

How to Build an Army: The Constitutive Utopian Rhetoric of Julius  
Wayland in the *Appeal to Reason*

By  
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## Abstract

Founded and edited by Julius Augustus Wayland, the *Appeal to Reason*, an influential socialist newspaper at the turn of the twentieth century, succeeded where every other contemporary radical periodical failed. It attracted a large national audience with an eventual distribution of approximately 750,000 copies per week. During its peak, the *Appeal* had a greater circulation than any other national weekly paper, and it remains the most widely circulated leftist publication in American history. In what follows I discuss the rhetorical strategies Wayland employed to constitute his readership into a movement geared toward collective action, and I describe the power of the utopian, constitutive, and prophetic rhetoric found in the pages of the *Appeal*, especially through the editorship of Wayland. Despite its largely secular doctrine, the *Appeal* can be seen as a kind of scripture pointing toward a socialist utopian myth to create heaven on earth, and Wayland was the key prophetic, homiletic, and symbolic figure serving to rally an energized group of *Appeal* Army foot soldiers during a period of great social unrest. I examine key rhetorical moments from the *Appeal*, including the early years of the paper, the creation of the *Appeal* Army, and the publication of Eugene Debs' infamous "Arouse, Ye Slaves!" These case studies reveal Wayland's mobilization of a vernacular persona, autobiographical narrative, hermeneutics, redefinition, and rhetorical violence as key strategies in the creation of the *Appeal* public. Through an inductive analysis of the rhetoric in the *Appeal*, I provide a theory-based explanation for the constitution and prodigious growth of the *Appeal*'s unprecedented readership.

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As the names above indicate, my cup runneth over.

Dedication

To my girls, Elaine and Eleanor.

It's all for you.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Socialist political parties never sustained major electoral victories in the United States, unlike most other industrialized nations.<sup>1</sup> This basic assertion obscures the importance of an early twentieth century socialist movement in America that experienced an unparalleled rate of growth. Founded in 1901, the Socialist Party of America grew into a significant political minority, eventually drawing millions of votes and landing more than 1,200 politicians into federal, state, and municipal positions. Socialism is typically associated with larger urban areas. New York City boasted an important socialist population, especially among European Jewish immigrants. Similarly, Milwaukee gained a reputation as a radical city, electing a socialist mayor in 1910, and nearby Chicago, due to its importance in American labor history, was also considered a bastion of socialism.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, perhaps the single most important socialist locale during the movement's golden age on American soil was a small Midwestern town tucked away at the edge of the Flint Hills: Girard, Kansas.

During the first years of the twentieth century, newspaper, magazine, and periodical publications flourished. Martyn Lyons noted, "In 1900, print stood supreme as the universal and unrivaled medium of communication. This was the golden age of print culture."<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Jason Martinek claimed, "At no time did print shape people's lives as broadly and directly as it did

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<sup>1</sup>Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks, *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), 9-11.

<sup>2</sup>Richard William Judd, *Socialist Cities: Municipal Politics and the Grass Roots of American Socialism*, Series in American Labor History (Albany: State University of New York, 1989), 22-5.

<sup>3</sup>Martyn Lyons, *Books: A Living History* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 209.

between 1880 and 1917.”<sup>4</sup> Located in Girard, Kansas, the *Appeal to Reason* achieved among the highest circulation of any weekly paper or magazine in America. This radical socialist publication, founded by Julius Augustus Wayland, broke multiple world records for circulation of single, special-themed issues, sometimes printing and selling in excess of 4,000,000 copies of a single edition.<sup>5</sup> The *Appeal* played a key role in the surprising ascent of the American socialist movement throughout its peak years. The sum result of the *Appeal*'s numerous headline-grabbing controversies was that “apart from the Socialist party itself, the *Appeal* was the most important socialist institution in America during the century's first decade.” Further, its editors “were the most famous socialists in the United States. During the non-election years particularly, the *Appeal* provided the excitement, vitality, and the continuity the socialist movement needed. Week after week, the *Appeal* was the dominant force linking the dispersed socialist movement together.”<sup>6</sup>

The *Appeal* was one of the most significant expressions of socialism ever on American soil. Billed as the “greatest political newspaper in the world” and “the greatest fighting machine the proletariat of this or any other land has ever known,”<sup>7</sup> the *Appeal to Reason* served as the primary organizing and evangelizing tool of American socialists and other radicals during the first decades of the twentieth century, the most crucial period of socialist prosperity in American

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<sup>4</sup>Jason D. Martinek, *Socialism and Print Culture in America, 1897-1920*, The History of the Book (New York: Routledge, 2012), 2.

<sup>5</sup>Louis Filler, *The Muckrakers* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1993), 224.

<sup>6</sup>John Graham, *"Yours for the Revolution": The Appeal to Reason, 1895-1922* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 10-1.

<sup>7</sup>George Allan England, *The Story of the Appeal: "Unbeaten and Unbeatable"; Being the Epic of the Life and Work of the Greatest Political Newspaper in the World* (Girard: Appeal to Reason, 1914), 7, 289.

history. The movement clearly would not have prospered to the same degree without the *Appeal* and its extensive reach.

Still, the success of the *Appeal to Reason* was an unlikely phenomenon. Established in 1895 by Wayland, the founding editor moved his printing operations to Girard as a cost saving strategy. At that point his subscriber list had declined to only 11,000, and as Wayland admitted, failure seemed probable.<sup>8</sup> Socialist publications did not typically flourish in the United States; very rarely did such publications produce the profit necessary for long-term success. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had speculated in frustration about the continued failure of socialism in the United States,<sup>9</sup> and despite renewed optimism after the publication of Edward Bellamy's utopian socialist novel *Looking Backward*, there was no reason to believe that a viable socialist movement could develop on American soil.<sup>10</sup> Much less was there reason to believe that such a movement could spring from a quiet Kansas town.

Through various strategies, Wayland steered the *Appeal* away from the brink of cessation to unmatched prosperity, settling atop the American publishing landscape; it became the most widely circulated alternative press periodical in American history.<sup>11</sup> Wayland achieved success where nearly every other socialist leader failed; namely, he gathered a large dedicated audience, one not only willing to read his paper but one willing to act on that which they read. One

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<sup>8</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "A Personal Allusion," *Appeal to Reason*, February 6, 1897, 4.

<sup>9</sup>Friedrich Engels and Leonard E. Mins, "Unpublished Letters of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to Americans," *Science & Society* 2, no. 3 (1938): 348-75.

<sup>10</sup>Terry Boswell and Christopher K. Chase-Dunn, *The Spiral of Capitalism and Socialism: Toward Global Democracy, Power and Social Change* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 165-6.

<sup>11</sup>David Armstrong, *A Trumpet to Arms: Alternative Media in America* (Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher, 1981), 38.

question must immediately follow the retelling of Wayland's success in his *Appeal*: why did he succeed? What separated Wayland's weekly from his many failed predecessors and contemporaries? Indubitably, one would not expect the loudest voice in American socialism to emerge from a small Kansan town. Without a careful examination of Wayland's rhetoric, the central element of his success remains unexplained: his ability to create and motivate a readership. Although many important scholars and theorists have written on the *Appeal to Reason* either directly or tangentially, the basic question of how Wayland's rhetoric worked remains unanswered. In what follows, I suggest the *Appeal's* success can be traced to Wayland's mythic constitutive rhetoric.

### Justification

Rhetorical scholars have largely overlooked the *Appeal to Reason*, and I suggest Wayland and his paper deserve attention for two simple reasons. First, the *Appeal to Reason* was a phenomenally influential Socialist entity throughout its existence. A rundown of contributors to the *Appeal* reads like a who's who of American socialists: Jack London, Upton Sinclair, Helen Keller, Mother Jones, Kate O'Hare, and, Eugene Debs, who worked with the paper, receiving an associate editorial credit. The *Appeal* acquired the single largest circulation of any American socialist paper before or since, and during its prime, Wayland's weekly outpaced any other major, mainstream publication. Paul Buhle asserts,

*The Appeal to Reason* is perhaps the only American radical periodical which belongs equally to the history of American radicalism and modern journalism. *The Appeal* was the most important evangelistic propaganda organ of the Left and the clearest expression of indigenous American socialism, but more than that, the only national political

newspaper of its time to capture a half-million subscribers and maintain its financial integrity with massive infusions of funds and, for considerable periods, without advertising.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, the *Appeal* published a number of important socialist and radical works. Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* was financed with funds from the *Appeal*'s budget and first printed as a serial in the pages of the newspaper, and by 1922, due to the achievements of Wayland and his successors, the *Chicago Daily News* dubbed Girard, "the literary capital of the United States."<sup>13</sup> Girard, not a historically radical town, functioned as an oasis for American socialists. Mother Jones once remarked, "If any place in America could be called my home, [Girard] was mine. Whenever, after a long, dangerous fight, I was weary and felt the need of rest, I went to [Girard]."<sup>14</sup> Thus, due to its undeniable significance in American socialism, in the history of journalism, and in American cultural politics, the *Appeal to Reason* deserves critical examination by rhetorical theorists, certainly by those who seek to "practice theory by doing history."<sup>15</sup>

Shortly before Wayland died, associate editor Charles Phifer reflected on the *Appeal* as literature:

The *Appeal* is not as good as it ought to be. It is crude—I know it. It isn't 'literary' or pretty. But it touches souls every week. Sometimes I stand in awe of the fact, sensing the

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<sup>12</sup>Paul M. Buhle, "The Appeal to Reason," in *The American Radical Press, 1880-1960*, ed. Joseph R. Conlin (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), 50.

<sup>13</sup>Quoted in Emmanuel Haldeman-Julius, "Girard Is the Literary Capital of the United States," *Appeal to Reason*, October 7, 1922, 4.

<sup>14</sup>Mary Jones, *Autobiography of Mother Jones*, ed. Mary Field Parton (Chicago: C. H. Kerr & Company, 1925), 29.

<sup>15</sup>Steven Mailloux, *Reception Histories: Rhetoric, Pragmatism, and American Cultural Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), ix.

deeper and unexpressed forces and feelings of a nation, of a world, surge upon me, calling for outlet; and if I thought I did justice to it I should realize I was inadequate for the position. I like literature; I like art; but sometimes I think the *Appeal* harsh and ugly as it is, partial as it is and must be, is, after all, the truest literature of the day, tracing the richest art of the soul, and that future bibliographers will go through its files to catch the spirit of an awakening people speaking in broken sentences through it.<sup>16</sup>

For all its faults, the *Appeal to Reason* was a force to be reckoned with, and it indubitably served as a rallying cry for American socialists at the movement's peak. Ultimately, the movement declined, but the *Appeal* brought crucial issues to the national consciousness and reached the attention of the most powerful people in the country.

Second, rhetorical scholars have failed to focus on radical movements in the crucial period of American history near the turn of the twentieth century, the Gilded Age and the early Progressive Era. While ample rhetorical work has centered on Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson, rhetorical theorists have largely overlooked the vital years between those two figures. Childers rightly notes, "The early years of the twentieth century were an important transitional time for democratic citizenship in the United States."<sup>17</sup> In this transitional period, due to the tremendous growth of industrial corporations, trusts, and corruption, Americans yearned for change, and Wayland preached the gospel of change, the upheaval of capitalism for the inauguration of socialism's golden age. As Dorsey suggests, "Revolutionary changes in American culture had already spurred an uncomfortable redefinition of identity for once

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<sup>16</sup>Charles Phifer, "Confession of an Editor," *Appeal to Reason*, January 6, 1912, 2.

<sup>17</sup>Jay P. Childers, "The Democratic Balance: President McKinley's Assassination as Domestic Trauma " *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 99, no. 2 (2013): 157.

disenfranchised immigrants.”<sup>18</sup> Those blue-collar disenfranchised politically radical immigrants sought identity and prosperity; Wayland’s *Appeal* claimed to present the path to both desires.

### Literature Review

There is no substantial rhetorical scholarship that focuses on the *Appeal to Reason* or Julius Wayland. At the same time, the work of various rhetorical scholars on American socialism and labor history does have relevance for this project. In what follows, I provide a survey of relevant historical, sociological, and rhetorical scholarship regarding the *Appeal to Reason* and its roots in the American socialist and labor movements.

#### *Literature Concerning the Appeal to Reason*

The *Appeal* editorial staff occasionally printed historical summaries of their successes, sometimes releasing pamphlets to demonstrate the importance of the paper to would-be subscribers. In 1914 the first book-length history of the paper was published, compiled from various historical pieces written by George Allan England. It was boldly titled *The Story of the Appeal. "Unbeaten and Unbeatable;" Being the Epic of the Life and Work of the Greatest Political Newspaper in the World.*<sup>19</sup> In the years surrounding the peak and decline of the *Appeal* a number of articles surveyed the history of the paper and its editors in various popular

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<sup>18</sup>Leroy G. Dorsey, "Managing Women's Equality: Theodore Roosevelt, the Frontier Myth, and the Modern Woman," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 16, no. 3 (2013): 425.

<sup>19</sup>England, *The Story of the Appeal*.

periodicals.<sup>20</sup> These works focused on the history of the paper, rather than rhetorical analysis of its message.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the *Appeal* began to receive limited attention from a small number of American historians. In particular, Howard Quint, Sharon Neet, Elliott Shore, and John Graham published research regarding the small-town paper. Quint's *Forging of American Socialism*, the published version of his dissertation from Johns Hopkins University, included a chapter parsing the contributions of Wayland's so-called "grass roots socialism."<sup>21</sup> Pertinently, Quint noted, "[Wayland's] new and not altogether orthodox socialism has received almost cavalier treatment from scholars, who have usually contemplated it with overly focused Marxist lenses which blur out nearly everything not associated with urban radicalism or trade unionism."<sup>22</sup> Quint's account of Wayland's paper and his contributions to American socialism became the authoritative statement on the subject for at least three decades. The primary shortcoming of Quint's account is its limited scope. Quint focused almost entirely on the founding of the *Appeal*, concluding his historical sketch of the paper in 1900, just three years after its move to Girard. The *Appeal's* subscriber base achieved its first substantial gains in 1901 and reached its peak in 1913, so Quint's account of Wayland's career prior to 1900 neglects the tremendous influence of the *Appeal* after that point. Nor did Quint focus upon the *Appeal* as rhetoric. Historians that rely on Quint frequently make the same error.

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<sup>20</sup>W. J. Ghent, "The 'Appeal' and Its Influence," *The Survey: A Journal of Constructive Philanthropy* 26, no. 1 (1911); Algie Martin Simons, "J. A. Wayland, Propagandist," *Metropolitan Magazine* 32, no. 3 (1913); George Milburn, "The Appeal to Reason," *The American Mercury* 23, no. 91 (1931).

<sup>21</sup>Howard H. Quint, *The Forging of American Socialism: Origins of the Modern Movement*, The American Heritage Series (New York: The Bobbs Merrill Company, 1953), 175-209.

<sup>22</sup>Quint, *Forging of American Socialism*, 175.

Despite Buhle's claim that the *Appeal* was "the only American radical periodical which belongs equally to the history of American radicalism and modern journalism," it received relatively little attention from those historians of journalism.<sup>23</sup> Frank Luther Mott's standard 1962 history of American journalism does not mention the *Appeal* once in its 901 pages,<sup>24</sup> and more pointedly, Lauren Kessler's monograph on alternative publications in America mentions the *Appeal* in one single sentence.<sup>25</sup> In 1983, Sharon Neet wrote her dissertation at North Dakota State University as an attempt to contribute to Buhle's claim. She focused on a particular, ingenious "journalistic technique" used by the *Appeal* staff "to promote and sustain not only itself but also the ideology of the Socialist Party."<sup>26</sup> Namely, "The *Appeal* in 1905, while remaining a national newspaper, diversified by adding special and regional editions, reporting the news of the state and regional party members. Thereby the *Appeal* provided a cohesiveness on the national level while at the same time nurturing grassroots support by dealing with local and regional issues."<sup>27</sup> While Neet's dissertation focuses on an important constitutive technique, her analysis begins specifically in 1905, without addressing in detail the crucial earlier years of the paper. She does not analyze other aspects of the *Appeal's* rhetoric.

Following Quint, Elliott Shore published his dissertation from Bryn Mawr University concerning Julius Wayland's and Fred Warren's editorships of the *Appeal*, situating the tenure of

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<sup>23</sup>Buhle, "The Appeal to Reason," 50.

<sup>24</sup>Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism; a History, 1690-1960*, 3d ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

<sup>25</sup>Lauren Kessler, *The Dissident Press: Alternative Journalism in American History*, ed. Gerald F. Kline, Comtext Series (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1984), 51.

<sup>26</sup>Sharon E. Neet, "Variant Editions of the Appeal to Reason 1905-1906" (PhD Diss., North Dakota State University, 1983), 4.

<sup>27</sup>Neet, "Variant Editions of the Appeal to Reason," 4-5.

both men within a formative culture of revolt and describing the *Appeal* in the larger epoch of publishing in America. Shore's *Talkin' Socialism* should be considered the preeminent interpretation of Wayland's *Appeal*.<sup>28</sup> Shore challenged the accepted narrative of the *Appeal*, the one printed in its pages and handed down to Quint and other interpreters. Perhaps his most significant contribution to the canonized narrative concerned a walkout strike that took place at the *Appeal* office in Girard in 1903. He highlighted the tensions created by the combination of socialist politics with socialist business practices in a capitalist democracy.<sup>29</sup> Shore considered the place of the *Appeal* in American publishing writ large and the effect of financial success on Wayland's message and attempted to answer the question: "How did the paper operate in its daily routines and how did practical business problems affect positions that the paper took on various issues?"<sup>30</sup> Although Shore's account of the *Appeal* answers a great many questions regarding the paper, its editors, its audience, and its effects, he did not address the power of Wayland's rhetoric directly.

John Graham published an anthology in 1990 containing selected articles of the *Appeal* accompanied by introductions to every section.<sup>31</sup> His account provided a bird's eye overview of the *Appeal* during its entire run from 1895-1922. The bulk of attention was devoted to Wayland's period, before 1913. Graham makes some suspect selections and emendations in his anthology,

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<sup>28</sup>Elliott Shore, *Talkin' Socialism: J.A. Wayland and the Role of the Press in American Radicalism, 1890-1912* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988).

<sup>29</sup>Elliott Shore, "The Walkout at the Appeal and the Dilemmas of American Socialism," *History Workshop* 22 (1986): 41-55.

<sup>30</sup>Shore, *Talkin' Socialism*, vi.

<sup>31</sup>Graham, *Yours for the Revolution*.

and Neet refers to the book as “nothing less than a disappointment.”<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, Graham’s account provided additional scholarly attention to the *Appeal*, even if his introductory essays added little of note to the existing academic literature on the paper. No monograph dealing with the *Appeal* has been published since Graham’s in 1990. Notably, there has not been a significant analysis of the *Appeal* as rhetoric. Such a study is long overdue.

Fortunately, sources are available to make such a study possible. Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas is home to the archives of Julius Wayland and Emmanuel Haldeman-Julius. Born in Girard, Gene DeGruson was the director of special collections at Pittsburg State for nearly 30 years. During his time in that position, DeGruson founded the *Little Balkans Review*, a journal dedicated to the cultural and ethnic history of Southeast Kansas. The *Little Balkans* featured various essays and poems occasionally regarding the *Appeal* and its people. In particular, the fall 1983 issue specifically addressed the *Appeal*, including five original essays on the subject.<sup>33</sup> These essays primarily concern the *Appeal* as it related to its surrounding area in Southeast Kansas. The archives and the journal provide useful information for a study of the *Appeal* as rhetoric.

James Green synthesized material from various sources to create a character sketch of the typical *Appeal* army member, those who regularly evangelized the paper and its doctrines.

Green’s work is impressively detailed and useful for describing the contours of socialist culture

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<sup>32</sup>Sharon E. Neet, "Review of *Yours for the Revolution: The Appeal to Reason, 1895-1922*," *North Dakota History* 58, no. 4 (1991): 39.

<sup>33</sup>J. A. Wayland, Founding Editor of the Appeal to Reason," *Little Balkans Review* 4, no. 1 (1983): 45-9; Randy Roberts, "The Girard Homes of the Appeal," *Little Balkans Review* 4, no. 1 (1983): 50-7; Gene E. Vollen, "The Social Impact of Socialists on Girard," *Little Balkans Review* 4, no. 1 (1983): 58-66; Raymond Joyce, "J. A. Wayland, the Appeal, and the Catholic Church: One Phase of a Wider View," *Little Balkans Review* 4, no. 1 (1983): 66-9; Gene DeGruson, "The Appeal Publications and Subsidiaries," *Little Balkans Review* 4, no. 1 (1983): 70-5.

in America.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Paul Buhle wrote about the *Appeal* as a touchstone in the history of American journalism. He traced the history of the *Appeal* at a general level. Buhle summarizes: “*The Appeal* discovered in tens of thousands of its readers an ‘Army’ for socialism and molded itself around this group's literary tastes and desire for self-education; in turn, the ‘Army’ conquered new territories for socialism until the calamity of World War I and the dissipation of indigenous radicalism.”<sup>35</sup> Continuing the focus on the *Appeal*'s journalistic techniques, Janice Hume explored “how alternative groups made use of public memory...as a tool for persuasion in the *Appeal to Reason* in 1912 and 1920.”<sup>36</sup> Since Julius Wayland died in 1912 and functioned primarily as a figurehead at the end of his life, Hume almost entirely neglects Wayland's role in creating a powerful message that reached millions.

A couple other relevant scholars have briefly interacted with the *Appeal*. James Darsey addressed the *Appeal* as it related to Eugene Debs and his prophetic *ethos*.<sup>37</sup> Michael Mark Cohen traced “the culture logics and political histories of conspiracy through the generation of American socialist and labor radicals that rose and fell between the Haymarket bombing of 1886 and the post-World War I Red Scare.”<sup>38</sup> He argued that the notion of conspiracy formed a core

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<sup>34</sup>James R. Green, "The 'Salesman-Soldiers' of the '*Appeal* Army': A Profile of the Rank-and-File Socialist Agitators," in *Socialism and the Cities*, ed. Bruce M. Stave, Interdisciplinary Urban Series (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1975), 13-40.

<sup>35</sup>Buhle, "The Appeal to Reason," 50.

<sup>36</sup>Janice Hume, "Lincoln Was 'Red' and Washington Was a Bolshevik: Public Memory as Persuader in the Appeal to Reason," *Journalism History* 28, no. 4 (2003): 172.

<sup>37</sup>James Darsey, *The Prophetic Tradition and Radical Rhetoric in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 99.

<sup>38</sup>Michael Mark Cohen, "'The Conspiracy of Capital': American Popular Radicalism and the Politics of Conspiracy from Haymarket to the Red Scare" (PhD Diss., Yale University, 2004), 14.

ideological and strategic tenet of American radicals near the turn of the twentieth century; he devotes a chapter to the *Appeal* and its proclivities for hyperbole, oversimplification, and conspiratorial rhetoric.

All of these texts address the *Appeal* from various angles, yet basic questions remain unanswered: how did the *Appeal* succeed where others failed? Why did the *Appeal* grow so quickly, and why did its readers act so readily in its defense? What in Wayland's rhetoric allowed for the material and ideological success not only for the *Appeal to Reason* but also for the socialist party in general? I suggest the answers to these basic questions can be traced through an examination of the rhetorical practice of the *Appeal to Reason* and its founding editor. This dissertation seeks to fill this gap in the existing literature by accounting for the tremendous growth of the *Appeal* through rhetorical criticism.

### *Broader Literature*

I now turn to a survey of the literature on American socialism and on labor movements, first from rhetorical scholars and then from historical scholars, to illustrate the availability of relevant research, while maintaining the need for a rhetorical interpretation of the *Appeal*. There is a significant literature surrounding American socialism and labor history published by rhetorical scholars, and I provide a brief selection of a few important contributions. Jim Aune wrote prolifically concerning the intersections of rhetoric and Marxism, especially classical Marxism. Aune suggested that Marxism had two primarily rhetorical problems. First, if the workers' revolution was fated to occur due to the revolutionizing faults inherent to a capitalist system, then workers had no reason to risk life or limb for such a revolution; it would take place without their uncomfortable sacrifices. Second, "classical Marxism tends to see the need for

revolution as self-evident, without considering that people might need to be persuaded to that belief.” Certain “communicative processes” can “enable historical actors to see liberatory possibilities,”<sup>39</sup> and without any consideration of rhetoric, Marxists cannot reliably gain and motivate a coherent audience, much less a revolutionary army. “In short, classical Marxists shared a key ontological assumption with liberal democrats: that people could see and act on self-evident reasons once a plain language articulated such reasons.” Thus, “Marxism’s subsequent history has been one long effort to address the problem created by the fact that there are no self-evident reasons.”<sup>40</sup> In other words, the lack of socialism’s effective spread can be reasonably labeled a rhetorical issue. To succeed, radical politics in America required a language appropriate to the American social formation. The *Appeal* was one prominent attempt at such a vernacular public address.

Matthew May provides one exploration of socialist and labor communication in America. Specifically, he examines hobo union orators and the notion of address as a “material practice that expresses political content through embodied performance and in the material organization of bodies that affect and are affected by the modification of its formal properties.”<sup>41</sup> Similarly, Mari Boor Tonn and Mark S. Kuhn describe Mother Jones’s “agitative rhetoric” that involves

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<sup>39</sup>James Arnt Aune, *Rhetoric and Marxism*, Polemics Series (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 13-4.

<sup>40</sup>John M. Murphy, "Between Structure and Struggle: The Intellectual Legacy of James Arnt Aune," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 16, no. 3 (2013): 569.

<sup>41</sup>Matthew S. May, "Hobo Orator Union: Class Composition and the Spokane Free Speech Fight of the Industrial Workers of the World," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 2 (2011): 158.

audience participation.<sup>42</sup> Jones played a key role, incorporating “affiliative responses,” suggesting her rhetorical practice was “interactive and collaborative” but “never egalitarian.”<sup>43</sup> By engaging in participatory speech, Jones provided a performative rhetorical event that worked extraordinarily well with union laborers, since these auditors might require a “special intensity as a potent means of struggling against the ravaged, decentered, and alienating social and physical landscape in which they live as exiles in their own country.”<sup>44</sup> As a final example, Mark Hlavacik provided an important critique of Margaret Haley’s 1904 call for unionism among American educators. Haley invoked the important connections between democracy, education, and unions. In essence, she argued “unionization would join progressivism’s democratic convictions to labor’s democratic practices, and thus, fulfill education’s responsibility to publicly uphold ‘the democratic ideal.’”<sup>45</sup> Describing democratic action as a means to a better school system, Haley “characterized unionism as a professional pursuit and lauded its democratic potential.”<sup>46</sup> These three articles are but a sample of rhetorical criticism focused on issues of socialism and unionism in the period of the *Appeal to Reason*. Although not focused on the *Appeal*, they provide vital background material for a study of it.

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<sup>42</sup>Mari Boor Tonn and Mark S. Kuhn, "Co-constructed Oratory: Speaker-Audience Interaction in the Labor Union Rhetoric of Mary Harris 'Mother' Jones," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1993): 315.

<sup>43</sup>Tonn and Kuhn, “Co-constructed Oratory,” 316.

<sup>44</sup>Richard Bauman, "American Folklore Studies and Social Transformation: A Performance-Centered Perspective," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1989): 179.

<sup>45</sup>Mark Hlavacik, "The Democratic Origins of Teachers' Union Rhetoric: Margaret Haley's Speech at the 1904 Nea Convention," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 15, no. 3 (2012): 505.

<sup>46</sup>Hlavacik, “Democratic Origins of Teacher's Union Rhetoric,” 515

Several historians have examined the development of American socialism. Morris Hillquit, a German-American immigrant who helped organize the Socialist Party of America during the *Appeal's* heyday, was a pioneer radical historian in America, publishing his *History of Socialism in the United States* in 1903; this work would be widely reprinted in multiple editions.<sup>47</sup> Hillquit examines socialism as produced by the Industrial Revolution and traces various traditions of socialism through the work, writings, and communities associated with Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, and Étienne Cabet. He noted, “The socialism movement in this country has thus made substantial gains with in the last decade. It has begun to penetrate the broad masses of American workingmen, has enlisted the support of many persons and other classes, has spread to all parts of the country. But with all that the progress of socialism in the United States has even within that, been slower than in almost any other civilized country. The difficulties that beset the path of the American socialists are varied and many.”<sup>48</sup> Hillquit concluded his book with the following reflection:

Many of the measures of industrial, social and political reform, originally advocated exclusively by the socialist, are gradually being forced into the platforms of other parties and organizations. The socialist program has become one of the favorite topics of discussion in books, in the periodical press, and on our public platforms. Socialism is at last beginning to get a hearing before the people, and the people of the United States move fast when once they get in motion.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Morris Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States*, 5th ed. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965).

<sup>48</sup>Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States*, 356.

<sup>49</sup>Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States*, 363-4.

Indubitably, the socialist platform—once considered radical—was in large part taken up by mainstream progressives during the early twentieth century, and socialist advocates did not successfully dispel many of the “grosser popular prejudices against the movement” as Hillquit had hoped.<sup>50</sup> Hillquit provides useful background for the study and points to an important area of research focused on explaining why socialism did not succeed in the United States.

This provokes a key question. Why did virtually every highly industrialized nation on earth other than the United States experience a successful socialist political party? Perhaps the first to ask this question as such was Werner Sombart in his 1906 text aptly named *Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?* Sombart noted, “If, as I have myself always maintained and often stated, modern Socialism follows as a necessary reaction to capitalism, the country with the most advanced capitalist development, namely the United States, would at the same time be the one providing the classic case of Socialism, and its working class would be supporters of the most radical of Socialist movements.”<sup>51</sup> Sombart spent the remainder of his book seeking answers to this puzzle, placing blame, in part, on American exceptionalism and the American two-party system. Ironically, when Sombart wrote his monograph in 1906, there was a socialist movement of repute in America, one that the *Appeal* served to reinforce and cohere. Still, as this movement declined during World War I, scholars continued to ask Sombart’s question, and their answers provide a robust literature regarding socialism and its place in the American cultural landscape.

Louis Hartz published an acclaimed answer to this question in his 1955 *Liberal Tradition in America*, wherein he postulated that Americans believed their society to embody the

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<sup>50</sup>Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States*, 363.

<sup>51</sup>Werner Sombart, *Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?*, trans. Patricia M. Hocking and C. T. Husbands (New York: Macmillan, 1976), 15.

classlessness toward which socialism aimed.<sup>52</sup> Hartz argued socialism required a rigid, less mobile class structure to cause rampant dissatisfaction and revolution. This position might be embodied by the aphorism: “no feudalism, no socialism.”<sup>53</sup> In short, “American radicals have been trapped within a liberal ideology devoted to the defense of individualism and private property.”<sup>54</sup> Hartz’s thesis about a dominant liberal ideology and the absence of feudalism in American society has been seriously challenged in the last few decades.<sup>55</sup> In general, Hartz sketched a homogenized picture of the American experience where prosperity, equality, and freedom never allowed socialism the opportunity to grow. Hartz’s homogeneous sketch is not consistent with the “social and economic differentiation” that characterizes the nation’s history.<sup>56</sup>

Jason Martinek recently argued that the socialist movement in America relied on an overly optimistic belief in the power of print to change minds, that sincere readers could be easily persuaded through texts to accept socialist teachings as solutions to major socio-economic problems. Leaders like Julius Wayland assumed that honest people would encounter his biting critiques, consider them patiently, and penitently convert to the cooperative socialist cause. Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* only bolstered this notion, that sustained reasoned

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<sup>52</sup>Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1955).

<sup>53</sup>Eric Foner, *Who Owns History?* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 120.

<sup>54</sup>Eric Foner, "Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?," *History Workshop* 17 (1984): 63.

<sup>55</sup>Herbert G. Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976); Eugene D. Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation* (Hanover: Wesleyan University, 1969). See also, Joyce Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1992), 161-3.

<sup>56</sup>John Gilkeson, *Middle-Class Providence, 1820-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University), 4. See, Edward Pessen, *Riches, Class, and Power before the Civil War* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath & Company, 1973).

arguments would produce societal change. However, Martinek noted, “The literature of dissent of the socialists sometimes, if not often, produced unintended consequences.”<sup>57</sup> In this project, I address the success, failures, and unintended consequences of the most important socialist newspaper in the nation. Socialist materials sold well, and important arguments did reach the public sphere. Regardless, substantive societal change remained elusive.

Among the most significant contributions regarding Americanism and socialism emerge from the writings of Seymour Martin Lipset. In 2000, Lipset and Gary Marks published a popular work that summarized, synthesized, and commented on many theories regarding socialism in America and its failure. At its onset Lipset and Marks remarked:

Explanations of socialism’s weakness in America are as numerous as socialists were few. Some writers attribute the weakness of socialism to the failures of socialist organizers and leader. Another school ascribes socialism’s bankruptcy to its incompatibility with America’s core values, while still others cite the American constitution as the decisive factor. And these only begin to touch upon a literature so abundant as to suggest that little new may be said up on the issue.<sup>58</sup>

As Lipset and Marks indicate, many theories attempt to explain the failure of socialism in America. In all the literature regarding socialism in America, the *Appeal* has received some limited recent attention from scholars of American radicalism and journalism. I suggest that the *Appeal* deserves further consideration from rhetorical scholars to explain the massive, historically significant readership of this important weekly newspaper. As the above literature

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<sup>57</sup>Martinek, *Socialism and Print Culture*, 116.

<sup>58</sup>Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks, *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), 14.

review illustrates, there is no lack of research regarding socialism in America, but there has been no significant analysis of the rhetoric of the *Appeal*.

### Methodology

In this project, I will proceed in three steps. First, I will gather and read a wide sampling of texts related to the *Appeal* and its influence. In this process, I will utilize digital, print, and archival sources to acquire the fullest picture possible of the relevant time period, people, places, and primary sources. Second, I will conduct an inductive examination of the source material, carefully analyzing the rhetoric to identify patterns and common stylistic features. Based on relevant historical-critical texts concerning the *Appeal*, I will determine the key moments in the history of the *Appeal*, and based on my reading of the identified primary source material, paradigmatic editions or articles, I will focus on these works to trace important themes, strategies, and techniques that characterize the writing and editing of Julius Wayland during the formative years of the *Appeal to Reason*.

Lloyd Bitzer noted that a “rhetorical situation may be defined as a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence.”<sup>59</sup> Following suit, I will determine the full rhetorical situations for each important paradigmatic moment, noting the exigences inviting utterance, the audience involved, and the constraints surrounding each rhetorical production. Finally, considering the relevant historical information and inductively analyzing the rhetoric of the *Appeal*, I will proceed to construct a theory-based answer to the

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<sup>59</sup>Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 1, no. 1 (1968): 6.

critical problem of this dissertation: the constitution and rapid growth of Wayland's *Appeal* readership.

### Plan of Study

Chapter two of this dissertation “On the Long Gilded Age, American Socialism, and Utopian Myth” provides important historical contexts necessary for a sustained study of the *Appeal to Reason*. In particular, I sketch the parameters of the culture that birthed the largest socialist expression in American history: the Gilded Age. Further, I provide an account of the Haymarket Affair, an important inventional resource for American socialists. After reviewing important moments in the Second Industrial Revolution, I summarize major influences of American socialism. Finally, I provide a theoretical frame to understand the *Appeal to Reason* as a mythic system. I contend Julius Wayland can be viewed as a prophet crying in the wilderness, preparing the way for a socialist utopia.

Chapter three “Julius Wayland’s Constitutive Self-Presentation in the early *Appeal to Reason*” concerns a crucial period when the *Appeal* nearly failed in 1897 after just two years of operation. In this period, Wayland constructed a vernacular persona and carefully crafted autobiographical reflections that energized his readership. The construction of a rhetorical persona has important implications for constitution of a movement. Wayland created a sense of consubstantiality between himself, his readers, and their shared larger cause, fostering loyalty that would drive the material success of the *Appeal* as a powerful propagandist machine.

Chapter four “Julius Wayland’s Constitution of the *Appeal* Army” examines Wayland’s constitution of a public within a public. Out of his growing readership, Wayland created a passionate evangelistic group of subscription hawks, members dedicated to pay for and receive

additional copies of the *Appeal* to be handed out to friends, strangers, and prominent citizens of their communities. These readers were known as the *Appeal* Army. Before 1901, this group existed largely on paper with little organization or growth. In that year, Wayland reconfigured a routine postal audit as a flagrant attack by the Federal Government on the *Appeal* in specific and on socialists in general in order to energize the key group of supporters. I provide an exploration of how Wayland reinterpreted not only the audit but also his rank-and-file audience as a military force.

Chapter five “Making Peace by Threatening Violence” furthers the examination of Wayland’s *Appeal* Army through one of its most important moments, controversy surrounding the Haywood-Pettibone Case and Eugene Debs’ essay “Arouse, Ye Slaves!” This short editorial is often referred to as the most radical or militant rhetoric of Debs’ career. I consider Debs’ role as a prophet of a desperate people, using rhetorical violence for nonviolent purposes. By explicating three markers of rhetorical violence for nonviolent social change, I suggest Debs’ violent threats aimed to and did achieve thoroughly nonviolent results.

Finally, in chapter six I draw conclusions based on the analysis of the *Appeal*, constitutive rhetoric, and myth. Additionally, I make recommendations for future research and discuss implications of my analysis for the current popular quasi-socialist movements in America today.

## Chapter 2: On the Long Gilded Age, American Socialism, and Utopian Myth

To study the *Appeal to Reason*, several historical contexts must be examined. First, I sketch an overview of the American political landscape leading up to the formation of the *Appeal*, noting the problems associated with corporate growth during the Gilded Age and the Second Industrial Revolution. Also, I provide the context of the Haymarket Affair as an important rhetorical touchstone for radical movements in America. Second, I describe and outline American socialism through its most dominant expression: utopianism. Finally, I provide an overview of the growth and success of the *Appeal to Reason*. I explain why the newspaper's location in Kansas served as an asset to its circulation growth and outline a brief history of the *Appeal* and its role in the American cultural landscape.

### The Gilded Age

In 1873, Mark Twain co-wrote a novel with Dudley Warner titled *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*, wherein they satirized the purported golden age following the Civil War as a period of incredible turmoil camouflaged by the veneer of economic growth. Historians found the epithet useful, and the term became the standard referent for the decades at the end of the nineteenth century. At the broadest and most general application of the phrase, the Gilded Age covers the years between 1865 and 1900, and at its most restricted between 1877 and 1896.<sup>1</sup> More recently, Leon Fink argued for a “Long Gilded Age,” collapsing the taxonomic distinctions between the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era. I agree with Fink's argument that the Gilded

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<sup>1</sup>Vincent P. De Santis, *The Gilded Age, 1877-1896* (Northbrook, IL: AHM Publishing, 1973); Arthur Stanley Link and William M. Leary, *The Progressive Era and the Great War, 1896-1920*, 2nd ed. (Arlington Heights, IL: AHM Publishing, 1978).

Age and Progressive Era are fundamentally connected.<sup>2</sup> The so-called Long Gilded Age represents one of the most chaotic periods in American history, and its chaos provided the pre-conditions for the only mass socialist movement on American soil, a movement best represented by the phenomenal growth of the *Appeal to Reason*.

After the horrors of the Civil War, industry advanced at breakneck speeds, and the final third of the nineteenth century produced “a period of industrial revolution unprecedented in history.”<sup>3</sup> Eric Foner reiterates the point: “The United States underwent one of the most profound economic revolutions any country has ever experienced, and witnessed some of the most violent struggles between labor and employers in the history of capitalism.”<sup>4</sup> Gigantic factories drove small, local craftsman out of practice as railroads, telegraphs, and steamboats erased geographic obstacles to connect citizens in unprecedented ways. In particular, the proliferation of railroads drove industrial production, as steel, meatpacking, lumber, and coal booms were all directly tied to the progress of tracks across the country.<sup>5</sup> In 1870, near the beginning of the Gilded Age, there were approximately 53,000 miles of railroad tracks throughout the United States, but by 1900, this figure shot up to nearly 164,000 miles.<sup>6</sup> As mills and factories sprouted across the nation, cities grew tremendously around them, and between the Civil War and 1900, the American urban

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<sup>2</sup>Leon Fink, *The Long Gilded Age: American Capitalism and the Lessons of a New World Order*, American Business, Politics, and Society (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2015).

