

NOVELS, NARRATIVE SKETCHES AND SHORT STORIES OF
1930-1940 CONCERNING THE POORER AMERICANS

by

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INTRODUCTION

Beginning about 1930, writers other than professional economists and sociologists, began giving attention to poorer Americans. This tendency increased and there is now a growing literature about the "ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed one-third of Americans."

This study was undertaken to find the significant themes, methods and concerns of this literature, and incidentally to get the perspective of artist writers on attitudes and situations common in current sociological focus and in social welfare practice.

The material was limited to novels, narrative sketches and short stories. Drama was included only where the novels considered had been dramatized.

The method was to read, besides some background material, a wide sampling of the 1930-1940 novels, narrative sketches and short stories about the "disinherited"; to analyze and classify these writings as to regions, dominant themes, methods of treatment and significant attitudes; to select a few examples, superior in their reflection of this part of American life; and to maintain personal contact with local poor people and some local welfare problems..

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NOVELS, NARRATIVE SKETCHES AND SHORT STORIES OF
1930-1940 CONCERNING THE POORER AMERICANS

Beginning in the early nineteen thirtiss there started a great increase of writings about poorer Americans.¹ More than just an industrial proletarian manifestation, these writings were part of the general social awakening that followed the economic crash of 1929. As though set by the same ignition, they burst out from city, town, village, farm, and desert. Not only were there more poor to writs about, but there was a new social awareness, aptly expressed in the title of Louise Armstrong's We Too Are the People.

An examination of recent novels, narrative sketches and short stories in this field has led to several conclusions which this thesis attempts to establish:

These novels, narrative sketches and short stories were indigenous to all regions of the country.

They were concerned with restlessness and readjustment; their situations and plots were found in one or more of three often interrelated socio-economic conditions, Home-

¹Charles and Mary Beard, America in Mid-Passage, p. 686. The Macmillan Company. New York. 1938.

"In the mid-passage, came something like a definite break in the flow of literary tradition. It was not a muck-raking nor a Utopian dissidence. It was largely an outcry in the name of the disinherited... It looked in the direction of the working class, sought to voice its tragedies and to impress upon its readers that something drastic should be done to redeem the disinherited."

lessness - Unemployment - Relief.

Written neither by nor to the "Have Nots," they sounded warning to the "Haves," ranging from (1) that only implied in simple photographic realism through (2) that veiled in satire and irony to (3) that of loud pronouncements for justice.

The forms of writing were influenced by sociological case study report methods. Some of the writing was in form, border line between literary art and case reports, with each borrowing from the other.

There was a conspicuous dearth of humor.

RANGE OF MATERIAL

The writings studied were indigenous to all regions of the country; from Maine to Florida and from New York to California, industrial and agricultural, white-collar and overall, negro and white.

Besides the many books and stories which reflected the lives of the poor in each particular region, there were also some which, by samplings from all over the country, sought to assemble a picture of the whole. Early in the thirties, John Dos Passos began a series of kaleidoscope narratives, a sort of cavalcade, which in 1937 were collected into U.S.A. Omnibus. It was supposed to have been written to

illustrate in specific human symbols the points President Hoover made in a speech enumerating the socio-economic problems of the country. Another panorama narrative was Louis Adamic's voluminous *My America* (1937), filled with fragmentary stories of people in different regions. While not limiting his stories and observations to poorer people, Adamic, like Doc Passos had great interest in them because their numbers made what was happening to them of importance to America's future. He was especially interested in how the present foreign-born Americans were meeting changed conditions. An important collection, made posthumously of extracts from the writings of Thomas Wolfe, contained many reflections of the lives of the poor. An early wide sampling was Clinch Calkins' Some Folks Won't Work (1930), a collection of stories to refute the accusation general at that time that all the unemployed were simply lazy. Still another was Youth Rebuilds (1934), twenty-nine personal experience stories by CCC boys, selected from more than two thousand submitted to the *American Forestry Magazine*. Others were Martha Gellhorn's The Trouble I've Seen (1936), relief short stories, and Gertrude Springer's Miss Bailey Says series.²

² These appeared frequently in the Survey, beginning in 1931.

The yearly O'Brien collections of Best American Short Stories were not selected on a regional basis. Nevertheless, the thirty-eight stories about the dispossessed in the 1930-1938 collections were widely representative as to region. Table 1 shows the proportion of these short stories in O'Brien's collections from 1930 to 1938.

Table 1. Proportion in O'Brien's collections of stories about the poor.

Of 28 stories in the 1930 collection no such story was in-					cluded			
" 29	"	"	"	1931	"	one	"	"
" 30	"	"	"	1933	"	five	such stories were	
" 31	"	"	"	1934	"	included		
" 32	"	"	"	1935	"	five	"	"
" 33	"	"	"	1936	"	six	"	"
" 34	"	"	"	1937	"	seven	"	"
" 35	"	"	"	1938	"	four	"	"
						ten	"	"

To get an estimate of the proportion of short stories of the nineteen thirties about poorer Americans, a check was made of Edward J. O'Brien's annual collections of the best short stories from 1930 through 1938. Those of 1932 were missing. Since O'Brien was classed as a Rightist by Charles and Mary Beard,³ it should be safe to conclude that his pro-

³ Charles and Mary Beard, America in Mid-Passage, p. 670.

portion of stories about the disinherited would not be above the average published. Another reason for making this use of O'Brien was that the technical excellence of the stories was assured if they had been included in his collection.

As would be expected, practically all of the New England and east central regional narratives about the poor dealt with urban industrial classes. Yet pictures of the same classes in the same city varied widely with different writers. There could hardly be sharper contrast than between Halper's episodic novel, Union Square (1934), and Lillian Wald's philosophical narrative, Windows on Henry Street (1934). Union Square with its communist agitator heroes was the sort of thing usually considered proletarian. The settlement workers on Henry Street who put into practice communal services and pleasures among their poor neighbors, watched with disillusionment the Russian experiment of a system in which the proletariat was to have found justice and freedom.

Michael Gold's stories of Hymen Kaplan and Milt Gross's The Feitelbaum Family told of the life of poor Jews in New York.

The writings of Harlem negroes showed a shift in hero models from earlier poet and clergy types to husky negro piano movers and stevedores.

An intimate, realistic study of low-income groups, in

the Bronx, Thomas Bell's All Brides Are Beautiful, showed both those walled in by deadening urban provincialism and those with a vision of broadening laboring-class brotherhood.

Josephine Lawrence's novels interpreted the white-collar poor of eastern cities: If I Had Four Apples (1935) analyzed the installment-buying, chronically improvident; A Good Home With Nice People (1939) called attention to the exploitation of domestic service in hard times; Sound of Running Feet (1937) told of the younger generation coming on, crowding the older people out of jobs; and But You Are Young (1940) presented depression-delayed marriage.

Many of the short stories of the dispossessed were laid in New York or other large eastern cities. Countless stress situations and pronounced character reactions - the stuff of which short stories are made - abounded in the cities, as workers were laid off their jobs or feared that they would be. Reflecting these situations, were such short stories as The Overcoat,⁴ The Red Hat,⁵ A Man's Day,⁶ In the Park,⁷ and

⁴Sally Benson, The Overcoat. American Mercury. In Edward J. O'Brien, Best American Short Stories of 1935. Houghton Mifflin Company. New York.

⁵Morley Callaghan, The Red Hat. In Thicker Than Water. Appleton and Company. New York. 1939.

⁶Frederick Scribner, A Man's Day. Ibid.

⁷Nashum Sabsay, In a Park. Story. O'Brien, 1934.

What Hurts Is That I Was in Such a Hurry.⁸

A rural exception to eastern urban stories was Gladys Hasty Carroll's As the Earth Turns (1935), telling of the belt-tightening and return to retrenched self-sufficiency in a Maine agricultural region. These people were not dispossessed; they were stuck.

One of the startling narratives of 1934 was Lauren Gillfillan's I Went to Pit College, about the life she shared with idle Pennsylvania coal miners' families.

Another startling example of writing about the eastern city poor was Pietro Di Donato's Christ in Concrete (1937), a highly symbolic story of Italian-American laborers in big city building trades. It appeared first as a short story in the *New Yorker* and then was expanded into a novel. As restrained as Christ in Concrete was emotional was Millen Brand's The Heroes (1940), a fiction study of the effect of "indoor relief" on the unemployed inmates of a Massachusetts soldiers' home. The most notable fiction interpretation of relief, Caroline Slade's The Triumph of Willie Pond (1940), was laid in upstate New York. But its picture was so true for practically all cities, its analysis so penetrating and its implications in the current social situation so arresting that it qualified as a novel nationally representative of the period and class.

⁸Vladimir Cherkasski, What Hurts Is That I Was in Such a Hurry. O'Brien, 1938.

In contrast to the northeast's urban literature of the poor, that of the southeast was rural. From this region came two novels of the period most consciously "proletarian" after the Marxian pattern. They were Grace Lumpkin's Sign for Cain (1936) and To Make My Bread (1932). The Sign for Cain was a study in race conflict and the factors back of a lynching. To Make My Bread concerned the fate of mountain families, caught in the mill towns when the factories closed. It was even proudly proletarian, with Labor martyred, which for many readers condemned it as having had foreign "Red" influence. Charles and Mary Beard defended such American proletarian literature. "...this literature whether imbued with a foreign flavor or not⁹ was at home in the United States, and, as much as Cooper's Tales were influenced by Scott's, it could be called indigenous."⁹ In 1936, To Make My Bread was dramatized as Let Freedom Ring, by A. Bein,¹⁰ and toured to strengthen the morale of local unions. The novel of the southeast to have the most successful dramatization was Erskine Caldwell's Tobacco Road. However, his God's Little Acre was considered by Jonathan Daniels a truer picture and one of the finest studies of the Southern Poor Whites that has ever come into our literature.

⁹Charles and Mary Beard, America in Mid-Passage. p. 693.

¹⁰A. Bein, Let Freedom Ring. Reviewed in News Week, July 25, 1936.

Jonathan Daniels also considered Fielding Burke's Call Home the Heart a faithful portrayal of the region. Its theme was similar to that of To Make My Bread, but the interest was centered more in the psychological development of one character, Ishma Waycaster, than in changes in groups of people.

From this region also came an assortment of negro literature. Julia Peterkin's novels, such as Scarlet Sister Mary, were studies of isolated Carolina negro communities, telling their primitiveness and childlike irresponsibility. They did not give the sense of the tragedy of the disinherited carried in Paul Green's plays of the Carolina negroes. Neither was this sense of tragedy in Their Eyes Were Watching God with its Carolina to Florida background, which the negro novelist, Zora Neale Thurston, finished while she was a Guggenheim Fellow.

Likewise of Florida lowly life, but mainly of white folks, were Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' often humorous short stories and novels, including the prize-winning The Yearling. These scrub country folk, of the same stock who farther north were moving into mill towns, were not so affected by current economic and social displacements. So her novels have none of the social problem atmosphere and will not so soon be dated. Neither will they have great significance as

major interpretations of the period.

A distinctive book about the poor in the southeast was the Federal Writers Project, These Are Our Lives, published by the University of North Carolina Press. It was a collection of thirty-five autobiographical stories selected from more than 400 and apportioned in true ratio between farm laborers, share-croppers, renters, owners, factory workers, people in service jobs and people on relief. The stories as told by these people were recorded by Federal Writers Project writers. Although many of these stories individually lacked the spark in literary writing, the effect of the whole was one of communal art. A few of the sketches should be included in anthologies representing the period, like A Christian Factory, Them That Needs and Till the River Rises. The distinction of this collection of stories lies in the fact that they were almost direct expressions of inarticulate people.

What was happening in the central region of the south was told in Willson Whitman's God's Valley. Even discounting its immediate TVA propaganda purpose, it related significant changes in patterns of living for the poor in that area.

An objective and comprehensive picture of the whole south was Jonathan Daniels' narrative, A Southerner Discov-

ers the South. Knowing the probable influence on population trends of the prolific southern poor, Daniels studied them carefully - share-cropper tribulations, tenant farmer union leadership, cooperative and communal experiments and ventures.

The picturesque Mississippi River shanty-boat folk had their social idiosyncrasies displayed in Ben Lucien Burman's short stories and in his novels, Steamboat Round the Bend and Blow for a Landing.

From farther west came contrasting pictures of southern Missouri poor. The Voice of Bugle Ann, in the slightly humorous vein of Marjorie Rawlings, told of poor folk contented with little - a dog and a bit of ground to hunt on. Josephine Johnson's Now in November was a tragically gloomy novel of a three-daughter and no-son family, driven out of the city by loss of savings and the father's job, back to a little mortgaged, worn-out farm, where the mother died, one daughter became insane, the father broke down physically and the two younger girls had to carry on alone. South of Joplin was a southwestern equivalent of I Went to Pit College, more of value for reiteration and emphasis than because it was especially well done.

From Oklahoma, came Alice Lent Covert's Return to Dust, a novel of the tenacity of dust bowl victims who did not

pull out for California. Also from Oklahoma come Edwin Lannam's The Stricklands. It gave two brothers' contrasting reactions to dispossession. Pat became antisocial, turning to prey upon society. Jay organized a tenant farmers' union to work for basic changes in land tenure.

In the north central region as in the northeastern, most of the stories were of urban industrial poor. In Chicago was the same divergence of representation between Halper's Foundry and Jane Addams' Second Twenty Years at Hull House, as in New York between Union Square and Windows on Henry Street. The Foundry was cynical realism. Hull House was hopeful realism. Neither was entirely objective.

It was of this region that Minehan wrote Boy and Girl Tramps of America, mostly city youth who had been forced into vagrancy. They waited around cities comforted by many of their own kind, "deriving a feeling of strength and solidarity from mere numbers like birds or sheep."¹¹

Wessell Smitter's novel, F.O.B. Detroit (1938), handled the situation of magnificent lumberjack workmen trying to lay a future independence and security by working terrifically hard in an automobile factory. From Detroit's shrinking industries, "home" to upstate Michigan, returned many such workmen as F.O.B. Detroit's Russ. Louise Armstrong's

¹¹ Thomas Minehan, Boy and Girl Tramps of America, University Minnesota Press, 1934, Ch. I.

narrative, We Too Are the People (1938), told of their plight back in the cut-over timber country - theirs along with that of Polak immigrants, woods Indians and a backwash of degenerated early American white stock. The plight of others who sought refuge from city unemployment by going back to the home folks' farm in Iowa, only to find it heavily mortgaged or even lost, was pictured in Ethel Hueston's Roof Over Their Heads (1937).

From this section came a most disquieting novel, Native Son, by the negro, Richard Wright. James T. Farrell, in the Studs Lonigan Chicago novels, showed the conditioning of white toughs in a spiritual poverty more acute than their physical poverty. Through Bigger Thomas, Wright presented the development of the kind of negro toughs who are emerging from the Chicago - and other similar - slums. Another novel by a negro, William Attaway's Let Me Breathe Thunder, demonstrated the same hard breed, but they were wandering bums in the Seattle-Yakima fruit region. Another story of the northwest was Robert Cantwell's Land of Plenty where the vigilantes struggled with labor.

Among the short stories representing the labor readjustments in California, were Adamic's Cherries Are Red,¹²

¹² Louis Adamic, Cherries Are Red. From My America. Harpers. 1938.

Don Mainwaring's The Fruit Tramp¹³ and Don Ludlow's She Always Wanted Shoes.¹⁴

The most widely discussed novel about poor Americans was a product of the reputed Utopia, California. For two reasons, however, Grapes of Wrath was more than regional to California. First, it went back to the south and the southwest and showed the destiny of one region changing the destiny in another. Second, it was written with consciously wide implications of concern for all the disinherited. Steinbeck's earlier novels were definitely regional to California. His first novel about the poor, Tortilla Flat (1935), was a study of the Mexicans in Monterey's picturesque slum area. Two years later, Steinbeck complained, "When this book was written, it did not occur to me that the paisanos were curious or quaint, dispossessed or underdogish. They are people whom I know and like, people who merge successfully with their habitat. In man this is called philosophy and it is a fine thing." And he didn't like "the literary slummers who sought the dirt in Tortilla Flat."¹⁵

¹³ Don Mainwaring, The Fruit Tramp. From Thicker Than Water. Appleton and Company. New York. 1939.

