

# Movements, Aesthetics, and Markets in Literary Change: Making the American Labor Problem Novel

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*One path to cultural innovation in artistic and literary fields is differentiation of a genre into new subgenres. But what are the dynamics at work in such a process? This article addresses that question by identifying and explaining the emergence and trajectory of a new fiction subgenre—the American labor problem novel—during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. I make a theoretical case for the intersection of social movement fields and cultural production fields showing, through a historical sociological analysis, that this subgenre was the joint product of: (1) a shift in literary aesthetic practice resulting from the rise of realism, (2) the subgenre’s dialogical character, (3) collective contention surrounding the rise of labor movement militancy, and (4) the exigencies of literary and popular culture markets. The historical conjuncture of these processes contributed to a repository of cultural constructions of class in storied form, as novelists sought to both entertain and educate readers about the emerging realities of class-contentious industrial society. This study demonstrates the fruitfulness of merging sociology of culture theory and social movement outcome perspectives when analyzing cultural change.*

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“The cessation of work was already greater. . . . They seemed to be losing their own control of the workingmen, and a few tonguey vagrants and convicts. . . . They were going from place to place . . . preaching what they called socialism, but was merely riot and plunder.”

– John Hay, *The Bread-Winners: A Social Study* ([1884] 1973:209)

“The fact is labor of all kinds, in the face of capitalist organization, must combine their forces or

sink deeper and deeper. . . . [We must] work out a solution of the labor problem—the great problem that includes all other problems on earth.”

– T. Fulton Gantt, *Breaking the Chains: A Story of the Present Industrial Struggle* ([1887] 1986:44)

**J**ohn Hay and T. Fulton Gantt were among the many contributors to the American labor problem novel, a fiction subgenre that began to appear in the last several decades of the nine-

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teenth century. Writers from across the political spectrum addressed one of the most pressing issues facing American society—the “labor problem”—in fictional form. Between 1870 and 1919, more than 500 labor problem stories were published in the United States. How can we explain this innovation in stories about strikes, unions, and the labor problem? How does a literary genre, novel-writing, become differentiated in a way that spawns a new subgenre? The task of explaining the emergence and temporal trajectory of this literary form offers an intriguing historical case and an important theoretical opportunity, one that allows us to examine how new cultural forms—genre differentiation, in this case—emerge, expand, and contract.

Identifying and explaining how new cultural forms emerge and develop is an important part of understanding cultural change. While research on specific cultural forms is vast, work theorizing the dynamics and social-historical conditions of genre and subgenre emergence and trajectory is much less common. In a recent study, Lena and Peterson (2008) identify several genre types in music and use them to map and theorize sequential combinations into recurrent trajectories followed by specific musics (e.g., delta blues and rock-n-roll). Yet they do not analyze the macro social-historical conditions that gave rise to specific genre innovations, or that shaped their cross-temporal trajectories. The sociology of literature has produced a substantial body of work on the novel (e.g., Griswold 1981, 2000; Radway 1984, 1988), but little examines genre and subgenre emergence and trajectory (but see Kiser and Drass 1987 and Drass and Kiser 1988 on trajectory). Our knowledge of the labor problem novel can be credited almost entirely to literary historians who have provided rich and insightful, yet selective and fragmentary, studies; no literary scholarship systematically maps and explains the emergence and trajectory of the labor problem novel. More generally, the study of literary change should not be ceded exclusively to literary critics (Eastwood 2007). This void in the sociology of literature might be filled, and the field revitalized, by studies following a variety of different paths, including: (1) formalistic approaches featuring intergeneric properties and trajectories (e.g., analogous to Lena and Peterson 2008 on music) and (2) more contex-

tually dependent strategies that examine genre and subgenre genesis and trajectory through a historical sociology of literary forms (Eastwood 2007). Here I follow the second path.

While any number of factors might help explain the labor problem novel’s emergence and trajectory—those endogenous to the cultural field, as well as extra-cultural conditions (e.g., institutions, industries, and markets)—my explanation highlights processes operating in both arenas. I demonstrate that the American labor problem novel’s emergence and trajectory during its heyday (1870 to 1905) and relative decline (1906 to 1919) was the joint outcome of processes both exogenous (especially [1] the growth of collective contention surrounding the rise of the national labor movement and [2] changes in publishing laws and markets) and endogenous to the literary field (namely [3] the emergence of the realist aesthetic in American fiction-writing and [4] the subgenre’s dialogical<sup>1</sup> character).

Many studies that focus on movements’ cultural outcomes ignore theories of cultural sociology, while cultural sociologists frequently neglect the role of movements in cultural innovation and change. Bringing a social movement focus to the study of literary change can facilitate a conceptual bridge that spans research on social movement consequences as well as the sociology of literature and cultural sociology more generally. Focusing on social movements as agents in cultural change in conjunction with cultural sociology enriches both subfields. Moreover, wedding these two important sociological preoccupations in this historical context illuminates an important vehicle through which cultures of class are produced and circulated in storied form.

The analysis is organized around several interrelated objectives. First, I establish the theoretical groundwork for understanding genre differentiation by linking the study of social movement outcomes to theories of cultural innovation and production. Second, I situate the quantitative trajectory and qualitative character of the labor problem novel in historical context

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<sup>1</sup> By “dialogical,” I refer to meaning production that is motivated and shaped by both collective contention *and* the internal dynamics of discourse itself (see Steinberg 1999:737).

and derive hypotheses regarding the emergence and trajectory of the “labor problem” in storied form. Third, I provide quantitative tests of these hypotheses to account for the labor problem novel literary formation during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Historical materials and quantitative analysis generally support the argument that social movement contention, aesthetic practice, and markets are jointly key in accounting for the trajectory of labor problem stories throughout the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era.

### SUBGENRE FORMATION AS CONTINGENT, MOVEMENT-INDUCED CULTURAL CHANGE

Genre is a conceptual category used to classify or comprehend the characteristic form of a cultural product for which an explanation may be required (Griswold 1987; Lena and Peterson 2008). Here the root genre is the novel, but it is the emergent, innovative differentiation and developmental trajectory of a subgenre—the labor problem novel (hereafter, LPN)—that I seek to explain. DiMaggio (1987:441) states that “genres represent socially constructed organizing principles that imbue artworks with significance *beyond their thematic content*” (emphasis added). But in the case of a novel subgenre, it is precisely the *thematic content* that differentiates it from other variations of the broader genre (e.g., romance, mystery, and LPN).

While we generally lack theory on genre and subgenre emergence (DiMaggio 1987:441; Lena and Peterson 2008) and analyses of literary genre trajectories are rare (Kiser and Drass [1987] and Drass and Kiser [1988] are exceptions), theories of cultural change can provide guidance. “Cultural ecology” (Kaufman 2004:346) refers to approaches emphasizing that cultural change occurs within relatively bounded “ecosystems” that set culturally endogenous constraints on growth, stability, and change in cultural forms. The major principle in such an explanation is an internal dynamic for both emulation and innovation within all cultural systems that is driven by the pursuit of social distinction and differentiation. Within cultural systems—whether academic disciplines (Abbott 2001), parents naming babies (Lieberson 2000), or, presumably, novel-

writing—accepted style, taste, and logic develop to a point wherein growing numbers of practitioners seek innovation for purposes of differentiation. The central issue, then, is to locate the threshold at which emulation begins shifting to differentiation; the key mechanisms for explaining such tipping points are internal to the cultural system itself, not exogenous social conditions or events. In short, culture shapes culture, and “cultural change can occur independent of social structural, technological, or material change” (Kaufman 2004:336). Within artistic and literary fields, then, one might expect shifts in aesthetic practices to be key in producing genre or subgenre change.

Institutional production-of-culture (POC) perspectives emphasize extra-cultural processes and conditions when explaining cultural change. POC theorists maintain that culture produced within formally organized institutions (e.g., art, music, and literature) is shaped by the social organization of its production, distribution, and use. This approach highlights structures and organizational conditions that constrain or encourage aesthetic choices, emphasizing the roles of industries, careers, markets, and legal environments (DiMaggio 2000; Peterson and Anand 2004).

Bourdieu’s theory of culture is useful here because it contains elements of both POC and cultural ecology frameworks; it is more historically relational and explicitly political than the institutionalist U.S. variant, while his “cultural fields” concept anticipates ecological thinking about culture (Kaufman 2004). While Bourdieu’s (1993, 1996) cultural fields are arenas of contestation between materially unequal groups, contemporary cultural ecology builds on, but moves away from, the importance that Bourdieu attaches to exogenous interest and struggle between unequal groups (Kaufman 2004:349). For instance, according to Bourdieu (1996:252), a “correspondence between internal changes [within the cultural field] . . . and external changes” within the field of power makes a transformation within an art field’s genre hierarchy possible, and the role of external power relations is clear when he insists on the importance of “political ruptures” (e.g., revolutionary crises) in nineteenth-century French literary change (p. 253). Bourdieu (1996:256) sees cultural productions as the outcome of relations between the history of fields of cultural

production and the history of the wider social formation. For present purposes, this suggests that locating the cultural field within the field of power requires an examination of the possible intersection of the social movement field and the literary field. While Bourdieu is suggestive, the institutionalist POC and other cultural perspectives (see Kaufman 2004) largely ignore the fact that cultural production industries can be embedded within fields of social movements that contribute, at least periodically and in part, to shaping change in cultural forms.

