

Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis or dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known, including display on the world wide web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis or dissertation. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Signature:

Philip Webb

11/14/2008
Date

Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds: Myth and the American Metropolis

By

Philip Webb
Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts

Elizabeth S. Goodstein
Advisor

Mark D. Jordan
Committee Member

Laurie L. Patton
Committee Member

Accepted:

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

Date

Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds: Myth and the American Metropolis

By

Philip Webb
M.DIV., Harvard Divinity School, 1996

Advisor: Elizabeth S. Goodstein, Ph.D.

An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts
2008

Abstract

Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds: Myth and the American Metropolis By Philip Webb

In *Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds: Myth and the American Metropolis*, I outline how the American discourse on homelessness arose from Victorian social and political anxieties about the impacts of immigration and urbanization on the middle class, Protestant family. This project focuses on how these anxieties were negotiated by social ministries, activists, and service providers, as well as those commenting on their work—journalists, sociologists, and finally policymakers. I look at the stories told by these religious activists and ministries—those ways in which they described and diagnosed social problems before they developed institutions to redress these problems—to understand how their modes of portraying urban life shaped subsequent social science and policy. I analyze how religious language and images codified ways to represent these urban problems, and through this process I explore how contemporary American social science, social work, and policy emerge from Victorian cultural and religious attitudes about the family, the city, and social life.

In this project, I examine several intersecting literatures—social ministry, journalism, sociology, and policy—to trace three distinct configurations of the homeless subject. Initially, before isolated individuals were constituted as homeless subjects, the fin-de-siècle city teeming with immigrant populations was described as embodying the homelessness that was juxtaposed to the family ideal of the Christian home. Then, the New Deal era ‘disaffiliated man’ became the other of the nuclear family. And, finally, the fracturing of a racial and gender consensus about the disaffiliated man led to the Reagan era effort to establish the homeless subject as a person without a fixed shelter failed in an attempt to decouple family ideology from the homeless subject. By emphasizing the continuing role of myth in shaping the homeless subject, I explain the inability of empirical and policy changes—like the 1980s rise of the homeless family—to fully reconcile with the discourse.

Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds: Myth and the American Metropolis

By

Philip Webb
M.DIV., Harvard Divinity School, 1996

Advisor: Elizabeth S. Goodstein, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts
2008

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Metropolitan Displacements	20
Chapter Three: The Rise of the Homeless Man	122
Chapter Four: Homelessness and Family Values	207
Chapter Five: Conclusion	285
Bibliography	296

Chapter One: Introduction

The lyrics of Billy Joel's 1989 pop music song "We Didn't Start the Fire" string together a list of historical figures and events of the preceding four decades. In his brief summary of the 1980s, Joel touched on geopolitics, pop culture, and prominent social problems, like suicide, AIDS, and crack. Stuck into the middle of the litany was the simple line—"Homeless Vets" (written to rhyme with the preceding foreign debts and the following Bernie Goetz). Homeless vets were emblematic of that decade which saw homelessness rise onto the national stage in a way never before seen. Men and women across American cities were increasingly seen sleeping on sidewalks and warming themselves on exhaust gratings. Congressional hearings and news shows focused great attention onto this 'new' urban problem. When data were finally compiled a decade later to find out how many of the homeless people in the United States were vets, it was discovered that one in every three homeless men (and nearly one in every four homeless people) were veterans.¹

When inverting these numbers, it becomes clear that two-thirds of homeless men were not vets. However, the enduring 1980s image of the homeless popularized in Joel's song or in the small town wanderings of vagrant John Rambo in *First Blood* (dir. Ted Kotcheff, 1982) was a veteran. Veterans came with a readymade explanation or etiology of their homelessness; post-traumatic stress disorder could easily account for the mental health and substance abuse problems commonly thought to be at the root of homelessness. The veteran could also be a sympathetic figure—one that homeless

¹ *Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve, Findings of the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients Highlights* (Washington, DC: Department of Housing and Urban Development Interagency Council on the Homeless, Dec. 1999).

advocates could easily invoke in requests for funding and services. While the veteran was a popular image (among many) of homelessness in the 1980s, this decade was not the first time that the two categories (homeless and veteran) were connected. After wars, veterans have long had difficulty integrating back into their mundane home lives.

Following the American Civil War, disbanded groups of soldiers often found it difficult to integrate back into domestic life.² Many availed themselves of the spreading of rail lines across the countryside to travel. They combined the new technology with their newly acquired, wartime skills of foraging through fields and forests for food and shelter; this practice—called tramping—was developed by Civil War veterans.³ By the end of the nineteenth century, those who went from place to place without working took their name from this practice—they were called tramps. They, along with hobos and bums, were grouped together by social activists and sociologists to form nascent categories of the socially displaced—those with no permanent ties to integrate them into society.

In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, terms for social displacement rose and fell, remaining in a state of flux as commentators grappled with how best to represent these problems. The category of the homeless man eventually replaced talk of these veterans who tramped, hobos that roamed and bums that lazed.⁴ While each of these terms signified distinct connotations, they eventually were all subsumed under the rubric

² For instance, see Larry Logue, *To Appomattox and Beyond: The Civil War Soldier in War and Peace* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Inc., 1996).

³ Kenneth L. Kusmer, *Down and Out on the Road: The Homeless in American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), Ch.3.

⁴ Early taxonomies of the displaced distinguished categories with two criteria: work and motion. Tramps remained in motion wandering from place to place but did not work. Hobos also wandered but they did work. Bums neither wandered nor worked.

of homelessness. The Civil War vets who were later represented as tramps would just over a century later come to be understood as Billy Joel's homeless vets.

The theme of a veteran returning from war—and thus upending the home life of his family who had moved on in his absence—is quite old. In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, the eponymous character returned home victorious from the decade-long Trojan War only to be killed by his wife Clytaemnestra. She had in the intervening years started a relationship with her paramour Aegisthus and resented her husband for their daughter's death. Returning from the same war, Odysseus wandered and experienced travails for another decade before approaching his home in Ithaca, where suitors clamored for the hand of his wife Penelope. The term 'homeless' first appears in the English language in a famous English translation of Homer's account of the itinerant veteran Odysseus. It was coined in George Chapman's seventeenth-century translation of *The Odyssey* (now most famous as the namesake of Keats' poem 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer'). The term was not used with regard to urban poverty until the middle of the nineteenth century.

In Chapman's coinage, the term initially described a veteran who was both unable to return to the land whence he came and unable to reunite with his family. This dual idea of place and family are at the core of the concept of homelessness. By the time Billy Joel sings of homeless vets, the term has been sanitized into a legal category; a homeless individual had become one without a fixed place to stay. In this new legal instantiation of homelessness—the one which still governs social science and social policy, the idea of homelessness appears to be merely about a place. But as I shall show over the arc of *Homeless Bodies*, *Homeless Minds*, the family continues to be integral to the category of homelessness.

Here I will demonstrate that current social policy and social science are predicated upon older cultural attitudes about the city and the family. I will trace contemporary political, legal, sociological, and social service definitions, categories, and assumptions to nineteenth-century responses to urbanization which both drew upon and acted out of these older cultural attitudes. Fin-de-siècle activists, sociologists, and critics deployed mythic tropes, which consolidated these responses. Invocations of Cain, the Wandering Jew, or Rachel weeping for her children distilled an argument about homelessness. The mythic tropes articulated reaction to the city, immigrants, and the poor. These adverse responses coalesced in mythic tropes which embodied the bourgeois cultural attitudes in a simple picture; they made an argument about the homeless figure. But these tropes used to describe the homeless were only part of the response. The responses which usually accepted older cultural attitudes as given, included both these mythic tropes and analyses of changes in urban life and the middle class family.

By myth, I mean deinstitutionalized religious narratives which serve a cultural function beyond the religious social field. The social fragmentation of the modern metropolis established a plurality of social fields. Such heterogeneity created the conditions in which religious narratives could be disconnected from a religious institution and become a cultural form, i.e., they could become myth. The majority of the tropes, like Cain or Ishmael, which I will analyze in this project come from the Bible. I distinguish mythic tropes from religious responses to urban problems by different functions; the same trope can be either religious or mythic depending on its use. When I turn to an analysis of these tropes in Ch.2, Sect.3, I will clarify why I interpret these Biblical tropes as myth and how they are distinct from religious responses to the city.

The cultural function which mythic tropes serves is one of signification.⁵ I rely in part on Clifford Geertz's working definition of culture as the webs of significance that humans have spun.⁶ In this project, I interpret the different responses to the city, the distinct modes of representation, and how different attitudes are mediated through these. In the discourse on homelessness, I will argue that the homeless man represents anxieties about the city and its impact on the bourgeois family.

This homeless figure came to represent the other of the bourgeois family to fin-de-siècle commentators. The invocation of mythic tropes was initially only used in the negative process of othering; it was the underside of attempts to protect the family in response to the onslaughts of urbanization. This bourgeois response to the city primarily had two reciprocal parts: positively, there was a literature of family; and then, negatively, there is a discourse of the other, which pathologizes those socially displaced persons who were thought to be threats to the family. The other in this polarity—an emerging homeless figure—became a repository for critiques about urbanization. The discourse on homelessness encompasses both the positive encomiums on the family and the negative othering of the homeless figures and their social lives. This negative process included both the deployment of mythic tropes and the broader analyses of changes in urban life. In the century-and-a-half arc of this project, I will demonstrate that social activists, journalists, and academics cease using the mythic tropes in those periods when the family

⁵ Religion quite obviously furnishes important means of signification. I regard it as a subset of culture. When in chapter two I discuss myth more extensively, I will elaborate the distinction between myth and religion on grounds of institutional and/or literary location of the trope and by its function.

⁶ "The concept of culture I espouse, and whose utility the essays below attempt to demonstrate, is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning." Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

is understood to be secure. In those periods when the family is perceived to be under greater threat—times of more intense social and urban change, activists begin to again deploy mythic tropes in their responses to the changing city. For instance, in the 1980s, displaced families began to appear in social service agencies. This new trend was already after Daniel Patrick Moynihan had pathologized the African-American family,⁷ and after divorce rates had begun to rise. Representations of family were already becoming problematic; with the appearance of the homeless family, activists reverted to mythic tropes to separate this newest group from the homeless individual.

The bourgeois family—particularly its Protestant incarnation—was elevated by fin-de-siècle reformers to a social ideal. Because urbanization and immigration changed social life so much in the waning of the nineteenth century—a point to be explored extensively in Ch.2, Sect.1, commentators developed new ways to negotiate these shifts. The family came to represent the last bastion of a simpler time and place, of a community in which people lived in the same place for generations. In short, it became a remnant of a supposedly collapsing *Gemeinschaft*.⁸ The term ‘homeless’ rose in popularity in tandem with another idea—a commonly proposed ideal for a social foundation and the utopic locus for the family: the Christian home. This family ideal was developed in

⁷ Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “The Negro Family: The Case for National Action,” in *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy*, ed. Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1967).

⁸ According to Ferdinand Tönnies, a *Gemeinschaft* is an association based on organic life, growing out of familiar, comfortable and exclusive social existence. His theory of *Gemeinschaft* posits a complete unity of wills in an original, or natural, state. This collapse of the value systems of a society is a condition which sociologist Robert Merton calls acute anomie. In critiques of modernity, this strong anomie appears as a sense that modernization destroyed a sense of being at home in the world and established a condition—in György Lukács’s phrase—of ‘transcendental homelessness’. We will return to this theme of a collapsing *Gemeinschaft*, anomie, and transcendental homelessness in Chapter 2. For more on *Gemeinschaft*, see Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, trans. José Harris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For more on acute anomie, see Robert Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1963). For more on transcendental homelessness, see Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999).

theological tracts and in treatises of domestic science; it was invoked by journalists and social commentators as the answer to urban problems. In these articulations, the Christian home was an ideal for the family—it was a structure for what was later to be called the nuclear family. In this representation, the immediate family was to provide emotional support and be an enclave into which to retreat from the ostensible threats of the world outside. According to these commentators, urban life was becoming fast and crowded—the Christian home was to be a haven from its vicissitudes.

The Christian home became a model for the ideal family at times when society was in flux. In this model of private life resisting the modern world, the perils of the city and their supposed threats to the family came to be called homeless. Fin-de-siècle social commentators used this language of homelessness to represent to their bourgeois audiences a lack in both place (the residence of the poor) and in relationships (family and social life). In this early stage, homelessness did not represent a condition of living on the streets, staying in shelters, or curling up to sleep in a car, though in Chapter 4 these conditions become the preoccupation of policymakers and social scientists. Homelessness at this time was a much broader concept. It was used to refer to living conditions, social practices, and family structures which failed to measure up to the Christian home ideal. Slums, tenements teaming with boarders, multiple generations under the same roof, unclean poverty, and darkened, soot-stained stairwells and hallways were all signs of homelessness. The profusion of slums in a New York exploding with new people—both domestic migrants and international immigrants—precipitated several social commentators to call it the ‘Homeless City’.

The early formation of American homelessness is tied to the city and the changes in social life brought about by its expansive rise. The initial connections with the ancient veteran Odysseus and the subsequent popular image of Billy Joel's homeless vets were not part of the fin-de-siècle formations of a discourse on homelessness. The early framers of this discourse began by juxtaposing the middle class family with the urban tenement. The bourgeois family was central to the foundation of the discourse and has remained so, even though the rise of legal categories seemingly sets aside the role of family and social relationships in defining homelessness.

In this study of the discourse on homelessness, I chart a story of the American city and the middle class family. Because these are never static, the idea of homelessness shifts as activists, journalists, sociologists and policy makers renegotiate urban change and social life. In the early stages, those figures, whose writings analyzed and documented homelessness, explicitly redressed the explosive rise of the city and changes in family life. Over time, such direct connections are not always made. Yet many assumptions, definitions and categories continue to implicitly perpetuate the social and political anxieties and critiques whence the commentary on homelessness began. In this project, I uncover how the assumptions and social norms which informed the fin-de-siècle rise of homelessness are continuously shaping and reworking the sociological literature and social policies on homelessness.

I look at how our ways of talking about Billy Joel's 1980s homeless vet derives from analyses of 1890s Lower East Side immigrant slums. I look at how the New York Draft Riots of 1863⁹ and even the Paris Commune of 1871¹⁰ stoked middle class fears of

⁹ In July of 1863, a week of urban violence broke out, releasing a range of class and racial tensions. Because the first draft act in America included a provision that let someone pay \$300 to avoid the draft, the

urban life and provided an impetus to anxious social critics to develop a language which brought a semantic order to a city which reformers and politicians were trying to order institutionally and spatially. The move from a Victorian critique of immigrant slums to 1987's Stewart McKinney Act is not immediately self-evident. An immigrant family stooped over the kitchen table of their tenement flat working hard in a cottage industry of tailoring or cigar-rolling is not easily seen as the same problem as urban camping. Exploited labor and the panhandler do not appear to be the same social problem, but the implicit norms of our current language of homelessness began long ago with that immigrant family. *Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds* looks at the discursive negotiations of the modern American city. It began as an effort to better understand how the current constellation of policies and structures of social service programs came to be.

Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds outlines how the idea of family became integral to the discourse on homelessness. I argue that the American discourse on homelessness arose from bourgeois social and political anxieties about the impact of urbanization on the middle class, Protestant family. This project focuses on how these anxieties were negotiated by social activists, journalists, sociologists, and finally policymakers. The responses of these writers and scholars, service providers and politicians both grew from Victorian cultural assumptions about the family and the city and also subsequently codified these in ways such that they were readily appropriated by later contributors to the literature on homelessness.

perception developed that the poor were being sent off to fight a war from which the wealthy were exempt. Thousands rioted a few days after the first names were drawn in New York City.

¹⁰ The Paris Commune was the short-lived rule of a left worker's government in the spring of 1871. These socialists and anarchists briefly seized power following French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War.

That contemporary social policy has Victorian roots has been argued elsewhere,¹¹ as has the role of religious charities in giving rise to social work and social science.¹² Here I am teasing out the implications of these claims; I am fleshing out the story beyond institutional connections. Here, I will look at the stories told by activists and reformers—those ways in which they described and diagnosed social problems before they developed institutions to redress these problems. By looking at the writings of activists in different eras, I am able to see how each incarnation of homelessness was understood before missions, shelters, or policies intervened. I am able to uncover the cultural roots of many policies or the narratives which were adapted by social scientists to form definitions and categories of homelessness. As I will show in different periods, social activists' responses tell a story about the homeless whom they are confronting; sometimes, these stories invoke mythic tropes to explain or articulate their understanding of homelessness. I will show the invocation of these tropes in multiple periods. These illustrations placed the modern homeless figures within a larger story—they provided a moral valuation, a social assessment, in short an argument about homelessness. And I am interested in the significance of this argument.

Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds is a study of the cultural arguments which gave rise to sociological and policy responses. I will show representations which articulate arguments about the family's role in social life, the pitfalls of the modern industrial city, and the proper forms of associational life. By looking at these arguments which are antecedent to institutional interventions with homelessness and tracing these

¹¹ For instance, Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1989).

¹² Roy Lubove, *The Professional Altruist: The Emergence of Social Work as a Career, 1880-1930* (New York: Atheneum, 1983).

through subsequent permutations, I show the connections between the poor tenement dweller and the panhandling vet. I will demonstrate how our current policies and social services came to be. I show that our social services and policies are grounded in the deployment of mythic tropes whose invocation tells a story about the pitfalls of the modern American city.

From Myth to Social Services

This project grew from my encounters with both of these—services and policies—as a one-time homeless service program director. Running homeless services is one part compassion, one part realist toughness, and one part regulatory enforcer. While the first two define interactions between social workers and their clients, the last part occupies much of the time and attention of a program administrator. Regulatory enforcing ensures continued lines of funding, one's ranking in the local continuum of care, and a smooth audit. The audit by an official from the regional office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will include questions about finances and accounting, case notes and outcome measurements, and most importantly the required verification of homelessness (and the supporting documentation) for each service recipient funded by the government.

Any director of programs knows that there is a range of documentation and forms of verification. Sometimes the caseworker may know that the applicant is homeless but the supporting documentation is wanting. The balance between compassion and realism enters here and determines if the applicant can access the services, is denied them, or is sent upon a Kafkaesque journey through the bureaucratic underside of social services to

find someone to state in writing (on letterhead) that the person is indeed homeless. One family shelter with whom I collaborated started to only take referrals from other agencies rather than allow families to apply directly to them; they wanted someone else to have to spend their time verifying and documenting the family's homelessness.

The proving of a lack or an absence is always difficult. In this case, the applicant must prove the absence of a particular material asset—a fixed place to stay. With the 1980s rise of this legal definition, the idea of homelessness has come to be almost co-extensive with houselessness or an unsheltered state. But these are not the terms used to describe the situation. The negation of home evokes far more than merely being without shelter; this narrow sense of homeless as unsheltered is very recent and tied to the McKinney Act which both funds and regulates the majority of homeless services.

But these regulations have only redefined the now dominant term of social displacement. The term homeless—or at least its deployment in contexts of urban displacement—dates to the late nineteenth century rise of the modern industrial metropolis. The term is a way to represent displacements which arose at this time.

A basic premise of this project is that social displacement has always been with us while homelessness has not. Social displacement is the unmooring of an individual from the broader society; homelessness, however, is a particular way to represent social displacement in the modern city. Before those displaced by urbanization, there were those displaced from land by the collapse of the feudal system; they were called vagrants and vagabonds. In twelfth and thirteen century Europe, there were groups of beggars wandering as a religious vocation; they were called mendicants. Homelessness is not a category to represent all displaced throughout history but a new term to describe a

modern, urban displacement. Homelessness is a term to represent a type of displacement which arose through processes of urbanization in the last decades of the nineteenth century—one that became the dominant category of displacement in the New Deal and Eisenhower years and came to national attention in the 1980s.

Now, in twenty-first century America—twenty years after Billy Joel’s homeless vets, homelessness has come to be a minor social and political concern. We now live in an era in which domestic concerns are dominated by immigration, energy prices, and family values issues like gay marriage. Homelessness’s relatively contemporary heyday as a concern of American political life has waned since the 1987 passing of the McKinney Act. Since this federal legislation and the funding which it authorized, the problem of homelessness has lost a central role in debates about the American city, family life, and social order. The Act and the ensuing adjustments by social scientists mark the unwinding of this discourse on homelessness. The displacements which this category was developed to represent were no more. People are still without shelter but their displacement is not the homelessness that arose at the end of the last century. The term lingers on but as of nineteenth century critique of the city.

Because homelessness has moved to the periphery of social policy, and even discussions of urban life, we are better able to approach it with a level of calm than just a few decades ago. Pitched battles of advocates versus corporate leaders or street dwellers versus shop owners have subsided. With this distance we can take a long view to better understand the cultural history—not only of the policy but the assumptions on which this policy (and social science) is grounded. We can identify how that policy grew from

earlier decades of social services, social commentary and social science, and how these arose from cultural responses to Victorian social changes.

Homelessness as a Cultural Problem

Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds is not a conventional history of homelessness—that has been explored in a condensed form by Peter Rossi¹³ and in much greater detail by Kenneth Kusmer. In *Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds*, I look at the discourse on homelessness as a problem of culture. To paraphrase Geertz, this project is an interpretive one in search of how urban social problems have been represented. I analyze some of the history mapped out by Rossi and Kusmer and argue that there were cultural forces at work behind the scenes, shaping the way that the sociologists, historians, and policymakers, whom they cite talk about homelessness. This response is not another social history à la Kusmer, nor a survey of the state of the scholarly field like Christopher Jencks.¹⁴ Rather, I argue that this history or state of the field is shaped by Victorian middle class assumptions about family life, modernization and the city.

Recent, work on homelessness has begun to step beyond the immediate sociological, anthropological, and economic status of homeless people. This work since Kusmer's 2001 history—most importantly Kathleen Arnold's *Homelessness, Citizenship, and Identity*¹⁵ and Todd DePastino's *Citizen Hobo*¹⁶—has begun the process of

¹³ Peter H. Rossi, *Down and Out in America: The Origins of Homelessness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), chapter 2.

¹⁴ Christopher Jencks, *The Homeless* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

¹⁵ Kathleen R. Arnold, *Homelessness, Citizenship, and Identity: The Uncanniness of Late Modernity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).

¹⁶ Todd DePastino, *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

theorizing and historicizing homelessness. *Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds* is a contribution to this process.

In her *Homelessness, Citizenship, and Identity*, Arnold provides some wonderful insights of the implications of homelessness for political theory but far less help in understanding the cultural roles of homelessness in American history. Her analysis begins *in medias res*—she studies homelessness as a heuristic for analyzing late modernity. This start in the middle misses many of the rich textures of the discourse and fails to recognize that the category of homelessness is still imbricated with the social problems of another era—nineteenth-century, modern industrial urbanization.

Todd DePastino's *Citizen Hobo* begins in the nineteenth century and links social changes from that era to our contemporary social policy on homelessness. While his book provides a wonderful cultural history of Hobohemia, it fails to distinguish between the hobo and the homeless. As I will show in much greater detail in Chapter 3, these were antagonistic forms of displacement. They assume different populations, different locations, distinct social practices, and completely distinct relations to space and social norms.

