From Transience to Trenches: Masculinity and Radical Politics in Canadian Fiction of the Great Depression

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at gender practices in Canadian radical political movements through the novels of the Great Depression. In the first chapter, I examine hegemonic masculinity, as defined by R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, in Irene Baird's unemployment novel *Waste Heritage*. The entanglement of masculinity and labour affects the morale of unemployed protagonist Matt Striker, and is disrupted by politicized female worker Hazel. Radical politics offers resistant but exclusive forms of masculinity, including protest masculinity, as theorized by Connell. In the second chapter, I turn to Ted Allan's Spanish Civil War novel *This Time a Better Earth*, in which protagonist Bob Curtis understands antifascism as practiced in combat, and necessarily linked to masculinity. I argue that love-interest Lisa offers an alternative form of antifascism, that she is ultimately seen as an obstacle. I read her alongside her real-life inspiration, Gerda Taro, and interpret the ways both women are simplified and compromised to give way to masculine antifascism. Judith Butler's theory of gender as a set of practices supports my conclusion that the refusal to challenge gender compromises the radical politics in both novels. All the same, these narratives offer models of resistance–and models of radical failure–that remain relevant and appealing, particularly because gender persists as a divisive issue.

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INTRODUCTION

Historical Context

Economically, socially, and politically, the Great Depression was an extraordinarily difficult period for Canadians. The 1929 stock market crash was a great blow to international markets, and left Canada with a surplus of resources and no one to buy them (Thompson 195). Then came years of drought in the Prairies. The crash affected the Canadian economy at all levels, and, the ranks of the unemployed grew. Single men faced unemployment at higher numbers than any other group, for multiple reasons: women could be paid much lower wages than men and married men were considered more deserving workers because they had to support families. Moreover, the seasonal employment that was so common in the Canadian economy kept single men on the move, and their transient lifestyles made it extremely difficult for them to qualify for relief (Struthers 51). Unemployed men became the resounding image of economic strife, and their plight drew the attention of artists and writers like Irene Baird.

Economic strife had dire social effects in Canada as well. The scarcity of jobs and the structures of relief and charity imposed conservative and unrealistic social expectations. For one, women were not recognized as self-supporting workers and were expected to depend on male family members. But simultaneously, unemployment made this kind of patriarchal family structure more difficult to achieve.

Political and charitable organizations sprang up to fill the gaps left by widespread wage-cuts, poverty and unemployment. Many sought alternatives to the capitalist systems that had failed them. The 1930s saw the founding of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), Canada's socialist labour coalition party, and the expansion the Communist Party of Canada.

Countless organizations and associations sprung up across the nation to address issues of social justice and inequality. Meanwhile, the Canadian government responded aggressively to dissent and radical politics. For example, Section 98 of the Criminal Code (passed in 1919) enabled police harassment of any supposed dissidents, and the government used it to repress Communist and leftist groups during the thirties (Filewod ix-x).

Essentially, during the 1930s, there were political struggles at all levels. The economic crisis spurred Canadians to look for support and solutions, and when they could not find it in any level of government, they turned to politics, unions, and charities. While many drew inspiration from the revolutionary visions of communism and socialism, others turned to the authority and exclusivity of fascist politics. These same struggles were playing out on the international stage, and leftist political groups encouraged the shift from local to international coalition-building. The antifascist movement in Canada is a vital link for understanding how Canadians experienced the shift from the economic recession to World War II.

My thesis takes up fictional representations of political struggle in this tumultuous period. Chapter I examines the protests of unemployed men in British Columbia through Irene Baird's novel *Waste Heritage* (1939). Chapter II studies the antifascist movement through Ted Allan's Spanish Civil War novel *This Time a Better Earth* (1939). My thesis interrogates these representations through the lens of gender. How did these political coalitions form around concepts of masculinity? How did women participate in these struggles, and were their interventions welcomed? Was gender challenged in the same ways that capitalism, liberalism and fascism were, or was gender a blind spot–or even a site of reactionary politics–for these radical groups?

Canadian Cultural Production in the 1930s

This thesis addresses questions of production and form during the Great Depression. Culturally, the Depression was a time of considerable social and political engagement. Writers struggled to create art that was relevant and productive, wary of self-involved art that spoke of indifference to the tumultuous world around them. In the pages of the leftist magazine *New Frontier*, Leo Kennedy dismissed poets who "have made no effort to locate Canadian poetry in its social place" (21). In the context of the Spanish Civil War, Cary Nelson sees the problem of political commitment as the major dilemma of the noncombatant writer: those who could not put their lives on the line for their ideals turned to poetry to make their passion heard (22).

There were a few women who wrote from the left during the 1930s. Many female writers, such as P.K. Page, Anne Wilkinson, Phyllis Webb, and Miriam Waddington, entered the literary scene in the 1940s, through magazines like *Preview*, *First Statement*, and *Contemporary Verse*. Dorothy Livesay and Anne Marriott both wrote canonical Depression poetry; Livesay's "Day and Night" and Marriott's "The Wind Our Enemy" are considered prime examples of the politically engaged poetry this era demanded. Candida Rifkind details the leftist and antifascist contributions of many other women poets, essayists, journalists and playwrights, including Margaret Day, Margaret Gould, Jim Watts, and Toby Gordon Ryan, but the literary scene was consistently dominated by male writers and critics. Rifkind argues that these women worked in a "[harsh] creative climate" marked by a "gendered division between political and artistic labour" that distinguished the "'soft' work of cultural production" from the "'hard' work of political organizing" (11). Though Baird was not a part of the literary community, I see these gendered

attitudes manifest in the character of Kenny, whose cultural production speaks to a softness and femininity, particularly compared to the hard, masculine political figure of Hep.

Allan and Baird were fairly unique in taking up the challenge of writing a politically engaged novel. The desire to create socially relevant writing had consequences for form. Poetry, drama and periodicals were popular forms during the Depression: they cost less to produce, and they were easy to distribute quickly. Novels were expensive to produce, and in Canada "the small national market seldom made the publication of novels profitable" (Doyle 96). Very few novels that "risk[ed] direct engagement with the state" made it through to the public (Mason *Writing Unemployment* 94). Now canonical Depression novels were written and published much later, such as Gabrielle Roy's *Bonheur d'Occasion* (1945), published in English as *The Tin Flute* (1947), and Hugh Garner's *Cabbagetown* (1968). Jody Mason distinguishes one other politically engaged novel, Claudius Gregory's *Forgotten Men* (1933), and Peter Weinrich's extensive bibliography of social protest identifies John Beames' *An Army Without Banners* (1930) as "a novel about prairie hardships" (113). Both novels are even more obscure than *Waste Heritage* and *This Time a Better Earth*, which have both been resurrected through the dedicated scholarly work of Colin Hill, Jody Mason, and Bart Vautour.

Besides the obstacle of production, there has been doubt as to whether the genre of the novel suits the collective theme of social protest: "The novel's association with individual character development certainly implies a historical identification with bourgeois individualism" (Doyle 96). Georg Lukács writes that the psychological novel, with its attention to "private fates and feelings…was absolutely unsuited to tackling in any way the great and general questions of our time" (46). Social crises demanded a new kind of novel. Lukács called this oppositional form

reportage, but I would relate it closely with the forms of documentary, social realism, and socialist realism. These were the dominant forms for leftist writers in the thirties, alongside the theatrical form of agitprop. They all share, to varying degrees, the same values and intentions. Namely, the writers behind these forms valued relevancy and accuracy, and sought to realistically depict social conditions and critique the mechanisms of oppression.

For my purposes, I will read the novels as broadly social realist, though with certain leanings. *Waste Heritage* is more rigorous in its verisimilitude, so it is important to understand Baird as practicing the methods of documentary and reportage. James Doyle argues that *This Time a Better Earth* is a socialist realist novel, and I agree that such reading attends to the ways Allan puts his communist ideals into aesthetic practice (122). I will briefly define these formal categories.

Social realism concerns itself with the realistic depiction of social issues. Both novels are social realist insofar as they document a particular event. *Waste Heritage* emerged from Baird's desire to communicate this crisis to the Canadian public: "the plight of the jobless as a great human disaster, something I knew all Canadians should be made aware of" ("Sidown" 81). Allan moved from the work of reporting the Spanish Civil War–as a columnist and broadcaster–to representing it in literary form.

But social realism has been widely critiqued for its naïveté or blatant politics, particularly when these politics (such as Stalinist communism) feel outdated to a contemporary audience. Ulna Anjaria, writing in the post-colonial context of Indian literature, argues that the skepticism around social realism

> fails to account for how deeply the writers of social realism were invested in developing an aesthetics adequate for representing the instabilities of modern life. From this perspective, social realism is significant for the radical content of its forms but also for the forms of its content–*which theorize the possibilities and limitations of realism itself* to see if its is sufficiently plastic to represent the epistemic crises of modernity. (186, emphasis is mine)

Even as Baird strives for accuracy, she is aware of the (im)possibility of realism. She plays with the form of the novel, letting the plot decelerate and even stagnate in imitation of the uneven life of the transient unemployed: short bursts of action followed by long periods of idleness. This deliberate form is more interested with imitating the experience of the transient than drawing in an audience.

Waste Heritage is what William Stott describes as a social documentary, which "shows man at grips with [social] conditions neither permanent nor necessary, conditions of a certain time and place" (20). The implication of these conditions as unnecessary serves in itself as a strong critique of the government, and this formal critique is supplemented by the protest voiced and staged by the novel's characters. Baird's reportage during the Vancouver strike brought a degree of accuracy to her representation. In an interview, Baird describes her determination to see the strike in action, including following the men to Victoria, and visiting their lodgings with the help of her family doctor, also the city medical officer ("Sidown" 84). Her research pays off; Michiel Horn even suggests that, given Baird's moderate politics, "the so-called radicalism of *Waste Heritage* probably is a function of its verisimilitude rather than of Irene Baird's own

views about the social or economic order" (38). His reading reflects on the influence of form and technique in shaping the message of a text, even beyond the writer's intentions.

Allan, as a trained journalist, also adopts some of the techniques of reportage, but I want to explore the way his Communist ideals shaped his novel. Doyle calls *This Time a Better Earth* the only novel that "rigorously follows the formulas of socialist realism" (122). Lukács distinguishes socialist realism as "being based on a concrete socialist perspective" and "using this perspective to describe the forces working towards socialism *from the inside.* Socialist society is seen as an independent entity, not simply a foil to capitalist society, or as a refuge from its dilemmas" (93). This genre, emerging from within the Soviet Union and the First Congress of Soviet Writers (Gutkin 856), translates easily into the context of the Spanish Civil War, where the leftist coalition defends a progressive state government, so that socialism may continue to grow within its borders and beyond them. But in its nature as socialist realist, the novel necessarily locates itself outside of Canada, an explicitly capitalist and liberal state.

In this sense, as a Canadian socialist realist novel, *This Time a Better Earth* casts doubt on the limiting frame of the nation altogether. The Spanish nation deserves support not simply as a nation under attack, but *as a socialist state*, and its survival raises the possibility of other socialist states. Cary Nelson writes, "For several modern American poets, the period of the Spanish Civil War was a period when they were no longer primarily *American* writers; they were part of an international political struggle and international community of writers" (9). This kind of struggle is at work in the content of *This Time a Better Earth*, as Bob wants to commit to the international community while still wishing to assert his Canadian identity. On the level of form, the novel's socialist realism locates its narrative in the international ideological space, but by

retaining the novel's Canadian roots, it brings Canada into this international space as well. As the only socialist realist novel, *This Time a Better earth* raises the possibility of socialism in Canada, and incorporates Canada into a wider socialist coalition.

A Note on Methodology

In my analysis of *Waste Heritage* and *This Time a Better Earth*, I approach these novels through theories of gender and masculinity. Mason argues that leftist documentaries, like the social realist texts I study here, "reveal and estrange the workings of the three forces shaping Canadian experiences during the Depression: capitalism, liberalism, and federalism" (*Writing Unemployment* 164). I contend that masculinity was just as significant a force during the 1930s, and that it held consequences for economic, political, and social relations of the time. Protagonists Matt Striker and Bob Curtis are motivated by masculine ideals as well as political ones, and in many ways their desires to act out particular masculine narratives are stronger than their desires for political and social justice.

To make this argument, I follow the direction of scholar Cynthia Enloe and perform a critical examination of the novel's primary female characters to interrogate practices of masculinity. In her work on sexual politics and the Cold War, Enloe writes,

> Men in real life learn about and accept or resist their culture's ideas about what is natural in male behavior by relying on (while still controlling) women, by fantasizing about women, and by working to separate themselves from women. Where are the women? … It is a question that reminds us that the people on the

> podium or around the conference table are not women. It is a question that makes us see men as people who have been socialized—not always successfully—into particular gender assumptions and who have had bestowed on them distinct privileges, authorities, and limitations. (19-20)

In both novels, female characters tell us a great deal. Hazel and Lisa are disruptive to the structures of masculinity on multiple levels, whether they are criticizing the men's ideals, playing into them, or are absent from the scene altogether. By examining masculinity in the unemployed movement and the antifascist movement, this thesis examines how gender assumptions shaped and limited these movements.

Structurally, my thesis consists of two chapters, one for each novel. The first chapter analyses *Waste Heritage* through the concepts of hegemonic and protest masculinities. R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt define hegemonic masculinity as the ideal of masculinity in a particular historical context (832). Masculinity is not a fixed identity, but a "way that men position themselves through discursive practices" (841). In the historical and narrative context of *Waste Heritage*, I argue that hegemonic masculinity is grounded in wage-earning labour and heterosexual family models, in which men work and women perform domestic labour. Given the impossibility of this ideal for many working-class men, I argue that the political organization behind the unemployed strike offers a form of what Connell and Messerschmidt call protest masculinity, a collective practice of economically and politically disenfranchised men who exhibit their marginal masculinity in resistant but futile and even misogynistic ways (847-48). Hazel is central to my argument for these practices of masculinity as meaningful influences in the lives and politics of the characters, and as contributing to the political futility of the novel.

My second chapter takes up gender in the internationalist fight against fascism through *This Time a Better Earth*. Judith Butler's theory of gender as a "stylized" performance is central to my argument that Bob's antifascism is a form of combat masculinity. Butler contends that gender is not a "stable identity" but "an identity tenuously constituted in time–an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts" ("Performative Acts" 519). Working off her assertion that "Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed" ("Performative Acts" 527), my analysis approaches gender as a construct within a specific historical and social context, which is practiced in normative or subversive ways. Bob's narrative celebrates Lisa when she performs femininity appropriately, but excludes her when she disrupts the gender binary that supports his sense of self. Lisa's real-life counterpart, Gerda Taro, complicates this analysis, and I use Taro's biography and other representations of her to critique Allan's rendering of her life and death.

My analysis also considers how gender is challenged in revolutionary times. In both novels, the most politically radical characters are seeking to overthrow an oppressive system (capitalism and fascism, respectively) in favour of a more socially just political order. The Depression was a time of crisis for capitalism and democracy, and it was easy for some to see beyond the reality of capitalism to a different kind of system. Gender was a bit more tricky. Though many scholars look back on this time psychologically and economically as a time of crisis for masculinity, this concept implies a stable masculinity to begin with, one grounded in labour, steady wages, and heteronormative family life. Masculinity was in crisis because the lives of men no longer fit into this deeply conventional category. Butler writes about challenging gender categories,

> we come to understand that what we take to be 'real,' what we invoke as the naturalized knowledge of gender is, in fact, a changeable and revisable reality…Although this insight does not in itself constitute a political revolution, no political revolution is possible without a radical shift in one's notion of the possible and the real. (*Gender Trouble* xxiii).

Butler's assertion that revolution hinges upon our ability to challenge all realities, including gender, supports my central question: What happens to gender roles in radical politics?