What can social movement scholarship bring to the study of cultural change? A central premise of the “cultural turn” in social movement studies is that not only does culture play a key constitutive role in forming and mobilizing movements (Jasper 1997; Johnston and Klandermans 1995; Polletta 2006; Reed 2005; Roscigno and Danaher 2004; Taylor and Rupp 1993), but *movements matter in making extra-movement cultural change*, a point of significance for both social movement scholarship and sociology of culture. Yet despite calls for research on cultural change (e.g., Earl 2000, 2004; Giugni 1998, 1999; Swidler 1995; Zald 1996), the preponderance of movement outcomes research focuses on political and policy outcomes, with little attention to cultural consequences (Earl 2004; Giugni 1998, 1999). In his review of the movement outcomes literature, Giugni (1998:373) calls this a “striking disparity” in focus.<sup>2</sup>

Within the limited body of work that does link movement activity to wider cultural outcomes, some studies focus on changes in values and beliefs as a result of social movement activity (e.g., d’Anjou 1996; Rochon 1998), while others examine signs and practices in cultural production, such as visual art (Oldfield 1995), music (Eyerman and Barretta 1996; Eyerman and Jamison 1998), fashion (McAdam 1988), educational institutions (Rojas 2007), and collective memory (Armstrong and Cragge 2006; Griffin 2004), with several studies focusing

specifically on movement-induced literary change. For example, Farrell (1995) traces the development of *Ms. Magazine* as an outgrowth of the women’s movement, Reed (2005:ch.3) describes the transformation of “women’s movement poetry” into the “feminist poetry movement,” and Pescosolido, Grauerholz, and Milkie (1997) systematically examine extra-movement literary change—the influence of civil rights movement intensity on pictorial representations in children’s literature. While both Farrell and Pescosolido and colleagues find that market processes condition movement effects in ways that dampen movement objectives in the cultural arena, these studies do not integrate social movements into a theory of change in cultural forms.

### *INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURING AND MEDIATING CONDITIONS*

Studies of movement effects on political policy outcomes generally find that institutional structures mediate or condition movement influences in significant ways; for example, favorable political environments (e.g., Amenta, Carruthers, and Zylan 1992; Jenkins and Perrow 1977) or discursive opportunity structures (e.g., McCammon et al. 2007) can help shape how movements influence political policy. In the case of movement-induced cultural outcomes, conditions identified by cultural theorists are potentially important determinants as well as possible mediating structures. Therefore, we should anticipate that norms of aesthetic practice (internalist) and how cultural production is organized likely interact with social movement influences (externalist). Writers (and artists more generally) may produce cultural works stimulated by movements, but movement influence on literary work is likely mediated by the kinds of social conditions theorized by POC (e.g., markets) and cultural ecology (e.g., artistic norms) perspectives.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In this article, I limit my focus to the conditions that gave rise to the LPN as an overall subgenre without attempting to parse the possible effects of various pro-labor or anti-labor stories on either labor mobilization or counter-mobilization against labor.

<sup>3</sup> The POC perspective has been sensitive to artistic and aesthetic movements within particular cultural arenas, but it has ignored social-political movements (Eyerman and Barretta 1996) and how aesthetic and social-political movements may interact to produce cultural change.

### *ARTISTS AS MOVEMENT AGENTS/ MOVEMENT AGENTS AS ARTISTS*

Movements generally consist of collective actions wherein political messages are often performed in culturally creative or dramatic fashion (Eyerman 2006; Taylor, Rupp, and Gamson 2004). Some activists and sympathizers are artistic producers—writers, musicians, poets, and actors—who play a role in *aesthetic activism* by producing and circulating movement-relevant culture in creative and entertaining ways. Movements are typically large, multivocal, multiplex collectivities comprised of individuals with varying degrees of involvement, ranging from hard-core cadre to peripheral, but nonetheless supportive, conscience constituents (McCarthy and Zald 1977). We should thus anticipate that movement-stimulated cultural performances may vary between two poles of movement and artistic agency. On the one hand, writers (artists) serve as movement and countermovement cultural agents through their writing. These individuals are writers (artists) first but are moved to respond to movement actions (in support of or against them) by incorporating them into their literary products, their primary concern. On the other hand, some movement and countermovement activists employ literature as a vehicle to purposively advance (or undermine) a movement. Here the movement is what matters most and the story, the novel, is simply a means to an end. While cultural products, like literature, are shaped by organizational systems that operate within markets under state regulations (Griswold 1981; Peterson and Anand 2004), writers are central literary production agents “who interact with texts working to encode meanings” (Griswold 1993:465). Writers may do so primarily as either writers or movement activists, and examining these aspects of an author’s social position may enhance sociological understanding of the literary creation (Bourdieu 1996; Eastwood 2007). Both types of writers constructed the LPN subgenre.

### *INSTITUTIONAL ARENA AND FORM OF CULTURAL CHANGE*

Because cultural change can be diffuse, perhaps unintended, and therefore “slippery” (Rochon 1998:17), some scholars argue that specifying the outcome of interest and guarding against spuriousness in causal claims is

even more challenging here than for other forms of movement-induced change (Earl 2000; Giugni 1998). My present focus is not diffuse cultural change, but rather specific practices within a formally organized institutional arena, a segment of the literary field whose primary business is cultural production, precisely the sort of activity around which POC theory has developed (e.g., Bourdieu 1993, 1996; DiMaggio 1982; Griswold 1987; Peterson 1976; Peterson and Anand 2004). Institutionally confined focus, theory, historical grounding, and analytic methods all help guard against spurious claims.

### **THE LABOR PROBLEM NOVEL: TRAJECTORY, CONTEXT, AND HYPOTHESES**

#### *THE SHAPE OF THE LABOR PROBLEM NOVEL LITERARY FORMATION*

The labor problem novel (LPN) was fiction-writing that contained at least some treatment of the “labor problem” or the “labor question,” as it was coming to be known. These novels were, of course, multisided and contentious, with authors depicting concerns as either problems of the newly emerging industrial society *for* collective labor or the problem *of* collective labor for the new industrial society. The primary pivot was the labor movement, especially what strikes and unionization meant for working people, employers, and young industrial America.

The American LPN began to show a substantial presence as a nascent subgenre during the 1870s. Working-class and class-sympathetic authors wrote a few predecessor stories—for example, a couple of Rebecca Harding Davis novels (1860s) about the degradation of factory life and an obscure novel by Martha Tyler (1855), *A Book Without a Title*, in which the first strike is depicted, one in which the author had participated (Blake 1972)—but the LPN subgenre did not have a real presence. Strikes, organized labor, and the collective labor problem as national issues were distinctly absent from the U.S. literary landscape. This would begin to change by the 1870s (Blake 1972; Hapke 2001) and the subgenre became more fully established by the 1880s. Most of this literary formation happened between 1880 and 1900 and declined from 1905 through the 1920s.

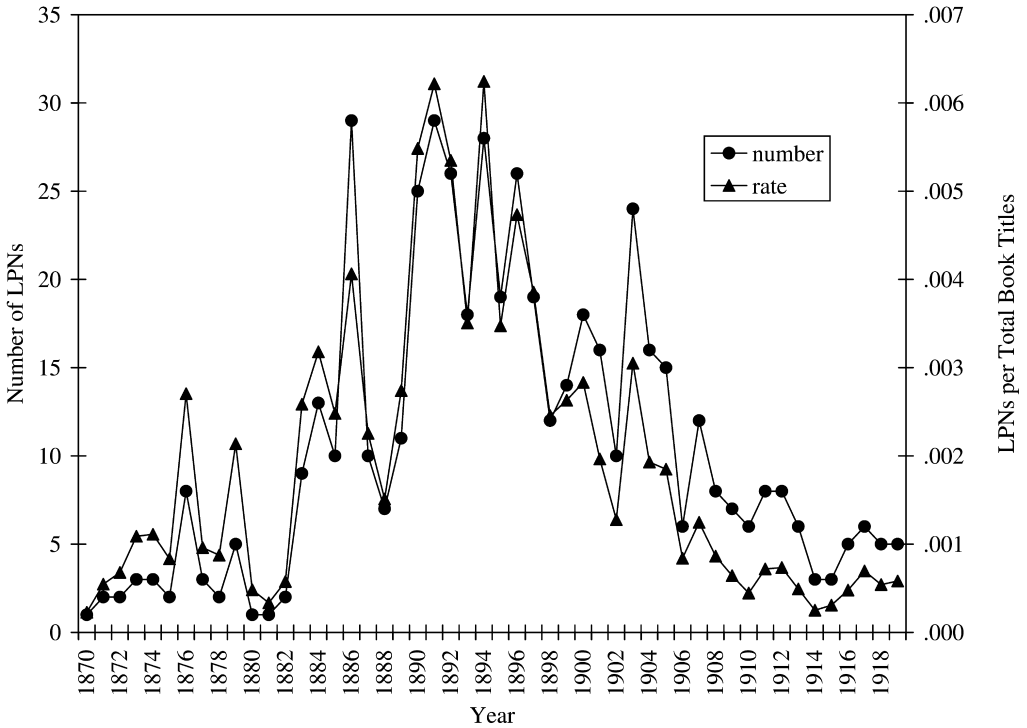


Figure 1. American Labor Problem Novel Title Production, 1870 to 1919

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Realist fiction forerunners emerged in France (Bourdieu 1996) and England in the 1840s and 1850s in the form of the “social-problem novel” (Poovey 1994), but the American LPN was relatively distinct in development and content. Quantitatively, simple mimetic diffusion cannot account for the timing of the emergence, trend, fluctuations, or growth in the U.S. LPN production trajectory. Qualitatively, the U.S. version was infused with a distinctive domestic cultural texture (Blake 1972; Smith 2006). As Grimes (1986:8) put it, American labor fiction looked at social problems appearing in the Gilded Age and “was mainly a home-grown product molded to American issues.” Figure 1 shows the trajectory of LPN titles from 1870 to 1919, along with the rate of LPN titles relative to total titles. The two series track closely ( $r = .91$ ), indicating that the LPN increased both absolutely and as a relative share of all book titles during the Gilded Age.

The genre’s diversity revolves around a distinctive two-sidedness. By the 1870s, organized labor’s alternative cooperative culture and demands at the workplace created a menacing presence for employers and other defenders of

the social order. Writers who equated the labor problem with the labor movement often used familiar tropes in their stories—for example, immigrant labor and the evil “walking delegate” who forced good workers to join unions and strike. Numerous stories painted the villain, the labor agitator, as an immigrant who brought alien ideas from the “old world” and infected good, but dull, native workers.