Arnold and DePastino do not ground the homeless figure in the problems of urbanization and its impacts on the bourgeois family. They, thus, fail to understand how the term homeless came to be the dominant term for social displacement. Understanding this process is essential to identifying the lingering Victorian assumptions which are shaping current policy and scholarly work. I look at the long arc of the discourse on homelessness to argue that it develops in tandem with anxieties about the family and critiques of the city. I demonstrate the cultural roots for the historical and sociological

texts analyzed by Arnold and DePastino to show the anachronisms of current policy and social science.

Telling a person who lives on a subway grating that their plight is a problem of culture can seem, at best, insensitive, and at worst, inhuman. Intellectually, it smacks of an abusive idealism. These allegations would be true if *Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds* were about the individual holing up in an alley at night. It is not.

Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds analyzes homelessness as a particular way of talking about displacement and a particular constellation of concerns. As we shall see, the form of displacement shifts, but the discourse maintains some important continuities while adapting to these changing urban conditions. The continuities all stem from anxieties about the middle class family. A discourse on homelessness does not exist without an overweening concern for the bourgeois family. These concerns have in multiple eras been mediated by the invocation of mythic tropes. These representations both grew from Victorian cultural assumptions about the family and the city and also subsequently codified these as social scientists took up categories and terms from the activist commentary.

The discourse on homelessness is central to the American response to and negotiation of urbanization; this discourse helped to bring a semantic order to a city newly teeming with people and problems. The fin-de-siècle activists who wrote of city life defined problems and distinguished needs and populations; they developed terms and images (often mythic tropes) to represent the city and its residents. This semantic order established the parameters for what was considered homelessness.

The modern metropolis brought unprecedented changes and in just a period of decades completely transformed American social life. While the city was temporarily reigned in by processes of rationalization in the early decades of the twentieth century, the discourse and the constitution of the homeless figure continued to shift with ongoing urban changes. In *Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds*, I identify three primary stages in the formation of the contemporary homeless figure. In chapter two—“Metropolitan Displacements,” I argue that the homeless city emerged; the place and, subsequently, its population were considered to be homeless because they were thought to threaten the middle class family and its utopic locus of the Christian home. Activists developed the category of homelessness through analyses of urban life and the invocation of mythic tropes; together these responses defined the populations, geography and characteristics which were considered to be homeless. Second, in chapter three “The Rise of the Homeless Man,” I argue that with the social (and discursive) stabilization arising from the political and rhetorical efforts of reformers, the social science category of the homeless man is consolidated in the New Deal era by sociologists drawing upon many of the attributes and populations defined through the fin-de-siècle mythic tropes. This homeless figure is defined as a disaffiliated man—a man without family connections. Then, in chapter four “Homelessness and Family Values,” I argue that the discourse on homelessness unravels. The basic framework of disaffiliation continued to define the homeless individual, while the homeless family—initially represented with mythic tropes—became bracketed from the assumptions of disaffiliation and pathology. But in the process of this bracketing, a break in the representation of the family began to appear. The construction of family which was being protected by this bracketing (both the

homeless and the middle class ones) was no longer that norm to which the homeless man was constituted as the other. The representations of this new family assimilated to modernity; the discourse on homelessness had lost its original purpose to protect the family represented as the last remnant of *Gemeinschaft*. The discourse on homeless, as it had been for the previous century, ceased to be.

In each of these chapters, I will trace how the preservation of the family continues as the often unspoken leitmotif of the discourse on homelessness. Nineteenth-century urban changes provoked anxieties about social life. Because metropolitan life changed so quickly, older ways of talking about social life became quickly irrelevant yet new ones had not yet developed. Writers turned to mythic tropes to represent urban life; their invocation began to effect a consolidation of arguments about the people and practices being othered—set apart from the presumed bourgeois norms. The deployment of myth enables the social engineering and cultural attitudes to remain explicitly unspoken. Many of these unspoken attitudes are codified through these mythic tropes only to be subsequently taken up by social scientists who later evaluated displaced populations. Social science analyses of the displaced shift with changes in urban life but continue to work from the Victorian attitudes codified through mythic tropes.

In *Homeless Bodies, Homeless Minds*, I contextualize the discourse on homelessness and contemporary family values within reactions to problems of urbanization. I analyze the roles of myth in furnishing discursive fixes for these modern problems, and through this process I explore how contemporary American social science and policy emerge from Victorian cultural attitudes about the family, the city, and social

life. This project reveals the diverse forms of social displacement and the inadequacies of our current ways of representing them.

Chapter 2: Metropolitan Displacements

In this chapter, we look at the emergence of the American industrial metropolis and the social displacements which both gave rise to the city and resulted from it. Primarily focusing on the New York City of the long fin-de-siècle period, this chapter analyzes responses to urbanization and its migrations, including, overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure and housing, and cultural *mélange*. These historical changes were the object of much contemporaneous commentary, as well as policy and institutional responses. I argue that this urban commentary brought a semantic order to the chaos of late Victorian New York by, on the one hand, legitimating the bourgeois, middle class family and its Christian home ideal as the proper foundation for social order, and on the other, othering the spaces, individuals and social practices which failed to conform to these norms. These responses to urban changes by writers and scholars, service providers and politicians began a process of semantically ordering the city—which precipitated spatial, political, and institutional processes of ordering—from which arose the incipient rhetoric of homelessness.

This initial rhetorical response to the city furnished representations of urban life which first brought order to the city and then later to those residents whose locations, family structure and living arrangements did not conform to the Christian home ideal. Early social activists and journalists, whose rhetorical efforts usually intertwined with their activism, began this process of ordering urban life by developing terms and categories for representing new conditions; only later, when some basic assumptions of what was meant by homelessness were established, did the term *homeless* began to appear in the work of social scientists. In its early usage, the term only represented vague

connections between discrete categories of displacement, e.g., hobos, tramps and bums. The commentary by journalists and social activists began a semantic process of ordering, i.e., developing terms and images (often mythic tropes) to represent the city and its residents; these representations both grew from Victorian cultural assumptions about the family and the city and also subsequently codified these as social scientists took up categories and terms from the activist commentary.

In this chapter, I contend that fin-de-siècle journalists and activists responded with alarm to social changes; they described urban problems as being a form of homelessness, including invoking of mythic tropes to represent homeless figures. I first look to how homelessness emerged (Sect. 1). Here, I argue that the term first applies to the city as a whole because it is the perceived threat to the bourgeois family and the *Gemeinschaft*-ideal of small town life. I then turn to some of the early rhetorical efforts and tropes which were deployed in this process of semantically ordering the city (Sect. 2). Activists and journalists who began this discourse turned to old practices of othering found in anti-Semitic traditions. In this section, I argue that anti-Semitic tropes provide symbols for and structures of representing homelessness. Finally in Section 3, I argue that the anti-Semitic tropes invoked by these urban commentators function as myth. The tropes serve a cultural and not a theological purpose and emerge in locations beyond the sphere of religion. By falling back onto myth, the language of homelessness enables the rhetoric to become a carrier of family anxieties.

This chapter does not fully bring us to the sociological literature on homelessness; we will find that after a consolidation in thinking about social displacement which is coextensive with the rise of American urban sociology. In the next chapter, we discuss

that consolidation. Rather, in this chapter, we analyze the early responses to metropolitan displacements by activists and journalists who turn to myth to develop ways to explain and articulate urban life. In these early responses many of the basic traits which sociological literature later attributes to homeless individuals begin to emerge through the mythic tropes: separation from family, wandering moral and/or pathological failings. The tropes provided an argument about the characteristics of these homeless figures—valuations connected with Cain, Ishmael, or the Wandering Jew became associated with those people described as homeless. Mythic tropes were an early means for ordering a discourse that was subsequently professionalized and codified by social scientists; the sociologist's descriptions of the homeless man began to take on the characteristics of a Cain or Ishmael.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, New York was thought to be a homeless city¹ populated by unmoored (domestic and international) migrants. Anxious commentators thought the city to have overturned life as they knew it. For them, a Babelian cacophony arose from the streets, decades before towers glowered down on the mutually incomprehensible sounds. Five-story tenement walk-ups enclosed darkness, staleness—holding light and air at bay. Journalists wrote of these throngs as spilling out from the stale, dank air of their semi-private enclosures. Though kitchens—with rough-hewn tables and stoves for warming coffee, food and people—provided a small locus for gathering, domestic life was thought to spill forth from tenements to flow into fire escapes, streaming onto sidewalks to join among the cart peddlers, and surging into the streets. These middle class commentators' discomfort with these overcrowded cities led

¹ William Dean Howells and Jacob Riis, among others, called New York a homeless city.

many to hope for Haussmann-like² reconstruction to run roughshod over poverty to rationalize the tenement quarters of the modern city.

Industrializing forces necessitated rational processes for production, distribution, and exchange, but in the minds of many middle class observers, those newcomers responding to industrial demands for laborers generated anarchic urban conditions.³ For these writers, the city's structure divided into parallel worlds of an ordered "clean, handsome, respectable quarter of the town"⁴ for fashionable plutocrats and a tumult in the tenement districts thought to house three-quarters of the population in 1890.⁵ The premier man of letters in this day, William Dean Howells describes the bustle and crowding of a tenement streetscape.

The fire-escapes, with their light iron balconies and ladders of iron, decorated the lofty house fronts; the roadway and sidewalks and door-steps swarmed with children; women's heads seemed to show at every window. In the basements, over which flights of high stone steps led to the tenements, were green-grocers' shops abounding in cabbages, and provision stores running chiefly to bacon and sausages, and cobblers' and tanners' shops, and the like, in proportion to the small needs of a poor neighborhood. Ash barrels lined the sidewalks and garbage heaps filled with gutters; teams of all trades stood idly about; a peddler of cheap fruit urged his cart through the street, and mixes his cry with the joyous

² In the early 1850s, Baron Haussmann was commissioned by Napoleon III to modernize Paris. He built large avenues and shopping districts. In part, the goal was to break up the poor, working-class neighborhoods in which the uprisings of 1848 began. The wider streets would both facilitate troop movements and make barricade-building more difficult for those hoping to start future uprisings. The changes implemented by Haussmann transformed the urban landscape and scattered the poor from the previously overcrowded, labyrinthine neighborhoods.

³ Geographer and urban analyst David Harvey talks about the contradictory impacts of the industrializing of the city—the rationalization of certain bureaucratic structures, while also unleashing the chaotic problems of unemployment, inadequate housing, and ethnic and class factionalism, which arise from overaccumulation of labor in cities. For a discussion of the urbanization of capital, see David Harvey, *The Urban Experience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), especially 17-34.

⁴ William Dean Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), 302.

⁵ According to Jacob Riis, "The tenements to-day are New York, harboring three-fourths of its population. When another generation shall have doubled the census of our city, and to that vast army of workers, held captive by poverty, the very name of home shall be as a bitter mockery what will the harvest be?" Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 20. Because my project is a study of the discourse on homelessness, I am not concerned with attempting to determine the seeming accuracy of Riis's numbers. Rather, I want to look at how the city, its life and problems were being thought about and discussed.

screams and shouts of the children and the scolding and gossiping voices of the women; the burly blue bulk of a policeman defined itself at the corner; a drunkard zigzagged down the sidewalk toward him. It was not the abode of the extremest poverty, but of a poverty as hopeless as any in the world, transmitting itself from generation to generation, and establishing conditions of permanency to which human life adjusts itself as it does to those of some incurable disease, like leprosy.⁶

This bifurcation between plutocratic respectability and chaotic tenements was a line through the city. The line not only divided people into segregated districts of the city; this split of urban geography divided popular images of people by class, culture, ethnicity and language.

In the parlance of the day, it created two numerically imbalanced ‘halves’. The everyday life of the poor—their living quarters, work practices, social habits and spatial arrangements—became other for middle class commentators. Rather famously, the New York poor—their everyday lives and their urban locations in slums—were studied in Jacob Riis’s *How the Other Half Lives*. In a gnostic turn against the everyday life of the poor, bourgeois commentators and reformers rejected this other and its life not merely as an unworthy banality, but as an evil; for them, the other half must be redeemed or rejected. These journalists and activists dismissed the modern urban life (of the metropolitan majority), calling for a transcendence from the muck of the modern city in hopes of a return to a nostalgic past, or at least the importation of some *Gemeinschaft*-ideal elements into the city. The critique of those unable to escape the underside of the city was simultaneously a disparagement and a call for greater urban order to minimize urban problems.

The slums—their squalor and poverty—came to be considered homeless and New York (the American city with the greatest profusion of slums) a homeless city; the city

⁶ Howells, 64-65.

and its poverty threatened hearth and home. In these discursive arguments against mundanity, the quotidian existences of the poor were homeless; the utopic locus of home, thus, must transcend the immediacy of environs. In a bourgeois discourse on homelessness, I argue, home—in particular the ‘Christian home’—was a this-worldly transcendence. Home was an ideal for family that pulls this social institution out of the banalities of daily life and legitimates it. Home was not merely a social category; it had explicitly religious connotations.

This particularly Protestant articulation of home became the locus for the formation of moral citizens and pious Christians;⁷ it was a sacred space forming a bulwark to insulate the Victorian family from modernizing ravages and proletarian immigrants. In the sermons, pamphlets, and popular writings extolling the virtues of the Christian home, home life not only furnished patriotic and ethical training but also “provided a means of blessing middle-class values and norms. Domestic Protestantism was not merely an individualized form of popular piety. The ideology promoted by secular and clerical writers helped to justify middle-class notions of gender, economics and taste by presenting the Victorian home as eternal and God-given.”⁸ With this God-given ideal for social life as the norm, commentators had a clear measuring stick against

⁷ Colleen McDannell, who has undertaken several studies of the Christian home, describes its central importance as a social institution. “During the nineteenth century, good family life was seen as the means by which the nation and its religion were maintained. Americans believed the home to be the nursery of both patriotism and piety. Home life taught the mutual dependence and reciprocal responsibility of each citizen. By connecting the individual to the community at large, the family instilled notions of morality, order, stability, education, purity, refinement, and discipline. Although the church also played an important role in creating good Christians, the Victorian preoccupation with the family saw home life as the more crucial purveyor of ethics and piety.” Colleen McDannell, “Parlor Piety: The Home as Sacred Space in Protestant America,” in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, ed. by Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 164.

⁸ McDannell, 173.

which to assess urban populations. The discourse of the other half developed in juxtaposition with the Christian home ideal.

As tensions increased between the populations of these halves—the ‘urban haute bourgeoisie’ and the urban slum dwellers, fears grew among the wealthy. The New York riots of the 1860s and 1870s⁹ left the urban middle and elite classes wary of the urban poor. New York’s population explosion in the final two decades of the century filled the city with an ever-increasing teeming mass of multilingual hordes. The labor overaccumulations and subsequent housing shortages led to usurious rents, ramshackle tenements, and an overly dense population. Commentators soon began to document urban life in a call for social reforms to avert possible explosions of class antagonisms.

In 1890 this assessment of urban life, especially that of New York, took a broader outline than before—fiction looked beyond the urban elite into tenement neighborhoods and journalism systematically documented each community of slums.¹⁰ In this year, three famous sketches of New York appeared—Stephen Crane’s *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*, William Dean Howell’s *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, and Jacob Riis’s *How the Other Half*

⁹ In particular, the Draft Riot of 1863 and the Tompkins Square Riot of 1877; also Chicago’s Haymarket riot of 1886 exacerbated anxieties. I argue that these earlier riots (and the Paris Commune) become markers of lingering dangers. In the 1880s and 90s they are discussed with great alarm not as history but as possible futures. Volunteer Special’s *The Volcano Under the City* (pseudonymously published in 1886 by William Stoddard—formerly one of President Lincoln’s personal secretaries) argues that the potential for urban explosion continues to lurk under the city. Jacob Riis calls for social change to avert another Tompkins Square. Later, in 1916, large vagrant populations are cited as a source of a New York threat much like the extensive vagrant involvement in the French Revolution. See Volunteer Special, *The Volcano Under the City* (New York: Fords, Howard, & Hulbert, 1887); and Frank Laubach, *Why There are Vagrants, A Study Based Upon an Examination of One Hundred Men* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916). Jacob Riis in *How the Other Half Lives, Battle with the Slum* and *The Peril and Preservation of the Home*, also repeatedly cites these riots as possible urban futures.

¹⁰ The early 1890s’ responses to the poverty of industrialized cities were not only important in the United States. Pope Leo XIII began the modern tradition of social encyclicals with 1891’s *Rerum Novarum* which tried to speak against the excesses of capitalism, tempered with even more alarming critique of communism. This tendency to acknowledge problems from the over-quick industrialization of cities and to call for incremental changes to avert the more sweeping (and atheistic) social transformations offered by anarchists and communists also marked the calls for reform in the United States.

Lives. The latter two in particular emanate from a bourgeois gaze into the slums. While generally evoking sympathy, these two texts are foundational for the discourse on homelessness because they mark the starting point of establishing the modern city itself as homeless.

The concerns with the city were not mere fictive backdrops for a good story. They represented an incipient turn to bourgeois reform in the face of modernization. Activists eventually began to acknowledge that bucolic small town life and the sense of community which was supposedly lost with its waning could never overtake the city—too many forces of capital, migration, rationalization, and technological innovation made such a return impossible.

The Christian home ideal, which fostered the family as the last remnant of a collapsed *Gemeinschaft*, would remain the measuring rod for society and that by which the city would be critiqued. Elements of the pastoral and communitarian—thought to best promote the family—would be introduced into the slums to restore order and assimilate the poor laborers overflowing in the slums. The search for order in its legal, spatial and linguistic senses all sped forward in an often haphazard rush for reforming rationalization. The loss of community and small town life was considered by bourgeois reformers like Jacob Riis to be a problem of homelessness; the ideal location for the family was lost to the homelessness of the city.

Section One: The Fin-de-Siècle Homeless City

In this section, I lay out the urban problems of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century city and how commentators talked about these urban crises. I argue that

the problems of overcrowding, cultural heterogeneity, insufficient privacy for the family, lack of greenspace and general urban dirtiness were all considered to be aspects of homelessness. Journalists and activists considered the city to be the locus of homelessness because it brought these attributes together and because the processes of urbanization undermined older social structures of small town, which were thought to foster the family.

I divide my analyses of the fin-de-siècle homeless city into three sections. First, I look at the emergence of the term of homeless. I demonstrate that it was a term with no analytical meaning but was a way to talk about urban problems; it arose in journalistic and activist responses to the urban boom. The term was first used to describe the city itself. The city was homeless because it embodied all that was other to the idea of the Christian home, which was itself the ideal locus for the bourgeois family. This family was ostensibly the last remnant of the *Gemeinschaft* which the city had destroyed. After demonstrating that the concept of homelessness emerged to describe the city, I then turn to outline how this concept of homelessness was deployed to represent threats to and the absence of order. Rural life and the Christian home—which was thought to be most easily cultivated without urban distractions—were the dual models of order, and ‘homeless’ became an adjective juxtaposed to these ideals. Then, finally, I conclude this section by looking at some of the processes of rationalizing the city to redress its homelessness. The family and its locus in the home provided the solution to the problems of slums. The ordering processes were not just semantic—there were institutional, spatial and political processes as well. The discourse on homelessness was part of the semantic restructuring of the city. In this third part of the section, we shall see that the processes of

rationalizing the city first divided the city into a series of binaries and then, as we shall see in the next section, turned to myth to provide the means for othering the ‘other half.’ These efforts of ordering the city emanated from bourgeois reformers who sought to avert the urban explosions which had plagued New York City and Chicago in the form of riots and had plagued Paris in revolutionary uprisings.

The fin-de-siècle homeless city bequeathed homeless individuals who were later constituted as a homeless subject. Thus, I now turn to look at how this city came to be called homeless, what changes were thought to need redressing, and how the bourgeois reform efforts try to bring order.

The Emerging Concept of Homelessness

The year 1890 was pivotal in the formation of the discourse on homelessness. Several texts appeared which described the urban grit and grime with a new commitment to realist detail; two very important ones—Howells’s New York novel *A Hazard of New Fortunes* and Riis’s *How the Other Half Lives*—call the city homeless. Howells establishes the connection between the homeless city and the Christian home; Riis popularizes the term homeless and its connection with urban poverty. A character of Howells thinks the newness of the city demands that small vignettes should be written about the different neighborhoods, workers, and lives of the urban population; Riis’s journalistic book actually does such a survey of the city. The discourse on homelessness dates to this moment when anxieties about urban social change and problems attained a new prominence. At this time, top novelists and journalists took on the city with a new

urgency because they feared the potentially revolutionary unrest lurking within the city's slums.

Christian Home and the Homeless City

In *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, Howells undertakes this new city—the post-war boom of population, building, and tensions; he shows how a family plopped into the metropolis cannot find the proper space for a Christian home and eventually comes to regard the city as homeless. The novel establishes the dichotomy of the Christian home versus the homeless city and, thus, is integral to the discourse on homelessness.

From Upper East Side parades of Sunday finery to downtown immigrant tenements, from the crassness of nouveau riche industrialists to a German socialist provocateur, Howells's panoramic cityscape newly painted the modern life of an American city. Though the portrayal of poverty problematically emanates from the bourgeois standpoint of his literary alter ego Basil March (with embellishments by the Christian socialist romanticizations of supporting characters Conrad Dryfoos and Miss Vance), Howells accomplishes one of the earliest, broad-ranging views of the modernizing American city. It was heralded at the time by Twain as “the exactest & truest portrayal of New York and New York life,”¹¹ and lauded by Howells' Boston pals—the James brothers.

The novel traces a group of relative newcomers to New York who coalesce around a start-up literary magazine prosaically named *Every Other Week*. Basil and Isabel March—from earlier Howells' works—leave his adoptive and her native Boston

¹¹ Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. “Introduction,” in Howells, xi.

(and his insurance firm) so that he can finally indulge long-latent literary interests by taking over the journal's editorial helm. He is brought into the project by Fulkerson whose role as manager anticipates the subsequent rise of the profession of publicity; he had also given the project grounding by bringing in a newly minted millionaire Dryfoos whose Indiana farm rested atop huge reserves of natural gas. Dryfoos—questing for society entrée for his daughters and distractions for his son Conrad's clerical desires—agrees to bankroll the journal and installs Conrad as publisher. The circle is rounded out by artistic editor Beaton, and a small coterie of contributors, including a young, aspiring artist Alma Leighton, a retired Confederate Colonel Woodburn who thought that slavery and agrarian gentility provided social and economic correctives to the gaucheness of industry, and Lindau, a one-handed German socialist (the other being lost as a Union soldier fighting for abolitionist idealism) who provided translations of works appearing in European journals.

The Marches' indecision to leave insurance and Boston for literature and New York led to a second round of irresolution as Basil and Isabel quest through New York in an interminable housing search for the ideal space for “a Christian home”.¹² They want a space, a room “where the family can all come together and feel the sweetness of being a family.”¹³ Their domestic ideal enwraps housing concerns into those of family and religion. The dozens of flats and houses which the Marches visit are unable to furnish the necessary accoutrements to form a proper home. Isabel tells Basil:

[T]he flat abolishes the family consciousness. It's confinement without coziness; it's cluttered without being snug. You couldn't keep a self-respecting cat in a flat; you couldn't go down cellar to get cider. No: the Anglo-Saxon home, as we know it in the Anglo-Saxon house, is simply

¹² Howells, 67.

