itself was tied to the town’s social and economic transformations:

the violence brought forward by anxieties and incapacities endemic to this new order of living. The worry over losing independence to remote and distant centers of power; the fear of being divided against one’s neighbour in the competition for scarcer resources; the mistrust of enlarged systems of governance required to make this new social engine run – these I argue were
the unvoiced tensions lurking beneath the surface of Port Jervis's monies calm, and they erupted fiercely in the manner that Lewis was put to death. (112) Goldsby’s examination of the lynching in Port Jervis foregrounds the relation between boosterism and violence. Goldsby argues Crane links lynching to economic opulence or abundance, and that corporate monopoly capitalism “sanctioned white indifference to the mortal violence done to black people in the name of making large-slave systems—be they cities and towns, states and nations, economies and markets, or even novellas and novels—run” (113). Here, corporate monopoly capitalism produces new social arrangements (“large-slave systems”) in which abstract power and capital dispossess local “freedom.” Local anxieties then erupt in lynchings that attempt to reconfigure or renegotiate what Goldsby describes as this “fully different freedom” (57).

From the very first sentences of *The Monster*, the economic development of the town is linked to time discipline. The novella begins with a small boy imagining himself as a train: “Little Jim was, for the time, engine Number 36, and he was making the run between Syracuse and Rochester. He was fourteen minutes behind time, and the throttle was wide open” (3). Little Jim’s fantasy of catching up with the clock even in his backyard figures the “world shaping forces...[that] can move through local backyards” (Goldsby 140). Goldsby echoes Benedict Anderson’s claim that the imagined political community of the modern nation was produced by the economic and social organization of the clock. “Jimmie’s fantasy,” writes Goldsby, “recalls how railroads ushered the timetables and spatial maps of corporate monopoly capitalism into daily routines of small town rural America and transformed the nation into the physically unified state it always aspired to be” (140). While Goldsby does not connect racial violence to time discipline specifically in Crane’s novella, I want to examine Crane’s “Twelve O’Clock,” which appeared in the 1901 London edition of
The Monster, to examine mob violence as a response to time discipline’s expansion outside of the work space and into the sphere of consumption. Goldsby remarks that the violence in Crane’s short stories may be read in relation to the practice of lynching:

These previously unpublished works concern the lynching-style murders of white men in the American West, and each quite explicitly links the deaths to corporate-monopoly development. When read separately, the allusions to lynching in these stories invoke no cross-racial tensions. However, when bound into one text with The Monster, the stories cry out for comparison because Crane’s persistent interest in lynching as a literary trope tests the reader’s willingness to contemplate the meaning of violence from one instance to the next. (159-160)

I argue that Crane’s “Twelve O’Clock” depicts mob violence as an eruption of anxieties and fears accompanying the extension of time discipline into spaces of consumption. Like “The Monster,” mob violence is linked to the desires of town boosters to modernize and urbanize Main Street life and culture in order to attract capital investment and industry to the town.

Crane’s “Twelve O’Clock” begins with boosters, Ben Roddle and Old Nantucket, discussing the town’s economic future. Roddle believes that the “periodic visits of cowboys” and their undisciplined behavior (running “down Main Street an’ yellin’ an’ shootin’”) are “scar[ing] away a whole herd of capiteralists” from investing in the town’s economy (146). He says,

“That don’t do a town no good. Now, how would an eastern capiteralist” – (it was the town’s humor to be always gassing of phantom investors who were likely to come any moment and pay a thousand prices for everything) – “how would an eastern capiteralist like that? Why, you couldn’t see ‘im fer th’ dust on
his trail. Then he’d tell all his friends that ‘their town may be all right, but ther’s too much loose-handed shootin’ fer my money.’ An’ he’d be right, too” (145).

Old Nantucket asks Roddle how he believes the cowboys can be integrated into the town and reflect its corporate civic philosophy. As Roddle looks out on to Main Street and watches one of the cowboys, Jake, enter the Placer’s Hotel, Roddle responds to Old Nantucket’s question: “‘Organise,’” he says, “‘Organise. That’s the only way to make these fellers lay down’” (146). The disruptive cowboys are to be incorporated into the social body of the town through the time-discipline of consumption. In Modernity at Large, Appadurai argues that we need to “resituate consumption in time,” and that “consumption must and does fall into the mode of repetition, of habitation” (66, 67). Appadurai argues that “consumption, in all social contexts, is centered around what Marcel Mauss calls the ‘techniques of the body’, and the body calls for disciplines that are repetitious, or at least periodic” (67). For Appadurai, consumerism transformed the experience of clock time in fundamentally different ways from its eighteenth- and nineteenth-century predecessor; E.P. Thompson’s time discipline reigns not only the realm of production, he argues, but also in the realm of consumption (81).39

The narrator describes the Placer’s Hotel as a “notable place,” noting its modern and fashionable interior: “Its office was filled with armchairs and brown papier-mâché receptacles. At one end of the room was a wooden counter painted a bright pink, and on this morning a man was behind the counter writing in a ledger”

39 In “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,” E.P. Thompson famously argues that an orientation to clock time, rather than to tasks or social activities, was the crucial characteristic of industrial capitalists societies. Thompson argues that the introduction of mechanical clocks in English factories resulted in a “restructuring of working habits” that resulted in an “inward notation of time” that led individuals to accept the industrial revolution’s basic premise of quantifiable wage labor and systematic production (57).
Jake enters this “city-like” space in order to arrange a meal in the Hotel’s dining hall. As Jake presents the monetary price the cowboys are willing to pay for their meal – “We’ll pay a dollar a head: by God, we will!” – his offer is interrupted by the “the machinery of a cuckoo-clock” (147). Shocked by the “wooden bird’s” announcement of the time, Jake is “stupefied” and “glassy-eyed” (147). While familiar with clocks, Jake recognizes that this is a different sort of temporality:

At the end he [Jake] wheeled upon Placer and demanded: “What in the hell is that?”

Placer revealed by his manner that he had been asked this question too many times. “It’s a clock,” he answered shortly.

“I know it’s a clock,” gasped the cowboy; “but what kind of a clock?” (147)

The cowboy’s temporal confusion is not a result of a clash between natural and mechanical time. Jake knows what a clock is, but what differentiates this clock from other clocks is the fact this is not merely a time-keeping device, but rather a time-telling device. The cowboy encounters the ways in which consumption, as Appadurai argues, creates time rather than responds to it (147). “In any socially regulated set of consumption practices,” writes Appadurai, “those that can center around the body, and especially around the feeding of the body, take on the function of structuring temporal rhythm, of setting the minimum temporal measure on which much more complex and chaotic patterns can be built” (68). Within this realm of leisure, Jake discovers that his own agency is dispossessed. He feels alienated and objectified by this new time discipline, and can only “recover his sense of self-possession,” says the narrator, “by a violent effort” (147).

Refusing this time discipline within the space of consumption, Jake leaves the Hotel to report this new time-telling device to his friends in the saloon, a space that is notable for its undisciplined order. Jake’s description of a clock with a bird in it that
comes out “an” says, “toot-toot, toot-toot!” is greeted with “roars of laughter...some
men laughing because they knew all about cuckoo-clocks, and other men laughing
because they had concluded that the eccentric Jake had been victimized by some wise
child of civilization” (148). Jake’s mimicry of the cuckoo clock echoes the call of the
train, and Crane links this time-telling device to corporate monopoly capitalism and
technological innovations. Trachtenberg argues that railroad companies were the
earliest giant corporation:

Not only did the railroad system make modern technology visible intruders and
physical presence in daily life but it also offered a means of exercising
unexampled ruthlessness of economic power...In railroad monopolies,
combinations, conspiracies to set rates and control traffic, lobbies to bribe
public officials and buy legislatures, the nation had its first taste of robber
barons on a grand scale. (57-58)

Railway companies and other private interests created towns, spatial patterns of land
use, and economic activity as part of their corporate activities. As John Hudson
remarks in his study of towns in the American West, towns were not independent from
one another but where interdependent components of plans formulated by the largest
corporations of the day for extracting value from dependent, colonial hinterlands (6).
Crane situates this new time consciousness with the corporate incorporation of the
local into the national. Within the bar, the temporal dissonance between “some men”
and “other men” figures the differences between the West and the East, the rural and
urban, the cowboys and the town “citizens” (148).

Jake’s unrest is compounded by the disbelief he receives from the men at the
bar. A man from Philadelphia, whose mother owns a cuckoo clock, takes a rise out of
Jake saying, “Jake’s a liar. There’s no such clock in the world. What? A bird inside a
clock to tell time? Change your drink, Jake” (148). Responding with a fury of
emotions, Jake throws down “forty-five dollars in gold upon the bar and bids the world come and win it” (149). The men move from the bar to the hotel, and while waiting for the bird’s next announcement, “Big Watson of the Square-X outfit, and at this time very drunk indeed, came shouldering his way through the crowd and cursing every body” (150). Big Watson terrorizes the group and shoots the hotel owner; Jake responds by shooting Big Watson: “With a yell of rage and despair, Jake smote Watson on the pate with his heavy weapon, and knocked him sprawling and bloody” (150). Soon after, the violence spreads out into the “chaotic street” as “it seemed for a moment as if everybody would kill everybody” (151). However, the cowboy’s rage and despair over “this dark something” is relieved by this eruption of violence, and a “flimsy truce [is] made between the inflamed men” (151). The cowboys and the town citizens find themselves unified by Jake killing drunk Big Watson, and they return as a unified group back to the hotel. With “a curious grim silence,” they listen to and watch “the loud whirring of the clock’s works, little doors flew open, a tiny wooden bird appeared and cried ‘Cuckoo’ – twelve times” (151). The tensions and unrest between the disruptive cowboys and the town “citizens” are resolved through a common outburst of violence. While the violence seems to initially contest the temporal synchronization of the local by national-corporate time, the violence in fact enables the relinquishing of Jake and the cowboys’ individualism to Roddle and Old Nantucket civic standards by providing a sense of imagined community.

In “Twelve O’ Clock,” Crane depicts the dissemination of time discipline by corporate capitalism into Main Street life and culture. Until 1883, “local mean time” ruled across the continent as each local assumed responsibility for setting its own time by testing methods of solar readings: “Bells and clocks struck noon, for example, when the sun stood directly overhead: never exactly the same moment from place to place or week to week” (Trachtenberg 59). The necessity of regulating times appeared
with the railroad. In *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*, Alan Trachtenberg writes,

> Obviously, a railroad passing from New York to Chicago could not adjust itself to the dozens of local times different from each other by fractions of minutes. By early 1883, there were about fifty such distinct private universes of each time, each streaming on wheels through the countryside, oblivious to others. (59)

The differences in time across different locales during a period of increased economic competition were seen to have dramatic consequences for production and distribution of commodities. "It seemed in everyone's interest to eliminate the disadvantage of eccentric time," writes Trachtenberg (59). In 1883, the railroads acted and by joint decision, placed the United States and Canada — without act of Congress, President, or the courts — under a scheme of "standardized time zones." The railroads' General Time Convention coordinated the adoption of a standard time system by most of the North American railroads. The plan divided the United States into five zones (an inter-continental zone included Eastern Canada) each with a standard meridian time fifteen degrees, or an hour, apart. While some communities resisted, most communities adjusted their clocks.

In *Selling the True Time: Nineteenth-Century Time-Keeping in America*, Ian Bartky argues that an innovation in railway operating practices began in February 1879 when P. H. Dudley's synchronizer-equipped clocks were installed at the mainline stations of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad. By September of the following year, Dudley's clocks were also being used on the New York Central & Hudson River Railroad, with the synchronizing signals coming from Western Union Telegraph Company's master clock (114). Dudley's synchronizer-equipped clocks provided patented regulators, which automatically reset clocks using telegraphic time

106
signals.\footnote{Describing the process in which railroad clocks were synchronized, Bartky writes, At convenient hours, a railway telegraph operator began the synchronizing process, signaling for the shutdown of all message traffic via a premonitory warning message. All other operators ceased tapping and waited to switch their local clock circuit into the main telegraph line. The central operator signaled again, whereupon they switched their clock wires into the main circuit. Exactly on the hour, Western Union’s pulse came. Instantly, all local synchronizers were actuated, and all clocks now displayed the same time. (114)} Telegraphy made possible the dissemination of a standard time, and enabled the synchronization of clocks and the maintenance of time standards by railroad companies. The use of regulators spread from the railroads into office buildings and onto city streets as consumers could buy time signals from telegraph companies. By the mid-1890s, Western Union Telegraphy Company held a monopoly on the sale of time signals. Following the telegraph companies, telephone companies got into the business of transmitting time signals. In 1883, John Oram, a Dallas jeweler, had applied for patents on a battery powered device that would subsequently be called the “Oram Time Machine,” the “Oram Time Regulator,” and the “Oram Time Indicator” (163). Bartky writes, Oram’s “instrument took advantage of the dedicated wire connection between subscribers’ telephone instrument and the company’s central exchange. Once installed, Oram’s system signaled the time of day continuously. A subscribed could hear the time – a code of pulses – merely by holding his local receiver to his ear” (163). Oram’s Time machine is a time telling device that, like Crane’s cuckoo clock, makes time palpable through its aural rhythms. Significantly, these new temporal rhythms provided by telephone and telegraph companies are connected to lynchings through the visual grammar of lynching photographs that depict lynch victims hanging from telephone and telegraph poles.
Figure 2: The Lynching of Joe Brown, March 18, 1909, Whitmer, West Virginia

The New York Times report of the lynching of Joe Brown in Whitmer, West Virginia in March 1909 reveals a hyper-awareness of time. Like many other lynching reports, the article provides the precise time of the lynching as well as notes the use of the telegraph pole to perpetuate the murder: “An ex-convict who last evening shot and seriously wounded Chief of Police Scott White at Whitmer, near here, was taken from the jail by a crowd of men at 1:30 o’clock this morning and lynched. Brown was hanged on a telegraph pole.” White “remonstrated Brown for using offensive language. Brown drew a revolver and shot White, and then took to the mountains. He was followed by a posse of citizens, captured and placed in the jail.” Waiting until the dead of the night when the town streets were deserted, a mob of between fifty and a hundred men surrounded the jail. The two guards released Brown to the mob, and he was dragged to Main Street where they adjusted a noose around his neck and hanged him. The mob made a poor job of it, and Brown remained alive for several hours. A
sock was stuffed into his mouth with a poker in a brutal attempt to suffocate him. The lynching photograph of Brown, included in *Without Sanctuary*, depicts Brown’s disheveled and limp body still hanging from the telegraph pole (Figure 2). His feet are bare, suggesting he was asleep before his abduction, and his clothes are torn and tattered, suggesting that he was dragged through the streets by the lynch mob. His lifeless body hangs above a dirt street, with a wood or stone block and left over hanging rope on the ground below him. His body was reportedly “cut down about nine o’clock [that] morning” (*Randolph Enterprise*).

In *Transforming the Appalacian Countryside: Railroads, Deforestation, and Social Change in West Virginia, 1880-1920*, Ronald Lewis mentions this particular lynching of Joc Brown as a famous example of the conflict between the values and social norms of the “law-abiding, sober, middle-class residents” that emerged as a class during the industrialization of the mountain and the undisciplined behaviour of the wood hicks who came to town for alcohol, poker, and prostitutes in West Virginia. Lewis argues that timber and lumber industry transformed this rural agriculture society, and the development of the industry was inextricably linked to railroad building, urban growth, creation of a wage labor class, and the decline of agriculture, which created “a twentieth-century society denuded of the forest and fully enmeshed in capitalism and the markets” (3). The burgeoning business and professional services found in the new towns required utilities previously unknown in the mountains. Most of the significant lumber towns had, Lewis writes, “electricity provided by generators operated by steam from wood waste incinerators...Since towns hugged the railroads, Western Union telegraph service also was available as was railroad express service through the railroad depot. (194). In *Goin’ Up Gandy: A History of the Dry Fork Region of Randolph and Tucker Counties of West Virginia*, Don Teter provides a history of Whitmer’s origins and development in Robert Whitmer’s purchase of the
Randolph West Virginia Boom Company in 1892: “Even though Whitmer had little capital, he eagerly entered into an agreement to take over the management of the lumber company and to buy into it by building a railroad up the Dry Fork” (32). Whitmer was anxious to begin harvesting time, so the Dry Fork line was built in a hurry and completed in 1894. Whitmer emerges as a “boom” town alongside this economic and social transformation of West Virginia by corporate capitalism.