The subgenre also contains pro-labor narratives. Common themes emphasize the plight of the worker and the vast material and cultural inequalities between labor and capital. Bosses are often characterized as greedy, immoral, and evil, while the hero is typically a worker. Standing up to the boss and fighting for employment rights is often depicted as an expression of manliness. Characters in some stories comment on modern industrial conflict as tantamount to a new civil war.

This subgenre not only characterizes the labor problem but also dramatizes a repertoire of solutions. Not surprisingly, the defense of the status quo against evil forces often required the use of armed force in the form of police, private militias, the National Guard, or the army. Some

defenders of the status quo built strong themes of temperance into their narratives, while others found saloons to be breeding grounds for radical ideas. Profit-sharing in cooperatively-owned enterprises and Christian socialism were the most common reformist hopes. On the other side, some authors championed worker self-organization and solidarity as the solution to the labor problem.

A wide variety of publishing houses, from mainstream to left-labor, produced LPNs. In addition to regular book publication, some labor problem stories began in serialization (some of which were later published in book form). Keeping with the two-sided character of this literary formation, serialization of labor problem stories appeared in both labor and genteel venues.

The novel came to serve as a vehicle for telling stories about the new, strange, and threatening developments unfolding in industrial capitalism. As they told their stories, some authors worked to stabilize meanings in hopes of stabilizing the social formation; others worked to reconfigure meanings that might stimulate a new vision for social change. Some authors were deeply embedded in their respective side of the struggle, while others were more peripheral, offering support for one side or another from a distance. Some wrote openly under their real names; others concealed their identity under pen names or wrote anonymously. Some were famous writers, but many were not well known. For every William Dean Howells, Edward Bellamy, Theodore Dreiser, or Upton Sinclair in the Gilded Age LPN field, there were literally hundreds of obscure writers who contributed to the making of cultural change with stories that reveal important characterizations of collective agents and collective actions, social problems, fears, and strategic solutions to the “labor problem.” But why did LPNs appear at this particular time? And how did the labor problem “get into” fiction to produce genre differentiation?

### *LABOR MOVEMENT CONTEXT*

The labor movement changed dramatically during the Gilded Age. Earlier antebellum movements were small, parochial, localistic, largely producerist in ideology and formation, and almost always made up of elite craft workers (Hattam 1993; Wilentz 1989). Throughout the

Gilded Age, the movement grew in size and diversity, became nationally oriented, formed around modern notions of class rooted in wage labor, exhibited increasingly pronounced boundaries between workers and employers, and collective contention became much more lethal (Lipold and Isaac 2009). During the 1870s, “the first clear signs of national working class presence” appeared (Wilentz 1989:84–85).

A series of major events in the 1870s shaped public consciousness about labor issues. News of the 1871 Paris Commune horrified elites but was typically interpreted as peculiar to the “old world” from which America was still seen as exempt (Isaac 2002). That exceptionalist outlook would weaken over the next several years. With over-investment in fixed capital and overproduction (especially in leading sectors such as rails), major slumps began in 1873 to 1874, leading employers to lay-off workers, speed-up the labor process, and cut wages, a sequence that would be repeated throughout the decade. Growing numbers of surplus workers (“tramps” as they were called), the Tompkins Square Riot (1874), the arrests of the “Molly Maguires” in the Pennsylvania coal fields (1875), and the founding of the socialist Workingmen’s Party (1876) all fed elite anxieties. But the first major shock to puncture complacent exceptionalist notions came in the summer of 1877: the railroad working-class, joined by the unemployed, miners, and some factory workers across major industrial centers, mounted the first mass, national-level militant mobilization against the new industrial regime (Isaac 2002; Stowell 1999). The central issue preoccupying America was no longer the South and reconstruction, but rather capital, wages, and related constructions of the “labor problem” or “labor question” (Montgomery 1980; Richardson 2001).

Collective contention grew around the labor problem. On the one hand, a narrative cascade of anti-labor discourse emerged during the post-1877 era. Along with this discursive flurry, massive resistance and counter-assaults against the labor movement mobilized conspiracy and injunction law, municipal police, local militias, citizen vigilance committees, employers’ associations, private industrial armies, detective agencies, the National Guard, and the U.S. Army (Isaac and Harrison 2006). On the other hand, strikes continued to grow throughout the period, even though strikers suffered disproportional

tionately from violence at the hands of repressive forces mounted by state and employers' agents (Lipold and Isaac 2009; Montgomery 1980). The growth of strikes, unions, and major flashpoints of collective contention—the great railroad rebellion of 1877, the Haymarket riot of 1886, the Homestead-Carnegie steel strike of 1892, the Pullman strike led by Eugene Debs and American Railway Union in 1894, and industrial armies of the unemployed on the march, such as Coxe's Army in 1894—all served to construct a very new political-cultural context (Montgomery 1980; Schneirov 2006), within which labor problem discourse came to be a leading issue.<sup>4</sup> Yet it took more than a labor crisis for the labor problem to become a major subject of fiction-writing. A new aesthetic in literary practice was also required.

### **THE REALIST AESTHETIC IN FICTION-WRITING**

The novel was a part of the American cultural landscape since the colonial era and grew as a literary form during the nineteenth century (Davidson 2004). Long a suspect enterprise, the production and consumption of the genre encountered moralistic resistance and conservative fears throughout most of the century (Davidson 2004).<sup>5</sup> But the realist movement in American literature<sup>6</sup> established new aesthetic norms that altered fiction-writing during the

Gilded Age (Editors 1967; Nagel and Quirk 1997; Trachtenberg 1982; Zeraffa 1973). Voices of gentility had long insisted on a view of art and literature in which cultured "good taste" was featured and the vulgarity of lower orders avoided by simply ignoring them (Trachtenberg 1982:182). The new realist impulse, however, was to "reflect"<sup>7</sup> the world as it really was, "to create a world of fiction congruent with 'real life'" (Trachtenberg 1982:184). Proponents of realism aspired "to disarm the authority of the ideal by dramatizing activities of life as it is really lived" (Nagel and Quirk 1997:viii).

Known for reproducing faulty vision and traditional sentimentalism, defects associated with the lower classes and femininity, Victorian elite men had long shunned novels (especially dime and romantic varieties). Realism was, according to its leading proponents (e.g., William Dean Howells), a corrective to the novel's traditional liabilities. Through the serious treatment of "commonplace" reality and especially "socially inferior groups," realists believed that their works could have a positive influence by holding up a mirror to society, thus representing a shift in the genre's epistemology. With the realist turn, elite men began to consider novels as serious, manly productions and a form of education about the social world, not simply misguided fluff suited to "the gentle sex" and the "lower orders" (Davidson 2004:10; Tuchman and Fortin 1989:8).

Realist fiction claimed to prize empirically "accurate" representations of the contemporary world, seeking to both entertain and edify, often by showing how new social formations (e.g., unions) or social types (e.g., the labor leader, the businessman, or the gold digger) had emerged in society or by showing how familiar ones had gone through a change in character (e.g., "good worker" into "bad worker"). In realist narratives, characterization was generally more important than plot. The realist movement in literature not only shaped the character and type of story, but it also served as a new space or opening for those who wanted to dramatize social groupings and events that were serious reflections of real life. In this sense, realism

<sup>4</sup> The emergence of the "labor question" or "labor problem" was truly a Gilded Age phenomenon. When tracked through the pages of the *New York Times*, these terms appear very infrequently before 1870 (they are in only five articles, all referring to slave labor), but increase in frequency over the following decades: 1870s = 279, 1880s = 481, 1890s = 441, 1900s = 660, and 1910s = 787.

<sup>5</sup> As Cowie (1951:5), a literary historian, put it: "[Pious, good people thought that] reading fiction tended to 'inflame the passions' and 'corrupt the heart.' It put ideas into girls' heads, gave them grossly inaccurate theories about life, made them discontented with their lot, opened the door to seduction, encouraged suicide, undermined religious beliefs, and vitiated democracy."

<sup>6</sup> It is not my aim to explain the rise of realism in literature, but rather to describe its role as an aesthetic movement that established a new literary opportunity structure for the development of the LPN.

<sup>7</sup> For critiques of "reflection theory" in literature, see Desan, Ferguson, and Griswold (1989) and Alexander (2006).



opened the door to and created a more favorable opportunity structure for a new kind of story that would employ “realistic” depictions of current social problems and social types in storied form. These conceptual and historical foundations regarding the labor movement and literary realism lead to my central hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 1 (movement and aesthetic practice):* Collective contention surrounding the labor movement—particularly that manifested in contentious collective actions like strikes and union organization—stimulated the production of labor problem stories, but was able to do so, in large part, because of the rise of realist sensibilities in literary practice. That is, the realist aesthetic movement in literary circles served to mediate or interact with the field of collective contention surrounding the labor movement.

#### LITERARY ACTIVISTS, BATTLING BOOKS, AND DIALOGICAL SOURCES OF SUBGENRE GROWTH

The nascent labor movement, and the collective resistance it encountered, induced a new discursive “space” (Eyerman and Jamison 1998). As authorial agents, LPN writers constituted a part of that space with their stories, and their relation to the wider social formation, especially the labor movement, mattered. To varying degrees, individual writers were movement-connected and movement-conscious in their efforts to tell stories about the problems and threats facing young industrial America and its new, conflict-ridden character. Some writers were affiliated with the union movement and used the novel as a strategic vehicle to promote mutualism and solidarity in collective action, challenging the injustices of the newly emerging industrial regime. On the other side, some authors were embedded in collective attempts to suppress labor’s self-organization and any form of labor movement for social change. Others, not participants in a direct action sense, were involved in the literary formation as conscience constituents supporting, with their stories, one side or the other of the emerging industrial fray. LPN authors were all either directly or indirectly involved as *literary activists* in the struggle over the “labor question.” But

how, in fact, did novelists get the movement or resistance to the movement into their stories? There were two key channels.