Masculine Narratives of Waste and War

Ultimately, a common theme unites these two novels–the young man in crisis. The novels share a basic narrative scaffolding: young Canadian man, struggling to find employment and fulfillment during the Great Depression, commits himself to a political struggle that offers some kind of future. From this initial set up, the novels go their separate ways, but they still have many factors in common: the camaraderie of a mixed group of men, the romance with a passionate but equally precarious woman, and the ongoing doubts over political commitment.

I have chosen these two novels because their shared themes and structure lend them to a parallel reading of gender in two political movements. One of the sites where they differ is their take on race: Baird's use of slurs, and her silencing of people of colour, is more noticeably problematic than Allan's depiction of the non-segregated battalions of the International Brigades. I believe that *Waste Heritage* grapples unconsciously with the ongoing project of colonization, while Allan's text is more concerned with the antisemitism of fascism. The reading of race in

both novels would require more space and more context, including other texts that speak directly to these issues, such as Wayson Choy's *The Jade Peony* paired with *Waste Heritage.* Given the complexity of gender in both novels, and the limited scope of my project, my decision to critique gender has made any thorough critique of race impossible.

Similarly, I am intrigued by the questions of nationality and citizenship at play in both texts. Mason has done some impressive work on transient identity and mobility in her book *Writing Unemployment*, and this could be carried further to examine evolving notions of citizenship alongside the developing nation and welfare state, as represented in *Waste Heritage*. This sort of study may work well with an exploration of nationality and internationalism in *This Time a Better Earth* and Spanish Civil War writing more generally, including a more thorough analysis of the Canadian Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in the International Brigades. But my commitment to studying Hazel and Lisa has diverted my research to the realm of gender, and questions of citizenship and nationality have necessarily fallen to the wayside.

These novels emerge from the same historical context, namely the economic depression, but they also anticipate the same moment of crisis: Canada's entry into the Second World War. The unemployed men in *Waste Heritage* feel the war on the horizon, and with it the frustration that only violent world conflict will bring value to them as people–and only then as bodies to enact violence and have violence acted upon them. Harry tells Matt, "Seems like the country's waitin' for Hitler to give you guys a job so you can all be heroes overnight" (6), and Matt later writes, "I don't belong in this country unless they have a war and want to shove a gun in my hand" (219). In a 1976 reflection on the novel, Baird comments on the men's impending fate: "these marchers with their high hopes and broken shoes, their parcels and their pack-sacks,

would soon star in a still more splendid production mounted by WORLD STAGE INC. Opening date September 3rd. The name of this super-production would be MARCHING TO WAR!" ("Sidown" 86). If the strikers are mounting a protest, then the Canadian state is preparing to mount an even greater show, one which will give a brutal and wasteful value to the men. Through protest masculinity, Hep and the other organizers attempt to forge another kind of identity than those of waste and warfare that the state offers.

This Time a Better Earth shifts us from anticipation to warfare. As far as Bob is concerned, Canada is already at war with Fascism. His struggle is to prove that "the world really [is] as important to [him] as [he] said it was," and this becomes a problem of constructing an identity that gives meaning to combat and self-sacrifice, an identity that is ultimately a fairly conventional construction of combat masculinity (86). But this identity comes at the cost of a critical approach to gender identity, and this has consequences for Lisa as a female participant in the conflict.

While the second chapter takes us out of Canada, I link it back to the nation through the reading of these novels as narratives of development. Mason writes, "By the 1960s, literary representations of unemployment, particularly Depression-era experiences of unemployment, were absorbed into national allegories and other nation-making narratives that figure the experience of the transient, unemployed male as a crucial element of the nation's coming of age" (*Writing Unemployment* 4). Similarly, Vautour writes,

> Allan draws on a rhetoric that would frame Canadian participation in the SCW as a continuation of the nation-building project. Yet, in a culture that repeatedly tells itself through official war discourse that the Canadian 'nation' came to maturity

> through sacrifice at war in Europe, contemporary Canadian commemorations all too conveniently forget about this socialist, antifascist cause. ("Introduction" xxiii)

When both war and unemployment are framed as central experiences in the nation's coming of age, there are two consequences. The first, which Mason and Vautour indicate, is that the radical elements of these narratives are shed in favour of a smoother narrative, one in which the Canadian state does right by the unemployed and soldiers alike, and their suffering contributes to a stronger, cohesive liberal nation. Second, as my thesis argues, Canada frames its development in specifically masculine terms, and women's experiences–of underemployment, of war on the sidelines or on the home front–do not figure centrally in the national narrative. But leftist narratives are equally masculine. My thesis examines leftist narratives from the 1930s with the aim to see how they contend with gender in radical politics, and contradictions within radical political movements.

CHAPTER ONE

"A Man's Job": Masculinity and Protest in Irene Baird's Waste Heritage

In Irene Baird's 1939 novel *Waste Heritage*, a group of unemployed men struggle to (re)gain political power and self-worth–lost through chronic unemployment and transience–by practicing a form of what the sociologist R.W. Connell calls "protest masculinity." Protest masculinity is a collective practice adopted by lower-class or marginalized men who make a spectacle of their marginalization. This is a useful concept in the context of *Waste Heritage*'s unemployed men, who construct a community around their experiences of imprisonment and poverty. Their practice is an alternative to the economically unachievable ideal of wage-earning, productive masculinity. What are the strategies of this practice? What are the costs and benefits? Does it attend to the economic suffering of women? How is the collective action complicated and disrupted by divergent masculinities? I will address these questions through my analysis of protest masculinity within the novel.

This chapter will begin with some historical context, and will go on to examine how political organizer Hep expands the community of the organization through discipline and recruitment. I will go on to explore how protagonist Matt's romantic interest in Hazel troubles commitment to the protest. I will also examine how this relationship exacerbates Matt's personal crisis of masculinity, a concept circulated in labour history discourse and used particularly to describe the psychological effects of mass unemployment during times of economic crisis. This will lead into an analysis of masculinity as constructed, performed and protested in the novel, how it cements but also troubles the identity of the organized men, and the subsequent

marginalization of female characters. I will define hegemonic masculinity and protest masculinity within the particular historical moment of *Waste Heritage*. Further, I will resist a stable or unified sense of masculinity by analyzing the divergent masculinities practiced by individual characters, including Hep, Kenny, and Eddy. Ultimately, I will follow the model laid out by leftist literature scholar Paula Rabinowitz and read gender and class "as mutually sustaining and discursive systems dependent upon representing each through the other" (4), but I will examine this interdependence through failure. In *Waste Heritage*, radical class politics fail because the major radical advocates cannot recognize the ways class is contingent on gender.

Historical Context: Unemployed Men in the 1930s

Waste Heritage is Irene Baird's fictional account of the aftermath of the Vancouver Sitdown Strike, an event that requires some historical background. During the 1930s, the Canadian government opened relief camps to deal with thousands of unemployed single men. Though the camps served the needs of the government, they "offered nothing to the men themselves" besides a meager wage (Struthers 100). As such, the isolated camps became sites of resistance. Baird recalls these experiences through the character of Hep, who proudly describes his work as an agitator: "So far I've been in eighteen camps, and every camp I went I stirred up trouble" (200). The Relief Camp Workers' Union (RCWU) led BC inmates in a "mass exodus" to Vancouver in 1935, which evolved into the On-to-Ottawa Trek (Thompson 269-70). The trek ended on Dominion Day 1935, when the police interrupted a rally to arrest the trek's leaders. What followed is called the Regina Riot: one constable was killed, and hundreds of trekkers were

injured and arrested. Baird fictionalizes this event as the Clever Riot, and protagonist Matt Striker remembers it as a traumatic experience.

The same year of the trek, the Department of National Defence (DND) took over the relief camps in British Columbia. Michael Ekers argues that this shift in leadership altered the discipline enforced in the camps: "To maintain control over the relief workers and prevent them from organizing, the military attempted to produce *individual* subjects. The DND knew that if relief workers successfully mobilized it was because of their ability to conceive of themselves as a social group and act on this basis" (1132, emphasis in original). This distinction resonates with Matt's dilemma throughout *Waste Heritage*, as Hep repeatedly asserts the significance of the collective, but Matt's individuality continues to shape his actions.

Despite the DND's efforts, the RCWU gave the inmates a sense of social cohesion. When the camps closed in April of 1938, the RCWU organizers took the lead (Thompson 293). By May, single unemployed men were occupying the Vancouver Post Office, the Art Gallery, and the Hotel Georgia. The men soon left the Hotel Georgia, but the Sitdown Strike endured for several weeks in the remaining two buildings, until June 19, 1938, remembered as Bloody Sunday. On this morning, the Art Gallery was peacefully evacuated, whereas the RCMP used tear gas to violently evict the men from the Post Office. To escape the building, "sit-downers choking on tear gas ran a gauntlet of Mountie billy-clubs," and leader Steve Brodie "was beaten senseless despite repeatedly attempting to surrender" (Thompson 294). This initial violence triggered a riot, and by late morning downtown Vancouver was a mess of broken glass and looted stores.

Baird's account picks up here. Protagonist Matt Striker arrives in Aschelon–a fictionalized Vancouver–[1]mere hours after the violence. He is an unemployed transient, no longer recognized as a resident of any province. He joins the organization of unemployed men and becomes entangled in the lives of five other working-class folks: Harry, a cafe owner and veteran who befriends Matt; Hazel, a female worker and a volunteer for the organization; Hep, a squad leader within the organization; Eddy, a fellow striker who has suffered a traumatic beating at the hands of the police officer; and Kenny, an out-of-work teacher determined to write the story of the strike. These five characters make conflicting demands on Matt's time and energy as he negotiates his participation in the collective struggle.

Though her novel engages with politics and class, Baird was politically moderate. She told a journalist that she had "never been mixed up with that sort of subject before [and] had no ideology at all" ("Novel of Depression" 6), but she became fixated on the Sitdown Strike. She followed the action closely, and even visited the men's Victoria accommodations by accompanying the City Medical Office and her family doctor, D.M. Ballie.

Baird, born Irene Todd (1901-81), emigrated from England in her late teens. She lived much of her life in Vancouver and Victoria, where she was living at the time of the sitdown strike. She married Robert Baird and the couple had two children. Though middle-class, they were affected by the economic crisis–Baird worked as a teacher until 1934, and shortly after Robert lost his job as an engineer (Hill xiii). Baird took up writing as a means of "supplementing the family income" ("Novel of Depression 6). Her first novel, *John*, was released in 1937; it was a Canadian bestseller and sold well in other countries (Hill xiv). Baird was one of many women

[1] It is worth noting that "Aschelon" is also the name of the major city in Baird's first novel, *John* (29). In *Waste Heritage*, Gath stands in for Victoria, the seat of the provincial legislature. Some critics have noted Gath and Aschelon are allusions to biblical cities (Rifkind 182).

working to support their families during the Depression, but as a self-employed middle-class writer she was most likely protected from a great deal of the hostility aimed at working wives.

Regardless of her class position and ideology, she was passionate about sharing this story of police brutality and government ineptitude with a wider Canadian public. Her publisher, Carl Eayrs, initially feared that the novel may sway the election: "That novel is dynamite, becauee [sic] it's so powerful and because it portrays conditions so truthfully," though soon after, his reading shifted and he considered the novel "anti-Red," as in anti-communist (Mason, "State Censorship" 192-93). The advent of World War Two dampened the novel's political relevance and delayed publication. Baird allowed changes to be made to the novel in adherence to the Defense of Canada Regulations: "any reference to the hypocrisy of the government's recruitment efforts was removed" (Mason, "State Censorship" 193). These changes were not made to the American version. I will be using the 2007 new edition of the novel, edited by Colin Hill, which uses as its source text the uncensored version published in the United States by Random House in 1939.[2]

Discipline and Disruption in *Waste Heritage*

Baird's novel is most explicitly critical of the government and the police, but her portrayal of leftist activists is compellingly critical as well. Baird represents political

[2] Jody Mason has covered the novel's production and censorship at length, and argues that Baird's moderate politics but also her lack of "symbolic capital" made her receptive to censorship (*Writing Unemployment* 113): "Baird's willingness to accept changes indicates a desire to distinguish *Waste Heritage* from radical works of art, such as *Eight Men Speak*, that were censored during the 1930s, but it also shows how fearful she might have been of jeopardizing her emerging and fragile literary career" ("Sidown, Brother" 155).

organization through the figure of Hep. Leftist scholar Robin Mathews describes the character of the community builder as central to a social-political novel: "an imaginer, teacher or preacher, he or she is the reconciler of opposites" (*Canadian* 2). Hep must work to reconcile the strikers to the collective, and the collective to the general community. On both levels this reconciliation takes the form of discipline.

Hep uses the word "discipline" repeatedly, reminding the men, and Matt especially, of its significance. The novel's emphasis on discipline echoes the historical descriptions of the unemployed strikes. Discipline was a major strategy during the Relief Camp Workers' strike of 1935 and the subsequent On-to-Ottawa Trek. Authorities were eager to frame the strikers and trekkers as a threat to Canadians–the only way to counter this was to maintain discipline and behave flawlessly in the eyes of the public. John Herd Thompson describes how during the On-to-Ottawa Trek, "The discipline that had been developed in Vancouver was maintained on the road, and recruits who flocked to join were rejected if deemed unlikely to adapt to it. Their exemplary behaviour won the trekkers the support of towns and cities along the route" (270).

In *Waste Heritage*, discipline is the tightrope that every individual striker must walk if they are all to succeed together. Hep expels two teenage boys from the organization because their drunken behaviour is bad for the group's reputation (145). Similarly, Hep suggests that Eddy be "transferred" to the "nut house" before he can cause too much trouble,[3] but agrees to entrust Matt with the care of Eddy, and, implicitly, the reputation of the organization (33). Hep insists, "The only thing that's going to get us any action is by educating the public that these boys here are not just a bunch of irresponsible bums an' hoodlums but men with a strong case […] That's why we

[3] Baird establishes that the asylum is a frightening possibility: Harry refers to a brother who ended up there, and suggests Eddy would be a "damnsite better [off if he'd] walk right down an' lay his head on the tracks" (89).

have to have discipline around here–*an' by Christ it has to be discipline!*" (62). Discipline wins and maintains public support, and Hep is the ultimate enforcer of discipline.

For this discipline to function, Hep must also reconcile the striking men to the communal aims of the organization through a careful process of recruitment. Through Matt, we see the true price of discipline, as he tries to tame his own feelings and desires for the sake of the organization. He is tense and bitter in conversation with citizens and other strikers, and memories of jail time and the Clever Riot–his worst experiences of unemployment and violence–haunt him. Hep counters this by arguing that Matt's experience is not unique, and that he is better off submitting to the organization than going it alone: "you've got to remember that what happened to you today has happened to damn near every man in this whole outfit" (183). He regularly reminds Matt, "You've got to keep looking at this as a whole, not as a lot of individual units" (153). Hep repeatedly talks Matt through his anger and doubts. Parallel to these talks, Hep assigns Matt more and more responsibilities, including the care of Eddy, controlling the drunken teenage boys, and visiting potential donors and supporters. He is clearly shepherding Matt deeper into the organization with a combination of talk and trust, and in exchange he asks that Matt prioritize the organization over his own interests.

Despite this convincing rhetoric, Hazel serves as a potent reminder of Matt's individual needs, and their relationship troubles his commitment to the organization. Their dates remind him that poverty and transience hinder any future plans, including marriage. The song "I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby"[4] haunts him, functioning as a bitter reminder of their relationship's limits. When Matt first hears the song, he remarks: "It is not a tune any of us likes

[4] "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" was written in 1928 by Dorothy Fields, with music by Jimmy McHugh, and has been performed by Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, and many other jazz musicians.

at the moment, too personal" (131). It plays again in a cafe, where Matt is spending Kenny's money on a tea for Hazel, and she questions his ability to pay. Later, Matt whistles the tune while Hazel refuses his frantic marriage proposal. She reminds him, "between us we've got nothing," and so asserts the bitter reality that the song cheerily disguises (180). Finally, Matt references the song in his last letter to Hazel (220).