Although the company built and operated the big Commercial Hotel and the Whitmer-Lane Store, Teter notes that there were opportunities for independent merchants in Whitmer: “Jonas Kisamore of Pendleton Country sold the company the land for their mill, houses, and buildings, but he kept the adjacent area where he had laid out Whitmer, selling lots there until the town stopped growing after 1910” (47). Hungry workmen and travelers usually supported at least two or three busy restaurants in Whitmer, and soon after the mill was built the Hotel Alpha opened its doors, with the Hotel Dermot quickly following. Many independent stores in Whitmer handled a large volume of business; the first of them, B. Golden’s, was opened in 1895, and about a year later it was moved to the first floor of the new, three-story Nydegger Building (47). The Whitmer Drug Company also operated a soda fountain and pharmacy in the Nydegger Building, “and there was generally at least one barber shop in town and a photography studio” (48). In Transforming the Appalachian Countryside, Lewis notes that photography had “become cheap and accessible to ordinary Americans, and they took great pleasure in posing for individual, group, and thematic photographs of themselves” (194). Taking account of the sheer number of photographs of “wood hicks” with “downed giants of the woods,” Lewis writes, “Americans generally like their counterparts among the boosters of West Virginia development realized that the end of a historic epoch was near; America was finally destined to emerge out of the woods into the light of ‘civilization’; the conquering
heroes of this transformation, the true agents of progress, were the lumberjack and wood hicks who did battle with the wilderness and laid it low” (194). One wonders if the local photographer of these triumphant scenes of progress was the same photographer of this local lynching?

Providing additional information about Brown’s lynching, Lewis notes that Brown’s violent temper was well known, having served a term in prison for murder, and that on various occasions he had terrorized Whitmer during his drinking sprees. Brown had been drinking all day, when he shot Scott White. Importantly, Lewis notes that the posse that captured Brown in the hills was later joined by a drunken mob back in town (207). Lewis suggests that this drunken mob was made up of wood hicks as Brown “relished frightening wood hicks by shooting their hats from their heads so that many men considered his death good riddance” (207). Similar to the cross-class alliance between the cowboys and the town residents produced by a response to the actions of drunk Big Watson in Crane’s “Twelve O’Clock,” the lynching violence in Whitmer creates a unified community between these men (the “law and order” posse and the drunken mob) whose values and social norms were previously at odds with each other. Significantly, Brown’s body is lynched in front of George Nethkin’s saloon, and the lynching performs a particular kind of disciplining of the undisciplined consumptive body. Three white men stand in front of the saloon in the background of Brown’s lynching photograph, and appear to look in the direction of Brown’s body and the camera. In this early morning shot, are these men wood hicks on their way to the mill? How do they understand this lynched body in relation to their own bodily consumption? Do they drink less later that day, week, month in light of this lynching? While no one was ever tried for Brown’s murder, Lewis writes, “the episode created a stir in the county, and two months later all liquor license applications from Whitmer were denied” (208). The lynching did not have a negative effect on Whitmer’s
economy as consumer culture expanded in this dry town, including the openings of a bowling alley, poolroom, and a motion picture theatre (Teter 7).

Critics have argued that lynching is embedded in the rise of consumer culture in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*, Grace Elizabeth Hale argues that lynching helped ease white anxiety about a new culture of consumption, in which this new mass society signaled a “raceless” consumer culture; one in which persons, of any race, gender or class, could purchase goods in any number of mixed public spaces. While segregation produced marked spaces for the consumption of goods, “making a spectacle of lynching,” writes Hale, “disrupted the commonality of even this spatially divided experience of consumption” (205):

In a grisly dialectic, then, consumer culture created spectacle lynchings, and spectacle lynchings became a southern way of enabling the spread of consumption as a white privilege. The violence both helped to create a white consuming public and the structure of segregation where consumption could take place without threatening white supremacy. (205-06)

It is important in many ways to identify more specifically the make-up of this new “white consuming public.” Sandra Gunning has examined how white mob violence, especially as represented in literary texts, created racialized, cross-class alliances among white men. While agreeing that lynch mobs consisted of various classes and occupations, Wood notes that “the mobs at mass spectacle lynchings, however, tended to be dominated by skilled laborers and white-collar workers – members of the rising middle class. These were townspeople who were themselves newcomers to the southern economy, engaging in occupations related to industrial and commercial enterprise: managers, petty merchants, salesmen, mechanics, and other tradesman” (7). This new white consuming public was anxious about its financial wellbeing in a
fluctuating market, as well as its social mobility that was neither assured nor steady. Their class status, Woods notes, was neither under direct threat from black men nor dependent upon black labor (7). It is important to understand the lynching scene within the production of the consumer and consumerism.

Despite the insistence on the lynching victim in lynching narratives, in the lynching photograph of Allen Brooks, his silhouetted lynched body is displaced by three other focal points: the white mob-crowd, the Elks Arch, and the Palace Drug Store (Figure 3). Brooks was an elderly African-American man, and was accused of molesting the missing three-year old daughter of his employers, the H. J. Buvens family in Dallas, Texas in March 1910. Another Buvens’ family servant, Flora Daingerfield, claimed to have seen Brooks with the missing child in the barn. After the child was examined by a doctor, who found “evidence of brutal treatment,” the local newspaper “described the alleged crime as “one of the most heinous since the days of Reconstruction” (Litwack 169). Immediately after Brooks’ arrest, a mob attempted, but failed to abduct him from authorities. On March 3, a second mob, “of two hundred whites and one ‘conspicuous negro’,” successfully kidnapped Brooks during his trial. Overwhelming the armed deputies and policemen, with no shots fired, the mob captured Brooks, who was trapped on the second floor of the courthouse (169). Tying a noose around his neck, Brooks was thrown out of the second-story window by the mob, and “landed dead with his neck broken,” writes the New York Times. He was attacked and kicked by dozens until he was covered in blood before “The mob outside grabbed the rope and dragged the lifeless body half a mile through Main Street to the corner of Akard. There they fastened the rope to a projecting spike and hood in a post that formed a corner of Elk’s Arch, erected during the Elks’ convention in 1908.” At Dallas’s most prominent architectural landscape, a score of hands pulled and hoisted the body aloft; there it hung for perhaps ten minutes, exposed to the view of the
10,000 or more people assembled in the streets. Brooks’ body was cut down and placed in a small express wagon, which was driven to the City Hall, and handed over to city officials.

(Figure 3 has not been reproduced due to copyright permissions)

Figure 3: The lynching of Allen Brooks. March 3, 1910, Dallas, Texas.

The Palace Drug Store is a prominent feature in the Brooks’ lynching photograph. The Palace Drug Store was a chain store that was locally owned and run. The fonts on the advertising signs as well as the awnings replicate the standard front of a Palace Drug Store in towns and cities throughout the United States. The Dallas Daily Times includes an opening announcement of the Palace Drug Store on the corner of Main Street and North Akard in April 1898: the new establishment’s stock includes “new drugs, medicines and chemicals and a complete line of fancy and toilet articles.” In the early twentieth century, Main Street drug stores would become a space for the selling of all kinds of commodities; no longer filled with just addictive drugs, sickening smells and poisonous chemicals, the Main Street drug store was crammed
full to the ceiling with everything from aspirin to roller skates, fresh coffee to iodine. In *Educating the Consumer-Citizen*, Joel Spring writes, “The interiors of department stores were turned into *palaces of consumption* and made shopping a leisure time activity. Goods were displayed in plate glass counters that allowed consumers to be entertained as they strolled up and down aisles gazing at the cornucopia of merchandise” (24, my emphasis). While we cannot see inside the Palace Drug Store, we do see the store’s front plate glass windows. William Leach argues that the extensive use of glass windows, as well as glass display cases in the store, “mediated between people and goods in a new way, it permitted everything to be seen and at the same time rendered it inaccessible” (323). The plate glass front was judged to mark a town as city-like and represented the penetration of a more intensive consumerism in small towns.

This urbanization of small-town life and culture is evident in the Elk’s Arch, which is also one of the focal points in the Brooks’ lynching photograph. This recently built architectural landmark speaks to the town boosters’ attempt to give Main Street a modern visual identity that reflected economic growth and success. In *Building an American Identity*, Linda Smeins writes, “Boosterism to promote town growth was raised to an art form, or perhaps I should suggest a vaudevillian art form…Town leaders exercised their entrepreneurial imaginations to make their towns appear prosperous and civilized so as to draw industry, commerce, and future residents, to become more city-like” (80). As a civic philosophy, boosterism aimed at promoting economic development, increasing civic pride, fostering tourism, and advertising towns and cities. For town boosters, commercial development was essential to improvements in all aspects of town life. Donald Wetherell argues that by promising the transformation of hamlets into towns and towns into cities, the tenets of boosterism conditioned the culture and identity of towns that had implications for their
visual identity of Main Street: "The look of familiarity was the look of success, and the monotonous similarity and lack of individual expression in a town’s layout and building design were elements in a deliberate strategy aimed at attracting investors by suggesting an aura of stability, familiarity, and probity" (182). In his 1922 Babbitt, Sinclair Lewis links boosterism with the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks through the figure of Vergil Gunch, "the coal dealer, equally powerful in the Elks and the Boosters’ Club" (61). Service clubs, such as the Elks, played a huge role in promoting the transformation of streetscapes and the erection of landmarks, such as the Elks Arch, by advancing these transformations as necessary to the social cohesion and enrichment of town life.

The last focal point of the photograph is the white-mob crowd that includes men, women, and children. There are several men and women watching the lynching of Brooks from the second-floor windows of the Palace Drug Store. The lynching occurred at noon, and one wonders if these are sales clerks watching the lynching during the lunch break. In Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940, Susan Porter Benson describes the ways in which "saleswomen prized their occupation’s white color prestige and opportunities while resisting those features of store life which bore an uncomfortable resemblance to lower-status occupations" (231). Benson writes, "They resented the built-in class system in the store - the set of rules that underscored their subordinate position, casting them in servantlike role or subjecting them to the same sort of control as factory employees faced" (231). One particular organization of work life that saleswoman resented and resisted were time clocks inside the employees’ entrance. One saleswoman at Rich’s of Atlanta noted the ways in which the time clock made her "feel more like a member of a goat herd than a human being" (232). The conflict between the time clock and the "development of a responsible staff" was also noted by
a manager of a major North Carolina store: "[the time clock] was an invention of the devil to check prisoners into their cells at night, and not to check honorable boys and girls into their jobs" (232). During the 1920s, Benson notes that a number of stores "responded to employee pressure and removed their time clocks" (232). Here, we see attempts by this new consumer public sphere to foreground class differences between sales clerk and factory worker. Yet, while the time clock is an explicit manifestation of factory time discipline in the sphere of consumption, there were other sorts of time controls that monitored and shaped the efficiency and productivity of consumerism.

The movements and actions of both sales clerks and consumers were analyzed in time studies. Benson argues that "increasingly after 1890, no physical aspect of the selling floor was immune from criticism in the name of more effective selling" (41). Store managers performed time studies in selling areas and announced the results with horror. During one such study, it was discovered that while twenty-four people were helped by salespersons, twenty-eight other prospective buyers "wait[ed] from one to fifteen minutes with the apparent intention of buying, but...went away without being served" (43). It was determined that inefficient fixtures required salespersons to spend more time handling goods and less time attending to customers. The working environment of stores sabotaged effective selling and various changes were made. One particular change addressed the differences between the ways men and women shopped. Attracting male shoppers was in the interest of department store executives that regarded men as an untapped market holding out the promise of increased sales volume. Benson writes, "Retail writers argued that the department stores failed to attract male trade because they did not sufficiently appreciate...[and] realize that for men, unlike women, time was money" (99). Attention to time created changes to store layouts, fixtures, and purchasing practices that aimed at increasing efficiency, productivity, and profit. The point of purchase played an important role in the stores'
new social arrangements. While charge sales took up to twice as long as a cash sale, the sales clerk’s time was more productive than during a cash transaction as the pay out in credit sales revenue per minute was nearly three times greater than cash sales (91). Department store managers prized these charge customers and cultivated their loyalty: the consumer becomes commodity.

In *A Spectacular Secret*, Goldsby argues that corporate monopoly capitalism made towns and cities “large slave systems,” and I wonder if we can read the Brooks’ lynching as slave auction in which white freedom and agency within commodity culture is reinstated (113). In *Terror and Triumph*, Anthony Pinn describes slave auction ritual as “a festive time for whites, a celebration of their subjectivity and dominance that could not be dampened by uncooperative chattel. Prospective buyers were often accompanied by their spouses, who dressed in their finest clothing and used the auction as an opportunity to socialize, while traders distributed alcohol and engaged those gathered in conversation” (50). The spectacle lynching and slave auction not only have the same rituals, but also both posit blacks as the only (living) commodity on sale. Saidiya Hartman links the slave auction and other nineteenth-century scenes of subjection to commodity culture; wherein, the black body enables white subjectivity to negotiate its own self-possession and self-making within the increasingly abstract and immaterial world of capitalism. In many ways, the Brooks’ lynching photograph can be understood as enabling a similar negotiation of white subjectivity within the new spatial and temporal organizations of consumer culture. While blacks did not threaten this new white consuming public’s privileges and opportunities, the lynchings of black bodies allowed for an easing of anxieties about the “freedom” of whites in a consumer culture wanting to make them all commodities. The lynching photograph presents a time lag in which the fantasy of control over the
black commodity ultimately dramatizes white ambivalence and anxiety with their own self-control and agency within commodity culture.

Examining the ways in which the white mob-crowd of a lynching pose for the camera moments after the terrors and torture, Shawn Michelle Smith writes, white audiences meet the camera boldly and directly, making explicit the ways in which the law privileges and protects them; they are confident in their white privilege, confident that their exposed faces will be sheltered by the rhetoric repeated over and over again in the newspaper accounts of these tortures and murders – that the victim perished “at the hands of persons unknown.” (126)

In the Brooks’ lynching photograph, white men, women, and children make up the crowd-mob. Interestingly, the camera captures the disgust or unease of one white man in the crowd, who briskly walks out of the scene, without looking at the lynched body or camera. However, there are many people in the crowd who appear to be profoundly unafraid by this scene of terror and torture, including two young white boys who look directly into the camera. Their sense of self-importance and self-mastery is facilitated by the silhouette of the lynched body that hovers in the space between. On the back of a postcard of the Brook’s lynching, a spectator in the crowd writes, “Well John – This is a token of a great day we had in Dallas, March 3, a Negro was hung for an assault on a three year old girl. I saw this on my noon hour. I was very much in the bunch. You can see the Negro hanging on a telephone pole” (Litwack 168). The spectator sees himself as being “very much in the bunch,” asserting a pride in this collective act despite the fact that he most likely did not see any thing. His dissemination of this scene of subjection extends his civic pride beyond that day and into the future. Paradoxically, while lynching critiques commodity culture that threatens to dispossess whites of their “freedom,” it further entrenches whites within commodity culture as evidenced in the selling and buying of lynching souvenirs.
Examining the extension of factory time discipline to the Main Street store, I am suggesting that town boosters – the social elite, the city hall official, the local business owner, and the corporate capitalist – were very much like factory owners and bosses. Some critics have argued that factory bosses would often create an atmosphere of lynching fever in order to subdue worker unrest through distraction and division, and I think one can argue that town boosters similarly excited lynching fever to suppress white consumer anxiety and to increase consumption, investment, and ultimately profit. If Main Street is a phantasmagoria that “strives to construct patterns of wholeness, unity, and surface harmony,” then we can understand the role Main Street lynchings can play in creating this sense of wholeness, unity and harmony in those who could potentially upset the economic promise and growth of Main Street (Chaudhary 90-91). The Main Street lynching creates the imagined political community where consumption, such as the purchasing of lynching souvenirs, becomes a form of local patriotism. The return of Brook’s body by mob leaders to City Hall suggestively implicates town boosters in agitating lynching fever. During the Brook’s lynching in Dallas, it is said that one of the mob leaders of the lynching said to his fellow Lynchers, “You did the work of men today and your deeds will resound in every state, village, and hamlet where purity and innocence are cherished and bestiality and lechery condemned” (Litwack 168). For the mob leader, lynching becomes a form of publicity that advertises the town’s “deeds” (including its erection of a monumental architectural structure) across the nation.

41 I talk more extensively about lynching and the factory in Chapter Four. The International Labor Defense argued that white bosses rather than white workers were the primary agents of lynching. Lynching was not a worker direct action; Rebecca Hill writes, “Even if bosses were not doing the lynching themselves, the ILD argued, lynching fever had been created by the attempts of bosses and the boss press to whip up, distract, and divide workers who were becoming united by conditions brought about by the Depression” (231).
Thus far, I have been arguing that lynching violence is linked to the modernization and urbanization of small town Main Streets by corporate monopoly capitalism at the end of the nineteenth century. My readings of the lynchings photographs have been very much informed by Goldsby’s argument that lynching is a modern phenomenon tied to technological innovations, mass culture, and corporate monopoly-capitalism. Importantly, Goldsby contends that lynching is a “national-global (rather than regional-local) scope of violence” (22). Despite gestures towards a transnational understanding of lynching violence, Goldsby focuses on lynching as a primarily national phenomenon.42 I want to engage Goldsby’s suggestion that lynching should be understood as a national-global scope of violence by examining its material as well as discursive presence in Alberta, Canada. While extra-legal lynchings have rarely been recorded in Canada43, legal lynchings were. Historian Alan Hustak notes that between Confederation in 1867 and the last hangings that occurred in 1962, 701 of the 3,000 people convicted of crimes punishable by death were executed. The

42 The only really transnational moment in A Spectacular Secret occurs during Goldsby’s discussion of Ida B. Wells’ anti-lynching crusade waged in Britain between 1893 and 1895 (80-82).