¹³ Howells, 67.

impossible in the Franco-American flat—not because it’s humble, but because it’s false.¹⁴

After failed attempts to identify a proper house—since the sine qua non’s of amenities (furnishings, steam, and elevators) were beyond their means in houses, the Marches’ search begrudgingly returns to flats out of economic necessity. In the Marches search for the proper domicile, an admittedly banal point emerges—the primary concern of home is with family. This point is integral to the discourse on homelessness.

This popular idea of a ‘Christian home’, which makes its way into Howells’s novel, arose through the Congregational Protestantism seen with figures like the Beechers and Stowes. This ideal requires a spatial arrangement for a family order. The *Gemeinschaft*-ideal, which fin-de-siècle commentators thought to be the proper social and spatial formation to foster the Christian home, requires both kinship relations and relationship to place. In the fin-de-siècle period, new zoning laws started to limit the numbers and relations of those who could live in the same residence by foreclosing options like multiple boarder or even older extended family domestic arrangements. The spatial arrangements carved up private space to promote the formation of what, by the middle of the twentieth century, comes to be called the nuclear family.

The spatial necessities for forming a Christian home extend beyond the domestic space to include the balance of this private space with the appropriate uses of public space. The failure to maintain this division establishes a line which comes to distinguish the homeless population from the normative bourgeois subjectivities.

The formation of private space, which emerges through the rise of bourgeois capital,¹⁵ contributes to the nuclearization of the family and to the religious legitimation

¹⁴ Howells, 68.

of this new familial form. In other words, modern capital established the conditions for the transformation of the family and the need for cultural legitimation of this atomizing social structure. The legitimation took the dual form of establishing the normative ideal and othering all domestic arrangements which failed to conform.

This process appears in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*—the Marches come to find that their metropolitan life in a Manhattan flat—which could not offer a Christian home—creates a sense of homelessness. They had never had such a problem in their hometown of Boston.

After a year in the bustling multicultural metropolis of New York, Isabel and the children returned briefly to their old home in Boston. They wandered through streets of puritanical orderliness and New England homogeneity but found their South End house—which they had let out to tenants—to feel alien. The encounter of urban cosmopolitanism transformed the Marches and made a return to a simpler way of life impossible—a transformation of which the Marches were aware in this return trip:

The Boston streets seemed very queer and clean and empty to the children, and the buildings little; in the horse-cars the Boston faces seemed to arraign their mother with a down-drawn severity that made her feel very guilty. She knew that this was merely the Puritan mask, the cast of a dead civilization, which people of very amiable and tolerant minds were doomed to wear, and she sighed to think that less than a year of the heterogeneous gayety of New York should have made her afraid of it...she was glad to go back to him [Basil] in the immense, friendly *homelessness of New York*, and hold him answerable for the change in her heart, or her mind, which made its shapeless tumult a refuge and a consolation.¹⁶

¹⁵ For instance, see Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).

¹⁶ Howells, 308-309.

The entire town made the three Marches forlorn. Somehow their rootedness was severed and they missed the chaos and anonymity of New York.

The city's excess of gayety and people precludes significant mooring in social relations. The relative anonymity furnished by this disconnection creates a negative freedom. The homelessness of the city, i.e., the collapse of community enforcement of norms (anomie) afforded the opportunity to get outside of such expectations. Mrs. March availed herself of the privacy afforded by shedding the panoptical presence of social life in a place of community-wide, life-long residence. She uses this freedom to slough off such strictures as obligatory Sunday morning church-going.

Able to more freely assert her independence and individuality, Mrs. March appreciates the urban freedom. It arises because of the severing of ongoing contact with longstanding relations. Her close-knit circle of Manhattan acquaintances does not supplant the (now severed) bonds previously felt in her native Boston. In New York, she withdraws into her immediate family—the majority of her nights out are to the theater with husband Basil; the Marches rarely entertain.

In her relative immunity to the perceived metropolitan downsides of poverty, crime and overcrowding—other than seeing a tenement neighborhood while passing through in the security of her coupe, Mrs. March finds that the city brings a refuge and a consolation. The consolation is a life withdrawn into her family; there is some remnant of home there. Yet, even this sense cannot be fully developed because of the spatial limits of a flat. The reduced sense of home available within the immediate family is juxtaposed to the homelessness of the city.

The anomic homelessness of New York only affords consolations to the comfortable. Here at the fin-de-siècle rise of modern homelessness, homelessness is not an unsheltered condition but the city's embodiment of the collapse of social structures. The term homelessness soon became associated with the poor slum dweller and eventually even the reject of the tenement, but homelessness here at the waning of the nineteenth century is a condition of the city.

As we go forward in this chapter, I will demonstrate a series of shifts in the discourse on homelessness: 1) the homeless object moves from the city to people and 2) begins to become the normative term for social displacement. This emergence as the categorical term for displacement begins in the fin-de-siècle period as 'homeless' starts to subsume a range of older terms like vagrant or vagabond (as well as some newer ones like hobo or tramp). This second process is not completed until the Depression (and the next chapter). This development rests upon the dialectical relationship between the home (and domestic sciences which developed earlier in the mid-nineteenth century) and the emerging category of homelessness. In some way, New York in particular, and the city in general, threatened the Beecher-Stowe consensus of domesticity and its heir, the Christian home.

New York presented challenges to many anxious, journalists, activists, social commentators; they worried that it represented the loss of ways of life that might be coming for the rest of the country. There was a widespread sense of a need to document the city. As we have noted, Howells's *Hazard*, has a dual importance for the discourse on homelessness. First, it establishes the binary of Christian home versus the homeless city.

And second, it establishes the importance of documenting the city as a means to gain middle class support for reform efforts.

In this novel of the newly homeless city, both Mr. March and Mr. Fulkerson felt that there was something unique about New York; they imagined that somehow the magnitude of the city created a qualitatively different place which would somehow pique the interest of readerships beyond Manhattan island. Before March's New York move, they already discussed the possibility of him writing up a series of sketches of New York life. This idea of documenting urban life was heralded (and also sometimes independently developed) by several figures associated with the magazine. Colonel Woodburn viewed such documentation as necessary for his studies of labor and poverty to which slavery was somehow to provide a solution.¹⁷ The publisher Conrad Dryfoos saw it as an opportunity to elicit bourgeois charity.¹⁸ Conrad tells Mr. March, "If you can make the comfortable people understand how the uncomfortable people live, it will be a very good thing, Mr. March. Sometimes it seems to me that the only trouble is that we don't know one another well enough; and that the first thing is to do this." A documentary interest in the new city served Howells both within the narrative and as author—the booming metropolis had to be recorded and understood.

¹⁷ "[H]e was working up a branch of inquiry which had so long occupied him, in the libraries, and studying the great problem of labor and poverty as it continually presented itself to him in the streets. He said that he talked with all sorts of people whom he found monstrously civil, if you took them in the right way; and he went everywhere in the city without fear and apparently without danger. March could not find out that he had ridden his hobby into the homes of want which he visited, or had proposed their enslavement to the inmates as a short and simple solution of the great question of their lives; he appeared to have contented himself with the collection of facts for the persuasion of the cultivated classes." Howells, 309-310.

¹⁸ Howells, 147.

The Rise of the Term Homeless

These fictional ruminations on the urban poor (executed much more extensively in Crane's *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*) were paralleled by the rise of documentary, muckraking journalism by figures like Jacob Riis, who also in 1890 published *How the Other Half Lives*, drawing upon his journalistic work for the *Tribune* and the *Evening Sun* as well as longer pieces for magazines like *Scribner's*. This work is the first in his broader normative project on home and family, which he elaborates further in other works like, *The Making of an American*, *Battle with the Slum*, and *The Peril and Preservation of the Home*. The enormous popularity of this first book—eleven editions in five years¹⁹—exceeded both Riis's expectations and that of earlier works of critique of the newly industrializing cities. He became one of the most prominent spokespeople for reform. Three decades later, University of Chicago sociologist Louis Wirth declares that Riis “has done much to call public attention to the tenement problem of the large American city and to invite remedial legislation.”²⁰ In its nascent appearance in American social thought, the term ‘homeless’ began as a description of the tenement; Riis popularized the term and the tenement in his ‘battle with the slum,’ through which the discourse on homelessness consolidated from urban vignettes into social science.

By carrying heavy photographic equipment through tenements, beer dives, police wards, and other poverty-stricken nooks, Riis gave a face to poverty like no one before him. Illustrating his stories (with photographs and drawings) and showing magic lantern images (a proto-slide projection) on his cross-country treks for lecture series, he sketched

¹⁹ Ferenc M. Szasz and Ralph F. Bogardus, “The Camera and the American Social Conscience,” *New York History* 55, no. 4, (1974), 422.

²⁰ See Louis Wirth, “A Bibliography of the Urban Community,” in *The City*, ed. Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Roderick D. McKenzie (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), 205.

poverty with word and picture which gave his pleas for reform a vitality and urgency. He trudged through the slums with a young police commissioner on raids of crime dens, rat-infested slums and illegal liquor houses, and so immediately drew political attention to his efforts and elicited instantaneous municipal response. His close relationship with this Commissioner Roosevelt who later became Governor, Vice-President, and then finally President—at the hand of one of the greatly-feared anarchists who assassinated President McKinley—gave the political and popular reach of Riis's efforts a national scope. (He was offered and declined a Caribbean ambassadorship as thanks for his years of tireless reform efforts.)

Serving on innumerable panels, commissions and other instruments of reform, his work moved from documentary description (à la Basil March) to normative exhortation. Because of his far reach as essayist, journalist, lecturer and reformer, Riis's work on the homelessness of the metropolis and homelessness in the city is foundational to subsequent discourse on homelessness. Riis both documented the problems and conditions which he called homeless and proposed responses for social activists and policy makers. His central importance to the discourse on homelessness rests in developing a vocabulary for new urban problems, documenting the conditions to be considered as homeless, invoking mythic tropes in his analyses of the homeless city—which we will discuss in the next section, and in helping to set up the institutional responses which subsequently codified homelessness as a problem of social science and (eventually) policy.

For in his time, 'homelessness' was as much (though not exclusively) a condition of the city, as one of an individual. As a locus that brought together vice, poverty, greed,

and unassimilated immigrants, the city, in Riis's accounts, created the conditions of homelessness. This early homelessness is quite ambiguous. The term does not correspond to the groups which it will ultimately describe in the process of becoming the normative category for social displacement, e.g., tramps, bums, vagrants. Another ambiguity arises from the term's role as a privative. At the time, the term was explicitly used as a negation of home—a connection which has been obscured by time; Riis, et al., shift equally between language of destroying home (or preserving it) and that of homelessness, i.e., homelessness describes those things which destroy home. For him, the city brought together the new threats to home and became both a homeless place and a place for the homeless. As we shall see in the next chapter, the former sense of homeless places fades as sociologists increasingly identify individuals as homeless.

The structure of our contemporary discourse on homelessness emerges here before homelessness is a category of science or policy. Part of documenting of and responding to the homeless city included developing a language to describe it. A semantic flux between terms reveals the inability to clearly articulate the new metropolis. Activists writing about these social conditions stretched older terms and brought a flurry of new ones before the term homeless began to emerge in popularity, primarily through the writings and lectures of Jacob Riis.

The emerging discourse about urbanization's disruptions of society was still fluctuating between language of place and that of relationships. A well-developed set of categories of urban social displacement was still several decades off. In the late nineteenth century, 'homelessness' was merely a useful term to talk about a loose set of social practices that fall beyond the bourgeois norms without having a categorical

meaning. Older terms like vagrant and vagabond were too outmoded to apply to emerging urban conditions. Newer categories, like tramps, bums or hoboes, appeared with greater frequency, even becoming nascent social science categories in the first decades of the twentieth century, before becoming subsumed by a meta-category—the homeless. Less than two decades before Riis's first book, Charles Loring Brace, the founder of the Children's Aid Society, floated the moniker 'houseless';²¹ Brace moves between the terms 'houseless' and 'homeless' in his book.

'Homeless' became increasingly common in the work of those like Riis whose primary concern was the preservation of family and its utopic locus home. The term 'homeless' is increasingly used to represent this other in the negative discourse of familial legitimation. Riis makes moves typical of the day. As we also saw with Howells, New York City, with its overabundance of tenements, immigrants, and surplus labor, earned the designation 'the homeless city' in the work of Riis. The dialectically-structured title of his first book—which marks his emergence onto the national scene—posits an other to a bourgeois norm. That norm, as we learn through Riis's work—is the Christian home. The middle class family in this utopic locus is the implicit norm against whom the Other Half is measured; the others are homeless.

Combating Homelessness: Bringing the Country to the City

In documenting the Other Half, Riis begins to conflate class tensions between the bourgeoisie and the urban working class with distinctions between the country and city.

In preceding decades, popular works like the oft-cited predecessors Charles Loring

²¹ See Charles Loring Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years' Work Among Them* (New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, Publishers, 1872), 97. Riis was certainly familiar with this text. He alludes to it in *How the Other Half Lives*, as well as numerous magazine articles and books. Riis, *Other Half*, 197.

Brace's *The Dangerous Classes of New York*, Josiah Strong's *Our Country*, Dickens' *American Notes*, etc.,²² had warned of urban perils. James Lane argues that most of these predecessors viewed urbanization as a locus of vice and crime which threatened the "the values of a rural society,"²³ but Riis moved the axial divisions of American society from this country-city dichotomy to distinctions between classes. We shall soon see that his ideals of social structure, housing and life are still grounded in the country. Riis makes pragmatic concessions to repairing the city for the urban populations, unlike Brace whose career consisted of carting young urban orphans to houses and farms away from the metropolis. But, his fixes are to bring elements of the country to the city; the country is still the ideal. It is the middle class who has access to the country and can bring elements of it into the city.

His motives for importing the country to the metropolis were only partially altruistic; he was very concerned about the political threats from an overcrowded urban population. Among the great achievements of reform, he cites the tearing down of Tompkins Square—the site of an 1870s urban uprising and disdained anarchist movements for "Bread or Blood"²⁴ by near-starving laborers—to be replaced by a park.²⁵ He contends that the introduction of gardens into a tenement block "does the work of a dozen police clubs. In proportion as it spreads the neighborhood takes on a more orderly character. As the green dies out of the landscape and increases in political importance, the police find more to do. Where it disappears altogether from sight, lapsing into a mere

²² For discussions of these texts and their influence on Riis, see Louise Ware, *Jacob A. Riis, Police Reporter, Reformer, Useful Citizen* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Incorporated, 1938), 49; and James B. Lane, *Jacob A. Riis and the American City* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1974), 52-3.

²³ Lane, 53.

²⁴ The 'Bread or Blood' riots were a series of uprisings from primarily industrial workers, starting in the 1830s Britain. Riis, as was typical of his day, dismissed any social or political discontents as anarchists and relegated them to the status of criminal elements or rowdies (rather than as offering social critique).

²⁵ For an example of his take on Tompkins Square see, Riis, *Other Half*, 124; or Riis, *Peril*, 184.

sentiment, police-beats are shortened and the force patrols double at night.”²⁶ Riis recognizes that the city cannot be sent away; it has come so forcibly, it is to remain a feature of the modern world. Yet, it must be reformed.

In his autobiography first published in 1901, Riis acknowledges that for him the slum is still contrasted not with uptown homes of plutocrats but with the countryside. “For hating the slum what credit belongs to me? Who could love it? When it comes to that, perhaps it was the open, the woods, the freedom of my Danish fields I loved, the contrast that was hateful. I hate darkness and dirt anywhere, and naturally want to let in the light. I will have no dark corners in my own cellar; it must be whitewashed clean.”²⁷ I argue that his ideal is closely akin to the theoretical construct of *Gemeinschaft*. *Gemeinschaft*, we have seen, presumed a unity of people and place where families had lived side-by-side for generations and developed relations in which social life functioned along the lines of family relations. While this point that Riis’s description of his childhood home in Ribe, Denmark, resembles Ferdinand Tönnies’ idea of community has been made elsewhere,²⁸ I am arguing that Riis is trying to create a space for home (as metonym for *Gemeinschaft*) in the city. Riis wants to create small havens from a heartless world into which people may retreat—he advocates more windows and parks to bring the air and countryside into urban life. The family in its Christian home becomes the last urban remnant of small town life.

Riis’s approach is quite akin to that of Brace’s friend and classmate from Yale—Frederick Law Olmsted. Olmsted’s Greensward Plan for the 843 acre Central Park

²⁶ Riis, *Other Half*, 124.

²⁷ Jacob A. Riis. *The Making of an American* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1925), 272.

²⁸ For a similar point, see also Lewis F. Fried, *Makers of the City* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), 21.

“proposed a reformer’s vision—a space designed to school both patrician and plebeian cultures by transmitting, almost subliminally, civilized values and a ‘harmonizing and refining influence.’”²⁹ Like the later reformers, Olmsted assumed that the poor of downtown must be carefully guided in proper use of the space. He wrote that “A large part of the people of New York are ignorant of a park, properly so-called. They need to be trained to the proper use of it.”³⁰ A space could be reclaimed from the ‘homeless’ portions of the tenements and used as an instrument to assimilate the population into bourgeois norms; the space of the parks could be part of the processes of urban ordering—first at the level of space and then as a tool to combat some of those social behaviors which were considered to be homeless.

The country brought into the city was not nature but a tool for regulating life; greenspace was to combat against the homelessness of the city. This homelessness was not merely a spatial problem of the city, else the parks might be able to remove the taint of urban homelessness; it also referred to the social behaviors of the Other Half. The parks developed a bureaucracy, rules, and techniques of enforcement to abet the development of ‘gentlemanly behavior’ among the poor; they also undertook processes of rationalization within increasing spatial segmentation and specialization in uses.³¹ Parks were instruments to bring about an urban moral order to combat the vices of the city.³²

²⁹ Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 794.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 795. Burrows and Wallace continue: “Doubting that the park’s deep structure would sufficiently discipline the unruly, Olmsted established regulations that, in marked contrast to the laissez-faire streets of the city, soon blanketed the park terrain with 125 varieties of directive and injunctive signs and posters. He also instituted park police—‘keepers’—who would ‘respectfully aid an offender toward a better understanding of what is due to others, as one gentleman might manage to guide another.’” Burrows and Wallace, 795.

³¹ For this point, see Terence Young, “Modern Urban Parks,” *Geographical Review* 85, no.4 (Oct. 1995), 535-551.

³² See Young.

Chicago-based activist and reformer, Jane Addams was also incredibly concerned about the role of play among youth and developed enormous plans and infrastructure to guide the direction of play to ensure that it did not go astray.³³ Green spaces, fresh air, and regulated play were instruments of socialization which could assimilate children of the poor and often immigrant into bourgeois norms; these elements of the country were to train metropolitan youth in the recreational practices and behaviors of the *Gemeinschaft*-ideal. These elements of the country combined with the institutions of the city—schools, councils on hygiene, zoning boards, etc.—to navigate the middle way of bourgeois reform to create the proper form of family life among the urban poor. The early discourse on homelessness was always tied to social programs—it emerged from a normative project of making the city safe for the family.

Riis wants to take home (or its possibility) into the lair of its enemy—the slums, lest the masses of these tenements overwhelm its last bastions. Homes must be built for the working masses, he argues,³⁴ or they will soon outpace the middle class in reproduction, ending any hope for home and family.³⁵ I find that Riis had a three-part process for taking ‘home’ into the slums. The first, I have mentioned, is to take the country (which is the proper place for home) into the city to create the community, or public, space for home. The second process is also spatial—produce spaces conducive to family through laws banning certain housing structures, mandating windows, airshafts, etc., creating the domestic, or private, space for home. The third is to shape the people of

³³ For instance, see Jane Addams, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1914).

³⁴ Riis, *Other Half*, 7.

³⁵ “The tenements to-day are New York, harboring three-fourths of its population. When another generation shall have doubled the census of our city, and to that vast army of workers, held captive by poverty, the very name of home shall be as a bitter mockery what will the harvest be?” Riis, *Other Half*, 20.

the Other Half through schools, churches, boys clubs, etc. This required not only these specific institutions but other techniques to ensure that the poor were present in these institutions to participate in assimilating processes. These techniques included developing child labor laws; then after the widespread flouting of these, developing additional regulatory mechanisms for their enforcement;³⁶ creating truant officers, juvenile courts, etc., to ensure children attended the institutions of social assimilation.

The concept of homelessness emerged in popular literature and journalism of this fin-de-siècle period. It was not an analytical category but a term which embodied anxieties that arose in response to the chaotic growth of the city. The homeless city, as Riis has shown us, harbored the radical and the criminal, afforded no privacy for the family and provided none of the fresh air and greenspace of the country. In this section we saw how the homeless city was established in juxtaposition to the ideal of the Christian home in Howells's *Hazard*. We then saw in the work of Jacob Riis that the role of documenting the homeless city had two integral parts: 1) a semantic ordering which began with the rise of the term homeless later to be taken up by social scientists; and 2) a normative project of shaping the space and people of the city to combat the homelessness of the city in defense of the family.

To see how the term began to become a concept, I turn to Jacob Riis's discussion of the Other Half, that half whose lives had to be assimilated to bourgeois norms or risk receiving the moniker of homelessness. As a description of metropolitan problems, homelessness began to describe not only the city but the people residing there. The

³⁶ Initial rules required parental acknowledgement of age, and when that proved to be easily perjured, additional requirements, like birth certificates were mandated.

concept emerges in juxtaposition to the unspoken assumptions of a normative family and its Christian home.

Homelessness as Other, *contra* Order

In this section, we will see how the home was thought to be the locus of the proper order for a family and how that which threatened this order or embraced chaos came to be the homeless of Riis's Other Half. For Riis, the Other Half is a chaos to be tamed, a disorder to be ordered. Riis, like many other reformers of the time, is a prophet of order;³⁷ he clings to the venerable social watchwords, "*property, family, religion, order.*"³⁸ The poverty, slums, and suffering of the city follow from uncontrolled growth with its "consequent disorder and crowding."³⁹ Since, in Riis's account, disorder causes poverty and slums, he implies that an increase in order will eliminate social ills.

The nature of this order includes not only regulations of structures through zoning laws, and housing codes (which in turn shape social interactions); it also includes discourses on behavior and provides for the institutions to regulate it. Riis argues that the loss of privacy from the crowded tenements has caused a "distinct descent in the scale of refinement among the children if one may use the term...the general tone has been lowered."⁴⁰ In the face of unprecedented poverty, hunger, and inadequate housing—both the amount and the quality of it, Riis is worried about the refinement of children. His project of Americanizing young immigrants calls for integrating the poor into middle

³⁷ See Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order: 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

³⁸ Karl Marx calls these the catchphrases of the old society. They were the slogan for the conservative alliance formed between Catholic and monarchist elements in 1848 France; this group was sometimes called the Party of Order. Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in *Surveys from Exile: Political Writings Volume II*, ed. David Fernbach (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 155. Louis Bonaparte and his reactionary program of order, e.g., Haussmanization, were lauded by Jacob Riis as a model for how to respond to the problems of urbanization.