<sup>3</sup>Morris Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States*, 5th ed. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), 17.

<sup>4</sup>Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 116.

<sup>5</sup>Fink, *Long Gilded Age*, 3.

<sup>6</sup>Steven T. Ross, *American War Plans, 1890-1939* (Portland: Frank Cass, 2002), 1.

population more than tripled in size.<sup>7</sup> Cities like New York, Cleveland, and Philadelphia doubled in population during this stretch, while Chicago quintupled.<sup>8</sup> By the turn of the twentieth century, American manufacturing surpassed the output of Great Britain, Germany, and France combined.<sup>9</sup> John Dewey remarked in 1900, “One can hardly believe there has been a revolution in all history so rapid, so extensive, so complete.”<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, immigrants poured into the country during the Gilded Age. According to Roger Daniels, “the three most salient special characteristics of Gilded Age immigration are the great increase in its volume, the decided shift in its sources and composition, and the beginning of its effective restriction.”<sup>11</sup> From the Civil War’s end to 1900, over 13,000,000 immigrants entered the United States.<sup>12</sup> Whereas western European immigrants had gradually filtered into the United States since its inception, this period saw a dramatic increase in southern and eastern European immigrants, emerging from war-torn contexts, often with little education.<sup>13</sup> A rising tide of nativists claimed that the newly arriving immigrants would not be able to assimilate into

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<sup>7</sup>Jay Hatheway, *The Gilded Age Construction of Modern American Homophobia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 34.

<sup>8</sup>Ari Arthur Hoogenboom and Olive Hoogenboom, *The Gilded Age* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 112.

<sup>9</sup>Foner, *Story of American Freedom*, 116.

<sup>10</sup>John Dewey, *The School and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1900), 22.

<sup>11</sup>Roger Daniels, "The Immigrant Experience in the Gilded Age," in *The Gilded Age: Perspectives on the Origins of Modern America*, ed. Charles W. Calhoun (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 76.

<sup>12</sup>Richard T. Hughes, *Myths America Lives By* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2003), 128.

<sup>13</sup>Daniels, "The Immigrant Experience in the Gilded Age," 77-84.

American society. They saw these immigrants as illiterate, poor, and a drag on American prosperity, unable to learn English and with little experience living in a democratic society.<sup>14</sup>

As just one example from a popular publication, Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge wrote, "It is proved first, that immigration to this country is increasing and second, that it is making its greatest relative increase from races most alien to the body of the American people and from the lowest and most illiterate among those races. In other words, it is apparent that while our immigration is increasing it is showing at the same time a marked tendency to deteriorate in character."<sup>15</sup> Additionally, many of America's Protestants disliked the fact that a substantial percentage of the new immigrants were Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or Jewish. Various groups lobbied for immigration restrictions, and West-coast unions successfully pressed Congress to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, completely banning Chinese immigration to the United States.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, many new immigrants brought with them a special concern for radical ideologies. Such an influx of immigrants, then, fueled labor movements aimed toward political revolution and provided socialists with an increased base familiar with the core doctrines. Although immigrants were part of the problem for many nativists, they also provided a substantial boost for the success of the socialist cause during the coming years.<sup>17</sup>

Socialists were also enlivened by morally questionable Gilded Age techniques to increase profit margins. Vertical integration allowed for meatpackers, like Gustavus F. Swift, to control

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<sup>14</sup>John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 65-7.

<sup>15</sup>Henry Cabot Lodge, "The Restriction of Immigration," *North American Review* 152, no. 410 (1891): 32.

<sup>16</sup>Daniels, "The Immigrant Experience in the Gilded Age," 90-2.

<sup>17</sup>Donna R. Gabaccia, "Immigrant Labor," in *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, ed. Paul S. Boyer (New York: Oxford University, 2001), 358.

the sale of beef from stockyards to slaughterhouses to distribution networks, so that Swift owned all the means of producing beef prior to its arrival in the butcher shop.<sup>18</sup> Horizontal integration, bolstered by a total lack of antitrust law prior to 1890 and a lack of substantive antitrust law prior to 1914, allowed tycoons like Andrew Carnegie to acquire and control virtually all production of steel in the country, creating “super-corporations.”<sup>19</sup> Through the scientific management revolution, led by Frederick Taylor, assembly lines and “continuous flow production” allowed machinery to set the pace and schedule of manufacturing operations, and human technicians worked to achieve optimum competency and to keep up with their assigned machine’s output. Through Taylor’s method, “every factor which could influence the pace of work had to be brought under control and standardized at the optimum level of efficiency.”<sup>20</sup> Workers took increasingly longer shifts, while machines constantly whirled to supply optimized production. One American manager explained, “I regard my work-people just as I regard my machinery. So long as they can do my work for what I choose to pay them, I keep them, getting out of them all I can.... When my machines get old and useless, I reject them and get new, and these people are part of my machinery.”<sup>21</sup> Workers were interchangeable, like cogs in a machine.

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<sup>18</sup>Alfred D. Chandler, "Integration and Diversification as Business Strategies--an Historical Analysis," *Business and Economic History* 19 (1959): 67.

<sup>19</sup>John D. Buenker, *The History of Wisconsin: The Progressive Era, 1893-1914*, ed. William Fletcher Thompson, 6 vols., vol. 4 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1998), 120.

<sup>20</sup>Hugh G. J. Aitken, *Scientific Management in Action: Taylorism at Watertown Arsenal, 1908-1915* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 29.

<sup>21</sup>Norman Joseph Ware, *The Industrial Worker, 1840-1860: The Reaction of American Industrial Society to the Advance of the Industrial Revolution* (Boston: Hart, Schaffner and Marx, 1924), 77.

Despite the skyrocketing of profit margins, “a comparatively small number of men fell heir to all the benefits of the process,” while laborers suffered terribly, and in this stretch, this “social contrast became more glaring than in any other period in American history.”<sup>22</sup> To put a finer point on this disparity, “by 1890, the richest 1 percent of Americans received the same total income as the bottom half of the population and owned more property than the remaining 99 percent.”<sup>23</sup> This tremendous economic growth “created both captains and captives of industry.”<sup>24</sup> The absence of regulation allowed for poor working conditions in factories. Thus, “sunup-to-sundown workdays” regularly exceeded twelve hours,<sup>25</sup> and by 1900, over two million children worked full-time jobs, earning lower pay than adults for similarly long hours.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, new complicated machinery “reduced many skilled mechanics to the ranks of common laborers, and deprived many more of work and wages permanently.”<sup>27</sup>

Dewey mourned that, in the span of a generation or two, the “factory system” had replaced the “household and neighborhood system” as the “center” of life.<sup>28</sup> As such, the rapid transformation of American society during the Gilded Age changed the lives of Americans in

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<sup>22</sup>Hillquit, *History of Socialism*, 17.

<sup>23</sup>Foner, *Story of American Freedom*, 117.

<sup>24</sup>Sharon E. Neet, "Variant Editions of the Appeal to Reason 1905-1906" (PhD Diss., North Dakota State University, 1983), 3.

<sup>25</sup>James R. Green, *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing That Divided Gilded Age America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 22.

<sup>26</sup>Chaim M. Rosenberg, *Child Labor in America: A History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2013), 1.

<sup>27</sup>Hillquit, *History of Socialism*, 17.

<sup>28</sup>Dewey, *School and Society*, 22.

innumerable ways. From vocation to social life to housing, the worker was affected at nearly every level by the industrial revolution. Just as Taylorism scientifically increased productivity and profit margins through efficiency, so the wages of the workers had been optimized and reduced to maximize profit, leaving many struggling with barely enough to pay bills and little time to spend away from work. Injury was common, and insurance nonexistent. Through such difficult conditions, dissatisfaction provided the impetus to protest and to the widespread desire for an alternative to capitalism. Without such difficult working and living conditions, socialism might never have gained any ground in American politics.

### *Haymarket Affair*

Before explicitly outlining the development of socialism during the Long Gilded Age, I now turn to one of the most important moments of protest by radicals in American history: the Haymarket Affair. In the words of William J. Adelman, “No single event has influenced the history of labor in Illinois, the United States, and even the world, more than the Chicago Haymarket Affair.”<sup>29</sup> As a historical moment, it loomed large over any public labor dispute. Throughout the nation, reformers and unions advocated for a standard eight-hour workday, arguing the worker should work for eight hours, have leisure for eight hours, and sleep for eight hours of each working day.<sup>30</sup> On May 1, 1886, the largest demonstration in favor of an eight-hour workday occurred, as reportedly 80,000 individuals walked down Michigan Avenue with interlocked arms in downtown Chicago. Such striking solidarity resulted in a more emboldened

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<sup>29</sup>William J. Adelman, *Haymarket Revisited* (Chicago: Illinois Labor History Society, 1976), 2.

<sup>30</sup>David A. Zonderman, *Uneasy Allies: Working for Labor Reform in Nineteenth-Century Boston* (Boston: University of Massachusetts, 2011), 95-7.

workforce, as strikes proliferated and as some employers yielded to their demands. On May 3, 1886, another peaceful protest at the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company was met with police intervention and intimidation, and at the conclusion of the police action, one striker was dead and a few others injured. A meeting of anarchist and other protest leadership was planned for the next day in Chicago's Haymarket Square. The mayor of Chicago, Carter Harrison, approved the meeting; he attended the rally as a spectator, confirming the peaceful nature of the proceedings.<sup>31</sup> After the majority of protestors and onlookers had dispersed, including the mayor, police intervened to force those remaining out of the public square. At this point, an unidentified person threw dynamite at the policemen; after the explosion, panicking police officers open fired into the crowd. At the conclusion of the violence, eight officers were dead, with another sixty injured. Civilian protesters were injured, as well, though the total was never tallied; Captain Schaack suggested the number of civilian casualties was "largely in excess of that on the side of the police."<sup>32</sup> However, the majority of injuries resulted from bullets, not from the bomb. Only one of the police officers died due to the effects of the explosion.<sup>33</sup>

After the tragedy, the citizenry demanded justice, and eight men were charged with conspiracy to murder. The prosecution suggested one of the defendants might have been involved with building the bomb, while the others planned the attack, but none of those on trial were formally accused of throwing the dynamite. All eight men were convicted, and seven of the defendants were sentenced to death, the other to a term of fifteen years incarceration. After their appeals were quickly exhausted, four of the defendants were hung on the gallows, and one of the

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<sup>31</sup>Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1984), 203.

<sup>32</sup>Michael J. Schaack, *Anarchy and Anarchists: A History of the Red Terror and the Social Revolution in America and Europe* (Chicago: F.J. Schulte & Co, 1889), 155.

<sup>33</sup>Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, 208.

others committed suicide in his cell. According to witnesses, in the moments before the men were hanged, one of the convicted shouted, "The time will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today."<sup>34</sup> The public response was overwhelming, and the trial and its results were castigated by many influential figures as unjust. In 1893, newly elected governor John Peter Altgeld pardoned the three surviving prisoners from the Haymarket riot. In a bold statement referred to by Allan Nevins as "one of the best state papers ever written in America,"<sup>35</sup> Governor Altgeld condemned the "malicious ferocity" of Judge Joseph Gary: "In all the centuries during which government has been maintained among men, and crime has been punished, no judge in a civilized society has ever laid down such a rule."<sup>36</sup> For supporters of labor, the Haymarket Affair was indisputable evidence that the American democratic system was rigged. The courts, from the lowest level to the Supreme Court, ruled against the laborers, despite a startling lack of evidence. The political system needed a complete overhaul.<sup>37</sup>

As a result of the Haymarket Affair and the executions that followed it, more than 1,400 strikes broke out across America. John Commons described the strikes of 1886 as the beginning of a rebellion of the worker against capitalism. He writes, "The movement bore in every way the aspect of a social war. A frenzied hatred of labour for capital was shown in every important

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<sup>34</sup>Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, 393.

<sup>35</sup>Allan Nevins, "Not without Thy Wondrous Story, Illinois," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 46, no. 3 (1953): 246.

<sup>36</sup>John Altgeld, "Governor John P. Altgeld's Statement," in *Gov. Altgeld's Pardon and the Modern Tragedy, Downfall of the Small Producer and the Crisis, Its Cause and Cure as Explained and Proposed by Socialism* (New York: New York Labor News Company, 1894), 13.

<sup>37</sup>Eugene V. Debs, "Arouse, Ye Slaves!," *Appeal to Reason*, March 10 1906, 1.

strike.”<sup>38</sup> Eventually, “War was openly declared” by many laborers.<sup>39</sup> Richard Hughes agrees with this seemingly hyperbolic assessment: “The next several years [after 1886] witnessed what did, indeed, amount to a bloody war between labor and capital in the United States, involving perhaps millions of workers in thousands of strikes.”<sup>40</sup> Far from “bringing in a golden age of peace and justice, unregulated capitalism had created for these workers extraordinary suffering and deprivation.”<sup>41</sup> At the same time, the Haymarket Affair and the resulting strikes did not result in a single unified protest movement, in part due to “the stress of defeat, fear, and the unknown;”<sup>42</sup> Fink and Dorothy Ross both note the problems of constituting a coherent movement in the tragic wake of oppression and violence against labor in 1886 and beyond.<sup>43</sup> Even so, the Haymarket Affair brought mass attention to the problems faced by workers in American society, and for the first time, many laborers considered alternate political proposals, socialism among them.

The *Appeal to Reason* and its success were tied to the upheaval of the Long Gilded Age. The rapid industrial and economic growth of the United States during the conclusion of the

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<sup>38</sup>John R. Commons et al., *History of Labour in the United States*, 4 vols., vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1921), 374.

<sup>39</sup>Commons, et al., *History of Labour*, 2, 458.

<sup>40</sup>Hughes, *Myths America Lives By*, 137.

<sup>41</sup>Hughes, *Myths America Lives By*, 138.

<sup>42</sup>Leon Fink, "The New Labor History and the Powers of Historical Pessimism: Consensus, Hegemony, and the Case of the Knights of Labor," *Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (1988): 135.

<sup>43</sup>Leon Fink, *Workingmen's Democracy: The Knights of Labor and American Politics*, *The Working Class in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1983), 219-34; Dorothy Ross, "Socialism and American Liberalism: Academic Social Thought in the 1880's," *Perspectives in American History* 11 (1977): 5-79.

nineteenth century “created two schools of social thought: justifiers who found solace in Social Darwinism and rectifiers who organized into groups.”<sup>44</sup> Wayland’s paper provided a text around which a public concerned with rectification and agitation could organize. Thus, “the *Appeal’s* agitation was directed to introduce the discontented to a potential solution to abusive capitalism through Socialism.”<sup>45</sup> Further, “The *Appeal* was published by and for people who objected to the course being charted by American society. It was an angry paper, a partisan paper that spoke for the cares and hopes, the frustrations and dreams of people who were united in their desire to change what they saw into a curious mixture of what could be and what they believed once was.”<sup>46</sup>

### American Socialism

Sharon Neet notes, “‘Socialism’ at the turn of the twentieth century was a term used to describe a wide variety of political and social philosophies.”<sup>47</sup> Still, any discussion of American socialism must focus on utopian or communitarian socialism, since the “yankeefying” of socialist ideology involved a strongly optimistic, utopian rhetorical trajectory.<sup>48</sup> Marxist socialism never received the reception that utopian socialism did in America. In what follows, I outline utopian socialism, its roots and its platform.

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<sup>44</sup>Neet, "Variant Editions of the Appeal to Reason," 3.

<sup>45</sup>Neet, "Variant Editions of the Appeal to Reason," 3.

<sup>46</sup>Elliott Shore, *Talkin' Socialism: J.A. Wayland and the Role of the Press in American Radicalism, 1890-1912* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988), 8.

<sup>47</sup>Neet, "Variant Editions of the Appeal to Reason," 1.

<sup>48</sup>*Social Democracy Red Book*, ed. Frederic Heath (Terre Haute: Debs Publishing Co., 1900), 46.

The United States, in many ways, began as “an experimental community,” one whose Constitution contains the “idealistic and near-utopian objective: ‘to form a more perfect union.’”<sup>49</sup> Perhaps, then, it should be no surprise that the story of American socialism begins with utopian communities and reaches its zenith through utopian ideology. The notions behind utopian socialism are relatively straightforward: free from the corrupting influences of society committed citizens living in a commune could share the means of production as a way to achieve a harmony that would be impossible under capitalism. If the general socialist principles could be shown to work in a single community, then, by extrapolation, they could work on a national scale. As Hillquit explains, “The utopian socialists knew of no reason why their plans of social organization should not work in a more limited sphere just as satisfactorily as on a national scale, and they fondly hoped that they would gradually convert the entire world to their system by a practical demonstration of its feasibility and benefits in a miniature society.”<sup>50</sup> Belanger suggested this premise contained a fatal flaw, since each individual commune was “America in microcosm where the conflicts over gender, class, power, and ideology ripped the small community apart.”<sup>51</sup> Rather than demonstrate the feasibility of socialism on American soil, utopian communes provided evidence of the fundamental tensions it faced in the United States.

Later Marxist configurations of socialism differed from utopian ideologies in many ways, but of particular importance, for the utopianist the advent of socialism required no form of class

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<sup>49</sup>John Egerton, *Visions of Utopia: Nashoba, Rugby, Ruskin, and the "New Communities" in Tennessee's Past*, ed. Paul H. Bergeron, Tennessee Three Star Books (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1977), 87.

<sup>50</sup>Hillquit, *History of Socialism*, 18.

<sup>51</sup>Yvonne Belanger Johnson, "The Ruskin Colony: A Paradox in the Communitarian Movement" (PhD Diss., University of Oklahoma, 1992), 1.

struggle or political revolution.<sup>52</sup> Fundamentally rational individuals or groups could, in theory, voluntarily adopt socialist ideology if presented convincingly. Even without the commune system, a utopian socialist considered constant evangelism of the socialist cooperation as the mechanism by which revolution would occur. Ideally, a successful commune could validate the expediency of socialism for American society, acting a rhetorical resource.

Robert Owen and Charles Fourier particularly influenced early American socialists. They represented the notion that human beings have desires that go beyond individual interests and that societal and economic constraints are necessary to combat poverty and inequality. Owen, a wealthy mill owner in England, journeyed to America in 1825 to set up his New Harmony society in Indiana. He argued that traditional marriage, religion, and private property stood as “sources of evil in human life.”<sup>53</sup> Later critics of leftist politics, like Theodore Roosevelt, would try to discredit American socialism by labeling it a perverse “free love” movement, drawing the connection to Owen. Such criticisms reveal the powerful rhetorical legacy of his proposal.<sup>54</sup> Owen’s rejection of private property was particularly important in the development of socialism. He wrote:

There can be nothing deserving the name of virtue, of justice, or of real knowledge in society, as long as private property and inequality in rank and condition shall constitute component parts of it; but the present system of the world cannot be supported without

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<sup>52</sup>Carl Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1991), 121-3.

<sup>53</sup>Robert Owen, *Manifesto of Robert Owen, the Discoverer, Founder, and Promulgator of the Rational System of Society*, 8 ed. (London: Home Colonization Society, 1841), 50.

<sup>54</sup>Theodore Roosevelt, "Socialism: Where We Cannot Work with Socialists," *Outlook* 91 (1909): 619-20.

private property and inequality of condition, consequently it is irrational to expect to find real virtue, justice, or knowledge, in the present system, in any part of the world.<sup>55</sup>

Then, Owen located the problems of society in private property and the inequality it fostered. He believed that “man is the creature of surrounding circumstances, that his character is not made by him, but for him,”<sup>56</sup> so given the correct environment and education, disparate individuals could be molded into a peaceful, cooperative society without need or inequality.

Charles Fourier criticized society for its wastefulness and disorder. The chaos caused by wastefulness resulted in a large impoverished class, and such disorder and the resulting poverty was the greatest of all evils. Fourier “does not address himself to the sentiments of man, but to their material interest. His battle-cry is not ‘Justice,’ but ‘Order.’”<sup>57</sup> He envisioned stratified societies characterized by cooperation and concern with complex, concrete organizational structures, wherein everyone worked and filled some specific role, according to ability, and wherein poverty was eliminated due to such developed cooperative structure. Thus, for Fourier, inequality was not evil at all; chaos and poverty were. Utopian visions founded on Owen’s philosophy would try to alleviate inequality, while those aligned with Fourier focused on poverty, acknowledging the need for rigid hierarchy. American socialism was a meshing of both perspectives, yet many, like Wayland, favored Fourier’s general premise, advocating a limited equality.

Edward Bellamy, an American-born socialist, produced a utopian sketch of socialist ideology that was enormously influential. He wielded such power that he purportedly had

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<sup>55</sup>Owen, *Manifesto*, 50.

<sup>56</sup>Hillquit, *History of Socialism*, 49.

<sup>57</sup>Hillquit, *History of Socialism*, 72.

“stirred the social fabric to its foundations, and awakened echoes of hope in countless hearts, the reverberations of which will never cease until success crowns their efforts.”<sup>58</sup> Likewise, G. C. Clemens wrote, “It is doubtful if any man, in his own lifetime, ever exerted so great an influence upon the social beliefs of his fellow beings as did Edward Bellamy.”<sup>59</sup> Wayland alleged that Bellamy “popularized socialism, made it interesting, and started millions to thinking along lines entirely new to them.”<sup>60</sup> Quint agrees that “Bellamy makes socialism respectable,” for perhaps the first time.<sup>61</sup> As an author and a thinker, Bellamy toiled in near obscurity until *Looking Backward* erupted into the American literary scene; it was the best-selling book since Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.<sup>62</sup> Bellamy essentially narrativized the socialist contention that adherence to principles of cooperation would lead to the significant betterment of society. *Looking Backward* tells the story of Julian West, a man hypnotized into a comatose state from 1887 until 2000; West awakens to find the world has changed for the better in innumerable ways. Since West began his hibernation, cooperation replaced competition as the dominant feature of human interaction and trade, and nearly every facet of society improved through this shift. Workers could retire with full benefits by age forty-five, and no one went hungry due to public kitchens and shared resources. The book also introduced astonishingly modern ideas such as

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<sup>58</sup>H. P. Peeples, "The Utopias of the Past Compared with the Theories of Bellamy," *The Overland Monthly* 15, no. 90 (1890): 574.

<sup>59</sup>G. C. Clemens, "Edward Bellamy," *American Fabian* 4, no. 6 (1898): 1.

<sup>60</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, June 4, 1898, 4.

<sup>61</sup>Howard H. Quint, *The Forging of American Socialism: Origins of the Modern Movement*, The American Heritage Series (New York: The Bobbs Merrill Company, 1953), 72.

<sup>62</sup>Vernon Louis Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought: The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America, 1860-1920* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1930), 302.

credit cards, warehouse club stores, and even a primitive version of the Internet, an information system that connected homes through telephone wires.<sup>63</sup>

In Bellamy's novel, societal transformation did not involve bloodshed or radical political protests. It was, instead, an eminently democratic revolution, a natural evolution from the chaotic excesses of capitalism, occurring only when the majority of Americans accepted the arguments of the "national party," named for its core argument that the state should own and organize all the means of production.<sup>64</sup> When the Nationalist Party came to power through a democratic vote and a grassroots movement, it brought about a smooth, peaceful revolution. Essentially, the flaws of capitalism necessitated its own collapse, and Nationalism, or cooperative utopian socialism, stood ready to take its place. *Looking Backward* concludes with a favorable depiction of human society moving forward. "It portrayed an era of unlimited human happiness, of intellectual achievement, of scientific conquest of nature. It pictured a Golden Age of peace and plenty, of leisure and freedom. The wastes and social blunders of the past were gone. Humanity had reached social, intellectual, and political maturity as the twenty-first century dawned."<sup>65</sup>

The reaction to *Looking Backward* makes it clear that American socialism was distinct from Marxism and other forms of European radicalism. Actually, "At the time that Bellamy wrote *Looking Backward*, he had not read Marx, Engels, or any of the other well-known socialist theorists."<sup>66</sup> Marx's class conflict thesis troubled many American socialists, Bellamy and Wayland included, who consistently maintained that revolution could and should occur without a

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<sup>63</sup>Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward 2000-1887* (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1888), 156-69.

<sup>64</sup>Bellamy, *Looking Backward*, 354.

<sup>65</sup>Quint, *Forging of American Socialism*, 77.

<sup>66</sup>Quint, *Forging of American Socialism*, 78.

violent turning point. Wayland believed that change would come through “ballots not bullets.”<sup>67</sup> Others, following Owen, thought a successful commune could provide the best evidence to persuade others about the benefits of socialism, thus spurring a revolution. A quasi-Marxist determinism without class competition characterized most strands of American socialism. In short, “The transition from a competitive, capitalistic society to a co-operative Nationalist order would be slow, orderly, and in accord with the innate workings of economic evolution under capitalism.”<sup>68</sup> History was marching toward cooperation and socialism.

Martin Lipset has written prolifically concerning the factors that caused socialism to be uniquely untenable in America, and in part, he argues that Americanism or American exceptionalism functionally rendered socialist ideology unnecessary. “The social content of socialism...is similar to what Americans think they already have, namely, a democratic, socially classless, anti-elitist society.”<sup>69</sup> Socialism is concerned with the welfare of all individuals, and American exceptionalism, represented by the mythos of the American Dream, supports the notion that every person can achieve prosperity through ingenuity and hard work in America, unlike other industrialized countries. In his view, this dream limited the power of the socialist narrative. More precisely, “Americanism has thus served as a substitute for socialism.”<sup>70</sup> Nonetheless, the utopian vision of socialism worked especially well in America.

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<sup>67</sup>Rodger Streitmatter, *Voices of Revolution: The Dissident Press in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 106.

<sup>68</sup>Quint, *Forging of American Socialism*, 93.

<sup>69</sup>Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks, *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), 30.

<sup>70</sup>Leon Samson, *Toward a United Front: A Philosophy for American Workers* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1933), 17.

Darsey notes the power of utopia rests on a “mythic dimension,” and in the case of utopia, myth functions as “a structure for desire” that motivates people to act.<sup>71</sup> In this regard, according to Barthes, “Myth has the task of giving a historical intention a natural justification, and making contingency appear eternal.”<sup>72</sup> Thus, through the powerful utopian mythic narrative offered by Bellamy, a story that resonated deeply with many Americans, the eventual victory of socialists and the elimination of poverty were described as “ontological necessities.”<sup>73</sup> Moreover, utopian communities proliferated in periods of great social unrest, periods where desires for upward mobility or general welfare were elided and unmet, and utopian myths were proffered as structures for these frustrated desires, pointed to a perfect future.<sup>74</sup> Herein lies the reason why so many reasonable people flocked to utopian communes despite their consistent failure. Utopian stories, like *Looking Backward*, “become true because we want them to be true and because they are presented in such a way as to make it appear that they should be true...If we could strip away all artifice, the myth suggests, and leave only what is real, we would arrive at Utopia.”<sup>75</sup> Bellamy offered people, including Wayland, a story that showed the way to set the world aright through

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<sup>71</sup>James Darsey, "Utopia and Desire," in *Argumentation and Values: Proceedings of the Nineth SCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation*, ed. Sally A. Jackson (Annandale: Speech Communication Association, 1995), 29.

<sup>72</sup>Roland Barthes, "Myth Today," in *The Roland Barthe Reader*, ed. Susan Sontag (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 130-1.

<sup>73</sup>Darsey, "Utopia and Desire," 34.

<sup>74</sup>Johnson, "Ruskin Colony," 1-2.

<sup>75</sup>Darsey, "Utopia and Desire," 34.

the simple principle of cooperation.<sup>76</sup> Utopian socialism flourished during a period when Americanism, its natural substitute, seemed most deeply flawed.

Though diverse, American socialists were tied together by one thread: education. People could be convinced of the clear superiority of socialism if presented with clear, colloquial arguments. Algie Simons lamented, “Too long our Socialist writings have been made up by the application of a German metaphysics to English economic history with a French vocabulary.” Therefore, “the great task of the Socialist writers of this country for the next few years is to interpret American economic life in the language and style which will best appeal to the American people.”<sup>77</sup> Of Wayland, Simons later wrote: “He left dogma to the closet philosophers and theologians of the movement and spoke to common men in their own language.”<sup>78</sup> Wayland’s purpose was American education toward inevitable social change.

Wayland numbered among the turn-of-the-twentieth-century socialists who considered reading an immensely powerful “radical act.”<sup>79</sup> He clearly exhibits his faith in the potential of clear written arguments:

The millions of people who are Socialists today were all voting and believing in other parties at one time. What changed their minds? Reading. Previously they had taken their ideas from the current thought of the day. They were honest and sincere. But they were

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<sup>76</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "A New Heaven and a New Earth," *Appeal to Reason*, February 8, 1896, 4; Bellamy, *Looking Backward*, 455.

<sup>77</sup>Algie Martin Simons, "American Socialist Literature," *The International Socialist Review* 2, no. 9 (1902): 697.

<sup>78</sup>Algie Martin Simons, "J. A. Wayland, Propagandist," *Metropolitan Magazine* 32, no. 3 (1913): 25.

<sup>79</sup>Jason D. Martinek, *Socialism and Print Culture in America, 1897-1920*, The History of the Book (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1.

induced to read and consider the evidences of things and changed their political beliefs. That is why the old party leaders do not want their followers to read Socialism. They want to control them. Socialists do not tell you to not read other theories. They want you to read all sides. The people who profit by your ignorance are anxious to keep you ignorant. Socialism can only benefit from your wisdom. If people would all read and consider this old world could be made a paradise in a few years. If you will read a work on Socialism you will know more about it than you do now. Would that be bad? Is knowledge a bad thing? Are you afraid to trust yourself with reading for fear you will be deceived and support some wrong? Are you so weak minded that you dare not trust your own judgment?<sup>80</sup>

Further, Wayland opined, “As soon as men understand Socialism they become advocates of it.”<sup>81</sup> For Wayland, the cooperative socialist system was inherently superior to competitive capitalism. If perspicuous socialist arguments could reach open-minded Americans, then socialism would naturally flourish through a passionate grassroots movement. In this model, circulation, vernacular arguments, and agitation are the key components that lead to societal betterment, all the way to utopian perfection.

### *The Appeal to Reason* and Its Relationship to American Culture

The *Appeal* was founded in 1895 after Julius Wayland left his utopian Ruskin Colony in Tennessee, abandoning his successful weekly paper *The Coming Nation*. In the early days of the *Appeal*, its success or even its survival was far from guaranteed. Wayland initially attempted to

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<sup>80</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 23, 1901, 1.

<sup>81</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 16, 1901, 4.

run his press from Kansas City, operating from the “best property in the city,”<sup>82</sup> but he ran into dire financial straights, losing money every month. So, he ceased printing for over three months and attempted to secure a location so that the paper might survive if only he could secure a regular base of just 10,000 readers per month. After “three months hunting,” Wayland moved his family to “the prettiest town [he] found,” Girard, Kansas.<sup>83</sup> Undoubtedly, it seems peculiar that this quiet little hamlet in rural Southeast Kansas once stood as the bastion of American socialism, and indeed, the legacy of the paper is almost entirely un-commemorated in the region surrounding Girard today.<sup>84</sup> Still, at the turn of the twentieth century, Girard was a reasonable location for a socialist paper for three reasons: geographical centrality, Kansan populism, and immigrant populations in Southeast Kansas. First and most obviously, Kansas rests in the center of the United States, and as such, the paper could be quickly dispersed throughout much of America, as several sizable cities lay within an easy day’s journey. Further, Girard is situated in the extreme southeastern corner of Kansas, providing quick access to Missouri, Arkansas, and present-day Oklahoma.

Second, in the words of Laurence Gronlund, Kansas was “ripe for socialism.”<sup>85</sup> Kansas, a state with a strongly agrarian economic system, was a prime candidate for socialist revolt, as

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<sup>82</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "Editor's Note," *Appeal to Reason*, April 18, 1896, 4.

<sup>83</sup>W. J. Ghent, "The 'Appeal' and Its Influence," *The Survey: A Journal of Constructive Philanthropy* 26, no. 1 (1911): 25.

<sup>84</sup>Dan Gardner, "Toto, I Don't Think We're in Kansas Anymore," *The Ottawa Citizen*, October 30, 2004.

<sup>85</sup>"Interesting Facts About Girard Kansas: Kansas' Most Picturesque City," (Girard Girard Press, 1930), 7-8; Laurence Gronlund, "Kansas," *San Antonio Labor*, January 6 1894.

farm profits are consistently and frustratingly “dismal,”<sup>86</sup> yet farmers provide an absolutely necessary service. Many farmers accused the capitalist system with driving agro-market prices down, increasing the costs of shipping, and creating tremendous unnecessary agricultural surpluses. Consequently, Kansan farmers began to clamor for a national rail system, for increased government subsidies, and for more make-work programs, spurred by Mary Lease’s supposed battle cry to “raise less corn and more hell.”<sup>87</sup> Concerning this period, William Connelley opined:

The upheaval that took place in Kansas in the summer and fall of 1890 can hardly be designated as a political campaign. It was a religious revival, crusade, a Pentecost of politics in which a tongue of flame sat upon every man and each spake as the spirit gave him utterance. The farmers, the country merchants, the cattle herders, they of the chin whiskers and they of the broad-brimmed hats and heavy boots had also heard the word and preached the gospel of Populism. The dragon’s teeth were sprouting in every nook and corner of the state.<sup>88</sup>

It is no accident that Wayland regularly ran articles that directly addressed farmers, land ownership, and nationalized shipping. Populism had grown to a prominent position in America generally and in Kansas specifically, and socialists, including Wayland, viewed populists as incipient, soon-to-be socialists. Kansas, then, with surpluses of crops and disillusioned farmers seemed a natural place for a socialist stronghold.

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<sup>86</sup>Steven C. Blank, *The End of Agriculture in the American Portfolio* (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 1998), 105.

<sup>87</sup>Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Movement in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 385.

<sup>88</sup>John E. Pickett, "A Prairie Fire," *The Country Gentleman* 83, no. 20 (1918): 13.

Finally, the southeastern corner of Kansas was pocketed with a variety of minerals and resources, and mines proliferated across rural Kansas. Mines extracting lead, silver, cadmium, zinc, and coal dotted the region surrounding Girard, earning the title “tri-state mining district.”<sup>89</sup> In the decades surrounding the turn of the century, this mining district supplied almost a third of the nation’s coal and was a world leader in zinc and lead production.<sup>90</sup> A promotional pamphlet for Girard states, “The eastern part of the county is devoted mostly to coal mines. Steam shovel coal mines are operating within four miles of Girard. Some of the best steam coal in the world is produced in this section.”<sup>91</sup> To staff these new mines, European immigrants flocked to the mining district in large numbers so that the region was sometimes pejoratively called the “Little Balkans.” These immigrants effectively Balkanized the previously homogenous Kansan socio-political landscape, providing notable diversity in elections and in attitudes toward alcohol.<sup>92</sup> The miners were “polyglot aliens and their native-born sons who thus struggled against big odds to wrest a precarious livelihood by working in the...marginal mines in this ‘Little Balkan’ section of Kansas.”<sup>93</sup> These alien miners were politically liberal, working class men, and thus, Girard and its surroundings were serendipitously endowed with an unusual preponderance of European

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<sup>89</sup>Douglas C. Brockie, E. H. Hare, and P. R. Dingess, "The Geology and Ore Deposits of the Tri-State District of Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma," in *Ore Deposits in the United States, 1933-1967*, ed. John D. Ridge (York, PA: American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers, 1968).

<sup>90</sup>Lawrence L. Brady, "Mining History in Kansas," in *Interstate Technical Group on Abandoned Underground Mines: Third Biennial Workshop*, Federal Highway Administration (Lawrence: Kansas Geological Survey, 1998).

<sup>91</sup>"Interesting Facts About Girard Kansas," 2.

<sup>92</sup>Ken Postlethwaite, "The Real Story of the 'Little Balkans' of Kansas," *Nevada Daily Mail*, September 5, 1985.

<sup>93</sup>Carroll D. Clark, "My Sociological Stewardship: Part I," *Kansas Journal of Sociology* 4, no. 1 (1968): 16.

political radicals in need of a means of unification, a means that Wayland and the *Appeal* aimed to provide.

### *The Story of the Appeal*

Having established a solid base of operations, Wayland's *Appeal* would grow to regularly reach over 500,000 subscribers weekly, with a peak circulation of nearly 750,000.<sup>94</sup> In what follows, I briefly sketch the growth of the *Appeal*, noting its effect on American popular culture. The history of *Appeal* could be traced entirely through its "fights," the public struggles between the *Appeal* and various entities, frequently the United States' Federal Government. Actually, the first official history of the *Appeal*, written in 1914, largely proceeded in this fashion with separate chapters named "The First Big Fight," "Battle and Victory," "The Postal War," "Victory at Last!," "The Fight against the Iron Heel," and "The War in Kansas."<sup>95</sup> Wayland and the *Appeal* knew better than most the power of a good controversy, and although the *Appeal* staff faced many legitimate attacks from the federal government, they also mastered the art of turning minor disciplinary swats into major national publicity. Wayland and his protégé Fred Warren used the *Appeal* as an activist paper for the cause of the American worker and the Socialist Party of America, founded in 1901. "The paper would make events happen and alter the course of others."<sup>96</sup> Each controversy, especially as amplified by the *Appeal*, made national news

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<sup>94</sup>John Graham, *"Yours for the Revolution": The Appeal to Reason, 1895-1922* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 1, 12.

<sup>95</sup>George Allan England, *The Story of the Appeal: "Unbeaten and Unbeatable"; Being the Epic of the Life and Work of the Greatest Political Newspaper in the World* (Girard: Appeal to Reason, 1914), 7.

<sup>96</sup>Graham, *Yours for the Revolution*, 8.

headlines, and the *Appeal* quickly became a known commodity, representative of the socialist cause both for insiders and outsiders.

The *Appeal* depended upon a unique brand of guerilla marketing. Readers would pay for several subscriptions at discounted rates, ranging from a few to hundreds of copies, and they would present friends, neighbors, and acquaintances with weekly issues. This practice provided a material expression of radical convictions by isolated readers who participated in a concerted effort to actively proselytize capitalists. The *Appeal*'s rapid growth would have been impossible without the creation of a dependable *Appeal* army. These soldiers would be subjects of great controversy as "chance subscribers," potentially in violation of the US Postal Code.<sup>97</sup> When the Third Assistant Postmaster General, Edwin C. Madden, audited the *Appeal* for its subscriber lists, Wayland reconfigured the audit—ostensibly a standard procedure by the postal department in such circumstances—as an attack by the federal government.<sup>98</sup> The readership responded with outrage, mailing in thousands of postcards in protest, and as a result the subscriber list grew to nearly 160,000 when the issue was resolved in early 1902, the fourth highest weekly circulation and the largest circulation of any political paper in America.<sup>99</sup> This "first battle" set up a repeatable pattern wherein the *Appeal* editorial staff implored its readership to act as the saviors of the *Appeal* or of socialism in general.<sup>100</sup>

Through various other scandals, the *Appeal* readership grew to unprecedented heights. After nearly a decade as the managing editor Wayland had passed those day-to-day

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<sup>97</sup>Janice Jacqueline Miller, "The Appeal to Reason: A Socialist Challenge to Progressivism" (Master's Thesis, Washington State University, 1981), 29.

<sup>98</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "A Race against Time," *Appeal to Reason*, November 23, 1901, 1.

<sup>99</sup>Graham, *Yours for the Revolution*, 7.