43 There has been very little research on extra-legal lynchings in Canada because so much of the discourse around lynching in Canada during its heights in the US figured lynching as “un-Canadian.” Even the account of a near lynching of a black man in Kingston, Ontario in August 1920 seems to reiterate Canadian civility. The headline in the New York Times reads “CANADIANS BURN JAIL TO LYNCH EX-SOLDIER.” David McNeal, an African-American from Philadelphia had served as a soldier in the Canadian army, was accused of murdering four year old Margaret Baucock in Thorold, Ontario on July 13. He was charged and arrested with the murder — despite claims by others that he was not the murderer. During his trial on August 16, a mob of several thousand clamored for possession of the prisoner. The mob set fire to the Town Jail and the Town Hall, and as the prisoner and police officers were being smoked out of the building, the crowd “which had grown to large proportions began to storm the Town Hall with bricks and stones. Every window in the newly built building was shattered and then the doors were attacked.” The mob surrounded McNeal and the police officers, the fire having forced the prisoner and the guards to leave the building. The police chief surrendered McNeal, who was taken to the town flagpole, where preparations were made to hang him. “He screamed for mercy while the mob bowled.” What is significant is that members of the crowd listened to his pleas to make a statement, and the crowd subsequently moved “to the Public Library steps.” McNeal spoke for “half an hour before a hushed crowd” swearing he had not killed Margaret and that “Only a degenerate could do such a thing!” After he ceased speaking, “there was no further talk of lynching. The crowd was almost jovial,” notes the New York Times; McNeal was taken away by the Chief and was later found innocent of the charges.
condemned were “subject to a lottery rigged by politics and economics and manipulated by unconscious racism and social prejudices,” writes Hustak, so “Native people, French Canadians, Canadians of Slavic origin, homosexuals, and blacks had a better chance of being executed than did white Anglo-Saxon Protestants” (xv). The only method used for capital punishment was hanging, and these executions often resembled lynchings as they drew spectators from other towns and cities as well as were attended by members of white supremacist groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan.44

In the summer of 2007, I came across the Crossfield Lynching photograph in the archives at the Glenbow Museum in Edmonton Alberta (Figure 4). The photograph depicts thirteen men and a young boy posing with a hanged lynch victim in front of the Crossfield Livery Stable. The victim is a white man: his body is clothed with his hat still on his head, and a gun poking out of the top of his pants. He is surrounded by white men who stare either at the lynch victim’s “expired” body or directly at the camera. These men are wearing clothes, from work overalls to tailored suits, which reflect the different classes and occupations, from the grain elevator worker to the general store owner, participating in the lynchings. The young boy watching the lynching is clothed in dark pants, a white buttoned-up shirt, and white hat that reflect the formality of the events. A male adult, perhaps his father, attends to the young boy. While his face is hidden, the gun he holds suggests his participation in the mob’s actions. At the bottom of the photograph, the act and location of the scene

---

44 In Execution Poems (2001), George Elliott Clarke describes the real execution of two black men, George and Rufus Hamilton, in Nova Scotia on July 27, 1949 as a lynching. In an interview discussing his research on the case, Clarke says, “My belief is that the judge, knowing the racist feelings against the Hamiltons, proceeded with their death sentences out of fear of provoking a lynching mob reaction should such not occur. (That ten thousand people, including members of the Ku Klux Klan, filled Fredericton’s streets on the night of the execution bears out the judge’s concerns)” (869). In Execution Poems, Clarke includes a fake newspaper report on the execution; he writes, “The execution site proved irresistible for roughly 1,000 curious onlookers from the city, nearby farms, and from as far away as Boston. Every close rooftop, line fence, window and woodpile was occupied as the throng, including babes-at-duck and grey pates, clogged the gaol yard entrance and vantage points to eye the two doomed negroes as they were guided from their cells to the gallows in the barn loft in the York County Gaol yard” (44).
of subjection are clearly identified: "A Lynching – At Crossfield Alta – .” In the archive catalogue, this photograph is described as a “Group faking a lynching, Crossfield, Alberta” and is dated between 1908 and 1910. While the title on the photograph itself attempts to authenticate the scene as a “real” lynching, the title in the archive catalogue, consciously or not, attempts to undermine the violence of this scene by describing it as “fake.” My reading of the photograph attempts to trouble the distinctions between “real” and “fake” by foregrounding the shared affect that lynching photographs (real or fake) produce. The catalogue also includes most of the names of the men involved in this lynching; many of the men in the lynching photograph appear in other Main Street photographs of Crossfield taken between 1906 and 1912 in the archive collection.

Located on the Calgary-Edmonton railway trail, Crossfield was a railway siding, and named for Mr. Crossfield, an engineer for the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1890. Its close proximity to Calgary, only twenty-nine miles north of the city, is important to understanding Crossfield’s rapid economic and social development. Calgary was established in 1875 as a Northwest Mounted Police post, but the Canadian Pacific Railway transformed this small rural town into an industrial city. During the 1890s, the Canadian government advertised immigration to western Canada to people from western and eastern Europe, but most of all to people in the United States. By 1898, “American editors were being junketed in special cars to see for themselves what a wonderful country awaited their compatriots north of the border…farmers themselves came north from Minnesota, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri, sometimes in small groups, sometimes in train-sized excursions” (Gray 15). Calgary became the transportation and distribution hub for the whole of the far western portion of the prairie region. By 1901, Calgary factories had an average workforce of thirty-one people, compared with just six a decade earlier.
Average capital investment nearly tripled from $15,000 to $43,000, while the value of output per factory rose from less than $10,000 to almost $60,000. As Calgary’s factories continued to expand and multiply, they became the source of employment for more and more of Calgary’s available workers. By 1906, there were already several factories regularly employing more than 100 workers each, including the Alberta Biscuit Company, the Alberta Cigar Company, the Alberta Portland Cement Company, Cushing’s sash-and-door factory, the Great West Saddlery Company, and the Gordon Nail and Wire Works (Bright 22). In 1901, Calgary’s population was 4,400 and a decade later it was tenfold, 44,000 people.

(Figure 4 has not been reproduced due to copyright permissions)

Figure 4: “Group faking a lynching, Crossfield, Alberta.” c. 1908-1910

Calgary’s rapid transformation had a drastic impact on the rural spaces close to the newly formed urban center. By 1903, all available land was purchased and settled in Crossfield, and the siding became a major service station. That same year, Main Street businesses opened, including the first general store, barbershop, grocery store, livery barn, and meat market. The following year, the first Canadian Pacific Railway agent arrived; the first medical practice was opened, and the Alberta Hotel was built. In 1906, a movement was started by P. I. MacAnnally to have Crossfield incorporated
as a village, with the hope that sidewalks and streets could be improved; however, he was first “met with but little encouragement, in fact some strongly opposing the idea of being incorporated as a village.”\cite{45} In “Making New Identities: Alberta Small Towns Confront the City, 1900-1950,” Donald Wetherell notes that Albertans initially resisted incorporation in order to avoid taxation; however, the tide turned when town promoters began seeking town status “out of a desire to be up-to-date, but more importantly because towns had greater borrowing power. Through debenture debt, a town could stimulate economic growth by installing civic services, such as water, sewage, and electrical systems, that would help attract population and investment” (181). When the manager of the Bank of Commerce, Jim Cameron, joined the movement, the necessary petitions were forwarded to the Provincial Government, and in 1907, Crossfield became a village. In the photograph of Main Street in 1907 (Figure 5), the wooden buildings are utilitarian and met the straightforward need of sheltering businesses; over the course of five years, Crossfield’s Main Street would be radically transformed through infill construction and renovations of earlier buildings.

(Figure 5 has not been reproduced due to copyright permissions)

\begin{center}
\textbf{Figure 5: Main Street, Crossfield, Alberta, 1907}
\end{center}

\cite{45} http://www.crossfieldhistory.com/

125
(Figure 6 has not been reproduced due to copyright permissions)

Figure 6: Main Street, Crossfield, Alberta, 1912

The Main Street photograph from 1912 (Figure 6) reflects the ways in which materials for construction and architectural design could transform the image of Main Street. Buildings made of brick, stone, and cement have replaced the formerly wooden buildings in Crossfield. The utility poles lining Main Street signify its modernization and technological development through electric and telephone services.46 The central building in the 1912 Main Street photograph is the Canadian Bank of Commerce (Figure 7); built between 1908 and 1909, the bank’s architectural design projects a serious and stable appearance. The “architectural designs of main street buildings,” writes Donald Wetherell and Irene Kmet, “responded to the fashions popular in larger, wealthier, and, in the eyes of townspeople, more successful urban centers in North America” (176). The 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago featured an exhibition of classical buildings, which came to be known as “White City,” and sparked the revival of classical architecture. With its polished stone columns, portico, and pilaster, Crossfield’s bank’s building reflects the classical revival or neo-classical

46 There are a series of photographs in the Glenbow archives that document each stage in the building of Crossfield’s first telephone line in 1911. There is an additional photograph inside Crossfield’s first electric light plant built in 1911.
style that came to prominence for large public structures in North America at the turn of the century. The classical features of Crossfield's The Canadian Bank of Commerce linked it with its other branches across the country, as large corporations, such as banks and railroad companies, used standard designs in their corporate building styles. This mapping of consumer space through repetitive collective choreographies of congregation, interaction, and relating between consumer and commodities created rhythms through which time and space becomes sedimented in the individual body and grounded in the shared spatio-temporal constellations that mark the nation. The lynching photograph from Crossfield (Figure 4) dates back to this period of rapid modernization and urbanization of small town life and culture, wherein replication rather than authenticity, and seriality rather than uniqueness serve as markers of economic success and growth.

(Figure 7 has not been reproduced due to copyright permissions)

**Figure 7: The Canadian Bank of Commerce, Crossfield, Alberta, 1911**

So, why re-enact a lynching that may be seen as an “atavistic” or “archaic” practice during this rapid economic transformation and development of Crossfield’s
Main Street? Between 1905 and 1912, 1,650 African-Americans, primarily from Oklahoma, but also from Kansas, Texas, and Mississippi, moved north to the Canadian prairies in pursuit of free government land and freedom from racial persecution. Although black Oklahomans had been arriving in the prairie provinces since at least 1905, the first sizeable group arrived in Saskatchewan in October 1908. Their migration coincided with the coming of statehood in Oklahoma in 1908, in which its legislature passed a series of increasingly restrictive racial laws that denied black Oklahomans the vote, codified segregation through new Jim Crow laws, and allowed Oklahoma to pass under the dominance of the Ku Klux Klan (Winks 301-302). After the first group's arrival in Saskatchewan, two hundred black pioneers soon spread out into Manitoba and as far east as the Thunder Bay area. Other black laborers, settlers, and small business owners went to the prairie urban centers, including Calgary, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg, and notably Edmonton, which by 1911 already had 298 black residents. Western Canadians' responses to the black settlers were immediate. The prairie press spearheaded the campaign against them. Its editorials drew heavily on the racialized and gendered images of a "white" and "fair West" to argue against the presence of "coloured" groups onto the prairies. As the Edmonton Capital argued on 16 April 1910, "the task of assimilating all the white people who enter our borders is quite a heavy enough one without the colour proposition being added" (Shepard 66). Lynching was evoked in frenzied reports in local newspapers across the prairie region that reproduced the stereotype of "the black rapist."

Boards of Trade, the Edmonton Trades and Labour Council, women's organizations, and newspaper editors wrote resolutions, petitions, and editorials opposing an influx of blacks and sent them to the federal government. In 1910, an emergency meeting was held by the Edmonton chapter of the Imperial Order of the
Daughters of Empire to consider the influx of African-Americans. In a petition sent to the Immigration Minister, they write, “We do not wish that the fair fame of Western Canada would be sullied with the shadow of Lynch Law, but we have no guarantee that our women will be safer in their scattered homesteads than white women in other countries with a Negro population” (Walker 127). In the context of this editorializing on the “peril” of black migration, F. T. Fisher of the Edmonton Board of Trade wrote a seven-page letter to Frank Oliver warning that if the government did not move quickly to halt the immigration of black settlers, race riots would be inevitable:

White settlers in homestead districts are becoming alarmed and exasperated and are prepared to go to almost any length. People in the towns and cities...are beginning to realize the imperative necessity of effective action; and it only needs a slight effort to start up an agitation, which would be joined in by practically every white man in the country. There is every indication that unless effective action is taken, such agitation will be put in motion in the near future. (Shepard 77)

Petitions and newspapers revived black stereotypes venting white fears about blacks becoming a sexual and economic threat: black men would endanger white women and lower the living standard of white workers. Black migration into the prairies was believed by many to be the importation of the problems of the US South into Canadian prairies, towns and cities.

In the context of this frenzy over black migration, Crossfield’s lynching photograph mimics the popular iconography of lynching cultivated in both narrative accounts and images in the US South. The title itself, “A Lynching,” aims at defining and differentiating this as a southern lynching scene from other traditions of western, frontier-style lynchings that held sway within North American popular culture well into the twentieth century. The butt of a gun poking out of the lynching victim’s pants
suggestively evokes the discourse of the “black rapist.” However, the most significant part of this re-enactment of the lynching scene is the purposeful placement of men (their bodies and faces) surrounding the lynch victim. The men’s body language and faces suggest excitement and enjoyment, which is exemplified in the man standing second to the right. With his eyes staring directly at the camera and his gun aimed at the lynch victim, pride and excitement exude from this man as he links his control and mastery to the scene at hand. Another striking feature of the photograph is the inclusion of a young boy, who has clearly been dressed up in his white buttoned-down shirt and white hat for this occasion. Here, the Crossfield lynching photograph seems to reference the archive of lynching photographs in which children appear in great frequency.\textsuperscript{47} The attempts to replicate an authentic lynching scene is undercut, however, by the man next to the young boy whose hand is on the back on the lynch victim’s body. This gesture, consciously or unconsciously, registers a concern for a friend’s (as opposed to a “rapist’s”) safety and well-being. Significantly, there is one other person that seems somewhat out of place in the lynching photograph. He is the man in the lower right hand corner who is not close to the lynch victim’s body, does not carry a gun nor does he stare directly at the camera. Instead, he holds a package or envelope under his left arm, and watches the men pose for the camera. One wonders if this man functions as a director, arranging these men and boy into an authentically southern lynching pose? Does the package or envelope he carries consist of lynching photographs or postcards that Smith aptly calls “missives of love and terror” (118)?