AUTHORS APPROPRIATE THE REAL: As part of the realist impulse to attend to real-world problems, authors appropriated material from the movement field. They deployed characterizations of real events, organizations, new social types, and well-known individuals as literary tropes or objects of “social study.” For example, renderings of major flashpoints of class struggle—the 1877 labor strike and riots; the 1886 Haymarket riot; the 1894 strike at Coeur d’Alene, Idaho; and the Pullman strike in Chicago in the same year—infused stories. Some authors used specific movement organization referents in their narratives, such as the mysterious “Molly Maguires,” the Knights of Labor, and the American Federation of Labor. Real-life individuals sometimes appeared as thinly disguised characters in stories.<sup>8</sup>

PROVOCATIVE INITIATOR NOVELS. The second major channel through which collective contention shaped and expanded this new subgenre was through “battling books,” the process of stories provoking new stories. Openness, ambiguity, and indeterminacy of narratives can be sources of continuing production (Polletta 2006), but some stories stimulate sequels and counter-narratives not so much because of their ambiguity as due to their clear message, a message that is read as politically or morally repugnant, a storied assault that must not go unchallenged. Periodically, a text was so provocative that it set in motion, in good dialogical fashion, a series of counter-narratives. This process not only fueled the subgenre’s quantitative growth, but it provided another way in which constructions of labor problem contention entered the repertoire of stories. John Hay’s *The Bread-Winners: A Social Study*, for

<sup>8</sup> Authors of realist novels often signaled their realism not only through the use of real-world events, settings, and characters, but also in paratext, like subtitles. For example, Hay’s *The Bread-Winners* carries “A Social Study” as the subtitle; Martin Foran responded to Hay with a more authoritative subtitle, “A Social Study Based on Fact.”

example, was a provocative initiator novel that sparked a flurry of counter-sequels.

*The Bread-Winners* addresses the labor problem from an anti-labor movement standpoint. *The Century* first serialized the story between summer 1883 and winter 1884; Harper and Brothers quickly published it in book form in 1884. Released anonymously, the author's identity was not disclosed until 1916, 11 years after his death.

In 1874, Hay married the daughter of Amasa Stone, a wealthy Cleveland industrialist. Hay periodically assisted his father-in-law with business matters, associated with wealthy industrialist and banker neighbors on Euclid Avenue's "Millionaire's Row" (Isaac 2002), and became involved in the right-wing of Ohio's Republican party (Gale 1978). Like many Gilded Age elites, Hay was shaken by the 1877 labor uprising. Cleveland elites, like their counterparts in other northern industrial cities, fully expected to see more "labor riots," as the mainstream press and elites called them, produced, in their view, by an increasingly ethnic, politically "unreliable" (militant) working class. Moved by labor and other fears, Hay and his upper-class neighbors from Millionaire's Row formed two paramilitary organizations—"First City Troop of Cleveland" and the "Cleveland Gatling Gun Battery"—only weeks after the uprising (Isaac 2002). This was Hay's proximate biographical trajectory and social context in the summer and fall of 1877.

The impetus for much of the novel was the 1877 labor uprising and a strike at the Cleveland Rolling Mill<sup>9</sup> in 1882, the year that Hay actually wrote the story, which is set in the mid-western, industrial, lake-front city of "Buffland." Much of the narrative centers in and around a wealthy, mansion-lined neighborhood the author names "Algonquin Avenue," where the hero, Arthur Farnham, resides.

By the author's own admission, the purpose of the novel was to sound the tocsin more than to entertain (Anonymous 1883), to characterize new social types that posed class threats to elite men, and to prescribe possible remedies. The

narrative belittles the working class in general and thoroughly demonizes the labor movement. Unions, with their secret societies and evil (often foreign-born) demagogues, threatened the social order because they were un-American, obstructions to free enterprise, and agents of violence. Strikes are equated with socialism, anarchy, plunder, revolutionary robbery, violence, and "lazy picnics" that harm workers' families, destroying the self-worth of good workers who really have no grievances but are intimidated into such actions by union bosses and demagogues. Hay even paints the Bread-Winners, the militant labor union, as thieves and murderers. At one point, the wealthy hero is compelled to form his own private militia to suppress the Bread-Winners who are attacking mansions on Algonquin Avenue.

Hay organizes the ethics and aesthetics of characterization along stark class lines. Virtually all that is truly good and beautiful is embodied in the story's upper-class characters, Arthur Farnham and Alice Belding. Farnham is a gentleman in the Victorian sense—cultured, wealthy, brave, strong, chivalrous; while Alice is young, beautiful, innocent, culturally-refined, and sentimental. Working-class men, by contrast, are depicted as slow, simple, and easily duped by sinister forces embodied in the militant Bread-Winners. A major tension throughout the story is the deterioration of "good workers" into "bad workers." The term "good worker" was coming to mean sober and hard-working yet not overly ambitious in aspiring beyond one's class position, respectful of one's class superiors, and, most importantly, free of labor movement or union involvement (Isaac 2008). Much is made of the characters' physical, bodily appearance, especially when describing the Bread-Winners—a more ugly, filthy, evil, disgusting, and despicable group of bad workers one could not imagine. So much evil and ugliness is found in this characterization of the labor movement that, if believed, even the most ardent movement supporter would be repulsed. Some readers, however, did not buy the anonymous author's characterization and brought alternatives into the fray. *The Bread-Winners* stimulated counter-sequels in book form, short stories, and a flurry of literary commentary. One counter-sequel will serve as illustration.

<sup>9</sup>The Cleveland Rolling Mill was the largest enterprise in the city, employing more than 5,000 workers at the time of the strike (Leonard 1979). Hay's father-in-law held a major interest in the company.

T. Fulton Gantt was active in the labor movement. After working on the Union Pacific Railroad, he moved to Washington, DC in the 1880s, where he became an integral member of the local Knights of Labor. During 1885 and 1886, when the Knights were at their peak, Gantt wrote *Breaking the Chains*, under the pen name “Zor,” in response to *The Bread-Winners*.<sup>10</sup>

The counter-sequels constructed the labor problem quite differently. Rather than the problem of labor presented in *The Bread-Winners*, it appeared as the problem for labor, for the working class. Counter-sequel authors sought to demonstrate that there was more to the labor question than that provided by *The Bread-Winner’s* noxious narrative. *Breaking’s* pro-labor movement stance revolves around the Knights, and the problem for labor centers on inequality fostered by venal, vulgar elites and their lackeys.

If John Hay gave his wealthy hero, Arthur Farnham, all possible good looks, intelligence, manners, cultivation, bravery, and morals—all that constituted true character and real gentlemanliness in a Victorian sense—these resources are given a metonymic class inversion in the counter-sequels. While repulsive and evil characters are located within the activist working-class in Hay’s narrative, the heroes and villains trade places in the counter-sequels. The most disgusting, villainous characters are now elites: Arthur Barnum (wealthy owner of a dead-horse business), Pelig Grinder (newspaper owner), and General Bluster (military officer turned politician) form a trio of perfectly crude, corrupt, and despicable money-bags.<sup>11</sup>

In the counter-sequels, the working-class heroes embody most of what is good. *Breaking*

features a working-class tandem, Maud Simpson and Harry Wallace, who are superior in cultivation, intellect, and virtue to all of the crude elites who appear in the story. In their leisure, Maud and Harry are usually found discussing big books—*Les Miserables*, *Progress and Poverty*—and critically evaluating the ideas of political economists—Smith, Ricardo, Sumner—while developing sophisticated pro-worker views on the labor question.

While *The Bread-Winners* dramatizes anti-unionism, *Breaking* is thoroughly pro-union. In one scene, the Knights join local printers in a boycott of Pelig Grinder’s newspaper because of low wages, poor working conditions, and Grinder’s refusal to recognize the union. At another point, a Knights organizer tells Harry and Maud that labor organization is essential to prevent virtually all workers from falling into “squalor and wretchedness” (pp. 101–102). As the Knights’ presence grows, the capitalist villains—Barnum, Grinder, and Bluster—meet to discuss what should be done to destroy the movement they characterize as an “unreasonable mob” (p. 105) and thoroughly “un-American” (p. 110). The villains devise a three-pronged counter-strategy: (1) passage of conspiracy laws against labor organization, (2) subtle disenfranchisement of working men, and (3) elimination, or at least reduction, of public schools.

*The Bread-Winners’* happy ending has all of the characters once again in their original and proper (class) positions after subaltern threats to the order of things have been defeated, but the counter-sequels contain various visions for a new world. *Breaking* is a clear call for worker self-organization and ends with the working-class heroes married to each other and to the Knights of Labor. Stressing worker mutualism over individualistic mobility subplots, and with a central, heroic female, working-class voice, Gantt’s response to *The Bread-Winners* is a powerful countercultural story on the labor question.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Biographical data on Gantt is from Mary Grimes (1986:15–19), Gantt’s granddaughter.

<sup>11</sup> Characterization in late-nineteenth-century realist fiction was excessive, a point not lost on contemporaries (e.g., Porter 1885). Characterization played a crucial role in forging reader identification with not only the individual personality but that of the social class to which a character belonged. Stories containing character and class metonymic tropes were constructed as allegories about larger social classes that these individuals were positioned to represent (Isaac 2008).

<sup>12</sup> During the late-nineteenth century, high literary realism’s center of gravity was the Atlantic group of elite magazines and the publishing networks connected to them. *The Century*, which initially serialized *The Bread-Winners*, was at the apex of elite privilege (Glazener 1997). Dialogical realism in the counter-sequels to *The Bread-Winners* reveals resistance to this dominant literary formation and a direct

*The Bread-Winners* and its counter-sequels, along with other provocative initiator novels, fueled the growth of the labor problem subgenre through the dialogical quality of stories. The wider contentiousness surrounding and intersecting the literary field permeated narratives and provoked other writers, thereby contributing to the subgenre's growth.