¹⁴ Don Ludlow, She Always Wanted Shoes. From the New Masses. O'Brien, 1938.

¹⁵ John Steinbeck, Preface to In Dubious Battle, Covici Friede. New York. 1937.

His next novel, In Dubious Battle, interpreted sympathetically the efforts in the early thirties of California Communists to organize migrant labor. Of Mice and Men was an interesting psychological analysis of the types of men which the migrant labor life had been attracting and developing. From these novels, it was a natural step for Steinbeck to present in Grapes of Wrath the plight and the impact of dust bowl immigrants.

One of the finest narratives about the dispossessed was also from California - Carey McWilliams' Factories in the Field. It was a documented account of the background conditions and episodes which Steinbeck fictionalized in his novels. It was written simultaneously with, but independently from, Grapes of Wrath.¹⁶ It gave authenticity and added significance to Steinbeck's novels.

Another novel of California poor was Upton Sinclair's Co-op. Earlier than Steinbeck, Sinclair pictured the coming of a few Okies. He gave a probably fairer and more comprehensive picture than Steinbeck's, but he propagandized for a pet solution, cooperatives, and fell far short of Steinbeck's concentrated dramatic effectiveness.

Thus, from every region of the country came this new

¹⁶ Carey McWilliams, Factories in the Field. Little, Brown and Company. Introduction.

literature - this new declaration, We Too Are the People.

Table 3 shows the classification of the books in this study according to their setting in the current socio-economic frameworks of Homelessness, Unemployment and Relief.

HOMELESSNESS, UNEMPLOYMENT AND RELIEF

The Homeless-Migrant Theme

No matter what region is represented, practically every novel, narrative and short story of this period concerning poor Americans has its situation and plot in Homelessness, Unemployment or Relief. Just as a theme with variations runs through the movements of a symphony, so the Homeless-Migrant theme with many variations runs through these writings of the thirties. First it told principally what was happening to individual wanderers, then to larger groups such as of boy tramps and shifting share-cropper families. Then it concerned larger movements: groups of families leaving worn-out hill farms for new industrial towns; negroes moving north; people let out of factory jobs trying to get back on the land; seasonal migrations; resettlement experiments; and it came to a climax in the stories of drought-and-depression, mass migration westward. It seems to be a record of new forces stirring many Americans out of the regions they had finished settling down in only a generation

Table 3. Novels using socio-economic themes.

Homeless-Migrant	Job-Unemployment-Labor	Relief
The Heroes - Brand	Nobody Starves - Brody	The Heroes - Brand
Call Home the Heart - Burke	Call Home the Heart - Burke	Return to Dust - Covert
Return to Dust - Covert	Christ in Concrete - Di Donato	
	The Foundry - Halper	
	Roof Over Their Heads - Hueston	Roof Over Their Heads - Hueston
A Good Home with Nice People - Lawrence	Sound of Running Feet - Lawrence	
To Make My Bread - Lumpkin	To Make My Bread - Lumpkin	
Co-op - Sinclair	Co-op - Sinclair	Co-op - Sinclair
	F.O.B. Detroit - Smither	
Grapes of Wrath - Steinbeck	Grapes of Wrath - Steinbeck	The Triumph of Willie Pond - Slade
Of Mice and Men - Steinbeck	In Dubious Battle - Steinbeck	
Their Eyes Were Watching God - Thurston		
Native Son - Wright	Native Son - Wright	Native Son - Wright

or two before.

In 1932, five years before John Steinbeck went to live among the Okies, Thomas Minehan of Minneapolis disguised himself as a bum and joined a bread line. Two years later, he published Boy and Girl Tramps of America, based on experiences he shared with them and information he got from nearly four hundred of them.

One of his favorite boy tramps was "Texas."

We meet in Northern Iowa on a freezing December day in a municipal rat hole. Blue with cold and very lonely, he still wears his tattered gray coat proudly with an air... His keen blue eyes seek a familiar face in the room. He is glad to see me. He has just come from North Dakota. He has no shoes. Paper swathed in cocoon folds inside a pair of old rubber boots keeps his feet from freezing. He has not been so fortunate with his ears. Both were frozen in Minot... He smiles at me. Two front teeth are missing.

"I lost them in an argument with a shack on the Santa Fe. He tried to kick me off..."

It is Spring when I see Texas again, Wisconsin. Gaunt as a wild animal wintering in uplands where forage is poor, Texas has lost another tooth. The upper third of one ear has permanently disappeared. He walks with an odd irregular stiffness from too much sleeping in box cars on zero nights and too much walking and too little food. He shakes hands with me. Two fingers feel stiff.

"I busted a mitt in a fight with a Nashville shack. He wore brass knuckles. I've been ducking cops and chain gangs all winter in the South. After freezing my ears, I decided to get out of the North if I had to go to jail. But I got by. I kept moving."

"And now what?" I ask him as the train jerks and rattles forward.

"Oh anything." There is defiance but not de-

spair in his voice. "I can't get a job anywhere. I can't get in a CCC because I have no dependents... I've seen a lot of the country and I'm glad I've seen it, but if a guy travels too much, he becomes a bum, and I don't want to be a bum."¹⁷

But the apprehension of ordinary folks expressed through police and the law, tended to confirm the young bums in that life.

In his Transient Unemployed, based on the records of the Federal Transient Service, John M. Webb spoke of the futility of "bum blockades." Minehan described a scene at a town where tramps were not allowed to board standing trains.

Imperceptibly the train moves as the fireman rings the bell. Like a group of race horses spring the barrier, or football players surging forward when the ball is snapped, the boys and girls surge en masse across the tracks. They alight and swarm all over the train as a cloud of locusts alight and swarm over an orchard. Some climb ladders to the roofs. Others pile into gondolas. The majority choose box cars.¹⁸

The kids on the road had to be strong and alert and cagey. The failures fell beneath freights or got pinched for stealing.

Minehan's chapter, Vagabondage in the Past, adds perspective to our interest in millions of homeless Americans by sketching the lineage of wanderers from the time the Jews walked out on Pharaoh. Rome tried to satisfy its vagabonds

¹⁷ Thomas Minehan, Boy and Girl Tramps of America. University Minnesota Press. 1934.

¹⁸ Ibid.

with bread and circuses, when what they wanted was land to grow their own bread. Vagabonds with a noble purpose were the crusaders. Every fifty family was left homeless by the English enclosures. Colonial expansion and industrial development brought Europe relief from vagabondage. America's frontier kept it low in America. Later, boom developments demanded mobile labor. Mobile labor may be a source of wealth, but in traveling, it dissipates much of its earnings, loses its home-making habits and acquires the mental outlook of vagabonds.

Chapter Seventeen in Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* is a close parallel to one of Minehan's chapters, with the essential conclusions in Minehan's five years earlier.

Driven out of homes, unable to find work or to live in normal ways, they are developing in the face of necessity, their own means of sustaining life and their own social habits, justifying their actions through their own folkways and systems of morals. Within a year, I saw Texas change not only physically but mentally. His frozen ears and stiff fingers were outward symbols of an inner change. From a bright, witty, American schoolboy full of dreams and vigor, he had turned into a predacious cunning person whose habits and actions differed as much from those of the American schoolboy, he had been, as the habits and actions of a member of one African tribe differ from those of another.¹⁹

Codes of honor and standards of right and wrong are all part of their new tribal life, in which begging, stealing and prostitution are regarded as occupations - not as sins.

¹⁹ Ibid.

New patterns antagonistic to our conception of society were being developed. These new antagonistic patterns were illustrated five years later, when a young negro, William Attaway, wrote the novel, Let Me Breathe Thunder. Reading about Attaway's three vagrants brings more fear of and for America's many wandering waifs than reading about Minehan's hundreds of tramps. Attaway's novel should be a fairly authentic study. Attaway was the son of a Mississippi negro doctor who followed the post-war migration north to Chicago. The doctor died, the son hoboed, went to the University of Illinois, hoboed, went back for his degree - free lanced and played in the road show, You Can't Take It With You. Let Me Breathe Thunder was laid around railroads and fruit ranches in the Seattle-Yakima country. The story was told by Ed, and was mainly about Stap and Ed, hard, selfish, undisciplined fellows, and a little Mexican lad, Hi-Boy whom they used as a mascot, screen, and sop to their egos.

The theme of the book was in the legend of the Nisqually Glacier. The rancher, Sampson, told the boys about it.

The god who made the earth was too big to fit in the pattern with the creatures he made. Being outside the pattern, he had to be a wanderer. The old God stayed put after a fashion by squatting down among the cascades. But the Indians say that his tormented spirit still moans, and sometimes breathes thunder. Some of the fellows

who came back to the valley after the war couldn't fit themselves into the pattern. Lots of youngsters who were jolted out of their patterns by the big depression became wanderers. And even when they don't have to drift any more, they can't hold down a steady job, they can't get back into the pattern.²⁰

A part of the book, at first unconvincing, is Sampson's trustfulness of Step and Ed. Evidently Attaway intended Sampson's failure to recognize Step's utter unscrupulousness to be symbolic of the obtuseness of good moral middle-class Americans about the vicious traits which many young tramps have developed. Perhaps it is even symbolic of the obtuseness of respectable democracies in regard to gangster nations.

Minehan's book reflected anxiety about what was happening to youthful vagrants. Attaway's novel, with a cold objectivity, told what did happen in one particular instance. The fact that his novel was five years later than Minehan's book may partly have accounted for his tramps having been older and more hardened, as though only the toughest, smartest and most ruthless were surviving. Many of Minehan's boys would rather have had a home. Several, like Texas, said, "I don't want to be a bum." But when Step and Ed ride the night freight with Wizen-Face, Shifty-Eyes and Black-Face (who has a blonde girl friend) they all agree

²⁰William Attaway, Let Me Breathe Thunder. Doubleday, Doran. New York. 1939.

that although it would be easier to go on Relief they just "don't want to settle down." Undisciplined and unadjusted in formative years, they had become like wild animals that couldn't stand being caged. "A dame's gotta look out for herself," was Step's code. Minehan's book tended to build up support for CCC camps and NYA projects. Attaway's novel aroused horror that cold-blooded recruits were being conditioned for unscrupulous leaders.

In the little Mexican, Hi-Boy, wistful for his home mountains, and enduring pain to win Step's approbation, Attaway showed how poisonous to little children is the selfish, irresponsible, vagrant life. It is a life that sends down no roots and bears little fruit. Some of that is back and forth across the color line. The frankness with which Attaway treated this obliteration of the color line is probably the reason why this novel is kept in the closet at my local city library, even though this city has its own cases of miscegenation.

A completely different picture of transient people was Zora Neale Thurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God. Her novel of lowly Carolina, Georgia and Florida negroes was primarily the love story of the wandering Janie and Tea Cake. Janie had "migrated" away from her first husband with a wandering pedlar. In Georgia he became a storekeeper and

shut her up in the store. When he died, she fell in love and married the poet-tramp, Tea Cake. Together they joined the negro bean-pickers' migration to Florida.

Day by day now, the hordes of workers poured in. Some came limping in with their shoes, their bare feet sore from walking... They came in wagons from way up in Georgia and they came in trucks from east, west, north and south. Permanent transients with no attachments, and tired-looking men with families and dogs and flivvers. All night, all day, hurrying in to pick beans. Skillets, beds, patched inner tubes all hanging and dangling from the ancient cars on the outside, and hopeful humanity, herded on the inside, chugging to the muck. People ugly from ignorance and broken from being poor... Fellows with names like Double Ugly and Who Flung.²¹

All night the jooks clanged and clamored. Pianos living three life times in one. Blues made and used on the spot. Dancing and fighting, singing, crying, laughing, winning and losing love every hour.²²

This is no story of furtive living nor of something the writer considers an abnormal symptom of the social body. Among these negroes, following the crops and having no set home, is the established pattern, a natural habit. Child-like, ignorant, amoral, all they expect is just to enjoy being alive, and on a standard of living that would be many Americans' cause for demanding relief.

Tea Cake really loved Janie. They were sharing, and were seeking living values rather than material security.

²¹Zora Neale Thurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God. Lip-pincott. Philadelphia. 1937.

²²Ibid.

If that meant wandering, then they wandered. However, their wandering was within a circle and not a striking out into unfamiliar hostile environment. As natural among negroes who had no heritage of possession of the land in America, Their Eyes Were Watching God told of people shifting and migrating so as to enjoy the earth rather than to possess it. And because they were not trying to possess the land, their seasonal migrations stirred up no conflicts.

Building up to a climax of tragic conflict, is Grace Lumpkin's novel, To Make My Bread. It is a story of the movement of ignorant, poor, southern mountain hill folk to the promise of jobs and money in the valley industrial towns. There they were caught when the depression closed many mills. Some of the folks worked back to the hills, but more joined the struggles of union labor.

Grace Lumpkin is a Georgian who has lived and worked among all classes of people in her region. In this novel, she undertook more than to present an immediate condition. She began her story with the early pre-war restlessness among the hill farmers who were growing poorer as their lands wore out. Then she moved them down, first a son or so, then whole families and communities into the booming mill towns, where they lived in company houses and the children also worked in the mills. Her detailed accounts of

their growing hardships made vivid the early days of the depression. Her build-up made the great strikes that followed seem inevitable. While the older generation took their suffering stoically, the younger generation rebelled, and the newer ones among them were attacked by the owner interests and scabs. Grace Lumpkin has no desirable character among the capitalist group. Her sympathies are openly and entirely with the poor folks. Still, as she holds no brief for their superiority, she created understandable characters - not mere proletarian puppets. Her use of their poetic mountain speech helped in this effect. She used some songs which were patterned on the old ballads. In the transformation from hill folk to factory hands, they changed the words of their ballads to songs of grief over their fate and of hate against the bosses. To the tune of little Mary Fagin, Bonnie led the workers in a song which ended a listing of woes with

Let's stand together, workers -
And have a union here.

Grace Lumpkin made the religious emotionalism of these people an integral part of the story, and a pattern of the way they could be expected to react to any strong group stimulation as in labor struggles and strikes. Like Steinbeck, she made plain the close connection between religious fervor and sex stimulation, especially among primitive

people.

A literary-minded club woman commented that she was "tired of all the illegitimate babies dragged into recent southern literature." The many children and the births - both with and without benefit of clergy - in To Make My Bread did not seem "dragged in" but natural in that part of America where the birth rate is highest.

Jonathan Daniels, in A Southerner Discovers the South, declared the prolific southern whites were not decadent but "still good stock," and he saw a healthy sign in their shifting and their restless movement.

Part of God's Valley by Willson Whitman (1939), told of the transplanting of a number of southern hill families by the TVA. The resettlement projects were model nurseries where the transplanted people were tended and looked after under direction of the Great Experimenters. At first, the people didn't like being specimens in a nursery of Social Change, but they got used to it. God's Valley is the story of the government's effort to make "The Valley" fit for people to stay in - to save it so their children and their children's children will not need to move away.

In her story of the TVA, Willson Whitman said:

Then in the depression a million of the movers [who had gone into city industries] had to come back home to ma and pa. They say seven hundred families came back to one county in 1932, and it was

a county that hadn't much before, or they never would have left.

They are still moving up or down, hitch hiking here and there and just milling around, trying to find which part of the country is least hard on poor folk. You see them on roadsides with three to five children and one valise, hoping to thumb a ride, in wagons if they still have mules, or on buses if they still have the fare.