The catalogue identifies this man directing the lynching scene as James Mewhort, who was the editor of the \textit{Crossfield Chronicle} between 1907 and 1909. There is also another newspaper editor in the photograph, Mewhort’s successor,

\footnote{White children are visible in ten out of twenty-eight southern lynchings documented in \textit{Without Sanctuary}.}
“Happy” Hathaway, who would run the Crossfield Chronicle between 1911 and 1912. Like Mewhort, Hathaway is not looking at the camera, but he does stand close to the body and holds his gun with both hands (he is the man dressed in a white shirt, black pants and hat, and directly in front of the boy). These two newspaper editors watch the scene that they have created before them. In A Spectacular Secret, Goldsby argues that far from suppressing news about lynchings, newspapers embraced them, providing abundant and even graphic coverage of the violence: “The reporting strategies and publishing tactics of these newspapers functioned to ‘create’ rather than ‘report’ the event, their account in this way aiding and abetting the murders” (45). Newspaper articles protected the identities of the lynch mob and used refrains that suggested that the accused was guilty of the crime and therefore deserving of the punishment. Anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells resented the capacity of the Memphis press to dominate public discourse on lynching: “The [Memphis] daily papers...helped to make this trouble by fanning the flames of racial prejudice” (Goldsby 44). Wells also noted the ways in which newspapers exploited the commercial possibilities of a lynching incident; Wells recalls, “one of the morning papers held back its edition in order to supply its readers with the details of [the] lynching” (45). As Wetherell and Kmet note, newspapers existed, like other businesses, to make money for their owner, but they also served the function in promoting the town (69). I want to suggest that the Crossfield Chronicle editors were shrewd in their understanding of the commercial possibilities a lynching could have for Crossfield. Within the context of the frenzy surrounding black migration to Alberta’s urban centers, lynching news could bring much needed publicity to a new “city-like” village seeking investment, industry, and settlers.
(Figure 8 has not been reproduced due to copyright permissions)

**Figure 8: Ontkes & Armstrong General Merchandise, Crossfield, Alberta, 1908**

(Figure 9 has not been reproduced due to copyright permissions)

**Figure 9: Ontkes & Armstrong general store, Crossfield, Alberta, ca. 1908-1913**

In *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, Lewis describes (and includes) the numerous photographs he has come across of wood hicks and town people posing
in the newly developed Main Street. The Glenbow Museum archive is similarly filled with pictures of Crossfield’s Main Street development. There are two particular sets that are published by Ontkes & Armstrong of interest to me. The first set is from 1906, a year in which Crossfield was seeking incorporation, and the second set is from 1912 that depicts many of the major transformations to Crossfield’s streetscape. Many of the photographs foreground the Ontkes & Armstrong store, but there are also many photographs of the Ontkes brothers (Henry and Dick) and their friends (including P.I. MacAnnally who started the movement to have Crossfield incorporated in 1906) in front or inside of other various Main Street businesses and stores, such as E.H. Morrow’s real estate office and the Collin Brothers Pool Hall. In this 1908 photograph of the general store (Figure 8), several men are identified including Dick Ontkes, George Davies, and Clark Mewhort. Davies would also be in the lynching photograph and Mewhort’s brother James is the “director” of the lynching scene. Ontkes & Armstrong are further implicated in the lynching scene as two of its salesmen, Tom Elliott and R. Pringle (two of the men in Figure 9) are identified as members of the lynch mob. Pringle stands to the right of the lynch victim and Elliott is identified as one of the men holding the lynch rope. The other identified man holding the rope and standing in front center of the photograph is Henry Ontkes. The centrality of Henry Ontkes in the lynching photograph may in part be due to his ownership of the Crossfield Livery Stable, where this lynching re-enactment is taking place.\footnote{There are two photographs of Henry Ontkes in front on the Crossfield Livery Stable and one with him and others in the interior of the Carriage House.}

Ontkes and Armstrong published several Main Street photographs reflecting the Crossfield’s urbanization, and I want to suggest that we understand the Crossfield lynching photograph as a form of town advertising or promotion. Albertan small
towns believed that potential investors and industries could be drawn to their towns through advertising and promotion. Pamphlets, advertisements and displays at fairs were used to attract settlers and investors. Wetherell notes that “These often represented major undertakings for small towns: the distribution by the Lacombe board of trade of 5,000 folders about the town and district in 1909 alone was not unusual” (183). While it was assumed that advertising was effective because it demonstrated self-initiative, it was also justified as a counter to the advertising campaigns of the cities. As the Claresholm Review observed on 22 January 1909, that if cities like Winnipeg, Calgary, and Vancouver found extensive advertising “of vital importance,” how much more valuable would it be for a small town, “on even with great possibilities such as ours” (182). It was contended that “a program of advertising and publicity has resulted in the material development” of every successful town in North America (182). Because advertising and pamphlets were expensive, a popular advertising alternative was to send articles to leading Canadian and US newspapers in the hope that they would be printed as news; as the Macleod Spectator observed in 1914, it was immaterial “whether these articles are of the boosting kind or just news, for every time a municipality is mentioned it means so much in its favour” (183).

Evoking racial antagonisms towards blacks, Crossfield boosters used the lynching scene to draw attention to Crossfield and differentiate it from other Albertan Main Streets being built and developed at the same time. It is essential that the lynching photograph only evoke racial antagonisms. If the lynch victim was black, it would suggest that the town had a “race” problem. It is also essential that the photographer’s camera’s view of the lynching scene goes beyond the scene itself to include the “director” (creating this scene of subjection), as the director’s presence affirms to its white viewer that this lynching is staged. A potential white settler or investor to
Crossfield can “enjoy” this lynching scene without the threat of death or significant injury happening to him.

(Figure 10 has not been reproduced due to copyright permissions)

**Figure 10: Main Street, Crossfield, Alberta, 1912**

While the Glenbow Museum dates the photograph between 1908 and 1910, I believe there are some clear indications that this photograph is from 1912 and should be viewed in conjunction with the series of Main Street photographs published by Ontkes & Armstrong that same year. The desire to place this photograph earlier in Crossfield’s history may stem from the belief that lynchings are supposedly atavistic and retrogressive acts of violence. If so, the Crossfield lynching scene has to pre-date the modernization and urbanization of Main Street. Without the modern amenities and technologies, Crossfield’s lynching can be read as an early display of “frontier” vigilantism that does not contest Canadian notions of white civility. However, the Crossfield lynching photograph appears to be from 1912, which is evident in the similar titling type and font between this photograph and the two 1912 Main Street photographs (Figure 10 and Figure 11). This suggests that the photographer of the Main Street views published for Ontkes & Armstrong was most likely the same photographer that captured Henry Ontkes and friends re-enacting a lynching scene.
By understanding the lynching photograph in relation to the economic development of Main Street, we avoid the all too easy dismissal of this scene of subjection as merely white amusement. Rather than countering Crossfield’s modern and civilized image in the 1912 Main Street photographs, the lynching photograph works in concert with these images in order to fill the empty throughway with the right “type” of people, industries, and goods

(Figure 11 has not been reproduced due to copyright permissions)

Figure 11: Main Street, Crossfield, Alberta, 1912

By examining lynching’s national-global scope of violence, my readings of lynching photographs have focused on the transnational expansion of the time of capital into the production of locality. In Empire, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue that the local is often assumed to be outside of globalization, in which the local represents difference and is set against the homogenization of global capital. The Main Street lynchings that I have examined in this chapter reflect local responses to the time discipline of corporate capitalism that was redefining the social arrangements of Main Street life and culture. However, the local is not an enemy to the effect of the globalization process; the local does not represent a stable barrier against the new accelerated global capital flows. In these productions of localities, the lynching scene
functions to incite or stimulate the flows of capital and industry. Main Street lynchings were not anti-modern responses to time discipline’s extension from the factory to everyday social life, but were, rather, choreographed events occasioned by town boosters in order to quell white anxieties and fears of consumer capitalism. Lynching simultaneously functions as a palliative to white dispossession and creates the social cohesion produced by town boosters’ Main Street phantasmagoric aesthetic.

My argument in this chapter emerges out of my own desire to begin to understand the significance of the Crossfield lynching photograph. Struggling to understand this photograph’s place in the Glenbow archives and in the Canadian national imaginary, I have asked: What kind of ideological work is this photograph doing in Crossfield, Alberta in the first decade of the twentieth century? What were the conditions and contexts for its production, printing, and circulation? Was this photograph circulated beyond the town, beyond the province, beyond the region, across the nation? And finally, how can we understand this photograph in relation to lynching photographs in the United States from the same period? While I have attempted to answer some of these questions more questions have emerged along the way. Does the Crossfield lynching photograph produce the same sentiments that seep through the front and back of the southern lynching postcard? Was their re-enactment a vicarious act of complicity with the southern mob? Was Alberta in the first decade of the twentieth century no different from US southern states, like Texas and West Virginia, in their public productions of lynching scenes?

While there are overlaps that I have discussed above, I want to point out some differences in the lynchings in the US South and in Alberta through examining a second lynching photograph from the Glenbow Museum. In the archive catalogue the photograph is described as a “Mock Lynching” (Figure 12), and was taken at the Calgary Exhibition in 1901. The Calgary Exhibition was created by a group of local
men in 1899, with the purpose of “making Calgary’s mid-summer exhibition the most prominent attractive and educational exhibition between Winnipeg and the Coast” (15). Unable to organize a summer show in 1899 and after several changes of dates, the first Calgary Exhibition opened as advertised on September 27. The following year, over 2,500 patrons were persuaded to pay the fifty-cent entrance fee to get into the grounds of the two-day exhibition, and most of them spent an extra twenty-five cents for a seat in the grandstand. The majority of the crowd’s attention was attracted to the horse races rather than the grain, vegetable, livestock, and commercial exhibitions. “To attract a crowd of 2,500 out of a city population of just less than 4,000 was regarded,” writes Gray, “as commendable by the Exhibition’s sponsors, but it was clear that something more than horse races needed to be a part of the Exhibition” (18). The following year, that “something more” would include attractions such as merry-go-rounds, the Ferris wheel, itinerant showmen, and a “mock lynching” exhibit.

(Figure 12 has not been reproduced due to copyright permissions)

Figure 12: "Mock Lynching" September 1901, Calgary Exhibition Grounds

The success of the “mock” lynching exhibit at the Calgary Exhibition speaks to the viable commercial exploitation of the lynching scene that Crossfield boosters
would employ a decade later. The photograph appears to be taken by a spectator, and depicts a fully clothed man hanging from a scaffold. The lynch victim’s arms are above his head as he holds himself up by the rope. As the lynching victim struggles for his life, the lynching photograph’s main focus is on the crowd witnessing this spectacle of death. The crowd includes men and young boys, with some men climbing onto raised platforms to gain a better view. While this lynching photograph includes the large crowd, the scaffold, and lynch victim typical of spectacle lynchings, there is a clear attempt by the organizers of this “mock” lynching to deny charges of complicity with the thousands of murders by the hands of lynch mobs. The men on the scaffold itself are distanced from the torture by dangling the lynch victim on a wood rod a significant distance away from the scaffold, and the crowd is clearly separated from the lynching by a wood barrier that functions to create a symbolic distance from the violent act itself. In this particular instance, the lynching scene is constructed as an “innocent” amusement for a group of proper, orderly white men and boys enjoying a day at the fair.

I want to suggest that it is “lynch law’s aura,” a phrase used by Mark Simpson, that provides the white participants a sense of authenticity to replication, uniqueness to seriality of modern everyday life.49 Walter Benjamin’s notion of “aura” is often defined in historical, aesthetic, and psychological opposition to the techniques of the mechanical reproduction. In literary, visual, and cultural studies, aura has become synonymous with the traditional work of art, whose contemplative experience is progressively eroded with the advent of modern media technology. Benjamin argues that the decline of the artwork’s aura reflects a wider condition of modernity, the turn

49 This phrase comes from Simpson’s examination of a Cairo, Illinois lynching postcard: “Here, lynching’s afterlife literally supplements modernity’s mass produced ephemera: lynch law’s monstrous aura grimly enlivens the standardized products of commodity culture” (23). In this chapter, I engage with the ramifications of the notion of lynch law’s aura to understand lynchings relation to mass-produced Main Streets.
toward seriality and uniformity which shapes the experience of reality: “The stripping of the husk from the object, the destruction of the aura,” writes Benjamin, “is the signature of a perception whose ‘sense for sameness in the world’ has so increased that, by means of reproduction, it extracts sameness even from what is unique” (“The Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” 255-56). The re-creation or re-enactment of the lynching scene articulates a shared feeling of alienation to and objectification of the time of capital that crosses regional boundaries and national borders. For Benjamin, aura is “a strange web of time and space,” and, in the time lag of the lynching scene, new meaning and affect are given to the “freedom” undergirding the new social arrangements of Main Street life and culture (“Short History of Photography,” 28).
CHAPTER FOUR

Documenting Lynching: Labor and A Critique of Capital in Dorothy Livesay’s “Day and Night” and Day and Night

The disesteem in which the United States is held because of lynch-law is world-wide. Newspapers in Europe, South America, Canada, China, and Japan, and even in Africa report with astounding regularity burnings, ordinary lynchings, and race riots in the United States. Such news items create in other countries emotions towards the United States which run the gamut from ironical laughter at American pronouncements of decency and fair play in world affairs to amazement and indignation that a so-called civilized country permits such unrestrained barbarity.

- Walter White, Rope and Faggot

The prolongation of the working-day beyond the limits of the natural day, into the night, only acts as a palliative. It quenches only in a slight degree the vampire thirst for the living blood of labour. To appropriate labour during all the 24 hours of the day is, therefore, the inherent tendency of capitalist production. But as it is physically impossible to exploit the same individual labour-power constantly during the night as well as the day, to overcome this physical hindrance, an alternation becomes necessary between the workpeople whose powers are exhausted by day, and those who are used up by night.

- Karl Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy (Volume 1)

In 1926, three African-American men were murdered in Aiken, South Carolina as more than one thousand spectators watched the horrific lynchings. Walter White, assistant secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was sent to Aiken, and was able to secure the names of several men involved with the lynchings. Following White’s investigation, newspaper organizations went to Aiken, and reports of the lynching were, James Weldon Johnson writes, “upon the front pages of the ‘New York World’ and other great Northern newspapers as well as the newspapers of the South, especially the newspapers of South Carolina” (90-91). Following the lynchings in Aiken, White took a leave of absence from the NAACP, and spent a year writing Rope and Faggot in France. Published in 1929, Rope and Faggot offers a penetrating critique of the cultural and economic foundations of lynching in the South. In the “Preface,” White targets the
normalization of lynching by addressing the white reader who lightly passes over a report of lynching while sipping his or her morning coffee; “mobbi sim has inevitably degenerated,” White writes, “to the point where an uncomfortably large percentage of American citizens can read in their newspapers of the slow roasting alive of a human being in Mississippi and turn, promptly and with little thought, to the comic strip or sporting page” (viii). White contrasts the dispassionate response to lynching reports in the United States to the range of emotions, from “ironical laughter” to “amazement and bewilderment,” in other countries to these same lynching reports (152).

During its short publication run (1931-1934), Canada’s Masses, published by the Progressive Arts Clubs of Canada (PAC), printed reports on lynching and racial terrorism in the US South. Canada’s Masses took at least its name from one of its US predecessors, the Masses (1911-17) or New Masses (1926-1948). Masses and its US counterpart held in common “the desire to discover and promote working-class voices – that is, to allow the historically repressed access to means of literary expression and production” (Irvine 33). However, unlike New Masses, Masses editors were not trying to reach an audience beyond its national borders. Masses had a focused Canadian addressee as the editors “were attempting to introduce an international proletarian culture – writers, workers’ press, visual artists, theatre groups – to left-wing Canadian workers, writers, and intellectuals in order to develop the nascent proletarian cultural movement in Canada” (33). Each issue consisted of 10 to 12 unnumbered pages. The magazine was intended as a monthly, but ultimately appeared only about six times a

---

50 Caren Irving substantiates this claim through a comparison of graphic designs (133-34), and Dean Irvine argues that Canada’s “Masses’ linocut prints for cover art and cartoons, its typeface and layout also mirror New Masses” (33).

51 In the January 1934 issue of Masses, the editors informed its readers of New Masses weekly publications: “MASSES enthusiastically greets this forward step by our American comrades. Canadian workers and intellectuals will be unable to read the ‘New Masses’ because of the stupid ban placed upon it by the reactionary Canadian government. This makes it all the more necessary for us to support our revolutionary cultural publications, and MASSES in particular, until we are able to force the government to change its policy in this regard.”
year. The 1931 emergence of *Masses* – devoted almost exclusively to creative writing and aesthetic culture and theory – reflected the increasing activity among Communist Party Canada’s members and sympathizers. Of interest in this chapter is the inclusion of articles, reviews, cartoons, and verse that document race relations and racial violence in the United States in *Masses*, which consists of an anonymous article and a cartoon (reprinted from *The Daily Worker*) that document the arrests and convictions of the Scottsboro Boys, a book review of Fielding Burke’s *Call Home the Heart* (1832), a novel that climaxes with a lynch mob in North Carolina, and two poems by African-American poet Langston Hughes.

In this chapter, I examine the significance of lynching in the writings of Dorothy Livesay, who was an editor of and contributor to *Masses*. I examine Livesay’s highly acclaimed documentary poem, “Day and Night” (written in 1935, and published in 1936 in the *Canadian Forum*), and the collection of poems with the same title published in 1944, which was awarded Canada’s highest literary award, the Governor General’s Award, later that year. Recently, Livesay’s writings from the 1930s have garnered more attention; however, this recent scholarship has noted but not fully addressed Livesay’s documentation of lynching violence.¹² Scholarly writings on “Day and Night” focus particularly on its representation of the factory worker, his relationship to the machine, and the poem’s call for revolution from within the factory. Critics for the most part have ignored the poem’s depiction of the lynching of a black worker; for example, Caren Irr gives all of a sentence to this scene of racial violence when she writes, “Recalling images of lynching, the phrase ‘day hanging over night’ figures the iniquity of the bosses’ attempts to divide the workers” (231-

I want to give more attention to the documentation of lynching in “Day and Night” through recognizing the importance of the two anti-lynching exhibitions in New York City in 1935 and the influence on Livesay’s poetic style and content of the documentary modernism of the *Dynamo* poets. While her writings for *Masses* (often appearing in the same issues that had reports on racial violence in the US South) do not address issues of race, images of lynching proliferate in her writings when she moved to New Jersey. Livesay soon joined the Communist Party (CP-USA) and entered the New York cultural front in 1934.