*Hypothesis 2 (dialogical growth)*: Provocative initiator novels, articulating different views of the labor struggle, stimulated the expansion of labor problem stories by spawning counter-sequels.

### PRODUCTION-OF-CULTURE CONDITIONS

The conditions emphasized by production-of-culture (POC) theory may have played a role in shaping the LPN subgenre, especially the publishing industry's legal environment and market competition.

COPYRIGHT LAW. Prior to 1891, foreign authors did not enjoy copyright protection in the United States. With the passage of the Platt-Simmons Act in 1891, the regulatory shift may have altered the calculus of not only foreign authors considering the U.S. market, but domestic writers as well (Griswold 1981; Tebbel 1975), including those contemplating writing labor problem fiction. The lack of copyright protection prior to Platt-Simmons allowed U.S. publishers to reproduce foreign authors' stories without legal consequence, which may have weakened U.S. authors' incentives to publish. By leveling the playing field for foreign authors, Platt-Simmons may have stimulated U.S. authors to write novels they otherwise would not have undertaken, including those in the LPN subgenre.

*Hypothesis 3 (publishing industry legal regime change)*: The Platt-Simmons Act stimulated the production of American LPNs.

MARKET COMPETITION. Because LPNs were, in fact, commodities, POC theory would sug-

gest that other market-based sources of competition may have been important in shaping author, publisher, consumer interests and tastes. Consequently, I introduce five market competition hypotheses, three dealing with literary field competition and two centered on nonliterary popular culture competition. At the turn-of-the-century, competition for consumer dollars and leisure time became more intense, which may have contributed to the downturn in the LPN product cycle. Nonfiction books were part of this market mix. By the early-twentieth century, nonfiction was accelerating in popularity and may have dampened the supply of labor problem stories.

*Hypothesis 4a (literary field market competition)*: The publication of nonfiction books competed with and negatively influenced the number of LPNs.

More specifically, during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, social science was taking off in the United States. For instance, between 1870 and 1910, economics (political economy) expanded to secure a niche in the U.S. university system. From 1888 on, the American Economic Association defined its profession exclusively in scientific terms (Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001); simultaneously, the scientific management movement was taking root (Montgomery 1989). The rise of social science likely contributed to undermining one of the LPN's key features—its putative edification about the labor problem. By upstaging humanistic insights with scientific authority, social science literatures may have contributed to the LPN's relative decline.

*Hypothesis 4b (literary field market competition)*: The rise of social science literatures, especially economics, competed with and undermined the novel's authority to speak to the labor question, dampening LPN production.

The rise of the muckraking movement around the turn of the century, and especially its associated writing in popular magazines like *McClure's*, altered the literary field. While some muckrakers wrote both LPNs and investigative journalism (e.g., Upton Sinclair), this journalism may have taken attention away from the LPNs. Moreover, as realism began to be identified with muckraking, high literary producers

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example of ideological class struggle in the LPN subgenre.

tended to disassociate from realism (Glazener 1997). This may have led some high literary writers away from LPN authorship.

*Hypothesis 4c (literary field market competition)*: The rise of muckraking writing, particularly in investigative magazine journalism, dampened LPN production.

Along with having its authority squeezed by general nonfiction, social scientific writings, and investigative journalism, the LPN faced a much more dense and competitive popular culture market by the twentieth century. A host of newly emerging, nonliterary forms of popular culture and consumer goods attractions—for example, bicycles,<sup>13</sup> radio, silent films, and automobiles—vied for consumer attention and discretionary income and may have suppressed the demand for and production of labor problem stories.

*Hypothesis 5a (popular culture market competition)*: The emergence of new popular culture attractions competed with and negatively influenced the volume of labor problem stories.

By 1905, neighborhood nickelodeons, with their showings of worker-centered stories, were especially popular (Ross 1998). Rather than read, consumers could now watch worker-centered silent films—and they could do so in a social setting.

*Hypothesis 5b (popular culture market competition)*: The production and distribution of labor films competed with and dampened the number of labor problem stories produced.

## DATA AND METHODS

### OBSERVATIONAL TIME FRAME

I employ annual time-series data for the United States from 1860 to 1919 for some portions of the analysis, but I estimate the majority of the models during the period from 1870 to 1919.

<sup>13</sup> In the mid-1890s, *Publisher's Weekly* (June 20, 1896:1008) reported that the “bicycle craze” was adversely affecting the book publishing business (Sheehan 1952:18).

Temporal framing is central to shaping social-historical context, scope conditions, and interpretations of time-series evidence. Small differences in opening and closing dates can have substantial consequences for parameter estimates and inferences; a clear rationale for periodization is therefore important (Isaac and Griffin 1989). I estimate models in the period between the Civil War and World War I because this period encompasses the LPN's emergence and relative decline, offering an empirical terrain on which to challenge a variety of important hypotheses.

### MEASUREMENT

I measure the dependent variable—the trajectory of the American LPN literary formation—by the number of new titles in the subgenre appearing annually, a gauge of LPN production intensity (see Figure 1). These are stories—some serialized but most in book form—in which the focus, authors, and publishers are all American and that contain at least one of the following features: (1) a labor strike, (2) labor union activity, or (3) the labor problem in one form or another. A total of 532 such titles appeared between 1860 and 1919, the vast majority between 1870 and 1919 (see Figure 1). Additional details associated with selecting LPNs, measurement definitions, and sources for all independent variables are presented in the Appendix.

### MODEL ESTIMATION

Because I am testing hypotheses about how collective contention, literary norms, copyright law, market competition, and other social conditions influenced the LPN's production frequency, I employ a standard production function specification. The Cobb-Douglas production function, as it is known in economics, or the fully interactive model in sociology (Stolzenberg 1979), has the appeal of allowing a multiplicative, explanatory logic where the influence of each independent variable is contingent on the level of all other variables in the model without absorbing as many degrees-of-freedom as do models containing product terms, a distinct advantage when working with a relatively small number of observations. Another advantage is the straightforward interpretation of its estimated coefficients. This production model specifies the outcome variable—the number of LPNs

published annually—as an interactive function of a series of other variables, as shown in Equation 1:

$$Y = a \prod_{i=1}^I X_i^{b_i} e \tag{1}$$

The parameters in Equation 1 can be estimated via ordinary least squares regression by taking the logarithms of all variables in the model and regressing log Y on all log Xs, as in Equation 2:

$$\ln Y = \ln a + \sum_{i=1}^I b_i \ln X_i + \ln e \tag{2}$$

The estimation of this “double-log” model produces elasticity estimates, which are constant over the range of the variables, that may be interpreted as a 1 percent change in X produces a b percent change in Y.

I monitored the presence of detrimental serial correlation by means of the Ljung-Box Q test. I first estimated models with OLS regression; if serial correlation was significant, I used the autocorrelation and partial autocorrelation error functions to determine the degree and form of the error process and re-estimated the models to account for the serial correlation.

**EXPLAINING THE LABOR PROBLEM NOVEL TRAJECTORY**

*MOVEMENT ACTIVITY EXOGENEITY PREMISE*

A central premise underlying Hypothesis 1 is that the collective contention associated with

labor movement actions was, in general, causally antecedent to labor problem novel (LPN) production, and not the reverse. This assumption is based on observation of multiple stories directly motivated by actual events and material often appropriated from an actual event, signaling that collective actions of one sort or another shaped stories. While some social movement scholarship on sources of internal movement culture might lead us to anticipate that the partisan politics of LPN stories might influence collective contention, I found no direct case evidence of such a process. But such anecdotal evidence for treating collective contention as exogenous deserves further consideration.

Therefore, to supplement historical and theoretical arguments about the causal direction operating between labor movement actions (strikes and unionization) and LPN production, I examined additional empirical evidence using Granger causality tests (Cromwell et al. 1994). These employ symmetric, distributed lag regressions of the following form:

$$y_t = a_0 + a_1 y_{t-1} + \dots + a_L y_{t-L} + b_1 x_{t-1} + \dots + b_L x_{t-L} \tag{3}$$

$$x_t = a_0 + a_1 x_{t-1} + \dots + a_L x_{t-L} + b_1 y_{t-1} + \dots + b_L y_{t-L} \tag{4}$$

The logic of the Granger test evaluates the contribution to y (current LPN story output) from distributed lagged x (past collective contention associated with the labor movement) beyond that of distributed lagged y (past levels of LPN production). The test’s symmetric structure enables an assessment of which of the two processes (labor movement actions or LPNs) is

**Table 1.** Granger Exogeneity Tests for Relations between Labor Movement and Labor Problem Novel Production Intensity, 1870 to 1919

Null Hypothesis	Wald-F	Inference
Labor Movement Actions Not Exogenous		
Strikes do not cause labor problem novels	3.199*	Strikes influence labor problem novels
Unionization does not cause labor problem novels	3.760**	Unionization influences labor problem novels
Labor Problem Novels Not Exogeneous		
Labor problem novels do not cause strikes	.683	Accept null
Labor problems novels do not cause unionization	.211	Accept null

Note: Tests are performed on log values of all variables. Wald-F statistics evaluate the joint hypothesis:  $\beta_{T-1} = \dots = \beta_{T-s} = 0$  for each equation.

\*  $p \leq .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .01$  (two-tailed tests).