<sup>100</sup>England, *The Story of the Appeal*, 43.

responsibilities to his feisty “fighting editor” Fred D. Warren, and Wayland served mostly as a figurehead for the paper and its passionate readership, contributing occasional pieces and advising Warren with regard to long-term editorial decisions.<sup>101</sup> The *Appeal* would not cease publication altogether until 1922, but beginning in late 1913, just months after Wayland’s death, the massive subscription list slowly dwindled. During the First World War the paper was forced to drastically reduce its operations. Wayland’s tenure with the paper stretched from its founding in 1895 to its strongest influence in 1912. In the words of Algie Simons, “The Appeal is the paper and ink incarnation of the mind of Wayland.”<sup>102</sup>

The *Appeal* wielded influence well beyond its embattled readership. For example, Fred Warren commissioned a young socialist named Upton Sinclair to investigate and report on conditions in Chicago’s meatpacking industry. The result was *The Jungle*, first published as a serial in the pages of the *Appeal* in 1905. Although it did not garner many new subscribers, the serial caused a great deal of upheaval and resulted in regulation in the industrial world.<sup>103</sup> As a further testament to its influence, Theodore Roosevelt referred to the *Appeal* as “a vituperative organ of pornography, anarchy and bloodshed.”<sup>104</sup> He once inquired of his Attorney General, “Is it possible to proceed against Debs and the proprietor of the paper [the *Appeal*] criminally?”<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup>Sharon E. Neet, "Variant Editions of the Appeal to Reason 1905-1906" (PhD diss., North Dakota State University, 1983), 11-2.

<sup>102</sup>Algie Martin Simons, "The Future His Monument," *The Coming Nation* (1912): 2.

<sup>103</sup>Anthony Arthur, *Radical Innocent: Upton Sinclair* (New York: Random House, 2006), 80-2.

<sup>104</sup>George Milburn, "The Appeal to Reason," *The American Mercury* 23, no. 91 (1931): 369.

<sup>105</sup>J. Anthony Lukas, *Big Trouble: A Murder in a Small Western Town Sets Off a Struggle for the Soul of America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 361.

Receiving a negative response, Roosevelt took it upon himself to personally write a rebuttal against socialism in *Outlook*, a popular magazine, just two weeks after leaving the presidency. In it, he described the *Appeal* as “a paper which not only practices every form of malignant and brutal slander, but condones and encourages every form of brutal wrongdoing, so long as the slander or violence is supposed to be at the expense of the person who owns something, wholly without regard to whether that man is himself a scoundrel, or a wise, kind, and helpful member of the community.”<sup>106</sup> Roosevelt’s response to the *Appeal* in a popular weekly magazine suggests the reach and influence of the paper.

Wayland and his staff faced a great deal of persecution for their convictions and their tactics. In fact, Fred Warren was thrown in prison for a particularly unusual campaign wherein he offered a financial reward to anyone willing to kidnap and extradite a former governor of Kentucky. Sentenced to six months of hard labor under the Roosevelt administration, he was later pardoned by Taft.<sup>107</sup> The *Appeal* offices, the largest building and employer in Girard, were repeatedly vandalized and burgled. On one occasion, an intruder pointed a gun into Wayland’s chest, and his life was spared only because the firearm jammed.<sup>108</sup> Through all these toils and troubles, the *Appeal* continued to grow. In 1912, after the failure of Debs’ campaign for the presidency, Wayland ended his life. Shortly afterward, the *Appeal* reached its peak circulation of approximately 750,000 weekly readers. Due to infighting and various issues of leadership, the

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<sup>106</sup>Roosevelt, "Socialism," 621.

<sup>107</sup>Mark W. Van Wienen, *American Socialist Triptych: The Literary-Political Work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Upton Sinclair, and W.E.B. Du Bois* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2012), 83.

<sup>108</sup>England, *The Story of the Appeal*, 180-1.

*Appeal* declined slowly after Wayland's death. Eventually purchased by Emmanuel Haldeman-Julius, the *Appeal* became a shell of what it once was, losing most of its radical flavor.

Still, during the earliest years of the twentieth century, particularly 1901-1912, the *Appeal* was unparalleled. The sum result of its numerous headline-grabbing controversies was that "apart from the Socialist party itself, the *Appeal* was the most important socialist institution in America during the century's first decade." Further, "Wayland, Warren, and Debs were the most famous socialists in the United States. During the non-election years particularly, the *Appeal* provided the excitement, vitality, and the continuity the socialist movement needed. Week after week, the *Appeal* was the dominant force linking the dispersed socialist movement together."<sup>109</sup>

### Utopian Rhetoric

Coined by Thomas More and derived from the Greek for "no place," utopia represents "the construction of imaginary worlds, free from the difficulties that beset us in reality."<sup>110</sup> Such imaginary worlds arise from disgruntled individuals and groups yearning for a society on their own terms, a revolutionary day when things might be put right. Ernst Bloch suggested humans are fundamentally characterized by this utopian impulse, a consistent desire to make circumstances better.<sup>111</sup> Likewise, Karl Mannheim posited that all political thought could be characterized as utopian or ideological, associating utopia with attempts of the oppressed "to

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<sup>109</sup>Graham, *Yours for the Revolution*, 10-1.

<sup>110</sup>Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia*, *Ralahine Utopian Studies* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 1.

<sup>111</sup>Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 3 vols., *Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986).

burst the bonds of the existing order” and ideology with the dominant classes’ proclivity to reinforce the “*status quo*.”<sup>112</sup> Frederic Jameson noted the utopian impulse governs “everything future-oriented in life and culture; and encompassing everything from games to patent medicines, from myths to mass entertainment, from iconography to technology, from architecture to eros, from tourism to jokes and the unconscious.”<sup>113</sup> Utopianism, then, underlies all attempts to better society, but it is particularly important for any group seeking substantive reformation or societal revolution. Perhaps more than anything else, utopianism is tied to upheaval, the capacity and energy necessary for change. As Núria Sara Miras Boronat suggested, “Persuading political agents to assume a political project may involve an appeal to good reasons, but also the fostering of people’s desires and hopes for a better life.”<sup>114</sup>

Utopian rhetoric, then, is symbolic inducement toward a particular vision of the future better life or a particular understanding of near or ultimate contingencies. Marlana Portolano further defines utopian rhetoric as “the use of symbolic communication in an attempt to move the actual state of human affairs into alignment with an imagined, better state of affairs—that is, a utopia, either one shared by the community or one invented by the speaker or both.”<sup>115</sup> Frequently, the utopian rhetors trace a chosen societal principle to its entelechy, aiming to create a perfected society, a heaven on earth. As such, utopia is necessarily a category of myth, what

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<sup>112</sup>Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1936), 173, 84.

<sup>113</sup>Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (New York: Verso, 2005), 2.

<sup>114</sup>Núria Sara Miras Boronat, "Utopias in Conflict: History, Political Discourse and Advertising," *Critical Discourse Studies* 13, no. 3 (2016): 313.

<sup>115</sup>Marlana Portolano, "The Rhetorical Function of Utopia: An Exploration of the Concept of Utopia in Rhetorical Theory," *Utopian Studies* 23, no. 1 (2012): 116.

Northrop Frye refers to as “speculative myth.”<sup>116</sup> Just as myths must address, involve, or answer “basic societal needs,”<sup>117</sup> utopian rhetoric fundamentally “appeals to broad cultural ideals and organizing principles.”<sup>118</sup> More importantly, utopian rhetoric can “provide a vision for one’s social ideas.”<sup>119</sup> By articulating an ideal reality, one within possible reach, utopianists create a mythic system that influences attitudes and activities. Anthropologists agree that narratives should only be classified as “myth” insofar as they “are treated as ‘true’ by the people who tell them.”<sup>120</sup> Similarly, if an audience deems a utopian offering as too pie in the sky or as unreachable, this narrative cannot effectively empower those seeking change. Conversely, those moments when a desirable utopian narrative is bolstered by strategic utopian rhetoric—sustained arguments aimed toward societal betterment—there is explosive potential for upheaval and reform. While scholars of utopian studies have capably sketched a history of the concept of utopia, those academics have often neglected to consider “how this concept is communicated or mediated via symbols and communicative conventions,”<sup>121</sup> how utopian visions are expressed rhetorically.

Utopian rhetoric has the power to energize a people or a social movement like virtually nothing else does. As Judith Shklar noted, fundamentally utopian literature acts as “a summons

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<sup>116</sup>Northrop Frye, "Varieties of Literary Utopias," in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*, ed. Frank E. Manuel, The Daedalus Library (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), 25.

<sup>117</sup>Robert C. Rowland, "On Mythic Criticism," *Communication Studies* 41, no. 2 (1990): 104.

<sup>118</sup>Portolano, "Rhetorical Function of Utopia," 116.

<sup>119</sup>Frye, "Varieties of Literary Utopias," 25.

<sup>120</sup>Rowland, "On Mythic Criticism," 105.

<sup>121</sup>Portolano, "Rhetorical Function of Utopia," 115.

to action,” one particularly useful to a reformer seeking to affect consistent and fundamental change.<sup>122</sup> The work of a reformer is difficult, as they are perennially stuck between “two contradictory criticisms,” that their arguments lack “intellectual rigor” sufficient to overturn established systems and that they are too “doctrinaire.”<sup>123</sup> As François Bloch-Lainé notes, since utopian discussions seemingly avoid “immediate practical consequences,”<sup>124</sup> reformers can escape this bind by relieving anxieties about turning over apple carts in the immediate future. Still, utopianism does not only seek to innocently effect change far into the future, but instead, through the value system of a utopian vision, present values and activities shift, ideally without significant controversy. While utopian rhetoric may describe a future perfect society, “the Utopian ideal is not necessarily situated outside of time,” but rather, the strategic use of utopian rhetoric can permit “the affirmation of ‘values’ that one can hold and respect right away, the setting of ‘objectives’ that can be achieved one by one, and the choice of permanent ‘scope.’”<sup>125</sup> A seemingly future-oriented mythic system allows for a present reorientation of values and actions.

Utopian rhetorical practice was at the core of the American socialist movement. Throughout the history of American radicalism, socialists have attempted to circumvent anti-socialist attitudes by “putting themselves in some kind of proper relationship with the

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<sup>122</sup>Judith Shklar, "The Political Theory of Utopia: From Melancholy to Nostalgia," in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*, ed. Frank E. Manuel, The Daedalus Library (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), 109.

<sup>123</sup>Francois Bloch-Lainé, "The Utility of Utopias for Reformers," in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*, ed. Frank E. Manuel, The Daedalus Library (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), 201.

<sup>124</sup>Bloch-Lainé, “Utility of Utopias for Reformers,” 203.

<sup>125</sup>Bloch-Lainé, “Utility of Utopias for Reformers,” 204.

Americanism of the era,”<sup>126</sup> producing a uniquely American tradition out of a uniquely American utopianism. Socialism was able to thrive precisely because of its connection to the utopian impulse as manifested through various literary and rhetorical productions. Pertinently, Adam Ulam noted, “In fact, it has been the decline of utopian thinking that has seriously damaged the capacity of socialism to stir up emotions of fear or hope.”<sup>127</sup> Utopian socialism, unlike classical Marxism, depended upon rhetoric producing societal transformation. Marx’s utopia was fated to occur, as capitalism would purportedly lead to revolution, but utopian socialism understood the future to be dependent on the power of arguments to change minds. Disavowing the notion of a class war, American utopianists suggested that socialism would overcome capitalism principally through the ballot box and through other traditional democratic means, indicating the necessity of rhetoric as symbolic action to affect individual and group attitudes. “Insofar as many issues divided socialists, upon one point they tended to agree. Change began with education, and the best way to educate was through print.”<sup>128</sup> The utopian future depended, in large part, on the rhetorical artistry of socialists to persuade non-socialists that American society could transform into a socialist utopia.

In particular, utopianism thrived at the conclusion of the nineteenth century in America, in great measure due to “the distrust and dismay aroused by extreme laissez-faire versions of

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<sup>126</sup>Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 78.

<sup>127</sup>Adam Ulam, "Socialism and Utopia," in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*, ed. Frank E. Manuel, The Daedalus Library (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), 117.

<sup>128</sup>Jason D. Martinek, *Socialism and Print Culture in America, 1897-1920*, *The History of the Book* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 2.

capitalism.”<sup>129</sup> Maren Lockwood noted, “To someone living in the nineteenth century, utopia was imminent; it was not an impractical, impossible notion. Utopia could exist: it was expounded as a legitimate hope for the average citizen and it was embodied in more than a hundred experimental communities scattered across the country.”<sup>130</sup> In 1888, Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* introduced a classical utopian tale about the gradual change from capitalism to a socialist utopia in America, purportedly by the year 2000. So resonant was Bellamy’s work that—in addition to selling hundreds of thousands of copies—it inspired many different “nationalist clubs” or societies solely interested in the promulgation of Bellamy’s speculative vision.<sup>131</sup> As Bellamy himself noted, “The Golden Age lies before us and not behind us, and is not far away.”<sup>132</sup> Clearly, Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* represents a key moment in socialist utopias in nineteenth century America, and its influence on Wayland and the *Appeal* cannot be overstated. Insofar as the *Appeal* argues for the betterment of society through gradual democratic revolution, it does so on Bellamy’s shoulders through overtly utopian rhetoric.

Critics frequently note that *Looking Backward* is not and should not be considered great literature. This perceived insufficiency might explain its popularity while illustrating the nearly inextricable relation of utopian narratives to rhetoric. Robert Rowland’s description of rhetorical narratives is useful here:

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<sup>129</sup>Frye, "Varieties of Literary Utopias," 27.

<sup>130</sup>Maren Lockwood, "The Experimental Utopia in America," in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*, ed. Frank E. Manuel, The Daedalus Library (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), 183.

<sup>131</sup>Allyn B. Forbes, "The Literary Quest for Utopia, 1880-1900," *Social Forces* 6, no. 2 (1927): 184.

<sup>132</sup>Clarence J. Karier, *The Individual, Society, and Education: A History of American Educational Ideas*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1986), 119.

Great literature often fails as rhetoric because the theme is too complex for the mass audience. On the other hand, great rhetorical narratives often are inferior literature. Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel about the horrors of slavery, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, is generally not considered to be great literature. The characters are based on simple stereotypes and show little subtlety. But there is no question that Stowe's novel had an immense rhetorical impact on popular attitudes about slavery in the North in the years leading up to the Civil War.<sup>133</sup>

It is no accident that the only nineteenth century novel to outsell *Looking Backward* was *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; both were sub-par literature but rhetorical masterworks.<sup>134</sup> Like Stowe, Bellamy was not subtle, spelling out an explicit defense of cooperative socialism in dull but “simple and obvious” and repetitive paragraphs.<sup>135</sup> One of the more memorable sections of the book is a twenty-eight-page sermon offered as a justification of his cooperative socialism,<sup>136</sup> not particularly riveting material. Shklar also noted the “literary feebleness” of Bellamy’s book. She suggested that it might have been “better presented in a political manifesto or in a systematic treatise,” calling it a “vulgarization...devised solely to reach the largest possible audience.”<sup>137</sup> Through her accurate description, Shklar, perhaps unknowingly, suggests *Looking Backward* to be a great rhetorical narrative, in spite of and because of its feebleness. I am suggesting that

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<sup>133</sup>Robert C. Rowland, "The Narrative Perspective," in *Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action*, ed. Jim A. Kuypers (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 121.

<sup>134</sup>Alan Ryan, "The Planners and the Planned," in *Hayek's Political Theory, Epistemology, and Economics*, ed. Jeffrey Friedman (New York: Routledge, 2015), 180.

<sup>135</sup>Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward 2000-1887* (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1888), 387.

<sup>136</sup>Bellamy, *Looking Backward*, 383-411.

<sup>137</sup>Shklar, "Political Theory of Utopia," 109.

utopian narratives are best understood not as literary but rhetorical projects,<sup>138</sup> and that on occasion utopian rhetoric can be extraordinarily powerful for reaching and motivating an audience. Utopian myths like Bellamy's are not told for their entertainment value but for their rhetorical dynamism.<sup>139</sup>

According to Frye, utopianists recognize problems of social behavior by observing unconscious "ritual habits" throughout their society,<sup>140</sup> and then, "the desirable society, or the utopia proper, is essentially the writer's own society with its unconscious ritual habits transposed into their conscious equivalents."<sup>141</sup> For Bellamy and for Wayland, destructive ritual habits across American society owed to the excesses of capitalism and, particularly, to the concept at its core: competition. Cooperation, then, was the antidote to all the problems of competitive capitalist rituals. If cooperation, expressed through the vehicle of socialism, could replace competition as the core of American economic system, utopia just might be within reach.

As Crane Brinton also notes, the "artificial" utopian plan, presented as an alternative order, requires "an enlightened few" or "one enlightened individual, who will think and act in a way the many by themselves will not, cannot, think and act."<sup>142</sup> As such, utopian rhetoric requires some sort of heroic leadership. This is why egalitarian movements are still remembered as associated with specific thinkers, like Owen, Fourier, or even Julius Wayland. The role of a

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<sup>138</sup>Ivan Angus Wolfe, "Arguing in Utopia: Edward Bellamy, Nineteenth Century Utopian Fiction, and American Rhetorical Culture" (PhD Diss., University of Texas, 2009), vii, 3.

<sup>139</sup>Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, ed. Betty Sue Flowers (New York: Anchor Books, 1991), 63.

<sup>140</sup>Frye, "Varieties of Literary Utopias," 39.

<sup>141</sup>Frye, "Varieties of Literary Utopias," 27.

<sup>142</sup>Brinton, "Utopia and Democracy," 50.

cooperative socialist hero is difficult to fill. Wayland's Ruskin Colony failed, in part, because of a perceived incongruity inherent in the role of Wayland as a leader over a cooperative commune. Even after Wayland left Ruskin, this tension followed his career as a socialist agitator. In this sense, Wayland served the utopian impulse of the larger socialist community by acting as a prophet for them; he pointed the way to paradise, the democratic socialist revolution to be enacted peacefully.

### *Markers of Effective Utopian Rhetoric*

To support his claim that utopias “have a crucial and constructive role in the historical process,” Zygmunt Bauman cited four functions particular to utopias, socialist utopias specifically, suggesting that these features indicate historically productive utopian visions.<sup>143</sup> In what follows, I first outline Bauman's markers of successful utopias, extrapolating them to develop the hallmarks of utopian rhetoric. Then, I explicitly connect Wayland's rhetorical practice in the *Appeal* to each of these markers, suggesting that much of his rhetorical-prophetic power emerged from a critical enactment of utopian mythos. If, as Mannheim suggests, utopian rhetoric springs from “a state of mind” that “is incongruous with the immediate situation” and leads to actions that “tend to shatter the order of things,”<sup>144</sup> then such rhetoric should express itself in concert with the functional features explicated below.

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<sup>143</sup>Zygmunt Bauman, *Socialism the Active Utopia* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976), 13.

<sup>144</sup>Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 341.

First, according to Bauman, “utopias relativize the present,” because “one cannot be critical about something that is believed to be an absolute.”<sup>145</sup> Utopian rhetoric opens the possibility that change could occur, that the status quo must not be considered insurmountable. Levitas refers to this relativization as the power of utopia to “distance us from the present,” considering it the primary utopian function.<sup>146</sup> Likewise Joseph Gusfield noted that utopian visions, by definition, often do not seem like the a “logical and immediate” step given present circumstances, and thus, “utopian vision, in this sense, breaks with historical continuity.”<sup>147</sup> In short, utopian rhetoric, when successful, highlights the frail contingency of any particular historical moment. Had past generations seized on different key principles, utopian rhetors allege, the present might have been otherwise. Put more directly, utopians argue that the world need not be as it is, that a perfected future is indeed possible.

Second, Bauman suggests, utopias do not answer questions like “what can I know?” or “what ought I do?” Instead, utopias aim to answer a different sort of question, namely “what may I hope?” Further, “The driving force behind the search for utopia is neither the theoretical nor the practical reason, neither the cognitive nor the moral interest, but the principle of hope.... Hope supplies the missing link between practical and theoretical interests because it is intrinsically critical of the reality in which it is rooted.”<sup>148</sup> Hope is the core of utopia, much as Ernst Bloch surmised. Then, aside from a focus on present contingencies, utopian rhetoric provides a mechanism for groups to motivate themselves toward a new reality, to succeed where past

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<sup>145</sup>Bauman, *Socialism the Active Utopia*, 13.

<sup>146</sup>Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia*, 201.

<sup>147</sup>Joseph R. Gusfield, "Economic Development as a Modern Utopia," in *Aware of Utopia*, ed. David W. Plath (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1971), 76.

<sup>148</sup>Bauman, *Socialism the Active Utopia*, 14-5.

generations failed, to render society better than they found it through the realization of some rhetorical vision.

For this reason, the prophetic persona is key to a successful utopian rhetoric. Without a prophet persona—Brinton’s aforementioned “enlightened individual”—a rhetor is unlikely to create the sort of hope necessary for reform or revolution; the friction necessary for upheaval requires some connection to sacred principles. Andre Johnson defined prophetic rhetoric: “discourse grounded in the sacred and rooted in a community experience that offers a critique of existing communities and traditions by charging and challenging society to live up to the ideals espoused while offering celebration and hope for a brighter future.”<sup>149</sup> Utopias require both hope and the critique of the present society as fundamentally unjust and a society that must be replaced with a perfected just society. While Marxist determinism might allay workers from fighting for an already certain revolution, commitment to utopia requires a passionate fighting force, a community bent on spreading its influence. As Jonathan Haidt notes, the construction of any civilization depends largely on the power of a sacred core to foster a shared identity that allows for the hard work of building and infrastructure; such complex work is dependent on the sacred.<sup>150</sup> Likewise, Eliade declares, “Sacred power means reality and at the same time enduringness and efficacy.”<sup>151</sup> Prophetic rhetoric taps into the sacred, whether religious or secular, to critique existing structures of power; the harnessing of sacred hope is part and parcel

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<sup>149</sup>Andre E. Johnson, *The Forgotten Prophet: Bishop Henry Mcneal Turner and the African American Prophetic Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 7.

<sup>150</sup>Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Vintage, 2012), 173-4; “Forget the Money, Follow the Sacredness,” *New York Times*, March 18, 2012, SR12.

<sup>151</sup>Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1959), 12.

of utopianism. Prophetic rhetoric indicates “something more complex than the breakdown of order; it indicates an alternative order.”<sup>152</sup> This alternative order might be called utopia.

As a third feature, Bauman suggests utopias split “shared reality into a series of competing projects-assessments.” In other words, utopianism produces “inevitably partisan yearnings,”<sup>153</sup> for step-by-step actions toward the perfect society. By explicating the desires of a particular people and location for the present and future, utopianists highlight tensions between us and them, between the righteous and the reprobate. In so doing, utopias have another important rhetorical effect, according to Bauman. “They portray the future as a set of competing projects, and thereby reveal the role of human volition and concerted effort in shaping and bringing it out.” Where conservatives and liberals discuss the future in terms of the probable, utopianism refers to the “possible,” the perfected future, sometimes hiding behind “the mask of the ‘inevitable.’”<sup>154</sup> Consequently, utopian rhetoric has the potential to constitute group identity in powerful ways, differentiating between competing sacred principles. It is precisely this feature of utopianism that undercuts the power of unconsidered ritual habits, as utopian dissent causes reflection on unconsidered structures and principles of power.

Finally, Bauman’s fourth functional feature of utopianism is the simplest; utopias foster “deliberate collective action.”<sup>155</sup> Utopian rhetoric is ineffective if it cannot lead to substantive change or, at least, to activism. As James Darsey notes, “Desire moves utopia from the realm of

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<sup>152</sup>James Darsey, *The Prophetic Tradition and Radical Rhetoric in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 6.

<sup>153</sup>Bauman, *Socialism the Active Utopia*, 15.

<sup>154</sup>Bauman, *Socialism the Active Utopia*, 15.

<sup>155</sup>Bauman, *Socialism the Active Utopia*, 17.

idle fancy into the realm of politics and, thus, into public debate.”<sup>156</sup> Potentially fanciful and sometimes bordering on the absurd, depictions of the future gain traction precisely because audiences wish they could be so against all odds. A constituted audience, motivated by the desire for the sacred, wills effective utopian visions into existence. Such a powerful rhetorical force, when enacted through the preceding functional features and emboldened by a “politics of desire,”<sup>157</sup> can move large groups to resolutely defy the common order.

These four markers of utopianism provide a means to understand utopian rhetoric and its power. In sum, utopian rhetoric relies on the relativization of the present in search of the sacred, the principle of hope for the future, the constitution of oppositional group identity through criticism, and collective action. Having established these critical functions and markers of utopian rhetoric, I trace utopian rhetoric in the early *Appeal to Reason*, suggesting utopianism provided the rhetorical power necessary to constitute and motivate a tremendous readership to unprecedented collective action.

### *Utopian Rhetoric in the Appeal*

At its core, Wayland’s *Appeal* relied on utopian rhetoric. Wayland’s previous publication, the *Coming Nation*, claimed to represent cooperative socialism “as taught in Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward*.”<sup>158</sup> Likewise, the *Appeal* routinely printed pieces from Bellamy’s book, advocating for a possible perfected future through the power of cooperation and public

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<sup>156</sup>James Darsey, "Utopia and Desire," in *Argumentation and Values: Proceedings of the Ninth SCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation*, ed. Sally A. Jackson (Annandale: Speech Communication Association, 1995), 34.

<sup>157</sup>Darsey, “Utopia and Desire,” 28.

<sup>158</sup>Arthur Lipow, *Authoritarian Socialism in America: Edward Bellamy and the Nationalist Movement* (Berkeley: University of California, 1982), 90.

ownership. The utopian impulse is furthered manifested in Wayland's proclivity to encourage democratic processes as the means for change and his emphasis on rhetoric to change minds by literacy and personal conversations. Wayland wrote from "a belief in the perfectibility of American institutions," that democracy could work in favor of the oppressed to effect lasting and just change.<sup>159</sup> Still, the utopian rhetoric of the *Appeal* went beyond its surface. In what follows, I use Bauman's four functions of utopia to highlight the powerful utopian rhetoric at the very core of Wayland's paper and its eventual success.

First, the *Appeal* relativized the present and pointed to a perfected future by regularly indicating the possibility of change, the frailty of business as usual. Encouraging readers to vote socialist, Wayland notes the chance for "change or real amelioration," suggesting that powerful political parties "would bend to [socialist] influence" if comrades were willing to protest.<sup>160</sup> Further he denounced "wise men" who "will not listen," rendering impossible "changes today that would bring peace, plenty and pleasure to the human family," and added that this obstinacy "will likely in time produce revolution." Wayland concluded this front-page reflection: "Because all governments have been bad is not necessarily a reason that they cannot be made beneficent. That they have been bad has only been because the people have been ignorant of the power and true purpose of the maximum of human co-operation—government."<sup>161</sup> Here, Wayland highlighted the key concept of Bellamy's utopian vision, cooperation, while noting the possibility of change. Elitist "wise men" who lived in willful ignorance of hurting laborers were

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<sup>159</sup>Elliott Shore, *Talkin' Socialism: J.A. Wayland and the Role of the Press in American Radicalism, 1890-1912* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988), 40-1.

<sup>160</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "Don't Throw Your Vote Away," *Appeal to Reason*, April 7, 1900, 1.

<sup>161</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, December 4, 1897, 1.

the major problem afflicting American society, and if such “wise men” could be replaced or properly pressured, government might be otherwise.

Wayland compared the American “laboring people” to a captured bird in a cage. If the bird were released, it would not be able to understand its freedom, since it did not fully grasp its captivity. As a result, Wayland notes, “The dark ages was not centuries ago, but right now. Only here and there are the rays of reason’s light breaking through the dark clouds of man’s black night of servitude giving promise of coming changes.”<sup>162</sup> Then, the perfect future could emerge, insofar as his readers worked for its appearing. Wayland reinterpreted and relativized the present moment as a period of darkness, offering utopian reason as its only remedy. Bellamy and Wayland agreed that government and expanded public ownership were solutions to the perversions of government in the present; change could occur through proper channels. Indeed, had perverse leaders not corrupted the governmental process, the present might have been otherwise. As such, the present became relativized; present problems were not fated to exist and could potentially be ameliorated.

Second, the *Appeal* was founded upon the power of hope, and Wayland served as a prophetic figure to announce the “coming revolution.”<sup>163</sup> Instead of focusing on the far off possibility of change, Wayland wrote with an unmistakable urgency, indicating substantive change could occur soon. He stated, “There appears to be a tumbling over to get into some party that promises a genuine change. It’s comin’.”<sup>164</sup> As a concrete example of the power of hope through rational argument, Wayland wrote a fictional account about a tramp reading a copy of

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<sup>162</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, March 6, 1897, 1.

<sup>163</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, March 19, 1898, 4.

<sup>164</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, March 14, 1896, 1.

the *Appeal* by happenstance:

He began to get interested and read every line on every page. A strange indescribable feeling came over him; a new hope began to grow in his heart. He couldn't quite grasp it yet; all night he sat there thinking it all out. In the morning he felt like a new man; the world looked brighter—there seemed to be a better day dawning, even for a tramp. That tramp, who was a tramp no longer, is now an important factor in the great socialist propaganda movement, and when the true history of the world is written, his name will appear on the roll of honor.<sup>165</sup>

Through just one interaction with the truth about socialism, a tramp was transformed. He was no longer a tramp; he was a fighter in the *Appeal* army, a force for change. In the biblical Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells a parable about a rich man whose name is forgotten after his death and a poor man, Lazarus, whose name is long remembered. Wayland taps into the same notion of sacred power for the production and alteration of history. The nameless tramp, near starvation and death, became important just by the act of reading. The tramp envisaged a “better day,” and he proleptically lived out that day as his soul awakened and delighted at the truth of the *Appeal*. As such, the *Appeal* not only argued for a pie-in-the-sky utopia, but the force of these arguments purportedly brought utopia into the present, blurring the line between the future and the now.

Perfectly illustrating the connection between utopian rhetoric and the sacred, Wayland attempted to sell copies of More's *Utopia* to his readership by saying, “It is one of the best wedges you can use to get a man to see there is something in socialism. He reads it out of curiosity—comes to scoff, as it were, and remains to pray.”<sup>166</sup> Here, the word “pray” is

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<sup>165</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, May 11, 1901, 2.

<sup>166</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, September 11, 1897 1.

revealing. Wayland invoked a common phrase to suggest the power of cooperative socialism to function as a faith system, capable of changing society. Despite its secular doctrine, Wayland's message and newspaper can be seen as a kind of secular scripture pointing toward a socialist utopian heaven on this earth. In another place, Wayland suggested that continued oppression would "cause the masses to open their eyes to the glorious condition awaiting them in the near future." He continued to predict, "A great change will come in the next four years. Let us hope in peace and by the ballot falling as softly as the snowflakes for men who see and long for that heaven on earth to be realized by public ownership—the co-operative commonwealth. But come it will."<sup>167</sup> As the impetus for this great change, the *Appeal* functionally became a sacred text, capable of ushering in a new era through rhetoric and literacy.

Wayland further used sacred hope in the *Appeal* through the mobilization of Christianity as an inventional resource to reinforce socialist rhetoric. Wayland routinely insinuated "that the man who claims himself a Christian and is not a socialist or a communist is either a fool or a knave."<sup>168</sup> Although Wayland was not a particularly religious individual, "Christ" was mentioned in some form in over 1,000 issues of the *Appeal* during Wayland's seventeen-year association with the paper. In 1903, Wayland edited a special Christian issue of the *Appeal*, the cover of which featured a large cartoon of Jesus standing over greedy businessmen with his finger pointed into the air, a halo formed by the word "Socialism" wrapped around his head.<sup>169</sup> By repeatedly connecting Jesus Christ to socialist dogma, Wayland anchored his vision to the power of Christian utopianism; cooperation became the sacred golden rule that might bring

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<sup>167</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "It Is Coming," *Appeal to Reason*, June 12, 1896, 1.

<sup>168</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, July 31, 1897, 1.

<sup>169</sup>Ernest Untermann, *Appeal to Reason*, February 21, 1903.

heaven to earth. If, as Wayland suggested, Christ came primarily to create “a new social order here,”<sup>170</sup> then socialism and Christianity—properly conceived—were fundamentally connected. Undeniably, both were sacred systems. Just as the Bible served to guide Christians into all truth, the *Appeal* led socialists in the same direction. One *Appeal* contributor summarized the utopian thread connecting Christianity and socialism well in this plea:

If, Christian preacher or church member, you have no social program, we Socialists will offer to your sincere purpose a rational program. Read our platform and principles. Come to the ballot box and vote with us. You will never again have such a chance to tilt the beam of a world’s balance to the real Kingdom of Righteousness and Justice on the earth. The crisis of centuries is at hand, and Socialism holds the key to the world’s deliverance.<sup>171</sup>

The deliverance of the world, then, relied upon the promulgation of the *Appeal* and its message, a message purportedly consistent with the Christian Bible.

Just as the *Appeal* functioned as the sacred utopian literature for American socialists, Wayland played the role of prophet. Thousands of laborers converted to cooperative socialism through Wayland and his message. As a prophetic figure, Wayland acted as a fiery critic of the dominant economic religion, preparing the way of socialism to provoke change. He routinely castigated those in power as “robber barons” who forced laborers to “tramp and beg” or into wage slavery;<sup>172</sup> Wayland used his position to produce prophetic rhetoric to “arouse righteous

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<sup>170</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, March 14, 1896, 1.

<sup>171</sup>J. Stitt Wilson, "The Mission of Jesus and Socialism," *Appeal to Reason*, February 21, 1903, 3.

<sup>172</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "The Inquisition in America," *Appeal to Reason*, June 5, 1897, 1.

indignation,”<sup>173</sup> highlighting the sins and excesses of capitalism, pointing to a better way. To this end, historian George England noted, “Chief among all educators of the people and all prophets of the Better Day, [capitalism] fears and hates the APPEAL.”<sup>174</sup>

In addition to Wayland’s prophetic pen, many other explicitly utopian pieces motivated by sacred hope were published in the *Appeal*. As an example, H. A. Gibbs declaimed in the pages of the *Appeal*, “My eyes have already seen the eastern horizon aglow with the morning beams of a better day. We are emerging from the mists and darkness of individualism into the broad sunlight of collectivism.” Gibbs concluded his reflection:

When that day shall come the capitalists and the tramp alike shall be things of the past. The mighty army of unemployed shall be mustered out and take its place again in the ranks of useful producers. Then, indeed, shall we be a people “blessed with plenty, purified with justice and sweetened with brotherly kindness.” Then, indeed, shall we be a nation “in which dwelleth righteousness,” because founded on economic equity.<sup>175</sup>

Likewise, in 1912, Wayland and Fred Warren published a reflection by Emile Zola that began with the line: “What a great and healthy society will it be, where every member shall contribute his logical share of work?” Zola continued to describe a world made right, a place “full of freedom and gaiety.”<sup>176</sup> Clearly, Wayland, as a writer and as an editor, valued the power of hope to constitute and motivate an audience.

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<sup>173</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "The Lone Indian," *Appeal to Reason*, May 22, 1897, 1.

<sup>174</sup>George Allan England, *The Story of the Appeal: "Unbeaten and Unbeatable"; Being the Epic of the Life and Work of the Greatest Political Newspaper in the World* (Girard: Appeal to Reason, 1914), 106.

<sup>175</sup>H. A. Gibbs, "The Right to Work," *Appeal to Reason*, September 2, 1899, 2.

<sup>176</sup>Emile Zola, "The Future Society," *Appeal to Reason*, April 20, 1912, 2.

Third, Wayland's *Appeal* created a group identity among its readership through a melodramatic opposition to dominant capitalist forces. He achieved this opposition not only through utopian visions wherein capitalists tumble and laborers ascend, but also through consistent condemnation of capitalist practices. As an example, following the suicide of an unemployed military veteran named W. L. Briscoe, Wayland wrote, "What a glaring fraud on justice! I say that every citizen, official or otherwise, who upholds the present infamous, crime-producing system of competition, is responsible for all such acts as Briscoe's. They are the real culprits."<sup>177</sup> In other words, society could be divided into two camps: those propping up the old order, Mannheim's ideologues, and those propagating a new order, Mannheim's utopianists. Wayland's *Appeal* repeatedly suggested humankind could be divided "into two great classes—wealth makers and wealth takers." A laborer made wealth, while a "capitalist" simply took it.<sup>178</sup> Further, "competition makes hyenas of men—co-operation would make them brothers."<sup>179</sup> There was no middle ground, no such thing as a righteous passive observer.<sup>180</sup>

Fourth, this utopian rhetoric led to discernible action. In terms of readership and political activity, Wayland's *Appeal* is unparalleled in the history of American radicalism.<sup>181</sup> Readers evangelized the socialist gospel by handing out thousands of copies of the *Appeal* every week, eventually growing the subscriber lists to over 750,000, with specific issues printing millions of

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<sup>177</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, June 6, 1896, 1.

<sup>178</sup>J. A. Edgerton, "Two Kinds of People," *Appeal to Reason*, November 17, 1898, 3.

<sup>179</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, April 10, 1897, 1.

<sup>180</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, February 21, 1903, 1.

<sup>181</sup>Michael Mark Cohen, "'The Conspiracy of Capital': American Popular Radicalism and the Politics of Conspiracy from Haymarket to the Red Scare" (PhD Diss., Yale University, 2004), 215.

copies. The *Appeal*'s significant subscriber base successfully used publicity to change political processes. When major legal battles against socialists or unions seemed hopeless, the *Appeal*'s readership provided visibility and pressure to these struggles to force equitable treatment.<sup>182</sup> The *Appeal*'s front-page, as John Graham noted, had the power to mobilize "its readers to write their congressman and newspapers" en masse.<sup>183</sup> The *Appeal* provided public attention, while readers agitated the political process into change, a clear case of utopian rhetoric spurring political activity.

Clearly, Wayland's rhetoric in the *Appeal* and the rhetorical power of the *Appeal* generally had a distinct utopian flavor, drawing from important religious and political American traditions. Whereas Marx suggested that inevitably capitalism must give way to socialism, Wayland put the responsibility for change on the evangelistic zeal and rhetorical performances of his readership; the fate of the future lay in the hands of common laborers. He wrote:

Let the good work go on. The future is as certainly ours, despite all the army, navy and fraud at the king's command, as the sun appears of the eastern horizon. The pressure will also make reformers exert more energy in propaganda. On their work depends the direction of the change when it comes. Its quality for good or ill depends solely on their work of getting the discontented to read the beauties of the socialist commonwealth.

Brothers, sisters, do your duty.<sup>184</sup>

He went on to command his readers to "go to work with hope," since "light is pouring in every

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<sup>182</sup>David L. Sterling, "The Federal Government v. The Appeal to Reason," *Kansas History* 9, no. 1 (1986): 31-42.

<sup>183</sup>John Graham, *"Yours for the Revolution": The Appeal to Reason, 1895-1922* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 8.

<sup>184</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, February 8, 1896, 1.

way piercing the dark gloom.”<sup>185</sup> Utopian rhetoric, aimed at the transcendent betterment of the social order through upheaval, allowed Wayland to promote a powerful rhetorical vision for the future that mobilized workers in the present.

I offer one final point regarding Wayland’s utopian rhetoric. Although utopianism necessarily seeks upheaval in the present to achieve the promise of the future, it often does so by calling for nonviolent resolution. Revolutionaries “promise a better world of tomorrow after the violence of the revolution is over,” but reformers, like Wayland, argued that “one is not renouncing the goal of making the world better just because one refuses to overturn it in a day,” allowing conscientious “idealists” to join reform movements.<sup>186</sup> Wayland focused on utopian rhetoric to allow for the gradual change necessary in the democratic process; a utopian vision motivated followers to action while tempering their immediate expectations. As such, Wayland’s brand of socialism sought to bring “American rhetoric in line with reality, replacing a system tightly controlled by a small ‘plutocracy’ with one controlled directly by the people,”<sup>187</sup> the laboring class, and consequently, Wayland’s utopianism powerfully called his readership to attention and activity, while channeling their angst into a “democratic end.”<sup>188</sup> That is, Wayland’s army hoped to nonviolently beat the plutocratic political system at its own game.