In the song, the speaker describes being broke, cursed, and plagued by rotten luck. The lyrics offer love in lieu of gifts or financial stability, and gestures to the "lucky day" when the speaker can give diamond bracelets and "all those things you've always pined for" (Holiday). Like the couple in the song, Matt and Hazel are attempting a romantic relationship in a time of poverty. But unlike the optimistic lovers of the song, they cannot look forward to better luck or richer times. The present is an unyielding obstacle; Matt is a transient, forced to travel for work or relief, and Hazel is tied down by her low-paying jobs and family ties. These conditions ensure their eventual separation. The song pushes an optimistic message: the lyrics "dream awhile, scheme awhile, / We're sure to find / Happiness and I guess / All those things you've always pined for" emphasize poverty as something surmountable through careful planning and wishing. But wishing and planning do not move Matt and Hazel any closer to a prosperous or even stable future together.

The song repeatedly reminds Matt of his failure to support Hazel financially and to achieve the expensive dream of marriage, a home, and children. Matt, momentarily taking a cue from the song and thinking hopefully towards the future, proposes to Hazel: "How about you an' me get married, honey? Maybe that sounds crazy to you now because I got nothing, but believe me, I won't stay that way" (180). Hazel counters with a more realistic vision of their future than

the one offered by the song: "you know where that gets you […] On relief…with extra allowance for each child" (180).

Gendered Labour: Wage Earners and Dependents

Later, I will discuss the crisis of masculinity, a concept circulated by labour historians to interpret the devastating social consequences of the Great Depression. But the scene of Matt's hasty marriage proposal draws attention to the gender crisis experienced by Hazel. At a time when married women were pushed out of the workforce,[5] marriage would put Hazel's employability at risk. Ruth Roach Pierson writes, "Insofar as policy analysts, legislators, and political and labour activists thought about women during the Great Depression, they tended to divide them into two categories, that of female worker and that of wife/mother. It was, by and large, ideologically anathema for a woman to combine these two categories in herself. Those who did risked putting themselves outside the solicitous embrace of public policy" (81-82). Hazel depends on her identity as a legitimate female worker, and marriage could disrupt that identity.

Hazel defines herself in resistant and revealing ways, so suggesting a shift in femininity among working women. Lindsay McMaster writes, "Some working women, like Vancouver's

[5] Married women became major targets during the unemployment crisis: "the standard practice across Canada was to fire married women, especially women in salaried jobs. For example, both the federal government and the Ontario provincial government undertook surveys of married women working in the civil service in order to expel them. To keep their jobs, separated and deserted women had to show they were the single wage earner in the family and also had to prove that their marriage had failed through 'no fault of her own'" (Christie 208). In her memoir *Right Hand Left Hand*, leftist writer and activist Dorothy Livesay describes being forced to give up her job as a social worker as soon as her husband found work. For more info on married women during the Depression, see Campbell; Hobbs.

Helena Gutteridge, saw that wage-earning women were in effect redefining the parameters of womanhood" (15).[6] While Matt struggles with his own masculinity, Hazel makes choices about what kind of woman she will be. She resists the objectification by her male supervisor, and so rejects the passive identity he assumes in her. Early in the novel, she complains that he "has tried to lay every girl on this floor," and Hazel has so far spurned his advances (84). She eventually challenges his behaviour: "I blew right up and told him what I thought he was and he had me fired" (175). Hazel also has sex with Matt in the park on their first date, pursuing her sexual desires even though society does not give her the space–literally–to do so. When Matt protests, "I didn't think you were that sort," she replies, "Every woman's that sort" (80), and thus resists the ongoing categorization of women. Even when she seems to desire the identity of homemaker, the appeal lies in the freedom this role may allow: "I want a home of my own," she tells Matt, "a place where you don't get chased around or spied on, where you don't have to punch a time clock every morning to prove to yourself it's another day" (77). She wants the opportunity to define herself on her own terms, beyond work and the supervision of her aunt. But even within her current constraints, she has a measure of choice, and she exercises it.

Once unemployed, she is offered a job by Art, who Matt describes as a "pimp," displacing an older woman who Art intends to fire. When Matt expresses his disapproval, Hazel replies, "I wish you know the line-up of girls waiting for the job an' some of the things they'd do to get it. I wish you knew all that" (175). She reminds Matt of the sheer number of women making difficult choices for the sake of employment and survival, and so gestures to a larger

[6] Helena Gutteridge was a political activist who moved from Britain to British Columbia to support the women's movement. She was active in the Women's Employment League, the CCF, and other political organizations. She was the first woman elected to Vancouver City Council in 1937, and was a vocal supporter of the unemployed men ("A Radical Woman").

crisis of working femininity that occurs silently alongside the loudly acclaimed crisis of masculinity. The novel does not resolve Hazel's storyline; in all likelihood, her unread letter at the end of the novel would update Matt on her employment status. Many critics presume that she takes Art's job as hostess at a dance hall, which Rifkind reads as "parasitic on the sex trade" (190), but Hazel has proven herself an unpredictable character, surprising Matt on multiple occasions. Her fate maintains some measure of ambiguity. The novel never resolutely defines what sort of woman she is.

Soon after Matt's botched marriage proposal, "he so far forgot himself and the prime necessity of keeping the organization intact as to call into every place in turn and ask if they had any work, any kind of a job at all" (182). His search reveals how much personal frustration disrupts his commitment to the collective. In Hazel, he sees a conventional middle-class future he wants badly, and he pursues it through the immediate action of looking for work, rather than allowing his future to hinge on the long-term collective action. If a job were available to him, would he turn away from Hep and the other men to pursue his future with Hazel? There is a sense of betrayal in his brief and fruitless job hunt, and the whole ordeal renews Matt's sense of despair.

Hazel and Matt's relationship speaks to the ways policy defined gender relations through male wage-earners and female dependents. Ekers describes the Depression as thrusting "'respectable,' hard-working 'family men'" into shameful dependence (1125). Women suffered unemployment as well, but "dependency [was] seen as appropriate for women and degrading for men" (1125). In *Waste Heritage*, the organization supports the men in a way that is less degrading: they contribute their time, their labour, and a measure of their individuality to the

organization, and the organization feeds them, includes them in a supportive community, and advocates on their behalf. But when Matt meets Hazel, he sees a would-be dependent that he is failing to support, and this reminds him of *his* financial dependence. On their first date, she sneaks Matt money so he can pay for their food, and though he appreciates her tactic, "[h]e paid, feeling cheap and shamed" (76). Her employment increases the shame of his unemployment. But even when Hazel herself is out of work, she must act carefully so as to not shame Matt. Historian Nancy Christie writes, "It was often suggested during the Depression that the breakdown of the home was caused directly by the 'inferiority complex' of the man without work" (211). Even without the frame of the domestic home, this complex plays out in Matt and Hazel's relationship. Her very presence is a reminder of his inadequacy as a man, and this erodes the morale that the organization has carefully built up.

Masculinity in Crisis

Through his relationship with Hazel, Matt experiences a "crisis of masculinity," a term widely used by historians to describe the sociological effects of widespread male unemployment during the Depression. Nancy Christie describes how the psychological consequences of male unemployment were a major concern in media of the time, and it is still a point of focus for many labour historians (Mason, Maynard, Roach Pierson). The concept of a crisis of masculinity holds some problematic assumptions. Steven Maynard states, "the very concept of a 'crisis' implied that at other historical moments masculinity was a stable formation" (185). With Maynard's criticism in mind, I do not want to claim a stable concept of masculinity. Rather, I want to use

the concept of a crisis as an entry into a discussion of practices of masculinity in moments of crisis and protest, with the aim of understanding the purpose of these practices, and whether they enable radical change or hinder it. I will begin with an interpretation of hegemonic masculinity in *Waste Heritage*.

R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt define hegemonic masculinity as a "pattern of practice" that "embodie[s] the currently most honoured way of being a man, it require[s] all men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimate[s] the global subordination of women to men" (832). They stress that hegemonic masculinity is not fixed, but prone to transform in relation to historical factors. It is clear in historical literature that the economic crisis of the 1930s transformed conceptions of masculinity, and a model of hegemonic masculinity arose that did not "correspond closely to the lives of any actual men [...] yet express[ed] widespread ideals, fantasies, and desires" (Connell and Messerschmidt 838). With this in mind, I understand the crisis of masculinity *not* as an unsettling shift away from a stable sense of masculinity, but as a failure to live up to an idealized–though perhaps wholly unrealistic–concept of masculinity.

Ideal masculinity in *Waste Heritage* is defined by the practices of earning a steady wage, contributing to the national economy, and supporting a family. I see this ideal circulated in *Waste Heritage* through negative comparisons between strikers and working men. The society within the novel asserts who strikers *should be* by disparaging who they *are*. Angry citizens call the strikers lazy and blame them for their own unemployment: "I know your kind," says one man on the street, "The most of you wouldn't take a job if it was offered to you" (15). The strikers read a newspaper article out loud that describes transients as "habitual trouble-makers unwanted in their

own communities because they refuse to accept steady employment" (69). This kind of argument defines a certain kind of masculine character–men who work hard, and *want* to work hard–and insists that the crisis of the strikers is simply a personal failure to accept this work-based identity. Mr. Chandler, the father of a hospitalized striker, sees "the Reds," the communist political organizers, as transforming men from legitimate workers into something less-than: "you teach boys to lie around and rot in idleness rather than accept honest labour" (206). His use of the word honest implies dishonesty on the part of the strikers and organizers, in contrast to a more honest form of labour. According to the disapproving public, made up of individual observers and mainstream media articles, the political work performed by the striking men is not honest; it does not make a visible and material contribution to society. Chandler is so ashamed by his son's political protest that he would rather consider him dead, insisting "I never heard of anyone by that name at all" (205). It is clear that his son's shift away from a certain kind of lifestyle marked by visible and honest labour has led to this disavowal.

The failure of this hegemonic masculinity is also communicated through Matt: his bitter sadness around Hazel expresses the gap between the kind of masculinity he wants to practice–with a wife, children, a home, and a job–and the kind of masculinity he is living–one of dependence, desperation, and loss. His memories of his own family also speak to a gap between ideal masculinity and the reality of poverty. He describes the breakdown of his parents' marriage in economic terms: "My old man was all burned up with ideas but he never made enough to give us any heat in the place and after a while my mother couldn't stand it so she walked out on us. At least I think that was the reason. If there was any other I never knew what they were" (94-5). His mother is found dead soon after. In Matt's understanding, his father's failure to support the

family financially led to her departure, if not her death. Matt calls his father a "dirty radical" but does not elaborate on his work or ideals. The implication is that his father put his energy into political work, not waged work, and so neglected his family in a fundamental way. These examples speak to a spectre of an ideal man: one who is not limited by poverty, and who supports himself and his family through hard work, making productivity and family his first priority. But because of the economic crisis, particularly the reduced global demand for Canada's resources, well-paying working class jobs are significantly more difficult to find, and many men fail to live up to this ideal.

This failure generates a responsive practice of another kind of masculinity. The hegemonic masculinity of the Depression ultimately emasculates the men who cannot live up to the ideal. Matt and the other unemployed men cannot achieve the sense of masculinity rooted in waged work, family, and home. Instead, they practice what Connell calls "protest masculinity," which reworks hegemonic masculinity "in a context of poverty" (114). This phrase emerges out of Connell's study on working class biker gangs, but the description suits the chronically unemployed men of *Waste Heritage*:

> The project of protest masculinity […] develops in a marginal class situation, where the claim to power that is central to masculinity is constantly negated by economic and cultural weakness. By virtue of class situation and practice [...], these men have lost most of the patriarchal dividend. For instance, they have missed out on the economic gain over women that accrues to men in employment, the better chances of promotion, the better job classification. If they accept this

> loss they are accepting the justice of their own deprivation. If they try to make it good by direct action, state power stands in their way. (16)

Matt's troubled interactions with Hazel speak to his loss of the "patriarchal dividend:" she holds the job and pays for the drinks, and this upsets the hegemonic model of the time, in which women are financially dependent on men.

Connell goes on to explain how men compensate for their loss through "spectacular display, embracing the marginality and stigma and turning them to account. At the personal level, this translates as a constant concern with front and credibility" (116). Individually, the striking men practice protest masculinity by bragging about their participation in riots and their time in jail. They often refer to jail as college. In a letter to Hazel, Matt explains: "a lot more of us has been sent up to college to finish our education" (218), and his metaphor speaks to two paths taken in life: ideally, boys would go to school, graduate, and use their skills and knowledge to secure work, a family, and a home, practicing hegemonic masculinity; in reality, boys do jail time instead, and incarceration in prison or in relief camps teaches them the practices of protest masculinity. Their bickering and posturing about jail, riots, and camps, such as the fight in the bunkhouse (234-36), or the argument over jail time (97), functions as the individual display of protest masculinity.

Protest masculinity is also practiced at a group level: the "collective performance of masculinity becomes a performance too […] Whatever one thinks of the script, it has to be acknowledged as a skilled, finely pitched production, mounted on a shoe string" (Connell, *Masculinities* 116). This describes the carefully organized public actions of the strikers.

Performances are strategically staged and acted. For example, a mass of men spend each day "tin-canning:"

> They did not solicit, they stood their rattling their cans. All over town there was this sound of rattling cans. After a time it had an eerie effect, like skeletons rattling round. Subconsciously everyone that dropped in a dime felt they had laid their part in the skeleton flat that way. The hard, dry sound of the coins struck on their ear as something personal and haunting. (Baird 225)

Here is an unspoken appeal to the men's cause. The public does not always respond well to articulations of the injustice: during a rally, a speaker "started to head into the fight from the social-conscience angle and the crowd was tired of him before he said anything" (38). But this eerie and wordless noise permeates the city and demands acknowledgment of some kind. It also transforms the streets of Gath into a kind of stage, where the public drama of unemployment and poverty unfolds, and the spectacle forces citizens to play their in parts in the drama. The skeleton simile indicates a pervading sense of guilt, as if every citizen has had a part in destroying the heritage of these young men, and every citizen must give back, if only to push the guilt aside a little longer. The men perform their poverty and bring society to account for it.

In a more humorous display, the men march through the streets of Gath to the Legislature carrying a bedstead and other awkward furniture. Their parade catches public attention: "The crowd got a certain human kick out of the parade, but the affair had bad political significance. It was bad for the city and thanks to shrewd timing and smart strategy, it held the authorities up to maximum public ridicule" (243). Though the strikers are often framed as a potential threat to the general public, the humourous props in their parade dissolve any sense of danger. The props

bring levity to a tense situation and help the public connect with the strikers on a more basic, even apolitical, level.

Furthermore, this performance casts the authorities in a ridiculous light, and not for the first time. Earlier in the novel, the men moved from city to city as "harassed authorities writhed beneath the same spotlight of publicity, and a lot of persons not ordinarily supposed to look ridiculous were made to appear so" (217). The movements of the strikers, performed with props, careful timing, and maximum audience, function on multiple levels to critique and protest the actions of the authorities. These movements clarify the extent of the problem, as parades emphasize the mass of unemployed; for example, when the men walk into Andersville the citizens are taken aback at the sheer number of them (138). Further, the apparent free movement and behaviour of the strikers suggests that the authorities lack any control over these men. Finally, as the men and their organizers claim public attention through their actions, the *inaction* of the authorities is more obvious.

These instances of collective action are strikingly diverse. The political organizers are clearly adept at performing protest from difference affective angles: the guilt evoked by rattling cans, the awe inspired by countless visible unemployed, and the lighthearted ridicule of props and parades. The men practice and perform their joblessness and transience. This appears to have two moderately successful outcomes: it solidifies the collective, as men perform together and recognize their common experience, and it draws the audience–the general public–into the political drama.