Over and over was repeated the theme of poor people shifting and moving. Still other variations appeared in These Are Our Lives, As Told by the People and Written by Members of the Federal Writers Project of the WPA of North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia.

The eleven narratives in the section, On the Farm, were apportioned among laborers, share-croppers, renters and owners according to their population ratio. Zora Neale Hurston's negro laborers may have taken for granted and enjoyed shifting about, but the share-croppers and renters, both white and colored, in These Are Our Lives didn't like it. Gracie Turner in Tore Up and a-Movin' voiced an attitude present in eight of the eleven stories in the section, On the Farm. Gracie, a negro share-cropper wife, said:

We got to move somewhere next year. I don' know where we'll go; houses is scarce and hard to find. Mr. Makepeace told Turner he'd help all he could, but he ain't got no house we can live in. Plenty o' land everywhere but no house! Turner's been huntin' for weeks and every night when he comes home, I runs to de door to hear de news. Every day it's de same tale, "I can't find no place yet." I

hates to move - nobody knows how I hates to move.

"Yonder's somebody movin' now!" Ola exclaims, looking out of the window. All eyes turn toward toward the road. Over the deep ruts in the sand, wagon wheels grind slowly eastward: two wagons loaded with shabby furnishings wind around the curve and out of sight. Then Gracie went on. Dat's de way we'll be soon - tore up and a-movin'. I wish I could have me one acre o' land dat I could call mine. I'd be willin' to eat dry bread de rest o' my life if I had a place I could settle down on and nobody could tell me I had to move no more. I hates movin'.

This bespeaks an experience of many moves which usually led to no improvement. It is a hopeless, shoved-around kind of moving - not the hopeful trek to a promised land.

Lived Too Long is the story of an owner who had become desperately poor by moving and trading and who wished he had stayed by one farm and built it up.

Some Sort of How is the way a life-long renter had raised thirteen children of his own and five of somebody else's and "ain't none of 'em been hongry." But "Southern Poor White Population Pressure" shoved the older ones out to wander around to places that weren't so crowded.

Only two out of the six stories of Section II, In Mill and Factory, were built on the wandering theme. Sometimes the negro who admitted "I Didn't Keep a Penny" had wandered from lumber yard to meat packing plants, to railroads, to race tracks to construction jobs. The prod back of wandering was not economic but domestic. He hadn't been able to

get along with his wife and like some of his more prosperous brothers in the same fix, had kept moving.

The Grease Monkey for a Knitter, orphaned at seventeen, wandered all over the south with other wanderers, looking for a job. When he got a mill job he stuck tight and began building up a little acreage so he wouldn't have to go on the road again when his eyes gave out on the knitter.

People In Service Occupations (Section III of These Are Our Lives) must have been contented for not one of their ten stories tells of moving or wandering.

Out of the thirty-eight short stories about the poor in O'Brien's 1930-38 collections, twelve were set in the Homeless-Wandering situation. In his introduction to the Best Short Stories of 1936, O'Brien said, "A short story is, by its nature, something that deals with relatively heightened moments. If it is dealing at all honestly with life, it will be serious, but there is no need to confuse seriousness with gloom." Of the dozen Homeless-Wandering theme stories from his 1930-38 collections, all but one are serious.

The Sacred Thing²³ is a short sketch of Mike, a night beat policeman who had to keep the park bums moving. They cussed. He kicked. He kicked one off a bench because he wouldn't move. The man was dead. The coroner said he had

²³Paul Ryan, The Sacred Thing. From Scribners. O'Brien, 1934.

Table 4. Classification of short stories according to socio-economic frame.

Homelessness	Unemployment	Relief
Annunciation - Le Seur	A Man's Day - Scribner	A Real American Fellow - Rayner
Awakening and Destination - Krantz	The Amateurs-Swados	Lily Daw and the Three Ladies - Welty
Arrival on a Holiday - Wright	Bus to Biarritz - Cole	My Friend in Herzegovina - Adamic
The Chrysanthemums - Steinbeck	The Cheat's Remorse - Callaghan	In a Park - Sabsay
Cross Roads Woman - Corning	Christ in Concrete - Di Donato	Mrs. Madison - Gellhorn
The Disinherited - Pogano	Dear Mr. Flessheimer - Cook	Jim - Gellhorn
Fruit Tramp - Mainwaring	The Disinherited - Pogano	Ruby - Gellhorn
Girl on the Road - Adamic	Dorothy - Caldwell	The Sampler - Morris
Money at Home - Terrell	The Double House - Hale	Tinkle and Family Take a Ride - Kelm
Outside Yuma - Appel	Mr. and Mrs. Fairbanks - Callaghan	To Those Who Wait - Moll
The Sacred Thing - Ryan	Fame Takes the J Car - Albee	Tom and Joe - Gellhorn
She Always Wanted Shoes - Ludlow	Fruit Tramp - Mainwaring	What Was Truly Mine - Flandrau
Torrent of Darkness - Field	In a Park - Sabsay	
What Hurts Is That I Was in Such a Hurry - Cherkasski	Man on the Road - Malz	
	Maybe the Sun Will Shine - March	
	The Overcoat - Benson	
	The Red Hat - Callaghan	
	Room in the World - Zugsmith	
	She Always Wanted Shoes - Ludlow	
	Tinkle and Family Take a Ride - Kelm	

starved to death. Mike's wife, understanding his real gentleness, tried to comfort his remorse. Told simply, as a true episode, this story was also an allegory of the way Society blunderingly kicks at the victims it wishes would keep out of sight.

Outside Yuma²⁴ concerns the effect of bumming on different kinds of fellows. It contrasts the kinds of despair felt by chronic hoboes pushed off a freight out in the desert. "Georgia" had a residue of guts. He gritted his teeth to keep that strength from escaping. "Texas" who had run away to be a circus man "was whimpering, bumming them all for a butt." The story is probably a protest against stereotyping all tramps as "bums." It is significant that Benjamin Appel, who served an apprenticeship writing this and other short stories, in 1940 published The People Talk of which Adamic said, "It is the faces, the voices, the heart, the guts behind the Gallup poll."²⁵

Money at Home,²⁶ built on an O'Henry pattern, told the attempt of a Jewish boy trying to get all his Glacier Park summer earnings back to his family in New York without

²⁴ Benjamin Appel, Outside Yuma. New Stories. O'Brien, 1935.

²⁵ Louis Adamic, Review of Benjamin Appel's The People Talk. Saturday Review of Literature. June 1, 1940.

²⁶ Upton Terrell, Money at Home. In North American Review. O'Brien, 1933.

spending any of it for train fare. Ostensibly related by an experienced railroad bum, the story is a study of the dangers and terrors of riding the blind. The teller warned the boy he shouldn't carry so much in his wallet. The boy was killed trying to board a train leaving Livingston where he had made a hurried trip uptown. The teller, searching for this boy's wallet, found only five dollars and a mail order receipt for the rest.

The Girl on the Road²⁷ was one Louis Adamic picked up and "hitched" for several hours when he was driving over the country to get the material he piled into My America. This is a more qualitative study than any Minehan recorded about girl tramps. But Adamic's emphasis wasn't so much on the girl and her story as it was on his getting of her story. And often the artist in him got left behind by the sociologist. His record of the Girl on the Road includes more that reached back into causes, more that interpreted homeless girls in relation to society, than does Vladimir Cherkasski's story, What Hurts Is That I Was in Such a Hurry.²⁸ But the girl in Cherkasski's story, without a spoken word, became a symbol of a problem that through the ages some women have had to face.

²⁷Louis Adamic, Girl on the Road. In My America. p. 496-517.

²⁸Vladimir Cherkasski, What Hurts Is That I Was in Such a Hurry. Short Story Mss. for 1937. O'Brien, 1938.

What Hurts Is That I Was in Such a Hurry recounted the futile remorse of a young man who might have "taken" a starving girl who had been two days in the subway station. She had refused his charity dollar. Some girls, he decided, found it less hard to sell themselves than to take alms. He had to hurry on to the train to go to work. During the day he resolved to ask her to share his little room and food. But that evening she was gone. Down on the tracks was a splotch and by the bench was her soiled handkerchief. The story makes the reader identify himself with the young man in his concern for the girl and in his feeling of remorseful futility. For all its New York subway setting, the story has a brooding, Russian atmosphere. Adamic's story is brisker - more American!

All that is essential in Minehan, Attaway and Adamic about young vagrants is in a short story by Jo Pogano, published the same year as Minehan's book. The Disinherited²⁹ is the story of a nineteen year old boy on his way home - after a year of bumming. Speaking first person through the boy as he stopped to rest in a jungle, Pogano gave all the types Minehan elaborated upon:

²⁹ Jo Pogano, The Disinherited. From Editors Choice. Alfred Dashiell. C. P. Putnam's Sons. New York. 1934.

two kids, a scar-faced man, a gaunt old fellow with gray hair and the face of a grocer, a pimply faced youth with front teeth missing - two or three Mexicans, a big buck nigger with his chin broken out in sores and a hatchet-faced wolf. They were just a gang of hungry and filthy men banded together like the remnants of some bedraggled, defeated army, and in their faces you could read the story of malnutrition and desperation, of viciousness and hardship and disease.

... I turned my face from them and lying on my back, folded my hands beneath my head and looked at the stars. And I thought of home. For a year now, I had been on the bum and now I was sick of it, and I was going home. In that year, I had gone a long, long way from home - oh, not so much in actual distance, though I had covered plenty of miles at that. But home is a place that means something clean and decent and sweet, and I had gone a long way from those things in the year.

But conditions at home were worse than when he had felt the necessity of removing himself before. Hardships and discouragement had aged his parents, made his sister more hopeless. There was still no job for him, no chance for his own abandoned education, or lost romance with Janice. He had to go back on the road. "I can't sponge on them. Jesus, they're having it tough enough as it is."

Torrent of Darkness³⁰ is a sordid combination of pathological conditions - low mentality, unbridled passion, general social irresponsibility in caring for the incompetent, hatred and violence, which prevented and ruined homes.

A none-too-bright white girl and her baby were aban-

³⁰S. S. Field, Torrent of Darkness. American Mercury. O'Brien, 1936.

doned by the man who put them off the train where she could "go right down to the road" to his folks. But he, as well as his folks, was unknown thereabouts and a poor white family took her in. When one of the men in the family tried to seduce her she fled to negro neighbors. They bravely refused to give her up. So the white man rounded up his gang, lynched the negro man and set fire to his home. The girl with her baby took to the road again.

Except for O'Brien, this story would have reached only Mercury readers with minds and stomachs stout enough to take their social pathology and abnormal psychology straight. Perhaps they too crave art-form interpretation.

The Crossroads Woman,³¹ a great primitive like Ma Joad, symbolizes the tenacity with which women cling to homes. The device of having the top of the hill crossroads be an air-route landmark fixed the vast loneliness of the region where many cars broke down climbing the hill. Discouraged at the hopelessness of making a living on a hump like this, her husband had gone off.

And while he had gone dredging for gold, the desert had eaten in upon the place, blasting the last vestige of his wife's faith in the land and in him. This, in a country where persistent need was the most evident characteristic of whatever managed at all to endure, a need the woman had been serving by patiently, savagely bestowing, by her own energy,

³¹H. M. Corning, The Crossroads Woman. The Prairie Schooner. p. 81. O'Brien, 1934.

the scanty substance the ranch afforded - boards, wire and metal for mending cars - food, chickens and meat to stranded families - shelter.

Then when she was down to nothing, ready to go, a transient in a rusty truck tried to take her. But she beat him up with her remaining chair and left - barefoot on the road, "free to return again to beginnings."

An enlarged version of a woman's losing her home to the encroaching desert is Alice Lent Covert's novel, Return to Dust (1939). The crossroads woman is a vague heroic scale symbol of a woman who had to start from nothing when climate and personal disaster took all her props. Margaret Adams is a specific young woman on a little drought-ruined Oklahoma farm, who had to do the same. After several years of crop failure, her husband, John, had become discouraged, sullen, often drunk, and infatuated with Lil Dumond in town. Her little boy, Ronnie, was undernourished and growing worse with dust asthma. Margaret tried to get John to move to California or Alaska. He, like most of the others in that community of small owners (a class above the share-croppers), refused to walk out on the little places they had built up. He was too proud to go on work Relief. Finally, to keep Ronnie from starving she went to work in a WPA sewing room. John drank more. The story was a triangle, with Hack, a neighbor and an early suitor, trying to get her to divorce

John and go with him to his sister's in Kansas. After Ronnie died, with John seemingly not caring, she went, so that her unborn child might have a chance. John was badly injured in a tornado which flattened their flimsy farm buildings and killed Lil Dumond. Old Pete Dumond who nursed him while his legs mended also helped mend his spirit. Pete and his cronies spun dust bowl yarns that rivaled the Paul Bunyon stories of the north. They began admitting that part of the threat to their homes had been due to their greedy, land-neglecting farming. Old Pete's care and philosophy helped John till he had courage to go back to his land and start again - terracing some slopes - digging a little pond, planting a bit of garden - rebuilding a small barn.

In the meantime, Margaret's baby born in Kansas grew so much like the younger, lovable John that she saw she could not marry Hack, but must go back to start over with John.

This story of Okies who went back to their land to try again was built around the idea that man's salvation depends on his appreciation and care of the earth which is his home.

In the short story, Awakening and Destination,³² laid mostly on roaring, crowded, New York subways, the young couple who had married on a shoestring and bought installment furniture, lost their jobs, their furniture and spent their

³²David E. Krantz, Awakening and Destination. American Prefaces. University Iowa Press. 1936.

last money on an abortion. Their homelessness was the product as much of their own weakness as of the crush of circumstance; and the roaring subway symbolized the rush of life that goes on without regard for individuals crushed or left behind.

As much as this story is one of weakness and fear, Annunciation³³ is one of strength and beauty. It is an affirmation of faith in life by a pregnant young wife stranded with her husband in California when their show folded up. The story consists in what, during a period of several weeks, she wrote down in a stream-of-consciousness style on scraps of brown paper. They were often hungry. Sometimes Karl had to beg and he got angry with her.

"Why don't you take something? Get rid of it. That's what everybody does nowadays."

Everything I said only made Karl angry, so I stopped talking to him so much. Writing was a sort of conversation I carried on with myself and the child.

I am going on a boat between the dark shores, and the river and the sky are so quiet that I can hear the scurry of tiny animals on the shores and their little breathings seem to be all around. I think of them wild, carrying their young now... Silent, alive they sit in the dark shadow of the greedy world. There is something wild about us, too, something tender and wild about my having

³³Meridel Le Sueur, Annunciation. O'Brien's Best Short Stories of 1936. O'Brien said in his introduction to this volume that this story was only the second one in 22 years that he had included which was not previously published in a magazine.

you as a child. We, too, are at the mercy of many hunters. I know we are as helpless, as wild, as at bay as some tender wild animals who might be on this ship.

I hope you will come glistening with life power, with it shining upon you as upon the feathers of birds. I hope you will be a warrior and fierce for change so all may live.

Although heightened sensitivity and vitality are normal in pregnancy, such perception and expressiveness is, of course, extremely rare. Perhaps Meridel Le Seur used it to say that the sense of participation in all life and of fulfillment beyond understanding must carry many women above pride and fear when bearing children into homelessness and poverty. It is an explanation of the serenity and beauty of some of the pregnant women buying second-hand baby clothes at rummage sales.

Of course, some were too dumb to be worried. That was the kind who made their Arrival on a Holiday.³⁴ The man, tired of his tire-patching job in Arkansas, had chucked it, packed his wife, children, and belongings in a Ford and lit out for a place in Texas where Bill was. When they arrived, the man couldn't remember Bill's last name, but, anyway, all the Bills were off for the holiday. When it began to rain, the filling station man said they could move into

³⁴Wilson Wright, Arrival on a Holiday. Harpers. 1936.
O'Brien, 1937.

his shed. The Ford stalled. "Ain't it damn-all, a-stoppin' like that just in front of a home?" The filling station man couldn't hear what the wife said, but he could see it was something cheerful and undisturbed.