In sum, utopian rhetoric aims toward a future perfected society, often through entelechial extension of some sacred cultural principle, like cooperation. As utopian scholars have indicated, hope for a perfected future world is a powerful motivation toward action and activism. Julius

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<sup>185</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, February 8, 1896, 1.

<sup>186</sup>Bloch-Lainé, "Utility of Utopias for Reformers," 203.

<sup>187</sup>Martinek, *Socialism and Print Culture*, 7.

<sup>188</sup>Crane Brinton, "Utopia and Democracy," in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*, ed. Frank E. Manuel, The Daedalus Library (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), 51.

Wayland activated this powerful hope in the pages of his *Appeal* to constitute a robust and politically motivated audience. Through his regular paragraphs, columns, and editorial choices, Wayland highlighted the possibility of change, the hope for desired structural ameliorations, the oppositional identity of his readers, and the need for action, clearly advocating the sort of socialist utopia Bauman outlined. In his role as a public leader, Wayland served as a prophetic figure over the sacred system of cooperation that could make the United States into an ideal society. He prepared the way for the cooperative revolution by a consistent and optimistic call to propagate socialist dogma through literacy and democratic processes. Utopian rhetoric, then, often focuses not on creating immediate upheaval but in the gradual process of societal betterment, ultimately changing present values and actions as individuals march toward the perfect future.

### Conclusion

In the following chapters, I explicate Wayland's expert use of utopian rhetoric in three case studies. First, as a prophetic figure of the coming utopian age, Wayland's self-presentation is significant; prophetic ethos propels and substantiates utopian and prophetic rhetorical practice. In this case study, I examine Wayland's early use of autobiographical narrative to enliven and build an audience in his own image. Second, Wayland constituted a devout portion of his readership as soldiers in his army, the *Appeal* army. Every revolutionary regime needs a fighting force, and Wayland defined a selection of his readers as freedom fighters whose weapons were arguments, literacy, and democracy. This identity was nestled in a politics of hope and desire for a better future, free from capitalist oppression. Finally, I discuss perhaps the most infamous article in the history of the *Appeal*: Eugene Debs' "Arouse, Ye Slaves!" Wayland publicly

approved the publication of this article. It represented a clear mobilization of the *Appeal* army to agitation toward social change. Such agitation was predicated on utopian principles. These case studies illustrate the constitutive techniques employed by Julius Wayland and his colleagues in the *Appeal* to gather and motivate an audience toward the gradual and democratic day of revolution.

### Chapter 3: Julius Wayland's Constitutive Self-Presentation in the Early *Appeal to Reason*

In 1897, Julius Wayland found himself on the verge of failure, yet again. The wealthy socialist businessman began one of the most significant cooperative communes in American history, yet after only a year, Wayland left in shame in 1895, calling the whole experience a “mistake.”<sup>1</sup> Starting a new paper, the *Appeal to Reason*, Wayland ran into dire financial straits, halting publication without warning for more than three months, between October 24, 1896 and February 6, 1897, to find a solution. Hoping to cut costs, he moved his entire operation to a small town in Southeast Kansas called Girard and vowed to print until his money ran out.<sup>2</sup> By 1900, Wayland's weekly paper had a subscriber list of over 100,000 people,<sup>3</sup> and by 1912, the *Appeal to Reason* had the highest circulation of any weekly publication in America.<sup>4</sup> In this chapter, I elucidate the rhetorical techniques Wayland employed to constitute his reading public, especially during the critical period immediately following the desperate move to Girard in 1897.

I suggest Wayland's early constitutive rhetoric consisted, in large part, of two strategies of identification: a vernacular persona and autobiographical narrative. Through the use of vernacular style and language, Wayland fostered an ethos of a regular worker, advancing a certain image of himself as consubstantial with his laboring readers. Further, through his use of autobiography, Wayland presented his life story to the audience as a model for action, with the understanding that they would be able to help complete his tale. Through these two constitutive

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<sup>1</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "A Personal Allusion," *Appeal to Reason*, February 6, 1897, 4.

<sup>2</sup>Wayland, "A Personal Allusion," 4.

<sup>3</sup>Fred D. Warren, "Building the Appeal," *Appeal to Reason*, April 13, 1907, 1.

<sup>4</sup>Michael Mark Cohen, "'The Conspiracy of Capital': American Popular Radicalism and the Politics of Conspiracy from Haymarket to the Red Scare" (PhD Diss., Yale University, 2004), 215.

strategies, Wayland developed a public, a loyal readership who identified with their trusted editor and who saw him as the hero of their movement. In this way, Wayland's identifications rendered him as both ordinary and extraordinary, as one struggling alongside the workers and as one already experiencing a bit of utopia.

Radical critique of existing social structures in light of sacred principles and sacred writings requires a prophetic figure. A prophet is judged not solely by his or her prophecy, but also by his or her persona. In this chapter, I explicate Wayland's self-presentation, a constructed persona with constitutive rhetorical and prophetic power, and as such, this case study fundamentally concerns ethos. As a prophet, Wayland must, in part, argue from his own experience; through ethos claims, he makes his message meaningful. Effective utopian rhetoric requires a powerful prophetic voice, and Wayland constructed his persona and voice through regular personal revelations, narratives, and anecdotes about himself and his pursuit of the utopian impulse during his lifetime, exhibiting the power of socialism to help the individual in specific and gradually perfect society at large.

The argument proceeds in three sections. First, I provide an overview of the life of Julius Wayland, noting important moments for the eventual construction of his constitutive image or reputation. Second, I outline various theoretical components of constitutive rhetoric mediated through vernacular discourse and autobiographical narrative. Third, I describe Wayland's particular construction of a vernacular persona and offer a reading of one autobiographical piece written by Julius Wayland and published at two key moments in the history of the *Appeal*.

## Julius Wayland's Story

Julius Wayland, the youngest of seven children, was born to a prominent family in Versailles, Indiana in 1854, but that same year, a cholera epidemic swept through the region, claiming the lives of Wayland's father and four of his siblings. Wayland's mother never remarried and barely managed to support her children through domestic labor. Due to his family's poverty, Wayland only enjoyed two years of formal education, and after performing odd jobs for several months as a teenager, he serendipitously secured a job as a printer for the *Versailles Gazette*. Wayland and a fellow printer soon borrowed hundreds of dollars to purchase the *Gazette* in 1872, renaming it the *Ripley Index*. From this point on, Wayland moved about the country frequently, from Indiana to Missouri to Colorado, often running a printing press for ideological newspapers. With one exception, every newspaper Wayland printed was aligned with the Republican Party, as was Wayland.

After discussing a railroad strike with a local English cobbler in Pueblo, Colorado named William Bradfield, Wayland received a pamphlet outlining and defending socialist ideology in 1891. As a result he read many important texts in the American socialist canon. In particular, Wayland found himself enamored with Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. The novel described the year 2000 through the eyes of a Rip Van Winkle-like character who awoke from a deep sleep to discover the United States had been nearly perfected through the enactment of socialism in 1887.<sup>5</sup> Wayland later suggested that the best way to convert capitalists into socialists

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<sup>5</sup>Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward 2000-1887* (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1888).

was to simply give them Bellamy's tome.<sup>6</sup> Thus, Wayland entered the socialist tradition through its utopian expression, the most common derivative of socialism in the United States. He would henceforth maintain that a great day was coming when socialism would prevail and heaven on earth would commence.<sup>7</sup>

In Colorado, Wayland made tremendous money by selling a local printing press and by acquiring real estate. By 1893, as a socialist, he had accumulated over 80,000 dollars, and he began his first radical paper in Indiana, called the *Coming Nation*. Its weekly tagline declared: "For a government of, by, and for the People as outlined in Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, abolishing the Possibility of Poverty."<sup>8</sup> Following the lead of many other utopianists, Wayland decided to found a colony, named after John Ruskin. As Darsey notes, utopianism is fueled by a "politics of desire," as individuals deeply yearn for societal redemption and attempt to force such redemption to occur.<sup>9</sup> Wayland, driven by ideology and enlivened by desire, set off to found a utopian colony with Bellamy's book as its "socialist bible."<sup>10</sup> He acquired about one thousand acres in rural West Tennessee, where he built some thirty houses to establish a community that could share all things in perfect cooperative harmony. The colony would revolve around the

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<sup>6</sup>George Allan England, *The Story of the Appeal: "Unbeaten and Unbeatable"; Being the Epic of the Life and Work of the Greatest Political Newspaper in the World* (Girard: Appeal to Reason, 1914), 29.

<sup>7</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "A New Heaven and a New Earth," *Appeal to Reason*, February 8, 1896, 1.

<sup>8</sup>Elliott Shore, *Talkin' Socialism: J.A. Wayland and the Role of the Press in American Radicalism, 1890-1912* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988), 32.

<sup>9</sup>James Darsey, "Utopia and Desire," in *Argumentation and Values: Proceedings of the Ninth SCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation*, ed. Sally A. Jackson (Annandale: Speech Communication Association, 1995), 28.

<sup>10</sup>Matthew Beaumont, "Introduction," in *Looking Backward 2000-1887*, Oxford World's Classics (New York: Oxford University, 2007), vii.

*Coming Nation* as a source of work and revenue for the community to share. “When we get settled in the colony I expect to do as extensive and fine printing as Harper Bros. We shall have just as fine material and knock out as elegant work. I have already some ten publications to start with.”<sup>11</sup> Although Wayland insisted on a ruling principle of equality, he personally paid for the land and housing, set up the ground rules, and edited the paper around which the colony was to form. From the beginning of the colony in 1894, discord abounded, and Wayland exited the Tennessee commune in 1895, forfeiting a tremendous amount of money in the process. He eventually acknowledged the colony to be a mistake and a “sink hole.”<sup>12</sup>

In a period of personal reinvention, Wayland also abandoned the *Coming Nation* paper to start the *Appeal to Reason* in Kansas City. He initially considered naming his paper after himself, but an unnamed “old German socialist” advised Wayland: “Don’t call it Wayland’s Weekly, but give it a name that in time will be better known than the man who made it.”<sup>13</sup> Although the paper did go on to wider renown than its printer, its success and identity always remained tightly connected to Wayland and his utopian vision. Although the *Appeal* initially struggled, Wayland, in time, grew it into the largest circulating socialist periodical in American history. In what follows, I provide an account of Wayland’s constitutive techniques for creating an impassioned readership. I focus on the ways that a vernacular persona along with autobiographical narrative can foster identification and how a public can form around a symbolic figure as a constitutive text.

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<sup>11</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Coming Nation*, February 24, 1894, 1.

<sup>12</sup>Wayland, "A Personal Allusion," 4.

<sup>13</sup>England, *The Story of the Appeal*, 11.

## Public Constitution and Vernacular Narratives

Jurgen Habermas used the term *Öffentlichkeit*, typically translated as “public sphere,” to refer to “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed,” one which “comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body.”<sup>14</sup> Various theorists have provided correctives to Habermas’s vision of the public, suggesting the rational-critical approach to deliberation elides many other factors in public opinion formation. In particular, Michael Warner described some publics that come “into being only in relation to texts and their circulation.”<sup>15</sup> Such publics are “autotelic,” existing by virtue of being addressed, so through circulation of particular textual addresses, a public forms as auditors provide “mere attention.”<sup>16</sup> I suggest Warner and other public sphere theorists underappreciate the rudimentary connection between author, persona, and text in public formation. Although texts circulate independent of an author and although audiences often produce textual interpretations totally incongruous with authorial intent, there still remains a connection between the implied author, the persona, and the text in the process of reception. In some circumstances when the author-text relationship is particularly strong, a public can, through various processes of identification, cohere around both the author and the text as singular entity. In other words, the author and the text become consubstantial. With Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, I suggest that the “the shifting but central character of the roles that we assume in the plays in

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<sup>14</sup>Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article," *New German Critique* 3 (1974): 49.

<sup>15</sup>Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 4 (2002): 413.

<sup>16</sup>Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," 419.

which we participate” directly affects the “formation of publics and counterpublics.”<sup>17</sup> Then, the persona of the rhetor can function as a symbolic figure around which a public coheres. This is likely to occur when the rhetorical persona is as important as the content of the address, as prophetic rhetoric typically requires.<sup>18</sup>

I suggest that Julius Wayland functioned as such a symbolic figure, as one whose personality and story were so connected to the *Appeal* that they circulated alongside it every week. When Wayland died, a famed socialist activist noted: “There is no other like the Appeal to Reason, and the Appeal is the paper and ink incarnation of the mind of Wayland.”<sup>19</sup> In the minds of the readers, the *Appeal* and Wayland were inextricably knotted together. Wayland achieved this feat through a masterful construction and reproduction of his personal image. Wayland’s constitutive rhetoric, the “art of constituting character, community, and culture in language,”<sup>20</sup> produced a self-identity that, in turn, reproduced readers in his own image. By explicating Wayland’s use of constitutive rhetoric through vernacular language and autobiographical narrative, I trace the processes by which Wayland achieved symbolic status among the *Appeal*’s public.

Language always constitutes. A rhetor’s linguistic choices are actions that interact with an audience with varying results. James Boyd White writes, “When we look at particular words, it is not their translation into statements of equivalence that we should seek, but an understanding

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<sup>17</sup>Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, “Agency: Promiscuous and Protean,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 2, no. 1 (2005): 5.

<sup>18</sup>James Darsey, “The Legend of Eugene Debs: Prophetic *Ethos* as Radical Argument,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74, no. 4 (1988): 435.

<sup>19</sup>Algie Martin Simons, “The Future His Monument,” *The Coming Nation* (1912): 2.

<sup>20</sup>James Boyd White, *Heracles' Bow: Essays on the Rhetoric and Poetics of the Law* Rhetoric of the Human Sciences (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), x.

of the possibilities they represent for making and changing the world.”<sup>21</sup> Among scholars of communication, Maurice Charland authored the classic essay on constitutive rhetoric, arguing that rhetorical criticism had long assumed the “extra-rhetorical” existence of the audience, yet Charland maintains “the very existence of social subjects (who would become audience members) is already a rhetorical effect.”<sup>22</sup> While Charland’s essential critique is insightful, one significant issue with Charland’s constitutive rhetoric concerns his use of Althusser’s interpellation. The Althusserian tradition significantly reduces rhetorical agency, the “capacity to act, that is, to have the competence to speak or write in a way that will be recognized or heeded by others in one’s community.”<sup>23</sup> Charland’s constitutive rhetoric often presents a reductive description of the agency of both the rhetor and the audience. Through a process of “hailing,” the audience is allowed only the “illusion of agency” as they are “positioned” into a “deterministic” narrative.<sup>24</sup> Conversely, per James Aune, Charland’s model effaces rhetorical agency for the rhetor,<sup>25</sup> as well, taking “a good deal of agency from the rhetor and giving it to the audience.”<sup>26</sup> Likewise, Celeste Condit chides McGee and, by implication, Charland, for the “rather sudden

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<sup>21</sup>James Boyd White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning: Constitutions and Reconstitutions of Language, Character, and Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984), 11.

<sup>22</sup>Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois " *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73, no. 2 (1987): 133.

<sup>23</sup>Campbell, "Agency," 3.

<sup>24</sup>Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 140; Nathan Crick, *Democracy & Rhetoric: John Dewey on the Arts of Becoming*, ed. Thomas W. Benson, *Studies in Rhetoric/Communication* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2010), 65.

<sup>25</sup>James Arnt Aune, "Modernity as a Rhetorical Problem: *Phronēsis*, Forms, and Forums in *Norms of Rhetorical Culture*," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 41, no. 4 (2008): 413.

<sup>26</sup>Martha Elizabeth Thorpe, "Making America: Constitutive Rhetoric in the Cold War" (PhD Diss., Texas A&M University, 2011), 40.

decision to portray audiences as the primary creators of texts.” She well states a major blindspot in Charland’s constitutive rhetoric: “Creative decoding, however, is not the same thing as the construction of a text of one's own.”<sup>27</sup>

Aune and Thorpe offer James Boyd White as a counterpoint without such elision of rhetorical agency.<sup>28</sup> White, a literary and legal critic, claims, “Each of us is partly made by our language, which gives us the categories in which we perceive the world and which form our motives; but we are not simply that, for we are users and makers of our language, too; and in remaking our language we contribute to the remaking of our characters and lives, for good or for ill.”<sup>29</sup> Therefore, even the smallest communicative actions have the potential to create or refashion a collective identity or community, and particular rhetorical or hermeneutical moves by the rhetor allow for the creation of self and collective identity through rhetorical processes, a partnership between the audience and the rhetor seeking to “contact others,” preserving the agency of both parties.<sup>30</sup> Jasinski refers to the intentional and extensional dimensions of constitutive rhetoric. Constitutive force can be exhibited intentionally through textual features and strategies, and conversely, constitutive force might derive from circulation and articulation.<sup>31</sup> Although Charland and White both deal with the interior dimensions of texts, the intentional

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<sup>27</sup>Celeste Condit, "Rhetorical Criticism and Audiences: The Extremes of McGee and Leff," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54 (1990): 340.

<sup>28</sup>Aune, "Modernity as a Rhetorical Problem," 413; Thorpe, "Making American," 41-2.

<sup>29</sup>James Boyd White, *Justice as Translation: An Essay in Cultural and Legal Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990), 23.

<sup>30</sup>Condit, "Rhetorical Criticism and Audiences," 340.

<sup>31</sup>James Jasinski, "Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography: Toward an Understanding of the Discursive (Re)Constitution of Constitution in the Federalist Papers," in *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, ed. Kathleen J. Turner, Studies in Rhetoric and Communication (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 74, 262.

approach is closely aligned with White and the extensional with Charland. Jasinski summarizes, “Texts invite their audience to experience the world in certain ways via concrete textual forms; audiences, in turn, appropriate, articulate, circulate, and/or subvert these textual forms in ways that release and transform their potential constitutive energy.”<sup>32</sup> Put differently, “agency is constitutive of collectivities,” even as “collectivities are constitutive of agency.”<sup>33</sup> Indubitably, both forces, the extensional and intentional play an important role in public constitution, but I find that, for the purposes of this chapter, White’s intentional approach better emphasizes the power of rhetorical techniques employed by a skilled rhetor.

Through constitutive rhetorics, rhetors attempt to reposition subjects into various narrative spaces to create the preconditions for discursive appeals toward political goals and material actions and effects. This constitutive function of rhetoric is, in part, founded upon the Burkean notion of identification. Burke realized that symbol usage involved a hortatory appeal, the dancing of attitudes,<sup>34</sup> so identification becomes rhetoric’s fundamental term. Through discourse, a rhetor attempts to foster identification between the audience and him/herself as a means to unify and inspire the audience toward action, so textual forms function as invitations to view and experience the world in particular ways. For Burke, identification between a rhetor and an auditor occurs insofar as their “interests are joined” or, more precisely, insofar as the auditor “is persuaded to believe” their interests are joined.<sup>35</sup> Then, publics are constituted “through

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<sup>32</sup>Jasinski, “Constitutive Framework,” 74-5.

<sup>33</sup>Campbell, “Agency,” 5.

<sup>34</sup>Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action* (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), 9.

<sup>35</sup>Kenneth Burke, “Identification,” in *On Symbols and Society*, ed. Joseph R. Gusfield (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989), 180.

explicit and implicit identifications and disidentifications.”<sup>36</sup> The collective identity of a public is textually produced and reified through circulation, and constitutive rhetoric is the gravitational force around which a public coheres and moves toward action.

If identification is the fundamental term of rhetoric and the foundational principle of public constitution, then, I suggest two discursive tools serve the rhetor particularly well in the pursuit of constitutive identification: vernacular language and personal narrative. I address each of these in turn. First, vernacular language refers to the way people talk to each other in everyday activity. Scholars have long realized that public opinion is reflected in various ways both behind podiums and behind lunch counters, yet the vocabulary used to express opinions in those settings differs dramatically. Clearly, “publics deliberate in ways that are not confined to the orderly debates of parliamentary bodies. They take a variety of forms suited to their time and place and within the cultural understanding of their audiences.”<sup>37</sup> Individuals discuss and debate issues of concern to their lives through particular conversational styles and vocabularies, all of which are historically and sociologically relative to a particular context. Vernacular language is represented “on the corner,”<sup>38</sup> the colloquial vocabulary in use at any particular moment and is “the aspect of any communicative action that authorises [sic] its claims with strategies that arise from or appeal to ‘traditional,’ ‘native,’ or local community beliefs and practices. The word ‘vernacular’ has its

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<sup>36</sup>Daniel Brouwer, "Counterpublicity and Corporeality in HIV/AIDS Zines," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 22, no. 5 (2005): 354.

<sup>37</sup>Gerard A. Hauser, "Vernacular Dialogue and the Rhetoricity of Public Opinion," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 65, no. 2 (1998): 92.

<sup>38</sup>Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, "The Critique of Vernacular Discourse," *Communication Monographs* 62, no. 1 (1995): 20.

origins in the concept of ‘the local’ or ‘home grown.’”<sup>39</sup> Rhetors intending to foster identification with an audience will likely fall flat without giving careful attention to the vernacular vocabulary of that audience. Through consideration of the second persona of a text, the target audience addressed, a rhetor shapes vocabulary to craft a specific self-image that might resonate and connect with the sensibilities of particular communities.

Vernacular discourse is typically associated with oppressed and non-institutional communities,<sup>40</sup> though Howard notes the vernacularity of elite and institutional discourse, as well.<sup>41</sup> As Ono and Sloop make clear, vernacular rhetoric need not solely focus on counter-hegemonic strategies, but instead, rhetors employ vernacular discourse to create an “affirmative, articulating a sense of community.”<sup>42</sup> Then, rhetors enhance the power of their appeals by couching them in “home grown” language, nodding to the norms and verbiage of a target community, speaking as one of them. Maegan Parker Brooks refers to this as the “vernacular persona,” a “self-presentation” that requires “strategic choices” for rhetorical purposes.<sup>43</sup> The “vernacular flavor” of a discourse is derived from the “the speech patterns of [a] local

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<sup>39</sup>Robert Glenn Howard, "A Theory of Vernacular Rhetoric: The Case of the ‘Sinner’s Prayer’ Online," *Folklore* 116, no. 2 (2005): 174.

<sup>40</sup>Robert Glenn Howard, "The Vernacular Mode: Locating the Non-Institutional in the Practice of Citizenship," in *Public Modalities: Rhetoric, Culture, Media, and the Shape of Public Life*, ed. Daniel C. Brouwer and Robert Asen, Rhetoric, Culture, and Social Critique (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 2010), 243.

<sup>41</sup>Howard, "Theory of Vernacular Rhetoric," 176-7.

<sup>42</sup>Ono and Sloop, "Critique of Vernacular Discourse," 22.

<sup>43</sup>Maegan Parker Brooks, "Oppositional Ethos: Fannie Lou Hamer and the Vernacular Persona," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 14, no. 3 (2011): 540.

community,” but also from “shared experiences, viewpoints, and modes of reasoning.”<sup>44</sup> Such a vernacular persona allows a rhetor the power to communicate to a community in its own language, ingratiating him/herself into the rhetorical community through intentional speech acts. A vernacular persona does not guarantee that a community will accept the rhetor; the use of certain shibboleths or key phrases by an outsider might not ring true to the intended audience. Nonetheless, such a persona goes a long way toward producing the identification necessary to constitute and motivate an audience toward action.<sup>45</sup>

Second, autobiographical narrative is among the most powerful means to create a rhetorical persona that might function as a constitutive public figure. Individuals are significantly more likely to “reinforce and attenuate existing attitudes” by encountering a narrative if they identify with the protagonist,<sup>46</sup> and as such, vernacular language paves the way for the more powerful tool of autobiographical self-presentation in the construction of a personal image. Martha Solomon notes that the autobiographical form is particularly potent for leaders of social movements. She claims, “If the leader of a social movement writes the story of his or her life, the narrative quite naturally will serve as an inspirational model for followers and as a tool for recruiting new members.”<sup>47</sup> Then, the autobiography serves as a way for a leader to carefully construct a particular image for recruitment and for the constitution of an audience. These biographies typically include “details of a life but also may suggest the roots of [a leader’s]

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<sup>44</sup>Brooks, “Oppositional Ethos,” 522.

<sup>45</sup>Campbell, “Agency,” 5-6.

<sup>46</sup>Anneke de Graaf et al., “Identification as a Mechanism of Persuasion,” *Communication Research* 39, no. 6 (2012): 817.

<sup>47</sup>Martha Solomon, “Autobiographies as Rhetorical Narratives: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Anna Howard Shaw as ‘New Women,’” *Communication Studies* 42, no. 4 (1991): 355.

commitment to the cause and the value of dedicating one's life to working for the advancement of the ideal."<sup>48</sup> Autobiography does not usually manifest arguments with "clear-cut inferential structures,"<sup>49</sup> but such "indirect argument from real experience is more concrete and potentially more affecting than rigorous and traditional forms of evidence and reasoning."<sup>50</sup> In this regard, Charles Griffin comments on the mutually reinforcing relationship between self-definition and social advocacy. Per Griffin, the social advocacy program and ideological perspective provides a background that renders the protagonist's life story as a plausible enactment, a blueprint of a movement's ideology for individuals.<sup>51</sup> The autobiographical form substantiates the rhetor's self-definition, cause, movement, and ideology.

By "taking a reader inside the writer's experience,"<sup>52</sup> the autobiographical form fosters a certain intimacy or "personal bond,"<sup>53</sup> whereby readers are potentially endeared to the author and his/her story. Such intimacy, tied to narrative identification, provides a visceral connection to rhetor's goals or legacy. Verene claims that philosophy and autobiography are inextricably fused together, since all philosophy is necessarily self-knowledge, so when a rhetor formally argues for an ideology, this is an act of autobiography or self-disclosure, a "projection of the philosopher's

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<sup>48</sup>Solomon, "Autobiographies as Rhetorical Narratives," 355.

<sup>49</sup>Walter R. Fisher and Richard A. Filloy, "Argument in Drama and Literature: An Exploration," in *Advances in Argumentation Theory and Research*, ed. J. Robert Cox and Charles Arthur Willard (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1982), 343.

<sup>50</sup>Solomon, "Autobiographies as Rhetorical Narratives," 363.

<sup>51</sup>Charles J. G. Griffin, "'Movement as Motive': Self-Definition and Social Advocacy in Social Movement Autobiographies," *Western Journal of Communication* 64, no. 2 (2000): 149.

<sup>52</sup>Thomas W. Benson, "Rhetoric and Autobiography: The Case of Malcolm X," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60, no. 1 (1974): 3.

<sup>53</sup>Solomon, "Autobiographies as Rhetorical Narratives," 366.

self.”<sup>54</sup> In much the same way, any act of biography is an act of philosophy, as the story of a life moves toward presently held ideological positions. By consuming an autobiographical text, the reader comes to know the author at a deeper level, understanding the circumstances behind argued ideology. Autobiography serves as a defense of an ideology, rendering it coherent within the lived experience of the subject, allowing for a first hand accounting of conversion narratives and other stories related to the formation of ideological or political sentiments. A person’s story can rarely be relayed dispassionately, but instead, the personal narrative proceeds from particular convictions, convictions made manifest in the actions and arc of the story. If the audience can relate to the subject of an autobiographical narrative, then the suasive power of its core rhetorical trajectory is immense.

The autobiographical form’s persuasive potency capitalizes on the implications of lived experiences, and as such, “the reader participates in [the] construction” of the formal argument.<sup>55</sup> In much the same way, Charland maintains, “Constitutive rhetorics leave the task of narrative closure to their constituted subjects.”<sup>56</sup> Then, the autobiographical form utilizes the same openness that makes constitutive rhetorics effective. Since autobiographies function as models for living and as proof that the ideology is fruitful in a person’s life, readers can feel compelled to pattern themselves after it, so the autobiographical form functions as a challenge to continue the legacy of the subject, to live out that example in one’s own context, to explore the meaning of that subject’s life in one’s own. As Solomon noted, “No amount of formal argument could

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<sup>54</sup>Donald Phillip Verene, "The Limits of Argument: Argument and Autobiography," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 26, no. 1 (1993): 6.

<sup>55</sup>Solomon, "Autobiographies as Rhetorical Narratives," 366.

<sup>56</sup>Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 143.

have been as convincing as this personal testimony,"<sup>57</sup> since such testimony allows the reader to draw his/her own conclusions and to make his/her own implications.

James Jasinski plots out four important constitutive dimensions of discursive practice that the rhetorical critic should consider:

In addition to self-constitution and the formation of subjectivity or subject positions, discourse functions to organize and structure an individual's or a culture's experience of time and space, the norms of political culture and the experience of communal existence (including collective identity), and the linguistic resources of the culture (including, in particular, the stock of fundamental political concepts that shape the culture's understanding of political existence).<sup>58</sup>

In this chapter, I am primarily interested in Wayland's self-constitution, the creation of his subjectivity, and its effect on the "experience of communal existence" and the collective identity of his readers. I argue that Wayland's story and style provided his readership with "linguistic resources" to apply to their own lives and circumstances. As such, Wayland's constitutive rhetoric directly or indirectly related to three of Jasinski's four constitutive dimensions of rhetoric.

### Wayland's Constitutive Identifications

Drawing on the above theoretical material, I suggest that Wayland constituted his self-image—which significantly informed the collective identity of the *Appeal* public—through two particular identifications. I focus on techniques Wayland used during 1897, a rocky point when

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<sup>57</sup>Solomon, "Autobiographies as Rhetorical Narratives," 365.

<sup>58</sup>Jasinski, "Constitutive Framework," 75.

his paper's survival seemed unlikely, having moved to Girard in a desperate attempt to save his operation. To grow his subscriber list, Wayland used two constitutive strategies of identification. First, he presented a vernacular persona to position himself as a member of the community of oppressed American laborers. Wayland was a very wealthy person and a brilliant businessman. When he died in 1912, he owned at least a quarter of a million dollars worth of real estate,<sup>59</sup> but through vernacular style and tropes, Wayland aligned his rhetorical persona so closely to the worker and his/her plight that he seemed to partake in the struggle of labor, as well. Through a vernacular persona, Wayland became consubstantial with the American worker. Somewhat paradoxically, Wayland's second act of identification concerned his use of autobiography to relay his trajectory of success and his conversion to socialism. In this way, Wayland presented himself as the embodiment of American optimism and utopian socialism; he was proof that one could be both a socialist and a financial success, that socialism was not tantamount to poverty. Wayland was proof that Bellamy had been correct, as his life drastically improved after his political conversion, so perhaps socialist utopia could succeed on a large scale in a similar way. As a protagonist, he was both a common relatable worker and a hoped-for ideal. In what follows, I parse both strategies of identification, first looking at Wayland's vernacular persona, and then, examining his constitutive self-presentation. Through these strategies, Wayland established the groundwork for his prophetic critiques, earning the ethos necessary to make those critiques as a member of the sacred community of American laborers.

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<sup>59</sup>"Editor Wayland Suicides," *The Avalanche*, November 14, 1912, 8; "J. A. Wayland a Suicide," *New York Times*, November 12, 1912, 9.

*Vernacular Persona*

Wayland's vernacular persona emerged from at least three practices: his paragraphing style, his anecdotes, and his consistent usage of vernacular language and tropes. I will address each one in turn. First, Wayland's editorial style fostered a vernacular identification through a conversational style and rhythm. Under Wayland, the *Appeal* did not resemble most other newspapers, whether ideological or not. Its front page rarely featured lengthy articles, exposés, or complex arguments. Instead, the opening page of the *Appeal to Reason* typically consisted of several, even dozens, of little paragraphs, each designed as a bite-sized barb in favor of socialism or against capitalism. This allowed Wayland to handle a huge swath of issues on a regular basis, since "he was able to reduce any question, news item or philosophical argument to a paragraph, usually less than 150 words in length."<sup>60</sup> Reading the earliest editions of his paper is like listening to a magazine style pop-news broadcast, where fresh stories are proffered every few seconds. These paragraphs ranged in subject from one-liner snarky jokes to summaries of current events to lessons from the past. As an example, I provide the following three paragraphs, arranged consecutively and surrounded by a sea of other paragraphs on the front page of an issue in early 1897. First, "So common is suicide becoming that patent medicine advertisers picture it to draw attention to their nostrums. Great Civilization!" Followed by, "Royalty has met the dock strikers of Hamburg with soldiers and killed a number, just like Cleveland did in Chicago. Royalty is the same everywhere, —so is labor." Finally, "The silk weavers of Patterson, N. J. are being jailed for asking for a wage sufficient to live on. The silk factories have made many paupers and a few very rich. The infant industries need protection! If operated by the people for

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<sup>60</sup>Shore, *Talkin' Socialism*, 45.

the people, the results would have been different.”<sup>61</sup> Each paragraph is set apart by a thin line, and there are no efforts to transition between subjects. Clearly, Wayland possessed the “extraordinary ability to compress complex social and economic issues into evocative prose.”<sup>62</sup>

Reading Wayland’s paragraphs, many of which featured the first person pronoun, provides an experience similar to a conversation with a like-minded friend. Readers, week after week, would continue their lop-sided conversation with Wayland, scouring dozens of bite-sized evocative arguments, and potentially, these paragraphs might proceed into their actual conversations with fellow laborers, as “linguistic resources” that shape a personal and collective “understanding of political existence.”<sup>63</sup> Wayland’s *Appeal* “talks the gospel of socialism in short pithy sentences, the kind one can pass along to one’s shopmate or neighbor.”<sup>64</sup> This editorial philosophy gave the *Appeal* a unique flavor, what one might refer to as its vernacular style. This style eschewed more formal methods of reportage for the buckshot delivery of diverse subjects. Such a style seemed more like the “home grown” rhythm of the “corner” than the standard fodder of institutional newspapers.<sup>65</sup> Wayland, then, fostered an unusual intimacy with his readers through an informal, imitable conversational editorial style.

Second, Wayland often included several first-person anecdotes among his weekly litany of paragraphs, so even as his vernacular style mimicked a conversational experience, his use of

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<sup>61</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, February 27, 1897, 1.

<sup>62</sup>John Graham, *"Yours for the Revolution": The Appeal to Reason, 1895-1922* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 3, 5.

<sup>63</sup>Jasinski, "Constitutive Framework," 75.

<sup>64</sup>W. J. Ghent, "The 'Appeal' and Its Influence," *The Survey: A Journal of Constructive Philanthropy* 26, no. 1 (1911): 27.

<sup>65</sup>Howard, "Theory of Vernacular Rhetoric," 174; Ono and Sloop, "Critique of Vernacular Discourse," 20.

the first person singular and his personal stories bonded the reader to him further. Anecdotes are simple, quick stories that “spark interest” and that may tap into “some larger frame of understanding.”<sup>66</sup> William Lewis parsed Reagan’s narrative rhetoric as consisting of anecdotes and myth. Per Lewis, Reagan used anecdotes to hold attention and to ingratiate himself to the audience, yet myth undergirded all his rhetorical endeavors, providing “a sense of importance and direction.”<sup>67</sup> Similarly, Wayland’s rhetorical practice is founded on Bellamy’s myth about the destiny of society through an inevitable revolution, but it is his use of anecdotes that, in part, constitutes his vernacular persona so that workers identify with him as a fellow struggler. Anecdotes carry “a clear message to those whose experience leads them to accept the story as either true or as true-to-life and whose values lead them to accept the moral.”<sup>68</sup> As such, anecdotes work within certain publics and within certain vernacular registers, as particular listeners are able to situate the story in its rightful context.

For instance, when Wayland moved the operations of the *Appeal* from Kansas City to Girard, largely due to financial reasons, he opened his first issue from Girard with the following description of the town: “I am more delighted with our new home and its people. The town of Girard...is beautifully laid out and improved. Every street is lined with large shade trees, every house has a large yard, and I feel more at home than I have in years.”<sup>69</sup> He paints a clear, pleasant picture of small-town life as he knows it. On the same page in the same issue, Wayland also recounts a conversation he had with a “preacher...at the postoffice” and another anecdote

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<sup>66</sup>William F. Lewis, "Telling America's Story: Narrative Form and the Reagan Presidency," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73, no. 3 (1987): 282.

<sup>67</sup>Lewis, "Telling America's Story," 282.

<sup>68</sup>Lewis, "Telling America's Story," 282.

<sup>69</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "In Our New Home," *Appeal to Reason*, February 6, 1897, 1.

about losing 500 dollars due to a bank closure, lamenting, “I am in the soup.”<sup>70</sup> Many other examples could be offered. Wayland consistently relayed personal ruminations, expressed in a vernacular style through conversational paragraphs, in the first person singular. He would often open paragraphs by saying “I think” or “I believe,” revealing a textual personality through minor anecdotes. These stories involve the most mundane activities, personal conversations, observations about town, or the business of printing. Typically, these stories come packaged with a moral or interpretation. Consequently, Wayland creates intimacy with his readers not simply by writing his prose into small paragraphs but also by peppering his pages with personal revelations, the sort of interactions any worker might encounter from time to time.

Finally, Wayland intentionally employed the vocabulary and tropes of the worker throughout the pages of his paper. In other words, Wayland inhabited the vernacular of his target audience, the American laborer. Wayland’s nickname is an interesting example; he referred to himself as the “One Hoss Editor” or the “One Hoss Philosopher,” admittedly “plebeian appellation(s).”<sup>71</sup> Some criticized that a man of such significance and means should resort to such humbling titles. Wayland responded, “My critics fear the vulgarism of ‘one hoss’ will detract. I write to the laboring classes who are not shocked at such expressions. I am one of them and proud of that. Dull as they are they are the salt of the earth and any reform that ever comes must come through them.”<sup>72</sup> Thus, Wayland makes clear his vernacular strategy. The sort of paper Wayland hoped to produce and the sort of change he hoped to cause required an

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<sup>70</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, February 6, 1897.

<sup>71</sup>*Appeal to Reason*, October 17, 1896, 1; “Bonus for Enterprises,” *Appeal to Reason*, February 13, 1897, 1; *Leaves of Life: A Story of Twenty Years of Socialist Agitation* (Girard: Appeal to Reason, 1912), 34.

<sup>72</sup>Wayland, *Leaves of Life*, 34.

impassioned plebian readership, so Wayland affixed an appropriately plebian title to himself, even if he had far more in common financially with the fat cats he tirelessly lambasted.

Additionally, Wayland consistently used slang in his paper, literally printing vernacular discourse, a blue-collar dialect. He opened one column by asking the readers, “Well, how d’ye do?”<sup>73</sup> He began another paragraph with, “Hully Gee! What great brains do rule the world!”<sup>74</sup> After a relatively low voter turnout in the 1897 elections, Wayland chided, “Say, boys, we have been talking about socialism for a long time—suppose we try voting it from now on and see if we do not make greater progress.”<sup>75</sup> Responding to a tax increase on tobacco, Wayland sarcastically exclaims, “Whoop-la! Let’er go Gallagher. We’re a rich, prosperous, high-muck-a-muck nation and can afford anything!”<sup>76</sup> Likewise, Wayland used the slang vocabulary that was particularly common in unions, referring to strike breakers as “scabs” or scabbies and to corporate powers as “flunkies,” “peddlers,” and “robber barons.”<sup>77</sup>

Moreover, Wayland routinely filled the pages of his *Appeal* with popular tropes among the workers. As an example, I provide the infamous notion of wage slavery. Barry Goldberg designates “labor’s continuing references to slavery and emancipation” as a “hackneyed rhetorical reliance.” Per Goldberg, “Many socialists and unionists recognized that interpretations of slavery and emancipation had a direct bearing on their own attempts to develop a viable

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<sup>73</sup>Wayland, "In Our New Home," 1.

<sup>74</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, December 4, 1897, 1.

<sup>75</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 20, 1897, 1.

<sup>76</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, March 27, 1897, 1.