Connell, however, sees this practice of protest masculinity as futile. "Protest masculinity looks like a cul-de-sac," he writes, and his words recall one of the novel's resounding images:

the squirrel cage (117). When Kenny struggles to accurately document the strike in words, Saul offers instead a simple yet striking image: "Draw a squirrel cage…in one end, round an' round, out the same end" (70). This image leaves other men speechless. Herb Wylie argues that this image of futility emphasizes the creative struggle of the novel: "Kenny's dilemma, and Baird's, then, is how to advance a narrative in which there is no progress–in other words, how to narrate inertia" (72). But for Matt this inertia is more than an artistic concern, it is an all too familiar lifestyle. The collective performance brings a fleeting sense of purpose to Matt: "For the first time in his life he felt the steel edge of personal responsibility" (62). But the settlement the organizers reach simply thrusts Matt back into his cycle of desperate mobility. The terms of the settlement, as understood by Kenny and Matt, offer relief to transients "for a month, and free transportation back where we come from," and offers "local boys" relief "so long as they don't collect twice in the same place" (259). Matt argues to Harry: "They done it this way to keep the boys on the move" (259). The dramatics and solidarity of the strike are a brief respite from the futile movement of the squirrel cage. Protest masculinity, as practiced within the novel, does not offer an enduring alternative to the failure of hegemonic masculinity.

Connell's emphasis on futility is a useful bridge back to the issue of gender in novel, because the protest's futility partially hinges on the organization's exclusionary practices. Elaborating on his sense of the protest masculinity as ineffective, Connell writes:

> It is certainly an active response to the situation, and it builds on a working-class masculine ethic of solidarity. But it is a solidarity that divides the group from the rest of the working class. The loss of the economic basis of masculine authority

> leads to a divided consciousness–egalitarianism *and* misogyny–not to a new political direction. (117-18)

Connell is identifying the central failure of protest masculinity as practiced by his biker gang subject, but this same glaring failure emerges in *Waste Heritage*, and Hazel makes this misogyny visible. She is both a participant and outsider to the men's struggle. She contributes her labour to it, but she is excluded from the organization's political aims, and eventually even from the space of the organization itself.

Though women are welcome to work in the kitchen in Aschelon, Hazel is met with suspicion at the strike accommodations in Gath. First, Gaffney eyes her "with polite disapproval," and does not allow her to enter the organizational space of the Angel because, "they just don't like ladies around" (172). Matt arrives and fully articulates the general discomfort with her presence:

> Seeing her again suddenly brought home to him why the rule about women had to be rigid and rigidly enforced. Their presence made war, intruded the natural into the disciplined unnatural, brought with it forces at once savage and dividing. He was glad to see her and because he was glad he wished to hell she had not come over. (173)

The phrase "the rule about women" speaks to this exclusion as a conscious strategy. The organization is aware of this female threat to morale, and as such they seek to exclude women from organizational spaces. This exclusion recalls Connell's definition of protest masculinity. Having lost out on the "patriarchal dividend" that grants advantages over women, the men assert their privilege in other ways. Their project of protest masculinity is exclusively a male one.

Women can participate in a fairly traditional way: through domestic work, out of the public eye, such as Hazel and her aunt cooking for the men in the hall basement (26). But when Hazel enters political and public spaces, and debates the organization with Matt, his practice of protest masculinity crumbles. Shame, doubt, and desire creep in, and Hazel is the implicit cause of this disruption.

According to Connell and Messerschmidt, hegemonic masculinity "ideologically legitimate[s] the global subordination of women to men" (832). In the ideal conception of male breadwinner, the ideal female is a dependent one. But this ideal clashes with Hazel's identity as a self-supporting female worker. Early in the novel, Hazel works as a meat packer at a large grocery store. Matt characterizes this as "a man's job," to which Hazel responds, "If they hired men they'd have to pay more" (48). Matt's statement asserts cultural divisions between men's work and women's work that limit employment choices for women. He also implies that Hazel is taking a job from a more deserving man. Hazel's reply emphasizes her first-hand experience of the gender oppression of capitalism, which defines her as a dependent, not worthy of a living wage.

Hazel's marginalization as a single female worker is a result of the idealization of the married male worker as "more equal than others" (Roach Pierson 84). The "family wage" was a popular concept throughout the 1930s, and at its root was the belief in a traditional family unit, in which men performed wage work and supported women. Christie describes how influential social scientist Leonard Marsh and his team of academics pushed this concept on policy makers and the public. But the family wage concept failed to account for the diversity of family units, including families in which men were absent or unable to work. Christie writes, "Marsh

completely discounted 'families where the chief breadwinner is a woman' on the basis that these could not rightfully be considered families at all" (204). Notably, Hazel lives with her aunt; there is no apparent man to support them, and they form a female-led household. Even though widespread unemployment transformed many family units, Marsh's idealization of the male breadwinner worked to render these families invisible or socially abnormal. But Baird explicitly represents a female-supported family and emphasizes Hazel's individual experience of the labour system in contrast to the generalized experience of the men.

Hazel is also suspicious and critical of the organization, even as she supports it through her domestic labour early in the novel. This is not surprising, given the organization's deliberate exclusion of her. In conversation with Matt, she compares the organization to her own workplace, even though the organization's anti-capitalist stance should set it apart from the profit-oriented structure of a business (73). She worries about the extent of Matt's commitment, concerned that he is "all tied up in this thing body and soul. Take it away and what have you got left?" (73). She is nervous about Hep's priorities:

> I used to hear him talk that way when the first sit-down was on, always at the boys to see this fight as bigger than themselves. Sometimes I used to think that he didn't care what happened to Hep just so long as the organization was going along okay [...] It's like I used to feel about the store sometimes … me underneath and something at the top that's not quite human. (179)

She is clearly suspicious of the individual sacrifice that has to occur for the organization's success, most likely because her survival has functioned on an individual level, as she is

excluded from the support of many organizations and from the capitalist ideal of the male-led family.

Unfortunately, both her observations about Hep and the organization ring true in the final pages of the novel. Matt explains the terms of the settlement in a letter to Harry, and it is clear they do not benefit transients: "All we freight car cowboys know for sure is that we are right back where we started" (259). Frustrated, Matt seeks Hep out and asks for a position within the organization. The request stems from Matt's immediate desperation, but it also emerges naturally from Hep's process of recruitment. Now, Hep rejects Matt altogether, and his language echoes the words of the would-be employers who turned Matt away:

> "They couldn't use you even if they wanted to [...] there's too long of a line-up ahead of you. Why there's …"
>
> Matt's face changed. He broke in harshly, "You don't need to tell me the rest, I heard it before." (265-66)

Rather than rescuing him from transience and validating his contribution, the organization reaches a settlement that does nothing for Matt, and it confirms his irrelevance by refusing his ongoing participation.

Hazel seems to foresee this all, and she links her skeptical wisdom to her gender when she listens to Matt's enthusiasm for the organization and inwardly laments: "Oh god, what does he know about all this? He's like a baby. Why don't men know things the way women do?" (74). This gendering of ignorance and skepticism is intriguing. Many historians argue that labour and leftist advocates set aside "the sex question" as something that would be more effectively dealt with *after* the overthrow of capitalism (McCallum, Sangster). As a result, many female workers

and activists contributed to movements that did not keep their unique interests in mind, or did not value their struggles as much as those of male workers. Hazel's situation is no different: she volunteers for the organization, but when her labour is no longer needed, she is not entirely welcome. Similarly, the organization does not attend to her low-wage or her sudden unemployment. Given these conditions of exclusion, Hazel's suspicion is understandable. How can she fully engage with an organization that views her as a threat? Her self-preservation necessarily overtakes her active participation.

In all, Hazel functions as a strong critic of the organization, mindful of the indifference of organizations to individual well-being. Her care for Matt tempers her skepticism to something more compassionate, and it contrasts strongly with Hep's organizational detachment. While Hazel struggles to reconcile Matt's optimism and her own hopelessness, Hep ultimately sets the needs of Matt and countless others aside in favour of the larger social movement. He scolds Matt for his disappointment, insisting: "You don't see what bringing this little stink here out in the open can do for the big main cause. All you're lookin' at is just one little corner," but Matt is not sufficiently politicized to see beyond the "one little corner" that is his entire existence (264). The community is not as real to him as his individual oppression.

Hazel is not alone in feeling excluded from the organization, or being critical of its aims and tactics. Though the men often act as a collective unit, one cannot overlook their differences. Individual men practice masculinity and protest in unique ways, and I want to think through some of these practices and their repercussions for the larger collective.

Divergent Masculinities

I have already discussed Hep at some length, but it is worth reviewing how he practices a form of divergent masculinity. First of all, it is clear that Hep performs a continuous work of recruitment and discipline that is essential to the collective performance of protest. He is always organizing, delegating, collecting, or debating for the sake of the organization. He maintains an air of commitment that works to reassure men who are still uneasy about throwing their whole selves into the struggle. He is a leader, but he does not speak from the distant point of the podium–rather, he engages with the men on the ground, and often on a one-on-one basis. He has a long history of organizing and agitating, particularly in the relief camps, telling Matt, "So far I've been in eighteen camps, and every camp I went I stirred up trouble" (200). Hep tirelessly performs political work.

In this sense, he enacts what Todd McCallum calls "radical manhood." McCallum develops this term to describe the men of the One Big Union (OBU), and contextualizes it in the 1919 Western Labour Conference (WLC), with its dominantly (white) masculine politics. Though Baird is writing in a later historical context, the concept of radical manhood adds some nuance to my contrast between hegemonic masculinity and protest masculinity. I defined the hegemonic masculinity of the time in terms of legitimate, waged work. Radical manhood displaced work as central to male identity and replaced it with strong socialist politics: "To work was to alienate one's manhood; socialism meant its restoration" (McCallum 35).

Rifkind argues that the strikers serve as an example of radical manhood, particularly when discipline is upheld and they succeed in winning over "an otherwise wary public" and restoring their own "sense of self." in these moments, "The individual man is not effaced by the collective, but rather achieves his ultimate expression in it" (186-87). Whereas Rifkind uses issues of mobility and metaphors of warfare to unravel the "collective fantasy" of radical manhood (189), I see radical manhood as a failing in the novel in two ways: First, Baird does not advance her political critique of capitalism far enough for the strikers to visibly practice radical manhood. Second, the differences between the strikers, including not-quite striker Hazel, cannot be sustainably glossed over by radical rhetoric that focuses so strongly on manhood.

Baird does not unpack the politics of Hep or the organization; her representation smudges the variations of communism and socialism. Matt wishes he had a steady job, and he is wary enough of radical politics to never fully articulate capitalism as the system enabling his oppression. He does not oppose the ideal of the working family man. In fact, he longs for it, and bitterly stews in his failure to achieve it: "I don't give a goddam about politics," he tells a comrade early in the novel, "all I want is work!" (24). The positive ideal of the working family man defines unemployed, single Matt as a failure.

McCallum's concept of radical manhood hinges on a socialist politics that articulates an alternative to capitalism, not just anger at its failure: "Much of the OBU's appeal lay in the connections advocates made, through the practice of radical manhood, between an active, positive sense of male gender identity and their particular brand of socialist politics" (29). This is what Hep offers–active, positive masculinity founded for the moment in protest, but eventually in a more just system. This is what Matt receives, briefly, when he works with Hep: "It's the first

time I ever saw any real hope or plan in anything" (73). And ultimately, radical manhood offers a long-term political vision, which enables Hep to see and work beyond the squirrel cage of protest masculinity.

Radical manhood, with its emphasis of masculinity, still runs up against the issue of misogyny: "while this vision of working men's collective strength had been shaped by the gendered division of labour under monopoly capitalism, the masculinized ideological overtones of socialists at the WLC obscured the work of women, in Women's Labor Leagues and informal community organizations, that was essential to the labour movement" (McCallum 26). This dynamic is certainly replicated in *Waste Heritage*, as Hazel and her aunt's contributions to the organization do not ensure their equal participation and value in the organization.

But their representation signals the difference in Baird's approach compared to other retellings of the event, such as that of strike leader Steve Brodie. Baird came into the sit-down strike and its aftermath as a female supporter, and she needed to find ways into predominantly masculine spaces, like the bunkhouses she toured with her doctor. She would likely have spoken or worked with the other female supporters. By introducing Hazel in this role, and then moving on to represent, even peripherally, her unemployment, exclusion, and disenchantment with the protest, Baird takes care to document the process through which protest and labour movements simultaneously relied upon and rejected female leftists.

She also represents characters who blur the boundaries of femininity and masculinity. In contrast to the confident radical manhood of Hep, there is nervous, sensitive Kenny Hughes. An unemployed teacher, Kenny is an intellectual, and his desire is to make change through art rather than action. Many critics have drawn parallels between Baird and Kenny. Wylie argues, "Baird

uses the figure of Kenny to articulate her anxieties about the authenticity and earnestness of her own portrait: that of an outsider" (67). In many instances, Baird seems to be poking fun at her own project, as her other characters mercilessly mock and criticize Kenny's progressive artistic aims.

At the very least, Kenny's anxieties reveal that Baird was by no means naive about the difficulty of her project and of her own status. The role of the middle-class female intellectual had its constraints. The reviews of *Waste Heritage* reveal skepticism that a female author could successively dramatize this kind of masculine event. Harold Strauss writes, "one wonders how a woman has managed to reproduce so accurately their racy dialogue" (7). Eleanor Godfrey deems Baird unsuccessful as a woman writing a man's world, and finds the novel "is the work of one who guesses rather than knows what is going on below the surface" (365). Many of the critics dismissed Baird's writing as derivative of Steinbeck and other male authors. Hill effectively argues that this criticism is a gendered one, as it represents a double standard in which critics "have denigrated her work by tracing its real and imagined American influences," while such influences on Morley Callaghan are evidence of "his seriousness, internationalism, cosmopolitanism, and modernism" (xxviii). The reviews identify Baird's gender more than her class as an obstacle to writing a successful representation of political struggle.

Both Rifkind and Mason attend to the gender difference at work in this novel and its production, and they read Kenny as a figure through which Baird can "cross-dress" into the struggle (Mason, "Sidown, Brother" 152; Rifkind 200). Through him, she closes the class and gender gap between herself and the strikers. But this is not a simple task, as Mason observes: "While the character of Hughes enables Baird to get much closer to the objects of

representation–the strikers–the novel paradoxically thematizes the difficulty of this endeavour, as if reflecting on the challenges Baird faces" (*Writing Unemployment* 124). This difficulty arises from Kenny himself: he is often marked as an outsider, and he does not completely match the other men in class or gender. Rifkind describes Kenny as "reeling from downward class mobility" (198). His project is an obsessive one, and he works at it "in a sort of fever so as to try to fool himself that he was not losing out and slowing down and rusting mentally through lack of a normal teaching routine" (Baird 150). He has not experienced jail or war, nor does it seem likely that he has been through riots and relief camps; he lacks the experiences that toughen and shape the other men, the kinds of legitimizing experiences they brandish in fights. Kenny is "all the wrong temperament for joblessness," and this difference is often tied to his identity as an intellectual worker, rather than a skilled or unskilled labourer (150). His intellectual background links him to Baird, who also worked as a schoolteacher. Though Baird claims, "This was the Depression, we were all 'have-nots' together," through the character of Kenny she differentiates the unemployed middle-class from the unemployed working-class (Baird "Sidown" 84).

Though Baird is to some extent "cross-dressing" through Kenny, this disguise does not grant her full insider status. This is partially because Kenny lacks the conventional markers of masculinity. Kenny is constantly set apart through gestures that mark him as "sensitive, more sensitive than the majority of men round him" (224). Kenny is often blushing (104, 225, 262), sighing, and speaking "with a touch of wistfulness" (224, 240). His behaviour reads as unmanly, and he is the butt of many jokes, including when Gabby brings a group to laughter at the image of Kenny working on a farm, a masculine activity that would not suit him (188).