Another family whose jalopypy journey westward made a story, are the Jetts of Upton Sinclair's Co-Op. Actually the fifth chapter of the novel, the story can stand by itself - a cartoon-like movie of migrants. Even the inconvenient, slightly previous way Mrs. Jett had her baby isn't too tragic. Silver spoon babies have been known to arrive in Cadillacs. This chapter makes effective contrast for the hard times the family ran into in California. But Sinclair's emphasis is not on the hard times the migrants had; it is on what they did to overcome them.

It was in California stories that this Homeless-Migrant theme of the symphony of American poor can be regarded as coming to a climax. And it was in California stories that the Labor theme came to a climax. Since in these California writings, the two themes are so closely interwoven, the rest of this Homeless theme material of this thesis will be discussed as it merges with the Labor theme material, at the end of the other material of this study concerned with plots and situations in the Job frame.

The Job Theme

Just as there are many variations in the Homeless-Migrant theme, so are there variations in the Job theme with its plots and situations in the frame of Unemployment. There is loss of jobs, fear of being laid off, strife over jobs, and a growing conception of the right to work - to earn - as a fundamental human right that has to be defended. The majority of short stories examined were written in this frame, usually about how individuals or families "took" unemployment. These short story reflections of how folks reacted range from the hysterical to the quietly courageous.

Fame Takes the J Car³⁵ is in the form of an hysterical letter which Oliver Smith wrote to the personnel manager of the company which laid him off - evidently due to his stupidity and braggadocio rather than to the press of the times. Such fellows were the first to go.

In The Blue Kimono,³⁶ the unspoken fears of husband and wife over their growing poverty developed into morbid terror over their child's minor illness - until her quick recovery made the ragged kimono seem no longer a symbol of degradation.

³⁵George Albee, Fame Takes the J Car. From Story Magazine. 1931.

³⁶Morley Callaghan, The Blue Kimono. Harper's Bazaar. O'Brien, 1936.

In the Hawthornesque, With Some Gaiety and Laughter,³⁷ a jobless young man, without food for four days and almost frozen, tried to sell his last possession at a pawnshop. It was a phonograph record - not of music - just of human laughter, "an echo of all the laughter that had washed the world since it had been shaped out of chaos." But when old Berger offered only five dollars (which he thought far too much) the young man refused so little for so priceless a thing.

Erskine Caldwell's Dorothy,³⁸ Bus to Biarritz,³⁹ and The Cheat's Remorse⁴⁰ all are versions of girls driven to choose prostitution. In Caldwell's 1931 (pre-public relief) story, instead of directing the hungry, penniless, job-seeking girl to the employment office where he had just been told there are no jobs, the teller of the story directed her to an across-the-tracks hotel. She guessed where he was sending her, but she went.

An American girl who had tried modeling and dancing

³⁷ Frank Kelley, With Some Gaiety and Laughter. Story. O'Brien, 1936.

³⁸ Erskine Caldwell, Dorothy. From American Earth. Scribners. Reprinted in O'Brien's collection. 1931.

³⁹ Madeline Cole, Bus to Biarritz. Short Story Ms. 1934. O'Brien, 1935.

⁴⁰ Morley Callaghan, The Cheat's Remorse. Esquire. O'Brien, 1938.

in New York and Paris couldn't make it, rather than go back to America to her long-out-of-work father - took the Bue to Biarritz.

By matching with a phony coin, a young man won the dollar both he and a girl epied under a cafe table. When she went out, handing in an unpunched food check, he followed and tried to make her take the dollar. She refused, admitting it wouldn't help much and walked away as if she had made some dreadful decision. The tragedy in all these was that it was not done in passion or seduction, but in desperate choice.

But often it was men who bore the brunt of job loss - or its fear - protecting their women as long as they could.

In The Overcoat,⁴¹ a bridge-playing wife felt sorry for the shabby overcoated man in front of her on the subway and figured he might have lost his job. At home she noticed her husband's overcoat sleeve looked horribly like the one in the subway. "And suddenly looking at it, she had a horrible sinking feeling as though she were falling in a dream."

A hero-father story superlatively well done is Albert Maltz's Man on the Road.⁴² He could no longer get work in

⁴¹Sally Benson, The Overcoat. American Mercury. O'Brien, 1935.

⁴²Albert Maltz, Man on the Road. From The New Masses. O'Brien, 1936.

the mines at home because he had silicosis. He left home without explanation but sent back a letter to his wife explaining he didn't want to be a burden and saying that he would send back money as long as he could work - maybe four months, the doctor had told him. He told her not to let the children work in the mines and that she had better marry again.

Dear Mr. Flessheimer,⁴³ The Red Hat,⁴⁴ and A Man's Day⁴⁵ told what happened when the man lost his job and the woman became the wage earner, in other words, what happened when our cultural imperative that a man support his wife was upset. Dear Mr. Flessheimer was the unemployed Dave Goggins' pathetic appeal to his wife's Sugar Daddy not to take her away from him because he needed her. He was doing the housework and caring for little Jimmy while she modeled Smoothie Brassieres. The Red Hat was just what Frances had wanted for months. It would cheer her moody and out-of-work husband for her to have it; it cost a lot, but wasn't she earning the money? He was furious. A Man's Day is a study of the degeneration that occurs when a man has lost his

⁴³ Whitfield Cook, Dear Mr. Flessheimer. American Mercury. O'Brien, 1938.

⁴⁴ Morley Callaghan, The Red Hat. From Thicker Than Water collection. Appleton and Company. New York. 1939.

⁴⁵ Frederick Scribner, A Man's Day. Story Magazine. O'Brien 1933.

self-respect. When his wife supported him, he could no longer feel superior to her and have her admiration. So, he walked out.

Section II of the Federal Writers Project, These Are Our Lives consists of stories of people In Mill Towns and Factories, Section III of people In Service Occupations. Over more of the people in Section II than of those in Section III hangs a fear of job loss. Through many of these autobiographical reports is an identification of justice with a right to earn.

Short story versions of out-of-work reactions on children in the family are presented in Room in the World,⁴⁶ The Double House⁴⁷ and Tinkle and Family Take a Ride.⁴⁸ The tragedy in Room in the World is the little girl's loss of face among her schoolmates when she helped picket against laying off men (her father among them) at "the building." The tragedy in The Double House is that of the lonesome motherless little boy's complete dependence on his father's courage and cheerfulness. When his father, discouraged over unemployment, longed for his happy childhood, the little boy

⁴⁶Leane Zugsmith, Room in the World. Story. O'Brien, 1937.

⁴⁷Hency Hale, The Double House. Vanity Fair. O'Brien, 1935.

⁴⁸Karlton Kelso, Tinkle and Family Take a Ride. International Literature. O'Brien, 1937.

hung himself in the ropes he played with in the vacant half of the house. When any Tinkle and family take a ride, the tax payers kick via pressure on the relief office. There was no gas for the \$20 Ford Mr. Tinkle bought after he was laid off. But they would sit in the car and pretend they were going for a ride in the country. When Mrs. Tinkle died and someone bought enough gas to go to the cemetery, the children were too charmed watching a butterfly to notice the burial.⁴⁹ These stories were handled with less sentimentality than these summaries suggest.

Out of the unemployment theme short stories examined, only two are labor conflict interpretations - Halper's Going to Market (where race conflict was the inciting cause) and Mainwaring's The Fruit Tramp,⁵⁰ which antedated Steinbeck's fuller handling of the same subject in the novel, In Dubious Battle. What distinguished The Fruit Tramp is its giving so fairly in one story both the conflicting points of view, and its making, not one side or the other, but the steady building up of fear and hate to blame for the tragedy. To secure an objective point of view, Mainwaring had the story told by a boy from a ranch which didn't need to

⁴⁹ Albert Halper, Going to Market. Harpers. O'Brien, 1933.

⁵⁰ Don Mainwaring, The Fruit Tramp. From Today's Literature. Edited by Gordon, King and Layman. American Book Company. New York. 1935.

hire the fruit tramps. The boy's dad had several sons to do the picking; he hadn't bought expensive cars or furniture on installment, he had no debt or fear of foreclosure to press him to pay starvation wages to fruit tramps and then be afraid of the resentment which such pay stirred up.

The boy told how the few local laborers, seeing threats to their jobs if the tramps should stay on, looked down most spitefully on the "dirty Red" fruit tramps. They especially had it in for "the big man," a natural leader in the migrant camp.

"He's always talking about a living wage," Jake said.

"Then he's a Red. They always talk like that."

"Maybe if we put it up to him that we got to live too, he'll be reasonable."

But Jake and the hunchback goaded the farmers into fighting the wage-striking tramps. When "the big man" hit back, someone shot him.

"We all went over and looked at the big man. He was lying stretched out with his head in the woman's lap and she was crying. In the grove, the fruit tramps were tearing the tents down and packing their stuff in automobiles, and inside an hour there was only one tent in the grove. That belonged to the big man and he didn't need it any more." In such a story, the Job theme and the Homeless theme were inextricably interwoven.

Short stories are the natural medium for reflecting heightened moments and tense situations for individuals. Novels and narratives are more suitable and frequent vehicles for the wider social reactions to job readjustments. Some novels tried the difficult rendering of the quieter aspects of labor unrest. A labor union official said to Louis Adams, "There is nothing that throws a spot light on the sufferings and unrest of the working man as a flare-up of violence. The worker is not news when he quietly starves." But "this long drawn out tedium and decline rather than the dramatic quality of unemployment"⁵¹ was depicted by Clinch Calkins in Some Folks Won't Work. His stories, adapted from social workers' records all over the country, are not of the unemployables, but of the steady, ambitious workers who lost their jobs through forces beyond their control as improved machinery, fashion shifts, and textile mill moving. In his introduction, Calkins wrote, "The world, though it will be tragic voluntarily, will be uncomfortable no longer than it takes to shift the knee... The sight of tragedy is moving, but the sight of misery is distasteful."

In I Went to Pit College, Lauren Gilfillan succeeded in conveying a sense of the great tragedy to the idle miners of this "long drawn out tedium and decline." She recorded some flare-ups of labor conflict, but not as much as did

⁵¹ Clinch Calkins, Some Folks Won't Work. Introduction. Harcourt, Brace. New York. 1930.

L. F. Davidson in South of Joplin. Lauren Gilfillan in 1934 wove in accounts of Communist propaganda. By 1939, the propaganda menace in South of Joplin was, rather, from a fascist vigilantism.

One of the first novels written in this Unemployment frame, was Catherine Brody's Nobody Starves. It is the common story of a young couple who were able to marry by both being wage earners. She became pregnant. Then he lost his job in a factory shut-down. He became crazed with anxiety, killed her and tried to kill himself. This novel was a reflection of those years of most acute distress just before private charity gave way to respectable public relief.

F.O.B. Detroit, a variation dealing with seasonal and uncertain employment in industrial centers, is an excellent interpretation of man-and-machine relationships, the thrill of power in manipulating some of the great complicated machines, the life-sapping strain of the assembly stretch-out. Through the characters, Russ, Rita and Benny, this novel put into human terms the problems and alternatives which many workers at obsolete jobs are facing. Through the effects on these everyday, understandable characters, it contrasts the mammoth magnificence of industrial America with its small appreciation of individual human lives. Holt, the factory owner, was a thinly camouflaged Ford. By posting mottoes

around the factory, as MACHINERY - THE NEW MESSIAH, he expounded the religion which grew out of his rationalizing his industrial philosophy.

A vivid and distinctive rendering of the dependence of industrial workers to their jobs, is Christ in Concrete by Pietro Di Donato, a young Italian-American workman. Structurally much could be desired in the novel as expanded from the first chapter originally published as a short story. But it has superlative vitality. This is partly due to its extraordinary language, "the sonorous and colorful use of an English which is ringing with memories of Italian."⁵² Dorothy Canfield Fisher said of it also, that "its language makes you realize that the purists who would keep our language untainted of South European corruptions would simply sterilize it."

The story symbolizes Christ crucified anew in industrial exploitation and city graft. Geremio, a building foreman, was killed when a partly completed building collapsed due to a too thin concrete mixture. Although thrown partly clear, Geremio was suffocated when the concrete mixer was dumped over on him. The symbolism was carried farther in having this happen on Good Friday, with Gere-

⁵² Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Book-of-the-Month club introductory commentary to Christ in Concrete. 1937.

mio's eighth child being born the following Easter. Even the names, Geremio, Annunziata, and of the son Paul, carried out the symbolism. The symbolism was so integrally a part of the story it greatly heightened the effect.

Geremio had been suspicious of the unsound quality of construction, but the "Super" would not stand for richer concrete. "There are plenty of good barefoot men in the street who'll jump for a day's pay!"

"Padrone, padrone, the underpinning gotta be made safe and - "

"Lissenyawopbastard, if you don't like it, you know what you can do."

But Di Donato did not direct bitterness against the "Supers." Higher-ups controlled their jobs. The strongest bitterness was directed against the priest who refused to help the unnaturalized Geremio's family. And Di Donato put it into the character of a poor young Russian Jew, to help Paul grow beyond a ready-made religion to one seeking truth and justice in what lay ahead, and in continuing to live for others - holding on to his tiresome job for the younger brothers and sisters.

As Di Donato used the word Job in this novel, it had several meanings:

1. The whole building construction organization.

2. The sum of men at work on it.

3. The specific part Geremie had - then the specific part Paul tried to get and keep.

It was never used with an article - just Job. And as though it were sanctified, it was always capitalized. And perhaps herein lay another deep symbolism, and a point of significance. If Job was sacred, then he who could supply jobs would be a Messiah!

A passage of remarkable beauty is Annunziata's tenement window soliloquy mourning Geremie. It begins:

"Feet - feet - feet - to my ears like rain. And whither Geremie's? Whither the dark eyes and tanned face of beauty to twinkle love's greeting? Whither the Roman figure of man, the broad chest with curved back and quick step and hands so strong? What do I here with only window ledge at bosom?"

In the same city with Geremie could be found such white-collar Americans as those in Josephine Lawrence's group of novels. She was completely objective, neither blaming nor defending any class nor stereotyping any characters. Sound of Running Feet was a skillful psychological probing into the family relationships of all those employed at Mead and Luth's. She revealed the personality and economic necessities back of their desperate holds onto jobs, and the desperate efforts of the owners to keep the business solvent.

Jack Conway's novel, The Disinherited (1933) was a mining camp story. After hard years in which mine accidents, steel mill strike fights and the strain of providing for a large family, had killed his father and two brothers, Larry decided family life was not for him. So, in an old car with two labor organizers, he rode away - in good old American tradition - to the west.

Many such small migrations, added to the great dust bowl migration, helped bring about in California that intensification of migrant and labor conditions which constituted the settings and plots of great human drama.

An artist had been watching the development of this drama, had been talking to the people, living with them, listening to their speech and pondering the themes running through their words. So, it was that in California, the Homeless-Migrant theme and the Jobless-Labor theme in the symphony of poor Americans came to a climax in a novel, Grapes of Wrath, by John Steinbeck. Leaving his earlier individual psychological studies, he wrote, along with articles on California labor conditions for the San Francisco News, Tortilla Flat, In Dubious Battle, and Of Mice and Men.