³⁹ Riis, *Other Half*, 146.

⁴⁰ Jacob A. Riis, *The Children of the Poor* (New York: Garrett Press, Inc., 1970), 65.

class norms—a project which required both institutional and semantic processes of ordering.

As with the Progressives soon to follow him (and the emerging social science developed as their agent), order is the order of the day; Riis calls for reigning in the city. The language of homelessness provide an implicit structure for this order; the semantics juxtaposition of home/homeless contain the blueprints of order. On the one side, we find home and its complementary concepts of family and community, and on the other, we find the objects of criticism in the homelessness of the city—pauperdom, haphazard urban development, and the willy-nilly social relations of the metropolis. In the fin-de-siècle period, the term homelessness signified the multiplicity of threats to a social order grounded in the home and family.

The nature of this order, though, is a necessary but not sufficient rejoinder to the urban chaos. A pure modern rationalization may have led to urban plans like those later developed in the concrete communities of Le Corbusier.⁴¹ Concrete jungles often result from subordinating urban spaces to technology and rationalization. For Riis, rationalization was an instrument not the goal; the ideal for space and relationships was still the country. Its ameliorative effects were to help minimize the downside of urbanization. Thus, when the ideal of the country clashes with implementation of order, Riis sides with the ameliorative impact of green space and openness. The *Gemeinschaft*-ideal was to create the space which could best foster the family—opening up the darkness of the slums could chase away some of the urban homelessness. The city had become homeless because there was no space for the family to flourish. The institutional, spatial

⁴¹ Le Corbusier was Swiss architect and urban designer who became known for large concrete buildings, towering skyscrapers interspersed by highways. His designs have been criticized for their impersonalism and for the spatial segregation of people from amenities.

and semantic processes of ordering were tools used by Riis and other reformers to subordinate the anomic aspects of the city to enable such a flourishing.

Riis's calls for order always straddled semantic and programmatic processes—he wanted to both clearly document the problems of the city and to use the schools, the police, landlords, commissions, etc., to transform these problems to create a place where a sense of home could develop. When Riis comes across a couple of children working on their first writing lesson, they wrote “Keeb of te Grass.” Forlornly, he laments, “They had it by heart, for there was not, I verily believe, a green sod within a quarter of a mile. Home to them is an empty name.”⁴² Maintaining coifed public spaces was less important than giving poor children a chance to romp in grass, like their more fortunate compatriots in small towns and the countryside. Also, here he explicitly equates an absence of green space with an absence of home. (No wonder the city was homeless.) Thus, Riis's call for order was a middle ground between a nostalgic call for a return to the land (which we shall see in the next chapter as a solution proposed in the nascent Catholic Worker movement) and a full embrace of modernization. As we shall shortly see, Riis calls for business to lead the way in improving the city and seeks a full-scale restructuring of the cityscape like that which Paris saw in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Riis's sense of order slides toward the Haussman-like modernizing of the city—bulldozing buildings, widening avenues, and creating greenspace which can foster a sense of home. He wants to accessorize the increasingly rationalized poor districts of the city through regulations of the number of units per block, their distribution, the number of windows and airshafts and the numbers of tenants per unit. He sought an end to the irrational exuberance of a real estate market gone amok. Just as worked to order urban

⁴² Riis, *Other Half*, 137.

space; his writings began to impose on the city a semantic order, which gave rise to the discourse on homelessness.

The Homelessness of the Other Half

In defining the Other Half, Riis begins to define homelessness. Riis's descriptions of the city segmented the population along class, race and ethnic lines—he defined his other and its subpopulations to classify the residents of the city. “[T]he boundary line of the Other Half lies through the tenements,” Riis tells us.⁴³ The tenements had been developed through the bubble of real estate speculators, sweatshop owners, landlords, et al., whose quest for meteoric returns broke the backs of the overwhelmingly immigrant poor. To address the problems of the Other Half—in the argument of Riis and other advocates of bourgeois reform—requires tweaking capital's Gilded Age excesses in order to sustain the basic socio-economic structures. Riis believes that reform is a necessary concession to maintain social order and to enervate the bellows enflaming the ‘volcano under the city’. Thus Riis's introduction includes excerpts from a report on the 1863 Draft Riots which concluded that:

‘When the great riot occurred in 1863...every hiding-place and nursery of crime discovered itself by immediate and active participation in the operations of the mob. Those very places and domiciles, and all that are like them, are to-day nurseries of crime, and of the vices and disorderly courses which lead to crime. By far the largest part—eighty per cent. at least—of crimes against property and against the person are perpetrated by individuals who have either lost connection with home life, or never had any, or whose *homes had ceased to be sufficiently separate, decent, and desirable to afford what are regarded as ordinary wholesome influences of home and family*...The younger criminals seem to come almost exclusively from the worst tenement house districts, that is, when traced back to the very places where they had their homes in the city here.’ Of

⁴³ Riis, *Other Half*, 5.

one thing New York made sure at that early stage of the inquiry: the boundary line of the Other Half lies through the tenements.”⁴⁴

The fear of this urban explosion informs the need to know the Other Half; reform is a result of fear.⁴⁵ This Manichean split between darkness and light—“I hate darkness and dirt anywhere, and naturally want to let in the light”—frames Riis’s analysis, that of his oeuvre, and even early twenty-first century views of homelessness. His concern for the Other Half is how to bring it into the light.

Riis’s analyses of the Other Half distinguish where there is hope in the city—he finds those who could with some amount of reform and assimilation emerge out of urban homelessness, and then those who were perhaps irredeemably lost. He identifies several places where the line is drawn between the two halves. Foremost, it runs through the tenement, as we have seen. Yet, he distinguishes secondary places for delineating the two halves—1) between pauperism and honest poverty and 2) between the flat and the tenement. Later, these distinctions will grow in importance as the city slowly succumbs to the processes of rationalization and the domain of those rendered homeless shrinks. The rhetorical distinction between populations enables the recuperation and assimilation of much of the ‘honest poor,’ ‘deserving poor,’ or whatever moniker applies to those integrated into bourgeois norms. Actually this first distinction—pauperism and honest

⁴⁴ Riis, *Other Half*, 5. His emphasis.

⁴⁵ “Long ago it was said that ‘one half of the world does not know how the other half lives.’ That was true then. It did not know because it did not care. The half that was on top cared little for the struggles, and less for the fate of those who were underneath, so long as it was able to hold them there and keep its own seat. There came a time when the discomfort and crowding below were so great, and the consequent upheavals so violent, that it was no longer an easy thing to do, and then the upper half fell to inquiring what was the matter. Information on the subject has been accumulating rapidly since, and the whole world has had its hands full answering for its old ignorance.” Riis, *Other Half*, 5. Riis’s demand to know the Other Half to avert such disasters is emblematic of broader outcries. For instance, see Volunteer Special, Volcano. Stoddard (Volunteer Special) argues that the Draft Riots broke out precisely because the public, i.e. the bourgeois public, were unaware of the simmering conditions among the poor. To avert further explosions, the poor must be monitored and controlled; the ‘powers that be’ must be aware of the conditions.

poverty—is between two subsets of the Other Half; the honest poor are still within the tenement. Initially, Riis merely indicates that one can distinguish between these two with the clothesline. “With it [the clothesline] begins the effort to be clean that is the first and the best evidence of as desire to be honest.”⁴⁶ A fastidious aversion to dirt (which we have already seen collapsed into darkness) has posed problems for many bourgeois social activists with genuine concerns about poverty but distaste for habits of the poor.⁴⁷ (Perhaps Riis’s revival-meeting conversion to Methodism inspired his adherence to Wesleyan aphorisms—‘Cleanliness is next to Godliness’.)

The Pauper and the Honest Poor: Fostering the Christian Home in the Homeless City

A Christian home had to be clean, healthy, well-ventilated, properly decorated—these were all necessary conditions for a Christian home. The Beecher sisters, to whom we shall briefly turn, outlined criteria of domestic space, the care of it, and the behaviors necessary to foster the Christian home. For reformers, lauding the cleanliness of these honest poor is insufficient; greater interventions were thought to be necessary to establish conditions for the preservation of the home.

Thus, the reformers’ battles against everyday life extended to personal sanitation; hygiene must be instilled into children to help them improve over their everyday life of filth. He recalled an example from a model school class. “The question is asked daily from the teacher’s desk: ‘What must I do to be healthy?’ and the whole school responds:

⁴⁶ Riis, *Other Half*, 39.

⁴⁷ For instance, George Orwell’s famed horror when being served bread from the hand blackened with coal and chamber pots. “The meals at the Brookers’ house were uniformly disgusting. For breakfast you got two rashers of bacon and a pale fried egg, and bread-and-butter which had often been cut overnight and always had thumb-marks on it. However tactfully I tried, I could never induce Mr. Brooker to let me cut my own bread-and-butter; he would hand it to me slice by slice, each slice gripped firmly under that broad black thumb.” George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1958), 15.

‘I must keep my skin clean,/Wear clean clothes,/Breathe pure air,/And live in the sunlight.’ It seems little less than biting sarcasm to hear them say it, for to not a few of them all these things are known only by name. In their everyday life there is nothing even to suggest any of them. Only the demand of religious custom has power to make their parents clean up at stated intervals, and the young naturally are no better.”⁴⁸ Riis asserts that for the slum-dweller only the insertion of holy days into ordinary time warrants cleaning; the everyday practices must somehow be subordinated and tamed to ones of another order. He also cites a school that has a special school officer, a matron, whose duty is to impart “the fundamental lesson of cleanliness,” by making “the round of the classes every morning with her alphabet: a cake of soap, a sponge, and a pitcher of water, and picks out those who need to be washed. One little fellow expressed his disapproval of this programme in the first English composition he wrote, as follows: *‘Indians. Indians do not want to wash because they like not water. I wish I was a Indian.’* Despite this hint, the lesson is enforced upon the children, but there is no evidence that it bears fruit in their homes to any noticeable extent.”⁴⁹

In his normative project on home and family, Riis went beyond expounding on the necessities of space and hygiene; he called for public and civil society institutions to take up a part in the effort to mold the city into a family-fostering place. Institutions, like schools and the government, became instrumental in extending disciplinary order beyond the middle class where rationalized processes had already taken much greater hold. In

⁴⁸ Riis, *Other Half*, 87-88.

⁴⁹ Riis, *Children*, 56. See also Riis *Children*, 18-19. The value of cleanliness was so important that New York reformers set up associations, e.g., the Citizens Council on Hygiene, for the sole purpose of ensuring that the value and methods of hygiene were taught to and implemented by the poor. For discussions of these, see. Jacob A. Riis, *The Peril and Preservation of the Home: Being the William L. Bull Lectures for the Year 1903* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co., 1903) 71; or Jacob A. Riis, *The Battle with the Slum* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1998), 19, 81.

The Battle with the Slum, Riis lauds the 1901 election of Columbia University President Seth Low as a reform mayor: “Decency once more moved in the City Hall and into the homes of the poor.”⁵⁰ City Hall was to extend the reach of public affairs into the private residences of the poor—seemingly contradicting the necessity for a wall of privacy around the family to constitute the home, which I will discuss below. Riis tells us that “it must be that the higher standards now set up on every hand, in the cleaner streets, in the better schools, in the parks and the clubs, in the settlements, and in the thousand and one agencies for good that touch and help the lives of the poor at as many points, will tell at no distant day, and react upon the homes and upon their builders.”⁵¹ These institutions were to not only engage in a pedagogy of class education and, eventually, assimilation; they were to implement processes of ‘Americanizing’ young immigrants.⁵² Because reformers had little institutional jurisdiction over adults, they focused primarily on a longer-term project of bringing up a younger generation in their image.⁵³

Enabling the home to take root in the city was a long-term project; Riis knew that it required an investment of time. In *How the Other Half Lives*, he introduces the importance of investing in the children of the poor, which he significantly expands upon in a later volume. “Nothing is now better understood than that the rescue of the children is the key to the problem of city poverty, as presented for our solution to-day; that *a character may be formed where to reform it would be a hopeless task.*”⁵⁴ He takes up this theme of social formation in his second book *Children of the Poor* which he published

⁵⁰ Riis, *Battle*, 75.

⁵¹ Riis, *Battle*, 53.

⁵² Riis, *Children*, 51.

⁵³ Though, he does note here that some institutions, i.e., churches, have the ability to inspire a certain cleanliness in its older members, though not as a systemic way of life.

⁵⁴ Riis, *Other Half*, 139.

two years later in 1892 and then a decade later with *Children of the Tenements* (1903).⁵⁵ His goal was not only to describe the problems of poor children but to participate in shaping them to be ‘proper’ members of society. Thus he published a series of volumes for child audiences—*Nibsy’s Christmas, Is there a Santa Claus?, Hero Tales of the Far North, Christmas Stories* (the last two being posthumously collected)—because he felt that children’s education and reading are useful tools for society to mold its younger members. He has a well-developed sense of ideology and perpetuation of hegemony.

The investment in future urban generations sometimes required breaking up the existing family to properly instill the middle class values necessary for a Christian home. When lauding two pioneering, powerful agents “in this work of moral and physical regeneration,”⁵⁶ he cites two agencies in Five Points (whose mid-century rowdiness and prominence in the Draft Riots is portrayed in Martin Scorsese’s film *Gangs of New York*)—the Five Points Mission and the Five Points House of Industry, whose programs targeted tens of thousands of children to rescue them “from homes of brutality and desolation.”⁵⁷ This model of social change required interventions which removed children from their parents to place them in the care, and often residence, of the reforming agency. Here the middle class ‘noble women’ can effectively form the characters of these young. Jane Addams and Hull House served similar purposes in

⁵⁵ The greater ease of forming a character than reforming one is a refrain of his career. “Where it would have been—is—so easy to *form* character, we have been laboring with such infinite toil to *reform* it. It would have formed itself had we left the boy the home, for that is where character grows. The loss of it thrust a hundred problems upon us of finding props to take its place. All the labor of forty years has been directed to that end.” Riis, *Peril*, 181-2. The props include, the fresh air holidays, boys’ clubs, kindergarten, cooking class, the social settlement, etc. Riis, *Peril*, 182-187.

⁵⁶ Riis, *Other Half*, 146.

⁵⁷ Riis, *Other Half*, 146.

Chicago—shaping young children, especially those of immigrants, who did not know how to behave properly.⁵⁸

It appears that the immediate family had to sometimes be forsaken for reformers' hopes of instilling their family ideals. When the honest poor were identified, they could be fostered to help them understand how to set up their urban Christian home. But paupers were often beyond help—the next generation was the only hope.

The Flat and the Tenement: The Privacy of a Christian Home

Later, Riis brings up the pauper-honest poor distinction when criticizing the large presence of alms-seekers in the tenements. Alms-seeking, or begging as he considers it, is for him a disease or pestilence. While the honest poor avert this ailment, the tenement hovers over the alms-seeker, threatening to blot out the line dividing these two groups.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, even this distinction is still one of class—he distinguishes between those who work and those who believe “that the world owes him a living”.⁶⁰ He criticizes the begging pauper, claiming with Paul, “if any man will not work neither shall he eat.”⁶¹ Essentially, this line is that between the proletariat and the lumpen; for Riis, the rabble of the city are irredeemable. The lumpen residents of the tenement were not able to be assimilated into the bourgeois family ideal.

After distinguishing between the behaviors of the pauper and the honest poor, Riis turned to the spatial distinctions between those for whom the reformers could hope and those for whom there was none. The second of the secondary class distinctions—which

⁵⁸ See especially, Addams, *Spirit*. Here she discusses the necessity to properly guide the impulses of youth to avoid them misdirecting youth into vice.

⁵⁹ Riis, *Other Half*, 184-185.

⁶⁰ Riis, *Other Half*, 185.

⁶¹ Riis, *Other Half*, 184.

we noted above—is the flat. While Riis acknowledges that the law does not distinguish between the tenement and the flat, observation lets one identify the flat. He wrote:

A locked door is a strong point in favor of the flat. It argues that the first step has been taken to secure privacy, the absence of which is the chief curse of the tenement. Behind a locked door the hoodlum is not at home... There may be a tenement behind a closed door; but never a 'flat' without it. The hall that is a highway for all the world by night and by day is the tenement's proper badge. The Other Half ever receives with open doors."⁶²

A proper assurance of privacy for household is necessary to be on the right side of the social divide—the family must have its own space for Riis. He wants families to be able to protect their havens from the thieves and dirt which lurk in the dark, dank stairwells and hallways of the tenement.

In a corollary to this anxiety, household-based production comes in for a great deal of criticism.⁶³ As we shall see in more detail in the next section, the home is to be a place for the family altar—it becomes a space for private worship set off from the concerns of the world. Riis could not want the family altar to be sullied by a tailoring or cigar-rolling workshop. Beyond the violation of domestic sanctity, the house-based sweatshop brought unmarried men and women into unfortunately close proximity.⁶⁴ Of equally great concern to Riis—and for similar moral anxieties—was the presence of lodgers. Before its time, Riis wants the family to be nuclear. Riis declares, “It is idle to speak of privacy in these ‘homes’ [with lodgers]. The term carries no more meaning with

⁶² Riis, *Other Half*, 120.

⁶³ See for example, Riis, *Children*, 38ff.

⁶⁴ “I have the authority of a distinguished rabbi, whose field and daily walk are among the poorest of his people, to support me in the statement that the moral tone of the young girls is distinctly lower than it was. The entire absence of privacy in their homes and the foul contact of the sweaters' shops, where men and women work side by side from morning till night, scarcely half clad in the hot summer weather, does for the girls what the street completes in the boy [that is, corrupt their morals].” Riis, *Children*, 43.

it than would a lecture on social ethics to an audience of Hottentots.”⁶⁵ Placing ‘home’ in scare quotes, indicates the absurdity of the idea of a home without privacy. Privacy is necessary to form a family, but the hands of reform can violate it, especially when the immigrant parent does not know what is in the child’s best interest.

The line between order and disorder is first and foremost that line between the tenement and the unnamed rest of the city—those sections where the quarter of the middle class and plutocratic populations reside. This division, however, must be broached to extend the reach of order ever further. Thus, secondary divisions identify the populations most easily assimilated into normative expectations of order, and so a series of binaries unfold to reveal the easily recuperated and the forsaken other: honest poor/pauper, flat/tenement, clean/dirty, private/public. Riis semantically arranges and divides the city’s residents into those who have preserved or imperiled the home and then further subdivides the imperilers into those who can be taught the values of home and those who cannot. In his classifications, Riis identifies the proper targets and processes for other processes of ordering—rationalization of the city targets these more assimilable groups. For the others, he proposes to target the children to make them into good Americans who know how to value cleanliness, family, and privacy—in short, to teach them the virtues of home.

Rationalizing the City

For Riis and his fellow fin-de-siècle social commentators, a home can only flourish where the family has its own space, not space that doubles as a tailor’s shop, a textile sweatshop, or a washerwoman’s workplace. For them, the relegation of the Other

⁶⁵ Riis, *Other Half*, 101.

Half to the homelessness of tenement life can only be reversed through creating conditions for an urban home. The home, or the family, is the solution to the slum. Riis was not the first to elevate family to its central role in social structure. Over the middle decades of the nineteenth century, home and family emerged as great concerns. The home came to represent a microcosm of social order; it was both a model of and a model for ordering the city.

The mid-century elevation of the home is most clearly seen in the work of Catherine Beecher, who wrote two books that outlined the ideal of the Christian home. This ideal for the proper space (and behaviors) of a family came with practical suggestions of how one could cultivate such a home. As with the discourse on homelessness, the constitution of a Christian home is first a way to talk about the ideal way to order a family, and then it becomes a social project.

The Christian Home as Model and Tool of Order

Beecher's 1841 book *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* was subtitled *for the use of Young Ladies at Home, and at School*. By the time she wrote an enlarged edition with her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1869, she reversed the title sequence: *The American Woman's Home: or, Principles of Domestic Science; Being a Guide to the Formation and Maintenance of Economical, Healthful, Beautiful, and Christian Homes*—the woman's home had become more important than domestic science; domestic science is now for the purpose of forming a Christian home, whereas the home had earlier merely been the location of domestic concerns. In its new role as the end and not a means for implementing a domestic economy, home was now of central importance—it receives a

double mention in the later edition; the science of domesticity takes a secondary position. With this now greater importance placed on the idea of home in the later edition, the sisters introduce a new concept to the Beecher/Stowe consensus—homelessness. In the later 1869 edition, they replaced the chapter “On Social Duties” with a new one entitled “Care of the Homeless, the Helpless, and the Vicious.” Beecher and Stowe do not define ‘homeless’; in fact, they do not use the term anywhere in the chapter—only in the title.

Homelessness was still at this time an ill-defined term used to discuss a range of social problems; it is not until twentieth-century social scientists start to use the term that it begins to take on a technical meaning for a clearly defined population. For the Beecher sisters, the homeless were presumably those who either did not or could not cultivate a Christian home. They do discuss some of these homeless social types—pauper and criminal classes, fallen women, and orphan children, as well as tenement dwellers. Their remedies for these ‘homeless’ are to place them with Christian families. They cite a report from the Massachusetts Board of State Charities: “[T]he report suggests that a better way [to help] would be to scatter these unfortunates from temporary receiving asylums into families of Christian people all over the State.”⁶⁶ To end homelessness, place these homeless individuals into families with a Christian home. The dialectics of homelessness to the Christian home are made explicit here—the Christian home is the antidote to homelessness.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Catharine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home: or, Principles of Domestic Science; Being a Guide to the Formation and Maintenance of Economical, Healthful, Beautiful, and Christian Homes* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 434.

⁶⁷ “The hardest work of all is to restore a guilty, selfish, hardened spirit to honor, truth, and purity; and this is the divine labor to which the pitying Saviour calls all his true followers; to lift up the fallen, to sustain the weak, to protect the tempted, to bind up the broken-hearted, and especially to rescue the sinful. This is the peculiar privilege of woman in the sacred retreat of a ‘Christian home.’” Beecher and Stowe, 433.

Beyond constituting homelessness as a condition antagonistic to the Christian home, the Beecher-Stowe explanations for the ‘care of the homeless, the helpless, and vicious’ establish many assumptions which are subsequently taken up in the discourse on homelessness. First, their discussion of homelessness turns specifically to urban problems, in particular those of New York City. Second, the Christian family is both that which is preserved through the proper domestic arrangements and practices and the means of ameliorating the problem of homelessness. And third, their plans include a caring space for a Christian dwelling inside the city to combat the homelessness of the city. Their solution includes the schematics for a Christian flat, as well as a model for construction of a Christian neighborhood. The slum was a mission field that had to be ordered for Christian homes to be able to flourish. The parameters of the eventual discourse on homelessness are outlined in a manual on constituting the Christian home—homelessness becomes that which threatens the family. But through proper planning and structuring the city—the Beecher sisters tell us, the metropolis could be made safe for Christian home; it did not have to be relegated to its urban homelessness. The influence of the Christian family, according to them, was the true instrument of gospel propagation in the formation of a Christian neighborhood;⁶⁸ a properly ordered Christian home could become the foundation for ordering the rest of the community.