As well as being sensitive, Kenny develops an abnormal interest in Matt. He frames this interest as intellectual, but it often reads as a sexual desire: "Hughes considered [Matt] handsome in a rugged, unfinished sort of way" (224). On some level, Kenny is aware of how his "sensitive instinct" might appear: "He had to fight this, too, in case he was thought queer. It was dangerous to be thought queer, especially in any large company of men" (150). Baird never makes the jump to declaring Kenny as queer, but it is clear that he does not fit well into the boxes of masculinity and heteronormativity. After he speaks with Hazel, the narrative describes him as "the type who needed a woman badly" (173), but he seems more interested in supporting Matt than pursuing his heterosexual desires.

Kenny inhabits what Maynard calls a "subordinate masculinity" (186). Maynard makes a convincing critique of masculinity as an overly simplistic lens for reading class and labour history, including his appeal that "because an unqualified or undefined masculinity usually carries with it the presumption of heterosexuality, attending to and naming the particularities of men's gender identities, allowing for both 'masculine' and 'feminine' components, should also help us avoid heterocentric assumptions" (191). Kenny does not fit the bill of hegemonic masculinity, protest masculinity, or radical manhood, as they are practiced by the other men. Twice, Matt follows up a description of "fancy" Kenny with the words: "We have all sorts here" (220, 259). Matt's words are not positive or negative, but they are a judgment of Kenny's difference. Kenny is indisputably of another sort. Fancy, queer, sensitive–he is ill-at-ease in the hyper-masculine realm of the strike. In fact, whereas Hazel's presence evokes shame and bitterness in the other men, including Matt, it invigorates Kenny: "That brief contact with Hazel did something to Hughes, it drew him out of himself, made him feel warm and happy and clever"

(173). Kenny is the type who needs a woman badly because his identity is less firmly grounded in conventional masculinity. Whereas the collective defines and solidifies itself to the exclusion or subjugation of women, Kenny feels uncomfortable in this site of concentrated masculinity, and he flourishes in the presence of femininity. His discomfort calls attention to the exclusive borders of this protest community: if his character, marked as intellectual and immasculine, is so out of place in the protest community, than it is clearly a community strongly rooted in certain traditional masculine qualities. The radical politics of the collective are not radical enough to comfortably accept potentially queer Kenny.

Eddy is also notably different from the other men. He occasionally performs domestic labour for the other strikers, mending clothes and cleaning socks (148, 244). Though Baird acknowledges through Hazel and her aunt that women's associations played a big part in the unemployed strikes by performing necessary domestic labour, she also chooses to represent a male character who takes on some of this work. But despite this traditionally feminine work, unlike Kenny, Eddy is never the butt of the joke. His masculinity goes unquestioned, though he also clings to Matt and demonstrates a heightened sensitivity. Because his sensitivity hinges on physical violence rather than intellectuality, it does not mark him as "queer."

All the same, Eddy inhabits a vulnerability that is heart wrenching and dangerous. He has been indelibly marked by the strain and violence of the strike. Reviewers describe him with bizarrely whimsical phrases: Eleanor Godfrey calls him "punch-drunk" and "slap-happy" (365), Harold Strauss describes how he "has been beaten silly–slug nutty–by nightsticks" (7). These out-of-date phrases seem to be reaching to describe something strange and unknown. In contemporary terms, it is clear that Eddy has suffered a concussion at the hands of the aggressive

police officer, and that the whole ordeal of the strike has traumatized him. Words and scenarios that recall his trauma trigger violent reactions: when Matt tells him "Sidown," Eddy retorts, "Don't you tell me to sidown. Don't anyone never tell me to do that again" (12). Psychologically and physically rattled by police violence, Eddy is far too unpredictable to appropriately participate in the collective protest. He throws the performance off by (over)reacting to situations that recall his trauma. Notably, many of these violent reactions involve women, and figure their interest in the strike in negative ways.

Eddy's vulnerability casts women as threatening and superficial. In rallies and open public spaces, a public hysteria jeopardizes Matt and Eddy's carefully maintained discipline. Though hysteria is usually applied to crowds in this novel, it is occasionally focalized in the behaviour of women. Eddy, with his bandaged head, air of helplessness, and his "young and empty" face (11), captures the attention of women on at least three occasions, and their hunger to be part of his struggle figures them as dangerous. The first woman "eyed Matt in a way that showed she wanted to do more for the cause of unemployment than a quarter's worth," then "gushed" in a hungry sympathy at Eddy's injuries, arousing his anger (17). The second woman to pursue him "stared at him as though he were something digestible" (41). Two of these women, including a sex-worker, are literally beaten off by Matt and Eddy. In contrast to the male bystanders, who debate politics or offer help and encouragement, women engage with the striking men in dangerous and ultimately unsupportive ways.

In another example of this, Matt and Hep pay a visit to Mrs. Bannerman, a widow who may be able to donate to their cause. Bannerman is clearly sexually interested in Hep: "[she] eyed him hungrily and beneath the dabs of rouge a sluggish colour rose" (210). It is clear that

Hep intends to play on her sexual interest to secure her financial support, and Matt pays close attention so he can learn what he calls a "new technique" (210). A cop interrupts this solicitation, but the treatment of Mrs. Bannerman is consistent with that of the other hungry women. Their interest is not rooted in political support or even human sympathy, but a lust for male vulnerability. In this sense, they are dismissed as dangerous and superficial rather than as useful supporters.

I want to emphasize this gendered dynamic, particularly as it relates to Eddy, because it reveals a persistent discomfort with women's presence and what feelings and reactions they evoke in men. Just as Hazel inadvertently threatens Matt's morale and commitment, these women trouble the organization's discipline by persistently triggering Eddy. Eddy's presentation–including his visible injuries and his helpless and childlike behaviour–provoke a dangerous and hysterical display of femininity from mostly female observers.

The term "hysterical" has a complicated medical and gendered history. Elaine Showalter writes, "hysteria has always been construed as a 'woman's disease,' a feminine disorder, or a disturbance of femininity, but this construction has usually been hostile" (286). She describes how it has been used medically to associate "lability and capriciousness" with female nature, and how only recently female historians have challenged this history, and "sought [hysteria's] sources in cultural myths of femininity and in male domination" (287). Baird is writing at a time before hysteria has been critically unpacked, but her use of the term to describe unpredictable women in a male-focused context is fascinating. The term functions to dismiss and further marginalize women from the protest. The hysterical female bystanders and the cautiously critical Hazel both trouble the organization and its carefully performed protest. The male collective is

stronger when women are elsewhere. But armed with a contemporary reworking of hysteria, the women's hysterical reactions are a reminder of their oppressive conditions, as well. Pondering the term's gendered psychoanalytic history, Showalter wonders, "could hysteria also be the *son's* disease, or perhaps the disease of the powerless and silenced?" (288) What makes the women's hysterical reactions so different from the angry, emotional outbursts of Matt and Eddy? They are all expressing something desperate, and the women could very well relate to the oppressed and dispossessed young men–altogether, they lack any real power and voice.

In closing, I want to return to Hep's watchword throughout the novel: discipline. Definitions of discipline describe obedience, codes of behaviour, and rules of conduct. Just as in gender performance, men and women are expected to follow certain rules, implicit and explicit, and to break them is to break with the collective. Men at large are viewed as trouble making, lazy, and dangerous if they do not mimic the spectral ideal of masculinity, even with the obstacle of unemployment. The men of the strike practice a collective form of protest masculinity that works on two levels: bringing a positive collective identity to a weary group of men, and presenting themselves as upstanding and neglected citizens to a wary public. But any divergence from the collective threatens this protest performance, and so it demands a certain effacement of the self and of individual needs. Kenny, Eddy and Matt all struggle with this submission. Though their struggles vary, their deviance from the collective always involves the negotiation of gender identity and gender relations.

The organization exchanges discipline for political voice and collective purpose, but only for men. It offers nothing to women, and even figures Hazel and other women as threats to the fragile construct of protest masculinity. Hazel confirms this fear when she functions as a catalyst

of Matt's crisis of masculinity, and their relationship weakens the discipline that Hep has carefully taught Matt. But beyond her relationship with Matt, Hazel resists labour and gender codes on her own terms. Adjacent to these masculine codes of conduct, Hazel is actively resisting her categorization as certain sorts of women, with all of the rules and assumptions that these categories produce. Her narrative consists of choice after choice, in contrast to the inertia that plagues the men. As the only primary female character, she casts light on the less visible crisis of femininity, made visible in the ways that hegemonic masculinity and protest masculinity defined themselves in reference to certain kinds of womanhood.

In her monograph on Depression-era women's writing, Paula Rabinowitz testifies that "Leftist women's fiction of the 1930s rewrites women into the history of labor and workers into the history of feminism" (4). Irene Baird is part of this tradition. Even as she concerns herself with bringing wider attention to the plight of men, she uses Hazel and different iterations of masculinity to ensure that gender politics visibly intersect with the labour movement.

CHAPTER TWO

"Lady Comrade": Gender and Antifascism in Ted Allan's *This Time a Better Earth*

In the seventy-five years since its initial publication, Ted Allan's Spanish Civil War novel *This Time a Better Earth* has garnered little scholarly attention. Caren Irr and James Doyle both analyze the novel briefly in their monographs on radical and progressive literature, and leftist scholar Robin Mathews argues that it is a rare example of "Canada's hidden working-class literature" (37). The introduction to Bart Vautour's scholarly edition of the novel is the longest engagement to date, but Vautour limits his introduction to contextual material, as he is wary of shutting down future discussion by providing too much analysis ("Introduction" xii). What analytical work there is focuses on the six male volunteers in the novel: Irr contends that Allan "uses relations among men of the International Brigades to figure social relations" (*Suburb of Dissent* 159), and Doyle argues that the story focuses on "a group of characters that epitomize the cosmopolitanism of the International Brigades" (123). As a result, there are many unexplored routes of enquiry with this novel, including its primary female character, Lisa Kammerer, and her romance with protagonist Bob Curtis. I intend to focus on these unexamined aspects of the novel, with the recognition that the journalistic work, which Lisa performs enthusiastically and which Bob takes up reluctantly, is a legitimate form of international solidarity, and one that reflects critically on issues of gender and political commitment.

This chapter will examine how political commitment and gender performance collide in this novel. I define political commitment as an active engagement with a political cause, whether

through cultural production or protest and activist work, and I will analyze gender with the support of Judith Butler's theorization of gender performativity. I argue that Bob's ideals of masculinity inform his definition of antifascism. He is particularly influenced by a heroic masculinity associated with war and combat. Lisa is disruptive of this, because she consciously practices and resists gender in strategic ways, and because Bob's relationship with her further compromises his ideal vision of antifascist work. I will analyze how Allan renders real-life photographer Gerda Taro into the character of Lisa Kammerer, and how, until recently, concepts of femininity and heterosexuality have shaped Taro's legacy, to the detriment of her reputation as a photographer. Ultimately, I will argue that the failure to recognize gender as another challengeable construct compromises the coalition-building, world-making vision of Bob, which is propounded in the novel as a whole. I will use Vautour's 2015 edition of *This Time a Better Earth* as my primary text.

I will begin with some historical context on Allan, Taro, and the Spanish Civil War internationally and in the Canadian context. I will then set up my theoretical framework, first introducing the concept of commitment and contextualizing it, then bringing in Butler's theory of gender to interrogate the ways that Bob and Lisa practice gender. I will read Lisa alongside Taro to examine how Allan's characterization of Lisa mimics the problems I see in Taro's memory and legacy. Ultimately, I will argue that *This Time a Better Earth* functions as a bildungsroman of masculine antifascist development, which requires Lisa's participation and presence but succeeds only with her death and the reclaiming of the front as a masculine site.

Biographical Context

Ted Allan (1916-95), born Alan Herman, was a Jewish journalist from Montreal. During the war, he wrote for the Communist Party paper the *Daily Clarion* and the leftist magazine *New Frontier*, and, like Bob, wrote and delivered broadcasts over short-wave radio. He also worked with the Canadian Blood Transfusion Institute in Madrid, and was close friends with its charismatic director, Dr Norman Bethune. During the war, Allan had a brief affair with Taro and was with her at the time of her death. After the war, Allan had a long career as a writer in Canada and the United States. His most famous works are *The Scalpel, the Sword: The Story of Norman Bethune* (1952), written with Sydney Gordon, and the screenplay for the 1975 film *Lies My Father Told Me*. He guarded Bethune's legacy closely, and many of Bethune's papers are still under the control of Allan's children (Hannant, "Doctoring Bethune" 81).

Gerda Taro (1910-37), born Gerta Pohorylle, was a Jewish photographer raised in Stuttgart, Germany (Rogoyska 19). She was imprisoned in her late teens for anti-Nazi activities, and upon her release she fled Germany for the relative safety of Paris. She spent the rest of her short life in exile, and never saw her family again. They were murdered by the Nazis during the occupation of Serbia (Schaber 33). In Paris, she met Hungarian photographer André Friedmann and he taught her photography. Though he trained her well, work was scarce and they lived in relative poverty. Eventually, the two invented the persona of Robert Capa, a name that immediately attracted professional attention. Irma Schaber sees Robert Capa and Pohorylle's adopted name of Gerda Taro as a response "to the antisemitism of Germany and the increasing antipathy toward foreigners in France…[the personas] spurned every ethnic or religious label" (17). The names also carried "a scent of Hollywood" given the contemporary success of stars

Frank Capra and Greta Garbo (17). Taro and Capa published under the credit Capa, then Capa and Taro, and eventually Taro begun publishing under her own assumed name.

Taro travelled to Spain early in the war to work as a photographer. Her work appeared in the French communist paper *Ce Soir*, and many other newspapers. It was also used in propaganda for the Republican side (Schaber 23). Her photos were likely useful in this context because they appealed to the humanity of the war; she often photographed refugees and orphans, the civilians caught in the conflict, and she did a memorable series of a crowd waiting outside the morgue to see the bodies of their loved ones.

Taro's death was a consequence of her commitment to the cause. The central value of Taro and Capa's work was proximity: "they rejected the safe and distant stance of the typical reporter and sought new angles and forms to enable actual participation through solidarity. For Taro, this entitled getting as close as possible to the volunteers in the International Brigades, and sharing the same risks and dangers that they faced" (Schaber 23). Taro died in July 1937, of injuries sustained in a car crash with a tank during the Republican retreat from Brunete. By all accounts, moments before her death, she was fearlessly taking photos while the soldiers around her sought cover.

Until recently the romance of her death has garnered more attention than her innovative work. The French Communist Party seized her death as an opportunity, declaring her "an antifascist martyr" and organizing "a memorial service verging on a state funeral, intended to generate political effects that would resonate far beyond personal sorrow" (Whelan 64; Schaber 31). For some time, Capa's fame overtook Taro's memory. Recently, there has been more study of her career, spurred in part by the 2007 recovery of a suitcase in Mexico that contained

hundreds of her lost negatives, and which was the subject of the 2012 Mexican/American documentary, *The Mexican Suitcase*. Besides Taro's work, the documentary recounts some of the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, including the migration of thousands of Spanish refugees to Mexico, and the contemporary efforts by Spanish citizens to exhume the physical and narrative evidence of this devastating war.

Historical Context

The Spanish Civil War began as a military coup in July of 1936. The country had been steadily transforming from a feudal state to a democracy for some time, and a Republican coalition had taken office in early 1936. The military, nobility, and clergy were unhappy with their loss of power, and the military attempted to overthrow the government. The government and people reacted swiftly: various parties and unions formed militias, and the major cities were well-defended. But the military forces, eventually called the Nationalists or Fascists, soon garnered the support of Hitler and Mussolini, while Western nations signed non-intervention and neutrality policies, effectively denying the Republican side military or humanitarian support. Mexico and the Soviet Union offered what support they could, and the Communist International organized the International Brigades to manage the thousands of volunteers arriving from around the world.