The lineage of California fiction which considered the migrant agricultural laborers traced back through Frank Norris's The Octopus in 1901 to Helen Hunt Jackson's Ramona

in 1884 and Stephen Powers' Afoot and Alone in 1872. The first serious economic and psychological study of migratory labor, The Casual Laborer, was made by Carleton H. Parker, who died in 1918. In 1914, the year after the Wheatland riot, Parker wrote:

There is a great laboring population, experiencing a high suppression of normal instincts and traditions... There can be no greater perversion of a desirable existence than this insecure, undernourished, wandering life with its sordid sex-expression and reckless and rare pleasures. Such a life leads to one of two consequences: 1. either a sinking of the class to a low and hopeless level, where they become a charge upon society or 2. revolt and guerrilla labor warfare.⁵³

As a result of the Wheatland riot, the Commission of Immigration and Housing helped improve housing conditions among those workers. The 1914 survey reported 75,000 migratory laborers, who, when employed on ranches, had to live devoid the accommodations given horses. Sample studies indicated a fourth of them were feeble minded.⁵⁴

But the war and boom times followed, the Wheatland riot and Carleton Parker were almost forgotten, and nobody but a few economists and sociologists worried about the

⁵³Carleton H. Parker, The California Casual. In Quarterly Journal of Economics. November, 1915.

- By way of Cornelia Stratton Parker, An American Idyll. Atlantic Monthly Press. New York. 1919. p. 83.

⁵⁴Carleton H. Parker, The Wheatland Riot. Quoted in Carey McWilliams' Factories in the Field. Little, Brown and Company. Boston. p. 158-164.

fruit tramps until the dust bowl refugees poured in.

In Dubious Battle dealt with migratory workers in Carleton Parker's second consequence classification - those of revolt and guerrilla warfare. So touchy was the subject that Steinbeck warned, "The Persons and Places in This Book Are Fictitious."

Not the Incidents! The story occurred in that period from 1931 when the Communists "launched an effort to organize workers" to the 1933 strikes which were "the most extensive strikes in the agricultural history of the U. S."⁵⁵ For the strike climax in In Dubious Battle, Steinbeck used what was probably a composite of the Vacaville and the Taus strikes. Judging from the accounts and official report excerpts in Carey McWilliams' chapter on "The Great Strikes," Steinbeck minimized rather than exaggerated their size, scope, casualties and duration. But he did intensify, by making it happen because of people and to men for whom he aroused sympathy.

The strike was broken by terrorism and by shipping in laborers from the outside, and it failed to gain its immediate objective. But Steinbeck showed its cause being given support, often secret from local sympathizers, wider attention over the state, and more hope and sacrificing

⁵⁵ Carey McWilliams, Factories in the Field. Chapter, The Great Strikes.

devotion by the fruit tramps themselves.

Steinbeck told the story from the viewpoint of a radical sympathizer, Jim Nolan; how some Communists engineered a fruit pickers' strike against big pay cuts. These fellows worked with such fervor that the pickers, from backgrounds of hate, anger, violence and hopelessness, were inspired by the new vision of working together. Mac, the leader, directed, "Tell 'em straight what a strike means, how it's a little battle in a long war."

Of Mice and Men was not about the newcomers from the dust bowl. It was about the regular fruit tramps, those in Carleton Parker's first consequence classification - the sinking to a low and hopeless level.

Steinbeck's theme chord sounded the tone of the novel:

They drift from ranch to ranch, these farm laborers, and the very casualness of their lives lends deep poignancy to their yearning for the refuge from loneliness and fear that all men seek - a few acres and a house of their own.

The story is of a pair of bindle stiffs who looked after each other - Lennie, a huge, feeble-minded boy and his small, quick, restless partner, George. Lennie was strong enough to do the work of both of them, but George had to look after him as one would a child, George would tell him how they were going to work, "get the jack together an' we're gonna have a little house and a couple of acres."

"An' live off the fatta the lan'," Lennis shouted.
 "Go on, George. Tell about what we're gonna have in the garden and about the rabbits in the cages and about the rain in winter and the stove - an' how I g't to tend the rabbits."

But even George's watchfulness could not keep Lennis "from doing a wrong thing." The fineness of this book has only incidental connection with its being about homeless fellows. It is a fine novel because the story seems absolutely real and the tragedy is built up inevitably out of the traits and deficiencies in the characters themselves - not only Lennie but George, Curley and Curley's wife, the only woman in the story and she a regular "jail-trap."

The moving picture made from the novel and the play heightened the beauty of the story and of the language, "a prose poem," perfect in its unity.

The wider implication in Of Mice and Men is what Parker called attention to regarding the migrants twenty-three years earlier: the physical strength (partly numerical) and little brain of long habituated degenerating migrant workers would become dangerous; equally dangerous would be the suspicious, scared arrogance of owners dependent on their labor. Since the story was well enough told to stand alone without any wider implications, it may long survive to carry

those implications.

The great migration which Steinbeck was watching was being variously referred to. The Pacific Rural Press for May 22, 1937, warned, "This is not a bindle-stiff movement." Business Week of July 3, 1937, characterized it as "one of the greatest migrations since the Gold Rush." Steinbeck studied this drama, lived with its people, and wrote about it. And what he wrote was an Odyssey of the last westward migration. Slowing down the narrative by interlude chapters which set the tone and gave background for the narrative parts to follow, he produced an effect of mass movement which had come from long-drawn-upon sources and would have far-reaching outcomes.

To understand the importance of Steinbeck's books as present pictures and wider interpretations, it is necessary to get a factual background. A great deal was made available in Carey McWilliams' well documented Factories in the Field, A Story of the Migratory Farm Labor in California, and in the criticisms aroused by these books. While Steinbeck was studying the background in history and in documents of Pacific labor conditions, while he was living intimately with these people and from that experience writing Tortilla Flat, In Dubious Battle, Of Mice and Men and Grapes of Wrath, Carey McWilliams, a Los Angeles lawyer

drafted into state service as Commissioner of Housing and Immigration, was continuing his already well-grounded studies along similar lines.

Carey McWilliams ended his history of the migrant laborers in California,

With the arrival of the dust bowl refugees, a cycle of exploitation had been brought to a close. These dispossessed Okies and Texicans were not another minority alien racial group, but American citizens familiar with the usages of democracy. With the arrival of the dust bowl refugees, a day of reckoning approaches for the California farm industrialists. The jig, in other words, is about up.⁵⁶

Factories in the Field and Grapes of Wrath were published almost simultaneously. McWilliams "marshalled history and straight facts" into a narrative aimed at thinking people. Steinbeck compressed history into Scripture-toned chapters, turned present facts into freshly created characters of an emotion-rousing novel, and aimed it at all who read. Enough did read to make it a best seller.

California, her fair name soiled, shouted, "Lies." Even the Reader's Digest was sufficiently impressed to reprint from the Forum an article by Frank J. Taylor, a San Francisco advertising man, pointing out its distortion and falsehoods. As deliberate an artist as Steinbeck would be the first to admit he used distortion for effect. At his door was a novelist's opportunity of a life time for a best

⁵⁶Factories in the Field, p. 306.

seller; the country was conditioned by the depression to a taste, to even a demand, for social indictment; close at hand, a spectacular human mass drama was passing its peak (already federal relief was easing the situation); he had served apprenticeship in writing about lesser aspects of the situation in preceding novels; he had the vision and sympathies; he was the man for the job.

Parallel with Steinbeck's direct objective telling of the story in Grapes of Wrath, eleven interlude chapters carried along a stream of tone-setting commentary, like an orchestral accompaniment or a Greek chorus. These ranged from dirges through satire, to prophetic warnings, back to dirges. Some reviewers found these chapters superfluous, sententious.⁵⁷

Chapter I was a dirge for the dead, dust-ridden land which the people were leaving.

VII satirized the second-hand car business.

XI was a moan of bitterness and hurt over leaving home, land and possessions.

XII "sound-tracked" Highway 66, "The long concrete path from the Mississippi to Bakersfield, 66, is the path of a people in flight... Where does the courage come from?

⁵⁷ George Stevens, Steinbeck's Covered Wagon. In Saturday Review of Literature. April 15, 1939. 19 : 3-4

Where does the terrible faith come from?"

XIV diagnosed the western states nervous as horses before a thunder storm.

XVII told of the new social patterns migrant life was evolving. "Every night a world created. Every morning a world torn down like a circus. The families learned what rights must be observed, the right of privacy in the tent; the right to keep the past hidden; the right to refuse help or to accept.

"And the families learned, although no one told them what rights were monstrous and must be destroyed... These rights were crushed because the little worlds could not exist for even a night with such rights alive."

XIX was a condensation of California's history. "Now farming became industry and the owners followed Rome, although they did not call them slaves, the Chinese, Japanese, Mexicans, Filipinos... Why - look how they live, and if they get funny deport them."

XXV was the paradox of hunger in plenty. "Men who can graft trees and make the seed fertile can find no way to let the hungry people eat their produce."

The story began in the drought-ravaged Oklahoma of the middle thirties (approximately 1936) when poverty-stricken share-croppers and laborers were abandoning the barren land

or were being shoved off by larger unit, mechanized farming.

Young Tom Joad who had killed a man in self-defense came home from prison just in time to join his family who were about to head west, lured by rumors of work in the California land of plenty. The Joads were poor folks and funny, ignorant folke - kindly, sturdy folks, not degenerates or freaks. Ma and Pa were wisely used to making the best of what came. Grampa was an obscene old goat and Gramma in her senility almost as bad. Uncle John had to drink when his memories and "sense o' sin" became unbearable. There were five children younger than Tom: Noah, huge, slow, dumb and quiet; Al, a young billy goat who rose to his responsibility as driver of the truck; Rosasharn, married to Connie and expecting a baby; Ruth and Winfield, considerably younger. Going with the Joads was Casey who wasn't a preacher any more but who had to be going along where his people went, to learn, to share and perhaps to help.

The journey on the crowded truck was hard. Grampa and Gramma died on the way out. When they met the first disillusionment in California, Noah left the family, slipping off down along a river where he could live by fishing. When more of their dreams and hopes broke in the face of Okie hostility, no jobs, money about gone and a tent in Hooverville to live in, Connie pulled out. Ma, shaming Rosasharn

out of self-pity, assumed leadership and held the family together while they moved from camp to camp looking for work. They encountered vigilantes arresting objectors as dangerous Reds, and riding herd on those who did get work - lest they strike for higher wages. Finally Tom killed a fellow who was killing Cassy as he tried to save a strike. Hiding Tom, the family had to move on. They found a fine box car to live in and while the winter rains almost swept them away, Rosasharn's baby was born dead. Tom left to carry on Casey's work. The Joads along with thousands of others faced a jobless winter. But they kept their courage and didn't break. They made friends among others like themselves and learned that out of this comradeship among the helpless, courage is kept alive, the courage that is their last possession. In its affirmation of man's courage in desperation, lies the human significance and value of Grapes of Wrath.

Because Grapes of Wrath was read so widely and aroused such controversies, it is well for the purpose of evaluating it in this thesis to determine its validity and honesty in so far as these may be determined in a work of art. At least Steinbeck's factual background material can be investigated and some check made of his implied accusations. An excellent source of reference for this is Carey McWilliams'

highly documented Factories in the Field. It is based on California history - United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau Agricultural Economics, California State Bureau and committee reports university studies, labor reports, etc.

The Forum for November 1939 printed an article by Frank J. Taylor,⁵⁸ a San Francisco advertising man, in which he attempted to refute the "broad accusations hurled so heedlessly in Grapes of Wrath." A check of Taylor's refutations with what Steinbeck said in his novel and with factual statements in Factories in the Field indicates that Steinbeck stuck surprisingly close to the truth. This check also left Taylor looking as though he might have been hired by Hearst or the "Associated Farmers"⁵⁹ to discredit Grapes of Wrath.

In some instances Taylor misconstrued Steinbeck. In other instances Taylor cited the treated and improved migrant conditions of 1939, evading the earlier peak of troubled conditions in which Steinbeck set his story. And some of Taylor's refutations held no water.

⁵⁸ Frank J. Taylor, California's "Grapes of Wrath". Forum. November, 1939. Reprinted in Reader's Digest. November, 1939. p. 89-95.

⁵⁹ Carey McWilliams, Factories in the Field. According to McWilliams the title "Associated Farmers" was a front to an organization of stock-holding, fruit-growing business corporations. See chapter, The Rise of Farm Fascism.

Taylor's first accusation was that the Joad family created by Steinbeck to be typical Okies were anything but typical,⁶⁰ inferring that they were a larger family and an older family than the average migrant family as computed from an FSA survey, which gave 30 as the average age of migrant adults and 2.8 as the average age of children. Steinbeck made such good use of Grampa and Gramma that Taylor "forgot" they died before they reached California. The rest of the adult Joads' ages figure at 30.6 years average. To be sure there were six Joad children but three were young adults. That leaves three (and one of them, Rosasharn, was married) which is again almost exactly the survey average.

The other families which Steinbeck described specifically were: 1. John and Sary, his invalid wife, a lone couple trying to reach California for her health; 2. the man who stopped to buy bread at Mae's hamburger joint, a wife and two little boys; 3. Ploy in the first Hooverville camp, a wife and two little kids; 4. the family with whom they shared the box car, one daughter; 5. the Weedpatch Camp family, with four children who had the "skittles"; and 6. the boy in the closing incident whose father was starving and whose mother and two sisters had died. This proves that Steinbeck kept his "Okie" families close to the FSA

⁶⁰Taylor, p. 89.

size and age average.

Mr. Taylor⁶¹ who secondly accused Steinbeck of general exaggeration, admitted 100,000 families or about 500,000 migrants had come. Steinbeck built his number up 50,000 - 100,000 - to only a 300,000 climax (except in his apocryphal interlude chapters where he referred to hunger in one stomach multiplied a million times). McWilliams said that although Oklahoma and Texas families had come as early as 1921 to pick cotton, the great dust bowl migration began in 1933, and that from then through 1939, 221,000 had been counted at the border. When he wrote late in 1939, Taylor admitted that 285,000 had been counted at the border highways, 1935, entrances excluding thousands who rode in on freight trains.⁶² In September 1935 the FERA liquidated the Federal Transient Service which had been caring for nearly 40,000 transients at once. The next year the entrance count was 87,301, and the SSA was not established until 1937.⁶³ It was in the tense, intervening period that Steinbeck set his story.

Third, Taylor told the "prosaic story back of the [Steinbeck's] lurid burning of Bakersfield's Hooverville," or shantytown. Taylor admitted the conditions in the

⁶¹Taylor, p. 92.

⁶²Taylor, p. 92.

⁶³McWilliams, p. 308.

squatter camps. He said the worst one was at Bakersfield [although others McWilliams mentioned sounded even worse]. Health deputies surveyed the camp. After six months of persuasion they got all but twenty-six families to move into town. The houses of these twenty-six were moved by the health authorities and the rest burned. But in telling of the El Centro winter-of-1938 strikes in the Imperial Valley, McWilliams recorded,

When the strike persisted, a force recruited from the sheriff's office, the local police and vigilantes obtained in towns under the command of the county health officers, raided the camp of the strikers. The shacks in which the workers were living were burned to the ground, and the workers driven out with tear-gas bombs. Over 2000 men, women and children were evicted. A baby died as a result of the bombing.⁶⁴

Pertinent to this last evidence is a news item from the Kansas City Times on April 22, 1940.

"ROUNDED UP 248 HOBOES

From Caves Under Beardsley Road
Police Flush 38

Two hundred and forty-eight homeless men...packed headquarters last night after a crew of officers devoted twelve hours to rounding them up in the city's hobo jungles, alleyways, gutters and sidewalks. The raid resulted from two factors. First was the complaint from West Side residents that vagrants were annoying their children. In addition, Chief L. B. Reed has ordered the department to clear the streets of panhandlers.

The small army of tattered men, sullenly taciturn, formed the biggest crowd of prisoners in the history of the

⁶⁴ Taylor, p. 91.

present headquarters. A great percentage of them had been drinking canned heat, nickle gin and a mauve-colored liquid dispensed in the North Side as moselle wine.