As we have seen, Riis makes similar diagnoses and prescriptions for the city—making the city safe for the ‘sacred retreat’ of the Christian home is the proper way to order the metropolis. In Riis’s model of the Christian home each family member has a proper role. The family that constitutes a home is not just any family, but one with a ‘proper’ female center. As we also saw with Beecher and Stowe, a home requires a

⁶⁸ Beecher and Stowe, Ch. XXXVIII.

woman; the American woman is necessary for the “*Formation and Maintenance of Economical, Healthful, Beautiful, and Christian Homes.*” When diagnosing what he thought was wrong with one particular tenement group, Riis calls for a wider opening of the immigrant door in the Chinese community to include the wife of the ‘Chinaman’. “Then, at least, he might not be what he now is and remains, a homeless stranger.”⁶⁹ For him, a female presence as wife or mother is necessary to form the home.

And not just any woman—certain expectations of femininity, certain obeisance to familial expectations and domesticity must be fulfilled. The family cannot bring order to the city, if it is not properly ordered. Riis wants women and children to know their proper place in the family, and only then can the family bring a stability to the volatility in tenement social life. Before improvements by the Tenement House Commission, the old Mulberry Bend, according to Riis, ‘harbored the very dregs of humanity.’ It was “pierced by a maze of foul alleys, in the depths of which skulked the tramp and the outcast thief with loathsome wrecks that had *once laid claim to the name of a woman.* Every foot of it reeked with incest and murder.”⁷⁰ Likewise, in his discussion of stale-beer dives, Riis notes that “to the women—unutterable horror of the suggestion—the place is free”⁷¹ such women who patronize these establishments do not fulfill womanly responsibilities. Stephanie Golden⁷² has noted Riis’s revulsion at a woman serving in an illegal stale-beer dive; he dismisses her as “a sallow, wrinkled hag, evidently the ruler of the feast, [who] dealt out the hideous stuff.”⁷³ To be a ‘woman’, requires certain dress, certain behavior,

⁶⁹ Riis, *Other Half*, 81. The early Chinese male immigrant as a threat to home and the sanctity of white, middle class American women is a long-standing cultural trope. Its most recent appearance was in the 2002 Broadway adaptation of the 1960s film *Thoroughly Modern Millie*.

⁷⁰ Riis, *Battle*, 40.

⁷¹ Riis, *Other Half*, 61.

⁷² Golden, 126ff.

⁷³ Riis, *Other Half*, 60.

certain social place. A home can only emerge with a ‘woman’ as the foundation of the family usually in the role of mother. The expected female role seems to slide toward the maternal role of woman, not her conjugal one in part because the reform efforts target children and thus necessitate a proper mother. She is, in the language of the Beecher sisters be the “Chief Minister of the Family Estate.”⁷⁴

A woman not imbricated in the formation of a family is suspect and, we shall see later, is rendered homeless. To rescue the home and family, the mother must be in her proper spot: “Everywhere, consciously or unconsciously, the movement is in the air, and growing, to rescue the home from neglect, to put a stop to child-labor and to home-work that would exclude the family life; the movement to send mother and children back to the home where they are safe.”⁷⁵ Beyond women observing their proper role in the family, Riis also introduces another necessary condition for constituting a Christian home.

Another necessary condition for home includes children fulfilling their role as child. Everyone has a proper place and must act according to their social location. “The problem of the children is the problem of the State,” Riis tells us in the opening line of *The Children of the Poor*. The State must intervene to ensure that children are able to be children. The State can ensure no child labor,⁷⁶ the dissemination of lessons of cleanliness, creation of parks, zoning and building ordinances, and other social improvements to create a space in which children can be children. Yet, despite the State’s “interest in the child as a future citizen,”⁷⁷ the State insufficiently enforces its ordinances precluding factory labor for those under fourteen years of age; an unintended

⁷⁴ Beecher and Stow, Ch.I.

⁷⁵ Riis, *Peril*, 187-188.

⁷⁶ For instance, see Riis, *Children*, 92-117; Riis, *Battle*, 31.

⁷⁷ Riis, *Children*, 92.

consequence of these child labor laws was the production of poor perjurers.⁷⁸ The necessity of the child's contribution to family income is scarcely addressed and only tangentially so when it is. "These are the children whose backs we have been loading with the heredity of the slum, of ignorance, of homelessness."⁷⁹ Riis, Addams, and the broader bourgeois reform movement used policy, social work, and institutions in addition to their semantic ordering of the city to form children who understood the concepts of home and family.

The influence of a family in a proper Christian home provided the greatest reach of the gospel into society. To order the city, a proper sense of domestic space, relationships, and habits had to be instilled into the urban poor. The Christian home became an ideal of how family life was to be structured. But then this ideal became an instrument of ordering; if home life could be restored to the city, its influence might spread. This hope of fin-de-siècle reformers became the basis of many reform efforts.

Reform and Social Order

In his calls for reform, Riis sought moderation; his solutions were to be a *via media* to tweak a status quo in the name of self-defense. We saw that he did not call for a return to the country—he brought elements of country life into the city. He does not want to undo the economics of the industrial city to alleviate social problems; rather, he wants to involve business interests and have them become the agents of reform. The Bread or Blood riots, the Draft Riot, the Haymarket Riot, and the Paris Commune had all stoked enormous fears of the violent potential of the homeless city. Fin-de-siècle activists hoped

⁷⁸ Ibid., 93.

⁷⁹ For instance, see Riis, *Peril*, 180.

that reforming the city could avert those problems, and perhaps spread the influence of the Christian home.

A first step to change the lives of the tenement dwellers was to make housing affordable. Riis wanted to change the cost of housing for the poor by reducing the income potential of landlords. Rather than addressing the underlying problem of insufficient wages, he asks for a curb to profit margins. He is suitably horrified when meeting with a 'respectable, Christian' garment business owner who explains that his business plan is predicated upon a policy of alienation. The owner presents his plan for division of labor, not for purposes of efficiency but for the purpose of exploiting worker ignorance to keep wages down and to prevent worker attrition. He purposely requires that each sewer have one specialty and makes sure that his sewers do not know each other—the garment sections are sewed in homes, so the workers do not come together in a factory. Thus, no one knows the entire process of assembling a garment, and he, thus, protects his interest by ensuring that the employees cannot leave him to make garments on their own.⁸⁰ While Riis is appalled by this admission (and the pride which the owner takes at his ingenuity), the business practice does not mean for Riis that there is something wrong with the economic system. Business created the problem and so will furnish its own solutions; he does not entertain possibilities that might harm business.

The business of housing the poor, if it is to amount to anything, must be business, as it was business with our fathers to put them where they are. As charity, pastime, or fad, it will miserably fail, always and everywhere. This is an inexorable rule...It must be a fair exchange of the man's money for what he can afford to buy at a reasonable price. Any charity scheme merely turns him into a pauper, however it may be disguised, and drowns

⁸⁰ See Riis, *Peril*.

him hopelessly in the mire out of which it proposed to pull him. And this principle must pervade the whole plan.⁸¹

Like some much more radical later activists, e.g., Dorothy Day, he argues against charity.

It produces paupers, who are those whom we saw Riis earlier juxtaposing against the

honest poor. These presumably dishonest products of alms-giving are the tribe of

Ishmael⁸²—in the next section, we will return to the significance of Ishmaelites in the

discourse on homelessness. When he shifts to discussing ‘pauperdom’, his rhetoric also

shifts: the Other Half becomes the Nether Half.⁸³

While Riis dismisses the nether half as the ‘wrecks and the waste,’⁸⁴ he does want to focus reform efforts on the other half. He even proposes justice as the corrective of charity,⁸⁵ much like the more radical attempts to implement Catholic social teaching.⁸⁶

However, his sense of justice remains entirely committed to business furnishing business solutions.⁸⁷ He diagnoses that the dangerous classes come not “from the poverty of the

⁸¹ Riis, *Other Half*, 201. Also, he argues that private enterprise must do lion’s share and must make it unprofitable to own a bad tenement. Riis, *Other Half*, 210-211.

⁸² Riis, *Other Half*, 183.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 191. This Nether Half, I argue, invokes the diabolic connections of wandering. Not only does he use a term which conveys an explicit reference to the lowest levels of existence and evokes ideas of the netherworld. He also claims that the Nether Half hides its deformity—a probable reference to a cloven foot. Diabolic connections to wandering are long-lived. For instance, see Daniel Defoe, *The History of the Devil* (Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972). In the next section, we will see that the diabolical underpinnings of both the idea of wandering and anti-Semitism remain latent within this discourse on homelessness.

⁸⁴ Riis, *Other Half*, 191.

⁸⁵ Riis, *Other Half*, 196.

⁸⁶ “Meanwhile, philanthropy is not sitting idle and waiting. It is building tenements on the humane plan that lets in sunshine and air and hope. It is putting up hotels deserving of the name for the army that but just now had no other home than the cheap lodging houses which Inspector Byrnes [Chief of detectives from 1880-1895] fitly called ‘nurseries of crime.’ These also are standards from which there is no backing down, even if coming up to them is slow work: and they are here to stay, for they pay. That is the test. Not charity, but justice,—that is the gospel which they preach.” Riis, *Battle*, 54.

⁸⁷ His arguments for justice are still motivated by fear; he believes that if a more just system is not set up, there will be violent upheaval. He criticized a report from the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor which expresses the fear “that reform may come in a burst of public indignation destructive to property and to good morals.” He argued against this report, “They represented one solution of the problem of ignorant poverty *versus* ignorant wealth that has come down to us unsolved, the danger-cry of which we have lately heard in the shout that never should have been raised on American soil—the shout of ‘the masses against the classes’—the solution of violence. There is another solution, that of justice. The choice is between the two. Which shall it be?” Riis, *Other Half*, 196.

tenements, but from the ill-spent wealth that reared them, that it might earn a usurious interest from a class from which ‘nothing else was expected.’”⁸⁸ His solution then ignores the workers’ demands for better wages, or the later Catholic Worker’s proposal for work not wages; he merely contends that business should slightly adjust earnings forecasts downward, but should not give charity. For Riis, the restoration of urban order in partnership with business interests can provide a way for the middle class to assimilate the Other Half; the poor will be able to access a Christian home. His ideas for reform stabilize urban life, not threatens the social order. The idea of the Christian home can be a model to help dispel the city’s homelessness—the home can survive among the poor, as long as the urban landscape and housing can foster a family and the members of the household know how to behave as a Christian family.

Twelve years after he published *How the Other Half Lives*, Riis claims that he was right—the idea of home can survive in the poor sections of town. One must partner with business interests; he still envisions a system of justice in which the poor are not agents. The changes—housing law, land reclamation for parks, reducing the return on investment—all happen at the discretion of bourgeois reformers.

It almost looks, does it not, as if it were a question then whether a man will take seven per cent. in providing for his brother and save his soul, or twenty-five per cent. and lose it?⁸⁹ It is odd that there should be people willing to make the latter bargain, but since there are such, you might almost say that our fight with the slum is a kind of missionary effort to compel them to take seven per cent. and save their souls in spite of themselves.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Riis, *Other Half*, 197.

⁸⁹ Initially, he seems to call for five per cent. Riis, *Other Half*, 198. Perhaps, he comes to realize that business investors need more than that, so he ups it to seven in his later book.

⁹⁰ Riis, *Peril*, 130.

He goes on to cite an example of a landlord who has undertaken such a ‘missionary effort’ and thus ‘made it possible’ for his tenants to have homes. The burden to enable the poor to move out of urban homelessness falls to the middle class reformers—they have the ability to ensure the maintenance of social order.

Essentially, Riis wants to transform the poor in the *imago burgensis*. He wants a full-scale adaptation of the style of life without addressing any underlying economic conditions. This mimetic transformation, of course, cannot produce exact replicas; the poor cannot actually afford the lifestyle. Nonetheless, the reformers’ hopes are that the financially underprivileged can at least comport with the air of the more genteel. The transformations necessary for this plan are two-fold: a change in the physical structure of the city and a change in the consciousness of the poor. While Riis would have ideally liked a full-fledged, state-sponsored Haussmannization of New York to transform the cityscape,⁹¹ Riis realizes that he is no longer in Europe. He will have to rely on the markets to gradually adapt the municipal infrastructure. “Business, in a wider sense, has done more than all other agencies together to wipe out the worst tenements. It has been New York’s real Napoleon III, from whose decree there was no appeal.”⁹² Riis would have envied the public/private partnership which restructured New York City a century later to make Times Square ‘family-friendly’ by displacing the indigent to replace them with suburban megastores. For the fin-de-siècle reformers, business was to provide the necessary urban changes to ensure a well-defended public and the maintenance of social order.

⁹¹ “[New York] has often sadly missed a Napoleon III, to clean up and make light in the dark corners.” Riis, *Other Half*, 199.

⁹² Riis, *Other Half*, 201.

The goal of Haussmann and Riis was a bourgeois self-preservation. The violent potential of the Other Half was the reformers' primary concern with social ills—Riis certainly acknowledge the centrality of self-preservation: “Clearly there is reason for the sharp attention given at last to the life and the doings of the other half, too long unconsidered. Philanthropy we call it sometimes with patronizing airs. Better call it self-defence.”⁹³ For him, reform was a choice between either justice or the violence of the masses.⁹⁴ He was not the only one who called for social services to avert an explosion of the “the embers of social hatred [that] have been smouldering in the vagrant class.”⁹⁵ Unlike Paris's state-sponsored reworking of the city to minimize the threat of a marauding vagrant class, New York must fall back onto the market to furnish solutions.

His call for social services and businesses to help improve urban life would have been fruitless had he not defined the problems. Riis framed the issues confronting the city, defined the populations involved, identified those parties who needed to act, and outlined the actions necessary to combat the homeless city. Reformers' efforts were made possible by his outlining of the problems of the city as the tensions between the Christian home and urban homelessness. The rationalization of the city required spatial and institutional practices which arose from the discursive efforts to bring order to the city. In his central role in the discourse on homelessness, he established the problems of the city as the problem of homelessness.

⁹³ Riis, *Children*, 1-2.

⁹⁴ See note 87.

⁹⁵ Laubach, 5. Laubach goes on to draw historical parallels to the French Revolution to make his case for the potential violence. “How pernicious the influence of his vast army of vagrants might become, should the class struggle develop, is suggested by the following description of conditions just before the French Revolution.” Laubach then cites a long passage from Taine's “L'Ancien Régime” in which he describes vagabond vermin as a criminal element who “were the leaders or supernumeraries of the Revolution.” Laubach, 6. Taine's conclusions are the same ones reached by Stoddard, Riis, et al., about the New York City riots—criminal elements with no justifiable social critique.

This homelessness of the city emerged through a broader project of bourgeois reform which brought spatial and institutional ordering alongside a semantic one. Jacob Riis's writings and lectures did much to define what that order should be and how it could be implemented. The dialectical structure of the category homeless (as a negation of home) and of the most popular text in this nascent formation of the discourse on homelessness (*How the Other Half Lives*) established this homeless space and population as the other to an implicit norm. The norm was the bourgeois family and its location in a Christian home—the proper foundation for a social order. The *Gemeinschaft*-ideal was thought to be the soil in which the Christian home could most easily flourish, so elements of small town life were imported to the city to try to create the possibility of Christian neighborhoods.

At this early stage, the discourse on homelessness began to set the parameters for social reform and for social science's subsequent work on the city. Manichean splits embedded in the language of the other—between home/homeless, immigrant/native—provided a framework for the subsequent discourse on homelessness. In this fin-de-siècle era, this concept of homelessness shifted from being primarily an attribute of the city to one of people. The descriptions of those residents of the Other half of the city were insufficient to other people. Thus, in this fin-de-siècle development of the discourse on homelessness, urban commentators developed a new way to describe these people—they turned to myth.

Section Two: Anti-Semitic Roots of Homelessness: Myth, Exile and Radicals in American Homelessness

When fin-de-siècle journalists and activists wrote about the problems of the new metropolis, the newness of social conditions presented them with difficulties. There were not standard ways to talk about the city, its new population, and the social lives emerging there. Having divided their understanding of the population into two halves—the tenement dwellers and the bourgeoisie, Riis, and many others, turned to longstanding traditions of othering to help explain characteristics of those urban residents whom they considered to be homeless. A set of binaries to other populations beyond the normative social expectations was readily available from Anti-Semitic traditions and their theological antecedent of anti-Judaism. These early writes whose work gave rise to the discourse on homelessness often fell back onto such traditions. At times of great social upheaval, anti-Semitism and myth have both been frequently deployed as a means to legitimate certain social practices and exclude others.

In this section, we look at the way that anti-Semitic tropes were used in writings about the city and urban life, before we turn to how these function as myth in the next section. In this section, we look at six intertwining strands of anti-Semitic images and ideas prevalent in the long fin-de-siècle period: Cain, Ishmael, the Wandering Jew, exile, the Simmelian stranger, and radicals and hobos. In the fin-de-siècle period, these traditions and characteristics are not joined together into a composite image, rather they provide a loose constellation of ideas which are taken up into the social science discourse on homelessness, which we will see in the next chapter. The turn to anti-Semitic traditions was abetted by the large migrations of Central and Eastern European Jews to New York in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

When the American civil rights activist Jesse Jackson called New York City ‘Hymie Town’ during his 1984 presidential campaign, he invoked a longstanding association between New York City and its Jewish populations, a tradition which has produced monikers like ‘Jew York’. Woody Allen’s paranoid cinematic alter ego in *Annie Hall* identified anti-Semitism as the reason that the rest of the country failed to support New York City. While New York City may have the largest Jewish population of any city in the world after Tel Aviv, New York is, nonetheless, not a predominately Jewish city. Nathan Glazer’s and Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s 1960s study *Beyond the Melting Pot* recognized the limits of Anglo-conformist assimilationist ideals by describing the plurality of the city’s regions. (New York is equally known for its Italian, Irish, Puerto Rican, African-American and increasingly its burgeoning South Asian populations.)

This pluralism began to emerge during the large waves of immigration in the last decades of the nineteenth century. These migrations—combined with large-scale domestic movements from the country to the city—brought new populations to a city bursting to accommodate these millions thronging to fulfill the labor demands of America’s urban industrialization. As we have seen, the slums—their squalor and poverty—came to be considered homeless and New York (the American city with the greatest profusion of slums) a homeless city.

In the bourgeois discourse on homelessness, I argue, home—in particular the ‘Christian home’—was a this-worldly transcendence. It provided a model for middle class norms, and as we have seen Colleen McDannell point out, the ideal presented the

“Victorian home as eternal and God-given.”⁹⁶ A Protestant middle class faced with urbanizing social upheavals crystallized its concerns about collapsing social structures on the family, which became a metonym for the organic bonds of community. The modern city was the carrier and location of this rootlessness. A dual response to legitimize the family in face of this onslaught of modernization endorsed the Christian home ideal versus the othering of urban displacement. The other in this polarity—an emerging homeless figure—becomes a repository for anxieties about modernization.

Because ‘the Jew’ had such a long tradition as a quintessential other in Western culture, anti-Semitic tropes furnished a series of images easily appropriated by fin-de-siècle social commentators critiquing the homelessness of the city. Anti-Semitic motifs provided symbols for and structures of representing homelessness. While taxonomies frequently distinguish religious anti-Judaism—including traditions such as Christian supersession, allegations of deicide, blood libel, etc.—from modern anti-Semitism, which is predicated upon the identification of the Jewish people as a racial group, this dichotomy is inadequate for my analysis. Sander Gilman and Steven Katz argue that this traditional view fails to understand the nineteenth century secularization of religious models in the biological sciences; they argue that the racialized pathologies attributed to Jews in the newer anti-Semitic categories were secularizations of older tropes from the religious traditions.⁹⁷

My argument, however, is slightly different than this secularization thesis; I contend that these ‘ancient’ tropes invoked by fin-de-siècle urban commentators are already modern; these anti-Semitic tropes were not for the purpose of disparaging the

⁹⁶ McDannell, 173.

⁹⁷ Sander L. Gilman and Steven T. Katz, “Introduction,” *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, eds. Sander L. Gilman and Steven T. Katz (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 1-2.

Jewish people—they were a means to criticize the modern metropolis. The old stories, tropes, and images were brought into modern settings and not left to be analyzed in themselves as a theological argument. I look at the Wandering Jew in nineteenth century New York, the mark of Cain staining the fin-de-siècle urban tenement and Rachel weeping for her children of the Lower East Side. These tropes are inflected by the modern anti-Semitic discourses (which may, à la the secularization thesis, have derived from the theological tradition). In this discourse, the anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic tropes have become so intermingled that the distinctions cannot be sustained.⁹⁸

A corollary of this claim is that the former theological tropes have become myth—they have become a mode of cultural representation rather than explicitly demanding a faith commitment. When reformers used biblical tropes in their social project, they did not elicit inspirational introspection; they used the tropes as a cultural mode of argument or representation. As I will discuss in more detail in the next section, I use the category myth to identify those images which are used as cultural forms and not as explicitly religious discourse. Unmoored from religious dogma or practice, the tropes lose their pre-modern grounding (becoming signifiers emptied of their institutional imperatives while retaining some of their ideological function) and so writers are able to easily assimilate the tropes to new loci with a modern overlay. Older religious symbols can become anti-Semitism (rather than anti-Judaic); commentators' invocation of these tropes in discussions of the city or tramping transforms these ancient images; they become representations of modern rejections of the Jewish people.

⁹⁸ I will, thus, use the term anti-Semitism to discuss these tropes, except for those few cases when I am talking explicitly about an ancient theological tradition.

In their study of anti-Semitism in times of crisis, Gilman and Katz have noted that anti-Semitism can be both paradigmatic and representative—both functions appear in the early discourse on homelessness.⁹⁹ By looking at six (often intertwined) strands of representation, I argue that anti-Semitic motifs were paradigmatic for the discourse on homelessness. Not each of the Jewish images is explicitly invoked in this discourse. Rather, these Jewish representations were prevalent at the time that a rhetoric of homelessness began to emerge. They were an integral part of the milieu of the discourse; they furnished a deep, underlying structure. The paradigm of anti-Semitism furnished both symbols for and structures of representation.

These tropes were (most often) deployed by the fin-de-siècle journalists and activists dedicated to ameliorating urban life; it drew upon a constellation of Jewish images to—in the language of one such reporter—determine ‘how the other half lives’. I identify six strands of discourse which form the conditions giving rise to the discourse on homelessness: Cain, Ishmael, the Wandering Jew, traditions of exile, the Simmelian stranger, and Jewish radicalism collapsed with hobo unions. Though never intertwining neatly into a unitary formation, these strands were the initial building-blocks for popular images of homelessness. Some particular tropes like Cain and the I.W.W. Jew appear in media counts. The structuring role of the anti-Semitic motifs occurs, at least partially, through some binaries readily appropriated for the process of establishing an Other—settled/unsettled; bourgeois/non-bourgeois, Christian/non-Christian, i.e., threats to family and social structure, the economy, and religion. Beyond these juxtapositions, the anti-Semitic motifs provide an underlying moral valuation. For example, the symbol of Cain, as a cultural form, carries traces of the theological and moral discourse from the Christian

⁹⁹ Gilman and Katz, 4-5.

tradition; the symbol carries the moral weight without compelling a faith commitment or religious practice. The previously theological trope of Cain becomes, in the hands of Jacob Riis or other Victorian writers, serves as a tool of social critique; they codified Victorian cultural assumptions about the family and the city. The differences established through these anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic images remains central to the discourse on homelessness.