The Canadian government took a stance of neutrality, and forbid its citizens from participating under the 1937 Foreign Enlistment Act (Petrou 54). Despite this, more than 1600 Canadians traveled to Spain, where they joined the International Brigades or worked as medical

staff, ambulance drivers, and journalists (Petrou 13). They formed the Canadian contingent of the International Brigades, the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, in July of 1937, the same month Taro died. At home, the struggle for democracy in Spain struck a chord with many leftists Canadians suffering the economic and political hardships of the Great Depression. The *Daily Clarion* chronicles the tireless fundraising efforts across Canada, often led by the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy (Mikalson 2). The literary magazine *New Frontier* offers a glimpse at the cultural engagement with the Spanish Civil War: Canadian artists and writers responded strongly to the war across all mediums, but particularly in poetry.[7] To this day, the Spanish Civil War remains a popular topic among Canadian writers.[8] Besides *This Time a Better Earth*, the only other (semi) Canadian novel written during the war was *Meet Me on the Barricades* (1938),[9] an experimental novel by ex-pat Charles Yale Harrison about a New York musician who obsessively follows the Spanish Civil War.

Commitment: Canadians and the Spanish Civil War

I want to introduce the concept of political commitment through Canadian modernist poet and editor Leo Kennedy, who is better known for his essays on Canadian poetry and his literary circle than for his own poetry. Though he never uses the term, Kennedy demanded commitment from the Canadian writers in his 1936 essay "Direction for Canadian Poets." The debate around

[7] For more thorough analysis of *New Frontier* and Canadian poetry on the Spanish Civil War, see Vautour "From Transnationalist Politics;" Vulpe "This Issue is Not Ended;" and Vulpe and Albari *Sealed in Struggle: Canadian Poetry & The Spanish Civil War*.
[8] For a detailed list of Canadian writing on the Spanish Civil War, see the extensive bibliography compiled by the Canada and the Spanish Civil War project (spanishcivilwar.ca).
[9] *Meet Me on the Barricades* has been out of print for decades, but University of Ottawa Press is publishing a new scholarly edition (Sharpe and Vautour).

commitment in art, particularly in poetry, dismissed Canadian literary tradition in favour of engagement with the contemporary political scene. Canadian literature had long secured its Canadian character through its themes, particularly the theme of landscape. But in a decade of crises, such writing seemed out of touch and even superficial. Kennedy issued a call to arms in the June 1936 issue of *New Frontier,* just a month before the Spanish Civil War broke out. In "Direction for Canadian Poets," Kennedy gripes that, "in this time of impending war and incipient fascism [… artists and critics] have made no effort to locate Canadian poetry in its social place" (21). He continues:

> It is my thesis that the function of poetry is to interpret the contemporary scene faithfully; *to interpret especially the progressive forces in modern life which alone stand for cultural survival* […] Poetry that is real, Canadian and contemporary can be written tomorrow by poets who worried about 'dreams' and their precious egos yesterday. It will be welcomed by millions of Canadians who want their children to grow up straight-limbed and enjoy a heritage of prosperity and peace, and who want the kind of writing that will help bring this about. (21, 24, emphasis in original)

Kennedy wrote against a tradition of Canadian literature that had stagnated in the lyrical, pastoral, and romantic. He wrote in favour of a new politically-engaged literature.

Commitment was a concern internationally, particularly when the war began and writers tried to stay actively engaged. Candida Rifkind writes that "An important and recurrent topic in Spanish Civil War verse is the question of how the writer can be folded into this collective action" (94), which I define as the problem of commitment. Cary Nelson identifies commitment

as the major dilemma for noncombatant writers, who struggle to meet "the demand that Spain and all it stood for placed on people everywhere" (22). Nelson reads Edwin Rolfe's Spain poem "City of Anguish," which describes the true ways that "man knows war" through frontline combat, as driven by "his troubled separation from the front…experience…at one anguished remove" (22). As a journalist working on the outskirts of the action, Allan was certainly concerned with commitment. His novel is both an attempt at socially engaged literature and a meditation on the struggle of commitment to a political cause. His novel's very title speaks to its ambition to honestly critique contemporary injustice and work towards a "better earth."

International solidarity around Spain made it clear that the project of commitment was not restricted within the nation. One of the slogans of the war, which Pepe refer to when he first meets Bob, is "Make Madrid the tomb of fascism!" (61) It speaks to the galvanizing vision that if fascism could be stopped in Spain, it could be stopped around the world. This resonated with Canadians fighting fascism at home. Fascism in Canada manifested itself in various ways: in the increase of anti-semitic publications and policies, especially in Quebec,[10] in the rising support for Adrien Arcand and his fascist politics,[11] or in the police brutality against the immigrant and working class, including the kinds of violence represented in *Waste Heritage*. Spain became a site of hope for antifascists around the world, including in Canada. Norman Bethune is often cited as saying, "It is in Spain that the real issues of our time are going to be fought out" (cited in

[10] For more information on anti-semitism in Canada between the wars, see Davies, Rosenberg.
[11] See Nadeau for a detailed look at Adrien Arcand, his fascist publications, and the Parti National Social Chrétien.

Stewart and Stewart 139).[12] The defence of Spanish democracy was the first major step in the fight against fascism.

The ideological significance of Spain leads scholar Nicola Vulpe to read Canadian poetry about Spain through displacement. Vulpe sees poets as transposing "the most pressing issues of the time" to Spain, so that Spain was understood as a "theatre" for the world's problems (158-9). Allan, as one of the few Canadian combatant writers, sidesteps this issue by writing first-hand about Spain, but he represents this internationalist fixation on Spain through his international characters. Bob comes to Spain because of his experiences in Canada. To make a better Canada, one first had to defend and secure a better Spain. This is clear to Bob; when he tells Lisa what brought him to Spain, he traces a seamless trajectory from the Depression in Canada to the battlefields of Spain. He was "seeking a way out" and found it in Spain (86). But Spain forces him to contend with his own commitment: he tells Lisa he has yet to settle one thing: "Is the world really as important to me as I said it was?" (86).

This discussion of Bob's background and commitment is an important point of contact between *Waste Heritage* and *This Time a Better Earth*. Bob admits that he is far from unique: "My so-called youth is almost a general biography of the youth of America […] thousands of other guys my age were living the same way I was, perhaps not thinking the same way, but seeking a way out the same way I was" (86). Matt Striker, Eddy, and Kenny Hughes are just a few of those thousands who graduated alongside Bob into unemployment and disenfranchisement. In my first chapter, I traced the unemployment strikes back to the relief camps and the On-to-Ottawa Trek. The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion carries the same ancestry:

[12] This quote appears in most books about Bethune. Roderick and Sharon Stewart cite their source as a National Film Board interview with George Mooney, a friend of Bethune's.

many Canadians who were politicized in the camps and/or on the trek made their way to Spain, while others carried the fight of the Relief Camp Workers' Union (RCWU) to Vancouver.[13]

In tracing this historical lineage, I argue that Bob and Matt are two halves of one story: both grappling with the conditions of unemployment, both "seeking a way out." The question Bob is struggling with: "Is the world really as important to me as I said it was?" is just another form of Matt's dilemma. The men wish to participate in something larger than themselves, to improve the world and not just their own lot. Hazel and Lisa are both disruptive to the men's notions of commitment, but this characterization is less a reflection of women and more a reflection of the men themselves. They may be willing to throw off capitalism, but they are not prepared to do away with masculinity as a central facet of their identity, and this has consequences for their commitment.

Antifascist Masculinity

To explain this more clearly, I want to bring Raymond Williams theory of commitment in "The Writer: Commitment and Alignment," alongside Judith Butler's theory of gender as a construction. Williams writes that we are born into different sorts of social relationships and alignments "of a deep type," and he contends:

> we should commit ourselves far enough to social reality to be conscious of this level of sociality. It means becoming conscious of our own real alignments. This may lead to us confirming them, in some situations. Or it can often lead to us

[13] The notes of Ronald Liversedge's *Mac-Pap: Memoir of a Canadian in The Spanish Civil War* provide brief biographies of many of the men to pass through the camps, the trek, and onto Spain, including Liversedge himself.

> changing or shifting or amending them, a more painful process than it sounds. (216-18)

He identifies "a very high kind of freedom" in "that active consciousness of those social relationships that include ourselves and our practices" (217-18). The ultimate result is "the sound of that voice which, in speaking as itself, is speaking, necessarily, for more than itself" (218). To search for such a voice is to practice commitment. It is to be critical of the social constructs (or social pressures, as Williams calls them) around you and of yourself acting within them.

It is clear to Bob, and (to some extent) to Matt that the conditions of capitalism put certain constraints on their lives. Bob seeks alternatives to this in socialist and communist associations. But what is not clear to either character is the extent to which gender acts as a constraint. Butler writes, "gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender creates the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all" ("Performative Acts" 527). Bob fails to recognize gender as a challengeable system, that often works with and through the structures of capitalism. His allegiance to rigid gender norms compromises his radical politics. He consistently grapples with the imperatives of masculinity, to the point where Bob's politics–his antifascism, his communism–sometimes seem to fall away altogether, or at the least seem to hinge on his achievement of key masculine practices. This chapter will explore how the pressure of performing gender manifests itself for Bob; first, however, I want to explore the unique negotiation of gender roles that took place within Spain during the civil war.

As a revolutionary site, the Spanish Civil War briefly held the possibility for resisting and remaking concepts of gender. Butler writers, "what is called gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo. In its very character as performative

resides the possibility of contesting its reified status" ("Performative Acts" 520). In the first months of the war, gender was one of the many institutions being actively contested. Women were members of various militias, and they took up arms in street battles and on multiple fronts. Lisa Lines has documented the experiences of these *milicianas*, including how antifascist groups circulated the image of the *miliciana* as a symbol of radical progress. She underscores that gender equality was far from realized in many battalions, where women had the "double burden" of combat work and domestic work, but there was visible negotiation of conventional gender roles, and women were stepping into leadership positions (180).

However, the Republican government eventually chose to enforce conventional gender roles. Butler warns, "those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished" ("Performative Acts" 522), and the *milicianas* eventually were. The Republican government recalled them from the front in February 1937, and they were simultaneously publicly vilified as the carriers of venereal disease (Martín Moruno 9-10). The new slogan "Men to the War Fronts, Women to the Homefront" signaled this decisive regression into strict gender divisions (Jackson 4). George Orwell gestures to this shift in early 1937, in his Spanish Civil War memoir *Homage to Catalonia*:

> There were still women serving in the militias, but not very many. In the early battles they had fought side by side with the men as a matter of course. It is a thing that seems natural in time of revolution. Ideas were changing already, however. The militiamen had to be kept out of the riding-school while the women were drilling there, because they laughed at the women and put them off. A few

> months earlier no one would have seen anything comic in a woman handling a gun. (5-6)

This image of men laughing at female combatants is striking enough. The Republican government and its supporters overturned many social institutions, but they made the clear choice that gender would not be one of them. The *milicianas* were useful up to a point, and then their potential as front-line combatants was systematically denied.

The association between men and the front is a significant one: it simultaneously constructs war as a central male experience, and denies women's access to spaces of combat. Miriam Cooke thinks through the "masculinization of space" in *Women and the War Story*: "The army used to be the place where boys were sent to become men. Soldiers were assured their masculinity because the physical space they occupied was free of women" (110). Bob is reaching for the front as a quintessential male experience that will (re)make him as a man, and even more specifically, as a radical man. He imagines it as a site of male camaraderie, where he would fight alongside his friends. When he does reach the front, he finds many of these friends gone. This shocks him. He cannot make sense of this absence–but Milton and Harry can. "You can't help feeling like you do right now," Harry tells Bob, "You haven't seen it as often as we have" (104. Harry's comment distinguishes between the inexperienced Bob and the men at the front, proving that they really have developed in essentially radical and masculine ways, learning lessons Bob has been sheltered from.

Bob's attitude towards the front lends itself to a reading of the novel as a bildungsroman. Many critics have argued that George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, written and published just before *This Time a Better Earth*, is a bildungsroman, as it "deals with a formative period in the

narrator/protagonist's life" and "reflects a process of growth from ignorance to maturity" (Hartveit 60). *Homage to Catalonia* is much more explicitly political and autobiographical, so I am cautious about applying similar reading strategies to Allan's novel. But there is a sense to which Bob is seeking out specific masculine and leftist experiences that are rooted in combat, and he is resistant to the alternative path that journalism offers. Comandante Motril argues, "You have to look at this from the point of view where you can be most useful," and Bob retorts, "But I came to fight, not to talk about the war," echoing an earlier argument with the doctor when Bob insists he can work a typewriter, "But I came to work a gun" (53, 49). Orwell entered the conflict with the opposite intentions: he arrived in Spain intending to work as a journalist, but quickly joined the militia instead, and from the front lines of action he issues some harsh criticism of journalists and "propagandists" as manipulative cowards: "the soldiers do the fighting, the journalists do the shouting" (68). Orwell's scathing suggestion that journalists "believe that to write is a substitute for fighting" (68) is the kind of harsh criticism that Bob directs towards himself and anticipates from others, worrying that he's "a fake" (59). There is a sense that Bob knows the best path to self-realization, and he is attempting to follow it, but Lisa, Madrid, and journalism interfere. He tells Lisa, "I came for the same reason most guys came. I came because I thought I could do something in the world beside talk. So I'm still talking….I probably came, too, to understand myself a little more" (85). Thinking about their romance, Bob thinks, "It was true. We had found something. But finding that made me want to find the other thing all the more" (135). The novel offers up two narratives of masculine development: Bob's ideal narrative of combat, experienced by Orwell and Bob's comrades, and the narrative of romantic love,

which Bob experiences instead. Ultimately, his lived narrative gives way to the ideal narrative, and at the end we see him marching off into combat, certain in his path.

Lisa and Bob: Gender Tension in the Antifascist Movement

This reading of the novel as a bildungsroman places Lisa in two lights. She is formative in the sense that she is the ideal female heroine, and her satisfactory performance of femininity reflects well on Bob and helps him develop into the heroic man. But she is also disruptive, because their relationship is one of the things that keeps him from acting out his ideal path, and because she is critical of his conception of antifascism as masculine front-lines combat.

The tension between these two readings functions as an apt metaphor for female participation in leftist movements. Through their labour and passion, women were indispensable to the movement, whether they were public activists or domestic supports. But even as women contributed to leftist movements in essential ways, their specific gendered concerns were often sidelined for more masculine concerns. I contextualized this in the first chapter when I described radical manhood and the deferred women question. Women asserted an intersectionality into the class and labour politics that many male activists were not prepared to address. Hazel is certainly figured as disruptive to the masculine space of the unemployment strike, and part of her problematic presence is her particularly gendered oppression as an unmarried female worker. While Hazel voices her criticisms in dialogue with Matt, Lisa is disruptive because she models a form of antifascist solidarity that is not at odds with her femininity, which dismantles Bob's conception of masculine antifascism.

Lisa demonstrates a certain awareness of gender as performance. She practices ideal femininity in strategic ways. Her appearance and flirtatious behaviour are useful to her work insofar as men are eager to please her, offering to take her around the city or to various sites. But when her femininity fails her and manifests as a restraint rather than a privilege, she actively contests it. Robin Stummer argues that the Republican government censured the press by controlling their movements, sometimes restricting journalists access to the front (43). In the novel, this restriction is gendered. Bob has access, but Lisa does not, as seen in her dialogue with Dickson:

> "I'm awfully sorry, but the lady can't go up now" […]
>
> "I'm a photographer, not a lady," said Lisa.
>
> "Orders are orders. We had a few women reporters come and visit us a few days ago. Now the colonel says no dames unless it absolutely quiet. You can go up, but I'm sorry about the lady comrade."
>
> "Please stop calling me lady comrade. Call me comrade. That is enough." (97)

He frames the restrictions on her movement in terms of safety: he will permit her access when it is "absolutely quiet." But this claim to safety overlooks the essential nature of Lisa's work: she captures moments of action, and this work is necessarily dangerous. Her gender overshadows her purpose, and this conversation, particularly the way he addresses her in the third person instead of spoken to directly, makes it clear that she is not taken seriously as a member of the antifascist coalition. In this case, Lisa agrees to stay behind the lines, but insists that she does it for her own reasons:

> "Dickson said no women allowed."