The sleep of thirty-six residents of the city's latest hobo jungle, an extensive village under Beardsley road between Thirteenth and Fifteenth streets was disturbed at two o'clock yesterday morning by the shouts and flashing lights of officers. The officers ordered the men out of their abodes, and they arose, shedding the wrapping paper and newspapers that serve them as sheets, for the ride to headquarters.

With the police at the Beardsley road raid were [two] municipal judges who went along to see how the transients live.

Beardsley road forms a roof for jungle town. The road at that point is supported on the bluff by pillars which have left a space of several feet between the road and the gullied bluff.

These transients have developed a style of architecture which is strongly evocative of Aunt Lucinda's combination cyclone and fruit cellar out on the Kansas plains. By burrowing back into the clay and shale of the bluff, and by building a superstructure of crude clay-and-stone masonry, the transients have built homes.

Others not so particular have taken the easy road to home ownership, building shacks of cardboard and tin...

All the alleged vagrants were booked for investigation, and fingerprinting activities began yesterday. Some of the men may be wanted in other cities, police believe. They will appear in court tomorrow morning.

Today police will return to the camp and tear out the shanties and burn them." (Italics added.)

There was no claim that this was a picture of all of Kansas City. Steinbeck was not trying to picture all of California. He was focusing sharply on a dynamic human sit-

uation of homelessness and joblessness. And because elements of that same charged situation were being felt in all parts of the country, Grapes of Wrath set off sparks all over the United States.

Returning to Taylor, his fourth refutation was that the U. S. Farm Placement Bureau inquired into the charges, aired in Grapes of Wrath, that California farmers had distributed handbills throughout the dust bowl, offering jobs to lure a surplus of labor. He said only two cases had been unearthed, one by a labor contractor.⁶⁵ McWilliams said,

...the California growers themselves set in motion the currents of migratory labor...by deliberately encouraging and soliciting "tourist" emigration through the activities of the California Development Association... Likewise the custom of recruiting out-of-State labor for specific purposes, such as breaking a strike, is still continued... On April 11, 1938, forty-six Mexican strike breakers from Uvalde, Texas, were escorted into California under an armed convoy...furnished by the Associated Farmers.

The Santa Barbara case which Taylor admitted, was described as follows by McWilliams:

The first revelation had to do with 2000 pea pickers marooned in Nipomo, a small community north of Santa Barbara. For two preceding seasons, labor contractors licensed by the State of California had been permitted to advertise in Arizona newspapers for "thousands of pea pickers, promising work for the season." In response to these appeals 2000 workers had assembled in the spring of 1937, only to discover there was work for but a third of their

⁶⁵ Taylor, p. 94.

numbers. To complicate matters, rain destroyed part of the crop and flooded the camp. Those who had any funds moved on. But 2000 were actually starving when the FSCC discovered their plight. The pictures taken at this camp by federal representatives are almost incredible in their revelation of the plight of 2000 starving, dirty, utterly dejected men and women. I know of nothing comparable to these except the famine areas in postwar Europe.

Steinbeck may have used artists' license in appropriating many of the details of the Wheatland riot of 1913 near the Durst hop ranch, involving 2800 people, over half, women and children.

Following the established practice of his fellow growers, Durst had advertised in newspapers through California and Nevada for workers. He had asked for 2700 workers, when, as he subsequently admitted, he could only supply employment for about 1500. Within four days after his fanciful advertisements appeared, these workers had assembled... The commission of inquiry which investigated the incident found that Durst had intentionally advertised for more workers than he needed in order to force wages down and that he purposely permitted the camp to remain in a filthy condition so that some of the workers would leave before the season was over, thereby forfeiting 10 per cent of their wages, which he insisted on holding back. Carleton Parker stated that the amount paid, per 100 pounds hops picked, fluctuated daily in relation to the number of workers on hand. Earnings varied between \$1.00 and \$0.78 a day. Over half the workers were destitute and forced to cash their checks each night. Throughout the season at least a thousand workers, unable to secure employment, remained idle in camp.⁶⁶

⁶⁶Carleton H. Parker, The Wheatland Riot. Quoted in McWilliams. Chapter, The Wheatland Riot.

Fifth, Taylor said that Grapes of Wrath charges that they (California farmers) deputized peace officers to hound the migrants ever onward.⁶⁷ Steinbeck did use deputized peace officers in four instances: at the first Hooverville camp, just after the Joads left it, in the vicinity of the Weedpatch camp, and around the barbed wire enclosed Hooper ranch. Only in the second instance listed above were they hounding the migrants onward. In the Hooper ranch they were helping break a strike. Around the camps they were looking for "Rede."

McWilliams told of the origin of the special deputies in 1933. The Farm Bureau Federation and State Chamber of Commerce had a committee study farm and labor conditions. After this, the farmers of Imperial Valley formed a voluntary association known as Associated Farmers "pledged to help one another in case of emergency...to offer their services to the local sheriff immediately as special deputies in event of disorders arising out of picketing and sabotage. By 1934 it was a State organization. In the Salinas strike, 1500 men were mobilized for deputy in one day, in Stockton 2200 deputies in a few hours, in Imperial valley 1000 in a few hours."⁶⁸

⁶⁷Taylor, p. 91.

⁶⁸McWilliams, Chapter, The Rise of Farm Fascism.

Sixth, Taylor said that Grapes of Wrath implied "that hatred of migrants is fostered by land barons who use the Bank of the West and the Farmers Association (obviously the Bank of America and Associated Farmers),"⁶⁹ inferring that he would refute it. He omitted even an attempt to do so. In 1935 McWilliams "investigated confidential files of Associated Farmers in San Francisco, with card indexes naming dangerous radicals among the migrants. Sets of this file were distributed to peace officers and to members." Steinbeck convincingly made the Californians' hatred the product of their fears of the incoming hordes and of mounting county relief costs.

Seventh, Taylor said "Grapes of Wrath accused California of allowing migrant mothers to bear babies unattended and in squalor. In 1939, Taylor asked the Shafter Camp manager how many babies had been born there that year. 'None; the mothers all go to Kern County hospital.' Yet in Steinbeck's book, the camp manager is obliged to act as midwife."⁷⁰

Steinbeck evidently had access to (and used as his basis for Weedpatch Camp) the same reports as McWilliams, those of the manager of one of the first two government migrant camps. Said McWilliams,

⁶⁹Taylor, p. 69.

⁷⁰Ibid.

I have been privileged to study a series of weekly reports submitted by Mr. Tom Collins, manager of the Arvin camp, to his superiors. In addition to being social documents of the first importance, these reports made fascinating reading. To take a sample week, ... "The whole camp is excited over the arrival of a baby - the first to be born in camp."

McWilliams also commented, "In his novel, In Dubious Battle, Steinbeck describes a confinement in a jungle camp, the details of which were incredible to many readers. Later investigations have revealed many similar cases.

Eighth, Taylor says that Grapes of Wrath charges that by implication, California farmers allowed children to hunger. Said Taylor, "Actually no migrant family hungers in California unless it is too proud to accept relief"⁷¹ and insists there is no red tape about getting food and shelter for fifteen days (and it can be renewed). Taylor says there are thirteen FSA model camps for 300 families, each. But, in the period Steinbeck described, there were only two.

But $13 \times 300 \times 5 = 19,500$ or say 20,000 - still only one-twenty-fifth enough to take care of all who entered.

It is quite interesting that the food distributed mentioned by Taylor included flour, beans, corn meal, canned milk and tomatoes - no citrus fruit! In his chapter, The Rise of Farm Fascism, McWilliams tells of how trucks in Orange County were hijacked and dumped on the highways.

⁷¹Ibid. p. 89-90.

McWilliams, on page 317, said, "Fifty babies, children of migratory workers, died in one county in a single season. Of children who died in Tulare County - two a day during the influenza epidemic of 1937 - 90 per cent were children of migratory workers. Twenty-seven out of thirty migratory children (Tulare County) were defective through malnutritional diseases." Steinbeck's stating and admitting the facts need not be blaming California. She probably did and is doing a better job of absorbing 500,000 people than any other state could have done.

It is interesting to compare Steinbeck's picture of housing on the Hooper ranch and Taylor's statement: "Many of the large ranches - Tagus, Hoover, Di Giorgio - provide housing as good as the FSA, and they do it for less. On the Tagus Ranch H. C. Merritt offers 200 permanent families neat cottages at from \$3.00 to \$5.00 a month."⁷² Taylor fails to mention this was not so a few years ago. It was on the Tagus ranch owned by the Merritt family and regarded as a citadel of reaction in August 1933, that one of the "Great Strikes" broke out. In telling of the great owners' opposition to FSA camps, McWilliams said, "The growers have resorted to wholesale evictions as a strike-breaking device. In those cases where workers were housed on company prem-

⁷²Taylor, p. 93.

ices, as at the Tagus Ranch, eviction could be summarily obtained." And again, page 231, McWilliams said, "At the Tagus Ranch, in 1934, a huge moat was constructed around an orchard in order to 'protect the properties,' with armed guards stationed at the entrance and with a mounted machine gun, "a regular concentration camp." So of course Mr. Merritt would rather put up some neat little cottages on his own property than to have the workers live at a nearby government camp where they might assemble and "organize."

In the last part of Grapes of Wrath Steinbeck showed among the migrants a growing sense of solidarity and brotherhood. The novel may have been structurally incomplete with its open ending, but no other writing of the period gave so adequate a presentation of homeless, jobless Americans nor directed to them such nation-wide attention.

Relief Theme

From its earliest attempts, American literature had reflected migrations and movements of peoples - a three centuries' record of a westward movement to new lands and homes. In this recent literature of poorer Americans, the stories reflect confused wanderings, crisscross movements and desperate search. Even Grapes of Wrath, which begins with the familiar westward movement, ends with blind wandering.

From earliest writings, American literature was also a record of people who worked, who labored in the assurance of reward for labor. In the recent literature, the reflection is of dismay, despair and sometimes rebellion that the unhindered opportunity to work for rewards has shrunk or collapsed - with minor reflections of easy-going, low-level living.

The relief theme in American literature is rare. The writer of this thesis had supposed that it was entirely new to the nineteen thirties, but found that there had been stories centering around the Freedmen's Bureau in the south following the Civil War. Established primarily to help the negroes make adjustments, the bureau offices were often besieged with begging poor whites. In 1868, Major John W. DeForest of the Freedmen's Bureau of Greenville, South Carolina, wrote for Putnam's Magazine, The Low Down People and Drawing Bureau Nations, surprisingly suggestive of episodes in Louise Armstrong's We Too Are the People (1938) and in Them That Needs from the 1939 These Are Our Lives. The recent point of view, however, is sympathetic or objective, and not condescending like Major DeForest's, "Since the Bureau supplied Unionists as well as Freedmen, every trashy applicant lied expansively about his sufferings for the Federal cause."⁷³ A host of poor white widows, genuine and

⁷³Shields McIlwaine, "The Southern Poor Whites from Lubberland to Tobacco Road." University Oklahoma Press. 1939.

spurious, swarmed through the Greenville bureau. "Whenever my office was invaded by a woman in threadbare homespun or torn calico, grimed with mud and perhaps tied with two strings, on her arm a basket and in her mouth a clay pipe, I was pretty sure to hear, 'Anythin' to git?'" He told of the "pair of such females" who borrowed his pipe, and of the widow who wheedled a loom out of the bureau to support her children but who months later had not put it up.

Of these "po' buckra" women, DeForest said,

They will not work, they do not know how to work, and nobody will set them to work. Such a thing as a poor white girl going into domestic service is unknown, not only because she is ignorant of housewifery but also because she is untamed, quarrelsome, perhaps dishonest, perhaps immoral, and finally because she is too proud to do what she calls "nigger work." But, "Lord's sake, don't send me to the poorhouse!" They would accept beggary from door to door, wintry life in a house of pine boughs, prostitution or thievery rather than sleep under the roof of charity.⁷⁴

Recent writers would not refer openly to these people as "trashy applicants" and "such females." They might imply it by using an extreme naturalism as Erskine Caldwell did in Tobacco Road.

DeForest saw these people as low comedy, as was natural in comparison with the battlefield tragedies he had been witnessing. Practically the only humor in recent writings about poorer Americans is in the relief stories. In the

⁷⁴ Ibid.

socio-economic charity structure is so much which is incongruous and bungling that humor is the method for its interpretation. This humor is more often at the expense of social workers and "good society" than at the expense of the poor.

Take the short story, Lily Daw and the Three Ladies.⁷⁵ It is a lovely travesty on the efforts of good women in a community to solve its social problems - women of the kind who a generation ago would have run the missionary society. While they were trying to get Lily off to a feeble-minded institution to protect her from such men as carnival followers, she produced a like-minded boy friend, a carnival drummer. As he really wanted to marry Lily, the ladies were delighted. This solved their problem and they got busy to arrange for the wedding.

Most of Willson Whitman's narrative of TVA, God's Valley, concerns itself with larger aspects of that vast relief project, and keeps itself at a Scripture-quoting elevation. But occasionally there are flashes like this: "Town people did better than rural people in getting work relief, and some said there were places where the Methodists did better than the Baptists."

⁷⁵ Eudora Welty, Lily Daw and the Three Ladies. Prairie Schooner. O'Brien, 1938.

A Murphreysboro, Illinois, editor collected literary gems from reports made out by Illinois social service investigators:⁷⁶

"Since Christmas family has been living off a democratic club basket."

"Man aggressive - has nine children."

"These people are extremely cultured. Something should be done about their condition."

"Woman says they are a delicate family and must have steamed apartment with eggs and oranges."

"Applicant's wife is a lady and hardly knows what it is all about."

"The people have religious pictures all over the place but seemed clean."

"Woman says husband has illness that sounds like arithmetic. I think she means arthritic."

"Family's savings all used up - relatives have helped."

A prize example of humor at the expense of social workers and of the society whose attitudes they are carrying out, is in The Triumph of Willie Pond. The case worker helping Willie's family prepare for his return from two years in a tuberculosis sanitarium, gives great care to making up a bed for him on the back porch, but completely avoids

⁷⁶Clipped from Manhattan Mercury, 1939.

giving any contraceptive assistance to him or his prolific wife, Sarah.

Tortilla Flat is mostly low comedy, and Steinbeck uses low comedy relief in Grapes of Wrath, especially where the Joads are enjoying the partial charity of the government camp at Weedpatch. How seriously the Ladies Committee of Sanitary Unit No. 4 take their offices in that puppet community! How scared and fascinated the children are over mechanical toilet facilities! Steinbeck can laugh at these people for, from the beginning, he shows compassion for them.

But what brought the social arousal and provision for relief were not the low-down, long-accustomed poor who showed what Shields McIlwaine called "the effects of living without social function." It was the new poor and the more poor. And as this is seen mostly as tragedy, the Relief theme writings are, on the whole, as devoid of humor as the Homeless and Jobless theme writings.

What H. G. Wells wrote in the preface to Martha Gellhorn's The Trouble I've Seen, applies to most of this material. "In these stories, we have a rendering of human beings passing from a certain homely sufficiency of life towards a continually contracting existence of need and hopelessness" - by "artistry which achieves identification

between reader and character, we live the lives of the people so reluctantly losing their old freedom and sturdy self-assertion - so infinitely perplexed."

Through narrators' accounts of real people and through artist writers' interpretations of created characters' reactions, can be studied: relief accepted, relief refused, relief from the viewpoint of the dispenser and of the receiver, private charity, recovery of independence after being on relief. Various social effects are illustrated in the following short stories:

What Was Truly Mine⁷⁷ showed how galling and degrading could be the private charity of a blood brother. By implication, what would be the effect of such charity multiplied a millionfold? The Sampler⁷⁸ showed how a benevolent intruder put an end to an old man's sampling of plum puddings, forcing him to buy that which he could not afford. The bakery had understood and humored him, as do the Chinese, who have regard for Face. A Real American Fellow⁷⁹ told, from the viewpoint of the family mainstay younger brother, about the return home of the former football hero older brother

⁷⁷Grace Flandrau, What Was Truly Mine. Scribners. O'Brien, 1933.