<sup>77</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 20, 1897, 1; Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, February 6, 1897, 1; Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, July 10, 1897, 4; Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, July 17, 1897, 1.

popular critique of the wage earner's plight."<sup>78</sup> Thus, wage slavery became a major way of understanding the plight of the laborer, especially among the unions, and Wayland employs this image to great success. A central tenet of this discussion, whether in the *Appeal* or elsewhere, was the assertion that wage slavery was actually a more insidious form of oppression than was its cousin, chattel slavery. An odd position at first glance, the assertion proceeded by a particular logic. Wayland explained, "All over the land unskilled and even some skilled labor can be hired for \$3 a week, and the wage-slave must board, clothe and care for him or herself. No slave owner could raise slaves or put \$500 to \$1000 in them, feed, clothe, care for and lose them by death after an average life time on \$3 a week. Not by a good deal."<sup>79</sup> Wage slaves were disposable to their employers, their masters, for whereas a dead or maimed chattel slave cost the master his investment in that slave, a dead or maimed wage slave could be pushed aside with no additional cost to the boss. Wayland would later pen a short, racially charged parable to this end. Written in dialect, Wayland writes:

"Massah!" a negro slave is said one to day to have answered his master, who ordered him to climb on a steep roof and plug a leak, "Massah! If I go up that steep roof, and I rolls off, and I falls down, and I breaks my neck, Massah will lose \$500. Now if massah sends up that Irishman who massah is hiring for \$1.50 a day, and he rolls off, and he falls down, and he breaks his neck, massah will lose nuffin." The Irishman repaired the leak.<sup>80</sup>

Thus, wage slavery was worse than chattel slavery, since wage slaves were robbed of personal value, hired only as cogs in the machinery of production. Wayland did not earn wages through

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<sup>78</sup>Barry Herbert Goldberg, "Beyond Free Labor: Labor, Socialism and the Idea of Wage Slavery, 1890-1920" (Columbia University, 1979), 30.

<sup>79</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, March 13, 1897, 1.

<sup>80</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "'Massah' Saw It; Do You?," *Appeal to Reason*, October 26, 1907.

manual labor; he was in no sense a “wage slave.” Still, the trope makes an appearance in a great many pages of Wayland’s *Appeal*.

By adopting this vernacular persona, Wayland establishes himself as a figure in the larger community of laborers, despite his material success. Andre Johnson notes that prophetic rhetoric requires a connection to a community, that a prophetic persona without relevance to an existing communal tradition is largely ineffective. “This means that the prophet is indeed part of the community fabric and understands the beliefs of the audience. Therefore, there is not prophetic discourse outside of the community.”<sup>81</sup> Then, the effectiveness of Wayland’s vernacular persona undergirds all his prophetic critique. He functions as a “representative prophet,” attempting to act as “spokesperson for a group of people who typically have no one to speak up for them,” the American laborers.<sup>82</sup> By using his audience’s language and publishing their tropes, Wayland constructed the persona that could speak into their troubles and on their behalf, as a member of the community of laboring socialists seeking a utopian future.

In sum, Wayland created a vernacular persona—what White refers to as “a character in the world created by the text”—through intentional constitutive rhetorical strategies.<sup>83</sup> His rapid-fire, paragraphing editorial style mimicked a conversational rhythm and tone, and his use of anecdotes, enlivening a grander utopian myth, revealed himself intimately to his readers, expressing his values through quotidian stories and parables. Lastly, Wayland employed the language, dialect, and tropes of his target audience, American union laborers in particular. Through these rhetorical choices, Wayland, a wealthy entrepreneur with less than five years of

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<sup>81</sup>Andre E. Johnson, *The Forgotten Prophet: Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and the African American Prophetic Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 8.

<sup>82</sup>Johnson, *Forgotten Prophet*, 17.

<sup>83</sup>White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning*, 15.

experience as a socialist in 1897, positioned himself as a member of the community of American workers, as one sharing, caring, and struggling alongside them. In what follows, I examine Wayland's specific configuration of his self-identity, noting the ways in which his self-presentation served to constitute his reading public.

### *Autobiography*

Wayland routinely revealed his life's story and personal testimony throughout issues of his paper, but on occasion he set about the intentional task of writing autobiographical columns. I examine here one such column, printed at two crucial moments in the history of the *Appeal*. Simply titled "A Personal Allusion," the brief article was first published in 1897, soon after the *Appeal* settled its operations in Girard. The future of the newspaper was in jeopardy; socialist newspapers generally did not fare well or produce profit. The article was reprinted in a special Labor Day edition in 1903; the edition ran one million copies, a high point at the time. It contained a detailed account of the history of the *Appeal* and its founder, reprinting Wayland's 1897 column verbatim, alongside other similar texts. In 1903, the *Appeal* had realized strong growth and installed new industrial printing presses, and it was important that the new subscribers be immersed in the founding stories of the paper. Community is constituted through narrative,<sup>84</sup> and Wayland's narrative needed to be told and retold to enact his role in the radical community as a symbolic figure. It was no accident that Wayland's only full-length autobiography was published in 1912, just a few months before the particularly important

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<sup>84</sup>Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame, 1981), 9-13.

November elections;<sup>85</sup> Wayland and his editors realized the constitutive power of his carefully presented life story.

Concerning constitutive self-revelation, White writes, “One is perpetually telling one’s story to oneself and others, trying to shape things so that the next step fits with what has gone before, ceaselessly claiming significance for one’s experience and actions.”<sup>86</sup> Through the form of autobiography the “persona of the rhetor emerges not just as an instrument of persuasion but also as something constituted within the rhetorical medium,”<sup>87</sup> so as Wayland tells his story, his subject position as a prophet is constituted line by line. This provides readers a model for action. It offers a testimonial proof that socialism can co-exist with material success, and it provides a hero for the readers, a socialist of renown to rally around, to create loyalty, and to foster the pre-conditions for a public motivated toward action on his behalf. The continued success of Wayland’s tale depended upon the loyalty of his readers.

Wayland’s “personal allusion” traces a small portion of his life from his socialist conversion to his founding of the *Appeal*, roughly covering about six years, 1891-1897. In Wayland’s narrative, he recalls his conversion to socialism and his path to editing a new, struggling paper in Kansas. Consistent with his vernacular persona, Wayland’s narrative does not reveal a grand conversion story or a dramatic prophetic calling. Eugene Debs, perhaps the most influential socialist of Wayland’s lifetime, had a storied conversion to socialist ideology while confined to a prison cell in 1894. Debs’ effective ethos was founded upon “ideas of suffering and

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<sup>85</sup>Wayland, *Leaves of Life*.

<sup>86</sup>White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning*, 276-7.

<sup>87</sup>Michael C. Leff and Ebony A. Utley, "Instrumental and Constitutive Rhetoric in Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter from Birmingham Jail,'" *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 1 (2004): 37.

sacrifice,”<sup>88</sup> and his imprisonment added a dramatic power to his conversion story. Likewise, David Bailey uses George W. Bush as an example of the sort of revisionism typically found in conversion accounts, as mundane narratives are spiced up to fit particular patterns or expectations, in Bush’s case the Pauline Damascus Road conversion account.<sup>89</sup> An exciting conversion story can be an important rhetorical resource.

Conversely, Wayland’s conversion story had virtually no excitement; it was packaged with no frills. Wayland described himself as an unlikely convert made through the quiet process of reading and thinking. William Bradfield, a local English cobbler in Pueblo, Colorado, offered Wayland a pamphlet, one which he accepted with “reluctant affirmative” answer, but he had no real intention “to waste time in reading it!”<sup>90</sup> Still, after a few days, Wayland perused the pamphlet and found it both useful and interesting. Returning to Bradfield’s shop, Wayland, who admittedly “had never read a serious volume in my life—few of any kind, in fact,” listened intently as the cobbler recited several powerful socialist arguments. He reflected, “I had taken my first lesson in socialism, which was to change my whole life, financially, socially, morally.”<sup>91</sup> Here, Wayland cites the holistic power of his mundane conversion to socialism. Such a decision does not simply affect one’s ideology; it changes one’s entire life. Wayland’s first lesson and conversion features no bells and whistles, no Debsian sacrifice and suffering, but to the contrary, it came from reading a pamphlet given to him by a cobbler. One must remember that despite the

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<sup>88</sup>James Darsey, "The Legend of Eugene Debs: Prophetic *Ethos* as Radical Argument," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74, no. 4 (1988): 441.

<sup>89</sup>David C. Bailey, "Enacting Transformation: George W. Bush and the Pauline Conversion Narrative in *A Charge to Keep*," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 11, no. 2 (2008): 215-42.

<sup>90</sup>Wayland, “Personal Allusion,” 1.

<sup>91</sup>Wayland, “Personal Allusion,” 1.

rhetorical power of a Pauline-styled conversion account, the conversion experiences of most disciples were not accompanied by a divine voice and a provocative story of great intrigue. Conversions frequently take time; they involve many small incidents. The great majority of socialists would respect and revere Debs' calling, but they could not identify with it, as they could with Wayland's less flashy account. Most workers do not join the cause due to cataclysmic events, but as James Green illustrated, most *Appeal* subscribers came to socialism through reading.<sup>92</sup> If the *Appeal* were to succeed, it would depend on the production of quality reading material filled with solid socio-economic arguments in the form of plain old ordinary pamphlets. More than that, it required people like William Bradfield, ones willing to hand out materials and to have important conversations. If such a simple method worked on Wayland, it could work for others, too.

After reading more material and speaking further with Bradford, Wayland dove into the socialist cause, buying thousands of books and printing up "circulars by the tens of thousand" to distribute personally.<sup>93</sup> Wayland did as he asked his foot soldiers to do. Grassroots socialism required not only reading material but also a multitude of willing hands to cast it about. To this end, Wayland "joined the people's party movement" and "tendered [his] services gratis to a labor paper. As a result of his hard-fought service, the people's party in Pueblo received hundreds more votes than expected "to the astonishment of the politicians." Furthermore, the paper changed its name per Wayland's advice, and "from a few hundred, mostly delinquent

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<sup>92</sup>James R. Green, "The 'Salesman-Soldiers' of the '*Appeal* Army': A Profile of the Rank-and-File Socialist Agitators," in *Socialism and the Cities*, ed. Bruce M. Stave, Interdisciplinary Urban Series (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1975), 34.

<sup>93</sup>Wayland, "Personal Allusion," 1.

subscribers, the list swelled to about 4000.”<sup>94</sup> Wayland’s narrative indicated that the growth of socialism was practically effortless; its ascendance was bound to happen. The harvest was plentiful even if the laborers were few, so if only *Appeal* readers would emulate Wayland by putting time and energy into their local socialist movements, the growth should be sudden and unstoppable.

Moreover, Wayland’s narrative revealed that he prospered financially while a socialist. He told the story of how he predicted the panic of 1893 by studying “the political situation of the country” and by deciding to unload his portfolio of property at just the right time. In some ways, his socialism allowed for his prosperity, since he learned to consider economics through socialist readings. As the economic panic began to churn, Wayland was purportedly “about \$100,000 in debt,” with only a small amount of cash on hand. After “hustling” and giving the greedy capitalists “their own medicine,” Wayland was debt free with a “few thousand” in cash to begin a new paper in the *Coming Nation* in his home state, Indiana. Reasonably expecting to lose money on the endeavor, Wayland profited over 25,000 dollars from the paper in a short period, rapidly accumulating a “surplus.” In short, everything Wayland touched seemed to turn to gold. Socialist newspapers rarely produced a profit, but Wayland grew every subscriber list he managed. Through autobiographical reflection, Wayland proffers a particular representation of himself, an image concerned with personal character. Although Wayland made money easily, his effort was never about money alone. He wrote, “What to do with this money was the problem. I could not use it for my own benefit, had I felt so disposed, as I had not started this paper to make

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<sup>94</sup>Wayland, “Personal Allusion,” 1.

money, and had stated so repeatedly.”<sup>95</sup> Despite his superhuman ability to raise money as a socialist in a capitalist society, he remained dogmatically committed to cooperative principles.

In fact, he was so committed that he invested heavily in the Ruskin Colony, putting to work the Bellamite optimism that undergirded his entire life story. Socialism led to personal utopia for Wayland; his life got increasingly better as a socialist, as Bellamy had claimed. There was no reason to suggest his commune would not succeed in creating heaven on earth, but with little explanation, Wayland stated “In a short time I discovered I had made a mistake, and I left the colony in July, 1895, and went to Kansas City and established the APPEAL TO REASON.”<sup>96</sup>

Fresh off a failure, Wayland introduces and contextualized the present moment. This man, seemingly incapable of failure, stood on the precipice of abject defeat. He reported that the circulation of the *Appeal* had surged to 20,000, before falling back to 14,000; he was forced to move to Girard for financial strain, his “good wife” and “five children,” depending on him.

Wayland summarized his situation:

I hope the APPEAL will receive a cordial support from reformers, but whether it does or not it will be printed unless the losses it entails be too great for the remnant of the Colorado capital referred to above. With these, perhaps egotistic and tiresome, observations, I am ready too [sic] work—to do my part with the best of my ability. Will you help spread the gospel? Will you do a little toward enabling me to get readers to talk to? I shall not fail you. Will be likewise faithful?<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Wayland, “Personal Allusion,” 1.

<sup>96</sup>Wayland, “Personal Allusion,” 1.

<sup>97</sup>Wayland, “Personal Allusion,” 1.

This passage is key to understanding the constitutive power of Wayland's self-construction, of Wayland's indelible image. Wayland's streak of luck, representative of the greater hopes of socialism, depended on the actions of his readers. Wayland promised to provide his own herculean efforts, but even so, the ending of his story remained unsettled. He must rely on his readers to provide the ending to his meandering tale. Utopia rested in their collective resolve.

Wayland provided a narrative of his own life story, a narrative with a consistently upward trajectory, accelerating since his unremarkable conversion. However, his stellar character, made manifest in his immense financial investment to create a Bellamite commune, put his trajectory in jeopardy. Wayland required a passionate readership to deliver the rightful ending to his story, to create utopia in his life and the lives of laborers everywhere. The conclusion of Wayland's story is yet unwritten in his "personal allusion." He might continue in prosperity toward utopian goals, or he might careen into bankruptcy. The power to bring a rightful conclusion lay in the hands of his readers. Again, "constitutive rhetorics leave the task of narrative closure to their constituted subjects," and they are necessarily "oriented toward action."<sup>98</sup> If they accepted his narrative and followed his model, if they read the socialist arguments in the *Appeal*, and if they volunteered their efforts to that cause, the *Appeal* readers would enact Wayland's happy ending. In short, if readers were constituted as "narratized" subjects inspired through the self-constitution of Wayland's image,<sup>99</sup> they would read and act accordingly to save the paper and the man behind it. The success of the *Appeal* rested upon the readers' ability to be like Wayland; if the readers identified with his conversion, they should emulate his post-conversion work ethic.

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<sup>98</sup>Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 143.

<sup>99</sup>Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 143.

Moreover, Wayland connects the ending of his story and the fate of the *Appeal* with socialism more broadly, so if Wayland falters, so does the socialist “gospel.”<sup>100</sup> To be faithful to the good news of Bellamy, one must be faithful to Wayland and his *Appeal*. In 1897, the socialist movement in America was in its infancy; the Socialist Party of America would not be founded until 1901. Just as Wayland and his paper stood on the precipice of failure, so did the American socialist movement. Thus, Wayland connected his story to that of the larger social movement, so faithfulness to socialism required faithfulness to Wayland’s *Appeal*. This political tradition showed so much promise, but since it was on the verge of failure, the only way to save it would be the effort of readers and laborers everywhere. Wayland’s story, then, is connected to the grander narrative of American socialist politics; he and the movement are essentially consubstantial. If Wayland continues toward success, American socialism advanced, but if not, Wayland’s failure would be representative of the problems and incoherence of a larger political and economic tradition.

### Conclusion

The faltering paper would grow to unprecedented heights, accelerating from fewer than 14,000 subscribers in 1897 to more than 100,000 in 1900.<sup>101</sup> Wayland’s constitutive strategies proved successful in creating a movement that looked to him as their “one hoss” friend and larger-than-life inspiration. In this essay, I have traced the constitutive techniques of Julius Wayland to cultivate a public, a readership in a crucial period for his paper. The *Appeal* would go on to become the most important leftist publication in American history, and its success can

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<sup>100</sup>Wayland, “Personal Allusion,” 1.

<sup>101</sup>Julius A. Wayland, “You Want Socialism? Will You Act?,” *Appeal to Reason*, June 23, 1900, 1.

be tied, almost entirely, to the techniques pioneered by Wayland during this period. Wayland constituted his audience by fostering identification through a vernacular style and persona and autobiographical narrative, and since all good constitutive rhetorics lead toward action, Wayland's readers were moved to evangelize the good socialist word through his folksy admonitions. In addition to providing important "linguistic resources" toward public constitution, Wayland's *Appeal* helped define "idioms of public life" like socialism, capitalism, or cooperation through "nuanced textual practices" described in this essay.<sup>102</sup> The *Appeal* continued growth until shortly after Wayland's death, when the decline began.<sup>103</sup> Since the paper had been constituted through Wayland's own persona and life story, it could not continue in the same way after he died. A master propagandist, Wayland's rhetoric and his vernacular self-presentation in the early *Appeal* created the pre-conditions for the most visible socialist movement in American history.

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<sup>102</sup>Jasinski, "Constitutive Framework," 78.

<sup>103</sup>Shore, *Talkin' Socialism*, 221.

#### Chapter 4: Julius Wayland's Constitution of the *Appeal* Army

The key to the editorial success of Julius Wayland can be traced to his creation of a passionate segment of the *Appeal to Reason* readership, the so-called “*Appeal* army,” a collection of subscribers who agreed to proselytize the socialist gospel by handing out a varying number of copies of the weekly *Appeal* and by harvesting new subscriptions.<sup>1</sup> These soldiers would receive several additional copies of each *Appeal* issue, leaving them in waiting rooms, dispersing them on the street, stacking them on bar stools, or passing them to non-radicalized laborers. During crises, the *Appeal* editorial staff developed a tendency to rely on the *Appeal* army to foster resolutions, applying publicity to important structures of power, including the federal government.<sup>2</sup> This group of readers, a public within Wayland's larger reading public, separated the *Appeal* from every other failed radical publication of its era, and without the *Appeal* army, the tremendous success of the *Appeal to Reason* would be unimaginable.

I argue that Wayland created his *Appeal* army through a public struggle with the Post Office near the end of 1901. At a crucial time when his subscriptions had grown quickly to around 150,000—<sup>3</sup>far below their eventual peak of 750,000—the United States' Postal Department, under the direction of Third Assistant Postmaster General Edwin C. Madden, canceled the *Appeal's* second-class mail permit. In order to save his permit and his fledgling

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<sup>1</sup>James R. Green, "The 'Salesman-Soldiers' of the '*Appeal* Army': A Profile of the Rank-and-File Socialist Agitators," in *Socialism and the Cities*, ed. Bruce M. Stave, Interdisciplinary Urban Series (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1975), 13-40.

<sup>2</sup>John Graham, "*Yours for the Revolution*": *The Appeal to Reason, 1895-1922* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 33.

<sup>3</sup>George Allan England, *The Story of the Appeal: "Unbeaten and Unbeatable"; Being the Epic of the Life and Work of the Greatest Political Newspaper in the World* (Girard: Appeal to Reason, 1914), 41.

newspaper, Wayland needed to prove his substantial claimed subscriber base within a few days; if he failed, the *Appeal* would necessarily stop production, allegedly without any further legal recourse. In response to this crisis, Wayland produced a series of pleas for paying subscribers to send in postcards affirming their subscription status, and through the course of these articles during a time of crisis, published from November 1901 to January 1902, the *Appeal* army took form for the first time. Resulting from Wayland's rhetorical mediation of the postal audit, a movement was constituted which profoundly changed the American socialist landscape.

Wayland constituted his core audience through the pages of the *Appeal* by particular hermeneutical moves. He reinterpreted Madden's postal inquiry as an attack. Redefining a potentially mundane postal audit to serve as an inventional resource, he highlighted the progress and power of the *Appeal* army. Early in the reportage of this postal event, Wayland proffered an interpretation of the audit as a panicked, aggressive attack by a frightened capitalist government. Through this reinterpretation, Wayland invited his readers to inhabit the role of foot soldiers in a righteous cause. Moreover, he explicitly and frequently connected his most passionate subscribers to the Founding Fathers, reinterpreting both historical and present identities. In short, Wayland harnessed a specific moment to generate urgent constitutive rhetoric in the formation of his crucial counterpublic, the *Appeal* army.

My argument will proceed in two primary sections. First, I outline the important relationship between utopia, constitutive rhetoric, and hermeneutics. Second, I describe and parse the post office dilemma of 1901, examining Wayland's specific constitutive rhetoric, which galvanized his readership and effectively created a functional *Appeal* army. I will further note Wayland's inventional and hermeneutical moves to redefine both his circumstances and his audience. I contend that Wayland constituted and reified a reliable socialist counterpublic—

contrasted with the dominant American capitalist public sphere—which he referred to as the *Appeal* army.

### Wayland's Constitutive Rhetoric

Constitutive rhetoric is, simply put, the art of “constituting character, community, and culture in language.”<sup>4</sup> Moreover, “it generates the conditions of possibility that can structure the identity of those to whom it is addressed,”<sup>5</sup> so through the deployment of constitutive rhetoric, a rhetor can prepare, construct, and configure an audience or empower a social movement to inhabit particular identities. The power of a rhetorical artifact is often tied to the constitutive power of identification rather than its stated arguments, and through identification “subjects, personas, situations, and problems emerge as the effects of rhetorical practices.”<sup>6</sup> As Zachary Walton noted, “Successful constitutive rhetorics form a coherent position for collective action.”<sup>7</sup> The actions that Wayland’s army performs in response to the postal department illustrate “social subjects as rhetorical effects,”<sup>8</sup> evidence that rhetoric shaped identity and spurred activity.

Audiences are forged as counterpublics, not simply through commonalities or collective agency, but through the articulation and mobilization of particular discursive spaces. Per Nancy

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<sup>4</sup>James Boyd White, *Heracles' Bow: Essays on the Rhetoric and Poetics of the Law* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), x.

<sup>5</sup>James Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001), 107.

<sup>6</sup>Ronald Walter Greene, "The Aesthetic Turn and the Rhetorical Perspective on Argumentation," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 35, no. 1 (1998).

<sup>7</sup>Zachary J. Walton, "Achieving an Anabaptist Vision: The Constitutive Rhetoric of Goshen Circle Mennonite Leaders" (Phd Diss., Southern Illinois University, 2011), 52.

<sup>8</sup>Robert Asen, "Seeking the 'Counter' in Counterpublics," *Communication Theory* 10, no. 4 (2000): 440.

Fraser counterpublics are “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs.”<sup>9</sup> Carolyn Miller further suggests, “rather than seeing community as an entity external to rhetoric, I want to see it as internal, as constructed...fundamentally heterogeneous and contentious.”<sup>10</sup> The *Appeal* constructed identity and community, producing social action through an emerging constituting genre: the *Appeal* army. Through constitutive rhetorics, rhetors aim “to introduce a reality rather than report on a meaningful one,”<sup>11</sup> so in the act of relating arguments and essays, Wayland constructed the very culture necessary to affect change, enacting the pre-conditions for sustained activism.

Walton described the process by which twentieth-century Mennonite rhetors juxtaposed the faithful “Anabaptist” subjects in contrast to “the world,” which acted as a devil term.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, Wayland contrasted his paper and readership with the “plutocracy” as the ultimate negative; the plutocracy manifested itself through a federal government corrupted by capitalism, a government hoping to squash any socialist movement, no matter how peaceful and righteous. Still, even in opposing the federal government, Wayland did not suggest his readers were somehow un-American or disloyal to democratic principles. Instead, he claimed that his readers emerged from an important lineage of radicalism and activism in America, extending back to the

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<sup>9</sup>Nancy Fraser, "Habermas and the Public Sphere," in *Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought* ed. Craig J. Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 123.

<sup>10</sup>Carolyn R. Miller, "The Cultural Basis of Genre," in *Genre and the New Rhetoric*, ed. Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway, *Critical Perspectives on Literacy and Education* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1994), 74.

<sup>11</sup>Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 33.

<sup>12</sup>Walton, "Achieving an Anabaptist Vision," 55.

Founding Fathers themselves. Janice Hume captures this technique in the title of her essay that explores the *Appeal*'s use of public memory: "Lincoln was a 'Red' and Washington a Bolshevik."<sup>13</sup> As such, Wayland constituted his audience as a fighting force, by placing them in opposition to a corrupt and tyrannical postal department and the federal government. In the struggle against this capitalist force, each *Appeal* foot soldier became a hero of true democratic principles.

Notably, utopian rhetoric has the power to constitute an audience in meaningful ways, as rhetors construct visions of the new world their movements could bring to fruition. This constitutive function of utopia asks audiences to consider the implications of their "envisioned new constitutional status," a reality incipient in the present and swelling into the future.<sup>14</sup> As such, constitutive utopian rhetoric necessarily involves hermeneutics and redefinition, as material circumstances must be interpreted in light of the interior logic of a utopia to come. In other words, rhetoric aiming toward societal betterment or perfection must ask auditors to interpret present circumstances through a new future-oriented identity. Kirt Wilson provides an example of the interplay between constitutive rhetoric and hermeneutics in Martin Luther King's symbolic action during the Montgomery Bus Boycott.<sup>15</sup> Wilson suggests, "Regardless of one's profession, people engage in simultaneous hermeneutic and rhetorical behavior, and all symbolic exchanges are interpretative and persuasive efforts that shape a context comprised of interrelated,

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<sup>13</sup>Janice Hume, "Lincoln Was 'Red' and Washington Was a Bolshevik: Public Memory as Persuader in the Appeal to Reason," *Journalism History* 28, no. 4 (2003): 172-81.

<sup>14</sup>Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73, no. 2 (1987): 135.

<sup>15</sup>Kirt H. Wilson, "Interpreting the Discursive Field of the Montgomery Bus Boycott: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Holt Street Address," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 2 (2005).

though temporally discrete, symbolic exchanges.”<sup>16</sup> The rhetor seeking to constitute an audience and motivate them toward action must provide provocative interpretations of the “discursive field” surrounding his/her audience. By providing novel ways of understanding and relating to a discursive field, mediated through “local history, folklore, private conversations, and public rhetoric,” the rhetor can “unify” a community, “constrain the mode of its protest,” and rearticulate elements of that discursive field to sketch the utopian future brought on by their “oratorical practice.”<sup>17</sup> Rhetors who successfully interpret discursive fields have thereby “galvanized the audience, created unity amidst discord, and established the parameters” for future rhetorical productions.<sup>18</sup> A constitutive utopian vision, acting as an invitation to work toward a perfected society, requires a fresh understanding of any particular historical moment and its rhetorical context, its discursive field.

Wayland’s interpretive choices can be understood as powerful redefinitions. A definition is “a key step in the presentation of argument,” yet definitions are “not claims supported by reasons and intended to justify adherence by critical listeners. Instead they are simply proclaimed as if they were indisputable facts.”<sup>19</sup> This perspective regarding definition proceeds from the assumption that “characterizations of social reality are not ‘given’; they are chosen from among multiple possibilities and hence always could have been otherwise. Whatever characterization

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<sup>16</sup>Wilson, “Interpreting the Discursive Field,” 306.

<sup>17</sup>Wilson, “Interpreting the Discursive Field,” 301.

<sup>18</sup>Wilson, “Interpreting the Discursive Field,” 305.

<sup>19</sup>David Zarefsky, “Definitions,” in *Argument in a Time of Change: Definitions, Frameworks, and Critiques*, ed. James F. Klumpp (Annandale, VA: National Communication Association, 1997), 5.

prevails will depend on choices made by political actors.”<sup>20</sup> The most important definitions negotiated by such actors concern not only terms but also situations or frames of reference, and the choice of a definition or perspective is “a central aspect of rhetorical invention” with important consequences for rhetorical practice, like the ability to capture an audience’s attention or to emphasize certain elements in a rhetorical situation.<sup>21</sup> Zarefsky notes four means of providing definitions: association (linking two situations or terms), dissociation (distinguishing between two commonly connected situations or terms), condensation symbols (using polysemous ambiguity to unify factions), and frame shifting (suggesting a different perspective from which to view a circumstance).<sup>22</sup> By offering a redefinition for a situation, a rhetor can transform a mundane event into an important turning point; molehills rhetorically become mountains. The most ordinary words or terms “can be subtly bent or shaded” to create powerful “new meanings.”<sup>23</sup> In so doing, audiences are called to action in new ways. Thus, the definition of situations is clearly “not neutral”<sup>24</sup> or an “undisputed concept,”<sup>25</sup> and definitions and descriptions are always fundamentally tied to “our needs and interests.”<sup>26</sup> A chosen definition leads to a unique series of actions, so despite lacking a typical claim-and-support structure, a

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<sup>20</sup>David Zarefsky, "Presidential Rhetoric and the Power of Definition," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (2004): 611.

<sup>21</sup>Zarefsky, "Definitions," 5.

<sup>22</sup>Zarefsky, "Presidential Rhetoric," 612-3.

<sup>23</sup>Arlene L. Swartzman, "The Geography of Hope: Definition, Discourse, and the Imaginary in Chicago's Parks: 1889-1909" (PhD Diss., Northwestern University, 2006), 60.

<sup>24</sup>Zarefsky, "Definitions," 5.

<sup>25</sup>Kathryn M. Olson, "The Controversy over President Reagan's Visit to Bitburg: Strategies of Definition and Redefinition," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75, no. 2 (1989): 131.

<sup>26</sup>Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), xxvi.

definition has power to direct future arguments, discourses, and activities in tremendous ways. As such, definitions “have a deliberative, rhetorical aspect which suggests what the future should be and how the present does or does not orient us toward that future.”<sup>27</sup> By its very nature, utopian rhetoric is a hermeneutical endeavor to redefine the present order and reorient auditors toward particular actions, ones implicit in and coherent with mythic redefinitions.

This technique is especially well suited to the practice of parrhesia or frank speech, a hallmark of prophetic rhetoric.<sup>28</sup> The prophet provides a new fundamental way of seeing a situation from the vantage point of the oppressed; he or she offers a novel frame of reference. As such, the parrhesiastes, the truth-telling prophet, always must acknowledge the contingency of interpretations, that the dominant or oppressive perspective reigns supreme due to the rhetorical power of its advocates and their deceptions.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the prophetic perspective, though located at the margins, is offered as truth, the best interpretation of current affairs. The prophet always strives to share “the real situation,” a revelation of that which has been obscured by deceptive rhetors.<sup>30</sup> Prophetic rhetoric, then, is principally concerned with frame shifting, with redefining situations through the perspective of marginalized populations, and thus, prophetic rhetoric functions as societal critique that redefines the past, present, and future in light of sacred communal principles.

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<sup>27</sup>Swartzman, "Geography of Hope," 63.

<sup>28</sup>Raymie E. McKerrow, "Foucault's Relationship to Rhetoric," *The Review of Communication* 11, no. 4 (2011): 260.

<sup>29</sup>Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 17.

<sup>30</sup>Andre E. Johnson, "The Prophetic Persona of James Cone and the Rhetorical Theology of Black Theology," *Black Theology* 8, no. 3 (2010): 276.

In this regard, Julius Wayland invited his readers to reinterpret and redefine federal actions as tyrannical, ultimately creating a new collective identity. As editor, Wayland mobilized the crisis as an exigence and an inventional resource to reposition his readers as an army in the midst of war. Charland suggested that new constitutive rhetorics emerge at moments of narrative crisis, especially when an alien other opposes a narratized identity.<sup>31</sup> I suggest that virtually all of the *Appeal*'s eventual success depended upon Wayland's mobilization of this very crisis as an oppositional narrative to constitute identity. In what follows, I trace Wayland's key constitutive and interpretive moves relating to the discursive field at one important historical moment.

#### The Post Office and the *Appeal* Army

Wayland's paper depended on a unique brand of guerrilla evangelism. Readers would pay for several subscriptions at discounted rates, ranging from a few to hundreds of copies, and they would present friends, neighbors, and acquaintances with weekly issues. This practice provided an external representation of personal ideologies, a material expression of radical convictions, and by distributing papers, isolated readers participated in a concerted effort to actively proselytize capitalists. The *Appeal*'s rapid growth would have been impossible without the creation of a dependable *Appeal* army. Wayland had previously grown readerships into the tens of thousands, but never before had he or anyone else ever moved so many people to spread the good socialist word. This strategy reflected the tremendous optimism regarding the power of a print culture of dissent to change individual minds and society at large. "The radicalization of literacy engendered the creation of cultural arenas that provided new possibilities for reconstructing American society from the bottom up," making "questions of class a matter of

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<sup>31</sup>Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 140.

national debate as hitherto unknown in American history.”<sup>32</sup> Socialists generally viewed printed arguments as “mental dynamite” to free sincere laborers from the shackles of capitalist misconceptions.<sup>33</sup> The key was to distribute these printed arguments widely, hence the importance of the *Appeal* and its army.

As early as 1897, Wayland began to recognize readers who distributed his paper with an occasional column called, “Patriots! Men and Women who are Stirred by the Sufferings of Humanity.”<sup>34</sup> This group of patriots was renamed the “*Appeal* Army” in 1899 and was given a regular column, including a roll of honor for “new recruits.”<sup>35</sup> Through these columns and the publication of letters from the *Appeal* army, Wayland created an incipient sense of community among the readers of the *Appeal*. A member of the “army” could be part of a vast group fighting to create a new world. Through the lens of military combat, sincere, conscientious, activist readers—reportedly numbering about five thousand by the summer of 1900—were transformed from invisible working stiffs to combatants.<sup>36</sup> They were soldiers marching to war in a cosmic, righteous cause. As Paul Buhle noted, “The most dramatic event for *The Appeal* in [its early] years was the formation of a group of ‘Patriots,’ later renamed simply the ‘*Appeal* Army,’ to

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<sup>32</sup>Jason D. Martinek, *Socialism and Print Culture in America, 1897-1920*, *The History of the Book* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1-2.

<sup>33</sup>George R. Kirkpatrick, *Mental Dynamite or Little Lessons to Learn* (New York: Kirkpatrick, 1906), 1.

<sup>34</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "Patriots! Men and Women Who Are Stirred by the Suffering of Humanity," *Appeal to Reason*, September 4, 1897, 4.

<sup>35</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "Appeal Army," *Appeal to Reason*, May 20, 1899, 3.

<sup>36</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, June 16 1900, 1.

distribute and solicit subscriptions for the periodical in an organized fashion.”<sup>37</sup> George Milburn described the *Appeal* army in glowing terms:

Those fanatic myrmidons, pitted against the fiends of Hell, would have made short work of them, beyond a doubt. Eighty thousand strong, they went charging about the countryside, taking subscriptions, selling credit cards to be exchanged for Socialist literature, circulating petitions, writing letters of protest, raising defense funds, terrifying the village *bourgeoisie* with their howls. “With men of such mettle,” said the *Appeal*, “what wonder the Plutocracy gnashes against us in vain!”<sup>38</sup>

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of this vociferous group of readers to the growth of the *Appeal* or the success of American socialist politics.

Concordantly, Wayland described his army as “the hungriest set of subscription sharks that were ever turned loose on a helpless nation,” and he lauded a single *Appeal* soldier in Indiana who converted half his town to socialism, empowering his audience with the exhortation, “You can do the same in your town if you get the ball rolling.”<sup>39</sup> He even went so far as to say: “The *Appeal* has made a formal declaration of war against the capitalists.”<sup>40</sup> Still, Wayland’s army was small and primarily on paper in 1901, a little group of passionate individuals, for the most part, unorganized. However, in response to the paper’s first major crisis, the *Appeal* army actualized and multiplied. Rallying against a perceived attack from the federal government, the

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<sup>37</sup>Paul M. Buhle, “The *Appeal* to Reason,” in *The American Radical Press, 1880-1960*, ed. Joseph R. Conlin (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), 53.

<sup>38</sup>George Milburn, “The *Appeal* to Reason,” *The American Mercury* 23, no. 91 (1931): 367.

<sup>39</sup>Julius A. Wayland, “*Appeal* Army,” *Appeal to Reason* December 23, 1899, 4.

<sup>40</sup>Julius A. Wayland, “Among the Workers,” *Appeal to Reason*, March 17, 1900, 4.

constitutive rhetoric principally employed by Wayland in this period of trial effectively galvanized isolated soldiers into a collective whole, an effective army of radical thinkers turned political actors. Wayland's frenzied actualized army would sustain the *Appeal* for over a decade, making possible its climb to the top of the American newspaper landscape. The army "rapidly came to be the heart of *The Appeal*, not only in matters of circulation and finance, but politically and spiritually, as well."<sup>41</sup> In other words, the *Appeal*'s rhetoric constituted or called its readership to attention as an "army" in a war against the powers of capitalism, and in turn, that "party-within-a party" reinforced the ideals of the paper, its readership, and, as a result, the Socialist Party of America.<sup>42</sup> Charland suggested effective and novel constitutive rhetorics emerge "as a means to collectivization, usually in the face of a threat."<sup>43</sup> Wayland needed a threat to motivate his army, to move his fighting force off the pages of his paper and into the material realm. In the postal department audit, a threat presented itself as the basis for his most effective constitutive rhetorical production. In order to be a faithful socialist, readers were heeded to respond in accordance with the interior logic of the melodramatic oppositional narrative with appropriate vitriol and urgency.<sup>44</sup>

Wayland announced the crisis as follows on November 16, 1901, "The [postal] department has decided in its infinite wisdom that the second-class entry, by which the *Appeal* is circulated through the mails at pound rates—the same as all republican and democratic papers—

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<sup>41</sup>Buhle, "Appeal to Reason," 54.

<sup>42</sup>Buhle, "Appeal to Reason," 54.

<sup>43</sup>Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," in *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, ed. Thomas O. Sloane (New York: Oxford University, 2001), 616.

<sup>44</sup>Walton, "Achieving an Anabaptist Vision," 147.

SHOULD BE CANCELED! From this decision, there is no appeal.”<sup>45</sup> Edwin C. Madden, the third assistant postmaster general of the United States, ordered the local Girard postmaster to prohibit the *Appeal* from using second-class services, relegating the paper to third class mail. This decision would make shipment of the *Appeal* exponentially more expensive, ultimately cost prohibitive.<sup>46</sup> If Madden succeeded, Wayland would likely have to close the *Appeal*, move to Canada, or drastically change its model of production.<sup>47</sup>

Madden’s grievance against the *Appeal* concerned its “army,” those who distributed copies of the newspaper to other non-subscriber individuals. Madden argued that the *Appeal* did not qualify for the significantly reduced prices of second class mail, accusing Wayland of sending far too many bundles of papers to “chance subscribers.”<sup>48</sup> “In other words, the grounds on which the department would cancel the *Appeal*’s entry as second class mail matter is that its list is not a paid one, but is being distributed free.”<sup>49</sup> Wayland rightly pointed out that every issue

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<sup>45</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "Mr. Madden Vs. Appeal Army," *Appeal to Reason*, November 16, 1901, 1.

<sup>46</sup>Second-class mail cost one cent per pound, while third-class mail cost eight cents per pound. Additionally, third-class mail had to be paid by the piece, not in bulk, levying more fees. As such, third-class mail was minimally eight times more expensive than second-class postage. Richard B. Kielbowicz, *A History of Mail Classification and Its Underlying Policies and Purposes* (Seattle: Washington State University, 1995), 47.

<sup>47</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 16 1901, 1. According to Wayland, in 1901, he spent approximately one hundred dollars a week on postage, and if second-class postage was denied, it would cost an estimated 1500 weekly. Wayland claimed he could get the same service, if he moved to Canada, for fifty dollars weekly.

<sup>48</sup>Janice Jacqueline Miller, "The Appeal to Reason: A Socialist Challenge to Progressivism" (Master's Thesis, Washington State University, 1981), 29.