**Table 2.** Regression Estimates for the Production of Labor Problem Novel Titles during Gilded Age Historical Subperiods

Explanatory Variables	Panel A		Panel B					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
<b>Movement Variables</b>								
Strikes (t-2)	.105 (.116)	.584** (.189)	.386 (.436)	.778** (.193)	.417** (.122)	.452*** (.098)	.456*** (.093)	.506*** (.124)
Union density (t-4)	-.288 (.344)	.470** (.162)	.053 (.293)	.683** (.228)	.350* (.176)	.424** (.138)	.424*** (.124)	.387** (.141)
<b>Dialogical Growth</b>								
Initiator novel (t-2)				-.445 (.930)	.861 (.582)	.637 (.459)	.628 (.406)	.660* (.397)
<b>Control Variable</b>								
Time trend	1.157* (.538)	-.467 (.639)	†	†	†	†	†	†
Constant	-1.831	-.479	-.622	-2.508**	.873	-1.032*	-1.055**	-1.353*
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.788	.798	-.168	.649	.681	.788	.809	.819
Ljung-Box Q (t-2)	.779	3.899	.193	2.018	2.158	2.362	2.677	3.187
(Q p-value)	(.678)	(.142)	(.908)	(.365)	(.340)	(.307)	(.262)	(.203)
Estimator	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
Time Period	1860 to 1876	1878 to 1900	1870 to 1880	1870 to 1885	1870 to 1890	1870 to 1895	1870 to 1900	1878 to 1900

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. † Model 3 could not be estimated with “time trend” and this variable was insignificant in Models 4 through 8.

\*  $p \leq .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$  (two-tailed tests).

driving the other, or whether there is evidence of mutual determination.

Table 1 reports results of two pairwise Granger tests. Each of the four hypotheses is accompanied by a Wald F-statistic for the joint hypothesis that the cumulative, distributed lags for each variable are not different from zero. I evaluated the tests with a distributed lag structure of five periods (i.e.,  $L = 5$  in Equations 3 and 4). In the context of these tests, labor movement actions are said to “Granger cause” LPN production if the cumulative distributed lags for movement actions are jointly different from zero, net of the distributed lags for LPNs.

Table 1 shows that the tests signal that labor movement actions (both strikes and unionization) influence LPN production, but not the reverse. Exogeneity tests corroborate the historical case observations. The Granger results should not be read as a gauge of causality in any deep sense, but the statistical data provide useful information for model specification, especially when coupled with historical evidence and sound theory.

### MOVEMENT ACTIVITY AND THE REALIST LITERARY AESTHETIC

Gauging the normative practice of literary realism independent of the written products shaped by that practice is not directly possible, so I took an indirect approach. I assessed literary realism’s conditioning role by estimating the influence of labor movement contention on the production of LPNs for separate historical periods, 1860 to 1876 and 1878 to 1900. Realism was not yet a widely accepted literary norm in the first period, and the *New York Times* reflects that fact: only five articles mentioned realism in a literary context during the period, all in the 1870s. During the second period, 1878 to 1900, realism became an accepted literary practice. Again, the *New York Times* is consistent with this claim, printing 192 articles that mention realism in a literary context during the period. Thus, if the realist aesthetic interacted with the labor movement’s contentious actions to stimulate LPN production, we should observe stronger strike and

unionization effects for the latter period, 1878 to 1900.

Models 1 and 2 in Table 2 report regression estimates for these two periods. The models are deliberately parsimonious because of the small number of observations. In addition to the strike (lagged 2 years) and union density (lagged 4 years) variables,<sup>14</sup> I include a time-trend variable to control for omitted trending processes that may have influenced LPN production. The results in Panel A of this table are consistent with Hypothesis 1. Neither movement variable has a significant influence on LPN publication in the early period. Both strikes and unionization, however, show sizeable, positive, significant effects in the later period, when realist norms had spread through literary circles.

Panel B in Table 2 shows regression estimates designed to assess evidence regarding the movement variables' effects (Hypothesis 1) and dialogical growth resulting from provocative initiator novels (Hypothesis 2). The basic model contains strike, unionization, and initiator novel variables all lagged to allow time for fiction writers to appropriate the conditions and events. I estimate these models for sequentially different historical periods, again to gauge the indirect, contextual influence of literary realist expansion. If the realist aesthetic interacted with the movement, we would expect to see weaker strike and unionization effects in the 1870s because that was a transition period—labor contestation was changing and the realist aesthetic was only beginning to take shape. The movement variables should be more influential by the 1880s to 1890s, as the realist aesthetic became a more widely adopted literary practice. The evidence in Panel B, as in Panel A, generally supports this hypothesis: the labor movement variables are

positive but weak and insignificant during the 1870s; they become larger and statistically significant once the 1880s and 1890s are part of the temporal estimation window. There is also evidence in support of Hypothesis 3 and the role of initiator novels, as their impact becomes significant when estimated across the later Gilded Age (1878 to 1900). Again, the models in Table 2 are parsimonious, but the overall configuration of the evidence is consistent with Hypotheses 1 and 2.

### ***MOVEMENT ACTIVITY, DIALOGICAL GROWTH, AND MARKETS***

To gain greater leverage on LPN production, I extend the analytic window from 1870 through 1919, which covers the full rise and maturation of American realism occurring by the end of World War I (Nagel and Quirk 1997). The extended window complicates the explanation inspired by Tables 2 and 3. LPN production clearly continued into the early decades of the twentieth century, but it was declining in both absolute and relative terms (see Figure 1). The major forces that brought it into existence—labor contention and realism—both continued, however. So what caused the decline?

The estimates presented in Table 3 are designed to test the relative strength of movement influence and dialogical growth in the context of conditions more typically a part of the POC lexicon, all estimated for the 1870 to 1919 period. The extended analytic window also allows for a more rigorous test of the movement variables than that provided in Table 2. Models 1 through 6 contain the three variables examined in Panel B of Table 2, along with sequentially introduced POC-type conditions: the Platt-Simmons shift in the legal environment (Hypothesis 3) and market competition generated by changes in the literary and popular culture fields (Hypotheses 4a, 4b, 4c, 5a, and 5b).

First, note that the movement variables retain strongly positive, significant effects even after controlling for legal and market factors. Second, initiator novel effects show up in only some models. Finally, the more conventional POC conditions indeed matter in accounting for the volume of LPN titles. Overall, Table 3 indicates that (1) collective contention associated with the labor movement continued to have a

<sup>14</sup> There is a logic to the specified lag lengths. Many writers responded to particular events (such as strikes) or the provocative story of another author by publishing their own story in response, often within a one- to five-year window; of course, some took longer. I expect strikes to have a shorter response time than unionization, largely because they are more dramatic and thus more noticeable (maybe even more threatening, depending on the author) than the prevailing level of unionization. Strikes are therefore more likely to rapidly stimulate stories.



**Table 3.** Regression Estimates for the Production of Labor Problem Novels, 1870 to 1919

Explanatory Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
<b>Movement Variables</b>							
Strikes (t-2)	.669*** (.180)	.735*** (.177)	.558*** (.096)	.885*** (.196)	.454*** (.083)	.455*** (.094)	.388*** (.095)
Union density (t-4)	.463* (.238)	.537** (.234)	.609*** (.145)	.697** (.235)	.385** (.116)	.292** (.129)	.367** (.134)
<b>Dialogical Growth</b>							
Initiator novel (t-2)	.429 (.397)	.417 (.385)	.950** (.454)	.479 (.398)	.705 (.404)	.789* (.459)	.803* (.464)
<b>Production of Culture Variables</b>							
<b>Industry Law</b>							
Platt-Simmons Act (t-2)		1.116 (.757)	.746* (.382)	1.329 (.706)	.265 (.315)	.935** (.397)	.154 (.352)
<b>Market Competition</b>							
Nonfiction (t-2)			-2.300*** (.313)				
Social science (t-2)				-2.992*** (.776)			
Muckraking (t-2)					-.340*** (.038)		
Popular culture (t-2)						-1.421*** (.196)	
Labor films (t-2)							-.719*** (.101)
Constant	-4.033*	-7.321	16.413***	10.537**	-1.045**	-1.000*	-.669
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.649	.657	.685	.757	.753	.681	.674
Ljung-Box Q (t-2)	2.505	3.283	1.614	1.997	3.903	5.566	3.320
(Q p-value)	(.114)	(.070)	(.446)	(.158)	(.142)	(.061)	(.190)
Estimator	AR(1)	AR(1)	OLS	AR(1)	OLS	OLS	OLS

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p \leq .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$  (two-tailed tests).

strong expansive influence on LPN production, (2) provocative initiator novels and the Platt-Simmons Act show an inconsistent influence, and (3) competition from both nonfiction (particularly social science writing) and major popular culture industries substantially dampened the production of LPNs.

The American LPN emerged during a period of very little competition in the popular culture market. By the turn of the century, circumstances had changed dramatically. The market for reading material had expanded, nonfiction began to outpace fiction, and more competitors vied for consumers' leisure time. The evidence presented in Table 3 is generally consistent with Hypotheses 3 through 5b and the effects of the labor movement remain unaltered.