> "Do you think it was that that stopped me? I said nothing yesterday because I felt you wanted to see your friends alone. This is my job. I will get up there." (112)

When Dickson again refuses her entry, calling her Bob's wife and insisting "no dames," she breezes by without heeding his warnings (112). This recalls her initial push to be sent to Spain at all: "First [the editor] said a woman should not be sent to a war. When I reminded him how much better the pictures would be if a woman took them, he listened" (87). Her work is her priority. She manipulates her femininity to enable her work, and sets aside feminine practices of passivity and vulnerability when they compromise her work. Her work demands a certain awareness of gender as a set of unstable and contestable practices. With this awareness, Lisa is able to carry on her relationship without disrupting her antifascist work.

This is a balance that Bob cannot achieve, partially because his conception of legitimate antifascist work is so rooted on the front. At some points in the novel, he frames their love affair as a burden or distraction. He describes "something missing. Not in Lisa. In me. And it was missing because a man must experience more than love to be a man" (135). "Don't you see," he insists to her, "that I will never be capable of really loving, of really being sure of anything, until I have fought for the things I believe in?" (135). He wants to secure his sense of self in combat. Joshua Goldstein argues that "war becomes a 'test of manhood'" (5). Bob is eager to test himself and his manhood in war. He laments, "And while Lisa and I were loving each other, things were happening, important things" (135). He wants to participate in these things, but feels that his relationship holds him back.

Even as Lisa models a feminine antifascist practice, Bob is still conceiving of the war in fairly masculine terms. This is clear in a brief exchange about the possibility of pregnancy:

> "Darling, what should happen if I got a baby?"
>
> "What?"
>
> "No. Do not be foolish. I am not going to have one. I am asking what should happen *if* I were going to get one?"
>
> "I forgot about people getting babies. I don't know. You'd probably go to Paris and wait there for me. But why think of it?"
>
> "I do not know why I think of such things." She sighed and shrugged her shoulders. (89)

Here, Bob suggests that pregnancy would be enough to take Lisa out of the Spain entirely. Womanly concerns like childbirth and motherhood take place elsewhere, away from the fighting. This is another example of Lisa being limited by her gender under the guise of safety. After his initial surprise, Bob dismisses the prospect of pregnancy altogether, and the conversation returns to the issue of Bob's happiness. The lovers discuss, once again, Bob's guilt over his safe, non-military work, and his doubt that he is being the *right* kind of antifascist man.

According to Cooke, the front is traditionally figured as "the physical equivalent of the psychic space of the modern male subject" that is at risk of being "invaded and occupied" by a "different unsoldierly, unmasculine others" (113). This recalls the ways I defined protest masculinity as something men build in the absence of–or to the exclusion of–women. Bob's longing for combat is simultaneously a longing for a separation from Lisa. When he voices his longing to act instead of speak, she feels this as a rejection of their relationship:

> "Someday I will say it without words"
>
> "How without words, kindchen?"

> "When what I've tried to say just now becomes so clear to me that I see in front of me like I do that sun, there will be nothing to say. I will take a rifle and fight. It will mean that it has finally become clear to me. And when that happens I won't use so many words."
>
> "It makes me sad when you talk like that," she said, "because it makes me realize that I cannot say you love me and I love you, and that is the most important thing....It makes me see that it isn't." (122)

It is already clear that the front is not a place for women. Many people attempt to keep Lisa away from it, and no *milicianas* are visible in Allan's novel, which is understandable given their withdrawal in early 1937. So for Bob to long for action above all else, to view combat as the pure way of comprehending and expressing antifascism, is to frame antifascism as an hyper-masculine practice. If the front is a masculine space, than perhaps he is the "unmasculine other" for not being present at the front.

The language of that last piece of dialogue is important: Lisa calls Bob kindchen, which translates roughly as 'little child.' This is not the only time she uses affectionate language that highlights his youth: she calls him a "boy" and "a baby [w]ho hasn't found himself" (90). He appears young and inexperienced, not just in comparison to the older doctor, or the tired men at the front, but alongside Lisa, who has been recording the brutality of war for much longer. His inexperience is a problem, and he can solve it by going to the front. He frames warfare as a test of manhood and of antifascism–and so Bob's struggle to achieve commitment becomes tangled up in the social pressure of performing hyper-masculinity.

Bob's anxieties arise when he compares himself to the men in the trenches. When Motril assigns him to radio work, he protests, "But I wouldn't be able to look the guys in the face" (53). Motril dismisses this, insisting, "You have to look at this from the point of view of where you can be the most useful" (53). In this moment, Bob struggles to see beyond himself to the larger way he can contribute to the war effort. Motril, Doc Woods, Rosa and Pepe all assure him that this work is necessary. Rosa expresses relief at his arrival: "It's about time someone arrived to do this work. It's been neglected" (63). But their enthusiasm is no match for his self-doubt, and he sees the work as a reflection of his manhood. Anxiously sweating himself to sleep, he dismisses Motril's justifications of usefulness: "*that's crap…I'm a fake*" (59). In an earlier inner monologue, he laments the situation, wondering "*If I were a different kind of guy. If. If*" (54). His work does not look like that of his comrades, and so he doubts its usefulness and his own commitment.

Untethered from the validating space of combat, some of the male journalists perform their masculinity in deliberately tough and detached ways. Lisa comments on this when she returns from a sickening trip to Brihuega with fellow journalist Blorio. Lisa is deeply disturbed by the site of enemy corpses, but she observes that it does not bother Blorio: "Blorio is used to such things. He sounded inhuman. Without feeling. Ach! I suppose he felt it too, but he didn't want to show it, being a man" (83). She implies that he is suppressing a natural human reaction to the sight, so as to present himself in a certain masculine way. Butler writes that our culture is one "in which the false universal of 'man' has for the most part been presupposed as coextensive with humanness itself" ("Performative Acts" 523), but Lisa describes this display of manhood as "inhuman," so registering her displeasure with the ideal manhood that Blorio is performing.

The dynamic of the tough man and the emotional woman comes up again, when Bob and Lisa visit a hospital that Bob finds upsetting. When she tries to prepare him for a traumatic visit to a hospital, he protests: "It is I who should be telling you…I mean a man should comfort a woman about such things, not a woman a man…" (121). Rather than responding to this patronizing remark, Lisa says she cannot always understand his English. It is unclear if she legitimately misunderstands, or if she chooses to misunderstand. He is expressing frustration that he does not fit the paradigm of tough masculinity, but Lisa does not express admiration for Blorio's detachment, nor does she look down on Bob for his sensitivities.

They clearly disagree on the issue of his masculinity, which deeply concerns him but not her. When Bob notes that other men are braver than him, growing stronger and stronger, and he worries "I haven't come to that yet," she argues that "strong silent men are that way to impress women. They have to impress women. I know about them. They are the ones who are afraid and have reason to be afraid. Promise me you will never become a strong silent man" (133). It is not clear what she thinks these men are afraid of, but her comment echoes Bob's anxious inner monologues where he fears the judgment of other men, or that he is a fake (54, 59). Bob fears not measuring up to a certain standard of gender. He does not seek to impress women, but other men. By exposing this, Lisa once again demonstrates a certain awareness of gender as a set of practices, and not a stable identity. Men are not naturally detached–men *choose* not to show their feelings, because they are attempting to be *men*. Bob is longing for a certain kind of masculinity, and Lisa is attempting to undo this fantasy and remind him of the cost and construction of heroic masculinity.

The Blonde: Reductive Femininity

Now I want to address the ways in which Lisa is constructed in very conventional feminine ways. I have argued that Lisa carries a certain awareness of femininity and masculinity as malleable identities. She is wary of the constraints of gender ideals. But while she demonstrates this consciousness in her words and actions, a great deal of the novel focuses on male impressions of her. It is in her reception that Lisa becomes the paradigm of femininity. This construction mirrors that of Gerda Taro, at least in early depictions of her as beautiful martyr or as Capa's deceased wife. But what is striking in a parallel reading of the two women is what Allan strips away when he translates Taro onto the page. The emphasis on her beauty and femininity comes at the cost of much of her back-story. I will analyze Lisa's characterization, Lisa and Taro's similarities and differences, and examine the problematic and reductive ways Taro's legacy has been shaped by and for men.

Allan's descriptions mark Lisa as exceptional: exceptional in her looks, a point I will pursue a little later in the chapter, and exceptional in her gender. *This Time a Better Earth*, like *Waste Heritage*, is a novel dominated by men. Rosa the censor, Mercedes the sex-worker and Helen the nurse complement Lisa's presence, but she is still treated as a rare female in a male world. The men react to her presence with shock and awe, and vie for her attention. Captain Brown treats the dinner with Lisa as a formal occasion (108), and the male journalists compete for opportunities to take Lisa out or find her a hotel room (70).

Lisa is the only identifiably international women in the novel (Helen's nationality is not revealed), and Allan gives the impression that she is rare in this regard, but she was not so singular. Though Taro was certainly a pioneer in her profession, many women travelled to Spain

to participate in the antifascist struggle. Lisa Lines describes several international *milicianas*, hailing from France, Germany, England, Argentina, and elsewhere (174-76). Michael Petrou records nine women among the more than 1600 Canadians to work and fight in Spain (13). Many women participated as nurses or administrators. But female journalists–though outnumbered–were far from absent, and were most certainly in Allan's line of sight. Frida Stewart, a British volunteer, "worked for a Canadian journalist, Ted Allan for several weeks, during which time Gerda Taro was killed by a lorry whilst taking photographs at the front" (Jackson 121). But these women are absent from the novel. Lisa herself claims that Bob chooses her because "[t]here aren't any women who speak English," and so she is marked as an anomalous female presence in a masculine world. (88)

There is one international journalist I want to draw attention to as a sort of counterpoint to the exceptional Lisa/Taro. Canadian writer Jim (Jean) Watts travelled to Spain as the war correspondent for the *Daily Clarion* and *New Frontier.* During her time in Spain, she was virtually everywhere:

> [She] made many radio broadcasts from Madrid to Canada, stayed with the Canadian Blood Transfusion Institute in Madrid, and, according to Larry Hannant, was the 'only woman to officially join the MacKenzie-Papineau Battalion' of the International Brigades. ("My God" 153). We also know that while in Spain she worked in the censorship bureau in Valencia, [and] served as a driver for the British Medical Unit. (Vautour, "Jim Watts" 2)

Allan was certainly aware of Watts' presence, as the *Daily Clarion's* hired her as their Spain correspondent, a position he wanted (Hannant, "My God" 157). But unlike Taro, whose story has

been told and retold,[14] Watts is largely absent from the cultural record of Spain. Vautour argues that, at a time that "saw the fashioning of a communal self amongst those turning to the political left and opposing the global rise in fascism" there are many ways to read Watts as "oppositional, exceptional, and outside the normative codes of 1930s femininity" ("Jim Watts" 3). Vautour does not pursue this argument in great detail, but Watts may have distinguished herself by choosing a male-presenting name, through her bisexuality,[15] and through her determination to be the first (and only) woman enlisted in the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, and so broaden her experience of the war and occupy the masculinist space of the front ("My God" 160, 153).[16]

I bring Watts into my analysis because her resistance to gender norms and her absence from the cultural record do not feel incidental. In counterpoint, Lisa's femininity is memorable–it seizes the attention of the men around her, and demands acknowledgement in various ways, and is central to her memorialization and hagiography. Judith Butler writes, "what is called gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo. In its very character as performative resides the possibility of contesting its reified status" ("Performative Acts" 520). She later adds, "as a strategy of survival, gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences. Discrete genders are part of what 'humanizes' individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished" (522). I will not dwell too heavily on a comparison of Watts and Taro, but I think their legacies

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[14] Kate Lord Brown and Susana Fortes have both written successful novels that re-imagine Taro. Jane Rogowska and Amanda Vaill have written non-fiction works about Capa and Taro's relationships. Schaber wrote a German biography of Taro that has been published and adapted into French and English.

[15] My information about Watts's sexuality comes from a letter to her close friend Dorothy Livesay (*Journey With My Selves* 74-75). Vautour gestures to this when he claims Watts "publicly subverted… sexual norms" ("Jim Watts" 1).

[16] Thanks to her appropriation of a masculine name, Watts is credited twice on the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion memorial in Ottawa, once as Jean Watts and once as Jim Watts (with thanks to Kevin Levangie for visiting the site and sharing his photos).

are telling. Watts contested gender in various ways, but she was also left out of most historical and cultural memory of the Spanish Civil War. In contrast, Taro and Lisa both practiced a very conventional femininity, fitting neatly into the label of beautiful woman, and it is this label that sticks to Taro's story even today, and draws a certain kind of attention. Many articles about her describe her looks before her career. Writers described her upfront as "extraordinarily attractive" (Stummer 43) and "is widely known for having been Robert Capa's lover" (Whelan 53). Once this is established, they introduce her as Capa's chief collaborator and a skilled photographer. Taro was also a memorable blonde, known by the Republican troops as *la pequeña rubia* (the little blonde) (Whelan 56, Stummer 43, Schaber 29). Writers discuss her clothes, footwear, hair, and general attractiveness. Where Watts was an antifascist, Taro was a beautiful female antifascist–through her gender practice, she earned the qualifiers that ultimately humanize her story.

I want to analyze blondness as the most significant marker of femininity in Allan's characterization. Lisa is not marked as exceptional just because she is an international woman: she is a beautiful blonde. When she first arrives in Madrid, the effusive attention she receives is confusing: "'Those reporters,' she said, 'what's the matter with them? Have they never seen a woman?' 'Not a natural blonde for a long time'" (72). Characters are constantly calling attention to her blonde hair, and she is often referred to as 'the/a blonde.' It is her dominant characteristic, the proof of her beauty and femininity, and she is always received and remembered in reference to it.

This emphasis on Taro and Lisa's blondness is striking, as it constructs them in terms of ideal white femininity. In his work on race and film, Richard Dyer reads blondness as

representative of ideal beauty and racial authenticity. For women, blondness carries the weight of heterosexual desire. “The most desirable woman is a white woman,” he writes, and Lisa is certainly the most desirable woman in the novel (*Heavenly Bodies* 41). Her blonde hair assures the audience of her beauty. There is a sense in which Lisa’s blondness romanticizes her death even further. Dyer writes, “the white woman is offered as the most prized possession of the white man” (40). As the ideal white woman, Lisa’s death is more poignant–carrying more political and affective weight than the deaths of the (dark) Spanish women she photographed.

Dyer’s comments resonate with two images that gained circulation after Taro’s death. The first is a photo taken by Capa, where Taro slumps, eyes closed, on a stone. The sunlight makes her hair look blonder than in any other image (Fig. 1). Understandably, this photo was published alongside reports of Taro’s death, which “conferred upon this picture a symbolic power which surely was not intended” (Schaber 19). The second image is a drawing of the tank striking Taro, circulated on a “True Stories of Modern Warfare” trading card, and the cover image for the 2015 edition of *This Time a Better Earth* (Fig. 2). The drawing is clearly copied from this first photo: the outfit is identical, and the posture imitates to a certain degree the one in the photo, with Taro’s camera in place of the stone. The trading card describes the death of “pretty Gerda Taro” and falsely reports that she died with “her husband-photographer, Robert Capa, at her side” (Schaber 33). In both images, Taro is beautiful and peaceful, and there is no physical evidence of the violence of her death. These are romantic images applied to an ugly moment. These are the images of a martyr: idealized through her death and through her beauty.