<sup>49</sup>Wayland, "Mr. Madden Vs. Appeal Army," 1.

of the *Appeal* contained the following front page warning, “The Appeal is NEVER sent on credit; if you receive it, it is paid for. Nobody owes a cent on subscriptions.”<sup>50</sup>

Wayland constituted the *Appeal* army out of this crisis in two important ways. First, he explicitly constructed Madden’s directive as a “fight” or as a malicious attack on American socialism by the Federal government, and he redefined the postal audit as an inventional resource, part of an overarching, long-lasting narrative of government persecution. Wayland’s hermeneutical strategy to interpret this demonstrably benign event as part of waged war called his readership to attention and action in an unprecedented. Second, capitalizing on the *Appeal* army’s response to the postal audit as attack, Wayland presented his audience with identity forming rhetoric, highlighting their revolutionary importance and transforming them into an army of uniquely American patriots fighting an oppressive regime. He even reinterpreted history, arguing the Founding Fathers stood on the side of the *Appeal* army.

#### *Routine Postal Audit or Vicious Capitalist Attack?*

Without question, Wayland framed the postal classification issue as an adversarial attack by capitalism represented by the United States Federal Government. For Wayland and his army, this audit was no routine clerical decision; rather, the postal classification crisis was just that, a crisis. It was a melodramatic battle between socialism and capitalism, good and evil, and the stakes were grave. Conversely, there is ample evidence to suggest this particular postal classification debacle had little or nothing to do with socialism, that the *Appeal* was audited in accordance with recent federal postal policy decisions. Richard Kielbowicz provides a thorough history of postal classification, noting “After 1879, postal administrators began developing a

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<sup>50</sup>Wayland, "Mr. Madden Vs. Appeal Army," 1.

number of tests and rules to shore up the wall Congress had built between the highly preferential second class and the more expensive third. Lawmakers took note of the administrators' efforts and, around 1900, began considering plans to revise second-class rates and terms of eligibility."<sup>51</sup> Thus, the essential charges by the postal service to the *Appeal* were based in policy decisions enacted as early as 1879, before the *Appeal* existed and even before Wayland had become a socialist.

According to Kielbowicz, Edwin Madden was the "principal figure behind stricter application of mail classification standards," and "between 1901 and 1919, Madden and his successors expanded the paid subscriber rule, which became the linchpin in determining whether mail fit in the second or third class."<sup>52</sup> Chase Benjamin published an interview with Madden in 1905 in *Printers' Ink*, a periodical devoted to publishing and print advertisements. Benjamin described Madden as a "reformer" best known for "the work that he has done in connection with the enforcement of the laws affecting of second-class matter."<sup>53</sup> Although Madden was undeniably unpopular among printers, editors, and advertisers in general, his unpopularity was not due to his ideological biases, but instead, to his insistence for "exact phraseology" and his lack of respect for "old-established precedents that do not conform to what he believes is right."<sup>54</sup> Ironically, as reformers, Wayland and Madden shared much in common in that regard. In addition, however, Benjamin, no fan of Madden himself, noted that many of Madden's image

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<sup>51</sup>Kielbowicz, *History of Mail Classification*, 46.

<sup>52</sup>Kielbowicz, *History of Mail Classification*, 49-50.

<sup>53</sup>Chase L. Benjamin, "Post Office Reform," *Printers' Ink* 52, no. 1 (1905): 10-9.

<sup>54</sup>Benjamin, "Post Office Reform," 11-12.

problems might dissipate if “he was more easy-going—more of a ‘good fellow.’”<sup>55</sup> Nowhere in Benjamin’s profile does he insinuate that Madden had been unjustly attacking radical publications during his then six-year crusade to reform second-class mail matter. Still, Madden’s unpopularity engendered and enabled doubts about the true reasons behind his postal enforcements, providing Wayland the ambiguity necessary to proffer a successful redefinition of Madden’s audit on his paper.<sup>56</sup>

Madden approached Wayland’s *Appeal* in 1901 likely not as a conspiratorial attack on socialism writ large, but as a means to enact stricter postal regulations across the broad landscape of American periodicals. Wayland’s paper was targeted because it was sizeable and it used suspicious, unusual tactics for growth. Actually, Madden had been a longtime member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen,<sup>57</sup> a union founded and led by a young Eugene Debs, so presumably, Madden was somewhat sympathetic to the plight of the working class in America, potentially explaining his initial familiarity with the *Appeal*. Since Madden audited the *Appeal* right at the beginning of his long-term crusade to enforce postal classifications, readers might legitimately decide the *Appeal* was uniquely targeted, but over the next couple decades, hundreds of periodicals received similar audits from Madden and his office. Still, even during Madden’s audit of the *Appeal*, the local Girard paper noted that the scope of Madden’s enforcement suggested he was not ideologically motivated.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, one could reasonably conclude, as I

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<sup>55</sup>Benjamin, “Post Office Reform,” 10-11.

<sup>56</sup>Olson, “Reagan's Visit to Bitburg,” 132.

<sup>57</sup>Harry L. Sparrow, “Edwin Charles Madden: Promoted from a Subordinate Position in the Detroit Post Office to an Office in Which He Acts as Monitor of Periodicals,” *Successful American* 5, no. 6 (1902): 356.

<sup>58</sup>*The Girard Press*, January 9, 1902, 4.

have, that Madden's actions against the *Appeal* were motivated, not by government conspiracy or capitalist zealotry, but by mundane post-office politics, the result of postal policy changes, tightened regulations, and intentional enforcement.

Madden ambiguously charged Wayland to present "evidence showing why the certificate of entry as second class matter should not be canceled."<sup>59</sup> He had until November 29, less than one month to collect the necessary evidence. In response, Wayland announced his plan of action: "I am going to ask every reader of the Appeal who considers himself a subscriber...to write on a postal card the fact that you are a subscriber to the Appeal to Reason; sign your name and give your address and mail it to J.A. Wayland, Girard Kan." With this evidence, "there can be no question in the mind of the most exacting postal official as to the genuineness of the Appeal's circulation. These postal cards...ought beyond any reasonable doubt satisfy Mr. Madden."<sup>60</sup> He challenged his readers to respond by November 20, just four days after the issue date of his plea; Wayland set a lofty goal of 100,000 post cards. In just one week, the *Appeal's* readership sent in over 64,000 names through post cards, letters, and telegrams.<sup>61</sup> These lists of names are critical to the evaluation of Wayland's constitutive rhetoric, since "constitutive rhetorics...have power because they are oriented towards action." Further, "Ideology is material because subjects enact their ideology and reconstitute their material world in its image."<sup>62</sup> Wayland's army *acted*; they actually fought. Since Madden's audit might be perceived as a hindrance to the enactment of

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<sup>59</sup>Wayland, "Mr. Madden Vs. Appeal Army," 1.

<sup>60</sup>Wayland, "Mr. Madden Vs. Appeal Army," 1.

<sup>61</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "Signatures Received," *Appeal to Reason*, November 23 1901, 1. Purportedly this figure does not include the "Pacific and Atlantic coast states," which needed more time to arrive.

<sup>62</sup>Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 143.

utopia, engaged readers responded with urgency. The *Appeal* army provided ample evidence with little time to spare. Rightly, Wayland acknowledged he had no reason to fear, since “the Appeal Army DOES things.”<sup>63</sup> Ghent argued, despite its faults, the *Appeal* “inspires the army to action. It keeps the zeal and determination of its readers always in high tension.”<sup>64</sup> Wayland’s utopian vision coupled with the “desires” of his readership allowed for a surplus of both zeal and determination, rendering most of Wayland’s pleas successful.<sup>65</sup> The action of the *Appeal* army validated their coherence and, in part, enacted their constitution.

In his initial reportage of the postal inquiry, Wayland seemed quite aware of the mundane nature of this audit, for he sympathetically digresses, “Mr. Madden...is suspicious (they necessarily have to be under the present arrangement, and really they are not to be blamed for it.)”<sup>66</sup> Whereas, originally, Wayland implied the subscriber list audit was a necessary evil, his interpretation of the controversy shifted as the post cards flooded his office. By the next issue’s publication, he had begun redefining the audit, hermeneutically reconfiguring the discursive field surrounding his newspaper and its relationship to federal regulations. In that edition, Wayland castigated Madden and the government for their efforts to “shut out of the mails the socialist press of this country.”<sup>67</sup> Throughout the classification affair, Wayland transformed this mundane postal audit into a unique aggressive attack by the federal government, piling blame upon

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<sup>63</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 30, 1901, 1.

<sup>64</sup>W. J. Ghent, "The 'Appeal' and Its Influence," *The Survey: A Journal of Constructive Philanthropy* 26, no. 1 (1911): 28.

<sup>65</sup>James Darsey, "Utopia and Desire," in *Argumentation and Values: Proceedings of the Ninth SCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation*, ed. Sally A. Jackson (Annandale: Speech Communication Association, 1995), 28.

<sup>66</sup>Wayland, "Mr. Madden Vs. Appeal Army," 1.

<sup>67</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 23, 1901, 1.

Madden and the system he represented. He redefined the audit by shifting its frame and by associating his readers' response with the trappings of war.<sup>68</sup> For his readership, Wayland mediated a supremely uninteresting topic, postal classification, into a provocative moment of crisis, a turning point of unification and action. He wrote, "If ever there was a time when every Socialist should be up and doing, that time is now."<sup>69</sup>

According to Wayland, the *Appeal* readers "are determined that no obstacle shall be allowed to stand in the way of the progress of the Socialist movement—and that any attempt to retard the growth of Socialist sentiment by suppressing its papers and publications" will be met with stiff resistance and "redoubled" efforts.<sup>70</sup> Thus, Wayland reinterpreted the federal postal audit as a crisis. Over the next few weeks, Wayland continued to reinterpret the postal controversy, heightening both the *Appeal* army's achievement and Madden's malevolence. He dramatically maintained, "Since the discovery of the art of printing, cold type has never been called upon to tell a more dastardly outrage against a free people and a free press."<sup>71</sup> He referred to the *Appeal* army's gathering of "indisputable evidence" as "the greatest feat ever witnessed by the world."<sup>72</sup>

This use of clearly hyperbolic language to manufacture urgency served an important constitutive function.<sup>73</sup> Michael Leff noted that hyperbole often facilitates the symbolic

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<sup>68</sup>Zarefsky, "Presidential Rhetoric," 613.

<sup>69</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "Appeal Army," *Appeal to Reason*, November 23, 1901, 3.

<sup>70</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "A Race against Time," *Appeal to Reason*, November 23, 1901, 1.

<sup>71</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, December 14, 1901, 1.

<sup>72</sup>Wayland, "A Race against Time," 1.

<sup>73</sup>Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric*, 505.

transformation of various elements in a discursive field. For example, Cicero exaggerated the evil of Catiline to create an appropriate rhetorical foil, an adversary whose defeat would have far grander consequences. Leff suggests, “The use of exaggeration is necessary because the real Catiline is neither powerful enough or dangerous enough to serve as a victim in this sacrificial drama.” Further, exaggeration can “perform the useful function of diverting attention from the poverty of...evidence.”<sup>74</sup> In Wayland’s case, by exaggerating the attack of the post-office, he transforms that institution—a lesser entity of the federal government—into a primary mode of suppressing civil liberties and as an agent of covert capitalist warfare, despite lacking the clear evidence to make such claims. Then, if or when Wayland’s army defeated the postal service so constructed, it would be a tremendous accomplishment; they would be defeating the full power of the capitalist State, an appropriately powerful “alien force.”<sup>75</sup> Through these exaggerations, Wayland’s evidence of proper second-class mail procedure mattered less than the potential harm done by the postmaster’s office. Further, by exaggerating the implications of the audit and the response of his readers, Wayland allowed *Appeal* Army members to develop a grander sense of their power to affect change.

Indisputably, Wayland positioned the postal audit as an adversarial, agonistic attack of “Mr. Madden vs. APPEAL ARMY,” a struggle later remembered as the *Appeal*’s “first big fight.”<sup>76</sup> This was a battle that the army must and “will win!”<sup>77</sup> In letters, published in the

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<sup>74</sup>Michael C. Leff, “Redemptive Identification: Cicero’s Catilinarian Orations,” in *Critical Questions: Invention, Creativity, and the Criticism of Discourse and Media*, ed. William L. Nothstine, Carole Blair, and Gary A. Copeland (New York: St. Martin’s, 1994), 337.

<sup>75</sup>Leff, “Redemptive Identification,” 330.

<sup>76</sup>England, *The Story of the Appeal*, 41.

<sup>77</sup>Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, December 14, 1901, 1.

*Appeal*, Madden positioned the audit as a process for the simple verification of postal classification credentials, but near the beginning of his reportage, Wayland referred to the audit as a “fight.”<sup>78</sup> The government had taken notice of the *Appeal*’s proudly subversive message, and in November 1901, they were attacking the progression of socialism by attacking the *Appeal*. Wayland raised the stakes, so an audit was no longer a routine procedure, but an insidious plot, a concerted attack. Wayland expressed gratitude to his army, specifically for the “feeling of security...that 100,000 or more men and women are back of [him] for a fight for the right.”<sup>79</sup> Per Wayland, the government had thrown the first punch, but the *Appeal* army was ready to finish the fight.

The *Appeal to Reason* was a small town paper; its swollen national subscriber list occasionally obfuscated this basic fact. Critics might suspect that the *Appeal*, though irksome, had more bark than bite. In other words, the *Appeal* loudly proclaimed its message, but only to an unorganized American socialist audience, so one could conclude that the *Appeal* was not a threat to the mighty capitalist system. Conversely, if Wayland could point to evidence suggesting threat from the federal government, he could justify both his cause and his paper as thorns in the side of those in power. His rhetoric in essence stated, “If the government was concerned enough to attack, little Girard’s radical paper, that paper must be on to something.” This movement and its paper were “more than a passing fad.”<sup>80</sup>

Therefore, the audit-as-attack aided the progress of the *Appeal* and on a national stage. Wayland chides, “Sad, indeed, must be the plight of capitalism when it must resort to such

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<sup>78</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 16, 1901, 4.

<sup>79</sup>Wayland, November 30, 1901, 1.

<sup>80</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 16, 1901, 1.

tactics as these.”<sup>81</sup> As he noted, “Nothing could illustrate more clearly the strength of Socialism and its widespread influence throughout this country than the efforts now being made [i.e. the audit] to head it off.”<sup>82</sup> The lasting success of Wayland’s redefinition of a minor audit into a crisis can be seen in the first book-length history of the *Appeal* originally published in 1914. As an introduction to this postal controversy, George England writes, “But, when in 1901 the circulation of the *Appeal* rose to some 150,000, and Capitalism began to feel the sting of its savage goadings, the Beast turned with a snarl.”<sup>83</sup> The *Appeal* and its mission mattered more than ever since the capitalist system showed signs of fear and desperation in its attack. This minor audit rendered as a major attack provided an important inventional and memorial resource, one that reified the identity of the *Appeal*’s readers. This victory became part of the discursive field of the *Appeal*, a memorial resource for the burgeoning movement.

### *Insignificant Workers or American Revolutionaries?*

In part, Wayland constituted and legitimized his army through frequent comparisons with America’s Founding Fathers. He lauded the understanding of the *Appeal* readership as a tenacious fighting force, an army, but much as he sought to hermeneutically redefine the postal audit as attack, he sought to redefine his *Appeal* army as a group of revolutionaries, fighting on the side of liberty. To this end, he argued:

With the signatures come expressions from men in all walks of life, which indicate that back of the Socialist movement in this country is the same spirit and determination which

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<sup>81</sup>Wayland, December 14, 1901, 1.

<sup>82</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 23, 1901, 1.

<sup>83</sup>England, *The Story of the Appeal*, 41.

made the American Revolution a success; the same spirit which imbued the patriots of the '50's to persevere until success crowned their efforts—though at times confronted by obstacles which discouraged and disheartened—calumny, violence, ostracism and the oppression of unjust laws and supreme court decisions.<sup>84</sup>

Wayland's army was redefined as a crucial piece in the inevitable evolution of American patriotism, following the Founding Fathers and the abolitionists. Immediately after the postal victory, Wayland awarded the most successful *Appeal* army members with inscribed gold watches. He suggested that these watches “will be appreciated as much by you or your children in a few years as would a gold medal presented by the Continental congress for patriotic service during the American revolution. The Appeal Army is the greatest factor in the movement in America in bringing in the Co-operative Commonwealth.” Further, the *Appeal* Army soldiers were “imbued with the spirit that shapes the destinies of the earth. They will live in history.”<sup>85</sup> Wayland provided a sense that the *Appeal* Army was filled with historically significant people, despite their status as base wage slaves. *Appeal* readers had the power to change the world. If any of the rank and file laborers doubted this interpretation, they need just look at what the army had accomplished: nothing less than the victory over the capitalist State, a new American revolution.

Repeatedly, Wayland oriented the *Appeal*'s postal dilemma as “A BLOW FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.”<sup>86</sup> Madden attempted to rebut this interpretation, claiming his

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<sup>84</sup>Wayland, "A Race against Time," 1.

<sup>85</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, March 22, 1902, 4.

<sup>86</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "Which Shall It Be?," *Appeal to Reason*, December 21 1901.

audit as a benign enforcement of postal policy,<sup>87</sup> but Wayland continued to reinterpret this enforcement as a fundamentally anti-liberty action. In fact, “If [Madden’s *Appeal* allegation] does not make your blood boil with indignation you have not inherited the liberty-loving spirit of your forefathers.”<sup>88</sup> Again, this controversy should resonate with those “who are interested not only in the *Appeal* and the cause it represents—but in the freedom of the press in this country—in the rights established by the Revolutionary fathers who gave their lives that their children might enjoy a free press and free speech.”<sup>89</sup> Years later, Fred Warren recalled that “the methods pursued by the United States postal department have been of a nature that would make the founders of this government blush with shame could they but see the ruthless trampling into the dust of the principle of free speech and free press upon which the liberty and freedom of the American people rested.”<sup>90</sup> Through Wayland, the simple postal audit was transformed into an outright war, and the simple *Appeal* faithful were reborn in the ethos of revolutionaries, with Wayland commanding the role of Washington, guiding his own fighting force toward their manifest destiny. By continually proffering similarities between the *Appeal* army and the Founding Fathers, Wayland not only constituted a collective identity among his readership, but

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<sup>87</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "'The Boomerang:' A Drama from Real Life, Act II," *Appeal to Reason*, December 14, 1901.

<sup>88</sup>Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, December 14, 1901, 1.

<sup>89</sup>Wayland, "The Boomerang," 1.

<sup>90</sup>George D. Brewer, *The Fighting Editor or Warren and the Appeal* (Girard: Brewer, 1910), 62.

he also reconceptualized the “culture’s experience of public time,”<sup>91</sup> revising history by imposing radical political convictions on the American revolutionaries of the past. Ghent isolated the genius of Wayland’s writing: “He made men see life as they had not before seen it and as they could not help seeing it thereafter.”<sup>92</sup> In other words, he reconfigured identity.

The revision of public memory is a hallmark of constitutive rhetoric; rhetors constitute auditors by repositioning them within important narratives. Describing Martin Luther King, Jr’s “Holt Street Address” and its discursive context, Wilson writes:

King’s text stipulates that Montgomery’s black community is engaged in more than just an economic strike to affect the policies of the Montgomery City Lines, Inc. The community is involved in a symbolic demonstration that enacts the ideals of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Through the ‘thick action’ of protest, they had joined the ranks of America’s founders, the abolitionists, and labor activists who when ‘trampled over by capitalistic power’ defied corporate greed.<sup>93</sup>

Essentially, Wilson argues that King participated in a tradition, traced through Wayland and his peers: the labor activists, who enacted justice through their enactment of democratic principles mirroring canonized historical figures. King connected the Civil Rights Movement to the mainstream ideals of justice by tapping into the ethos of the Founding Fathers. Similarly, Wayland connected his readers to the rhetorically heavy Founding Fathers to enhance credibility,

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<sup>91</sup>James Jasinski and Jennifer R. Mercieca, "Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics: The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and the 'Principles of '98'," in *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, ed. Shawn J. Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 333.

<sup>92</sup>Ghent, "The 'Appeal' and Its Influence," 25.

<sup>93</sup>Wilson, "Interpreting the Discursive Field," 305.

to reconfigure identity, and to “challenge established sources of cultural authority.”<sup>94</sup> In short, he “interprets the workaday world as no other paper interprets it,”<sup>95</sup> providing new ways to see federal action and new ways to see collective identity and power. Wayland’s constitutive rhetoric awakened the potentialities of the previously amorphous *Appeal* army, welcoming them into a utopian movement that “reconfigured subject position” and “imputed self-understanding” as revolutionaries in the tradition of the Founding Fathers.<sup>96</sup>

All of these important reinterpretations require a connection to utopian rhetoric. Immediately before asking his readers to continue sending cards as proof of subscription, Wayland reminded his readers of the progress of socialism, saying “The sky is brightening.”<sup>97</sup> As soon as Wayland submitted his subscriber lists and lauded the greatness of his readers, he described the *Appeal* army as “American men and women who are pledged to inaugurate a better and brighter day.” The sum effect of their efforts powered “another long step towards the Co-operative Commonwealth.”<sup>98</sup> Without some connection to the sacred, Wayland could never have motivated his audience to such great effect. Pertinently, Wayland described his *Appeal* army as leading an “onward and irresistible march to victory over the forces which have made a by-word of the Nazarene’s ‘Peace on earth, good will to men.’”<sup>99</sup> Wayland positioned his readers as a secular enactment of the Christian hope for change, the power to bring about heaven on earth, a

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<sup>94</sup>Jasinski and Mercieca, "Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics," 320.

<sup>95</sup>Ghent, "The 'Appeal' and Its Influence," 27.

<sup>96</sup>Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 142, 38.

<sup>97</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "Labor Unions and Socialism," *Appeal to Reason*, November 23, 1901, 4.

<sup>98</sup>Wayland, "Race Against Time," 1.

<sup>99</sup>Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 30, 1901, 1.

power corrupted by capitalism. In this system, Wayland served as the prophet directing divine judgment, and his *Appeal* functioned as a rallying point, the sacred scripture of a committed utopian fighting force. Highlighting his commitment to democratic principles, Wayland wrote, “The boys smell the smoke of battle afar off—the last and final skirmish between the organized forces of capitalism and Socialism. This Armegaddon [sic] will be fought with BALLOTS! And the victory will be with the people!”<sup>100</sup>

Andre Johnson suggested prophetic rhetoric requires a four-part rhetorical structure: (1) rootedness in communal sacred principles, (2) parrhesia, (3) judgments or warnings about society, and (4) encouragement or hope.<sup>101</sup> Wayland clearly exhibited all four parts of prophetic rhetoric. All of his rhetoric was rooted in cooperation as a sacred value with the power to perfect society. Wayland positioned himself as the parrhesiates, the sole voice of the truth regarding the postal audit. After repeatedly printing Madden’s grievances regarding the *Appeal*, Wayland purported to tell “the Appeal’s side of the story,” noting that the “action of the department is not based on the grounds alleged,” but instead because of “POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC IDEAS.”<sup>102</sup> In doing so, Wayland clearly denounced the practice of the government and warned his readers to be careful and vigilant, that further agitation might be necessary. Additionally, nearly all of Wayland’s rhetoric relied on the principle of hope. After reporting the success of the *Appeal* army, Wayland exclaimed, “Yes, Socialism is almost here!”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "Circulation by States," *Appeal to Reason*, November 9, 1901, 4.

<sup>101</sup>Andre E. Johnson, *The Forgotten Prophet: Bishop Henry Mcneal Turner and the African American Prophetic Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 7-8.

<sup>102</sup>Wayland, “Appeal Submits Its Case,” 1.

<sup>103</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 30, 1901, 1.

In order to substantiate his interpretations of the audit and his readership, Wayland published quotations from other non-radical newspapers that voiced concern about postal enforcement, especially as regarded the *Appeal*. Regarding this practice, Wayland paused to record an important reflection:

You will be as proud of this evidence of the work of the *Appeal* as am I, because it has been through your efforts that these persons have been reached with Socialism. With but a few exceptions, these expressions are from those who have but lately taken notice of the movement—it illustrates and demonstrates the deep and abiding strength of Socialist through in the public mind. It tells another thing—It SHOWS THAT THERE IS A SUBTLE FORCE AT WORK IN THE HEARTS OF MEN WHICH IS LEADING THEM RAPIDLY INTO THE SOCIALIST RANKS! Never has the time been more opportune to go to your neighbor and tell him the glad story of industrial emancipation and the NEW DAY! If every worker feels like I do today, there is not a discouraged nor disheartened one in the ranks. When I was first served with notice of the action of the department, my heart for a moment sank within me. I had that dull feeling of despair which comes to the soldier who, alone on sentry duty is attacked by an unknown foe. With the dawn of day reinforcements are seen coming ten thousand strong over the hills, this feeling gives way to one of exultant thoughts of victory. When the thousands of letters and postal cards from friends of the movement throughout the land came to the *Appeal*, breathing the spirit of strength and determination, I knew that I was not alone, and that back of the *Appeal* was a host of patriots as true as the martyrs who gave their lives for American freedom or who languished in a German prison for daring to speak the truth! I feel repaid a thousand fold for all the trials, for the financial loss, for the

execration, for the ostracism, for the threats of bodily harm, which has been my lot during the past twelve years.<sup>104</sup>

Wayland, as a lone prophetic figure, one whose ethos delighted and shaped the sensibilities of his readers, invited his audience to come alongside him as the fighting force of justice. In their victory, his readers became revolutionaries on par with the heroes of early American democracy; they provided important evidence that the new day of socialism was coming. *Appeal* readers acted through their constituted identities as soldiers in a war of the highest stakes; their victory would prove the importance of their cause and the power of their collective agency.

*The Army Prevails!*

In January 18, 1902, just over two months after the audit began, the *Appeal's* front page declared: "And The Appeal Won." Wayland reported, "I am just in receipt of information from the postoffice department at Washington that the case of the Appeal has been dismissed... The right of the Appeal to send the paper through the mails and the right of our readers to send the paper to their friends is thus sustained."<sup>105</sup> The massive list of names had impressed the federal postal department, and the case was closed, the matter settled. Left in the wake of this first major crisis, was a restless army called to attention. The *Appeal* army had settled the dispute, and Wayland learned he could rely on his readers, "a pattern that the paper followed throughout its years of publication."<sup>106</sup> The official history of the *Appeal* concluded its discussion of this postal crisis: "Such was the end of the first battle of the long campaign waged by the powers of

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<sup>104</sup>Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 30, 1901, 1.

<sup>105</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "And the Appeal Won," *Appeal to Reason*, January 18, 1902, 1.

<sup>106</sup>Graham, *Yours for the Revolution*, 8.

plutocracy against the Appeal. Such was the first real triumph of the invincible little fighting organ of the Revolution. And in that victory, as through a symbol, might...have won for the Appeal its title: ‘UNBEATEN AND UNBEATABLE!’<sup>107</sup> Such confidence, unknown before the postal crisis, characterized the *Appeal* readership through their phenomenal growth. Thus, “the Appeal became a movement paper, one that socialists identified as theirs to support and save, one that articulated, fought, and won socialist battles.”<sup>108</sup>

During the denouement of the postal crisis, as the anxieties subsided, readers began to submit letters crediting Madden and the crisis—though in actuality the credit belonged to Wayland’s constitutive moves for unifying and growing their movement, their army. Socialist politician Leon Greenbaum noted, “Do you know that Madden is organizing Locals of the Socialist party? Fact.”<sup>109</sup> A comrade from North Dakota wrote, “This Madden business has made it easy to get subscribers for the Appeal.”<sup>110</sup> Texan A. M. Martin opined, “Comrade Madden has done more for the cause of Socialism in the past two months than all the combined forces of Socialism has done in the past fifty years.”<sup>111</sup> In response, Wayland chirped, “Several hundred new names were added to the Appeal Army list during the last week. Might sorry, comrades, but we have to give Madden the credit for it.” He concluded, “Mr. Madden is making Socialists.”<sup>112</sup> On December 21, in his usual “Appeal Army” column, Wayland obnoxiously ended almost

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<sup>107</sup>England, *The Story of the Appeal*, 44.

<sup>108</sup>Graham, *Yours for the Revolution*, 10.

<sup>109</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "Appeal Army," *Appeal to Reason*, January 4, 1902, 4.

<sup>110</sup>Julius A. Wayland, “Appeal Army,” *Appeal to Reason*, January 11, 1902, 4.

<sup>111</sup>Julius A. Wayland, "Appeal Army," *Appeal to Reason*, December 14, 1901.

<sup>112</sup>Wayland, “Appeal Army,” December 21, 1901.

every short paragraph with the same phrase: “Madden did it.”<sup>113</sup> He aptly likened Madden’s actions—or his interpretation of Madden’s actions—with stirring “up a hornet’s nest with a short stick.”<sup>114</sup>

Just a week after Madden’s audit became public knowledge, Wayland prophesied that it would have an important effect on his audience. “The net result [of Madden’s audit] will be a decided gain for the Socialists—every comrade will feel it his imperative duty to redouble his efforts in the future. It takes opposition to build up a great movement—in fact a movement which creates no opposition is not worthy the support of any man.”<sup>115</sup> Wayland was correct; a great movement requires tension, some obstacle to overcome and some evil to denounce. Through his interpretation of Madden’s audit and his audience, Wayland created both the opposition and the victory necessary to catapult his *Appeal* army from the pages of his paper to the realm of political activity. Although Wayland deflected credit for agitating his readership toward unification, he and his readers thoroughly agreed that this postal crisis practically created the *Appeal* army, increased subscriptions, and galvanized a heretofore-unknown sense of unity and community among the domestically scattered *Appeal* readership. Whereas the *Appeal* army existed largely on paper prior to Madden’s intervention, a revolutionary counterpublic army was constituted, moved, and motivated through Wayland’s redefinition of Madden’s audit.

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<sup>113</sup>Wayland, “Appeal Army,” December 21, 1901.

<sup>114</sup>Julius A. Wayland, “Appeal Army,” *Appeal to Reason*, December 7, 1901, 4.

<sup>115</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, November 23, 1901, 1.

## Conclusion

I have explored Wayland's constitutive rhetoric through the pages of the *Appeal to Reason* and argued that virtually all of Wayland's success in his newspaper depended upon the construction of an army of evangelistic zealots to present the socialist gospel to the United States during a crucial period of change. He constituted his army by hermeneutically redefining an ostensibly routine postal audit as an exigent attack, thereby redefining his blue-collar audience as a revolutionary army, fighting a war every bit as weighty as the original American Revolution. Regarding the audit, Wayland constructed and mobilized an entire network of interpretations into an inventional resource to create constitutive rhetoric, calling his army into existence and to attention. By redefining the audit as an attack in accordance with his needs and interests,<sup>116</sup> Wayland provided the pre-conditions for the activities that would sustain his paper in the coming years, creating an army aimed to enact the utopia of its desires at nearly any cost.

Wayland would routinely spar with the postal service during the next several years, and frequently, he would rely on his construction of the postal service and its practices as an inventional source to produce a sense of accomplishment and urgency in his audience. In 1903, Wayland printed a previously absent phrase at the top of his paper, under its title, a phrase he had stopped using in 1899 but one he would occasionally print throughout the paper's publication: "Entered at Girard, Kansas, Postoffice as second-class mail matter."<sup>117</sup> The *Appeal* won its big fight, proving its fighting force unbeaten and unbeatable. Wayland continued fighting in the war

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<sup>116</sup>Edward Schiappa, *Defining Reality: Definitions and the Politics of Meaning*, ed. David Blakesley, Rhetorical Philosophy and Theory (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 2003), 68.

<sup>117</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, October 10, 1903, 1.

against capitalism, his nationwide army—constituted and tested through crisis—faithfully marching in step by his side.

## Chapter 5: Making Peace by Threatening Violence

Trudging through eight inches of snow after sunset on December 30, 1905, former Idaho Governor Frank Steunenberg opened the gate to his house in Caldwell, Idaho and in doing so triggered an explosion that would shortly end his life as his family rushed out attending to him. Steunenberg, one of the best-known Idahoans in the state, created many enemies within the labor unions during unusually violent union strikes and protests in Northern Idaho in 1899. To quell those uprisings, Steunenberg called in federal troops and ordered a period of martial law.<sup>1</sup> His representative said, “We have taken the monster by the throat and we are going to choke the life out of it. No halfway measures will be adopted. It is a plain case of the state or the union winning, and we do not propose that the state shall be defeated.”<sup>2</sup> Although six years had passed since these tense conflicts, authorities suspected foul play from the union leadership almost immediately following the explosive death of the former governor. After arresting a primary suspect, investigators attempted to connect leadership from the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) to the assassination. Based on dubious interrogation and extradition tactics, they arrested and imprisoned three prominent WFM leaders on charges of conspiracy to murder: Bill Haywood, Charles Moyer, and George Pettibone. Union members and other radicals were incensed by the arrest of men who, they believed, had nothing to do with the bombing. Perhaps the highest profile defender of Haywood, Moyer, and Pettibone was the beloved rabble-rouser Eugene Debs.

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<sup>1</sup>John A. Farrell, *Clarence Darrow: Attorney for the Damned* (New York: Doubleday, 2011), 147.

<sup>2</sup>J. Anthony Lukas, *Big Trouble: A Murder in a Small Western Town Sets Off a Struggle for the Soul of America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 145.

In response to this controversy, Debs wrote an undeniably inflammatory article entitled “Arouse, Ye Slaves!”<sup>3</sup> that was published in the *Appeal to Reason*, for which Debs would later serve as an associate editor. The article suggested the judicial system was rigged and should be overturned by violence, if necessary. “Arouse, Ye Slaves!” has been routinely dubbed, “the most radically charged statement of [Debs’] career” and his “most militant position ever taken.”<sup>4</sup> The front-page editorial reads like a breathless rant about the injustice of the trial in particular and the plutocratic class in general. “Arouse, Ye Slaves!” ranks among the most memorable and effective pieces of Debs’ career and is consistently labeled a “rhetorical masterstroke.”<sup>5</sup> It was also perhaps the single most infamous and influential article published in the *Appeal*, featured in one popular protest song and engendering controversies with the White House and the Canadian postal service.<sup>6</sup> Following its publication, subscriptions for the *Appeal to Reason* soared to unprecedented numbers. Thus, it is essential to explain the power of Debs’ editorial.

On this point, it is curious that Debs’ violent call to action stands in marked contrast to the majority of his rhetoric and to the convictions of a sizable portion of his readership. In 1900, Debs wrote: “I will do what little I can to hasten to coming of the day when war shall curse this

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<sup>3</sup>Eugene V. Debs, "Arouse, Ye Slaves!," *Appeal to Reason*, March 10 1906.

<sup>4</sup>Elliott Shore, *Talkin' Socialism: J.A. Wayland and the Role of the Press in American Radicalism, 1890-1912* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988), 176; John Graham, *"Yours for the Revolution": The Appeal to Reason, 1895-1922* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 109.

<sup>5</sup>Michael Mark Cohen, "'The Conspiracy of Capital': American Popular Radicalism and the Politics of Conspiracy from Haymarket to the Red Scare" (PhD Diss., Yale University, 2004), 274.

<sup>6</sup>Adams, *Sagebrush Post Offices*, 115; Emma F. Langdon, *The Cripple Creek Strike: A History of Industrial War in Colorado, 1903-4-5* (Denver: Great Western Publishing Co., 1905), 491. Also, "Assert Roosevelt Seeks Their Death," *New York Times*, May 2, 1907, 1; "The President and Labor," *New York Times*, April 20, 1907, 8.

earth no more.... I have no ambition to kill my fellow man, and I am quite certain that I have no ambition to be killed. When I think of a cold, glittering steel bayonet being pushed into the soft, white, quivering flesh of a human body, I recoil with horror.”<sup>7</sup> He introduced himself as “an ambassador of peace.”<sup>8</sup> Throughout his career, Debs maintained the value of education as the primary vehicle for social change, and although he could not be described as a thoroughgoing pacifist, he argued for peaceful, democratic revolution. More than a decade after the Idaho assassination, Debs, sickly and frail, famously chose a prison to protest the United States’ involvement in the First World War. Running for president from prison, he essentially became a candidate of “peace and brotherhood.”<sup>9</sup>

Further, the audience of the *Appeal to Reason* was composed of many different socialist flavors, but Christian socialists comprised a vocal faction. In fact, the managing editor of the *Appeal*, Fred D. Warren, was a faithful Methodist committed to nonviolence.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the *Appeal* frequently invoked the motto: ballots not bullets. Debs and a major portion of his audience strongly preferred peaceful protests, yet his most violent article was published in the *Appeal* and served as a rallying cry. The conflict between the message in the editorial and the normal practice of both Debs and the *Appeal* can be resolved by understanding that Debs’ violent

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<sup>7</sup>Eugene V. Debs, "Competition Vs. Cooperation: Speech Delivered at Central Music Hall, Chicago, Il," *Appeal to Reason*, October 13, 1900, 3.

<sup>8</sup>Bernard J. Brommel, "The Pacifist Speechmaking of Eugene V. Debs," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 52, no. 2 (1966): 146.

<sup>9</sup>Ernest Freeberg, *Democracy's Prisoner: Eugene V. Debs, the Great War, and the Right to Dissent* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 260.

<sup>10</sup>George D. Brewer, *The Fighting Editor or Warren and the Appeal* (Girard: Brewer, 1910), 21-2.

threats served to circumvent the need for physical violence. Debs wrote words of violence in the service of peace.

After Debs' death, historian Louis Adamic alleged that Debs actually hoped to cause a violent revolt and that Debs planned to personally lead a militia in battle through Montana into Idaho. Adamic writes, "He wanted to organize an army in the manner of John Brown...and march to Idaho and free Haywood, Moyer, and Pettibone by force. But fortunately Debs had a level-headed wife who kept him from embarking upon many a wild venture."<sup>11</sup> Surely, this anecdote, unsubstantiated by any other source, is apocryphal. In a full-length article published in the *Appeal* on April 28, 1906, Debs defended his rhetoric, saying: "We are not favoring violence, but resisting it. We are seeking, not to commit, but to prevent murder."<sup>12</sup> For Debs and the *Appeal* staff, then, somehow the rhetorical violence, the threats served peaceful ends. Also, it is important to note that Debs' editorial did not incite any substantial violent outbreak among *Appeal* readers, but it did bring attention to a particularly underreported case.<sup>13</sup>

A newspaper like the *Appeal to Reason*, seeking radical change and peaceful resolution through utopian rhetoric, is caught in a bind, since its rhetoric must be appropriately virulent to motivate their disgruntled audience while not leading to counterproductive violence.<sup>14</sup> Calls for peace may not be sufficiently arousing for an outraged public, yet calls for violence can lead to undesired results. Utopian rhetoric works particularly well for reformers since it explicitly seeks

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<sup>11</sup>Louis Adamic, *Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence in America* (New York: The Viking press, 1931), 145.

<sup>12</sup>Eugene V. Debs, "To the Rescue!," *Appeal to Reason*, April 28, 1906, 1.

<sup>13</sup>Adamic, *Dynamite*, 145-7; Louis Kopelin, *The Life of Debs*, ed. Emmanuel Haldeman-Julius, People's Pocket Series (Girard, KS: Appeal to Reason, 1920), 44.

<sup>14</sup>Herbert W. Simons, "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movements," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56, no. 1 (1970).

gradual change, the cumulative effect of which is societal perfection. Utopianists must remain patient, yet a movement's patience has its limits. After sustained activism, *Appeal* army members could easily become frustrated that major union injustices still took place with little public outcry or awareness. The "coming nation" was still a long time coming, and some leaders considered dynamite a more effective harbinger of it than print. Rhetorical violence attempts to eschew physical violence while affirming the need for more extreme measures, validating frustrations and motivating renewed nonviolent action. Although rhetorical violence for social change has utility outside of utopian socialism, it is a strategy particularly well suited to the goals of Wayland's readership.

In short, rhetors might choose to employ violent words that invoke urgency and shore up group identity while facilitating nonviolent resolution. In what follows, I sketch out the parameters of rhetorical violence, as found in the *Appeal* and exemplified by Debs' editorial, and its utility in bringing about the peaceful goals of agitation and education. Utopian rhetorics, due to a strong connection with myth and societal upheaval, can easily produce undesired violent consequences as members strive to force utopia into the present.<sup>15</sup> Debs and the *Appeal* editorial staff used rhetorical violence to overcome this difficulty. Although Debs' words were radical and, at face value, violent, he wrote these words in the service of peace.