### RIVAL HYPOTHESES

There are, of course, other plausible explanations for the LPN's rise and decline. In addition to the contentiousness surrounding the labor movement, the provocative character of some famous stories, and changes in publishing laws and popular culture markets, the United States experienced massive social change during these five decades that could have stimulated authors and publishers to produce labor problem stories. Certainly, dimensions of social modernization (e.g., expansion in literacy, wages, industrialization, and urbanization) may have shaped the subgenre's trajectory. With growing literacy and material gains, the capacity and potential interest in reading material generally increased. Perhaps, too, it was urbanization or cities teeming with

**Table 4.** Regression Estimates for Alternative Hypotheses in the Production of Labor Problem Novel Titles, 1870 to 1919

Explanatory Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
<b>Movement Variables</b>							
Strikes (t-2)	.524*** (.092)	.458*** (.092)	.601*** (.171)	.552*** (.124)	.509** (.196)	.721*** (.147)	.517*** (.098)
Union density (t-4)	.497*** (.142)	.464*** (.136)	.499*** (.143)	.510*** (.148)	.496*** (.144)	.545*** (.141)	.501*** (.145)
<b>Dialogical Growth</b>							
Initiator novel (t-2)	.847* (.427)	.700* (.412)	.925* (.455)	.831* (.435)	.835* (.456)	.860* (.417)	.856* (.435)
<b>Production of Culture Variables</b>							
<b>Industry Law</b>							
Platt-Simmons Act (t-2)	.992** (.370)	1.208*** (.365)	.992** (.373)	1.088** (.467)	.970* (.457)	1.426*** (.443)	1.003** (.379)
<b>Market Competition</b>							
Nonfiction (t-2)	-1.309** (.483)	-.953* (.486)	-1.246** (.501)	-1.272** (.501)	-1.294** (.522)	-1.051* (.496)	-1.297** (.493)
Popular culture (t-2)	-.775** (.300)	-.801** (.286)	-.646* (.385)	-.766** (.304)	-.766* (.321)	-.504 (.333)	-.785** (.308)
<b>Other Social Conditions</b>							
Literacy growth (t-2)		.883** (.394)					
Average wage (t)			-1.098 (2.038)				
Industrialization (t-2)				-.212 (.616)			
Publishing industrialization (t)					.024 (.284)		
Urbanization (t-2)						-3.722* (2.722)	
Immigration growth (t-2)							.006 (.031)
Constant	8.845**	3.341	14.612	8.497**	8.826*	19.180**	8.764**
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.724	.750	.719	.718	.717	.737	.717
Ljung-Box Q (t-2)	2.477	1.858	2.806	2.567	2.431	4.187	2.622
(Q p-value)	(.290)	(.395)	(.246)	(.277)	(.297)	(.123)	(.270)
Estimator	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p \leq .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$  (two-tailed tests).

new immigrants<sup>15</sup> that cultivated a host of hopes and fears that drove the production of labor problem narratives and *not* the contentiousness

fueled by labor movement collective actions. Or perhaps industrialization was the force behind both collective contention associated with labor and the production of LPNs.

Table 4 displays evidence to test these alternative explanations. Model 1, the full specification, takes LPN production as a function of the conjunctive influence of labor movement actions, provocative initiator novels, and POC conditions. All six variables have substantial, statistically significant effects and serve as the

<sup>15</sup> As labor historian Sean Wilentz (1989:119) put it: “The outstanding structural feature of the post-bellum industrial workforce was its largely immigrant and ethnic composition. In 1870, one-third of the nation’s industrial workers were immigrants; these figures were far higher in the major commercial-manufacturing centers.”

baseline from which to examine alternative hypotheses that could challenge the core findings to this point.

For additional tests of possible spuriousness, I examined the potential effects of literacy, wage growth, industrialization in general, development of the publishing industry in particular, urbanization, and immigration growth on labor problem story production (see the Appendix for measurement details). Models 2 through 7 in Table 4 examine the separate influence of each of these rival explanations. Literacy shows a significant, positive impact (as expected) on the production of LPNs (Model 2) but leaves the configuration of other determinants unaltered. Urbanization (Model 6) signals a significant, negative effect (contrary to expectations), while wages, industrialization, publishing capitalization, and immigration have no substantial influence on LPN production (Models 3, 5, 6, and 7). Most importantly, in no instance do these rival hypotheses alter, in any appreciable manner, the basic configuration of the labor movement/POC findings. Additional tests for robustness of the labor movement effects are reported in the Appendix.

Could the LPN have emerged as a substantial subgenre without the combination of labor movement activity *and* realist aesthetic practice? Without the combination of both contentious labor movement politics and the aesthetic movement, it is highly unlikely the genre would have emerged, much less flourished in popular culture. One can certainly find examples of urban social-problem novels prior to the rise of the national labor movement in the 1870s and the diffusion of realism by the 1880s, but these works do not address worker collective action as either the problem or the solution to conditions of industrial society. Their themes of the antebellum decades—urban life and poverty, sometimes using factory settings (Lowell girls)—were shaped more by Calvinist theological sensibilities (Blake 1972:16) and a fascination with urban life than by concern with what would become the labor problem. Strikes and craft unions existed on a local scale prior to the 1870s, but before a mass LPN genre could take shape, the American literary world required more extensive and intensive experience with labor movement actions (empirical material) to stimulate discourse on the “labor problem” (ideology), and, especially for genteel

authors, a new sensibility that gave license to focus on the “lower orders” in serious writing (change in literary aesthetic). These changes all came together during the Gilded Age, giving rise to LPNs as distinctive “fictions of the real” (Trachtenberg 1982), reflecting the rapidly changing reality of young, conflict-ridden industrial capitalism, American style.

By the turn of the century, the LPN faced a more competitive environment. On the one hand, popular culture entertainment prospects were quickly expanding in size and diversity, offering consumers a wide variety of ways to dispose of their leisure time and income. On the other hand, the LPN, originally meant to both entertain and educate, faced new authoritative competition from nonfiction. The labor problem increasingly became the province of new social science and muckraking journalistic authority. The realist LPN was thus squeezed on both sides of its hybrid form, its entertainment and edification capacities. The LPN’s relative decline (it did not disappear) would reverse again during the 1930s, not only with the expansion of a more consistently pro-labor problem fiction, but with labor-centered poetry, music, and theater as well (Denning 1996).

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The labor problem novel emerged, flowered, and contracted as an American fiction subgenre during the half century between the Gilded Age and World War I. Although a fictional form, authors claimed to realistically depict workers, company owners, strikes, unions, and other newly emerging features of industrial capitalism. An adequate explanation for the rise and relative decline of this cultural form requires a production-of-culture perspective that includes the joint interplay of collective contention associated with the movement field, aesthetic shifts in literary practice, along with changes in literary and popular culture fields that altered market dynamics. The implications of these findings point in several significant directions.

### *SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE AND CULTURAL CHANGE*

The findings indicate that a variety of different theories of cultural change—those emphasizing culturally endogenous processes exemplified

in cultural ecology perspectives (Kaufman 2004), as well as those emphasizing exogenous conditions of production (Peterson and Anand 2004)—are required to adequately explain the emergence of the LPN as a new literary subgenre. But the subgenre's emergence and trajectory were also a product, in part, of collective contention spawned by a mass movement. At least in the case of the American LPN, the field of power (in the form of struggle over the course of collective labor) intersected with and shaped the field of cultural production (Bourdieu 1996). The making of this new subgenre cannot be explained exclusively by culturally endogenous or culturally exogenous approaches. The contentious conditions of mass movement mattered, too.

The fact that labor movement contention was central to the LPN's emergence and trajectory also indicates that social movements are at least periodically important to literary change, a point largely neglected by sociologists of literature and most cultural sociologists in general. This study demonstrates the importance of embedding the fields of cultural production within fields of collective contention and movements, and the conjunctive determination of both the emergence and trajectory of this subgenre. Only when we have accumulated a variety of studies linking different movements to cultural changes will we be able to address the question of where and when power struggles and movements penetrate cultural production institutions and shape their products, and when they do not. We might start by examining the role of other movement-induced (e.g., women's or civil rights movements) shifts in a variety of different genres.

### **SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

Because the present study indicates that collective contention contributed to literary genre differentiation, it also speaks to social movement scholarship's interest in how movements produce cultural change, an area of social movement studies that has been relatively neglected (Earl 2004; Giugni 1998, 1999). In general, my findings suggest that the study of movement-induced cultural change should pay close attention to factors emphasized by POC theories (e.g., laws and markets) and cultural ecology theories (e.g., aesthetic practices among artistic producers) because social movements'

impact on cultural products will likely be mediated by such conditions. This study highlights key conditions that mediate a movement's impact on cultural change, a point of neglect in the few movement studies that do focus on such outcomes (see Earl 2004). Periods of mass turmoil or "unsettled times" are likely more conducive to ideological innovation than are more "settled" times (Griswold 1993; Swidler 1986). But the forms and magnitudes such production assumes can shift even during times of turmoil, either as a function of social movements or the conditions through which their effects are mediated. Analogous to social movement cycles (see Taylor 1989), cultural forms do not necessarily die out when they decline. When movements and mediating conditions become jointly conducive, a particular cultural form that waned may reemerge, albeit with different qualitative characteristics imprinted on it due to the new historical context. This study suggests that a social movement focus can complement and enrich cultural change research and that serious attention to cultural theory can greatly enhance our understanding of the cultural consequences of social movements.

This study also illuminates an alternative form of agency—novel writing—in movement-relevant symbolic production. Most social movement studies concentrate on framing by social movement organizations and their leaders as the major vehicle through which movement-induced discourses are produced and distributed (Benford and Snow 2000). This study, together with several others, suggests an expansion of this view. Musicians acting as "traveling evangelists" in 1930s southern textile strikes (Roscigno and Danaher 2004:63), contemporary cabaret performances by drag queens (Taylor et al. 2004), and late-nineteenth-century labor problem novelists all have something in common: they all constructed and circulated movement grievances, strategies, collective characterizations, and identities in ways that were relatively autonomous of social movement organizations, whether through music, stage performances, or realist fiction-writing. This suggests that social movement scholars should pay more attention to the role of meaning construction by artistic producers, their social position (e.g., habitus, artistic field position, and configuration of capital forms [Bourdieu 1996; Eastwood 2007]), and whether

they are embedded in or responding to social movements (i.e., their social movement field position).

Because case studies have their limits, it is difficult to determine how general the role of social movements might be in literary change or other forms of cultural change. Expanding our scope to other historical periods could illuminate more general patterns. In the Gilded Age, the rise of the mass labor movement and its opposition generated cultural change in literature, a new novel subgenre. But the impact of collective contention was contingent on, and mediated by, the growth of technologies for mass publishing, favorable market conditions, and a shift to literary realism, which liberated genteel and professional authors to focus on the profane of the “lower orders” and the labor problem. During the 1930s, the arts experienced a massive cultural change that saw the expression, for the first time, of working-class interests, culture, and actions. A renaissance in proletarian literature was only one distinct layer of this cultural formation. The “laboring of American culture,” as Denning (1996) calls it, included theater, poetry, music, and more. This shift resulted from the conjunctural encounter between a mass democratic movement—the Popular Front—and the modern cultural apparatus of mass education and entertainment (Denning 1996:xvii–xviii). During the 1960s, the mass movement field, especially civil rights and New Left currents more generally, intersected with a new, more electronic cultural field, one in which music became a critical-mass, cultural-political conduit for, and simultaneously transformed by, mass movements (Eyerman and Jamison 1998; Gitlin 1993). In each historical instance, a powerful mass movement field encountered a mode of mass cultural-artistic expression made available by technologies of production and circulation. In the 1960s, it was music via the new mass media technologies of radio, the record industry, and television; in the 1930s, it was mass entertainment and education industries that depended on large volumes of workers at a time when employment was a source of mass crisis; and in the Gilded Age, collective contention shaped and was expressed through the popular literature industry in the novel. Comparative-historical sociological analyses along these lines would provide a fruitful strategy for establish-

ing the limits of generality and particularity of such cases (see Eastwood 2007).