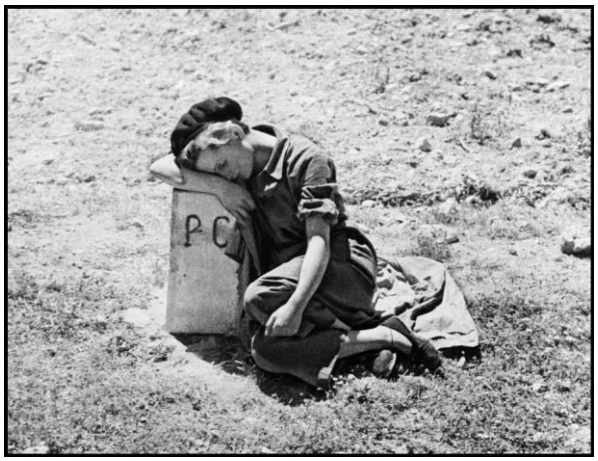

Fig. 1: Gerda Taro with Stone Inscribed "PC"

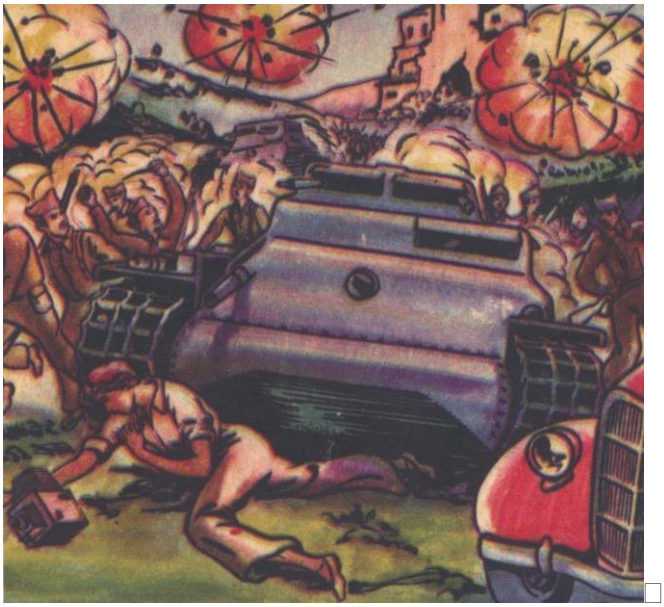

Fig. 2: Horrors of War Card

The novel draws attention to the ways Lisa stands out among the dark-haired Spanish women, but there are also ethnic implications to this emphasis on blondness. Dyer writes, "blondness is the ultimate sign of whiteness […] blondness is racially unambiguous" (*Heavenly Bodies* 40-41). Taro was Jewish, and though the nickname "the little blonde" has resonated, her hair appears dark in most photos. Schaber writes that Taro and Capa chose names that "spurned

every ethnic or religious label," which improved their lot in a time rife with antisemitism (17). Lisa's reputation as blonde functions in much the same way: it marks her as unambiguously white, and at the time such a marker was undoubtedly a form of protection. It is never suggested that Lisa is of Jewish heritage, and the blonde hair seals away any doubts about her ethnic or religious status.

Lisa's hair is not the only way that Allan distances her from Judaism. The major difference between Lisa and Taro is biographical; specifically, how she arrives in Paris and into politics. Whereas Taro was politicized as a teenager and had to leave her home and family, Lisa arrives in Paris on holiday before her wedding. She is politicized by her cousin, Carl, who tells her she is "beautiful but dumb" (87). Her entry into politics comes much later, and it does not hinge on the Jewish resistance to Nazism or the experience of exile that are central to Taro's life and her work. Schaber reads Taro's career as an empowering experience, a way to resist the limitations imposed on her by fascism: "Through the camera, Taro transformed herself from a homeless, disempowered asylum seeker into a critical war photographer, an active witness" (24). There is a resonance between Taro's photographic choices and her personal life: her favoured subjects were war orphans and refugees, and she took these photos at the same time that her family was seeking refuge in Serbia (Schaber 33). Though her chosen name certainly concealed her religion and her nationality, markers of her persecution and exile, her work was a concrete form of solidarity with others like her. In comparison, Lisa is certainly committed to her work, but her simplified biography excludes details that enrich her work.

Another discrepancy between Lisa and Taro is her love life. Carl, a family member, trains Lisa, whereas Taro studied under her lover, Hermann/Capa. This small change excludes Capa

from the story altogether, ensuring that Bob and Lisa are the sole romantic couple. They speak of their intent to marry, and they often discuss their plans for a honeymoon in France. Lisa is deeply invested in the relationship, calling Bob her "first love" (90) and wanting their love to be "the most important thing" (122). As with Taro and Lisa's backgrounds, Allan has simplified a more complex situation. She and Capa were involved for many years, but as she became more independent in her photography, their relationship became less committed. She is often quoted as calling Capa her friend, or *copain*. It does seem that she was romantically involved with Allan, but still maintained a relationship with Capa. In any case, Allan was not her first love or the only man in her life. But Allan constructs a conventional romance, secured by monogamy and commitment.

Perhaps in reaction to Allan's conservative representation of Taro, Kate Lord Brown's 2012 novel *The Perfume Garden* engages with female sexuality in the Spanish Civil War. Lord Brown clearly read *This Time a Better Earth* and did significant research into Allan's papers,[17] and Taro and Allan appear as minor characters in her novel. Lord Brown depicts Taro flirting with Robert Capa, Ted Allan and her own protagonist, Charles, and implies intimacy with all three men. Gerda speaks openly to Charles about her desire not to settle down and not to be lonely, which he understands as "free love" (238). Her promiscuity is not frowned upon by anyone–it seems to make her more desirable to Charles, and the other female characters all pursue their own sexual desires outside of marriage. Lord Brown deliberately constructs a different kind of sexuality for Taro than the one experienced by Lisa. The Gerda Taro in *The*

[17] Subtle details make it clear that Lord Brown has read *This Time a Better Earth* and thoroughly researched Ted Allan's experience: Gerda's death plays out just like Lisa's, though with Charles as the third-wheel and witness to the day's events; and a scene between Ernest Hemingway and Ted Allan matches Allan's memory of the event (Vautour, "Introduction" xxii).

Perfume Garden also resists the restrictions of Capa's celebrity: in stories about Capa, Taro is often represented as the dead wife. This characterization has endured for decades, despite the fact they were never married, and regardless of Taro's comparable talent.

Allan's stripped down version of Taro is not so different from the simplified version of Taro that has endured in the shadow of her lover and partner Robert Capa. Capa's fame continued to grow after the Spanish Civil War, and it began to eclipse the things around it. One interviewee in the 2012 documentary *The Mexican Suitcase* contends: "Capa's myth is so great that it's eclipsed many other witnesses and also to a large extend the reality of the places where he'd been."[18] Taro's primary biographer, Irme Schaber, sees Capa's fame as detrimental to Taro's memory: "While Capa's photos were absorbed into the historiography of the Spanish Civil War, the partnership with Taro slowly transmuted into a love story central to *his* biography" (34). This is, of course, due partially to Taro's early death. She never had the opportunity to carry on, and so her career is and accomplishments are less impressive. But there is something about Schaber's lament that resonates with *This Time a Better Earth* and my argument for the novel as a bildungsroman. In what sense does Lisa become reduced–particularly in death–to a function of Bob's development?

The novel's ending is troubling, as there is a great deal of optimism in the wake of Lisa's death. Milty is going to teach Bob to shoot again, which is "swell," and their reunion is a scene of idyllic male camaraderie: "Arm in arm we walked toward the trenches. The sun was high in the sky" (162). Bob is where he always intended to be, and Lisa's death allows for this–in her absence, he is the better man he longed to be. To echo Schaber, their love story is a detail in *his* biography.

[18] The film does not introduce every speaker, so I am unable to attribute this quote.

In one sense, this can be justified in the name of commitment. Bob has already expressed his discomfort with speaking instead of acting, and his desire to "say it without words" (122). He has an insatiable hunger to give to the cause, to contribute more, to contribute in tangible ways. In the end, he gives Lisa, or Lisa is taken. On the subject of commitment, Nelson reposes a question asked by poet Mike Quin, "How much for Spain?" The implicit answer is that nothing will be enough, "that seeing Spain clearly meant being willing to give everything" (23). Lisa, who is exceptional in her looks, her gender, her vocation, and her love for Bob, is the most valuable thing he can give.

When she is lost to the cause, there is nothing left to do but give himself. In one of the novels more melodramatic moments, Bob tells Lisa, "When what I've tried to say just now becomes so clear to me that I see in front of me like I do that sun, there will be nothing to say. I will take a rifle and fight. It will mean that it has finally become clear to me. And when that happens I won't use so many words" (122). This passionate statement plays out pretty clearly on the final page, right down to the rifle in hand and the sun clear ahead of him. Lisa's death clarifies the worth of the cause–if it can claim her, then it is worth everything. It clarifies the need for action above all else, and finally makes words insufficient. His commitment to her is displaced by her death, becoming instead a (renewed) commitment to antifascism.

It is troubling to read Lisa's death as a gesture of commitment, or as the loss that frees Bob from his doubts. The optimistic ending is an uncomfortable shift away from Lisa's painful death, but it is also uncomfortable when we reflect on how Bob's war played out. The Republican effort, even with the backing of the International Brigades, was a failure. The Nationalist forces triumphed in the spring of 1939, and Franco ruled the country for the next four decades (Romero

Salvadó 183-84). Madrid was not the tomb of Fascism, and soon the world moved on to the next phase of conflict, as Hitler's troops–many of them trained in the battlefields of Spain– aggressively moved across Europe. Allan, who left Spain in August of 1937, most likely wrote *This Time a Better Earth* when this failure was already in sight (Vautour, "Introduction" xvii). The Republican forces were "on the verge of imminent defeat" as early as March of 1938, and Comintern withdrew the International Brigades in the fall of 1938 (Romero Salvadó 157, 168). The *Better Earth* imagined in the Allan's title was already crumbling.

Allan does not even attempt to write this failure. While Bob's story begins with questions and caution, it ends with optimism and clarity. Allan chose to end his novel early in the war, when defeat was far from certain, and a better world was still possible. Unfortunately, the better world is one without Lisa. Bob returns to Harry, Milty and Lucien– restoring his original male cohort only slightly damaged by the war. Lucien and Bob dismiss each other's concerns, insisting "All wounds get better in time" (162). As Milty explains the intricacies of a gun at great length, Lisa recedes into the past, along with her critiques of masculinity, her passionate reactions to the death and destruction around her, and her determination to enact solidarity through cultural production, not combative destruction. Allan situates this optimistic ending in the trenches, a place that Cooke reminds us is traditionally "free of women" (110). For Bob, clarity is strictly a masculine achievement, and commitment is secured in a masculine space.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has argued that radical politics suffer when they fail to challenge conventional gender dynamics. Political struggles rooted in masculinity reinforce oppressive structures, for men and women, and compromise radical reimaginings of the world. In *Waste Heritage*, Hazel is marginalized, excluded, and forgotten on multiple levels. To begin, she experiences the precarity of a working-class female during the Depression, or under any capitalist system: she is underpaid, then fired for standing up for herself. Next, she becomes the tool of Matt's shame–he can imagine himself with her, but only in a traditional marriage, where he is the successful breadwinner, and the untenability of this vision leaves Matt angry and bitter with himself and her. Finally, she supports the political organization, but is not supported in turn, because the organization relies on collective masculinity to ensure unity and discipline, and they posit women and women's interests as a threat to this fragile collective.

Women are not so explicitly excluded in *This Time a Better Earth*, but the space of war and combat favours masculine participation. Bob constructs his antifascist politics around a certain ideal of combative masculinity. Lisa presents a viable alternative by contributing to the fight through compassionate cultural production no matter what space she occupies–the city, the hospital, and the front lines. But Bob continues to view combat as the only legitimate form of commitment, and he achieves it only when Lisa is eliminated entirely. In one moment, Lisa declares that "this time it will be a better earth" and wonders "how it will end for us, for you, for me, for the world, for Spain" (122). Allan's novel does not carry on to the end of the war and the antifascist Republicans' devastating loss. Instead, he chooses to end his novel on an optimistic note: Lisa has died but Bob is in the trenches with his male comrades, weapon in hand, sun in the

sky, masculinity secured. It is a better world for Bob, but it is necessarily a world without Lisa and the complications she raises. In both novels, the present economic, political and social crisis is seen as mainly a crisis for men, and the recovery plans prioritize the most masculine of individuals, leaving women and subordinate males behind.

In a study focused on gender, I have had little space to explore the urgent topics of race and colonialism. As it stands, these are novels about mostly white people resisting oppression on their terms, and the gaps, exclusions, and discriminatory moments offer more opportunities to learn and unlearn what productive political struggle looks like. Futures studies could broach the race politics of *Waste Heritage*, addressing why the novel predominantly features white Anglo Saxon men, the use of racial slurs, and the ways in which Indigenous and Asian-Canadians are silenced and marginalized throughout the text.[19] This is particularly problematic in the historical context, as British Columbia had significant populations of Indigenous, Chinese, and Japanese Canadians during the 1930s (and today), who were undergoing their own crises and struggles during this period. There is less material for race analysis in *This Time a Better Earth*, but there is some interesting research underway on people of colour in the International Brigades, including Emily Robins Sharpe's work on African-American nurse Salaria Kea ("Salaria Kea's Spanish Memoirs"), and Cary Nelson's analysis of Langston Hughes' poetry points to further avenues of study in terms of antifascism and anti-imperialism (17-19). Though this work is extraordinarily compelling, I have chosen to perform a thorough analysis of gender in these novels, rather than attempt a more intersectional study, which would exceed the space and time of the thesis project.

[19] Rifkind critiques the whiteness of the strikers (190-191), and Colin Hill addresses the representation of Chinese Canadians and Chinatown (xxxviii-xl), but these questions could be pursued much further.

My research benefits from the resurrection of these novels: both have recently found their way back into print. It is unclear if *This Time a Better Earth* was ever published in Canada, and the American and UK editions have been out of print for decades (Vautour "Introduction" xxvi). Hill describes how *Waste Heritage* was re-issued in 1973 to favourable reception, "but the novel quickly went out of print a second time"(xxii). Now, both novels are back in print. The University of Ottawa Press re-issued them as part of their Canadian Literature Collection. *This Time a Better Earth* is the inaugural book in a new sub-series on Canada and the Spanish Civil War. These new editions herald a revived interest in the period, and in leftist and antifascist cultural production in particular.

Is there something about the Great Depression that is resonating with contemporary researchers and audiences? What does 1930s cultural production have to offer, and where does my work fit in? For one, historical narratives can offer models of resistance. Our nation has evolved into an advanced neoliberal state, and has been met with a strong desire for radical and leftist alternatives. Our economy continues to depend on resources, and transient and precarious labour. In their introduction to the website for Canada and the Spanish Civil War, Vautour and Emily Robins Sharpe write, "The Spanish Civil War was a crucial moment in developing Canada's political identity on the world stage" ("Introductory Essay"). We are at another such crucial moment: Canada has come under fire internationally for our environmental policies, and ongoing and unacknowledged colonial violence. Like the antifascist movement, Idle No More has flourished as an international movement of political and cultural resistance, led by Indigenous people worldwide. In many ways, our contemporary moment echoes that other time of crisis and resistance.

Our notions of protest have certainly adapted, particularly with the help of technology, but my historical reading has turned up many examples of collective action that are innovative and appealing. But these narratives also carry warnings, and that is where critical analyses are vital. The exclusive notions of masculinity that compromise the resistance and revolution in *Waste Heritage* and *This Time a Better Earth* are by no means a thing of the past. Ian McKay writes,

> All Canadian socialisms have failed...every Canadian socialist has necessarily made compromises with hegemonic liberalism, whether in daily life, in political tactics, or in cultural formation...And yet, in another way, all Canadian socialisms have succeeded, at least to the extent of creating spaces of resistance, some them extremely complex and durable, from which projects of an alternative humanity have attained reality-status. (78)

These leftist and radical failures are productive insofar as they model problems so we do not have to relive them. It takes critical work to interrogate how gender functions in various movements and institutions, and to challenge it in productive ways. In radical movements, there is a dual work of learning and unlearning, and restrictive notions of masculinity and femininity take time to unlearn. I hope my research contributes to that work, for me and for my readers.

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