I describe an important tactic for the constitution of the *Appeal* readership, noting Debs' deployment of rhetorical violence to enliven Wayland's prophetic/utopian redefinition of his readers as soldiers in a revolutionary army. By examining "Arouse, Ye Slaves!," the most infamous article published in the *Appeal*'s history, I am able to highlight further the important ways Wayland as an editor extended the *Appeal*'s utopian vision to leverage controversy into

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<sup>15</sup>Barbara Goodwin and Keith Taylor, *The Politics of Utopia: A Study in Theory and Practice*, Ralahine Utopian Studies (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 106-7.

publicity and to spur readers into action. My argument proceeds in four sections. First, I outline the parameters of rhetorical violence mobilized for nonviolent social change, suggesting three markers present in the most effective cases of its deployment. Second, I provide a general sketch of the Steunenberg assassination accusations and arrests, noting the details that precipitated the rage of Eugene Debs and the American socialist movement. Third, I examine Debs' "Arouse, Ye Slaves!" editorial, explicating his text in light of the markers of rhetorical violence. Fourth, I show that rhetorical violence was the culmination of a significant strategy used by Wayland. In the conclusion, I discuss implications of my analysis of rhetorical violence as a constitutive technique.

#### A Rhetoric of Violent Threats for Social Change

Several theorists have offered treatments of the rhetoric of violent language. Sidney Sondergard defines "rhetorical violence" as "the replication in language of the physical experience of pain: its causes, its consequences, its analogues in conflict and suffering, real and imagined."<sup>16</sup> He notes that such language must be understood as having been "encoded as vehicles of persuasion."<sup>17</sup> James Andrew Baker describes rhetorical violence as capable of creating "a paradigm shift in the mind of the reader."<sup>18</sup> He further notes that rhetorical violence

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<sup>16</sup>Sidney L. Sondergard, *Sharpening Her Pen: Strategies of Rhetorical Violence by Early Modern English Women Writers* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2002), 16.

<sup>17</sup>Sondergard, *Sharpening Her Pen*, 15.

<sup>18</sup>James Andrew Baker, "Necessary Evil: Rhetorical Violence in 20th Century American Literature" (PhD Diss., Texas A&M University, 2006), 29.

has the power “to bring about a shift in thinking in the minds of readers, and...this typically involves the reevaluation of an existing ideology.”<sup>19</sup>

During a time of crisis, protestors deal with two crucial audiences: those within the movement and those outside. Protestors might primarily seek to gather and influence group members to action and attention,<sup>20</sup> addressing an important “ego-function,”<sup>21</sup> or instead focus on an external audience to resolve a complex problem.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, both audiences must be considered in public protests, especially since audiences are, to some degree, constituted by confrontative rhetoric, as group members learn to “imagine and actively perform” a modified “subjectivity” and outsiders grow to fear and respect group members mediated through their threats and protests.<sup>23</sup> Rhetorical violence constitutes an audience in search of utopia through the “brutal art” of shock and urgency.<sup>24</sup> Through threats of violence, marginalized rhetors can enact the power to energize a movement and to motivate public leaders to inch toward resolution or, at least, hear their concerns.

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<sup>19</sup>Baker, “Necessary Evil,” 2.

<sup>20</sup>Randall A. Lake, “Enacting Red Power: The Consummatory Function in Native American Protest Rhetoric,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69, no. 2 (1983): 128.

<sup>21</sup>Richard B. Gregg, “The Ego-Function of the Rhetoric of Protest,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 4, no. 2 (1971).

<sup>22</sup>Theodore Otto Windt, “The Diatribe: Last Resort for Protest,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58, no. 1 (1972): 3.

<sup>23</sup>Angela G. Ray and Cindy Koenig Richards, “Inventing Citizens, Imagining Gender Justice: The Suffrage Rhetoric of Virginia and Francis Minor,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 93, no. 4 (2007): 378.

<sup>24</sup>Robert L. Scott and Donald K. Smith, “The Rhetoric of Confrontation,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60, no. 1 (1969).

By rhetorical violence I simply mean the use of violent language and threats, not as a necessary provocation of physical violence but to express outrage and reinforce identity. Marginalized movements often use rhetorical violence to move audiences and to motivate those with power to act. In this way, they demonstrate a “canny awareness of the persuasive power of violence.”<sup>25</sup> While scholars have made clear the power of rhetorical violence, they have not clearly identified its constituents. In what follows, I lay out a theoretical basis for the use of rhetorical violence for nonviolent resolution, and then, suggest three markers typically present in such discourse, markers that might be used to differentiate provocations of physical violence from rhetorical violence aimed at social change.

### *Rhetorical Violence*

In his explication of a “deep rhetoric,” James Crosswhite notes, that “in order to be an alternative to violence, rhetoric must in some way resemble it.”<sup>26</sup> Crosswhite focuses on rhetoric as violence as a means for reason to settle conflicts without physical violence, but he brings to the fore another salient point: rhetoric can serve as an expression of violence. In essence, seemingly violent rhetoric can produce thoroughly nonviolent results. Crosswhite writes, “Absolute pacification and absolute nonviolence is not a goal. Nonviolence is a means for achieving peace, and peace is a kind of sociality or community in which conflict has become one of the means by which individuals and groups are renewed and grow and achieve well-being.

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<sup>25</sup>Sondergard, *Sharpening Her Pen*, 28.

<sup>26</sup>James Crosswhite, *Deep Rhetoric: Philosophy Reason, Violence, Justice, Wisdom* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2013), 134.

The form of this peace is justice.”<sup>27</sup> Lasting justice can only be enacted through conflict, even if that conflict is staged entirely in rhetoric.

Additionally, Crosswhite notes, “Rhetoric is the opposite of violence, the great, cultural anti-violence. Its very existence is an attempt to redress the problems of violence, and it is explicitly a substitution of a conflict of ideas and arguments for physical conflict.”<sup>28</sup> Rhetoric not only serves as a vehicle for reason in the avoidance of physical conflict, but also as a *substitute* for violence. In such cases, the production of violent rhetoric subsumes the need for violent physical expression, directing public energy toward nonviolent solutions. For example, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X sought resolutions to similar exigences. While King used nonviolent strategies, Malcolm X employed violent rhetoric; yet both individuals effectively brought about largely nonviolent resolutions to complicated conflicts.<sup>29</sup> Both produced a sense of urgency, and ultimately, both men created justice-minded movements concerned with decidedly nonviolent activities: awareness raising and education, what Crosswhite refers to as “pacified processes and procedures.”<sup>30</sup> Blight notes, “Violent language could serve emotional needs,”<sup>31</sup> thus energizing a movement for radical change.

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<sup>27</sup>Crosswhite, *Deep Rhetoric*, 145.

<sup>28</sup>Crosswhite, *Deep Rhetoric*, 162.

<sup>29</sup>Ellen W. Gorsevski and Michael L. Butterworth, "Muhammad Ali's Fighting Words: The Paradox of Violence in Nonviolent Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 1 (2011): 58, 64.

<sup>30</sup>Crosswhite, *Deep Rhetoric*, 138.

<sup>31</sup>David W. Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War: Keeping Faith in Jubilee* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 98.

Sondergard notes the power of “violent images or words” to provoke “corrective action.”<sup>32</sup> Further, “rhetorical violence is applied to confer an immediacy to textual arguments” and “functions as a threat, a suggestions of what can happen if the writer’s message is ignored or rejected.”<sup>33</sup> As DeLuca and Peeples note, “the threat of violence” galvanizes public attention which otherwise might be lacking, “despite the significance of the issues being discussed.”<sup>34</sup> Sondergard notes, somewhat counterintuitively that the “exercise of rhetorical violence is more often designed to resist or to deflect anger, than it is to feed or to channel it.”<sup>35</sup>

Thus, rhetorical violence plays a key role in arousing both the internal and external audiences of a movement, but also preventing the situation from spiraling into real violence. Kenneth Burke notes that “imagery built about the active, reflexive, and passive forms of death (killing, self-killing, and being killed) so obviously contributes to dramatic intensity, [and] thoughts of death are so basic to human motivation.”<sup>36</sup> Blight adds that “aggression” has historically served to reinvigorate “flagging missionary zeal” within social movements.<sup>37</sup> This occurs because “violent metaphors are capable of cutting through all of the platitudes and

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<sup>32</sup>Sondergard, *Sharpening Her Pen*, 17.

<sup>33</sup>Sondergard, *Sharpening Her Pen*, 18.

<sup>34</sup>Kevin Michael DeLuca and Jennifer Peeples, "From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism, and the 'Violence' of Seattle," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19, no. 2 (2002): 140.

<sup>35</sup>Sondergard, *Sharpening Her Pen*, 19.

<sup>36</sup>Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1950), 13.

<sup>37</sup>Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War*, 98.

anthems.”<sup>38</sup> In fact, Burke claims “identification with imagery of murder” can function as the “*terms for transformation in general*.”<sup>39</sup>

### *Three Markers of Rhetorical Violence for Social Change*

Rhetorical violence can be used to amplify an issue, provoking fear in a dominant group. Induced by threats of violence, fear shocks a dominant class into listening to demands, considering reasonable arguments, and performing justice due to the increased scrutiny. Although theorists agree on the potency of rhetorical violence aimed toward transformation, clear markers have not been identified. In what follows, I identify three markers of rhetorical violence for social change and argue that the force of the technique is enhanced when all are present. The line between unproductive rhetorical violence—rhetoric that produces “hysterical politics” and actual violence—and rhetorical violence aimed at motivating a movement toward social change is thin, indeed.<sup>40</sup> Three textual markers suggest a rhetor might be using rhetorical violence in the service of physical peace: radical linguistic division, generalized agitation, and a prophetic persona. I will discuss each of these markers in turn.

First, radical linguistic division refers to the process by which rhetors dogmatically separate good from evil, their beloved community from a constructed other. For Burke, “identity is the key process...in attempts to persuade others,” so “identification is the key term in Burke’s

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<sup>38</sup>Baker, "Necessary Evil," 29.

<sup>39</sup>Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 11.

<sup>40</sup>Christian Lundberg, *Lacan in Public: Psychoanalysis and the Science of Rhetoric*, ed. John Louis Lucaites, Rhetoric, Culture, and Social Critique (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012), 173-4.

analysis of persuasion.”<sup>41</sup> Moreover, “Identification is compensatory to division.”<sup>42</sup> Borrowman and Kmetz note, “Thus division creates identification,” resulting in a sense of “shared beliefs and values, and enemies.”<sup>43</sup> Through radical linguistic division, publics are divided into stark, rigid categories, out of which identification can develop.<sup>44</sup> The otherness of the enemy is, thus, likely established prior to the consubstantial unity of the movement, and upon the enemy’s otherness, the basis for antithetical identification is founded. In this way, rhetorical violence is a constitutive strategy, one that hinges on the creation of a melodramatic oppositional identity.<sup>45</sup>

Strong value judgments directed toward an enemy can resemble insults or ad hominem attacks, as opponents embody devil terms.<sup>46</sup> Concordantly, the principle of antithesis is “an exceptionally effective rhetorical device,” for defining a movement based on what it stands against.<sup>47</sup> Through radical linguistic division, a rhetor creates a disjunction between his or her movement and the constructed other. Thus, a rhetor “can prod his audience to consider local ills

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<sup>41</sup>Joseph R. Gusfield, "Introduction," in *On Symbols and Society*, ed. Joseph R. Gusfield, Heritage of Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989), 18.

<sup>42</sup>Kenneth Burke, *On Symbols and Society*, The Heritage of Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989), 182.

<sup>43</sup>Shane Borrowman and Marcia Kmetz, "Divided We Stand: Beyond Burkean Identification," *Rhetoric Review* 30, no. 3 (2011): 281.

<sup>44</sup>Burke, *On Symbols and Society*, 191.

<sup>45</sup>Michael Osborn and John Bakke, "The Melodramas of Memphis: Contending Narratives During the Sanitation Strike of 1968," *Southern Communication Journal* 63, no. 3 (1998): 222.

<sup>46</sup>Richard M. Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co, 1953), 222-3.

<sup>47</sup>Burke, *On Symbols and Society*, 73.

primarily in terms of alien figures viewed as the outstanding causes of those ills.”<sup>48</sup> If a common enemy is properly constructed, then arguments can proceed out of a shared pool of disgruntlement, anchoring various injustices in the motives of the enemy.<sup>49</sup> A rhetorical enemy becomes “something to hunt down and purge, not to understand—something to deny, not transcend.”<sup>50</sup> Rhetorical violence, then, is normalized through the construction of the melodramatic other.<sup>51</sup> Such violence can be located in the radical divisions proposed by rhetors, casting enemies as other and allies as self.

Still, radical linguistic division can be found within any social movement; radical rhetors usually attempt to distinguish the faithful of their movement from a constructed other. Further, the practice of radical linguistic division is also sometimes tied to genuine appeals for physical violence. When a speaker wants to incite violent effect, he or she will play on political prejudices to stoke the fire of revolution. However, when rhetorical violence is mobilized in the service of peace, the symbolic division stops short of violent revolution, extoling a utopian reformatory purpose instead. As soon as one suggests gradual reformation is impossible, the default reaction is revolution, a la John Brown.<sup>52</sup> Thus, rhetorical violence for social change can draw harsh distinctions between the marginalized audience and the dominant opposition, but allows for the possibility of repentance and reform, making revolution unnecessary.

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<sup>48</sup>Burke, *On Symbols and Society*, 281.

<sup>49</sup>Scott and Smith, "Rhetoric of Confrontation," 4-5.

<sup>50</sup>Robert L. Ivie and Oscar Giner, "Hunting the Devil: Democracy's Rhetorical Impulse to War," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (2007): 586.

<sup>51</sup>Thomas Cooper, "The Uses of Adversaries: Normalising Violence through the Construction of the Other," *At the Interface / Probing the Boundaries* 75 (2011).

<sup>52</sup>Albert J. von Frank, "John Brown, James Redpath, and the Idea of Revolution," *Civil War History* 52, no. 2 (2006).

The second marker of rhetorical violence for social change is agitation, labeling an issue as a crisis and advocating education, awareness, and democracy as the answers. The goal of rhetorical violence for social change is agitation, not assassination. Provocations of physical violence often occur in private meetings behind closed doors. Nonviolent mobilizations of rhetorical violence must occur in public, for if the threats are not widely distributed, they can have little effect. Through rhetorical violence, rhetors hope to spur their movements toward and action, while calling their opposition to account.

Traces of the use of rhetorical violence in the service of peace can be found in the rhetoric of abolitionists. The National Convention of Colored People and Their Friends issued a statement in 1847 that favored education and agitation above all other strategies. “In all the language of inspired wisdom, there shall be no peace to the wicked, and this guilty nation shall have no peace, and we will do all that we can to *agitate!* AGITATE!!! AGITATE!!! AGITATE!!!”<sup>53</sup> They argued, “The human voice must supersede the roar of the cannon.” Although these abolitionists of the 1840s spoke violently and passionately, they believed that verbal agitation was the most effective means to accomplish their goal. Rhetorical peace must be fractured through verbal canon as a substitute for physical violence. Robert Dick writes:

A common strategy at this time [the 1850s] was to threaten whites, particularly slaveholders, with the possibility of physical violence. Slaves and free blacks stood no chance of surviving when being ultimately faced with organized and armed local forces as well as federal ones. Nevertheless, the slaveholder or the Negro oppressor could be killed just as easily at the outbreak of black violence with the entire nation pledged to

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<sup>53</sup>Robert C. Dick, *Black Protest: Issues and Tactics*, Contributions in American Studies (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), 140.

support his oppression militarily as he could without that support. Thus he was faced with a nearly uncontrollable threat which black spokesmen could aggravate.<sup>54</sup>

Here, the threat of violence was integral in an agitative strategy to create nonviolent resolution.

Wendell Phillips, one of Debs' greatest heroes, defined agitation as "the method that puts the school by the side of the ballot-box."<sup>55</sup> It is the process of consistently attacking the dominant system through rhetoric. One might assume that agitation would naturally progress to outbreaks of violence, following the lead of John Brown rather than William Lloyd Garrison, yet according to Phillips and the tradition he represents, "in all modern constitutional governments, agitation is the only peaceful method of progress."<sup>56</sup> Further, "Agitation prevents rebellion, keeps the peace, and secures progress."<sup>57</sup> Although rhetorical violence is at the core of agitation the goal is to produce reform. Phillips notes agitation proceeds by means of "reason and argument, —no appeal to arms."<sup>58</sup>

Furthermore, agitation must involve broad, sweeping statements. The more specific the instructions for violence, the more likely someone will attempt to carry out a violent act. Thus, rhetorical violence must walk the thin line between threats strong enough to be taken seriously by dominant structures and calls for specific violence. Recently, for instance, Palestinian activists posted videos and images on various social media sites providing detailed tutorials on

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<sup>54</sup>Dick, *Black Protest*, 147.

<sup>55</sup>Wendell Phillips, *Daniel O'Connell: The Irish Patriot* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1884), 13.

<sup>56</sup>Wendell Phillips, *The Scholar in a Republic: Address at the Centennial Anniversary of the Phi Beta Kappa of Harvard College* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1881), 22.

<sup>57</sup>Phillips, *Daniel O'Connell*, 14.

<sup>58</sup>Phillips, *Daniel O'Connell*, 14.

“how to stab a Jew.”<sup>59</sup> Such highly specific commissions are likely to escalate from the symbolic to the material and thus are provocations of physical violence, not strategies for nonviolent resolution. Rhetorical violence for social change must involve language that will alarm dominant powers and enliven marginalized peoples, but such threats should be general, unlikely to cause specific manifestations of physical violence.

The final marker involves the persona of the rhetor; rhetors with a clear prophetic ethos are more likely to successfully produce rhetorical violence that leads to social change than those that lack such persona. The ability to connect threats of violence with the transcendent allows audiences to receive these threats as potent, worthy of commitment and concern. As the appropriate role for the invocation of the sacred, the prophetic persona, then, has special power in effecting change through threats. James Darsey argues that: “Every radical vision challenges the society to which it is presented. Visionaries tend to be stringent in their demands on us.”<sup>60</sup> The prophet through “stringent demands” mobilizes violent language as a means to achieve some transcendent reality. As Mark Juergensmeyer notes, rhetors often elevate localized “political battles” by infusing the language of “cosmic war” into them. In this way rhetorical violence can elevate the local through a marriage with the transcendent.<sup>61</sup> Utopianism requires a dramatic reorientation of worldview, and such a shift is difficult to enact without a prophetic discourse.

In order for rhetorical violence to accomplish nonviolent resolution, rhetorical communities must unite and show a willingness to make good on publicized threats. The enlisted

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<sup>59</sup>Carl Campanile, "Terrorists Post Videos Teaching Palestinians 'How to Stab a Jew'," *New York Post*, October 17, 2015.

<sup>60</sup>James Darsey, "The Legend of Eugene Debs: Prophetic *Ethos* as Radical Argument," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74, no. 4 (1988): 439.

<sup>61</sup>Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3 ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 150.

soldier in the fight against plutocracy must be willing to devote substantive portions of his or her education, energy, and life to the cause of democratic reformation. Prophetic ethos is not automatically required to enact rhetorical violence, but the prophetic persona is crucial to efforts aimed at systemic reform. It is no small task to secure the radical commitment vital for effective rhetorical violence, a commitment that energizes a community under duress and motivates those in power. Such a herculean commitment almost certainly will be couched in the language and tradition of the sacred from a rhetor with a strong, principled prophetic ethos.

These three markers—linguistic division, agitation involving generalized threats, and the prophetic persona—can be used to distinguish rhetorical violence from rhetoric inciting actual violence. A rhetoric of rhetorical violence potentially productive of nonviolent social change, is a powerful tool in the arsenal of rhetors in marginalized communities. Rene Girard notes that violence is “eminently communicable.”<sup>62</sup> I suggest that communicated violence is eminently generative, capable of unrestrained proliferation. It creates an urgency unavailable to more moderate modes of communication. Sonderegard provides a good summary: “Rhetorical violence becomes a practical tool of personal empowerment” functioning as an alternative to “physical violence” and as the “best, or perhaps only, access to social or political power.”<sup>63</sup>

### Historical Context

On January 1, 1906, police arrested Harry Orchard, one of many aliases used by Albert E. Horsley, as the assassin in question. He had made no effort to leave town or to discard evidence,

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<sup>62</sup>René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1977), 30.

<sup>63</sup>Sonderegard, *Sharpening Her Pen*, 28.

as investigators recovered conclusively incriminating materials from his hotel room.<sup>64</sup> Although he initially purported to have acted alone, officials “almost immediately seized upon [the arrest] as an opportunity to carry out far grander countersubversive ambitions.”<sup>65</sup> One week after Orchard’s arrest, the State of Idaho, at the behest of Governor Frank Gooding, hired legendary detective James McParland, chief investigator for the Pinkerton Detective Agency’s Denver office. “McParland was ostensibly hired to investigate a crime in which the guilty party was already in custody [Orchard], however, the real purpose of the Pinkerton’s involvement was to find a conspiracy of union terrorists and rid the states of Idaho and Colorado of the influence of the WFM.”<sup>66</sup> By many accounts, the guilt of a mythic “inner circle” of the WFM leadership was considered beyond dispute, largely due to the union’s history of protest, violence, and use of dynamite.<sup>67</sup> McParland recorded preliminary notes by hand concerning the case on his train ride to Idaho on January 10, noting his conviction—a conviction forged prior to any interaction with the suspect—that Orchard was but a passive “tool” in the hands of WFM conspirators.<sup>68</sup> Cohen summarizes: “In short, armed with the money and backing of the state and organized capital, McParland set in motion what can accurately be described as a real, criminal conspiracy to frame and illegally prosecute the leadership of the Western Federation of Miners.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Lukas, *Big Trouble*, 706.

<sup>65</sup>Cohen, “Conspiracy of Capital,” 258.

<sup>66</sup>Cohen, “Conspiracy of Capital,” 258.

<sup>67</sup>B. T. Cowart, “James McParland and the Haywood Case,” *Idaho Yesterdays* 16 (1972): 26.

<sup>68</sup>Philip S. Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, History of the Labor Movement in the United States (New York: International Publishers, 1965), 41-2.

<sup>69</sup>Cohen, “Conspiracy of Capital,” 258-9.

McParland and his team used brutal interrogation tactics to provoke a confession from Orchard, tactics that one commentator described as “grewsome [sic] enough to make the most hair-raising writer of dime novel fiction turn green with envy.”<sup>70</sup> After being transferred to solitary confinement for nearly ten days at the agency’s request, Orchard met McParland for the first time. If given a confession with named union conspirators, the detective promised the inmate that he would be “properly taken care of afterwards.”<sup>71</sup> Orchard eventually divulged that he was an accomplished hit man for hire, regularly employed by the Western Federation of Miners to murder specific targets, confessing to many bombings-for-hire prior to his assassination of Steunenberg. In total, Orchard claimed connection to almost every major act of union violence in the Western United States—stretching from Colorado to California—including the infamous Independence Depot explosion that killed thirteen.<sup>72</sup> If his confession were true, Orchard should still be considered the most destructive domestic terrorist in American history.

Buoyed by Orchard’s 18,000-word typed confession, McParland made plans to arrest three implicated, high-profile leaders of the WFM: Bill Haywood, Charles Moyer, and George Pettibone. Haywood, Moyer, and Pettibone lived in Denver; none of them had recently been to Idaho. To make matters more complicated, a formal extradition process would likely require a corroborating witness—something McParland and the prosecution did not have. The ensuing decision to arrest and extradite the labor leaders without a standard extradition process became a major touchstone in the outrage surrounding this case; opponents referred to this less-than-legal

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<sup>70</sup>Langdon, *Cripple Creek Strike*, 39.

<sup>71</sup>Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, 43.

<sup>72</sup>Lukas, *Big Trouble*, 199.

process as a “kidnapping.”<sup>73</sup> The three leaders were arrested by a group of police officers and private detectives on Saturday February 17, 1906, and after detaining the men for one night in a county jail, the emissaries shuffled Haywood, Moyer, and Pettibone onto a special train “that would make a well-armed, full-throttle dash for the Idaho border so as to evade any effort to serve writs of *habeas corpus*.”<sup>74</sup> The eventual writs of *habeas corpus* were filed after the men had been publicly arraigned in Boise on the charge of conspiracy to murder, jumpstarting a lengthy dispute about the unusual extradition process. Eventually, the United States’ Supreme Court ruled “that though the seizure and extradition had been illegal, given that the men were currently in Idaho’s jurisdiction, there was no legal recourse or remedy: the kidnapping stood and the trial date could now be set.”<sup>75</sup> Detective McParland was quoted as having said of the labor leaders, “They will never leave Idaho alive.”<sup>76</sup> Eugene Debs, among others, thought intervention would be necessary, so he wrote “Arouse, Ye Slaves!” and sent it to the *Appeal to Reason*, hoping it might be published to a large sympathetic audience.

In 1906, Julius Wayland no longer acted as the managing editor of the *Appeal*; he had turned the day-to-day operations over to Fred Warren. Still, he retained great influence on the *Appeal*. George Brewer detailed the tense mood of the *Appeal* office after Debs’ biting editorial first arrived to be considered for publication. Warren called for Wayland to come immediately to his office, and after giving him Debs’ offering, an uncertain Warren asked Wayland for his

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<sup>73</sup>Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005), 325.

<sup>74</sup>Cohen, “Conspiracy of Capital,” 261; “Roosevelt’s Attack on Moyer and Haywood,” *The Journal of the Switchmen’s Union of North America* 9, no. 7 (1907).

<sup>75</sup>Cohen, “Conspiracy of Capital,” 262.

<sup>76</sup>Lukas, *Big Trouble*, 272.

opinion. Wayland's "towering form" paced the room as he read the article. The founding editor then provided Warren his blessing to publish it.<sup>77</sup> According to Brewer, the following exchange took place:

"J. A. [Wayland], you realize that the publication of this article may mean the suppression of the *Appeal* and the arrest for feloniously inciting to armed rebellion, every one of us, followed by imprisonment and possible execution?" The reply came in calm, even tones: "Yes, I fully appreciate the gravity, and the only question I want you to settle in your mind before acting is 'will it work to the best interests of Socialism?' If so, regardless of consequences 'publish it.' With these words he turned his back on us, walked to his own room, sat down at his desk and took up the morning paper, while Warren folded the article, handed it to the ever-ready messenger with a note to the foreman of the printing department to set it up in big type on the center of the front page. Before night this fiery and revolutionary message was gorging the mails on every departing train."<sup>78</sup>

Debs' "Arouse, Ye Slaves!" editorial represents the culmination of Wayland's editorial policy and his constitutive utopian rhetoric. The article, ultimately published by Wayland, acted on the redefinition of the *Appeal* readership as an army to put pressure on structures of power. Without the notion of an *Appeal* army, threats of violence might seem less urgent, both for socialists and capitalists. The editorial was consistent with Wayland's utopian vision. The editor was willing to print any article that might hurry along the coming utopia. If an article benefitted socialism, it

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<sup>77</sup>Brewer, *Fighting Editor*, 52

<sup>78</sup>Brewer, *Fighting Editor*, 53.

should be published, regardless of any fallout, so Debs' article was printed, adding another important prophetic voice to the *Appeal* canon.

#### “Arouse, Ye Slaves!” as Rhetorical Violence for Nonviolent Social Change

Debs' “Arouse, Ye Slaves!” editorial is a paradigm case of rhetorical violence for the purpose of nonviolent social change. The three markers provided above are all quite evident. Debs began his article by decrying that “for the blindness of the people, [the kidnapping and arrests] would have startled the nation.” In an effort to cast light on an issue of intensity among laborers and ignorance among the broader public, Debs mobilized threats of violence to validate the former and to disturb the latter.

First, Debs clearly made use of radical linguistic division, constructing his enemy, the plutocratic class, as wholly other. Principally, Debs accomplished this division through the dichotomy between the wage slave and the plutocratic slave master, an image built on a robust rhetorical tradition within the labor movement, one used to great effect by Julius Wayland in the pages of the *Appeal*. The titular exclamation framed Debs' entire editorial, so all violence throughout the piece—a piece which is substantially composed of threats—must be understood as the response of slaves to masters. “Slave” or slavery functioned as a terministic screen of sorts to construct a system in which Debs' violence could be coherent. Without the frame of wage slavery or slave rebellion, his violent threats might seem like overreactions, especially to his broader audience, but in the context of slavery, his violent threats became reasonably hostile as responses to systemic or structural violence.

Debs' most colorful language was applied to the so-called “capitalist tyrants.” If the worker is a slave, then the capitalist is the tyrannical slave master, but going further, Debs did his

best to brand reputable capitalist businessmen and financiers as the very essence of evil. Debs hermeneutically reconstituted a potentially dry legal process into the epitome of corruption, through an important frame-shifting redefinition.<sup>79</sup> It becomes the “boldest stroke of plutocracy,” and those behind this master plan were villains, motivated by pure and unmitigated maleficence. He refers to the plutocrats by a variety of insults: “gory-beaked vultures,” “brazen falsifiers,” “venal villains,” “miserable tools of the mine owners,” and “vultures that fatten upon our misery.” Furthermore, these vultures have “cowardly hearts,” conspiring to commit a “criminal calumny.”<sup>80</sup> Clearly, Debs described his enemies in harsh language, emphasizing their otherness and the need to supplant the dominant system of affairs.<sup>81</sup>

Debs appears to suggest revolution, not reformation, when he alleged: “capitalist courts never have done, and never will do, anything for the working class.”<sup>82</sup> However, Debs did not suggest violent revolt as the only option. He noted that through solidarity among workers, the plutocratic others “will be but too eager to relax their grip upon our throats and beat a swift retreat.”<sup>83</sup> This call for revolution was totally conditional; he did not suggest revolution must happen, regardless of circumstance. Writing for a publication with the motto “ballots not bullets,”<sup>84</sup> Debs and his American comrades, especially the sizeable Christian socialist

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<sup>79</sup>David Zarefsky, "Presidential Rhetoric and the Power of Definition," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (2004): 613.

<sup>80</sup>Debs, "Arouse, Ye Slaves!," 1.

<sup>81</sup>Scott and Smith, "Rhetoric of Confrontation," 2.

<sup>82</sup>Debs, "Arouse, Ye Slaves!," 1.

<sup>83</sup>Debs, "Arouse, Ye Slaves!," 1.

<sup>84</sup>Rodger Streitmatter, *Voices of Revolution: The Dissident Press in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 106.

contingent, had a long history of choosing nonviolent democratic solutions over violent revolt. Thus, for Debs, a revolution should come about only if the plutocrats “dare to execute their devilish plot” or if “they attempt to murder Moyer, Haywood and their brothers.” Even at the end of his editorial, as his revolutionary rhetoric reached its fever pitch, Debs maintained that strikes could be invoked “if extreme measures are required.” By implication, extreme measures might not be required. If reason prevailed and if the judicial system was just and if accountability could be motivated by outrage to allow for acquittal, then no revolution would be necessary. Debs did not call for revolution at any cost; instead, he levied threats of violence to render revolution unnecessary. He sought reformation, noting the possibility of revolution only if the capitalist courts execute innocent men. The effectiveness of his threats hinge on their plausibility, but the call for revolution itself was conditional and, ultimately, aimed at concession and reformation.

Second, Debs explicitly joined himself to the abolitionist agitative tradition through his use of slavery as a terministic screen, a framing originary point for his tirade. Like the abolitionist agitators before him, Debs attempted to amplify the issue at hand to constitute a passionate public. Though diverse, American socialists were tied together by one thread: education. Many believed that anyone could be convinced of the clear superiority of socialism if presented with clear, colloquial arguments. American socialists were not Marxian revolutionaries, but instead, they advocated education as the way to change the world. A 1908 survey reported approximately 52% of American socialists initially formed their ideology through reading, and in 1975, James Green analyzed 495 persons associated with the *Appeal*, concluding that 74% became socialists through reading.<sup>85</sup> Realizing the importance of education

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<sup>85</sup>James R. Green, "The 'Salesman-Soldiers' of the 'Appeal Army': A Profile of the Rank-and-File Socialist Agitators," in *Socialism and the Cities*, ed. Bruce M. Stave, Interdisciplinary Urban Series (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1975), 34.

and nonviolence to his readership, Debs wrote, “For the very reason that we deprecate violence and abhor bloodshed we cannot desert our comrades and allow them to be put to death.”<sup>86</sup> The chief aim of American socialism was the ballot box. The democratic process—a process that deprecates violence—relies on rhetorical practice, the production and critical evaluation of arguments. By circumventing accepted legal practices, the plutocrats had purportedly attacked the very foreground of Socialist pacifism.

Debs invoked narrative at two points in his speech. The first, unsurprisingly, was a rehearsal of the details regarding Haywood, Moyer, and Pettibone’s arrest and trial, but the second was a brief rendering of the Haymarket affair:

Nearly twenty years ago the capitalist tyrants put some innocent men to death for standing up for labor. They are now going to try it again. Let them dare! There have been twenty years of revolutionary education, agitation and organization since the Haymarket tragedy, and if an attempt is made to repeat it, there will be a revolution and I will do all in my power to precipitate it.<sup>87</sup>

Here Debs diagnosed the failure to respond to the tragic Haymarket affair as the lack of a coherent, motivated, and educated American socialist movement, implying that the Haymarket situation might have been remedied if specific sustained education had preceded it. Actually, if Debs’ typical agenda could be summarized in only three words, those words might well be “education, agitation, and organization.” He sought to educate and agitate to develop a powerful community to produce significant change. Did Debs here threaten violence? Obviously, he did. However, Debs primarily aimed to spur education to prevent said violence. Debs’ appeals to

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<sup>86</sup>Debs, "Arouse, Ye Slaves!," 1.

<sup>87</sup>Debs, "Arouse, Ye Slaves!," 1.

violence are first and foremost a rhetorical technique to motivate his readers to act according to the basic tenets of American Socialism: agitation, education, and organization. Debs hoped that “upon the issue involved [the kidnapping and trial] the whole body of organized labor can unite.”<sup>88</sup>

Also, Debs threatened violence only in the most generalized terms. He called his fellow comrades to “stand up like men” and “prepare for action,” but he never actually specified what that violent action might be. In the conclusion, Debs nearly hazarded a plan: “A special revolutionary convention of the proletariat at Chicago, or some other central point, would be in order, and, if extreme measures are required, a general strike could be ordered and industry paralyzed as a preliminary to a general uprising.”<sup>89</sup> He suggested a meeting, one only necessary if the trial produces the undesirable result. However, he explicitly used the word “general” twice to describe his proposal. Since Debs must walk the line between credible threat and nonviolent resolution, his generalized plan-as-threat accomplished the task. Debs had led several historic, large-scale strikes, and a revolutionary conference in the heavily industrialized, socialist-haven Chicago could seem scarily plausible to corporate powers. Furthermore, Debs referenced the violence of the Haymarket Affair, so a conference in Chicago of political radicals, one with explicitly violent overtones, would make many very uncomfortable. Thus, Debs’ threats were undeniably ambiguous, threatening bark with little realistic bite. They were too general to be carried out by rogue passionate individuals but serious enough and specific enough to warrant the attention and concern of the listening opposition, almost functioning as a diatribe that aimed

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<sup>88</sup>Debs, "Arouse, Ye Slaves!," 1.

<sup>89</sup>Debs, "Arouse, Ye Slaves!," 1.

“to criticize, to entertain, to shock” by committing “in language the very same barbarisms one condemns in society” principally to gather “an audience when orthodox speeches will not.”<sup>90</sup>

As he began his concluding remarks, Debs exclaimed “Get ready, comrades, for action!” In essence, I suggest that the call to “get ready” was more important for Debs than was any hypothetical violent action. Likewise, Debs’ final call to “watch every move they make and in the meantime prepare for action,” emphasized observation, publicity, preparation, and accountability over and above any physical violence. In the conclusion, Debs most clearly states his purpose: “If we stand up like men from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from Canada to the Gulf, we will strike terror to their cowardly hearts and they will be but too eager to relax their grip upon our throats and beat a swift retreat.”<sup>91</sup> Standing up and organizing a coherent response was the goal; the rhetorical mobilization of threats underscores the urgency of that goal. In this way, “fight” takes on a twofold meaning: one violent, the other nonviolent, one fought in the realm of the soldier, the other in the realm of the agitator.

Finally, Eugene Debs’ prophetic ethos has been well described by James Darsey. Darsey suggests that the prophetic traditions of radical reform and the Hebrew Bible share “a sense of mission, a desire to bring about the practice of the people into accord with a sacred principle, and an uncompromising, often excoriating stance toward a reluctant audience.”<sup>92</sup> Debs clearly passes these prophetic tests. His sense of mission was undeniable, especially as he proclaimed: “if we do not stand by [Haywood, Moyer, and Pettibone] to the shedding of the last drop of blood in our

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<sup>90</sup>Windt, "The Diatribe," 7-8.

<sup>91</sup>Debs, "Arouse, Ye Slaves!," 1.

<sup>92</sup>James Darsey, *The Prophetic Tradition and Radical Rhetoric in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 16.

veins, we are disgraced forever and deserve the fate of cringing cowards.”<sup>93</sup> Debs’ concepts of dignity, loyalty, and justice are bound up in his desire to save the lives of these men in the service of the socialist cause. Further, Debs purported to speak to those “from the farms, the factories and stores,” conveying the sacred principle of fairness and solidarity. Finally, Debs understood the reluctance of portions of his audience, while offering an uncompromising stance: “We are not responsible for the issue. It is not of our seeking. It has been forced upon us. . . . They have driven us to the wall and now let us rally our forces and face them and fight.”<sup>94</sup> Here, Debs suggested that the current economic system was evil; for Debs and other comrades socialism was a fundamentally moral issue. Capitalism was simply wrong. In addition, Debs’ use of slave language, though immediately tied to the abolitionists, contains biblical qualities, adding to his ethos. He becomes a Moses figure, standing on the banks of the Red Sea, waiting for the spirit of Socialism to enliven his enslaved people and to part the waters of injustice.

As noted in the previous chapters, parrhesia or the perception of frank speech is a major part of effective prophetic rhetoric.<sup>95</sup> Haywood’s, Moyer’s, and Pettibone’s accusers, as constructed by Debs, trafficked in deception and manipulation; they never spoke the truth, being “brazen falsifiers.”<sup>96</sup> In this context, Debs channeled a characteristic feature of *Appeal* reportage by positioning himself as a truth-teller, the one voice of reason amidst a sea of deception. In contrast to mainstream news sources, Debs asserted he actually practiced consistent parrhesia.

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<sup>93</sup>Debs, "Arouse, Ye Slaves!," 1.

<sup>94</sup>Debs, "Arouse, Ye Slaves!," 1.

<sup>95</sup>Andre E. Johnson, *The Forgotten Prophet: Bishop Henry Mcneal Turner and the African American Prophetic Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 8.

<sup>96</sup>Debs, “Arouse, Ye Slaves!,” 1.

The mine owners were liars, but the labor leaders were “rigidly honest.”<sup>97</sup> As Foucault noted, prophetic parrhesia is “a verbal activity in which a speaker... risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself).”<sup>98</sup> As one of moral virtue, the parrhesiates, or the prophetic figure, “uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion,” risking potentially extensive damage to self-image so that the truth might be heard.<sup>99</sup> Debs was so committed to the pursuit of truth and the future cooperative commonwealth that he would purportedly die just to enact its appearing. As common to social movement leaders, Debs presented his interpretation of events as hermeneutically “simple,” an explanation of the circumstance for “for what it was.”<sup>100</sup> In his inflammatory article, Debs participated in the utopian prophetic ethos that Wayland developed in the *Appeal*, speaking the truth to a community of committed radicals.