I argue that “Day and Night” engages with the poetics of documentary modernism of leftist poets such as Sol Funaroff, Kenneth Fearing, and Muriel Rukeyser, and I examine Livesay’s documentation of lynching in “Day and Night” as part of her engagement with the politics of the Popular Front, “a radical social-democratic movement forged around anti-fascism, anti-lynching, and the industrial unionism” (Denning xviii). Her documentary poem articulates the Popular Front’s “commitment to the ‘folk idiom and the documentary aesthetic,’ its social realism....[and] its masculine brotherhood” (117). In particular, I focus on Livesay’s critique of lynching in relation to *Day and Night’s* larger engagement with capitalism. Livesay’s examination of racial discrimination and violence in the South, evident in her intertextual engagements with the Scottsboro case in Alabama and the Hawk’s

---

55 In addition to the reference to this lynching scene in Irr’s discussion of Livesay’s “Day and Night,” there is a reference to the lynching in “Day and Night” in a footnote in Candice Rifkind’s *Comrades & Critics: Women, Literature, & the Left in 1930s Canada*:

There are many close readings of this poem [“Day and Night”] published in 1936, later than the period I consider in this section. Of particular interest to my argument is Pamela McCallum’s culturally and historically informed reading of “Day and Night” as a document of Livesay’s consciousness of labor and race relations in the United States. McCallum suggests that Livesay fuses the physical oppression of industrial labour with images of the racial oppressions of lynching to connect African American cultural memories of slavery with present experiences of racial and labour injustices. (232 n15)

McCallum’s paper has not yet been published.
Nest Incident in West Virginia, provide occasions for Livesay to articulate the Popular Front’s campaign against lynching and labor repression. Significantly, Livesay’s poems extend the examination of lynching and labor repression to white women often elided by CP-USA discourse and practices. She affectively identifies herself with both black men and white women in the lynching scene. Rather than voyeuristic indulgences, the proliferation of lynching images in Livesay’s *Day and Night* produce an experience of shame. Livesay’s representations of lynching serve to not only condemn the “unrestrained barbarity” in the South, that White seeks, but also forces Canadians to recognize and understand their own complicity and participation in these acts of racial terror and violence.

*****

The June 1932 issue of *Masses* includes an anonymous article, “Lynch the Niggers,” that outlines the events leading to the “legal lynching” of nine black young men in Scottsboro, Alabama. Listing the death sentences of Eugene Williams, Ozzie Powell, Willie Robinson, Olin Montgomery, Haywood Patterson, Andy Wright, Clarence Norris, and Charlie Weems, the article details the events leading to the arrest and conviction of the Scottsboro nine in March 1931. From their attempts to find work on March 20 to the end of their trial on April 9, the article presents the rape charges against the Scottsboro Nine as a frame-up. The two women accusers had “den[ied] the negroes raped them,” but broke after being “Egged by sheriff and attorney.” The article’s headline documents the calls for the lynching of the Scottsboro Nine in southern newspapers: “LYNCH THE NIGGERS! Chattanooga News, Jackson County Sentinel, and other papers controlled by rich landowners, froth at mouth.”54 The

---

54 Apel writes, “the very day of the arrest, the story made the front pages of the Scottsboro’s afternoon newspapers with the headlines of the *Jackson County Sentinel* reading: ‘Nine Negro Men Rape Two White Girls; Threw White Boys from Freight Train and Held White Girls Prisoners until Captured by Posse; All Negroes Positively Identified by Girls and One White Boy Who Was Held Prisoner with
slogan “Lynch the Niggers” would be repeated by mobs surrounding the courthouse: “April 6…10,000 farmers come to town, toting guns. Have read in newspapers of horrible rape by nine black bastards of two innocent white girls. Jury panel mingles with mob.” During a quick four-day trial, four separate juries convicted eight of the black young men of rape and sentenced them to death, while sentencing the youngest to life in prison. The Scottsboro case attracted attention from a number of groups. Walter White, writes Dora Apel, “moved cautiously and was initially reluctant to get involved with the Scottsboro case” (61). The legalistic strategies the NAACP preferred to use were believed to be ineffective in Alabama where local and state officials shared racist attitudes towards blacks, and White “was wary of alienating modern southerners or respectable middle-class northern blacks and liberal whites…by associating the organization with what at first appeared to him to be nine pathetic teenagers who might have been a gang of rapists” (61).

After a protracted struggle with the NAACP, the International Labor Defense (ILD), a Communist legal aid auxiliary that Michael Denning calls “the earliest Popular Front organization” (13), took over the defense. The CP-USA and NAACP had two different approaches to the fight against lynching. While the NAACP “sought to work through narrowly focused legislative appeals,” the CP-USA “urged interracial organizing that related lynching to broader civil rights issues and mass working-class action” (62). Once the ILD took control of the case, they helped propel it into international headlines. “Precisely because the Scottsboro case is an expression of the horrible national oppression of the Negro masses,” The Daily Worker argued, “any real fight…must necessarily take the character of a struggle against the whole brutal system of landlord robbery and imperialist national oppression of the Negro people”

---

Pistols and Knives While Nine Black Friends Committed Revolting Crime.” The allegations transformed into incontrovertible facts” (54).
(qtd. in Carter 137). The ILD’s strategy was a legal defense supported by mass action: thousands of political cartoons about Scottsboro were subsequently published in the periodicals of the CP-USA and its affiliated organizations. A political cartoon about Scottsboro published in The Daily Worker was reproduced in the December 1932 issue of Masses. The cartoon by H.R. Burke, entitled “Let’s Burn Them Ourselves,” depicts a “fat” southern landowner pouring gas, what the cartoon describes as “Lynch Mob Propaganda,” over the U.S. Supreme Court Decision to grant a new trial to the Scottsboro boys. The cartoon charges the propaganda disseminated in southern newspapers with fueling mob lynchings; it depicts four half-naked men chained to each other, and only moments away from being burned alive by the lynch mob. What is intriguing about this cartoon as well as the anonymous article on the Scottsboro case is the lack of engagement (direct or indirect) with these news reports in Masses. There are no contextualizing prose or creative pieces by Canadian writers or artists that articulate Canadian response(s) to the “astounding regularity [of] burnings, ordinary lynchings, and race riots” in the US (White 152).

This silence may be in part due to Canadian endorsement of racial terrorism on its own soil. Newspaper reports of Ku Klux Klan activities within Ontario and Western Canada were numerous during the late 1920s and early 1930s. One such instance of Klan activity involved the gathering of a small army of seventy-five individuals, clad in white gowns and hoods, marching through Oakville, Ontario on the night of February 28, 1930. The Klan intended on ending a relationship between a black man, Ira Johnson, and a white woman, Isobel Jones, through terrifying and threatening Johnson and his family. The Klansmen took a terrified Johnson and his elderly uncle and aunt from their home, and took them back to Johnson’s home, where they nailed a large cross to the post in the front of the door and set it on fire. They threatened that if Johnson was “ever seen walking down with a white girl again” the
Klan “would attend to him” (Backhouse 174). Reports of the Klan’s activities in Oakville were front-page news on the local newspapers. “‘Ku Klux Klan Cohorts Parade into Oakville and Burn Fiery Cross’ was the lead item on page one of the next morning’s Toronto Globe. The Oakville Star and Independent announced, “It was really impressive how thoroughly and how systematically the Klan went about their task,” pointing out that the “burning of the fiery cross added a realistic touch.” “There was not a semblance of disorder,” concluded the Toronto Globe, and the Hamilton Spectator added: “The citizens of Oakville generally seemed pleased with the work accomplished by the visit” (175). Here, the Klan is not figured as a public menace or organ of terror as “the citizens” of Oakville publically endorse its actions. Rather than denounce lynching, mainstream Canadian newspapers endorsed the practice.

In Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature, Jacqueline Goldsby argues that the aesthetic forms of journalism “helped cultivate the climate in which lynching thrived,” and that conventions of literary realism essentially absolved white readers from taking direct action against racial violence (65). The arrangement of lynchings stories with other articles provides a way of understanding the signification of US southern lynchings within Masses. Describing spatial arrangements of time and space in newspapers, Lisa Duggan writes, “Page layouts organized reports of temporally simultaneous occurrences across dispersed geographies according to principles of relevance and hierarchies of significance” (33). Layouts and terms of address, argues Duggan, “produced modes of relatedness and connection” (34). The article next to “Lynch the Nigger” at first may suggest a disconnection between the South and Canada as it praises the popular Canadian feminist Nellie McClung and the “gracing [of her books on] the bookshelf of the ‘proper’ Canadian home” (“McClung and Canadiana”). However, the connection between the US South and Canada becomes more visible in light of the eugenical
principals embedded in McClung's feminism: "The woman movement," writes McClung, "which has been scoffed and jeered at and misunderstood most of all by the people whom it is destined to help, is a spiritual revival of the best instincts of womanhood – the instinct to serve and save the race" (In Times Like These 100). For McClung, white women as mothers of the race were central to the "preservation of the globally dispersed white Anglo-Saxon community through a collective addressing of what was seen to be preventing 'good' racial stock from being born and maintained" (Devereux 30). The placement of these two articles – both on the "protection" of white women from racial "bastards" – side by side is striking for its seeming consent of racialized practices that "preserve" the purity of white women.

This endorsement of racial violence (through the juxtaposition of articles and the silence on local events of racial terrorism) brings into question the collective addressing of the "we" in the final paragraph of "Lynch the Niggers." Calling for interracial solidarity, the writer says, "We as part of the cultural movement of the working class, demand equal rights for negroes and protest the legal lynching of the nine boys." While a handful of articles in Masses address an interracial "we" that links black civil rights with white working-class issues, the "we" addressed in Masses is most often de-racialized through an emphasis on an international "we." This de-emphasis on black-white race relations for an emphasis on a de-racialized international collective is perhaps most evident in the editorial selections of two Langston Hughes' poems published in Masses. During the fall of 1931, Hughes read and wrote poetry for the Scottsboro Boys, reciting his verse while visiting them on Kilby Prison's death row. Hughes spoke at rallies and raised money for the accused young black men's defense by arranging an auction of books and artwork donated by distinguished writers and artists (Leach 86). Hughes wrote and published Scottsboro Limited, Four Poems and a Play in Verse, and donated the proceeds to their defense fund. In 1932,
he attended a Scottsboro rally in Moscow. In his autobiography, *I Wonder as I Wander*, Hughes describes his reception in the Soviet Union: “With the Scottsboro Case in world wide trial in the papers everywhere and especially in Russia,” writes Hughes, “folks went out of their way to show us courtesy. On a crowded bus, nine times out of ten, some Russian would say, ‘Nerchanski tovarish – Negro comrade – take my seat!’” (74). With international attention on the Scottsboro case and Hughes’ involvement with the mass protest, it is significant that the poems by Hughes included in *Masses* are not his Scottsboro poems or any poems that address lynchings – legal and illegal – in the US South.

The first poem by Hughes appears in the November 1932 issue of *Masses*. The poem, “Good-morning Revolution,” is perhaps one of Hughes’ least known poems. Unlike “Scottsboro” that calls the world’s attention to the legal lynching of “8 BLACK BOYS IN A SOUTHERN JAIL / WORLD, TURN PALE!” “Good-morning Revolution” calls the world’s workers to revolution against the ruling class and capitalism:

*Listen, Revolution,*

*We’re buddies, see –*

*Together,*

*We can take everything:*

*Factories, arsenals, houses, ships,*

*Railroads, forests, fields, orchards,*

*Bus lines, telegraphs, radios,*

*(Jesus! Raise hell with radios!)*

*Steel mills, coal mines, oil wells, gas,*

*All the tools of production,*

*...*
Hey you rising workers everywhere

greetings

*And we'll sign it:* Germany

*Sign it:* China

*Sign it:* Africa

*Sign it:* Poland

*Sign it:* Italy

*Sign it:* America

The speaker greets the allegorical figure of Revolution as a “buddy,” routinely castigated as a “trouble-maker or alien enemy.” The speaker believes that Revolution will help him take charge of the “tools of production” for the benefit of the workers not the bosses. The poem extends its indictment of US capitalism internationally as it predicts the embrace of Revolution around the world. Written towards the end of 1932, after Hughes’ successful tour of the Soviet Union, the poem was published (after being rejected by *Saturday’s Evening Post*) in the September 1932 issue of *The New Masses.* Here, Hughes’ use of slogans and flat prose statements in a structure of broken lines and free verse to disseminate Communist propaganda may have been what drew *Masses* editors to this poem since it reflects the style and content of most of the poems published in *Masses.*

The second poem by Hughes, published in the May-June 1933 issue, similarly focuses on class rather than race. The short prose poem, “SH-SSS-SS-S!”, focuses on a mill-town in Alabama; the poem begins, “Riding through Alabama.” The speaker addresses the disparities between the living conditions of starving, unemployed mill-workers and the big houses of the northern owners of the mills through invoking class revolution:

I said: “Have you ever heard of Russia where nobody lives in a big house
while people starve?"

The boy said: "Shsss! You can't talk about Communism here."

Oddly enough, the poem draws our attention to Alabama, but makes no reference to the Scottsboro case as "We passed a town." Racism and racial violence in Alabama are ignored as the South’s problems are re-contextualized in terms of capitalism and labor repression. The white working-class is represented as innocent, weak, and vulnerable in comparison to the big bosses. Evading white working-class identification with racial hatred and responsibility for acts of racial violence, this particular poem allows the collective "we" of Masses readership to avoid any self-referential engagement with white racism.

Dorothy Livesay’s own contributions to Masses appeared in issues documenting lynching in the US South. Hughes' "SH-SSS-SS-S!" was printed at the end of Livesay’s co-written article on the state of Canadian art. Livesay’s contributions to Masses includes not only creative pieces but also articles and reviews. In Editing Modernity: Women and Little-Magazine Cultures in Canada, 1916-1956, Dean Irvine writes, "Her articles for Masses, beginning with the November 1932 issue, had already exposed her appreciation only of artists 'whose work tends towards a comprehension of present-day conditions, of the life off the working class' (‘Art Exhibition’)" (38). Her review articles, writes Irvine, "sharply reiterated the typically leftist sectarianism of PAC members and magazine contributors" (38). While Livesay’s Communist writings do represent, as Candida Rifkind notes, “the lived experiences of such political minorities as unemployed men and women, labourers, strikers, relief cases, First Nations people, immigrants, and children,” Livesay does not fully engage with issues of racial discrimination and violence until she leaves Canada for New Jersey in the fall of 1934 (36). Livesay’s writings during and after her time in
the United States are intimately informed by Popular Front writings and artwork that link labor repression and lynching.

In her various memoirs, Livesay recalls her active participation in the stimulating environment of New York’s cultural front. The left had a substantial presence in New York’s theatres, including Broadway, the alternative theater, and the units of the Federal Theatre Project. The proletarian avant-garde was represented in New York’s “coffee pots” and small galleries, and in networks made up of the John Reed Club, the Composers Collective, the Film and Photo League, and the Artists Union. In Right Hand, Left Hand, Livesay describes New York as a place where a writer could “breathe”:

The writers’ project interested me, and I got to know some of the people in it. Some of the leading writers of the thirties were employed to do research work on the history of areas, and the literary development in certain places. There was almost an army of them doing this. There were of course artists painting murals for public buildings, and there were musicians exploring the past folksong life so it was an extraordinarily stimulating experience to be there.

(130)

Livesay’s interest in art is evident in her co-written article entitled “Brief History of Canadian Art” that appeared in the May-June 1933 issue of Masses. Here, Livesay and C.R.P. answer their provocatively posed question: “Why is Canadian art so flat, so dull, so meaningless to the great mass of the people?” They surmise that “the art of the Canadian bourgeoisie has nothing further to endure but the slow dying,” and that Canadian artists need to turn away from “decorative lifeless imitations” to “other paintings – alive and virile in colour and form, and bold in outline – that describe scenes directly taken from a worker’s life.” For Livesay, the aim of the artist of the proletariat is to be in solidarity with the workers’ struggle, and bring to life through
the intensity of the visual image the male workers' everyday world. The "alive and virile" masculine image of the worker is an important feature that Livesay translates to the work of documentary poetry.