The anti-Semitic images passed into relative obscurity when social science took over from journalists as the dominant institutional locus of the discourse. But urban sociologists did later take up many of the cultural attitudes distilled in these tropes. Fin-de-siècle social activists and journalists had invoked these mythic tropes to negotiate anxieties about the impact of urbanization; their responses to the city shaped much of the subsequent development of the discourse on homelessness.

But I here focus on the formation of this discourse—the symbols and structures of othering that give rise to a homeless figure. By focusing primarily on the intersections between print media and other popular forms like pulp fiction, pamphlets, and the literature of charity organizations in the long fin-de-siècle period, I demonstrate the anti-Semitic roots of the American discourse on homelessness.

Cain

The Biblical figure of Cain became a popular heuristic for representing urban slums and tramps. Christian anti-Judaic traditions have associated Cain with the Jewish people or the synagogue. Jacob Riis links this Cain tradition to the problems of the modern city, since Cain established the mythical first city to negotiate his forced

wandering from place and family. In the long history of the Cain tradition, he became emblematic of displacement and, through the anti-Judaic tradition, simultaneously represents a threat to Christianity.

Riis is not the only influential fin-de-siècle commentator turning to Cain to represent modern homelessness. In the country's first social welfare textbook, *American Charities*, Stanford professor Amos Warner inserts Cain in his discussion of "The Unemployed and Homeless Poor." For Warner, Cain is the precursor of "the homeless and wandering poor" who make their way through modern social service agencies.¹⁰⁰

Throughout the chapter he uses a range of terms in seemingly synonymous ways—tramp, beggar, mendicant, vagrant. He always uses 'homeless' adjectively to modify 'poor'. It is still a term of description, not a category of analysis. Warner looks around the globe (or at least across Europe) to complaints "of the curse of vagrancy" in his inquiries into the tramp.

¹⁰⁰ Amos Warner, *American Charities: A Study in Philanthropy and Economics* (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1894), 183. As the standard textbook for social work in its day, it continued into multiple editions over the next three decades and even, somewhat curiously, warranted a 1989 reprint edition with an introduction by historian of social work, Mary Jo Deegan. By the time of a posthumously revised edition in 1919, the book was already seeming quite dated. "The book is hardly of sufficient contemporary interest for the general reader, but for the social worker it is instructive and entertaining—and somewhat bewildering...One puts down this book with the sense that admirable as were the motives of the revisor in devotedly attempting to perpetuate the memory of a pioneer in social work, the net result falls short of justice to a man who was a progressive spirit in his time and who if he had lived today would have written a book radically different from anything that can be made out of his work of a generation ago." From an unsigned review in *The Dial*, Vol LXVII, Aug 23, 1919, 164. Unfortunately, the hordes clamoring for *compassionate conservatism* are unable to see the datedness of the book that was already quite evident within a couple of decades of its initial publication. Marvin Olasky—the former American Enterprise Institute Fellow who derived the late twentieth-century concept of *compassionate conservatism* from figures like Riis, likewise greets the work of Warner with encomiums. Olasky concludes that the lessons of *American Charities* is: "The goal of charity workers, therefore, was not to press for governmental programs, but to show poor people how to move up while resisting enslavement to the charity of governmental or private masters. Charity leaders and preachers frequently spoke of freedom and showed how dependency was merely slavery with a smiling mask." Marvin Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion* (Washington: Regnery Gateway, 1992), 100. This foundational text of social work, thus, like Riis, gives rise to a discourse of home, family and homelessness which generations later emerges as our contemporary rhetoric of family values.

If, instead of extending our inquiries geographically, we had extended them historically, we should have found the same complaint of an exceptionally large number of wandering beggars made in nearly every age of which we have a record; and it has been suggested that if, just as we look for proto-martyrs, we should look for the proto-tramp, we should find him near the beginning of history in the person of Cain.¹⁰¹

The first point of interest here is that the idea of looking for a proto-tramp is modeled on the practice of searching for a protomartyr—with this search, Warner establishes the modernity of Cain. This quest is not a dredging to satisfy antiquarian curiosity; rather, the protomartyr inspiration refers to attempts to understand the modern world.¹⁰² As a model for his own query, the modernity of the quest for a protomartyr points to the modernity of Warner's own problem—the tramp. Moving between the ancient mythic trope of Cain and modern homelessness, Warner acknowledges “it cannot be asserted that even in the domain of trampery there is nothing new under the sun.”¹⁰³ Changes in transportation created a modern character for the vagabond; this modern component is what makes the tramp the greatest threat to family. Because of new means of mobility, “[i]t is increasingly easy for men to get away from their *duties to families and neighbors*, and it is getting to be easier to wander than to work.”¹⁰⁴ As for Riis, the threat of wandering is the possible breakdown of community responsibilities. Because he juxtaposes ‘neighbors’ to wandering, Warner connects duties to the people in a particular

¹⁰¹ Warner, 182-183.

¹⁰² He does not refer to historical identifications of the apostle Stephen as the Christian protomartyr; for this recognition was longstanding—no one need look for this protomartyr. Rather, the protomartyr inspiration refers to attempts to understand the modern world. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, new political and social movements identified their protomartyrs as part of grounding modern movements and ideas. For instance, nineteenth-century Princeton philosopher and historian Charles Woodruff Shields identified Arnold of Brescia as the “proto-martyr of civil liberty;” or eighteenth-century poet Samuel Boyse wrote of “Hampden firm assertor of her laws, And protomartyr in the glorious cause.” See Charles Woodruff Shields, *The Final Philosophy, or System of Perfectible Knowledge Issuing from the Harmony of Science and Religion* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1877), 205; or Samuel Boyse, “The Triumphs of Nature,” in *Gentleman's Magazine* 12, 1749, 324.

¹⁰³ Warner, 183.

¹⁰⁴ Warner, 183.

place. Vagrant mobility threatens community bonds; a modern Cain represents the threats of displacement which have come with modernization.

A second point of interest in the Warner passage is his methodological turn. He first does a contemporary comparative analysis, briefly looking at tramps in Germany, Russia, etc., but trying to understand the tramp within the means of his day seems inadequate to him. Thus, he turns the axis of analysis from the synchronic comparison of a spatial axis to a diachronic one of historical contextualization. Somehow the newness of the condition—the new modes of transportation and the threats to social institutions like the family—point to an insufficiency of late nineteenth-century America to account for the homeless poor. Thus, Warner finds tramps transcending their present day; they are lurking in the Ur-violence at the ‘beginning of history’. Warner’s citation of Cain, thus, evokes multiple things—criminality (or homicide),¹⁰⁵ familial destruction, and wandering; these threats are many of the attributes that become associated with the homelessness of the city.

While Warner’s Cain distills distinct fears or threats to society, for Riis, Cain is more. Over nearly a decade-and-a-half, Riis’s works continually invoke the Cain story—in *How the Other Half Lives*, his contribution to *My Brother and I*, and in 1903’s *The Peril and the Preservation of the Home*. Riis makes recourse to Cain (and other tropes) to represent a range of threats to family norms by symbolizing anxieties about domestic arrangements, moral laxity, and laziness, especially among the urban poor; the

¹⁰⁵ Kenneth Kusmer in his recent history of homelessness, invokes Amos Warner’s idea of Cain as a proto-tramp to explain the idea that the “vagabond life is depicted as synonymous with a life of crime.” See Kusmer, 44 and 263, n.25. With the emergence of the post-Civil War tramp in the 1870’s and 1880’s, criminality and immigrant background, along with laziness, were perceived as major aspects of the homeless man. Kusmer, 46.

responsibility to be a brother's keeper, involves molding the poor in the image of the middle class.

Riis opens his analysis of the Other Half (after a brief introduction) with a discussion of the origin of the tenement. "The first tenement New York knew bore the mark of Cain from its birth, though a generation passed before the writing was deciphered. It was the 'rear house,' infamous ever after in our city's history."¹⁰⁶ A particular focus of Riis's harangues, the rear tenements were encircled by other buildings with little space for light or air, which marked them for respiratory problems, disease, and death, as well as criminality or "a proletariat ready and able to avenge the wrongs of their crowds."¹⁰⁷

Eventually eliminated by establishing municipal housing codes, the rear tenement became emblematic to Riis of the worst of urban tenement life.¹⁰⁸ He cites a report from the Society for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor that concluded about the inhabitability of the rear tenement. The report said: "Crazy old buildings, crowded rear tenements in filthy yards, dark, damp basements, leaking garrets, shops, outhouses and stales converted into dwellings, though scarcely fit to shelter brutes, are habitations of thousands of our fellow-beings in this wealthy, Christian city."¹⁰⁹ This nadir of the city bore Cain's mark. And this mark served more than mere rhetorical flourish for Riis. The Cain story is integral to both his view of the city and his response to it. Cain, for Riis, marks the tenement; the tenements comprise the slums. New York is homeless because of this accumulation of slums. "The slum is the enemy of the home. Because of it the chief

¹⁰⁶ Riis, *Other Half*, 9.

¹⁰⁷ Riis, *Other Half*, 17.

¹⁰⁸ Riis, *Other Half*, Ch.1.

¹⁰⁹ Riis, *Other Half*, 16.

city of our land came long ago to be called ‘The Homeless City.’”¹¹⁰ He links Cain—the mythical founder of the first city—to the problems of the modern city. Yet, Cain’s importance emerges more profoundly elsewhere in Riis’s work.

In his *The Peril and the Preservation of the Home*, the Genesis story informs both the former (peril) and latter (preservation) formulations. Riis identifies “*the* weak spot, in your campaign for the home—that home which all the influences of the modern day combine to put in peril. I mean the disappearance of the family altar.”¹¹¹ Two important points emerge in this diagnosis. First, the home is under threat from modern life. He continues to elaborate on this point by delineating some of the causes of the destruction of the home.¹¹² But Riis’s second point about the family altar invokes Cain. First, the Cain story is the first place where family devotions and an altar are established. Second, popular commentaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, e.g., Matthew Henry’s Commentary, relate Cain’s actions to shunning of the family and the altar. Despite the ‘family altar’ evoking a 1950s Ozzie and Harriet household with a Bible devotion around the dinner table, the altar was initially a place for the violent slaughtering of an animal (since Cain’s lack of blood was an unacceptable offering).

In Riis’s work, the Cain story also provides suggestions for the preservation of the home by an affirmative answer to Cain’s question of God: Am I my brother’s keeper? Recognizing that one’s fellow city-dweller is like a member of one’s family becomes

¹¹⁰ Riis, *Battle*, 7; Riis, *Peril*, 13 and 162.

¹¹¹ Riis, *Peril*, 49-50.

¹¹² “They are many and complex in the setting forth of them, I suspect: the hurry of our modern life, the new freedom that makes little minds think themselves bigger than their maker, the *de*-moralization of the public school, the pressure of business,—it is hard to get the family together—which is merely setting up the fact of the scattering of the home in the defense of it. The causes are many, but the result is one: the wreck of the home.” Riis, *Peril*, 50.

Riis's proposal to save the city. The modern homelessness of the city cannot exist if the family is preserved. Riis writes:

[T]he moral question whether I shall love my neighbor or kill him; whether I shall stand idly by and see my brother's soul stunted, smothered in the slum of my making, of my tacit consent at any rate, or put in all upon rescuing him. Brethren, we shall never rescue our city, you will never rescue yours, until we understand that that is what it all harks back to, that all these things mean one and the same thing: that I am my brother's keeper for good or for evil.¹¹³

He resorts to the language of neighbor, which signifies not only a relationship but a locus of that relationship, i.e., a rooted proximity to one's brother; these relations with their language of close kinship and neighborliness are those of the *Gemeinschaft*-ideal.

Participating in and creating this community is the solution for social ills, but the first step is the recognition of a familial bond. Riis, like his contemporaries, feared that community structures centered around the family were collapsing in the metropolis—a threat which Warner also saw as emanating from the modern tramp. Riis's own bifurcated life of urban police reporting in the Five Points tenement district and rural family life on Long Island (even requiring a move further out when development encroached on his 'country' haven) provide a model for desired social relations.

If this sense of community is truly Riis's goal, his project has an inherent contradiction. The supposed organicism of community cannot be created; it is a neighborliness that arises from decades or centuries of ongoing proximity. The seeming immediacy of the relationship emerges from the immediacy of space. Producing a community in this idyllic mode is an impossibility, for production is a mode whose social form is that of civil society; produced relations are the transactional or associational ones which he decries. Riis thought that recognizing the other as brother could rectify such

¹¹³ Riis, *Peril*, 80.

social ills—the mark of Cain arose from failure to recognize that ‘I am my brother’s keeper’. Because of this failure real estate speculators set up rear tenements as “habitations of thousands of our fellow-beings.” Presumably, following the logic of Riis’s argument, if those residents had been regarded as brothers and not fellow-beings, landlords would have taken better care of the housing for the poor—and the metropolis would not have the mark of Cain.

Cain’s centrality in the story of the modern homeless figure moves beyond a structure of othering into a mode of representation. The figure of Cain bore the mark of urban homelessness, while simultaneously evoking ancient anti-Judaic tradition. By connecting modern problems with Cain, Riis and Warner linked tramping, the city, and urban life with many long traditions of othering. The conflation of Cain and the Jews begins in the New Testament, where the gospels of Matthew and Luke forward a nascent form of equating Cain with the Jews.¹¹⁴ A few centuries later, Ambrose¹¹⁵ borrows the Jewish philosopher Philo’s idea that Cain and Abel represent two competing views of life,¹¹⁶ but he adds a particularly pernicious dual interpretation of the brothers—Cain and Abel are the prototypes of the Synagogue and the Church.¹¹⁷ Christianity has a long tradition of anti-Judaism, based on a theological assumption that the Jews rejected Jesus. In much of this tradition, there is attached to this putative rejection an additional charge

¹¹⁴ In a diatribe against the Pharisees, Jesus charges that the blood of all the righteous from Abel (the first victim of murder of the Hebrew Bible) to Zechariah (the last victim of murder) rests upon them (Matthew 23:35). The diatribe opens with Jesus saying that “The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat” (Matthew 23:2); he connects them—as murderers of Abel—with the leadership of the Jewish people.

¹¹⁵ Ambrose is a fourth century Bishop of Milan.

¹¹⁶ Ambrose, *Saint Ambrose: Hexameron, Paradise, and Cain and Abel*, trans. John J. Savage (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1961), 360.

¹¹⁷ Ambrose, 362.

of culpability of murder of Jesus; the Jewish people are considered to be Christ-killers.¹¹⁸ Cain's murder of Abel represents the Jews supposed murder of Jesus. By killing Abel, Cain attempts to kill the church and must permanently wander. With Augustine—who continues the Jewish/Christian dichotomy of the brothers,¹¹⁹ Cain's wandering is forgotten—his significance is settling down; he establishes a city. In *City of God* Augustine continues a hermeneutic polarity, he juxtaposes Cain and Abel to represent the earthly city of man and the divine city of God.

The anti-Semitic Cain tradition thus straddles the dual poles of wandering and the establishment of the city as a locus of the rootless. In both incarnations—that of the wandering of the proto-tramp or marking the homelessness of the urban slums, Cain embodies Jewish otherness to represent a threat to the family altar of the Christian home—he embodies homelessness.

Ishmael

The anti-Semitic invocation of biblical figures in this discourse broadened the included group of Semites¹²⁰ to include another Genesis evictee—Ishmael. The terms Ishmaelite, tribe of Ishmael or street Arab, became standard in media accounts of frauds

¹¹⁸ “In Aphrahat's writings the statement in John 8:44, ‘Your father was a murderer from the beginning’, was identified with Cain. Ephrem also identified the Jews with Cain: ‘Today the glory has passed from the people of Israel and they stand among the nations ashamed as Cain was, at the unnatural deed.’ In the fourth century, Prudentius maintained that the Jew was the murderous brother who now wanders the face of the earth: ‘From place to place the homeless Jew wanders in ever-shifting exile, since the time when he was torn from the abode of his fathers and has been suffering the penalty for murder and having stained his hands with the blood of Christ whom he denied, paying the price of sin.’” Dan Cohn-Sherbock, *The Crucified Jew: Twenty Centuries of Christian Anti-Semitism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 29.

¹¹⁹ Augustine, *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin Classics, 1984), 606.

¹²⁰ Anti-Semitism is usually taken to be an anti-Jewish attitude. But historically, Arabs have also been classified as Semites. Ishmael is the legendary progenitor of the Arab people.

and professional beggars. The invocation of Ishmael evokes another rejection of familial norms, i.e., illegitimacy. Like Cain, the trope of Ishmael represented urban threats to family ideals.

Conventional accounts for the rise of the term Ishmaelite attribute its use to an historical accident. The eugenicist Rev. Oscar C. McCulloch presented an 1888 paper “The Tribe of Ishmael: A Study in Social Degradation”¹²¹ in which he outlines an argument for the hereditary tendency of certain forms of ‘parasitism’, ‘unchastity’, ‘criminality’ and ‘pauperism’. He names the condition for one of the over two hundred and fifty nomadic families—the tribe of Ishmael, which he purports to have studied. The conventional account is that Ishmael first appears related to the homelessness in McCulloch’s report which takes its name from this historical family. However, ‘Ishmaelites’ appear in fictional accounts of tramps at least a decade earlier.¹²² Thus, the relationship between the tribe of Ishmael and the historical family is rather dubious.

Even if McCulloch independently developed the category, his selection of the Ishmael family name for this group does not take place within a cultural vacuum; it has resonance with cultural traditions. Also, McCulloch uses the name Ishmael out of two hundred and fifty possible family names and then places the name “tribe of Ishmael” in scare quotes; there is an illusion to Abraham’s banishment of Ishmael and his mother Hagar. Ultimately these concerns with authorial intent are irrelevant, since writers like

¹²¹ Published three years later.

¹²² “You were an Ishmaelite, and there was a savage satisfaction in feeling that all the world had its hand raised against you, and yours against the world Indeed, to tell the truth, you were not far from desperate deeds. The step from poverty to crime is a short one—if poverty, *itself*, be not a crime. A man without money feels an ownership in every one else’s property an ownership where Might becomes an agent of Possession.” William Staats, *A Tight Squeeze; Or, the Adventures of a Gentleman Who on a Wager of Ten Thousand Dollars, Undertook to Go from New York to New Orleans in Three Weeks without Money as a Professional Tramp* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1879), 23-26, in Todd DePastino, *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) 40.

Riis or the later University of Chicago sociologist Nels Anderson subsequently use the idea of the “tribe of Ishmael”, or Ishmaelites, in contexts unconcerned with the historicity of McCulloch’s family. In M.W. Law’s 1903 article in *The American Journal of Sociology*,¹²³ he explicitly evokes the Genesis account of Ishmael being banished to the desert in the opening line, talking of “this Ishmael of the city desert.” Later, Law perhaps conflates Ishmael with his half-brother Isaac by calling Ishmael a scapegoat, a possible reference to the binding of Isaac. The inclusion of a negative Arab trope within the nascent discourse underlines the necessity of a turn to older cultural images to bring a semantic order to urban life. By using the shorthand of mythic tropes, Riis, Law, et al., also avert any problems in explaining the connections between illegitimacy as a violation of bourgeois family norms and urban petty crimes.

The deployment of the trope of Ishmaelite requires eliding distinctions between the modern nuclear family (violated in the Ishmael story) and the feudal structure of the Ancient Near East (maintained in the Genesis account). While etymologically family signifies the entire household, including (especially) all of the household servants, like Ishmael’s mother Hagar, the modern category of illegitimacy assumes a violation of a modern, soon-to-be nuclear family. The illegitimacy within the Genesis account results from the handmaiden Hagar failing to understand her servile role to Sarah, even though she had produced a child for Abraham. However, the modern idea of illegitimacy signified by Ishmaelites has a much more encompassing sense of pathology.¹²⁴ The trope signifies a violation of family and the production of children who can never know home.

¹²³ M.W. Law, “Our Ishmael,” *American Journal of Sociology* 8, no. 6, (May 1903): 838-851.

¹²⁴ For a discussion of the relationship of modern illegitimacy to these traditions, see John Witte, Jr. “Ishmael’s Bane: The Sin and Crime of Illegitimacy Reconsidered,” *Punishment and Society* 5, no.3 (2003): 327-345.

With no functioning family unit, such children are likely lost to the streets, where they become—in Riis's term—a street Arab. With these first two anti-Semitic strands which form the conditions giving rise to the discourse on homelessness, we see threats to the family emerging as an integral part of representing homelessness.

Wandering Jew

Waves of immigrants moved from Europe to North America over the nineteenth century. In addition to their luggage bundles, they brought with them stories and legends, culture and traditions. Among these was the European legend of Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew; interest in this figure proliferated on the North American shores. In the impressive ways that legend works, Cain has long had a connection to the Wandering Jew;¹²⁵ thus these first two strands are intertwined. As with all legends, that of the Wandering Jew has many versions through centuries; with each retelling, Ahasuerus' story accrues new adventures as he travels the globe across the centuries. The basic story is that Jesus was carrying the cross through Jerusalem en route to Golgotha outside of town. He paused for a few moments rest at a doorstep, but the owner of the house—Ahasuerus—drove Jesus away, telling him to walk faster. Jesus cursed the man, telling him that he would be forced to walk until his second coming.¹²⁶ This image of Jewish wandering represents a religious threat to the Christian home.

An important narrative entrance of the Wandering Jew into America first appears across the Atlantic, in a French novel. Despite being the namesake of Eugene Sue's

¹²⁵ With the mark, the wandering, and the association with Christ—Abel as Christ, the legend borrows a great deal from the Cain story. George K. Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1965), 3.

¹²⁶ Anderson, *Legend*, 11.

popular mid-century novel *Le Juif Errant* serialized in *feuilleton* section of the newspaper, the Wandering Jew is a relatively minor character in the anti-clerical, anti-Jesuitical work of the popular writer. Sue introduces this condemned wanderer on the Bering Straits gazing across from “the Uttermost limits of the Old World” into the opening to the New.¹²⁷ His gaze to the New World probably presages subsequent claims of American sightings of the Wandering Jew. One such newspaper account saw Ahasuerus in New York.

Quite an excitement, it is reported, was recently caused in the village of Harts Corners, a few miles from New York, by the appearance of the veritable “Wandering Jew.” Now an *ordinary wandering Jew* would not be at all likely to create any surprise, seeing that they are to be met with in every quarter; but the case would be quite contrary—even in a community of beer- and tobacco-loving Dutchmen, the very embodiment of all that is imperturbable, if the genuine Ahasuerus—condemned by the Great Teacher to walk the earth until the day of judgment—were to make his appearance in their midst. So nobody can wonder at the excitement displayed by the people of Harts Corners on the appearance of this very notorious and venerable character in their midst!