### CULTURES OF CLASS

The LPN literary formation was thick with political ideology, much of which constituted a repository of stories about a newly emerging industrial America and a spectrum of meanings about social class associated with that great transformation. We do not know how this formation may have shaped the outlook or behaviors of the reading public, beyond authors and literary figures who responded in writing to various stories; nor do we know how these stories may have fed the larger collective construction of movement reputation (Meyer 2006). But we do know that this process of genre differentiation changed literary cultural stock in ways that provided new materials for class-based understandings of the world—materials that consisted of representative class characters and class markers in taxonomies of social and bodily types, codes, and scripts that were shaping up to be quite different from those of antebellum America. The LPN offered materials of a dialogically-based class formation, a storied record of class characterizations and allegorical cultures of class in novel form. At least during the Gilded Age, the struggle over the meaning of class was deeply storied; realist fictions served as narrative channels for the production and circulation of class characterizations. A product, in part, of newly emerging struggles over the place of mass wage labor in industrial society, the LPN was a contested terrain wherein the evils and virtues of both capitalists and workers were narrated and the reading classes could *read class*.

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(with Dan Cornfield, Dennis Dickerson, and James Lawson) and a National Endowment for the Humanities-funded study of the political culture of private elite militias in *Gilded Age America*. He is also an incoming editor of the *American Sociological Review*.

## APPENDIX

### **PROCEDURES, DEFINITIONS, AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES FOR THE LABOR PROBLEM NOVEL TITLE SERIES (DEPENDENT VARIABLE)**

The labor problem novel (LPN) series is the number of American LPN titles published annually. Labor problem stories are those in which the focus, authors, and publishers are American and contain at least one of the following features: (1) a labor strike; (2) labor union activity; (3) the labor movement is constructed in positive terms; or (4) the growth of the working-class or labor movement (strikes, unions) appears as a problem for employers or the social order more broadly.

Literary historians have used other, related subgenre designations—for example, “social problem novel” (Millgate 1964), “economic novel” (Parrington 1930; Taylor 1942), “strike novel” (Blake 1972), and fiction that deals broadly with “the worker” (Hapke 2001). These are not identical designations, but there is a

substantial labor problem current running through these categories from which I identified the population of titles with collective labor problem features.

I constructed the LPN series by using (1) library searches on “economic,” “labor,” “social problem,” and “strike” novels; (2) recommendations from literary specialists familiar with this period; and (3) snowballing from bibliographies in annotated and literary historical analyses. These strategies are similar to those recommended by Hodson (1999:19) for establishing a population of documentary accounts. I curtailed the search for additional titles after new sources yielded no new titles. From the list of potential novels, graduate students and I read some completely, scanned others, and also relied on secondary-source annotations and literary analyses to select titles into the series. The following 15 publications formed the major bibliographic basis for the title series shown in Figure 1, yielding a total of 532 titles for the years 1860 through 1919: Blake (1972), Coan and Lillard (1967), Denning (1987), Fine (1977), Forbes (1927), Geller (1980), Grimes (1986), Hapke (2001), Parrington (1930), Prestridge (1954), Rideout (1956), Rose (1944), Sargent (1988), Smith (1995), and Taylor (1942). The full list of novels, by year, is available from the author on request.

**Table A1.** Definitions and Data Sources for Explanatory Variables

Variable Category	Description	Source
Movement Variables		
Strikes	Annual number of strikes over all issues.	Years 1860 to 1879 from online search of <i>New York Times</i> and <i>Chicago Tribune</i> (search terms = "strike" and "work stoppage"); years 1880 to 1919 from U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 1, Series D-977, p. 179, and Griffin (1939).
Union density	Percent nonagricultural labor force unionized.	Years 1880 to 1919 from U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 1, Series D-941, p. 177; years 1870 to 1873 from Ulman (1955: 19) and Montgomery (1981: 140); 1877 from Dulles and Dubofsky (1993: 106); and interim years in 1860s to 1870s estimated by linear interpolation. Constructed from LPN series.
Dialogical Growth		
Big initiator novel	Binary variable for provocative initiator novel that spawned a series of counter-sequels; 1 = 1883, 1884 <i>The Bread-Winners</i> appears in serialized and book form, 1888 <i>Looking Backward</i> appears; 0 = other years.	
Publishing Industry Legal Environment		
Platt-Simmons Act	Binary variable for the passage of the Act, which gave foreign authors copyright protection in U.S. markets after July 1, 1891. 0 = 1870 to 1891; 1 = 1892 to 1919.	Constructed from Tebbel (1975) and Griswold (1981).
Market Competition		
Nonfiction	Number of nonfiction book titles produced in the United States annually.	Constructed from <i>American Catalogue, Publisher's Weekly</i> ; U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Tebbel (1975, 1978), and Hokkanen (1981).
Social science	Cumulative stock of "economics" and "political economy" books.	Annual title counts from online search of Library of Congress English titles published in the United States between 1870 and 1919.
Muckraking	Cumulative stock of muckraking magazine articles between 1900 and 1919.	Annual article counts are from C. C. Regier's (1957:220-40) bibliography.
Popular culture	Cumulative counter variable that indexes by one unit with the introduction of a major popular culture or consumer goods innovation that would compete with the novel: newspapers and magazines; bicycle craze; radio; silent films in nickelodeons; automobiles.	Constructed from historical sources.
Labor films	Number of labor films produced annually.	Ross (1998:353-67).
Other Social Conditions		
Literacy growth	Directionalized change score (see Griffin and Isaac 1992): increase in percentage of adult population literate; decreases are scored as zero.	Constructed from U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 1, Series H-664, p. 382.
Industrialization	Total annual manufacturing capital stock.	U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 2, Series P-107, p. 683.

(continued on next page)

Table A1. (continued)

Variable Category	Description	Source
Other Social Conditions		
Publishing industrialization	Average capital stock per publishing firm.	Constructed from publishing industry capital stock divided by number of publishing companies. U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 2, Series P-153, p. 685; Part 1, Series E-135, p. 211; Tebbel (1975: Appendix C) and <i>The American Catalogue</i> .
Urbanization	Percentage of the population in Northeast and North Central states living in urban areas.	Constructed from U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 1, Series A-178 and A-179, p. 22.
Immigration growth	Directionalized change score (see Griffin and Isaac 1992): annual increase in number of immigrants entering the United States.	Constructed from U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 1, Series C-89, p. 105.
Wages	Average annual real earnings for nonfarm employees.	Years 1870 to 1900 are from U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 1, Series D-736, p. 165; years 1901 to 1919 are constructed from the current average annual earnings for all nonfarm workers and the CPI U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), Part 1, Series D-780 for earnings and Series D-727 for the CPI.

**ADDITIONAL ROBUSTNESS CHECKS**

I examined the robustness of the labor movement variable (strikes and unionization) effects on the trajectory of LPN title production through a wide variety of specifications, including examination of various flashpoint event effects (e.g., Haymarket, 1886). I also tested an extensive array of alternative control variables in addition to those shown in Table 4, including time trend, size of the publishing industry, capitalization in the publishing industry, and varying lag values of the dependent variable as an alternative gauge of dialogical growth. These variables did not have significant effects and did not fundamentally alter the key results.

I also considered model structures other than the multiplicative log-log structure reported in Tables 1 through 4. In particular, I evaluated the basic unlogged, additive structure for all equations shown in Tables 1 through 4. These findings for the movement variables were largely consistent with those reported but tended to display more instability.

I also considered an alternative specification of the dependent variable—number of LPNs as a proportion of all books published annually (rate). While the number of LPNs and rate correlate closely ( $r = .91$ ) (see Figure 1), there were some minor differences when rate was used as the dependent variable. Most movement-effect patterns remained the same; however, in comparable equations for Equations 1 and 2 in Table 3, movement effects were not significant.

I also evaluated the temporal behavior of the movement variable effects. First, I examined the lag structures of strikes and unionization for the full models estimated across the full time period, 1870 to 1919. Strike effects were positive and significant for  $t$  through  $t-6$  and then decayed at  $t-7$ ; unionization effects held positive and significant for lags  $t-3$ ,  $t-4$ ,  $t-5$ , and decayed at  $t-6$ . Second, I examined the cross-temporal stability of the movement variables by means of temporally recursive regressions (see Griffin and Isaac 1992; Isaac and Griffin 1989). When the movement variable effects are estimated for 10-year windows via diagonal recursive regression (see Griffin and Isaac 1992), the effects get stronger as years from the 1870s are eliminated and the 1880s are added. The parameter estimates for strikes and (unionization) are the following: 1870 to 1880

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= .512 (.650); 1871 to 1881 = .495 (.734\*); 1872 to 1882 = .524 (.714\*\*); 1873 to 1883 = .818\*\* (.714\*\*); 1874 to 1884 = .778\*\*\* (.683\*\*\*); 1875 to 1885 = .746\*\*\* (.756\*\*\*); 1876 to 1886 = .701\*\*\* (.859\*\*\*); 1877 to 1887 = .638\*\*\* (.666\*\*\*). These results lend additional support to the argument that movement actions were mediated by the increasing acceptability of realist norms in fiction-writing by the 1880s.

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