In her 1971 article, "The Documentary Poem: A Canadian Genre," Livesay emphasizes the visual and aural characteristics of documentary poetry, which she describes as "the employment of actual data itself arranged for ear and eye" (267). "Such poems," writes Livesay, "record immediate or past history in terms of a human story in a poetic language that is vigorous, direct, and rendered emotionally powerful by the intensity of its imagery" (281). Livesay's interest in documentary poetry can be linked to the mode of "social documentary" that dominated the 1930s. Unlike journalistic accounts, social documentary went beyond simply reporting on the conditions people faced by emphasizing historical specificity that attempted to draw out the causes of those conditions in an effort to encourage social change (Stott 21). Documentary culture's influence on left poetry is best known, perhaps, in the work of Kenneth Fearing, who was a member of the Dynamo poets. Walter Kalaidjian argues that Fearing's "verse project in some ways anticipated Kenneth Burke's 1935 address to the American Writers' Congress, calling for revolutionary symbols which would ramify social realism's more parochial and classist representation" (200). In "Revolutionary Symbolism in America," Burke argues that "the depression-era writer should not mimic Soviet style proletcult but 'take an interest in as many imaginative, aesthetic, and speculative fields as he can handle -- and into this breadth of his concern...interweave a general attitude of sympathy for the oppressed and antipathy towards our oppressive institutions'" (qtd. in Kalaidjian 200). In Right Hand, Left

55 The documentary aesthetics of the Dynamo poets attempts to produce affective responses for its readers to the sufferings of the working class. The documentary aesthetics of the Dynamo poets attempted to engage readers and encourage social change.
Hand, Livesay describes the importance of her trips to Greenwich Village bookshops, where she discovered poetry that gave her "some relief from the orthodox Marxian literature I had been consuming for so long – Masses, The Daily Worker, and the countless pamphlets and political tracts along with some heavier economics and Engels, Lenin, and Stalin" (153). I argue that Livesay's documentary poems from the 1930s are informed by the documentary modernism of the Dynamo poets.56

In the June 1934 issue of Poetry, Morton Zable argues that Dynamo: A Journal of Revolutionary Poetry was one of the more interesting of the recent crop of left-wing magazines. Although Dynamo published no formal manifesto nor made an explicit statement of purpose, it did, in a sense, represent a school. While the Dynamo poet selected materials that best expressed Marxist attitudes, the Dynamo poet could not simply report the most recent coal strike and present it as socialist realism like a journalist. Rather, the Dynamo poet had to make political reality into poetry. Calling for innovations that reflected the new social sensibility, Dynamo attracted the most exciting of the Popular Front poets: among those who appeared in its pages were Sol Funaroff, Muriel Rukeyser, and Fearing. In 1935, Fearing became almost immediately known as a revolutionary poet with the publication of Poems under the Dynamo poetry series. In Poems, Fearing juxtaposes snatches of discourse drawn from

56 In Right Hand, Left Hand, Livesay describes the influence on English poetry on her emerging literary consciousness in New York. She writes,

What was my astonishment and unbelief to find some slim volumes of English poetry – revolutionary poetry but full of lyricism and personal passion! C. Day Lewis first, then Spender, then Auden, and MacNeice. There was nothing like it in America or Canada, but it was a movement that followed exactly where I had left off with my Paris thesis – it threw Eliot aside and proclaimed a brave new world. I think I must have wept over this discovery, but there was no friends and comrades who would have taken any interest in it. All I could do was write a poem myself, celebrating the new horizon. (153)

Livesay presents her own myth of origins for her socially conscious poetry, but as several critics have noted it needs to be interrogated. Caren Ir, for example, takes Livesay to task for repeating colonial narratives of discovery, and for devaluing many of her continental contemporaries. Rather than accept this self-mythologization, I trace the stylistic influences and intertextuality between Livesay and the Dynamo poets.
diverse registers and fields, particularly subverting the conventional boundaries between traditional lyric poetry and the textuality of the modern mass media. Similar to Fearing's poetic collages, Livesay's "Day and Night" is a composite record of voices from diverse registers and fields that uses new cultural industries (feature film, radio, jazz and folk music, etc) to produce and mobilize a public mass. Describing the mixture of Marxist ideas, popular music, and social documentary in "Day and Night," Livesay writes,

This documentary is dominated by themes of struggle: class against class, race against race. The sound of Negro spirituals mingled in my mind with Cole Porter's "Night and Day" and Lenin's words (I quote from memory): "To go two step forwards we may have to take one step back." (The Documentaries 17)

Like Fearing, Livesay deploys the techniques of popular culture to develop a "proletarian" counter-hegemony. My reading of "Day and Night" and Day and Night is not only informed by Livesay's engagement with the poetic strategies of the Dynamo poets, but also by the two major anti-lynching art exhibitions in New York City in 1935 that seem to inform some of the political content of Livesay's poetry.

In February 1935, the NAACP organized an exhibition of anti-lynching imagery called An Art Commentary on Lynching. In Imagery of Lynching: Black Men, White Women, and the Mob, Dora Apel writes, "The NAACP hoped the exhibition would help build support for new anti-lynching measures in Congress, the Costigan-Wagner Bill. Because [Walter] White was sensitive to charges that the exhibition was merely a propaganda ploy, having accused the ILD of the same thing in the Scottsboro case, the NAACP became a silent sponsor of the exhibition that included 183 patrons in a Who's Who of the New York elite" (84). Two weeks after the NAACP exhibition, the John Reed Club presented Struggle for Negro Rights at the ACA Gallery, the most
important commercial venue for left-wing artists. *Struggle for Negro Rights* was organized in conjunction with ILD, the Artists’ Union, Artists Committee of Action, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, and The Vanguard, all of which were initiated or affiliated with the Communist Party (118). The decision by the John Reed Club to hold their own anti-lynching art exhibition a couple of weeks after the NAACP’s exhibition reflects the antagonism and competing ideological and political approaches to lynching between the two organizations. While there is no direct evidence of Livesay’s attendance at either anti-lynching art exhibition, her involvement in the CP-USA and the New York cultural front suggest that she would have known of the anti-lynching campaigns.

William Gropper’s lithograph *Southern Landscape* was one of six works approvingly cited in the *New York World-Telegram* review of the John Reed Club’s *The Struggle For Negro Rights*. Depicting a large diagonal tree with a factory on one side and a small nude figure hanging from one of its branches on the other, *Southern Landscape* (1935) provides a visual representation of the CP-USA’s understanding of lynching’s roots in economic structural relations. Dora Apel writes, “In the United States during the 1930s, the emphasis on southern rural backwardness as the driving force behind lynching not only failed to recognize the real economic competition created between poor whites and poor blacks for access to land, it obscured the role of planters and employers in supporting and facilitating racial violence in an attempt to keep wages down and re-establish the old social hierarchy in a changed democratic society” (49). For the CP-USA, economic competition and technological innovations were the lead causes for lynching. In *A Spectacular Secret*, Goldsby similarly argues that the practice of lynching was not separate from the “industrial innovations that resulted in American workers toiling long hours over complicated machinery that caused severe physical injuries and even death” (24). Livesay’s “Day and Night”
seems to give words to Gropper’s lithograph as it connects the practice of lynching 
with labor repression and technological innovations.

"Day and Night" opens with a cinematic description of the outside of the 
factory – the “Dawn, red and angry” and a “shaft of steam searching the air" (Day and 
Night 16). As the camera lens moves from the outside to the inside of the factory, we 
see factory workers working along the assembly line. In this scene, the movements of 
“the giant arm command” and direct the factory workers, who are reduced to 
components of the machine itself as “they move into sockets, every one a bolt” (16). 
Within this first section, the images of the internal movements of the factory are 
matched with various sounds, as attention is drawn to the whistles and screams, the 
humming and whirring of machines. The repetitive movement of the assembly line 
imagined as “a dance in time to the machines” is given sound through a heavy, 
jerking meter that echoes the workers’ futile dance (16):

One step forward
Two steps back
Shove the lever,
Push it back

While Arnot whirls
A roundabout
And Geoghan shuffles
Bolts about

One step forward
Hear it crack
Smashing rhythm –
Two steps back. (16-17)
The “smashing rhythm” is ominous, violent, and oppressive, and within this mechanized dance, the giant arm’s “writhing whack” maintains the men’s ritualized movements and drowns out their shouts (16). In their attempts at efficient mass production, Taylorism and Fordism succeeded in mass-producing their labor force, creating uniform laborers who each repeated their single activity with machine-like efficiency.

Taylor developed a method for restructuring labor to maximize profits in the manufacturing sector. Most notably, Taylor’s management principles promoted the division of complex tasks into ones repeated in a limited amount of time and the disciplinary regulation of workers’ bodies to eliminate superfluous motion. Henry Ford adapted some of Taylor’s methodology to the automobile assembly line. Ford’s contribution of the moving assembly line to the factory labor process, in which the mechanized workers’ bodies conformed to the temporal schedule dictated by the machinery around them, further led to his workers’ loss of individuation in the wake of their identification with the company, its products, and its labor processes. The social character of temporality is transformed to the point of enacting the worker’s premature death. The “moving human belt” in “Day and Night” personifies the “body and soul” crushing of efficient mass production (16). 57

In “Day and Night,” capitalism is not merely embodied by the ruthless few, but is shown to be a pervasive web of systematic command underpinning all activities as it is constituted in modern society. Beginning with the lines “Day and Night / Night and Day,” the third section of the poem is framed by the promise of romance in Cole

---

57 In Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Karl Marx describes the dehumanizing effects of day and night shifts on workers. The capital’s “vampire thirst” for labor “during all the 24 hours of the day” establishes an independent framework within which human motions, events, and actions occur (367). Previously demarcated “naturally” by sunrise and sunset, time comes to be contained within a set of hours that comprise the work day.
Porter’s popular 1932 song “Night and Day” from the Broadway musical *The Gay Divorcee*. In Porter’s song, the speaker describes his love as a “hungry yearning burning inside of me.” He speaks of his loneliness as he imagines a day when “you let me spend my life making love to you.” His heartache exceeds the natural cycles of “night and day, day and night” as the “voice within [him] keeps repeating...like the tick, tick, tock of the stately clock.” Estranged from the natural world, the mechanical work of industrial labor extends itself into the rhythms of the worker’s body and the natural impulses of human contact are replaced by the rhythms of the clock.

In “Day and Night,” the speaker in the third section attempts to awaken workers from the lull of popular culture; these workers, he says, “move as through sleep’s revolving memories,” the promises of freedom, wealth, and romance (17). He attempts to awaken them by reminding them of their everyday realities of discrimination for immigrant communities. The earlier names of Arnot and Geoghan suggest Irish and Eastern European ethnicities, and the speaker links their non Anglo-Saxon Protestant ethnicities to poor wages and no social mobility. Galvanizing the workers to strike, the speaker says,

Piling up hatred, stealing the remnants
Doors forever folding before –
And where is the recompense, on what agenda
Will you set love down? Who knows of peace? (17)

The speaker rallies the workers to strike against capitalism and the ruling class. The imperatives of efficiency and production in the factory have extended its control into their everyday lives. The speaker seeks remembrance rather than reification (forgetting), and advocates cultural practices rather than mere false consciousness.

The “cracks” and “whacks” that keep the factory workers in line in the first section of “Day and Night” echo the overseer’s whip during slavery, and draw a
parallel between the fates of black and white workers under industrial capitalism. The speaker in the third section of “Day and Night” registers the similarities between himself and his black co-worker. The burning coals “burn our skins away, his and mine”:

We were working together, night and day, and knew
Each other’s stroke; and without words exchanged
An understanding about kids at home,
The landlord’s jaw, wage cuts, and overtime. (18)

Here, Livesay notes the ways in which the temporality of commodified abstract labor does not completely subsume or contain heterogeneous temporalities. Within the factory, the white worker describes a social relation with a black man that emerges naturally – from “working together, night and day” – and stands in contrast to the social relation produced by capital earlier in the poem that joins Arnot and Geoghan in a mechanical dance. The speaker describes a friendship that relies on intuition and mutual understanding to bridge the distance between them.

The speaker’s use of the word “buddies” to describe their friendship is also reminiscent of Hughes’ revolutionary friendship in “Good morning Revolution”; Hughes writes, “We’re buddies, see – ”. The speaker in “Day and Night” says,

We were like buddies, see? Until they said
That nigger is too smart the way he smiles
And sauces back to the foreman; he might say
Too much one day, to others changing shifts.
Therefore they cut him down, who flowered at night
And raised me up, day hanging over night –
So furnaces could still consume our withered skins. (18)
Here, the black male worker whose smiles and impertinence are seen as dangerous and threatening to the factory’s order is the embodiment of Hughes’ allegorical figure Revolution. The speaker sets up a clear division between “we” (the black worker and himself) and “they” – those who manage the factory and the labor: “they said...he might say / too much one day, to others changing shifts” (18). The speaker suggests that factory bosses were worried about worker unrest, and therefore “they cut him down” (18). Here, Livesay evokes the imagery of lynching to suggest that factory bosses played central roles in agitating lynching fever among white workers.

Here, the black worker who “sauses back to the foreman” needs to be shown his place at the bottom of the racial hierarchy by being physically and violently subjugated through the act of lynching. In *Men, Mobs, and Law: Anti-Lynching and Labor Defense in US Radical History*, Rebecca Hill argues that the ILD did not believe lynching was a worker directed action: “Even if bosses were not doing the lynching themselves, the ILD argued, lynching fever had been created by the attempts of bosses and the boss press to whip up, distract, and divide workers who were becoming united by conditions brought about by the Depression” (231). The speaker notes the ways in which his relationship with the black worker “raised him up,” and that this resistive spirit “flowered at night” (18). This organic growth or blossoming of resistance is set in contrast to the mechanical noise that drowns at the men’s shouts earlier in the poem. The social relation between the two men, “Night and Day,” is presented as a natural equality; however, the lynching produces a social relation that is unnatural, “day hanging over night” (18). While the lynching image should perhaps read night hanging over day, the image Livesay gives suggests that the white worker is also a victim of a kind of lynching. The lynching encouraged by factory bosses subdues worker unrest by providing, what W.E.B. DuBois describes as, a
“psychological wage.” The speaker clearly notes that this wage does not change the conditions of capitalist exploitation as the furnaces “still consume our withered skins” (18). It is at this moment that Livesay shifts from documenting labor repression and lynching to describing the kinds of political actions that will be necessary for revolutionary change to occur.

In the following section, Livesay uses musical rhythms of black resistance in the form of the “negro spiritual” to mobilize a united workers’ struggle. In The Life of Poetry, Muriel Rukeyser pays the greatest tribute to African-American music: “From the Negroes of this country issue a wealth of poetry, buried in that it never touches its full audience; it touches few poets; but it passes, as song, into the common air at once, stirring forever those who hear blues and shouts, the dark poetry” (98). Livesay’s incorporation of black musical forms in “Day and Night” follows Rukeyser and other leftist poets who saw black music as authentic signifiers or modes of collective resistance. “Drawn by their convictions as well as by the CP-USA’s attention to segregation, prejudice, and interracial violence,” writes Michael Thurston, “these writers [Sol Funaroff, Genevieve Taggard, and Muriel Rukeyser] sought both to make common cause with blacks and to speak authoritatively about ‘black’ issues (i.e., issues that they saw more broadly in terms of social justice)” (69). In “Day and Night,” Livesay sets up a dialogic relationship between black and white workers through the white workers’ response to the black workers’ call:

Lord, I’m burnin’ in the fire

58 Both DuBois, in his study of white workers in the Reconstruction South, and David Roediger more recently, have suggested that whites benefited from a non-monetary “psychological wage” – that is, feelings of superiority over black workers – as a result of discriminatory policies at all levels of employment process. See W.E.B. Du Bois’ Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880 and David Roediger’s The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class.

59 Livesay makes references to black music in other writings from the same period. In her radio play, “The Times Were Different”? (1936), she has her white female protagonist dancing in Harlem to the music of Duke Ellington and listening to the rhythm of “Every day da Lawd is Watchin’” played on the jukebox (Right Hand, Left Hand 143).
Lord, I'm steppin' on the coal
Lord, I'm blacker than my brother.
Blow your breath down here.

Boss, I'm smothered in the darkness
Boss, I'm shrivellin' in the flames
Boss, I'm blacker than my brother
Blow your breath down here. (19)

Livesay’s incorporation of lyrics from the spiritual “Shadrack” speaks to the revolutionary promise of solidarity. In the biblical story, Shadrach, Mechak, and Abednego refuse to bow down to a colossal golden statue and are thrown into a furnace where their faith protects them from a fiery death. In Livesay’s incorporation of the black spiritual, she secularizes the Biblical story as she replaces the “Lord” with the “Boss,” and figures the factory workers as “the children in the fiery furnace” (“Shadrack,” Armstrong). If it is the power of the Gospel that gives Shadrach, Mechak, and Abednego strength, it is Marxist literature that will power the workers’ faith in revolution.

In One Step Forward, Two Steps Back, Lenin writes, “the proletariat can, and inevitably will, become an invincible force only through its ideological unification on the principles of Marxism being reinforced by the material unity of organization, which welds millions of toilers into an army of the working class” (12). In the last section of the poem, Livesay suggests that the revolution will happen in the factory and that workers will use the mechanical dance (“One step forward / Two steps back / Will soon be over: / Hear it crack!” (21)) itself to overthrow the system. The section begins with Livesay juxtaposing the industrial world with the images of rural life and the natural world:
Up in the roller room, men swing steel
Swing it, zoom; and cut it, crash.
Up in the dark the welder’s torch
Make sparks fly like lightning’s reel.

Now I remember storm on a field
The tree bow tense before the blow
Even the jittering sparrow’s talk
Ripples into the still tree shield. (19)

The mechanized factory storm is overwhelming natural life – “We are in storm that has no cease / No lull before, no after time” (20) – and is reminiscent of Walter Benjamin’s description of the storm of progress. In “Thesis on the Philosophy of History,” Walter Benjamin describes linear time as an empty, meaningless repetition, in which alienated labor is produced. He spells out most fully his distinction between the linear continuum of historical evolution, what he calls here “homogenous, empty time,” and the explosion of its additive sequence by the power of revolutionary memory (261). Linking technical progress with social regression, Benjamin suggests the arresting of the “pile of debris” created by a storm called “progress” will occur by true “revolutionary classes” seeking to perpetuate the moment in which the ordinary sequence of ticking seconds is ruptured (258, 261).