For Debs, threats of violence were not simply tied to anger; instead, he called his comrades to commit themselves to his vision of the coming world of socialism. Although American socialism differed dramatically from classical Marxism, it did contain a major stream of economic determinism, that the reign of socialism was inevitable.<sup>101</sup> Thus, utopian societies, largely motivated by the writings of popular American socialist Edward Bellamy, proliferated during the latter portion of the nineteenth century. The founding editor of the *Appeal to Reason* once wrote, “Socialism is the coming great movement of the world. Better get out of the way of

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<sup>97</sup>Debs, “Arouse, Ye Slaves!,” 1.

<sup>98</sup>Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 19.

<sup>99</sup>Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 19.

<sup>100</sup>Ray and Richards, “Inventing Citizens,” 377.

<sup>101</sup>Shore, *Talkin' Socialism*, 41.

it.”<sup>102</sup> American socialists held to the dream that they might actually “conquer the earth for socialism.”<sup>103</sup> Debs, then, through his overwhelming sense of mission, connected his appeals to violence to bringing to fruition utopian socialism. Such a prophetic persona was vital to the success of the nonviolent function of rhetorical violence, for in-group members must feel compelled to act and out-group observers must appreciate that commitment. The week following Debs’ rousing editorial, the *Appeal* printed another article by Debs that advocated for a “propaganda” that is “one of education and is perfectly orderly and peaceable” and predicted that “a new era will dawn in human progress and in the civilization of mankind.”<sup>104</sup> His calls for violent revolution were aimed toward a prophetic age of progress and liberation.

Darsey notes the strong connection between the prophet and martyrdom. A prophet must be willing to act as a moral exemplar, to suffer, and to die for the truth if necessary. Debs’ career was framed by two prison sentences, one that started his life as a socialist leader and another that concluded it during the First World War. Debs was clearly willing to suffer for his convictions.<sup>105</sup> It is telling, then, that at the top of the front page of the *Appeal* just above Debs’ editorial, the paper was emblazoned with the bold headline “If they hang Moyer and Haywood, they’ve got to hang me. –Eugene V. Debs.” Burke refers to martyrdom as a sort of

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<sup>102</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, March 11, 1898, 1.

<sup>103</sup>George Allan England, *The Story of the Appeal: "Unbeaten and Unbeatable"; Being the Epic of the Life and Work of the Greatest Political Newspaper in the World* (Girard: Appeal to Reason, 1914), 39.

<sup>104</sup>Eugene V. Debs, “The Growth of Socialism,” *Appeal to Reason*, March 17, 1906, page 4.

<sup>105</sup>Murray Kaufman, "The Image of Eugene V. Debs in the American Popular Mind: 1894-1926" (PhD Diss., Carnegie-Mellon University, 1981), 137.

“exhibitionism,” a commitment that “*must* be witnessed.”<sup>106</sup> By offering up his own life, Debs stood in the place of the morally exemplary prophet of the socialist gospel. To this end, Emma Langdon wrote of Debs’ role in the WFM controversy:

In the light of his intrepid courage men walked bravely when they might have faltered. Well he knew the prison doors would fly open before an aroused working class, but if capitalism should press on, seek the blood careless of impending fate, well he knew the shadow of the scaffold he climbed would fall across its grave. In one glad, supreme moment, he would have sealed the devotion of a life. More than any other man capitalism fears Eugene V. Debs; more fully than any other he holds the hearts of the toilers. Their dumb agony finds speech through his lips. Their bowed broken bodies grow tall and fair in his presence. The dreams of ages flower in the love of that lofty soul.<sup>107</sup>

As a prophetic figure, Debs’ readiness for martyrdom served as a source of inspiration and strength and a visceral reminder of the coming “dreams of ages.” Writing about Debs’ editorial, George Brewer claimed it was “destined to go down in history classed with the immortal words of such men as Patrick Henry, Wendell Phillips, Abraham Lincoln and others of like character, who sacrificed reputation and in many cases, life itself, in behalf of the forces that lead toward complete freedom.”<sup>108</sup> In his role as a prophet of a coming nation, Debs helped form socialist identity through the pages of the *Appeal*.

The markers of rhetorical violence present in Debs’ “Arouse, Ye Slaves!” reveal a rhetoric of nonviolent, radical social change. The omission of any one of these three markers

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<sup>106</sup>Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 222.

<sup>107</sup>Langdon, *Cripple Creek Strike*, 488.

<sup>108</sup>Brewer, *Fighting Editor*, 51.

would lessen the power of the technique. If rhetorical violence is meant to raise the rhetorical stakes so that marginalized rhetors and their communities are taken seriously, Debs' masterful deployment here worked quickly. In the issue containing Debs' editorial, the *Appeal to Reason* announced a special edition to be printed just three weeks later on March 31, 1906, containing an article that would tell the "facts" about the case.<sup>109</sup> Debs' editorial, then, served as a means to gain publicity for the more than 3,000,000 copies of the special "Rescue Edition," a world record at the time.<sup>110</sup>

Reaction to the editorial indicates the success of Debs' strategy to gather attention. The article drew criticism from the Canadian Postal Service, which, for a time, refused to circulate the *Appeal* due to its radical nature, citing "Arouse, Ye Slaves!" as evidence.<sup>111</sup> President Theodore Roosevelt called the article "seditious" and labeled the *Appeal* as a "vituperative organ of pornography, anarchy and bloodshed,"<sup>112</sup> describing Debs and the imprisoned union leaders as "undesirable citizens." In response, protestors by the thousands wore protest buttons emblazoned with the words: "I am an undesirable citizen."<sup>113</sup> That the President would mention Debs alongside the Haywood and Moyer indicates he was attached to the proceedings as much as the defendants were. Clearly, Debs' rhetoric of violent address shaped public response to the case.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>109</sup>J. A. Wayland, "The 'Rescue Edition' of the Appeal," *Appeal to Reason*, March 10, 1906, 1.

<sup>110</sup>England, *The Story of the Appeal*, 277.

<sup>111</sup>England, *The Story of the Appeal*, 84-6.

<sup>112</sup>Theodore Roosevelt, "Socialism: Where We Cannot Work with Socialists," *Outlook* 91 (1909): 621.

<sup>113</sup>"20,000 Parade for Accused Miners," *New York Times*, May 5, 1907, 1.

<sup>114</sup>"Debs Preaches Anarchy," *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1906, 11.

Not only did “Arouse, Ye Slaves!” serve to publicize the issue, but it also called for judicial accountability and aided in the cultivation of a widespread public concern for the trial, a trial that was initially underreported by mainstream media.<sup>115</sup> Clarence Darrow eventually defended the union leadership, and all of them were exonerated of all charges. Unlike the Haymarket Affair, where innocent men were put to death by the judicial process, the Steunenberg trial convicted the guilty, Harry Orchard, and released the innocent, Haywood, Moyer, and Pettibone. There is good reason to believe that this process went so smoothly precisely because of the attention and concern of socialists and the public at large.<sup>116</sup>

Debs’ early rhetorical violence might have been confused for an actual provocation of physical violence by the uninitiated, but later, as Debs more explicitly equated the terminology of warfare with his clear attempts of agitation and education, his nonviolent purposes become clear. Debs wrote:

One thing Gooding and McParland, in their whispered consultations over the plans and specifications, failed to take into account. *The Socialist and Labor Press!* They were not to blame for overlooking this powerful battery. It is new and has never before been in action when capitalist conspiracies to murder labor have been evolved and executed. When this battery, led by the APPEAL TO REASON, unlimbered and sent its shells crashing into the camp of the kidnappers and then trained its guns on the whole capitalist class and their venal and iniquitous system, consternation seized the conspirators, the capitalists of the entire nation were startled and alarmed, and many of their own papers began to denounce the crime against our comrades and demand for them a fair trial. This

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<sup>115</sup>Green, "The 'Salesmen-Soldiers'," 31.

<sup>116</sup>F. M. Cassidy, "Editorial," *The Journal of the Switchmen's Union of North America* 9, no. 10 (1907): 798; England, *The Story of the Appeal*, 54.

and this alone thwarted the cruel and craven conspirators, and paralyzed the black hand of legal assassination.<sup>117</sup>

Debs' war took place verbally; his threats served as weaponry for education and accountability. The week after Debs' article, Wayland advised the angry readership of the *Appeal* that "the Appeal is your most powerful weapon."<sup>118</sup> One writer referred to Debs' articles as "paper bullets."<sup>119</sup>

Debs later described the effect of his rhetorical violence: "I issued an appeal to the working class on their behalf, entitled 'Arouse, Ye Slaves,' which stung the capitalist press into giving it wide publicity and at the same time condemning it furiously."<sup>120</sup> As one historian wrote, "Only the agitation of the labor press and the Appeal rendered possible even the semblance of a fair trial."<sup>121</sup> Through threats of violence, Debs motivated his readership to protest, and he motivated the general public to a pinnacle of concern or fear, increasing the chances for negotiation and accountability.<sup>122</sup>

### The *Appeal's* Tradition of Rhetorical Violence

Although Debs' editorial represents an extreme version of rhetorical violence, the most infamous in the history of the *Appeal*, the use of violent vocabulary was commonplace in

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<sup>117</sup>Eugene V. Debs, "Collapse of the Conspiracy," *Appeal to Reason*, July 7, 1906, 1.

<sup>118</sup>J. A. Wayland, "Shall We Start 'Er at 2,000,000?," *Appeal to Reason*, March 24, 1906, 1.

<sup>119</sup>"Shall These Men Thus Be Murdered," *Appeal to Reason*, April 14, 1906, 1.

<sup>120</sup>Eugene V. Debs, "Roosevelt Vs. Roosevelt," *Appeal to Reason*, May 4, 1907, 1.

<sup>121</sup>England, *The Story of the Appeal*, 54.

<sup>122</sup>DeLuca and Peeples, "From Public Sphere to Public Screen," 141.

Wayland's and Fred Warren's *Appeal*, as rhetorical violence provided the urgency and coherence necessary as *Appeal* army members grew frustrated with the failure to immediately achieve their utopian vision. Frequently, Wayland and Warren relied on radical division while calling their readers to "fight."<sup>123</sup> The "politics of desire" that energizes audiences through utopian rhetoric also functions as a continual reminder of how far utopia remains from the present struggle.<sup>124</sup> A democratic reformatory vision of utopia requires principled "patient" protestors,<sup>125</sup> and as patience grows thin, rhetorical violence can function as an outlet for outrage, a mechanism to galvanize publicity, and a means to unite frustrated laborers together around important goals. Eugene Debs' effective rhetorical violence extended upon an important tradition forged by Wayland in the *Appeal* that offered an important retelling of the story of socialist violence. This constitutive technique to "reconceptualize" his readers' "experience of public time (including the past)" defined the history of violence from workingmen and women as necessary responses to provocations from oppressive capitalist regimes.<sup>126</sup>

In "Arouse, Ye Slaves!" Debs characterized violence as a reasonable response to wage slavery, a developed trope in the pages of the *Appeal*, but Debs also drew on Wayland's work to connect union violence to an ongoing war declared by capitalists long ago. In 1903, Wayland

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<sup>123</sup>Fred Warren, "Fight for Freedom," *Appeal to Reason*, July 3, 1909, 1.

<sup>124</sup>James Darsey, "Utopia and Desire," in *Argumentation and Values: Proceedings of the Ninth SCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation*, ed. Sally A. Jackson (Annandale: Speech Communication Association, 1995), 28.

<sup>125</sup>Crane Brinton, "Utopia and Democracy," in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*, ed. Frank E. Manuel, The Daedalus Library (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), 364.

<sup>126</sup>James Jasinski and Jennifer R. Mercieca, "Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics: The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and the 'Principles of '98'," in *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, ed. Shawn J. Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 320.

addressed this “industrial war” and its effects: “When capitalists put one set of armed men to killing another set, it is called a glorious war. The men who do the fighting have no interest or benefit from the killing. All they have to do is to die, or, if they live, to be taxed to pay the expenses of the war. The history of the past is a history of just such killings of the working class for the pleasure or profit of the master class.”<sup>127</sup> As such, workers potentially had a right to violent action, since violence had been systemically forced upon them in the “most atrocious cruelties that are recorded in history.” In this editorial from 1903, Wayland rehearsed injustices done to working people from the “Appian way” by the “Roman legions” to struggles constructing the “Santa Fe railroads” in the United States. This contextualization of worker violence as a response to the long-suffering labor struggle was summed up by Wayland: “It is sometimes terrible when the working people attempt to use the force which their masters have taught them.”<sup>128</sup> In short, the laboring class occasionally responded to violence with violence, even if that might be counterproductive. Here Wayland provided a constitutive reading of history so that union violence became coherent, not the work of incomprehensible “thugs and brutes.” Wayland encouraged readers to “learn the lesson of politics,” to proceed toward utopia through democratic processes, but he understood the struggle must necessarily become “larger and more fierce.”<sup>129</sup> In this way, Wayland explained why so many socialists chose violence, even if he personally considered it a poor decision.

In Wayland’s reconceptualization of labor history, he emphasized that wars always began at the behest of plutocrats, not the peasants who would die in them. Wayland redefined war as

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<sup>127</sup>Julius A. Wayland, “Industrial War,” *Appeal to Reason*, July 25, 1903, 1.

<sup>128</sup>Wayland, “Industrial War,” 1.

<sup>129</sup>Wayland, “Industrial War,” 1.

“the harvest time for the classes that live on other fellow’s sweat.”<sup>130</sup> He suggested, “It was not the English people who declared war against the colonies in 1776...it was the commercial class. They desired to force the people here to trade with them so they could profit off them.”<sup>131</sup> In another paragraph, Wayland opined:

If the men who make bombs with which to kill people are anarchists and enemies of society and should be hunted and killed as wild beasts, why are not the officer of a nation who not only make bombs to kill but rob the people of the money to make them, why are they not public enemies to be hunted as wild beasts? Why is murder a virtue in some and a crime in others? Why is killing one man murder and the killing of ten thousand glory? At what number does murder cease to be murder? When the rulers make compacts to crush out all who oppose their rule, why do not the ruled make a compact to crush out all the rulers? Is not one as right as the other?<sup>132</sup>

In other words, capitalist state violence against laborers in the form of war or financial oppression renders a retaliatory violent response a reasonable choice. The voiceless might feel forced to choose violent revolt to finally achieve articulation. Through a retelling of major events, denigrating the motives of the commercial class, Wayland proffered an understanding of history in which present-day violence could be more easily justified and defended.

At the same time, even after painting a bleak picture of current societal structures, Wayland remained committed to democracy as the means to enact the utopia he sought. An article published by *Appeal* staff writer Franklin Wentworth is a good example of the

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<sup>130</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, May 5, 1900, 4.

<sup>131</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, January 8, 1899, 1.

<sup>132</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, January 8, 1899, 1.

fundamental tension between revolutionary rhetoric and democracy. Wentworth rehearsed the common critique that “militarism is capitalism’s most abhorrent crime,” and he noted specific wars throughout history where “master-butchers like Napoleon” were venerated while “the real heroes died unknown deaths...unmarked for honor.”<sup>133</sup> Still, Wentworth ended the article:

And yet, when all is said, there is yet the truth, that here in America we have a form of government which may yet be made to respond to the popular will. It needs simply to be vitalized and wrestled from the owning class, which is debauching it into a vulgar instrument of selfish interest. Here in America the worker has the ballot. Will he reclaim his world?... You, oh workingmen! You who outnumber your masters as the sands of the sea; you at last shall say. The world’s life rests in your right hand. Shall there one day be an inauguration which you have made; which you, too, may enjoy?<sup>134</sup>

Wentworth embodied the tensions of Wayland and his movement; frustrating injustices continued to occur, even as the peaceful march to utopia continued through education and agitation. The perfect new society might lay just over the horizon, but that horizon seemed to drift further and further away. Although Wayland maintained the superiority of democratic processes in effecting long-term change, he helped his readers comprehend the motivations behind outbreaks of violence by laboring peoples.

Since rhetorical violence and strategic threats are most useful as a movement’s frustrations run high and patience ebbs low, it was rarely found in Wayland’s personal writings in the *Appeal*’s history, especially in its early years. Indeed, much of Wayland’s personal use of rhetorical violence centered on his redefinition of *Appeal* readers as soldiers in an army at war.

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<sup>133</sup>Franklin H. Wentworth, "40,000 Soldiers and Nine Workingmen," *Appeal to Reason*, March 18, 1905, 4.

<sup>134</sup>Wentworth, “40,000 Soldiers,” 4.

For instance, in 1897 he declared his readership to “war against Great Britain” for reckless economic policy, saying “Vile repudiation! To arms! To arms!”<sup>135</sup> This threat of war can serve as a microcosm of the *Appeal*’s style of rhetorical violence. Wayland levied an insult, referring to Britain’s leadership as “vile,” while offering no specific threat, just a generalized call “to arms.” The prophetic pulpit Wayland developed as an editor and writer for the *Appeal* provided the ethos necessary to deliver such a threat. Admittedly, Great Britain would be unlikely to change as a result of a threat printed in a Kansas-based weekly paper, but this strategy of threats provided the blueprint for Debs’ later editorial, issuing generalized but effective threats with little chance of physical violence. Without Wayland’s justifications of the labor movement’s violence, Debs’ article would have been unintelligible to readers of the *Appeal*.

In sum, Eugene Debs participated in an *Appeal* tradition that normalized violence as a response to great injustice, while attempting to circumvent its necessity. Wayland constituted his readers as soldiers fighting in a long war, one they did not choose, but he continued to maintain the supremacy of nonviolent activism. Rhetorical violence, in this system, allowed for Eugene Debs to produce credible threats that would incite both his readership and the opposition to action. Debs’ articulation of threats went further than any preceding instance of rhetorical violence in the *Appeal*. Even so, the success of Debs’ words depended upon a tradition of agitation and the reconceptualization of history emphasizing the magnitude of capitalist injustice and the potential need for violent response, in the hope that the socialist utopia could be achieved without the necessity of actual violence.

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<sup>135</sup>Julius A. Wayland, *Appeal to Reason*, September 25, 1897, 4.

## Conclusion

In “Arouse, Ye Slaves!” Eugene Debs used rhetorical violence to create nonviolent resolution, circumventing the bind faced by rhetors of radical social movements, a bind caused by the need for a response sufficiently extreme to satisfy their movement and sufficiently placid to avoid unproductive physical violence. Debs successfully enacted a rhetoric of threats to amplify the controversy, enliven a public, and create the pre-conditions for accountability in the trial of union leaders. The above analysis further suggests the utility of the three markers for identifying rhetorical violence that supports nonviolence: reformatory radical linguistic division, agitation not assassination, and a connection to the transcendent via the prophetic persona. This technique motivated Wayland’s *Appeal* army, thereby holding the state accountable.

The analysis of Debs and rhetorical violence has important implications for rhetorical critique. First, although rhetorical violence has undeniable power to aid a movement in the service of reformation, the line between rhetorical violence for social change and provocations of physical violence is thin. Sometimes, rhetors aiming to enliven their public can step over that line without the intent to cause destruction. For example, when Sarah Palin used shooting targets to suggest targeting congressional districts in a warlike effort, her threats, using the language of violence to enliven a movement, could have been a factor in the shooting of Congressperson Gabby Giffords.<sup>136</sup> In addition, the rhetoric employed by some pro-life advocates can aggressively over-enliven individuals to do horrible things.<sup>137</sup> Violent force can become a

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<sup>136</sup>Beth L. Boser and Randall A. Lake, "'Enduring' Incivility: Sarah Palin and the Tucson Tragedy," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 17, no. 4 (2014).

<sup>137</sup>Laura Flanders, "Far-Right Militias and Anti-Abortion Violence: When Will Media See the Connection?," *Extra!* 8, no. 4 (1995).

desperate option for frustrated protestors in dire circumstances.<sup>138</sup> There is a real danger that rhetorical violence can be extended in an entelechial fashion, resulting in actual violence. John Dominic Crossan suggests “*names and words* often escalate through *sticks and stones* to *ovens and crematoria*.”<sup>139</sup> The distinction between sophisticated rhetorical violence and a crude call to arms is fine at best, and without all the proposed markers, threats of violence become more and more likely to have lasting material consequences. Further, political leaders in traditional structures of power are often incapable of drawing the fine distinction between purely rhetorical violence and provocations of physical violence, and as such, rhetors like Debs run significant risks of a punitive reaction. For example, Debs’ article caused the *Appeal to Reason* to temporarily lose subscribers in Canada through government censorship and caused a backlash from the United States government.

Second, while my analysis has focused on Eugene Debs and the *Appeal*, there is good reason to suggest this rhetorical technique has been widely employed by a variety of radical rhetors. In addition to abolitionists, the Black Power movement used rhetorical violence, sometimes with peaceful effect. In particular, Malcolm X’s “The Ballot or the Bullet” speech is an example of the sort of rhetorical violence described in this analysis, using a clear prophetic persona and generalized agitation.<sup>140</sup> Thus, violent rhetoric addressed to social movements by marginalized rhetors, especially those with prophetic ethos, constitutes a potentially important rhetorical pattern, one with applicability beyond early twentieth-century socialism.

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<sup>138</sup>Victoria J. Gallagher, "Black Power in Berkeley: Postmodern Constructions in the Rhetoric of Stokely Carmichael," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 87, no. 2 (2001): 155.

<sup>139</sup>John Dominic Crossan, *The Power of Parable: How Fiction by Jesus Became Fiction About Jesus* (New York: HarperCollins, 2012), 182.

<sup>140</sup>Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet," in *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements*, ed. George Breitman (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 23-45.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

For Julius Wayland, 1912 was a difficult year. After losing his first wife to cancer in 1898, he faced the unexpected demise of his second wife in an automobile accident in late 1911, and in 1912 faced federal suits for sending obscene matter through the mail and awaited further federal indictments for scandalous crimes he likely did not commit. Even so, perhaps the most devastating loss that year came in Eugene Debs' fourth place finish for the presidency, as he failed to reach a million votes. Just five days after the election, Julius Wayland despondently climbed the stairs up to his bedroom, wrapped a bed sheet over the barrel of his revolver, and fired a shot into his mouth. Wayland's bullet struck more than its willing target; it also set in motion the decline and death of his massive paper and the movement it enlivened. Like many self-inflicted deaths, Wayland left behind a note. He simply wrote, "Under the current competitive system, the struggle is not worth the effort."<sup>1</sup> He left his note in a book, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, a decision with no little symbolic consequence. With his bullet and scrawled note, Wayland signaled the downfall of a tremendously powerful utopian vision.

Wayland had passed managing editorial responsibilities to his feisty "fighting editor" Fred D. Warren several years prior to his death, but Wayland remained connected to the paper as a occasional contributor and a figurehead.<sup>2</sup> The *Appeal* would not cease publication altogether until 1922, but beginning in 1913, the massive subscription list began to dwindle until the paper was forced to drastically reduce its operations during the First World War. Many historians agree that the *Appeal to Reason* changed after Wayland's death. Michael Cohen wrote, "[Following

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<sup>1</sup>"Story of the Tragedy," *Appeal to Reason*, November 23, 1912, 1.

<sup>2</sup>Sharon E. Neet, "Variant Editions of the Appeal to Reason 1905-1906" (PhD Diss., North Dakota State University, 1983), 11-2.

Wayland's death] the spirit seemed to be leaving the paper and the movement. While a huge campaign after Wayland's death pushed the *Appeal* to its peak circulation in 1913, the paper soon thereafter went into steep decline."<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Elliot Shore claimed the once-robust *Appeal* was reduced to a "shell of the paper that used to be the main organizing tool of the Socialist Party." Further, he noted:

The *Appeal to Reason* was the only mass-circulation radical publication in the history of the United States. After 1912, it ceased to be a radical publication in the sense that it no longer was a rallying point for a movement; rather was an outlet for publishing stories that were not politically appropriate for mainstream papers. After 1912, it became an alternative paper, one that pointed out the problems facing the nation but that no longer offered an effective alternative political solution for them.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, Sharon Neet suggested that the paper lost an "an indefinable quality" after Wayland's direct influence disappeared.<sup>5</sup>

There is little question that Wayland's death was considered the catalyzing event in the *Appeal's* downfall. In 1924, *McClure's Magazine* pinpointed the downfall of the *Appeal* in two events, the First World War and "the death of the paper's founder and chief owner."<sup>6</sup> An editor in nearby Lawrence, Kansas commented in mid-1914, "The Appeal to Reason has not held its

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<sup>3</sup>Michael Mark Cohen, "'The Conspiracy of Capital': American Popular Radicalism and the Politics of Conspiracy from Haymarket to the Red Scare" (PhD Diss., Yale University, 2004), 348.

<sup>4</sup>Elliott Shore, *Talkin' Socialism: J.A. Wayland and the Role of the Press in American Radicalism, 1890-1912* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988), 221.

<sup>5</sup>Neet, "Variant Editions of the Appeal to Reason," 78.

<sup>6</sup>Herbert Flint and Viola Roserboro, "Sixty Million Books: Haldeman-Julius' First Five Years," *McClure's Magazine*, August 1924, 30.

own since the death of J. A. Wayland. It must be that Wayland was possessed of a great executive genius.”<sup>7</sup> Admittedly, it is curious that the death of an editor who did not manage the day-to-day operations of the paper would cause such a shift. Still, as the Hebrew prophet said, “Strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter.”<sup>8</sup> The *Appeal to Reason* was not simply a newspaper; it was an extension of Wayland’s life, his successes, and his utopian dreams. His readers felt as if they had “known the man so intimately in connection with his public work as an editor.”<sup>9</sup> After his death, the paper simply could not continue as it had. In this study, I have demonstrated that Wayland served as a prophet of a powerful utopian movement, a public constituted through the pages of the *Appeal to Reason*. The steady descent of the *Appeal* following Wayland’s death reinforces my claim. When the prophet or head of a mythic system dies, the entire rhetorical schema can fall apart. Without its utopian prophet, readers lost the key figure who previously had helped them inhabit a new identity.

### Summary

The claim that socialism “didn’t happen here,”<sup>10</sup> belies the significance of the nation’s largest socialist movement at the turn of the twentieth century. Emerging from the southeastern corner of Kansas, the *Appeal to Reason* succeeded where all others failed; through circulation it enlivened a national community of motivated socialists. This study provides one explication of

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<sup>7</sup>Lawrence Daily Journal-World, July 29, 1914, 4.

<sup>8</sup>Zechariah 13.7.

<sup>9</sup>Henry Vincent, *The Editor with a Punch: Wayland, an Appreciation* (Massillon, OH: Henry Vincent, 1912), 3.

<sup>10</sup>Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks, *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000).

this weekly newspaper's rhetorical power. I have argued that Julius Wayland constituted a massive readership through strategic utopian rhetoric, casting a powerful vision of society as it could be as a coming utopia. I suggest utopian appeals are most effective when they include four features: acknowledgement of the contingency of the present, a prophetic pronouncement of hope, the introduction of a partisan narrative, and a call for collective action. Wayland mobilized the frustrated desires of the Long Gilded Age to call his readers to attention and action through an effective utopian rhetoric.<sup>11</sup> Writing during the "heyday" of the printed word, Wayland contributed significantly to the "print culture of dissent," the creation of a compelling "cultural arena," one that "presented mainstream America with an alternative way to live, think, and be" through the creative "radicalization of literacy" at a key moment in American politics.<sup>12</sup>

In the various case studies of specific instantiations of constitutive utopian rhetoric in the pages of Wayland's *Appeal*, I demonstrated the power of his message. In chapter 3, I examined a crucial period of desperation for Wayland, after being forced to relocate the operations of his then-modest paper to small-town Girard, Kansas to cut costs. I described Wayland's constitutive strategies of identification, namely his use of a vernacular persona and autobiographical narratives, both situated in the larger context of a utopian mythic system. He rendered himself consubstantial to his readers and to the cause they championed. Through these strategies, Wayland established the groundwork for his prophetic critique, speaking on behalf of the sacred community of American laborers.

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<sup>11</sup>Leon Fink, *The Long Gilded Age: American Capitalism and the Lessons of a New World Order*, American Business, Politics, and Society (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2015); James Darsey, "Utopia and Desire," in *Argumentation and Values: Proceedings of the Ninth SCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation*, ed. Sally A. Jackson (Annandale: Speech Communication Association, 1995).

<sup>12</sup>Jason D. Martinek, *Socialism and Print Culture in America, 1897-1920*, The History of the Book (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1-2.

In chapter 4, I considered the formation of Wayland's *Appeal* army, a group of subscription hawks who facilitated the long-term growth of the newspaper. I suggested Wayland redefined a routine postal audit into a battle to peacefully produce a new utopia. Through constitutive utopian rhetoric Wayland provided readers with a new identity as foot soldiers in a grand and just cause. In chapter 5, I considered the most famous article in the history of the *Appeal*, one that invited international responses and a critique from President Roosevelt, Eugene Debs' "Arouse, Ye Slaves!" Debs' editorial used rhetorical violence to achieve important goals for primary and secondary audiences. Rhetorical violence is a technique especially useful for utopian rhetoric, for utopian rhetoric, as deployed by reformers like Wayland and Debs, requires great patience as activists must wait for gradual change through lethargic democratic processes. Rhetorical violence aimed toward nonviolent change allows movement leaders to validate the outrage of their constituents while also leveraging publicity to provoke those in power to facilitate nonviolent resolution. I provided three markers for effective rhetorical violence that seeks to avoid actual violence, noting the particular necessity of such a technique to Wayland's project, explaining how Wayland's writings on violence and nonviolence in the *Appeal* provided the necessary groundwork for Debs' use of rhetorical violence in 1906. In all the case studies, I explained the power of Wayland's constitutive utopian rhetoric to create the largest radical readership in American history.

George Brewer, a regular contributor to the *Appeal*, encapsulated the way many subscribers viewed the *Appeal* throughout its embattled history:

When the sky was darkest and hope almost dead, there sprang into the breach the most powerful weapon of defense and offense the toiling millions of the world has ever had at their back THE LABOR PRESS. Capitalism had reckoned in this instance without

considering the power of this terrible weapon that had been built up during the past few years of struggle. Towering head and shoulders above anything of the kind that had ever appeared in the history of the world stood the APPEAL TO REASON. Through the force of modern machinery and a tremendous circulation... it was able to hurl its thunderbolt of defiance and truth against the citadel of Capitalism at the rate of three million per week.<sup>13</sup>

The *Appeal to Reason* was fueled by a powerful politics of hope and desire, a utopian vision for the world as it might become. This present study served to explicate and account for Julius Wayland's powerful utopian rhetoric that quickly constituted and motivated the largest circulation of any weekly paper in America.<sup>14</sup>

### Implications

Although the *Appeal to Reason* represents the loudest and most effective voice in the history of American socialism, radical political movements remain an important feature of American democracy. The Bernie Sanders presidential campaign of 2016 provides a clear example of the continuing rhetorical power of the populist socialist tradition today. The historical context that birthed the *Appeal* has considerable connections to the present moment. In fact, some writers suggest Americans have been embroiled in a "second Gilded Age" for decades,<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>George D. Brewer, *The Fighting Editor or Warren and the Appeal* (Girard: Brewer, 1910), 49-50.

<sup>14</sup>Cohen, "Conspiracy of Capital," 215.

<sup>15</sup>Steve Fraser, *The Age of Acquiescence: The Life and Death of American Resistance to Organized Power* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2015), 8-13.

since “we have now returned to Gilded Age levels on inequality.”<sup>16</sup> Therefore, a greater understanding of the *Appeal*'s rhetorical power can reveal important implications for utopian and reformist rhetoric in contemporary America. In what follows, I briefly outline four possible implications of this study.

First, reformist and utopian movements are most likely to develop and cohere around a charismatic prophetic figure. In this vein, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell discussed the critical importance of “the shifting but central character of the roles that we assume in the plays in which we participate, which, in turn, raises issues about the formation of publics and counterpublics.”<sup>17</sup> Although publics and movements are energized through textual arguments, the role played by leaders acting as heroes or prophets is enormously important for a cohesive public. It is notable that while Bernie Sanders repeatedly claimed that his campaign was emblematic of a larger movement, his followers viewed him as a prophet of a better future.

Julius Wayland's paper emerged in an unexpected place to produce a national movement, and in the same way, Senator Sanders, hailing from a tiny state and publicly identifying as a socialist, managed to win 23 democratic primaries, including Kansas. Wayland and Sanders both produced cogent arguments to substantiate their causes, but much of their active following gathered as a result of careful self-presentation and their prophetic ethos. Sanders appeared as a disheveled man of resolutely consistent principles, eschewing popular “media disdain with a

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<sup>16</sup>Greg Jobin-Leeds, *When We Fight, We Win: Twenty-First-Century Social Movements and the Activists That Are Transforming Our World* (New York: The New Press, 2016), 105.

<sup>17</sup>Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Agency: Promiscuous and Protean," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 2, no. 1 (2005): 5.

certain Brooklyn sangfroid.”<sup>18</sup> Silhouettes of his untamable hair were plastered across all sorts promotional materials, even tattooed on the bodies of particularly ardent supporters. The politician served as a modern-day St. Francis of Assisi, attracting birds to his lectern as he advocated on behalf of the poor. These “characterizations” were central to Sanders’ success, not an ancillary result of his acclaim. Such a persona stirs the “real political drama” of gathering, constituting, and motivating movements to act.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the ancient truth that only a prophet can foretell the new age is a modern truth as well. The power of the prophetic role to constitute publics and counterpublics is illustrated by the change of the *Appeal* after Wayland’s death, suggesting Sanders’ political public also will rely on his continual characterization.

A second implication of this study concerns the power of utopian rhetoric. The utopian socialist vision achieved powerful resonance at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but even an effective utopian rhetorical vision can be coopted by mainstream political structures. The failure of socialism in America and the eventual downfall of the *Appeal* can be partially attributed to the progressive moment’s appropriation of the entire socialist platform. In other words, the increasingly mainstream success of Wayland’s utopian vision contributed to its downfall. One summary of the *Appeal* platform illustrates this danger.

The Appeal began in 1895 (six years before there was a [nationally unified] Socialist party) to agitate for direct elections, recalls, referendums, the abolition of child labor, pure food and drug laws, an eight-hour workday, workmen’s compensation, and collectivization of land. Only this last, the collectivization of land, has not become an

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<sup>18</sup>Richard Seymour, "Corbyn, the Unlikely Populist," *Jacobin* (2017), <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/01/corbyn-populism-labour-brexite-tories-immigration/>.

<sup>19</sup>Robert O. Anderson, "The Characterization Model for Rhetorical Criticism of Political Image Campaigns," *Western Speech* 37, no. 2 (1973): 77.

accepted part of our governmental system of today. Soon were added equal rights for women and minority groups, universal suffrage, and the concept of equal pay for equal work.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, when Theodore Roosevelt, a vocal opponent of the *Appeal* and American socialism, ran as a progressive in 1912 against Eugene Debs, the platform he adopted at the Progressive Party National Convention was largely a restatement of an official platform of the Socialist Party of America held since the 1904 election, favoring national health insurance, an eight-hour workday, inheritance tax, farm relief, and direct democracy, among other items.<sup>21</sup> Debs acknowledged the similarities between the parties' platforms, noting that "but a few years ago," Roosevelt had denounced these positions "as anarchy and treason," calling into question his "sincerity and good faith."<sup>22</sup> The Progressive Party hoped to build its success on the foundation of the *Appeal's* successful advocacy. These shared positions eventually became part of the Democratic Party, in part under Woodrow Wilson and in full under Franklin Roosevelt in 1932.<sup>23</sup>

An example of the utopian rhetoric used by progressive politicians to commandeer the *Appeal's* core political platform can be seen in the writings of Robert La Follette:

If it can be shown that Wisconsin is a happier and better state to live in, that its institutions are more democratic, that the opportunities of all its people are more equal,

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<sup>20</sup>"The Appeal to Reason: A Kansas Committee of the Humanities Presentation," *Little Balkans Review* 4, no. 1 (1983): 43.

<sup>21</sup>*A Contract with the People: Platform of the Progressive Party Adopted at the First National Convention*, (Chicago: Progressive National Committee, 1912), 1-16.

<sup>22</sup>"Debs on Roosevelt and His Party," *Appeal to Reason*, August 24, 1912, 6.

<sup>23</sup>Michael E. R. Bassett, "The Socialist Party of America, 1912-1919: Years of Decline" (PhD Diss., Duke University, 1963), 188.

that social justice more nearly prevails, that human life is safer and sweeter – then I shall rest content in the feeling that the Progressive movement has been successful. And I believe all these things can really be shown, and that there is no reason now why the movement should not expand until it covers the entire nation. While much has been accomplished, there is still a world of problems yet to be solved; we have just begun; this is good fighting, and a chance for the highest patriotism still ahead of us...a new age.<sup>24</sup>

Here, La Follette discusses the power of progressivism to inaugurate a new age of social justice, mirroring Wayland's effective rhetoric while essentially incorporating his political stance, one already successfully deployed by socialists in Milwaukee in his home state. This illustrates the non-proprietary nature of utopia. A skilled rhetor is needed to build a cogent utopian vision, but major political forces can appropriate that vision once it reaches a certain tipping point, once it becomes politically useful.

A third implication involves the effectiveness of a consistent, cohesive narrative vision. In its earliest years, when Wayland produced most of the weekly content found in the *Appeal to Reason*, the paper consisted of dozens of little paragraphs, punctuated by occasional articles by important current or past socialist thinkers. Wayland's style as a master "paragrapher" produced a powerful effect, as a plethora of self-contained arguments, parables, and quips flooded the front page of the *Appeal* every week. Often these paragraphs "ended with an exhortation to change things, to learn more, or to wake up. Or it ended with a ringing profession of faith and hope in the future."<sup>25</sup> Throughout issues of the early *Appeal*, the rapid-fire paragraphs, substantiated by expert testimony in the form of articles and book excerpts, produced a consonant melodramatic

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<sup>24</sup>Robert M. La Follette, *La Follette's Autobiography: A Personal Narrative of Political Experiences* (Madison: Robert La Follette Co., 1913), 369.

<sup>25</sup>Shore, *Talkin' Socialism*, 45.

rhetorical narrative, situating readers in a larger battle against greedy capitalists. This technique proved quite effective, as readers grew to appreciate Wayland's mediation of the "workaday world" more than anyone else's.<sup>26</sup> Thus, a consonant, consistent rhetorical narrative can motivate audiences in uniquely effective ways. Wayland's paper could be understood as an incipient form of today's FOX News or various twitter feeds, productively blending news and commentary to persuade auditors. Through a deluge of paragraphs that reinforce a particular narrative, Wayland's readers evidenced little doubt of the accuracy of his accounts of the American political situation. If Wayland suggested that the *Appeal* was under attack from the Federal Government, readers accepted this claim as fact, since it comported with the narrative they were conditioned to appreciate. Essentially, a cohesive narrative vision has tremendously powerful effects in the constitution and motivation of political subjects.

A final implication of this study forefronts the role of rhetorical violence in nonviolent protest. Social movement advocates, especially those using utopian rhetoric, seeking radical change and peaceful revolution are caught in a bind, since their rhetoric must be appropriately virulent to validate their disgruntled audience while not leading to counterproductive violence. Calls for peace may not be sufficiently arousing for an outraged public, yet calls for violence can lead to undesired quagmires. As a rhetorical alternative to nonviolent action, rhetors might choose to employ violent words that invoke urgency and shore up group identity while facilitating resolution. This suggests that threats might serve to create peaceful effects, as rhetors balance various responsibilities and audiences. Though potentially dangerous, the harsh, bombastic rhetoric of a social movement can be understood as a virtuous attempt to resolve complex and underreported issues through radical division, generalized agitation, and prophetic

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<sup>26</sup>W. J. Ghent, "The 'Appeal' and Its Influence," *The Survey: A Journal of Constructive Philanthropy* 26, no. 1 (1911): 27.

rhetoric. Groups without access to corporatized publicity resort to extreme rhetoric in order to achieve desired results.

### Conclusion

The *Appeal to Reason* was a tremendously influential newspaper that has received virtually no attention from rhetorical scholars. With this study, I contribute a recovery of this crucial paper in the communication discipline with the hope that Wayland's achievements as an editor and writer might receive a wider contemporary audience.

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