⁷⁸Ira Morris, The Sampler. Story. O'Brien, 1933.

⁷⁹George Thorp Rayner, A Real American Fellow. Story. O'Brien, 1933.

who had lost his job in New York. The younger brother didn't mind sleeping in the attic, etc., until he found that the big brother and his wife took it all for granted and thought it was a joke.

John Crowe Ransome told of the Pueblo Indian tribe⁸⁰ which had suffered even drier seasons than usual until their plight was such that voice was raised for them in Congress, and \$20,000 was appropriated for their relief. The government agent who went to make the presentation to the chief, was surprised that he did not jump at it, but was rather indifferent. However, he called his counsellors together. After deliberation, he reported that the tribe would not accept the white man's money because it would be bad for the young men.

When Louis Adamie went to Hibbing, Minnesota, to lecture, he was told that of the unemployed miners around there, his Herzegovinian countrymen would rather starve than accept relief. So proud was he that instead of giving the lecture he told the story, My Friend in Herzegovinia.⁸¹ to inspire them anew with their heritage of such a cultural imperative for independence by effort and self-denial.

Stories about people getting off relief after they had

⁸⁰ John Crowe Ransome, The Esthetic of Regionalism. American Review. 1934. Reprinted in Literary Opinion in America. p. 107.

⁸¹ Louis Adamie, My America. p. 139-155.

been on, are rare. Elick Moll's To Those Who Wait⁸² told the shock to a white-collar man of regaining his job after being out four years. He had stretched savings to last three, then rather than let his family starve, had gone on relief. Like a shipwreck or tornado survivor, he suffered from shock so that he couldn't telephone the good news to his wife; he could barely say "Ninth floor, please," to the elevator boy. The implication is that, for him, a little longer would have been too long.

For the benefit of a discouraged jobless young father in In a Park,⁸³ an old Russian questioned the validity of the business and job measure of a man. He gave the young man perspective by telling the story of his own life: business lost by fire, flood and pogrom; daughter lost in the pogrom, a son lost in Siberia, another son in the army, his wife dead from the grief of it all; his coming with the remaining son to America, their getting along, the son's marriage and now, with a child coming, his job lost. "Neighbor say, 'Foolish have child when no job.' But I say, 'Why foolish? Good children everything and business and job no mean so much.'" And he asked the young man about his wife, "Is she good sport?"

⁸²Elick Moll, To Those Who Wait. Scribners. O'Brien, 1938.

⁸³Nahum Sabsay, In a Park. The Commonweal, Calvert Publishing Company. O'Brien, 1934.

"Yes, she is."

The old man nodded approvingly, prophesying the young man would climb up again.

An interesting example of how people on relief build attitudes of self-respect was revealed in one of the autobiographical sketches in the Federal Writers Project, These Are Our Lives. The teller of Them That Needs, on his WPA job distributing surplus commodities, learned to understand many relievers.

I gat so all-fired full of laugh when some of these women from the higher ups comes down to the Welfare Department. Nice ladies, but it ain't a salt spoon of sense about poor folks in their heads. Pretty little thing come last week to tall the women who come here about cooking - "Brush tha baking dish with melted butter," says she. If she hadn't been so pretty and young, I'd liked to ask her, "Where thay goin' to get the butter?" When she come to tall part, givin' them leeva to ask questions, she looked ready to fall off the box I'd drug out for her to speak from. It's a blessing tha Lord made it easy for some. A blessing, and I'm glad Ha done it.⁶⁴

Another instance of this bolstering up a feeling of superiority toward the more fortunate is in Minehan's Boy and Girl Tramps of America. The boys and girls getting a jungle camp fire supper ready, laughed heartily at "Texas'" report of his tilt with the woman from whom he had just begged supper contributions.

⁶⁴These Are Our Lives, Section IV, Sketch 2.

"But how did you happen to leave home?" he mimicked her stupid question.

"Hard times, lady," I sez to her. "Hard times. Just like that, Hard times, lady, hard times."

Rescued from a life like that of "Texas" were the CCC boys whose twenty-nine personal experience stories went into Youth Rebuilds published by the American Forestry Association in 1934. Young men who formed the first CCC in 1933 were invited to compete in an American Forestry Magazine contest, on What the CCC Has Meant to Me. Even discounting the propaganda purpose of the contest, the stories show the positive human results of a program of earned relief.

The local experience man for a Wyoming camp at first felt degraded to be with the CCC boys. "Lord, are these the creatures I must live with?" - "I had never seen such an array of ragged, slouchy, poor white trash." - "I am writing two months later. The bums that made me shudder are real men now."⁸⁵

Many of their stories resemble patent medicine testimonials or religious experience recitals of salvation. In so far as the boys identified the source of salvation personally with President Roosevelt and the Forestry Service,

⁸⁵ Youth Rebuilds, CCC boys. Sketch, Christ Was Not All Wrong. American Forestry Association.

the stories are pathetic and show tragically how politics can take advantage of human appreciation. In so far as the stories expressed hope renewed after idleness and despair, they are heartening, and show how a government enterprise can develop self-respect and pride in country by giving opportunities to share in preserving and restoring its resources.

A Texas boy's testimonial illustrates:

Apathy settled over me and my friends. We quit trying. Relief organizations held our heads above water. Then a great man came into power in our Capital City. He said, "There shall be a new deal." - And now I am out in the Tonto National Forest. Our camp stretches on a hillside - a long line of brown canvas like the connected bars of a freight train, only it does not move. Above us, towers the red wall of Tonto Rim, below us rush the clear waters of Tonto Creek. - We have learned about erosion, tree culture, insects, animals, blights. We have learned the part our forests occupy in our national economic structure and how many people depend on them for a living. If the loggers in Texas had left a seedling or parent tree every three hundred yards, by now a young forest would be well on its way. - I am resolved when I go back to Texas, to support any movement that will help to raise again the proud heads of southern pines above the barren slopes of those sandy hummocks.

The boys who wrote these experiences were the more articulate among the 250,000 boys in CCC camps in 1933.

Another testimonial is the one which the moronic Wearly Willie made when he told his story to a Federal Writers' Project recorder for These Are Our Lives. A kind, stupid boy,

he liked the food, clothes and showers in the CCC. He evidently worked hard and willingly under direction. The \$22 a month he sent home helped feed his brothers and sisters. "We just didn't none of us go to school" - "My pap just sets around the house after he gets off work. - After the crop is laid by, he just sets around. - The chaplain preaches to us two times a month and I like to hear him. He makes tears come to my eyes. I quit drinking on account of him. I'm a good boy now."⁸⁶

During the nineteen thirties, three social service pioneers published chronicles of their work. Jane Addams brought her Chicago record up to date by issuing the Second Twenty Years at Hull House. Mary Simkhovitch published a corresponding but simpler account of Greenwich House in New York, and Lillian Wald made a rich mixture of narrative and philosophical commentary in Windows on Henry Street. The books by these women of culture and privilege are pertinent to the study of this thesis because of their long-time perspective and because it was in the settlement house testing laboratories and service stations which they established where the problems of the poor were studied intelligently, and where standards and techniques were evolved for helping the poor, that is, relief, charity.

⁸⁶ These Are Our Lives. Section IV. Sketch 1.

The story of the Henry Street Settlement reflected the working of Lillian Wald's philosophy, her "faith that the first essential to sound human relations is respect. No one who has that sense of respect will patronize, insult or feel alien to human beings."⁸⁷

She drew from a wealth of anecdotes: about the poor with whom she worked, the important who came to watch, and the rich who joked that "it cost \$5,000 to sit next to Lillian Wald at dinner." She reminisced of how Irving Berlin and George Gershwin had grown up in Henry Street and how their music haunted her with its comprehension of those people. She recalled participation in strike arbitrations: "Only a blind spot could make one fail to realize how wise it is to help forward the organizations of wage earners as a direct road to making relief unnecessary, enabling them to take the responsibility for their work and family needs."⁸⁸

From the viewpoint of one who had watched the effect of previous lesser depressions on the poor, she wrote,

Perhaps the veterans of experience realize with special clarity the price that must be paid for a break of such magnitude in our economic and social life... Of the effects,...it seems to me that the loss of the dignity of man is the most tragic. Within this are bound up loss of home, of time, of position, the humiliation of breadlines and appeal

⁸⁷ Windows on Henry Street. Chapter, The Lean Years.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

to relief agencies, and the overwhelming sense of failure.⁵⁹

She marveled at the bloodlessness of the revolution going on and attributed it to Americans' sense of social responsibility, in cushioning the shock for the poor. This way of looking at it, disregarding the fear motive, may be too idealistic. But probably the existence of standardized techniques for administering relief and of some people trained to use those techniques, helped America to swing into a quick administration of relief.

One of those trained people was Louise Armstrong, and her record of how Relief went into a northern Michigan county in 1933 was one of the outstanding narratives of the period, fully worthy of its title, We Too Are the People.

Her instructions when she took the job as relief administrator were not to let the people "starve, freeze or start a revolution." In meeting the needs of 8,000 people with whom she dealt during the years 1933-1936, her staff uncovered, as were being uncovered elsewhere, evidences of human retrogression. Fortunately she regarded her job as a great experience and a great adventure - not as a great opportunity for reform. So, it didn't "get her down," and from her keen observations and disinterested fascination in all kinds of human beings she wrote a chronicle stranger than

⁵⁹ Ibid.

fiction, a chronicle important because it told so vividly the story of individual, poor people in one American county, that with variations in extent and degree was the contemporary story of all American counties. It demonstrated in non-technical writing how the relief of poverty was inextricably tied with problems of human behavior and deviations of conduct.

Through the narrative, for the most part held objective, can be traced changes in Mrs. Armstrong's attitude: first, from a faith in the New Deal's saving these people, through disillusionment, to the conviction that social justice can not come unless the people themselves "rise above the selfishness, the pettiness of mind and indifference to human injustice";⁹⁰ second, a growing pity for her own kind, the Hill folk, who by holding themselves aloof, are becoming perhaps too highly differentiated (used in the biological sense); third, a growing hope in the close-to-earth swarming humanity.

After exposing social conditions which were and still are a disgrace to any social order which considers itself to be civilized, she concluded,

The real beauty of living human beings survives. - I caught little glimpses of it all

⁹⁰ Louise Armstrong, We Too Are the People. p. 469 in Conclusion.

about me, hidden sometimes in the darkest places. A child in a nest of criminals cherishes the picture of a fairy princess; an old man basking in the warmth of a little kindness, spreads out newspapers over his beautiful quilt; a little harlot works to the point of exhaustion that the children's Christmas toys may be finished on time; something of the chivalry of old France still lives in a tempestuous boy, and out in the forest a squaw-man sings lots of songs for his baby.⁹¹

In all the writings about the disinherited during the nineteen thirties, there appeared no notable novel dealing with American families on relief. Perhaps ten years of depression were necessary before there could develop the perspective with which Caroline Slade presented the tenement-dwelling Willie and Sarah Pond and their large family. With superlative irony, this novel implied a questioning of the whole situation of relief - ameliorative efforts which help conceal causes. It closed with the politically appointed case worker, Miss Southard, upset by news of imminent war in Europe, unmoved by the same paper's account of the suicide of a client whose case she had so grossly bungled, and unaware of any connection between war and the misery of the lowly millions such as this client.

The Triumph of Willie Pond is considered by critical social workers an authentic representation. Twenty years' experience in upstate New York child welfare and court work gave Caroline Slade a pre-depression background and acquaint-

⁹¹Ibid. p. 473.

tance both with people who need help and with the maze of agencies and workers who administer it.

By skillful use of contrasts, she avoided stereotyping any characters. To balance Miss Southard, there were competent, unselfish workers. To balance the Ponds, a family superior to those usually found in such conditions, were their degenerate neighbors the Pickenses.

This novel was packed with social indictment: political prostitution of relief so that it pandered to professional loafers and spongers; failure of schools to meet the needs of children like George, Betsey and Mary Pond; welfare agencies' avoidance of contamination by birth control organizations. Mrs. Slade made these indictments through such convincing characters acting inevitably through a plot so structurally sound that the effect was not sordid and depressing, but enlightening and disturbing - which was undoubtedly what she wanted.

Willie Pond had had a good job, self-respect and five children when the mill had closed down. When the story opened, he was digging ditches for the WPA, was far gone with tuberculosis but afraid to go to a doctor, had eight children and a ninth coming. They lived in a condemned tenement. Sarah was becoming a slattern, the eldest boy hard and bitter, pretty fourteen year old Mary too wise, and the

younger ones all undernourished. The various welfare women from overlapping agencies were more often scornful, sentimental or dictatorial than objective, comprehending or encouraging.

When a broken leg sent Willie to a hospital, his tuberculosis was revealed and he was sent to a sanitarium. His family was transferred to another agency and put on extremely generous relief. But Mary, scared by the zealous case worker's suspicions of her, had already run away. Although the family did not see her again, the readers did. The qualities of pride and independence to which the Ponds clung made them "difficult" for social workers.

Two years later, Willie, improved, was released to go home. He could find no job, but as he was then "employable," the family had to be taken off relief. He knew that he could not support them. Rather than let them return to their previous privation and degradation, and so that Sarah would have a widow's pension, he committed suicide - with Sarah pregnant again. Willie's triumph was the survival of his family - the triumph of all the lowly replenishers of the population of the land.

To the Romans, the proletarians were the prolific, the breeders of workers and soldiers. In this old Roman sense, then, rather than in the modern sense connoting foreign-

inspired labor struggles, The Triumph of Willie Pond was a proletarian novel, and one of the best so far.

A novel easier to take and not so controversial as Caroline Slade's, was Ethel Hueston's Roof Over Their Heads. It was her twenty-fourth novel, and she directed it to her regular small-town, newspaper serial-reading audience. It told of a family reduced to live in the tenant house on what had been Mom's and Dad's farm. Back to Mom (Dad had died) and the younger ones, came Judith with her children and out-of-work husband, and Danny, out of work, with his wife and baby. Finally, Mom, rather than let her grandchildren starve, applied for relief, rationalizing that for years she had paid taxes and was entitled to it. One by one, as they lost their old self-respect, the family slipped. Bob drank. Danny got hopeless and lazy. Eileen, his wife, couldn't and wouldn't accept it and tried to get Danny to leave. As she became unbalanced, the roof of the crowded little house seemed to her the symbol of the confinement and trouble. Then, one morning when most of them were out of the house, she set fire to it. She was the only one killed, but they were all shocked out of their acceptance and inertia. "When she was most wrong," they said, "she was more right than we are."

The rest of the story concerned their various pride-

pocketings and self-supporting ventures, which all came out satisfactorily for the serial readers.

Another contrast to Caroline Slade's vigorous social indictment, Millen Brand's The Heroes was a quiet, critical study of institutionalized relief. On a preface page he put the definition, "Heroes, a term ironically applied to World War Veterans." But it was society, not Brand, who used the term ironically. He developed the characters of a group of disabled veterans in a New England soldiers' home, to show that some of them were spiritual heroes. He did this through the viewpoint of George Burley who was an inmate from 1934 to 1937.

George had not wanted to go to the home. One-armed, for ten years he had supported himself in a cabinet shop. When the depression put the shop out of business, he could not get another job. The men at the Legion Post had said, "You've got to do it, George. It's the only thing. It'll give you something to eat and a roof over your head - until things get better."

There was little plot. The conflict was of men's spirits against a system that however adequately it fed and sheltered men, denied them the right to produce what their limited capacities would allow and denied them the right to private home and family life. Brand showed the effects of

his own. Having learned that man's imperative was to live life rather than be protected from it and its inevitable end, Death, he and Mary faced the uncertainties willingly.