In “Day and Night,” the mechanized factory is a storm that never ceases: “We bear the burden home to bed, / The furnace glows without hearts: / Our bodies hammered through the night / Are welded into bitter bread” (20). Yet, that bitterness also provides the only way to interrupt the factory’s rhythm. A worker must use the few fleeting moments of silence allotted to him to

Use it not
For love’s slow count:

Add up hate,

And let it mount. (21)

In forcing the workers to replicate the machine’s efficiency, mass production is radicalizing the workers and setting the stage for revolution. No longer enslaved by the frantic whirring of the machine or the mechanical dance, the speaker sees the “weakness / In the foreman’s case” and strength in numbers. This burst of anger spurs men into action and forces the mechanical movement to go out of kilt:

The wheel must limp

Till it hangs still

And crumpled men

Pour down the hill.

Day and night

Night and day –

Till life is turned

The other way! (21)

The success of a resistance to the mechanized and relentlessly crushing rhythm of industrial life is not readily assured, but this ending of “Day and Night” does suggest that a transformation will only occur after the time of capital is interrupted.

While some critics have been unsatisfied by Livesay’s depiction of the efficacy of revolution, Livesay’s depiction of the time of capital and its deathly effects on workers is echoed in the poetry of Sol Funaroff and Kenneth Fearing. Similar to Livesay’s “Day and Night,” Sol Funaroff’s “Factory Night” in The Spider and the Clock (1938) represents the factory as a destructive force against nature:

Smooth as the oil the factory night

166
pours into grooves of the company town
and down the shaft of the iron mill
whose engines, cushioned in beds of grease
purr like iron beasts in sleep. (11)

The mechanical noise of the factory extends itself into the town and "leaves behind / a town of clapboard skeletons and carbon dust" (12). Funaroff links the worker's deathly existence to the time of capital in "Time is Money":

    Tick-tock. Time is Money.
    Tick-tock. Safety First
    and Haste is Waste
    and all mangled limbs of Time,
    charred bodies, slag in white-hot steel,
    the rotting teeth, the t.b.-faces,
    the yellow-green decaying skins of Time! (13)

Various slogans yelled out by foremen regarding the safety of the workers are undermined by the demands of productivity and profit. For Funaroff, the reduction of time to moneymaking (figured in the reiteration of the Benjamin Franklin summation that "Time is Money") renders a premature death for the worker as his body is "decaying" and "rotting" to the tick of the clock. The workers bodies are "mangled limbs of Time, / charred bodies, slag in white hot steel" (13). Similar to the image of the burned tree limb in Gropper's *Southern Landscape*, Funaroff describes "charred bodies" hanged on mangled limbs.

In "Denouement" from *Poems* (1935), Fearing similarly articulates a dark and deathly relation between the time of capital and violence. 60 The poem begins with the potentially revolutionary hope that the social "desire of millions" may for once

---

60 Fearing's 1948 murder-mystery novel is aptly titled *The Big Clock*.
become real. The stopping of clock time becomes central to this new social order. The speaker says,

Clock, point to the decisive hour and, hour without name when
stacked and waiting murder dissolves, stay forever
as the world grows new; (68)

The halting of clock time produces the “decisive hour when murder fades” and allows for a new world to emerge. The poem asks that “flesh and blood” be “deathless.” However, the speaker’s optimism for revolutionary action vanishes as “a thunderbolt kiss” and “South Sea music” from the silver screen interrupts the call for social change. The desire for a kind of messianic revolutionary moment gives way to the false consciousness of mass culture. The following section immediately begins with the description of a lynching:

But here is the body found lying face down in a burlap sack,
strangled in the noose jerked shut by these trussed and
twisted and frantic arms; (68)

The remainder of the poem bears witness to this lynching, and other scenes of black subjugation, within the context of white working-class poverty, starvation, and death. Among the scenes of subjection Fearing references are the Hawk Nest’s Incident (“But these are your lungs, scarred and consumed?” (70)) and the Scottsboro case (“‘They Shall Not Die’ as they sink in / clouds of poison gas and fall beneath clubs, hooves, rifles, / fall and no not arise, arise, unite” (72).61 Fearing links these historical events of black subjugation together, and posits political struggle in “the issues that

---

61 Details of the Hawk’s Nest Incident are provided in my later reading of Livesay’s “Seven Poems.” “They Shall Not Die!” was a phrase tied to political protests of the Scottsboro case; for example, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights published a pamphlet in 1932 entitled They Shall Not Die! Stop the Legal Lynching! The Story of Scottsboro in Pictures.
return....the scenes that come again” (72). For Fearing political struggle is found and fought in the violent realities of life.

Fearing and Funaroff’s depiction of lynching within the context of capital’s domination of time provides one context in which we can understand the repetition of lynching scenes in Livesay’s 1944 collection Day and Night. The first poem of the collection is “Seven Poems,” written between 1934 and 1940. The seven sections (or poems) do not form a coherent narrative, but they do trace the various personal and political changes, upheavals, and devastations that the speaker has witnessed during this period. Of particular interest is the fourth section or poem in “Seven Poems” where Livesay documents the racial discrimination and violence against African-Americans in Scottsboro, Alabama and Gauley Bridge, West Virginia. The Hawk’s Nest Incident at Gauley Bridge was one of the worst industrial disasters in US labor history. Thousands of workers, mostly African-American men, died of silicosis, an incurable lung disease, that they contracted from breathing glass dust while drilling the Gauley tunnel in the early 1930s. During and after the drilling of the tunnel, reports of the disease among the miners who did the work began to circulate. Because many of the men had left the area after becoming sick or after the completion of work, the story of their illness and deaths were difficult to substantiate. Rumors circulated in nearby

62 Livesay’s Day and Night articulates a broad commitment to Popular Front politics. “Day and Night” is accompanied by another documentary poem “The Outrider” that depicts the oppression of the farm laborer. In the final poem of the collection “West Coast,” Livesay uses mobile and interactive shifting points of view to depict a united “we” of shipyard workers intent on “straddling [a] new day” (48). Day and Night also includes a poem for Spanish poet García Lorca. Livesay’s “Lorca” contributes to what Cary Nelson describes as “the poetic memorial service for García Lorca [that] started almost immediately after his death in August at the outset of the Spanish Civil War” (226). “Lorca” is one of Livesay’s many contributions to the international choral response to Lorca’s murder that includes poems by Rukeyser, Funaroff, and Fearing. Funaroff writes, “Lorca, you who were the morning song of Spain / the song is on the lips of the people!” (Nelson 231). Rukeyser wrote of the Spanish Civil War in U.S. 1 (1938), A Turning Wind (1939), Beast in View (1944), The Speed of Darkness (1968), and, in “Neruda, the Wine,” in her last book, The Gates (1976), she calls Spain “that core of all our lives, / The long defeat that brings us what we know” (238). “The Outrider,” “West Coast,” and “Lorca” each reflect Livesay’s continued support of the Popular Front in the late 1930s and early 1940s.
towns, but it was impossible to verify the stories of mass burials. Finally, in 1936, spurred by press accounts of the disaster, Congress convened hearings to investigate what happened at Gauley Bridge.

In section four of “Seven Poems,” Livesay references the human disaster at Gauley Bridge, as the speaker describes the ways in which “magnifying glass / revealed death’s desert in a finger-nail / Of dust” for miners poisoned by silicosis (4). The Hawk Nest Incident was reported in the mainstream press, but the speaker critiques the merely factual reportage claiming “This is not news.” Establishing responsibility for the tragedy, the speaker describes Union Carbide’s decision to ignore the US Bureau of Mines regulations that silica be mined with hydraulic water drills to limit dust as “a resolution passed” (4):

Impartially the chairman-undertaker
Smiling casts his vote, announces death
Speculates on population where
Our wombs are lacerated, lovers’ breath
Is torn asunder in the cool March air. (4)

The word “Speculates” functions here to highlight the ways in which Union Carbide were willing to risk the lives of African-Americans - the work was performed predominately by black migrants – in the short term with the hope of making a profit from the extracted commodity. The speaker gives a sense of the devastating effects on families (“wombs are lacerated”) as miners eventually suffocated (“lovers’ breath / Is torn asunder”) and died from silica lung poisoning (4). The “chairman-undertaker[’s]” decision to shift the company’s attention from the construction of a hydroelectric power plant to the extraction of silica ultimately meant the death of thousands of workers.
In “Seven Poems,” Livesay does not understand the Hawk’s Nest Incident as a single event, but within an amalgamation of scenes of racial violence and inequality against African-Americans in US history. In the voice of an African-American collective, the speaker says,

We are the children long prepared for dust
Ready in bone, the wrist a pulsing pain:
On a precarious railway-rib we lie
Our limbs long ready for the armored train—
Ears to the ground and bare eyes to the sky. (4)

The history of racial violence and injustice to African-Americans is figured as a living reality, as a “pulsing pain” reverberates within the collective social body. Pain is “in bone” (inborn) and its generational memory has prepared the black community to not only grieve but also survive these deaths. The phrase “precarious railway-rib” joins the premature death sentence of silicosis poisoning shown on x-rays of the rib and chest area with the trials, convictions, and death sentences of the Scottsboro boys for allegedly raping two white women on the freight train. Linking the injustices against the miners at Gauley Bridge and the boys at Scottsboro, the speaker calls for “armored” protection against white hatred. Laying “Ears to the ground and bare eyes to the sky,” the speaker anticipates the ground swell and opening of a transformative new order (4).

The gendering of this new transformative social order is especially interesting given the emphasis in the documentary poems on the virile masculine worker. In private correspondence with Livesay, Canadian poet E.J. Pratt describes her documentary poem “West Coast,” which ends Day and Night, as “fine muscular poetry.” However, many of the poems in Day and Night are lyric poems that foreground the feminine and the domestic. These poems engage the time of capital
and women’s subordination to white patriarchal control. As Paula Rabinowitz documents in *Labor and Desire: women’s Revolutionary Fiction in Depression America*, class struggle within Communist Party rhetoric was “metaphorically engendered through a discourse that re-present class conflict through the language of sexual difference. The prevailing verbal and visual imagery reveled in an excessively masculine and virile proletariat poised to struggle against the effeminate and decadent bourgeoisie” (8). The class position of white middle-class women who wanted to become politically active in the Communist Party was especially problematic: “Hopelessly outside of the working class because she was not hungry, the female intellectual was ideologically inscribed rather than materially determined” (54). In her lyric poems, Livesay attempts to include white middle-class women within the CP-USA’s campaigns against labor repression and lynching by foregrounding an identificatory relation between black men and white women. In a letter, Livesay writes, “everything I write contains pairs of opposites….Hegel’s thesis, antithesis leading to synthesis – Marx and Engels was it, analogy of the water, boiling, turning into steam. Revolution! A new society being born” (quoted in Irr 230). For Livesay, a central oppositional pairing in her lyric poems is that of the black man and white woman.

The narrative organization of Livesay’s “Serenade for Strings” is reminiscent of Rukeyser’s “The Face of the Dam: Vivian Jones” from “The Book of the Dead” that begins *U.S. I* (1938). In “The Face of the Dam: Vivian Jones,” Rukeyser uses the movement of the clock to organize the poem and convey a sense of time passing. Vivian Jones is the African-American engineer of the now unused locomotive that carried silica on the C & O from the Gauley Tunnel to Alloy:

On the quarter he remembers how they enlarged
the tunnel and the crews, finding the silica,
how the men came riding freights, got jobs here
and went into the tunnel-mouth to stay. (79)

As the clock moves from the hour to the quarter and then to the half, the movement in
the present parallels the move of Jones's memory of the past. Situating Jones "on the
hour" at the gorge where "he sits and sees the river at his knee":

There, where the men crawl, landscaping the grounds
at the power-plant, he saw the blasts explode
the mouth of the tunnel that opened wider
when precious in the rock the white glass showed.

[...]

hundreds breathed value, filled their lungs full of glass (78-79)

"The 'value' the men breathe is literally the 'precious' pure silicon," Robert Shulman
writes, "from Marxist discourse value – as part of a system of commodity exchange
the glass has value and the men breathe the profit, the surplus value the company gains
from the rock and from them" (197). Through this Marxist usage, "Rukeyser gives a
compressed, idiomatic indictment of capitalistic greed and indifference to workers'
lives" that is similarly expressed in Livesay's poem (197).

In "Serenade for Strings," Livesay extends the focus of capitalist time on the
discrete spaces of production to the sphere of reproduction. The clock in "Serenade for
Strings" charts the speaker's memory of reproductive labor: the first stanza begins,
"At nine from behind the door," and the second stanza begins, "At eleven louder!,"
and so on until her son's birth on "A burning noon-day" (29-31). The speaker
describes her body as a "cavern" through which her son will emerge:

And deep in the cavern
No longer the hammer
Faintly insistent
No longer the pickaxe
Desperate to save us
But minute by minute
The terrible knocking
God at the threshold!
Knocking down darkness
Battering daylight (29)

Livesay uses the metaphor of a cavern to describe reproductive labor in industrial terms. She gives value to female labor, often dismissed by the CP-USA, through aligning it with the manual labor of miners with their hammers and pickaxes. The speaker describes an alienation from her body, and presents a quiet protest. In italics, the speaker describes her body as being attacked, “wracked and writhing / Hammered and hollowed” (30). She has “No breath to fight it / No thought to bridge it” (30). She is exhausted and is left with only an “airless heaving” (30). She hears her newborn crying as “the final bolt has fallen” (31). Describing giving birth through industrial metaphors, Livesay attempts to include women (laborers in the home and workplace) in the CP-USA’s campaigns against labor repression and lynching.

Livesay’s organizational parallel of “Serenade for Strings” with Rukeyser’s “The Face of the Dame: Vivian Jones” suggests an identification that Livesay is making between white women and black men. In Right Hand, Left Hand, Livesay describes her encounters and interactions with African-Americans as “open[ing] a new area of identification” (129). Livesay’s empathetic identification with what she calls “their terrors and phobias inherited from centuries in the South” reminds us of Saidiya Hartman’s examination of “the precariousness of empathy and the uncertain line between witness and spectator” (The Documentaries 16, Hartman 4). In addition to work of the NAACP and CP-USA to bring attention to the violence and terror of
lynching, Livesay’s emerging race consciousness comes in this period from her direct engagement with African-Americans as a social worker. In *A Poetics of Social Work*, Kenneth James Moffatt describes Livesay’s involvement in social work as a complicated affair. Her decision to become a social worker was largely based on her need to find work, but it was also a product of her broad commitment to social welfare. In her journal entries of the 1970s about her experience during the Depression, she talks about her genuine 1930s commitment to both “the career of social work and to the communist interpretation of capitalist society” (qtd. in Moffatt 51). For Livesay, real experience was the most valuable source of knowledge that informed her roles as a poet, communist agitator, and social worker: “What I call experience today is the suffering of millions of human beings, the conflict around the conception of liberty” (52). She includes in her definition of “absolutely concrete experience” the disconcerting callousness and indifference of some people towards those who were suffering (51). Moffatt writes, “According to Livesay, vital questions such as whether there is an objective social truth could not be answered through abstract ideas for reform but only concrete experience...Livesay insisted on a dialectic between concrete lived relations and the ideal. Idealism abstracted from real relations was futile and decadent” (51).

In *Journey With My Selves: A Memoir 1909-1963*, Livesay describes the devastating economic and social conditions within which African-Americans lived in New Jersey:

I soon became aware, since I was working in the community as a caseworker, that there were specific social problems to be faced: housing, overcrowding, unemployment – all affecting the hundreds of black people who were moving or had moved from the south into small towns around New York...I got to know how stifled and impoverished was the black population. (146)
Paul, a university-educated African-American man, is repeatedly referred to in her discussions of her emerging racial consciousness. Through her friendship with Paul, Livesay becomes aware of the trauma of racial violence, and the ways in which terror structures and limits African-American life. “Paul was trapped,” Livesay writes, “by the treatment his people had gone through and this made him not exactly bitter, but depressed” (147). She writes,

It was perhaps not that night, but some other talking time the following week, when Paul told me of his family background in the south. He had an uncle who was hanged on a tree by the Ku Klux Klan. (147)

Paul’s story of his uncle’s murder at the hands of white supremacists in the South leads Livesay to become more conscious of Paul’s pain, and the intimacy between the two forces her to recognize the “racial antagonisms” that she “had not encountered” in Canada (147). Social work experience informed her writing; contact with people in need shaped her activism; and her activism affected her social work.