The discovery was made under the following instances: On the 2nd instant, as two little boys were going a-fishing, their attention was arrested by deep groans which seemed to emanate from an old shanty they passed on their way. The boys entered the shanty and there beheld a venerable-looking individual with a long white beard, dressed in black flowing garments, seated in one corner, apparently in pain. They manifested a desire to assist him, but were frightened off by the old fellow lifting his staff in a frightening manner. The youngsters retreated and soon returned with a number of the villagers, who, on entering the shanty, saw an individual with a large hooked nose, larger ears and finger nails about an inch long—there was no tail visible at least.¹²⁸ They asked what ailed him, and he replied that he had fallen on a stone and severely hurt his leg. In the course of conversation he also informed them he *had no home*, and that his

¹²⁷ Eugene Sue, *The Wandering Jew* (London: Dedalus Ltd., 1990), 1.

¹²⁸ As we have already noted, this possible conflation between the Wandering Jew and diabolism probably develops because of the traditions of wandering associated with Satan. For instance, in his *The History of the Devil*, Daniel Defoe argues that the Devil’s banishment from heaven is a state of wandering. “In short, the true account of the Devil’s circumstances, since his fall from heaven, is much more likely to be thus: That he is more of a vagrant than a prisoner, that he is a wanderer in the wild unbounded waste...Satan being thus confined to a vagabond, wandering, unsettled condition, is without any certain abode...This is his present state, without any fixed abode, place, or space, allowed him to rest the sole of his foot upon.” Defoe, 94-95.

last friend had departed this life long before the light of heaven illumined the soul of any among them, and that the voice of the only one he loved was silent in the tomb before printing was invented, or America had ever echoed the cry of liberty.

Exclamations of “cracked” escaped several of the crowd, which aroused the indignation of the Jew who asked them why they had come there if they did not believe him. They replied they came because they had heard there was a man in trouble and they wished to assist him. To this he replied, “man *can not* and Heaven *will not*.” He then gave them a short account of his recent travels from Siberia to America via Behrings Straits, through the wilds of Alaska, etc., saying that the first kind word he had heard during the whole journey was from the party he was then addressing. He then bade them adieu and departed.

In his hasty departure on this occasion as he is said to have done on many others, he left a memento by which his identity was fully proven. This time it was an old volume of extracts from the Babylonian Talmud in the Hebrew character. On a fly leaf was a short account of his birth, parentage, the sentence of the Saviour and his subsequent wanderings, all clearly proving that he was the identical *bona fide* Wandering Jew.¹²⁹

This journalistic account of a sighting furnishes a story of the Wandering Jew’s entry into the New World which borrows from Sue’s introduction of Ahasuerus in *Le Juif Errant*. Sue’s prologue opens on the Bering Straits (“the land’s end of two worlds”)¹³⁰ with the Wandering Jew on the Siberian side looking across the expanse of sea to his sister facing him from the American shore. The fiction of the *feuilleton* has become journalistic fact of Ahasuerus’ entry into America. Significantly, Sue’s role as a backdrop to American accounts of the Wandering Jew implies a connection between the legend and political radicalism. In an Epilogue that reunites Ahasuerus and his sister, *Le Juif Errant* asserts that the Wandering Jew has long championed the cause of the exploited laborer. He is finally able to be free of his curse and allowed to die when “the aurora of the day of

¹²⁹ Desert News 17 (1856), in Rudolf Glanz, “The Wandering Jew in America,” in *The Wandering Jew: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend*, ed. Galit Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 108-109. For an account of the “veritable Wandering Jew” in New York City, see Desert News 7 (1856), in Glanz, 108.

¹³⁰ Sue, 1.

deliverance” soon comes.¹³¹ This conclusion to tales of imperialism and the poor of Paris seeks liberation for the workers for the world.

And so, for centuries, men without pity have said to the artisan: “Work! work! work! without truce or rest—and your labour shall be fruitful for all others, but fruitless for yourself—and every evening, throwing yourself on the hard ground, you shall be no nearer to happiness and repose; and your wages shall only suffice to keep you alive in pain, privation, and poverty!”¹³²

Thus the modern Wandering Jew seen in the United States—whose curse-lifting death has failed to come—brings in his North American wanderings a commitment to revolutionary politics.¹³³

Beyond an implicit political radicalism, a second point that emerges from this newspaper account is that the Wandering Jew is both a particular figure (Ahasuerus) and a type (an ordinary Wandering Jew). While Ahasuerus may not permanently lurk through the American hinterlands, others of his type might. Thus Ahasuerus becomes a paradigm for wandering across America, and, I will argue later, that he is also a paradigm for the social form of the stranger. The Wandering Jew enters the annals of a popular imaginary as a symbol that combines Jewishness (as a rejection of Christianity) with political radicalism and wandering—all of them threats to the Christian home. The popularity of this trope of the Wandering Jew and these other strands created an environment in which social commentators could easily invoke these anti-Semitic traditions to represent a sense of otherness.

¹³¹ Sue, 846.

¹³² Sue, 846.

¹³³ As I shall show later, the discourse of Jewish radicalism most frequently cites threats from Russian Jews. Though three-quarters of a century before the Bolshevik revolution, we already see a Jew bringing radicalism by entering the American shores from Russia.

Exile

The metonymic connection between these two wanderers (Cain and the Wandering Jew) and the Jewish people relates to this next strand—the trope of exile in Judaism. Forty years of desert wandering, the Babylonian Exile and the post-Bar Kokhba expulsion from Jerusalem established a connection between the Jewish people and the idea of exile. Scholar Susannah Heschel argues that “the experience of alienation is central to Judaism...exile itself becomes the value that is affirmed instead of an awaited redemption. Exile and redemption are central theological categories in Judaism.”¹³⁴ This longstanding association between the Jewish people and alienation is central to the anti-Semitic formulations of homelessness. Heschel expands on exile in Judaism:

Exile enters the first Jewish text from the earliest moment. We think immediately of the exile from the Garden of Eden, which is followed by the exile of the patriarchs and matriarchs from the land promised by God to Abraham, then the exile to Egypt which meant slavery to Israel. In historical terms, we have the exile from the Northern Kingdom as a result of the Assyrian conquest and from the South Kingdom following the Babylonian conquest.¹³⁵

After the expulsion from Eden (which is not an exile of the Jewish people per se), each exile prompted either a wandering or a captivity. Because theological tradition—in most cases, both Jewish and Christian—interprets each stage of exile as divine punishment, the Jewish people’s displacement from homeland arises from rebellion against God—the same idea that appears in the tropes of Cain and the Wandering Jew. A Christian *Weltanschauung* thus easily assimilates a sense of homelessness to Jewish metaphysical rebellion. When looking at Riis’s writings about urban homelessness, we see that modern urban exile is linked to Christian anti-Judaic traditions. Riis writes:

¹³⁴ Susannah Heschel, “The Exile of Redemption in Judaism,” in *Religions of the Book*, ed. Gerard Sloyan (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996), 4.

¹³⁵ Heschel, 4.

So, in all matters pertaining to their religious life that tinges all their customs, they stand, these East Side Jews, where the new day that dawned on Calvary left them standing, stubbornly refusing to see the light. A visit to a Jewish house of mourning is like bridging the gap of two thousand years. The inexpressibly sad and sorrowful wail for the dead, as it swells and rises in the hush of all sounds of life, so comes back from the ages like a mournful echo of the voice of Rachel “weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are not.”¹³⁶

The rejection of Christianity follows the immigrants into their ‘Jewtown’ where the wailing of Rachel is to be heard. In the Biblical book of Jeremiah, the matriarch Rachel weeps inconsolably for her exiled progeny; the laments and grief of ‘Jewtown’ become connected to cries for the exile of Jewish people represented as the sundering of children from their mother. The exile which Riis invokes thus brings dissolution in the familial home and a religious rejection of Jesus. This new exile is a condition threatening a Christian home by establishing an outside to its domain. Family dissolution and a life beyond middle class Christian norms are precisely the two conditions forming homelessness in this nascent discourse on homelessness. The invocation of tropes like Rachel weeping for her children or Cain is an effective means to codify attributes which eventually become associated with homeless individuals; part of this efficacy is because the tropes function as myth. In the next section, we will look at how these tropes function as myth in the formation of the discourse on homelessness.

The Stranger

Anti-Semitic stereotypes have long straddled two contradictory poles: from the Shylocks of capitalist finance¹³⁷ and the Emma Goldmans of anti-capitalist radicals. A

¹³⁶ Riis, *Other Half*, 87.

¹³⁷ Because the threats of homelessness include a class dimension, the famous Shylock stereotype has no significant role in the discourse on homelessness.

slightly less dichotomous version of these two poles appears in these modern tropes which inform the discourse on homelessness. The social function of ‘the stranger’—made famous by Georg Simmel—takes the pure animalistic motion of Ahasuerus and attenuates the absolute detachment in a synthesis with its conceptual opposite of attachment. As this synthesis, the stranger is both near and far, both remote and close. As a part of the social group, the stranger is spatially near but brings “qualities into it that are not, and cannot be, indigenous to it.”¹³⁸ Throughout economic history, Simmel tells us, the stranger appears as the trader—most frequently as a Jewish trader.¹³⁹

While I certainly agree with Simmel that the Jewish trader is a likely antecedent for the social form of the stranger, Ahasuerus himself functions as a stranger. He wanders, enters towns where he is by appearance immediately determined to be foreign and is sought out for his news and objectivity—he can tell kings of their enemies, the histories of their peoples, or the happenings in distant lands. He participates in the city and moves on. This role of temporary confidant and source of objective information attached itself to the legend. Maxwell Sommerville’s 1902 novel *A Wanderer’s Legend* is precisely a story of Ahasuerus as the stranger. His fortuitous sixteenth-century appearance at Nuremberg’s Church of St. Sebaldus on the eve of a conclave to address Reformist schisms appearing within the Germanic church sets the stage for his role as informant to the assembled bishops, theologians and other churchmen. The novel consists of his series of recitations of the peoples and faiths of other lands, disquisitions on historical events, and evaluations of the branches of Christendom. All know that he will move on, that he has seen the church’s rise to power and its demise in the East; he was

¹³⁸ Georg Simmel, “The Stranger,” in *Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 143.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 144.

thus valued for his objective status and so is each day supplicated to share yet another piece of information.

His millennium-and-a-half of wandering have made Ahasuerus a wise man. In Sommersville's novel, he is acutely aware of his function as stranger. On an ancient journey, he tells of attaching himself to a Jew Trader, and, upon approaching the city, Ahasuerus encounters sentries who "recognized in me a stranger";¹⁴⁰ the trader's vouchsafing for him enabled his entry to the city, whereupon he decamps to the public markets to find some repose. This modern incarnation of Ahasuerus maps his cursed wanderings onto those of the Jewish trader; the Simmelian stranger has deeper roots than the pre-Industrial mercantile system; it incorporates ancient anti-Judaic motifs which are overlain with later economic and social history.¹⁴¹

The social conditions of the modern metropolis transforms the stranger from a social form of an individual into the entirety of the urban population. The problem with the urban anonymity of fin-de-siècle New York City was precisely the overabundant influx of strangers, such that all social relationships changed. Mobility had entirely undermined the seemingly organic community bonds and left only those of strangers. Thus the entire city was homeless. The denizens of the city were strangers to the nation, to the town. Without a doubt, they were by proximity a part of the urban group, but in

¹⁴⁰ Maxwell Sommersville, *A Wanderer's Legend* (Philadelphia: Drexel Biddle, 1902), 151.

¹⁴¹ See also Glanz on this point. "Here we find the wandering Jew already in transition to a new motif. He has already acquired a secular purpose, while it had been the very essence of his previous distinction that he did not trade, and that his long bag served only to illustrate his long travels. But on the long way across the American continent the resemblance of his bag to the peddler's bag of the German-Jewish immigrant continuously increases, and we have already found this hinted in our poem. If we take this as our point of departure, we come to understand why the legendary features of the wandering Jew blend so fully with those of the traveler for temporal gain in the figure of the Jewish peddler that has been treated so often in the literature, that in the end the long bag full of the sufferings of the eternal wanderer is forgotten over the peddler's bag." Glanz, 110-111.

language, custom, and appearance, they were alien; they were strangers in a strange land. The form of the stranger was perfected in defining European Jewish populations.

The longstanding idea of wandering and Jewishness took this new form with the early modern rise of trading and gave rise to this fourth strand. The ideas of mobility, relations predicated on social distance and populations with no claim upon land are central to Simmel's analysis of the social function of the stranger. The stranger furnishes structures to the discourse on homelessness and establishes the limits to the community which is able to participate within the ideal of the Christian home. The metropolitan stranger's migratory mobility juxtaposes with the stasis of the native middle class Protestant. In its new metropolitan incarnation, the immigrant as stranger embodies class, ethnic and linguistic difference. The one group whose otherness extended into the realm of religion (beyond denominationalism) was precisely that group on whom the social form of the stranger was modeled—the Jewish people.

Radicals and Hobos

The formation of the final strand requires an elision between the tradition of Jewish radicalism and the radical (but mostly Gentile) hobo unions. Because the hobos wandered and had some radical elements—especially in the International Workers of the World (I.W.W.)—thus, for example, magazines like *Life* collapse distinctions and discuss the Jewish Wobbly.¹⁴² Thus, the image of the immigrant Jewish radical is superimposed onto that of the native migratory hobo to combine threats to economic life and the bourgeois family in an anti-Semitic representation.

¹⁴² 'Wobbly' is a nickname for a member of the I.W.W.

In early twentieth-century media accounts, Jewish immigrants were always strangers; they were inassimilable—*Life* magazine tells us that “[T]he Jewish mind is a totally different instrument from other minds that operate in these States. It has a different background, different racial instincts, different traditions, and with its great abilities and increasing grasp on all public concerns it is a factor of our future that deserves prayerful and attentive contemplation.”¹⁴³ Jewish people—*Life* explains—operate differently than other groups; this difference is racial, and prayer is necessary to determine how to address the difference. Jewish differences marked this immigrant in a way that other, i.e., Christian immigrants, were not; by bearing the marks of both racial and religious dissimilarity. They did not come here and settle, for they were unsettled people; as a ‘sojourner here’¹⁴⁴ or as a ‘restless people’,¹⁴⁵ the Jew was ever eager to change American life.

The tradition of Jewish sojourning was important for the formation of popular stereotypes of radicalism—the wandering is a sign of a deeper restlessness that desires change that will wreak havoc on a Protestant status quo. The Russian Jew¹⁴⁶ thus becomes an easy symbol for the radical threat of homelessness. In the bourgeois press, Russian Jews became the poster boys for all radicals, so much so that native radicals came to be represented by the Russian Jew.

We have cherished and honored in this country during the last twenty years a type of mind totally different from any of the types to which our government owes the organization, our commercial system its development, our country its growth. It is the most destructive mind in the

¹⁴³ *Life*. June 20, 1918, 983.

¹⁴⁴ *Life*. June 20, 1918, 983.

¹⁴⁵ *Life*. June 6, 1918, 915.

¹⁴⁶ In the latter part of this period of the long fin-de-siècle, the targeting of Russian Jews increased in particular because of the Bolshevik Revolution, and perhaps, because of Trotsky’s time in New York shortly before the revolution. However, even before 1917, they were sometimes singled out as being especially prone to radicalism.

world, the most grasping and unabashed...The Russian Jews...have no real national feeling. They are loyal to Socialism, to Internationalism, to whatever untried ideal of human welfare may be floating in their heads at a given moment, but are not bound by more than the loosest ties to any country or form of government...In Baruch and scores of like men we see it working for the good of the country. But...what of the *I.W.W. Jews*, the revolutionary Russian Jews of whom [Morris] Hillquit is one, with all breeds of bats in their noisy belfries?¹⁴⁷

The cognitive processes which enable an easy collapse of a native migratory worker into a symbol of the Jewish radical by the I.W.W. Jew or Jewish Wobbly is facilitated by the idea of the sojourning restlessness of the Jew; many traditions, e.g., Cain and the Wandering Jew, point to this restlessness. Hobo restlessness and the social threats of mobility easily take an overlay of racial and religious difference to escalate the threat to a new register.

Beyond this more mythic connection between Jewish wandering and radicalism, there were historical reasons to associate Jewish radicals with the (primarily) native-born hobo. At a very simple level, the famed Russian Jewish anarchist leader Emma Goldman was a long time partner and collaborator to erstwhile hobo impresario Ben Reitman. Reitman was the sometimes director of Chicago's Hobo College,¹⁴⁸ a self-declared (and sometimes elected) Hobo King and doctor to the hobos (as well as to prostitutes and Al Capone). Reitman was not a Wobbly; in fact his political commitments primarily extended to addressing the personal needs of individuals rather than planning for large-scale social change. While Reitman was not a member of the I.W.W., he was a hobo closely associated both with a hobo union and a Russian Jewish radical. Also, he—as head of the Hobo College or as coordinator of lively debates at Chicago's Dill Pickle

¹⁴⁷ *Life*. June 20, 1918, 983.

¹⁴⁸ Both the Hobo College and the closely connected Hobo union the International Brotherhood Welfare Association were founded and funded by James Eads How (the so-called hobo millionaire) who recruited the garrulous Reitman to coordinate many of the Chicago activities of the organizations.

Club—did collaborate with some members of the I.W.W. from time to time. Beyond the Reitman-Goldman connection, I.W.W. actions did sometimes receive public support from prominent Jewish radicals.¹⁴⁹

The connection between a few individual Jews and either individuals or actions of the I.W.W. is hardly an important point, though. In his “avante-garde [*sic*] ‘little magazine’”¹⁵⁰ *The Philistine*—which happened to take its name from the ancient political enemy of the Jewish people, Elbert Hubbard explicitly argues that these radicals represent a Jewish type—quite similar to that described in *Life*.¹⁵¹ “[Samuel] Gompers, [Ben] Reitman, [Emma] Goldman, Gyp the Blood, Lefty Louie, Jack Rose, all represent one common and particular type of mind.”¹⁵² Hubbard links the unsettling discontent of the Jewish radicals back to that first wandering malcontent who came to represent the Synagogue—Cain. He concludes his diatribe against Louis Brandeis—whom he links to Gompers, Reitman and Goldman—with a definition of venom.

Venom: The juice of hate. 2. The sap of reformers, moralists and socialists....Venom, like everything else is subject to the law of evolution and variation. Between the venom of Cain and the venom of Tolstoy, several million instances could be quoted to prove the universality and beneficence of this breedy instinct.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ For instance, the 1918 Kansas City conviction of Rose Pastor Stokes—whose Russian-Jewish background was a central concern—under the new wartime Espionage Act provoked *Life* magazine to recall her past activism in behalf of Paterson, New Jersey, silk-workers who participated in a 1913 strike organized by the I.W.W.

¹⁵⁰ Michael Dobkowski, “Ideological Anti-Semitism in America: 1877-1927” (Dissertation, New York University, 1976), 486.

¹⁵¹ “Emma Goldman and her companion [fellow anarchist Alexander Berkman] were not workers at Homestead—in fact, they are not workers anywhere. They are butters-in, outsiders, who agitate, vex, annoy and stir up strife and discontent. Samuel Gompers, kin by racial blood-ties and social sentiment, represents the same type Gyp the Blood, Lefty Louie, and their confreres...They toil not, they do not build, they do not create. Their tendency is to destroy, tear down, uproot.” *The Philistine*. 1913, 53-54.

¹⁵² *The Philistine*. 1913, 55.

¹⁵³ *The Philistine*. 1913, 63.

As the most famous of modern radicals, the anarchist Tolstoy's¹⁵⁴ discontent has roots at the 'beginning of history'. By linking Russian radical discontent to Cain, Hubbard associates Jewish radicalism with wandering and the rootless metropolis, as well as a threat to the church.

By looking at how the representation of the hobo intersects the longstanding trope of the Jewish radical, we are able to better understand the characteristics which social scientists come to attribute to hobos. With the conflation between the hobo's restless mobility and breaking of social ties, on the one hand, with the perceived Russian-Jewish propensity to be bound by only "the loosest ties to any country or form of government,"¹⁵⁵ on the other, we find the integration of threats to home in its religious, familial and nation-state sense. These journalists combine religious and political threats in the figure of the I.W.W. Jew. Homelessness becomes a threat to an entire way of being in the modern world—to class, family and religious structures; or conversely, home is a haven from the threats of the modern world. Those threats lurk in changes brought by immigrants. While all immigrant groups brought change to the American bourgeoisie, with co-religionists, the degrees of difference were smaller—an Italian could be a Christian or an anarchist. With the Jew, the difference was perceived as being of an entirely different order.

Because the hobo embraces wandering and unattachment, the Jewish radical is easily assimilated to the figure of the hobo—an early category of homelessness. The lack of mooring in broader social networks is precisely what recommends the hobo style of

¹⁵⁴ While not Jewish, Tolstoy was a very public face of Russian radicalism. Also, Hubbard had already derisively discussed the exported Russian anarchists in America—the Jewish radicals Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. Tolstoy was the internationally public face of Russian anarchism, while Goldman and Berkman were the American face.

¹⁵⁵ *Life*. June 20, 1918, 983.

life. Thus, radicalism and religious threats are represented in a figure who forsakes family life; as we saw with Riis's anxieties about urban riots, homelessness again connects to the potential for political violence. But here, the anxiety is not the historical worry about bigger urban uprisings; it is codified in forms of representing homeless individuals. Hobodom provided a life, a community, and means of support to those with no family or those uninterested in maintaining family contacts; the Jewish Wobbly represented these threats and displacement.

In this historically last strand, we see many assumptions that make their way into the early social science literature on homelessness. University of Chicago sociologist Robert Park¹⁵⁶ provides an account of the role of mobility in homelessness which contends that the hobo mind rests upon the Aristotelian idea that locomotion is the distinguishing feature between plants and animals. However, he argues, humanity has a great attachment to place, particularly the “inveterate and irrational ambition to have a home—some cave or hut or tenement—in which to live and vegetate; some secure hole or corner from which to come forth in the morning and return to at night.”¹⁵⁷ The desire for place and stability is always connected with a family bond.¹⁵⁸ This overweening attachment inhibits the full realization of the contrary desire to move and roam. The

¹⁵⁶ While his essay on the hobo mind does not explicitly use anti-Semitic symbols for representing, the structure is present. Elsewhere in his oeuvre, Park's analyses do appear to be tinged with anti-Semitism. For instance, “From the standpoint of organization the Jews are the most interesting of the immigrant groups. There is among them, indeed a great variety of disorder and personal demoralization—gambling extortion, vagabondage, family desertion, white slavery, ordinary and extraordinary crime.” Robert E. Park and Herbert A. Miller, *Old World Traits Transplanted* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1921), 237.

¹⁵⁷ Robert E. Park, “The Mind of the Hobo: Reflections upon the Relation Between Mentality and Locomotion,” in Park, et al. *The City*, 156.