Reflections in the Relief theme literature are not yet as clear as in the Homeless and Jobless themes. There seems to be a double image. One image is of people saved from starvation or from degrading situations which the relief programs uncovered. The larger image is of lost independence and priceless self-respect, of growth of bitterness and desperation on the one hand and of fear and arrogance on the other.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FORM AND METHOD

The purpose of this thesis was a study of art form interpretations of the lives of poor Americans, as distinct from strictly sociological or economic interpretations. As the reading progressed, however, it became evident that there was an extensive border line field and much influence of each of these kinds of writing upon the other. Some definitely sociological writings approached art forms in intent or actuality. Many art forms used case study report methods of analysis and presentation.

Much of the writing was in loose narrative form as though the writers, impelled by an urge to tell immediately

what was happening, were too close to occurring changes to assimilate them and turn out creative fiction. Such was Louis Adamio's sociological travelogue, My America. Many of its short narrative fragments were almost true short stories and had individualized symbolic quality: My Friend in Herzegovina,⁹² Bootleg Coal,⁹³ The Door Bell Rang⁹⁴ and Girl on the Road.⁹⁵

Adamio was himself aware of the spot news limitation of his writing; in reference to a rough sketch of a potentially fine story about a Russian immigrant woman, he commented, "Some day I should like to write a portrait of her."

Although such writings lacked concrete, compact form, they usually had vitality and a wealth of true incidents which later artist writers might draw upon.

The dissatisfaction of some sociologists that their conventional, accurate statistical reports were still abstract and needed imaginative literature was voiced by Minehan in the introduction to his Boy and Girl Tramps of America.

Scenes of boys on the road, pictures of girls in box cars kept pushing my mind to cry against the facts I had tabulated so carefully. - To de-

⁹²Louis Adamio, My America. p. 139-155.

⁹³Ibid. p. 316-325.

⁹⁴Ibid. p. 279-281.

⁹⁵Ibid. p. 476-517.

scribe their life in statistical terms was not only inadequate but untrue. Such a description omitted the most important phases of their lives, their strife against cold, their battle for bread, their struggles to obtain and repair clothing, their hates, their humors, their loves.

An artist - not a scientist - was needed to paint what I had seen, record what I had heard. And I was not even an amateur craftsman. Yet for the sake of homeless thousands of boys and girls, I decided to try. In my descriptions, I have relief upon actual incidents and real character...

Minehan adhered so closely to facts that his book had authenticity. He stayed in a present tense immediacy with the young tramps. Although he didn't go, as he had wanted to, far enough to make great creative literature, he helped arouse country-wide interest in young vagrants.

In I Went to Pit Collage, Lauren Gilfillan used much the same method for revealing the lives of unemployed miners. Like Minehan's book, it was presented from a close-up, how-it-feels perspective. - If you know how folks feel, you're more apt to know how they'll act.

The method of using people's own stories about themselves was more successful in the Federal Writers Project These Are Our Lives than in the magazine contest CCC testimonials. The FWP method was for the WPA writers to record the stories after an interview, with no note taking during the interviews.⁹⁶ Because they followed a common outline,

⁹⁶ Editor's Introduction.

the narratives of each of the four groups had a college class theme monotone. Still, even though flat and without overtones, they unquestionably were honest recordings of the voices of inarticulate people, and as such may be, as were the *Gesta Romanorum*, sources for later story artists.

These Are Our Lives, an experiment in socialized literature, had hybrid offspring. Of the thirty-five offspring the one most resembling the literature parent was A Christian Factory. In this the FWP writer, using only the words of the dumb young factory hand, conveyed the tragic irony in his situation of which he himself was unaware.

Lillian Wald thought of people too much as individuals to use a scholarly statistical method in her writing. [Although she helped establish the United States Children's Bureau and other social agencies where scholarly statistical methods were demanded] she admitted she was like a man who when asked by a research student, "What is the death rate here?" replied, "I guess it's about one for every person."⁹⁷

In a family case report she included as significant the question of the little girl who from her tenement canyon, gazed off up at the distant Woolworth tower and asked, "Does God live there?" In her telling the development of an arts program among the neighborhood poor, she interwove such com-

⁹⁷ Lillian Wald, Windows on Henry Street. p. 1934.

mentaries as, "Long, long ago, Confucius, out of his wisdom, spoke thus, 'Man has no place in society unless he understands aesthetics'." ⁹⁸

"Unless a writer's social consciousness," declared Edward O'Brien, "serves to communicate richness to his perceptions rather than propaganda to his style, he is certainly not fruitful." ⁹⁹ Because Louise Armstrong's social consciousness did add richness to her perceptions, We Too Are the People was more than a collective composite case study of the poor in one county. It was an unusually clear, finely etched and colored print of a pattern widely distributed in America.

A short story which illustrated how an artist writer could create an illusion of reality more convincing than the sociologists' report on which it was based was Don Ludlow's She Always Wanted Shoes. ¹⁰⁰ Basing it on a case in Transients in California, ¹⁰¹ Ludlow had the little girl's

⁹⁸ Ibid. Chapter on Arts and Education.

⁹⁹ Edward J. O'Brien, Introduction to Best Short Stories of 1938.

¹⁰⁰ Don Ludlow, She Always Wanted Shoes. The New Masses. O'Brien, 1937-1938.

¹⁰¹ Transients in California. Division of Special Studies of California Relief Administration. Ag. 1936 (a 1931 ruling had declared only those who had lived in the state three years were eligible for relief). Later the Federal Government helped with emergency provisions. What Ludlow described was conditions at their worst, when federal assistance was just starting.

father tell how she had slowly died of starvation and exposure while they moved from camp to camp for short bits of work. The little girl was patient - but she longed so for a pair of shoes. When she was buried by the County, the father found that they had put shoes on her.

A number of other esthetically satisfying short stories might well have been evolved from case study reports which artist writers used for more than fact-reporting realism. Little of the humor and irony in Lily Daw and the Three Ladies could show up in fact reports. Exasperating to a relief worker would be a Tinkle family to whom she could not authorize grocery orders as long as they owned even a twenty-dollar car. This story's evidence that man does not live by bread alone, could hardly appear in a report such as "Neighbors reported Tinkle family had no food. Man bought a car after he lost his last job. He refuses to sell it. Not eligible for public assistance." On many records the Man on the Road would appear as a desertion case. Walz found unexpected heroism.

Back of Martha Gellhorn's well done short stories about people on relief, The Trouble I've Seen, was a comprehension gained in her experiences with the FERA. "Comprehension is," says Gordon Hamilton in his Social Case Recording, "perhaps a philosophic rather than a scientific exercise, but all the better case records show both the discipline of facts and

the discipline of elicited meanings."¹⁰² Martha Gellhorn's Mrs. Maddison was not just a story of an old lady who made difficult the providing for her support. It was a study of a conflict between self-respect standards developed in one economic social order and the impossibility of their fulfillment in a changed order.

In Joe and Pete when Clara was caught with her lover, she defended herself, "It's the only thing we can do that don't cost money." Miss Gellhorn neither accused nor defended her. She showed how a changing economic order was producing changing sex mores.

Destitute Ruby, in her joy over the roller skates she got of it, practically forgot what happened to her in the cabin down by the tracks. It was society's not forgetting when they found out that confirmed her in prostitution. It is of interest that Miss Gellhorn dedicated her book to her father, a St. Louis surgeon.

Gordon Hamilton says, "At present [1938] the preoccupation in social work is to find satisfactory ways of recording human relationships in their more dynamic aspects."¹⁰³ Thus the trend in case recording is away from exclusively

¹⁰² Gordon Hamilton, Social Case Recording. Columbia University Press. New York. p. 3. 1938.

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 45.

chronological, topical and summarizing methods to a diagnostic method which is also the method of such fiction writers as Josephine Lawrence, Millen Brand, Richard Wright, Caroline Slade and John Steinbeck, for they, too, "pluck from the unending web of social experience the thread of probable significance." One might say that doing thus has marked all sociological fiction, and that some of its methods are now being adopted by sociologists.

Hamilton defined the approach to making diagnostic records, "As understanding behavior relationships and social situation grows, case workers become able to make significant inferences with less personal bias, and we call these disciplined...inferences diagnostic thinking."¹⁰⁴ Josephine Lawrence made obvious use of diagnostic methods in her psychological novels analyzing depression reactions, especially of people seemingly unable to rise again. In If I Have Four Apples, the tangled finances of the installment-buying Hoe family were referred to Mrs. Bradley who ran a budget service for the Evening Record's financial page.

In Native Son, Richard Wright put his diagnosis into the mouth of the old Jewish lawyer, Mr. Max, who defended Bigger Thomas. Caroline Slade not only diagnosed the Pond family through the viewpoints of a variety of social work-

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 103.

ers, but in so doing, she diagnosed the workers themselves and the whole system of relief. Steinbeck's method was twofold: direct, in his interlude chapters, and indirect, through the slow working out of the preacher Casey's philosophy and through Ma Joad's common-sense wisdom. The widespread acceptance of Grapes of Wrath as reality was an evidence of the shadowy boundary, during the nineteen thirties, between sociological fiction and sociological fact reporting.

CLASS FUNCTION

Practically none of the literature about the poor was written by the poor. Exceptions like Christ in Concrete and These Are Our Lives are conspicuous. After carrying on a searching inquiry, Louis Adamic declared that the proletarian authors were either non-proletarian in origin or ceased to be when they entered the white-collar career of letters.

The answer to the question,

Did the workers in town or country read the proletarian literature?¹⁰⁵ Adamic sought by traveling far and wide over the country interviewing the kinds of men and women described in it... He reported that the influence of such literature on the working class was negligible; in fact nil. Workers in factory and field did not care to read about themselves... They read few novels and fewer books of

¹⁰⁵Charles and Mary Beard, America in Mid-Passage. p. 722.

a general character. Now and then they bought Liberty, True Stories and Wild West Tales... Ninety-nine and one half per cent of the American workers, Adamic concluded, in 1934, seem to be beyond the reach of radical printed propaganda or serious writing of any sort.

Evidently, then, the literature of the disinherited was not by or for them. Bernard De Voto,¹⁰⁶ discussing the two functions which class literature may have, said that if it has the first function, it heightens and unifies the sentiments of the class it represents, increases their group consciousness, makes stronger their sense of power or injury, and creates, enlivens their beliefs, myths, aims and sanctions which make action possible.

The other, or "interclass function," he said, "may be an agency of attack on other classes or of conversion among them. It may...make them pity and fear for the class it represents, giving them a sense of shame or guilt or futility." ¹⁰⁷

It is the interclass function which the new proletarian literature is serving, interpreting one class to another.

Even if it is debatable whether there are any real class distinctions in America, the growth of this field of literature, indicates class feeling toward and for the poor, if not among them. The keynote is a warning. Much of the warning was only implied in simple photographic realism,

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 725.

¹⁰⁷ See next page.

with the readers' imaginations or consciences supplying actual warning. In short stories the warning was only what was implicit in the reactions the readers would expect from people in the Homeless, Jobless or Relief situations portrayed. Bitterness would be expected from the father of the little girl who had always wanted shoes, strength to endure and meet new conditions from the young mother in Annunciation. Also in such realistic narrative sketches as I Went to Pit College, We Too Are the People and These Are Our Lives, the warning is only implied. The idle mining communities and poor croppers foreshadowed further degeneration, or desperation. And it is only implied in such novels as Of Mice and Men and The Heroes. In one description Millen Brand¹⁰⁸ pointed to it,

...the character of the street began to change. On one house he saw a cornice broken away; on another, a brick porch was sagging. The houses, the grounds, showed poverty, not outright poverty like the workers' shacks around the factories, but poverty invading a new kingdom, rising here as it was all over America.

Sometimes the warning was veiled in satire or irony. Eudora Welty's satire of the three ladies' handling of Lily Daw's affairs may have warned the upper classes against a too sure regulation of the affairs of the less fortunate.

¹⁰⁷ Bernard DeVoto, quoted in America in Mid-Passage. p. 623.

¹⁰⁸ Millen Brand, The Heroes. p. 94.

Upton Sinclair's satire warned that government relief agencies wouldn't be able to do as much as self-help cooperatives. Josephine Lawrence turned satire on the Good Home With Nice People. The irony was strong in Martha Cellhorn's stories, in Christ in Concrete, in The Triumph of Willie Pond and in Grapes of Wrath.

Sometimes the writers pulled out all the stops and made loud pronouncements for justice. Conspicuous among them are To Make My Bread, Grapes of Wrath and Native Son. The pronouncements sounded prophetic in so far as they were preceded by details of convincing reality.

The use of Scripture was strikingly frequent and contributed to the prophetic tone. Many of the titles have a connotation, at least, that is Biblical: Return to Dust - God's Valley - Grapes of Wrath - Their Eyes Were Watching God - Christ in Concrete - Annunciation - Sacred Thing - The Trouble I've Seen. It was probably not so much an unconscious attempt of the authors to weight their writings with Scripture, as a natural hitting upon the richest source of common vocabulary dealing with conceptions of trouble, retribution, comfort and prophecy. In Grapes of Wrath, Steinbeck took the title from Revelation, and he used a Scriptural phrasing in some of the interlude chapters:

And some day the armies of bitterness will all be going the same way, and they'll walk together and there'll be dread terror in it. (Chapter XI.)

And such was their hunger for the land that they took the land... And it came to pass that the owners no longer worked their farms. (Chapter XIX.)

The decay [surplus fruit] spreads over the state and the sweet smell is a great sorrow in the land. (Chapter XXV.)

The sounding of prophecy was even stronger in the sensational Native Son, which has been referred to as an American Crime and Punishment. In a long defense in Bigger Thomas's murder trial, Mr. Max asked,

Your Honor, is this boy alone in feeling deprived and baffled? Is he an exception? Or are there others? There are others, Your Honor, millions of others, Negro and white, and that is what makes our future seem a looming image of violence. The feeling of resentment and the balked longing for some kind of fulfilment and exaltation - in degrees more or less intense and in actions more or less conscious - stalk day by day through this land...

Your Honor, Bigger Thomas was willing to vote for and follow any man who would have led him out of his morass of pain and hate and fear. If that mob out-doors is afraid of one man, what will it feel if millions rise? How soon will someone speak the word that resentful millions will understand: the word to be, to act, to live? Is this Court so naive as to think that they will not take a chance that is even less risky than that Bigger Thomas took?...we uphold...two fundamental concepts of our civilization upon which we have built the mightiest nation in history - personality and security - the conviction that the person is inviolate and that which sustains him is equally so.

Let us not forget that the magnitude of our modern life, our railroads, power plants, ocean liners, airplanes, and steel mills flowered from these two concepts, grew from our dream of creating an invulnerable base upon which man and his soul can stand secure.

When men of wealth urge the use and show of force, quick death, swift revenge, then it is to protect a little spot of private security against the resentful millions.

Your Honor, I ask in the name of all we are and believe, that you spare this boy's life!... I beg this in order that not only may this black boy live, but that we ourselves may not die!

In The Corruption of Liberalism, Lewis Mumford¹¹⁰ said, "It is not in Ricardo, Marx or Lenin, but in Dante, Shakespeare and Dostoevsky that an understanding of the sources of fascism are to be found."

SUMMARY

This study of a new class literature in America can be summarized in four main conclusions.

1. This literature about poorer Americans is indigenous to all parts of the country, east and west, north and south, industrial and agricultural, negro and white.

2. It concerns restlessness and readjustments manifested within one or more of three interrelated socioeconomic frames: Homelessness - Unemployment - Relief.

3. Much of it is in loose narrative form; in method it shows the influence of sociological case analysis and reporting.

4. It is written neither by nor to the "have nots," but to sound a warning to the "haves."

¹¹⁰Lewis Mumford, The Corruption of Liberalism. New Republic. April 29, 1940.

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