Livesay’s identification with black men emerges from her understanding of the ways in which both black men and white women are subjugated and dispossessed of agency in the lynching narrative. In “Prelude for Spring,” Livesay radically imagines a white woman watching her black lover lynched by a mob. The poem documents the joy between a white woman and black man – “Here is the meadow where we kissed” – as well as the violence that ends their relationship. Describing the innocence of the white woman who has fallen in love with a black man, the speaker says:

How blind two eyes
Shuttling to-fro
Not weaving light
Nor sight...
In darkness flow.
The speaker describes the woman's racial blindness that echoes in many ways Livesay's description of her own unawareness of racial difference in her memoirs. The poem describes the two lovers being chased by "proud prowler, this pursuer comes" and the "run, fearless of feet's thunder" (25, 26). The couple is caught, and the speaker describes the lynch mob's "surge / Axe striking stump" (26). Describing the man's murder at the hands of the lynch mob, the speaker says,

O beat of air, wing beat
Scatter of rain, sleet,
Resisting leaves,
Retarding feet

And drip of rain, leaf drip
Sting on cheek and lip
Tearing pores
With lash of whip (26)

The speaker documents the violence of the lynching -- the beating and whipping that tears his skin apart -- as well as the black man's defiance evident in the "resisting leaves" (26). Significantly, Livesay does not end the poem with this image of the lynched black body, but on the murder's effect on the white woman, who is now "Frozen, foot-locked / Heart choked and chafed / Wing-battered and unsafe" (28). "The hysteria of the white woman," writes Dora Apel, "is the implicit counterpart to the danger of the hypersexed black male...the white woman's hysterical body is integrated back into the social body while the hypersexed black body is publicly scourged and destroyed as inimical to the social body" ("Lynching Photographs" 57). In "Prelude for Spring," the woman is terrified, and the very condition of her black lover's proximity to her becomes an assault not only on her person, but also on her
senses, causing irresistible feelings of panic, frenzy, and fear. The socialist affect of love that Livesay imagines at the end of “Seven Poems” between two lovers is replaced with a more prevalent and sustained social affect of fear.

Livesay’s writings (creative and non-creative) produced after leaving the US suggest a familiarity with the hegemony of regulatory and prohibitive laws that infiltrate cultural forms and govern affective life. Forty years after leaving the US, Livesay provides the reasons for her departure in 1936: “I went home, supposedly with an ulcer but actually, I think with a slight nervous breakdown... Although I returned to my job in Englewood I was not well enough to carry on and the doctor sent me home for the winter. I spent it slowly getting well – probably psychoanalysis would have been the cure at that stage and writing. Besides the new poems eventually included in the volume Day and Night, I did quite a number of short stories, some of them published under a pseudonym in the new united front monthly, New Frontier” (Right Hand, Left Hand 153-54). As Livesay describes in her journals the importance of concrete experience to question objective social truth, her lyric poems undermine the CP-USA’s idealism of interracial solidarity that she represents in her documentary poems. Livesay’s experience with African-American men occurred during her social work; in her various writings from and about her time in the US she tells a similar story about a budding romance between a white Canadian woman (who resembles Livesay, but named “Margaret” and “Joan” in her writings) and a university-educated black man (most often named “Paul,” but also referred to as “Fred”) who is also a social worker. In each of these narratives, the interracial love affair is suppressed by racist beliefs and acts. The relationship’s quick end is attributed to the protagonist’s own exposed racism, the disapproval of the relationship by white male members of the CP-USA, and the disciplining of the protagonist’s body and desires by other white women. In each narrative iteration, the protagonist’s transgression of racial
boundaries is paired with a traumatic return “home” where her revolutionary ambitions are contained as she finds herself physically and psychologically “caught” (“The Times Were Different”? 150).

Here, I am suggesting that Livesay’s own experience seems to inform her identification with the “frozen, foot-locked” white woman in “Prelude in Spring.” In the final section of “Seven Poems,” Livesay imagines the joining of self with other as two lovers are figured safely wrapped up in each other bodies. The speaker imagines her lover tracing her new body with his finger-tip, and says,

No hazard here, for we
Like sleepers plunging deep
Into the recurring waves of dream
Cannot awake from the connected bliss.

We are asleep on the long limb of time. (6)

This last line echoes Funaroff’s line - “all mangled limbs of Time” - in “Time is Money” (13). For Funaroff, workers’ bodies are “mangled” together by Time’s disregard of humanity. For Livesay, the “the long limb of time” is the momentary stoppage or rupture of the time of capital and its organization of social relations. It is within nature’s time measured by the “recurring waves” that the two lovers find refuge. Ebbing in and out with the natural temporal rhythm of the “wave,” the speaker feels her body and its desires. No longer Funaroff’s “mangled limbs,” “charred bodies,” “decaying skins of Time!,” these two lovers experience “the nerve and sinew of ourselves” (6). While the races of the lovers are not clearly identified, the fact that there are “No hazard here, for we” suggests that it is a dangerous love for both of them and that the speaker can only imagine the safety of their love in a dream. In these lyric poems, Livesay abandons the violent realities of lived experience, and escapes to the timeless world of dreams.
Livesay's documentation of the injustices in Scottsboro, Alabama and atrocities in Gauley Bridge, West Virginia not only bring these human tragedies to light, but also aims at creating social transformation out of these losses. However, in the lyric poems, Livesay is removed from the political rhetoric of cross-racial solidarity of the Popular Front, and imagines the real dangers of cross-racial solidarity for black men and white women. These poems undercut the political idealism of the Popular Front as they often re-assert the hegemony of the race and gender hierarchies of white patriarchal supremacy. This dissonance is also evident in Livesay's 1945 poem, "For Paul Robeson: Playing Othello." Robeson first performed "Ballad for Americans" on a CBS network radio program called "The Pursuit of Happiness" on November 5, 1939. The song's popularity was such that Robeson was said to have briefly enjoyed the status of being "the voice of America." Indeed, the last line of the song pronounces the singer to be "America! America!" in response to the choral question — "Who are you?" — that recurs throughout. Within this patriotic veneer, the song acknowledges the United States' historical failings towards blacks, noting "the murders and lynching," and stressing the need for change: "Man in white skin can never be free / while his black brother is in slavery." "Ballad for Americans" articulates the Popular Front discourses of labor repression and lynching, and in "For Paul Robeson," Livesay imagines a swell of transnational solidarity after hearing Robeson's song on the radio.

In "For Paul Robeson," Livesay imagines the harmonizing of rhythms of both sound and silences, human and inhuman noises, that "fall and resound" in the rhythm of the sea. She attaches the sounds of Robeson's voice to these resounding waves as they extend "our world's first tongue" to "echoing circles" that "reach, embrace, rejoice!" (81). Livesay imagines four individuals all listening to the words of Robeson's song in their separate spaces. She writes,
Lose littleness, grow in the world they share.

...given of beneficence

Learn to breathe its air. (81)

The voice over the radio creates an expanded community of “beneficence” as the voice unifies a community of isolated listeners, their individual but simultaneous experiences are set in relation to each other. However, in the last stanza, Livesay is no longer listening to Robeson’s public voice, but instead reflecting on the black man who gives this voice its “noble bearings” (81). When she begins to contemplate his subjectivity, Robeson becomes more a symbol of a threatening black masculinity than a unifying voice. Caren Irr writes, “Like Othello, the play he reads, his presence evokes basic opposition: dark skin and illuminated, sunlit words; love and murder; balm and pain; joyous humanity and wilderness. In other words, mediating on the immediate, socially situated paradoxes of race pulls Livesay away from her dominant wave imagery” (225). As in Day and Night, Livesay’s belief in the politics of the Popular Front are undercut by her last thoughts on the injurious consequences of a kiss between a black man and a white woman. As she mediates on her own white subjectivity and desires, the violence and terror of lynching becomes, I would argue, sources for her own individual shame. I think this individual shame is most explicit in her continued attempts to revise and re-mythologize her time in the United States.

Significantly, her individual shame is expanded into a collective national shame in a following collection of poems, Call My People Home (1950). Here, Livesay documents the confiscation of fishing-boats and forced removal of Japanese-Canadians from their fishing-villages to the British Columbia interior. The speaker records the traumatic dispossession of Japanese-Canadians by white Canadians. Much like her emotional portrait of African-American resilience in the US South, Livesay paints a portrait of Japanese-Canadian physical and spiritual endurance in the face of
injustice and inhumanity. Livesay reveals Canada’s own history of racial terror, and she links these scenes of subjection in Canada to those in the US South through the poem’s title. “Call My People Home,” writes Livesay, was “an echo of the Negro spiritual often sung by [Paul] Robeson, ‘Let My People Go’” (33). The images of pain and suffering in Livesay’s poetry collections attempt to prohibit the desire to block from memory and comprehension these national shames.

Forty years after the publication of Call My People Home, Livesay would express disappointment, but not surprise, that her documentary poems had failed in their social purpose. In Journey With My SELVES, she writes, “twenty years went by before the Canadian public began to realize what had happened; my plan had failed in its aim to rouse the wrath of the people. It was ahead of its time” (173). Several years earlier, George Woodcock had also discussed the effect of timing of the initial reception of Livesay’s poem. Because it appeared “so close after the war,” Woodcock maintains, “Canadians were still not prepared to view [these events] with the shame that Livesay stirs through her treatment” (56). The US South in Livesay’s Day and Night does not provide a space through which to displace and disavow Canadian racism, but rather provides a lens through which to recognize and understand the workings of racial violence in Canada. Following Livesay’s lead, Canadians must no longer hide behind the prevailing mythology that “Mississippi is anywhere south of the Canadian border,” as Malcolm X contends, and must instead begin to give an account of our own unrestrained barbarity (Haley 424).
EPILOGUE

"I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!"

Well, I heard mister Young sing about her
Well, I heard ole Neil put her down
Well, I hope Neil Young will remember
A Southern man don't need him around anyhow.

Sweet home Alabama
Where the skies are so blue
Sweet home Alabama
Lord, I'm coming home to you.

In Birmingham they love the governor
Now we all did what we could do
Now Watergate does not bother me
Does your conscience bother you?
Tell the Truth.


"From Dixie to the Dominion" has charted the transnational circulation of scenes of subjection as they have traveled from the US South to Canada, and explored the ways they have taken root, become adapted, and been re-articulated in literary and visual culture in Canada. Beyond representing the dispossession of white privileges and rights by capitalism's abstraction of labor (Haliburton), the dehumanizing effects of commodity culture on social relations (Moodie), and the deadly relation between the time of capital and violence (Livesay), the cultural work of scenes of subjection, I have argued, constructs counter-hegemonic discourses of insurgent temporalities that invent, maintain, and renew white supremacy. Haliburton, Moodie, and Livesay all reckon with the consequences of global capitalism through using black bodies as surrogate selves for meditations on "human" (read white) freedom. Together these writers recognize the pervasiveness of ideologies of global capitalism that penetrate down to the level of individual consciousness, and figure ways of extracting oneself from this system of dispossession that is founded upon the extraction of surplus labor
and an ever-expanding colonial marketplace. Telling the South in Canada thus enacts an unending process of white self-making and enjoyment that take shape in and through transnational circuits of cultural exchange. However, this complex process of telling the South is also one that can be subsumed back into the marketplace and the structures of capital’s dominance as seen in my examination of lynching photographs’ coevalness with contemporary secular, modernization aspirations.

“From Dixie to the Dominion” comprises one mapping of the cultural roots and routes, carried in literary and visual form and genre, joining the US South and Canada. From Haliburton’s intertextual engagements with southwestern humor, I traced the cross-cultural interconnections between Nova Scotia and the South in their resistance to US northern economic colonialism. Haliburton’s aestheticization of black fright through the reversals of bodies in various scenes of subjection rendered racial violence against black bodies as an appropriate response, in fact a comic response, to black empowerment and equality. Examining Moodie and Stowe’s use of the slave narrative and sentimental genre, I argued that the whipping scenes functioned as pedagogical moments to produce white civil subjects who can save the nation from the moral and spiritual peril accompanying the secularization of market capitalism. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *Roughing it in the Bush* counter the universalizing tick of the clock as it expands the colonial marketplace by foregrounding social relations determined by a greater good and sanctioned by a great God. My readings of the visual grammar of lynching photographs examined the ways in which these scenes of subjection documented local ambivalence toward and anxieties about the extension of the time of capital to Main Street built environments. The Main Street lynchings, I argued, created a time lag in which there is re-signification of white “freedom” and agency within commodity culture. Similarly preoccupied with violence and the time of capital, Livesay’s *Day and Night* re-visions the southern landscape through an
inter textual engagement with the documentary modernism of the *Dynamo* poets. She imagines a messianic revolutionary moment when the rupturing of clock time will produce the “decisive hour when murder fades” and a new world emerges. Taken together, these examples of Canadian reproductions or re-enactments of scenes of subjection culled from the US South script, shape, and authorize counter-intuitive histories of racial violence in the Americas.

This project has interrogated the limitation of Malcolm X’s assertion – “Mississippi is anywhere south of the Canadian border” – that has pithily provided a summation of new southern studies’ challenges to the regionalization of racial violence in the United States (Haley 424). Contesting the romanticization of race relations in Canada, I have taken seriously the transnational comparative lens to understanding racial violence that the Malcolm X assertion provides. I have attempted to move beyond a comparative project of “influences” or parallel trajectories by demonstrating the contemporaneous, dialogic relation between US and Canadian writers and artists through their simultaneous telling and retelling of stories of the South. In this study, Canadian cultural producers have been read in conjunction with those in the United States, including Augustine Baldwin Longstreet, Davy Crockett, Harriet Beecher Stowe, George Washington Harris, Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, William Faulkner, Langston Hughes, Muriel Rukeyser, Sol Funaroff, Kenneth Fearing, Richard Wright, and Ralph Ellison. I have argued that telling the South in tandem has become sedimented performatively in an alternative public sphere, what Dipesh Chakrabarty alludes to as “other temporalities, other forms of worlding,” that is concretely embodied and made present in dynamic cultural practices (62).

During the early 1970s, the FM radio band transmitted a (new) telling of the South between the Canadian rock musician Neil Young and the Southern rock band Lynyrd Skynyrd. In 1970, Young released the first of two popular songs in which he
witnessed racial discrimination and violence in the South. “I saw cotton and I saw black / Tall white mansions and little shacks,” sings Young in “Southern Man.” Two years later, on his hugely popular album *Harvest*, Young turned South again, singing, “Alabama, you’ve got the weight on your shoulders.” Young asks, “What are you doing, Alabama? You got the rest of the Union to help you along. What’s going wrong?” In 1974, Lynyrd Skynyrd responded to Young’s telling of the South in their southern nationalist song, “Sweet Home Alabama.” Ronnie Van Zant, the lead singer of Lynyrd Skynyrd, defends the history and worldview of fellow white southerners. Borrowing a line from an earlier song about the South – “Proud Mary” –, the first line of the song’s refrain stakes claim to the southern homeland: “Big wheels keep on turning,” sings Van Zant, “carrying me home to see my kin.” Van Zant addresses Young directly singing, “Well, I hope Neil Young will remember: Southern man don’t need him around, anyhow.” While Van Zant claims that the “southern man don’t need him around anyhow,” this project illustrates the centrality of the Canadian cultural producer to narrative reconstructions of the South. Rather than merely reiterate Quentin Compson’s disavowal of his hatred for the South and its past at the end of *Absalom, Absalom!*, Van Zant interestingly addresses the role of outsiders in the production and enactment of southern racial ideologies, when he asks, “Does your conscience bother you? Tell the truth.” If Van Zant’s lyrics imply an understanding of Young as a challenge to rather than an affirmation of southern racial ideologies, the existence of this musical interchange reminds us that the transnational dialogue between Canada and the US South is far from over.
WORKS CITED


— “The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility.” *Walter Benjamin:


Berlant, Lauren. “Poor Eliza.” American Literature 70.3 (September 1998): 635-668.


Chakrabarty, Dipesh. “Marxism After Marx: History, Subalternity, and Difference.”


Clemens, Cyril. *Young Sam Clemens*. Portland: Leon Tebbets Editions, 1942.


Denning, Michael. *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the


Houghton, 1897.


Francis. H. Rev. of Fielding Burke’s *Call Home the Heart. Masses* (May-June 1933).


Kelly, Darlene. “Haliburton’s International Yankee.” *The Thomas Chandler


- *Day and Night.* Toronto: Ryerson, 1944.


- "The Times Were Different"?. *Right Hand Left Hand: A True Life of the Thirties.*


- *A Voice From the South: Comprising Letters from Georgia to Massachusetts, and to the Southern States.* Ithaca: Cornell University Library Digital Collections, 1847.


- Mathieu, Sara-Jane. "North of the Colour Line: Sleeping Car Porters and the Battle


Nelson, Cary. *Revolutionary Memory: Recovering the Poetry of the American Left.*


Prince, Mary. *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave Related By Herself.*


Raitlin, Ben. “‘What Else Could a Southern Gentleman Do? Quentin Compson, Rhett Butler, and Miscegenation.’ *Southern Literary Journal* 35.2 (Spring 2004):

197