¹⁵⁸ For instance, Freud interprets this ambition to create a dwelling as a substitution for the mother's womb—“the dwelling-house was a substitute for the mother's womb, the first lodging, for which in all likelihood man still longs, and in which he was safe and felt at ease.” Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. by James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1962), 38.

wandering locomotion of the homeless figure is in itself a threat to family and its dwelling—which is merely a technological mimesis of the mother-child bond; by becoming a spatial reenactment of this bond, the idea of home becomes a utopic locus for family.

In Park's account, mobility is a basic animal instinct which is overridden by the desire for place. The locomotion of the hobo is, for him, unchecked motion; it is locomotion for its own sake.

The hobo is, to be sure, always on the move, but he has no destination, and naturally he never arrives. Wanderlust, which is the most elementary expression of the romantic temperament and the romantic interest in life, has assumed for him, as for so many others, the character of vice. He has gained his freedom, but he has lost his direction. Locomotion and change of scene have had for him no ulterior significance. It is locomotion for its own sake.¹⁵⁹

Park implies that the hobo is too much of an animal. The hobo fails to subordinate locomotion to a purpose or a vocation; it is only movement. By maintaining pure motion, the hobo sacrifices human needs for association. Park argues that all forms of association are predicated upon locality. Society cannot exist with the extreme individual freedom of unmitigated mobility. Presumably, cultural pressures are necessary correctives; culture, or civilization, is agonistic to locomotion. The unchecked locomotion is a purely animalistic behavior; civilization must furnish norms and social relations to tie the homeless man to place. "The hobo, who begins his career by breaking the local ties that bound him to his family and his neighborhood, has ended by breaking all other associations. He is not only a 'homeless man,' but a man without a cause and without a

¹⁵⁹ Park, "Hobo Mind," 158.

country.”¹⁶⁰ The homeless man was never sufficiently bound into the family, and thus neither community nor country; the ties could not bind the animalist impulses for motion.

This mobility of the hobo and radical reflects a social and political discontent which is a continual impetus to motion. The Jewish radical, like the hobo, has no ties to nation or community because they are unsettled. The hobo is, according to Park, a ‘homeless man’; the traits of this homeless man—here is the nascent formation of the homeless figure—are those of the Russian Jewish radical whose lineage stretches back to Cain. This final strand combines a wandering which destroys families with the bestial rejection of civilization’s settling influence.

Times of Crisis

While the turn to anti-Semitism at times of social upheavals is nothing new, the figures integral to the early formation of the discourse on homelessness drew on tropes from this tradition. In doing so, they contextualized fin-de-siècle urban social crises within a broader panorama. Gilman and Katz ask the question: “What is it about such times [of crisis] which spontaneously seem to result in the use of the Jews as the essential Other through which to define the integrity of the self?”¹⁶¹ I here sketch an admittedly incomplete answer. Christianity formed itself by distancing itself from and rejecting its parent religion. The structure of *ressentiment*—the structure of othering—was written into the relationship of these religions. As the political balance between the religions changed fortunes with a Constantinian edict establishing Christianity as the imperial religion, Christianity could establish the representations of rejection.

¹⁶⁰ Park. “Hobo Mind,” 159.

¹⁶¹ Gilman and Katz, 5.

The Christian anti-Judaic heritage thus provided a ready lexicon of tropes and structures of othering. When the self—in this case, the subject of the bourgeois family—is in crisis, forming a dialectical other can quickly furnish social and discursive stability. Thus, the Victorian social crises brought on by urbanization prompted a turn to traditions of anti-Semitism to legitimate the family in crisis. The positive discourse of the Christian home was bolstered through the negative formulation in the discourse of the other—an emerging homeless city and the homeless people populating it. These disparate traditions of anti-Semitism furnished a loose framework for describing the people, places and practices of the homeless city.

This peregrination through fin-de-siècle newspapers, magazines, *feuilleton*, lectures, etc., does not bring us fully to the constitution of the social science category of the homeless man—that task fell to social scientists undertaking Depression-era urban research in Chicago. I am focusing on the emergence of a discourse on homelessness before analytical categories are well established and the described social conditions are still in such a state of flux that traditional cultural forms—like mythic or anti-Semitic tropes—furnish useful tools to discuss the changing circumstances. In this particular case, I am looking at how the city came to be represented as homeless. From the homelessness of the city itself, the category of ‘homeless’ moves to apply to the poor urban tenement dweller. The term’s amorphous signification then shifts from this catch-all for the seventy-five percent of the city residing in the slums to a way of talking about a much smaller subset of this population—the residents of skid row. The dialectics of homelessness rest in a threat to or rejection of the Christian home. Anti-Semitic traditions of wandering and exile, radicalism and malcontents all provided tropes that embody some

threat to the Christian home. In some cases, the actual anti-Semitic image became a symbol of the new homeless condition, e.g., Cain or the I.W.W. Jew. Yet, in all of these, anti-Semitism provided a deep, underlying structure to the discourse on homelessness.

Section Three: Proto-Homelessness as a Mythic Discourse

These anti-Semitic traditions from biblical stories, legends, theological traditions, etc., function as myth; these mythic tropes codified a loose set of assumptions and ideas in the early responses to urban changes. The invocation of these images embodied bourgeois cultural attitudes and made an argument about homelessness. As part of the middle class response to the booming metropolis, mythic tropes provided a means to draw together the attitudes which we saw emerging from disparate places in the last section—attitudes about the family, politics, wandering, and stability. As we shall see in the next chapter (and saw in part with Robert Park in the preceding section), the consolidation of a constellation of cultural attitudes into a figure began a process of defining an emerging homeless man.

The social fragmentation of the modern metropolis—cognitive and spatial distinctions of ethnicity, culture, religion, language, class, and gender—established a plurality of social fields. Such heterogeneity creates the conditions in which religious narratives can be disconnected from a religious institution and become a cultural form, i.e., they become myth. As myth, the new urban conditions assume a seeming naturalness; the new problem of homelessness can thus come to seem as if it has long been with us and has been reflected in our most ancient stories. By having a mythic

overlay, the basic modernity of homelessness is elided. In naturalizing the negative form homelessness, the discourse also implicitly naturalizes the positive formulation of home. The Christian home becomes an eternal form for social life; it is naturalized as is its pathological underside—homelessness.

In this section, I distinguish the deployment of mythic tropes in the discourse on homelessness from other religious responses rejoinders to urban social problems. The discourse on homelessness became a carrier for anxieties about the family because the mythic tropes legitimated the family and othered the threats to it. Despite their biblical origin, tropes like Cain and Ishmael do not serve a religious function. Fin-de-siècle religious interventions with proto-homelessness demanded a faith-based commitment and action of their audiences, whereas the deployment of mythic tropes merely proffered a cultural argument about family and social order.

Then, I argue that by being deployed in contexts of semantic ordering, myth serves as an instrument of rationalization. The transcendentalization which is concomitant with myth was part of the process of ordering the city. Because of the newness of urban problems, there was inadequate language or forms of representation to articulate the conditions of the city. To explain and legitimate social life, commentators turned to ancient traditions. This new vertical axis deployed the cultural values embedded in the ancient mythic tropes. This semantic process of ordering established the parameters for subsequent spatial and institutional processes of rationalizing the city.

Finally, I finish this section, and this chapter, by looking at how the deployment of myth legitimates the bourgeois family and the Christian home in addition to representing the city as homeless. I look at the example of the Cain story—the

importance of maintaining the family altar and being my brother's keeper—to argue that myth legitimates the family against the associational life of *Gesellschaft*. This fin-de-siècle clash of social structures juxtaposes the important value placed on family versus what comes to be called the associational life of social capital. This contradiction reemerges in the last decades of the twentieth century when a new family values movement (which acclimates itself to social capital) replaces the discourse on homelessness as a primary carrier for family anxieties. In the waning Victorian years, myth dually supported the family as the foundation for society—elevating it and the Christian home to a social ideal and othering people and practices which failed to meet or threatened the family ideals.

Mythic and Religious Responses to the City

In the discourse on homelessness, we find that fin-de-siècle critics of the city invoked tropes like Cain as myth. The deployment of modern myth in the discourse on homelessness is quite distinct from a Sunday School lesson on Cain. In this section, I will distinguish mythic tropes from religious responses to urban problems by different functions; the same trope can be either religious or mythic depending on its use. This difference became possible through processes of modernization, like social differentiation and fragmentation; religion, culture, arts, etc., each became distinct social fields. I define myth as deinstitutionalized religious narratives which serve a cultural function beyond the religious social field. The anti-Semitic tropes of Cain, Ishmael, the Wandering Jew, and Rachel weeping for her children, I argue, are myth because they function as such deinstitutionalized tropes.

By being grounded in myth, the discourse on homelessness becomes a problem of culture. Myth can be a latent presence within a discourse, which can be readily deployed at times of social tension. It is no coincidence that myth and anti-Semitism appeared co-extensively—both here in the fin-de-siècle period and again on the European continent a few decades later. In both contexts, they arose at times of great upheaval—the chaotic boom of the American city or in the collapse of the Weimar political economy. As we saw with Gilman and Katz on anti-Semitism and will see with Cassirer on myth, these forms of language appear in times of crisis because they furnish ready-made categories and symbols for ordering indescribable situations.

Distinguishing myth from religion, however, does not mean that myth is the form of representation which appears in the discourse on homelessness. The reason I consider these primarily biblical tropes to be myth is to distinguish them from contemporary projects which explicitly demanded a faith commitment. Riis's 'mark of Cain' does not require the audience to somehow undertake an orthopraxy because the tenement bears this mark.

In the fin-de-siècle period, religious leaders also responded to new social problems with the invocation of Biblical tropes, but their invocation was for the purpose of mobilizing audiences to act out their faith—a very different process than Riis or Warner undertook in representing the city or the tramp. A few years after *How the Other Half Lives*—in 1897 to be precise—Topeka pastor Charles Sheldon wrote *In His Steps*,¹⁶² a novel about a tramp or hobo who bursts into a Sunday morning service and indicts the congregation's lack of lived faith with a few searing questions. After his dramatic collapse and subsequent death, many of the congregants vow to ask themselves 'What

¹⁶² Charles Monroe Sheldon, *In His Steps* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1937).

Would Jesus Do?’ before undertaking any life decisions.¹⁶³ This church interprets the vagabond as a divine emissary; this more religious interpretation of tramping requires a faith commitment and action. Amos Warner invoked Cain as the proto-tramp to contextualize a new problem within a cultural and historical context for social work students. By invoking Cain, he implicitly argues that tramping (despite its historical newness) has been a part of human existence, like criminality, since human prehistory. For Warner, Cain is a form of representing social problems, not a demand to be personally transformed because of his response.

While Charles Sheldon did become involved with the settlement house movement, the appropriation of his project inspired a more personalized commitment, creating something of a Christian categorical imperative. Sheldon’s book became an enormous success—still remaining in print as “the all-time best-selling inspirational novel”¹⁶⁴—and was used to incite a more reflective process in daily life. His novel provides an account of the transformation of particular evangelicals; it shows a model of how a specific sphere of the population should act. However, it does not furnish a model for how American society must understand social problems. It is a call to action for the faithful, not an ordering of language and thus our collective social life.

The trope of Cain or Ishmael provides a framework to understand a modern problem, rather than an exhortation to act. Sheldon’s tramp could speak to evangelicals, but he could not be disseminated to a broader culture; Riis’s or Warner’s Cain could appear in channels inaccessible to religion. While Sheldon’s project focused on

¹⁶³ The more contemporary *What Would Jesus Do* movement, which has devolved into primarily a marketing campaign for bracelets, bumper stickers, hats, t-shirts, etc., was inspired by the Sheldon novel.

¹⁶⁴ Mike Hertenstein, “What Would Jesus Do? The Settlement House Movement and *In His Steps*,” *Cornerstone Magazine*, 1997, 39.

transforming the audience, the reformers wrote to inspire middle class readers to go and change those documented in their writings—the goal was to create housing in which a poor family could thrive. The invocation of Cain or Ishmael provided a means to represent a problem to a society who might undertake political action. Myth furnishes an ordering for modern society; these tropes or images function as cultural forms and not as the explicitly religious discourse of a figure like Sheldon.

Myth and Rationalization

The mythic tropes which we have seen in the work of fin-de-siècle commentators were deployed in contexts of establishing a social order. As we saw in Section One, the discourse on homelessness was intertwined with efforts to rationalize the city. Journalists and activists like Riis brought a semantic order to the city, as they defined problems and distinguished needs and populations. After a semantic order was established, then social services and municipal policies began to address the needs articulated by the reformers. The mythic tropes which brought together a constellation of attitudes about the city and family in images defined the parameters of the discourse; these parameters became the basis for subsequent social science and policy.

Riis's zeal for reform, e.g., calls for a complete Haussmannization of the city, often reveals inherently anti-democratic impulses. His attempt to change the habits and minds of the poor is not mere Victorian paternalism as he claims. That allegation was acknowledged by Riis and he willingly accepted it—"Call it paternalism, crankery, any other hard name you can think of, all the same it goes down underneath the foundation of

things.”¹⁶⁵ I argue that the work of Riis, Warner, Addams, et al., is more than patrician condescension. From a position perched high above the Other Half, and even farther over the Nether Half (who later become the homeless man proper), they call for state institutions, albeit usually at a municipal level, to say that these are the type of citizens which it wants, to use its techniques of social formation to form these subjects, rather than having a society in which the citizens articulate the society and state which they want. The effort is to change law and social practices, using the power of the state and the press to shape how the Other Half is articulated and negotiated in the public sphere. These anti-democratic impulses did not only manifest in their activists processes of rooting out the homelessness of the city to establish social order. Their language, e.g., calling large populations the Other Half or the Nether Half, indicates similar impulses. In this fin-de-siècle era, before these semantic and institutional efforts produced a man constituted by his homelessness, myth provides a shortcut to forming a nascent figure shaped by the homeless city.

With the appearance of these new urban upheavals, the invoked mythic tropes quickly defined emerging spaces and, more importantly, populations. Marx has noted the tendency to fall back on old language at times of great transformation:

Men make their own history, but not of their own free will; not under circumstances they themselves have chosen but under the given and inherited circumstances with which they are directly confronted. The tradition of the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the minds of the living. And, just when they appear to be engaged in the revolutionary transformation of themselves and their material surroundings, in the creation of something which does not yet exist, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they timidly conjure up the spirits of the past to help them; they borrow their names, slogans and costumes so as to stage the

¹⁶⁵ Riis, *Battle*, 23.

new world-historical scene in this venerable disguise and borrowed language.¹⁶⁶

The borrowed language—in this case, myth—is part of the process of semantic ordering; fin-de-siècle commentators’ invocations of myth consolidate Victorian attitudes about the city and the family. Older valuations carried in the tropes of Cain or Ishmael were assimilated to these Victorian attitudes; responses to the nineteenth-century revolutionary remaking of the city by industrialization and mass migrations provoked writing from Riis’s reporting to Elbert Hubbard’s *The Philistine* to conjure up the past to represent new conditions. A borrowed language readily signifies; Cain as a proto-tramp is grounded in old anti-Semitic traditions, which can more quickly (and probably more clearly) represent than a new social science term and definition.

By distilling the constellation of attitudes which we saw in the last section, the deployment of the tropes begins the process of connecting them not merely with the city but with individuals—Cain, Ishmael, the Wandering Jew. This shift from the homelessness of the city to Cain as a proto-tramp presages the move towards what becomes the homeless man of Depression-era social science.

The mythic tropes helped bring semantic order to the urban chaos—they represented the social upheavals in readily accessible ways. To control an unwieldy population, a two-step process was undertaken. Establishing the norm of the bourgeois subject in the family home and trying to use institutions to assimilate as many of the poor to this norm. The second requires othering the unassimilated. Shaping them into an image of mythical pariahs abets this process. As we shall see in the next chapter, the mythic tropes fade into dormancy as a homeless figure begins to emerge through social science,

¹⁶⁶ Marx, “Eighteenth Brumaire,” 146.

though myth later returns as the discourse confronts a contradiction between its cultural logic and policy imperatives.

The process of constituting a homeless figure is part of the very processes of ordering and rationalizing the chaotic structures of the city; this discursive process brought a semantic order to a rationalizing the city. Once the populations, problems, and possible solutions were defined; the parameters for responses were primarily set—we saw this in Section One. In the last section, we saw that the invocation of anti-Semitic traditions were integral to the semantic ordering. Here, we see that the anti-Semitic tropes function as myth. The reformers' social programs took up the rationalizing processes—they changed housing codes and zoning laws to foster the immediate family to the exclusion of boarders; they brought greenspaces into the metropolis to create an environment in which families might flourish. But these grew out of the nascent discourse on homelessness which relied heavily on the invocation of mythic tropes.

In times of basic stability, society can ground its institutions and relations within its culture. From the philosopher Ernst Cassirer, we know that in times of upheaval myth is often turned to,¹⁶⁷ and from Gilman and Katz, we know that at such times in the West, anti-Semitism is also frequently invoked. As we have noted, both myth and anti-Semitism furnish easily articulated structures to establish a sense of understanding at times when social changes are so revolutionary as to be nearly unrecognizable. Myth provides a borrowed language to represent new conditions within older traditions. Cassirer argues that myth is an ever-lurking presence in the dark corners of social life that is insufficiently banished by enlightening forces of rationalization. “For myth has not been really vanquished and subjugated. It is always there, lurking in the dark and waiting for

¹⁶⁷ Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946).

its hour and opportunity. This hour comes as soon as the other binding forces of man's social life, for one reason or another, lose their strength and are no longer able to combat the demonic mythical powers."¹⁶⁸ While his adverse assessment of myth is overblown, Cassirer correctly indicates that when social norms start to collapse, a turn to the past provides tools to legitimate or explain the newness of life.

When relationships to family, to place, to society are inarticulable—when Mrs. March can no longer return to comforts of New England provincialism, yet the metropolitan life of New York furnishes no mooring, myth can emerge. Commentators, activists, and others wanting to rein in the anomic potential of great social change can draw upon an arsenal of tropes from myth. Myth cannot, in Cassirer's language, be vanquished or subjugated by enlightenment; myth is not fully banished, I argue, because these tropes of Riis or Warner have a new role in modern life. Mythic tropes initially provide the discourse on homelessness with a way to ground an understanding of the metropolis and a tool to argue about how the city should look. Implicit within the tropes were valuations of the new spatial and personal displacements.

In the modern world, mythic tropes are assimilated into processes of rationalization; myth abets processes of ordering society. It helps provide a discursive order concomitant with broader forces of order. A myth/reason juxtaposition is an outmoded dichotomy; modern myth is an implement of rationalization and helped to discursively order the American city. Modern myth serves rational ends; it is not a form of consciousness, as Cassirer argues.¹⁶⁹ Before social scientists develop the means to talk about the city and to classify its populations, myth and its transcendentalizing processes

¹⁶⁸ Cassirer, *State*, 280.

¹⁶⁹ Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Volume 2: Mythical Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955).

elided the historicity of the homelessness of the city; its deployment helped ground the new social transformations in ancient traditions and begin to bring order to the city.

While the transcendentalization of myth which we find in the discourse on homelessness turns to ancient tradition, we do not have to turn to antiquity to transcendently ground life. Literary critic and theorist Roland Barthes shows synchronic transcendence in cultural forms.¹⁷⁰ But his mythic images appeared in the (relatively) stable society of post-war France; a turn to antiquity was unnecessary to deploy a transcendental trope. Margarine or plastics have no deep history and still can communicate meaning from the perspective of a point in time. They are products placed into a stable middle class environment; thus Barthes can synchronically analyze to understand their signification—he can contextualize a mythic image within its immediate socio-historical context.

In the fin-de-siècle period, the social upheavals were such that commentators turned the axis of the transcendence to older traditions; the ancient tropes are used because the means available to them were inadequate to make sense of the time. The city was unrecognizable, unknown; to represent it, they turned to ancient tropes.

The antiquity of the trope has no correlation to a presumed antiquity of the condition to which the trope is applied. The Russian socialist realist author Maxim Gorky points out the inventedness, the essential newness, of myth and its attempts to transform the world.

Myth is invention. To invent means to extract from the sum of a given reality its cardinal idea and embody it in imagery—that is how we get realism. But if to the idea extracted from the given reality we add—completing the idea by the logic of hypothesis—the desired, the possible, and thus supplement the image, we obtain that romanticism which is at the

¹⁷⁰ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987).

basis of myth, and is highly beneficial in that it tends to provoke a revolutionary attitude to reality, an attitude that changes the world in a practical way.¹⁷¹

Now Gorky implies myth in a more constructive way than I find in the works of bourgeois reform. I do not attribute a political intention to the invocation of mythic tropes by fin-de-siècle reformers; the invocation was an argument to ground a problem within older traditions.

Riis, et al., use myth to change the world in a practical way, but it is part of the two-step process. First the norm of a bourgeois subject and family is necessary, and then myth is used in the negative part of the project—othering the social practices that need to be managed. To use Gorky for our purposes, a homeless figure might function as a realist image, Cain or Ishmael supplement and become a mythic overlay. But because Cain historically precedes the formation of the figure within the discourse on homelessness, the image is already ‘supplemented.’ The older valuations enter into the discourse; once the mythic trope distills a constellation of assumptions—threats to Christian home, slovenliness, violence, etc.—to the image, the trope can slide away. The remaining ‘realist image’ of the homeless figure becomes a carrier of these social anxieties and assumptions of family norms.

The image of Cain (or Ishmael) distills arguments about the city—its mire and muck are taken up into this mythic image. By forming a constellation of significations which became attached to the Other (or Nether) Half, the mythic tropes play a role in developing the discursive underpinnings to homelessness. Myth was integral to bring a semantic order to the city; it was part of the response of urban commentators to urban

¹⁷¹ Gorky, in Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 279.

changes and codified many attitudes about the city and family. These attitudes became connected to the residents described as homeless; these assumptions of homelessness were often appropriated by social scientists who in the first decades of the twentieth century began to talk about homeless men.

Myth and the Family

The discourse on homelessness has two intertwined parts—the legitimization of the family and the othering of threats (social or individuals) to family norms. These two processes grew from responses to the impact of modernization on the middle class family. Among the responses was the invocation of mythic tropes to other social practices and individuals whose lives were thought to threaten middle class norms. While this part of the discourse is where we most frequently find the invocation of mythic tropes, myth does make some appearance in the legitimization of the family part of the discourse. In fact the same trope which is integral to the formation of the discourse on homelessness, i.e., the Cain story, is also invoked to legitimate the family.

Long before bowling alone became a problem, bowling together was one. Unlike Robert Putnam's praise for bowling teams,¹⁷² early twentieth-century observers of the rise of the associational life of civil society (including bowling clubs) thought it threatened community and family life. Putnam's category for these social relations—social capital—arose from the ruins of community, or so Jacob Riis would have us think.¹⁷³ The currently lauded associational life of the United States was in the fin-de-siècle thought to be a social ill; it lured people away from their family. As we saw in

¹⁷² Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

¹⁷³ Riis, *Peril*, 52 ff.

Section Two, the family altar (and hearth) become metonym for family and civil society organizations and clubs are thought to threaten the family and its symbols. Riis writes:

In the town of which I spoke, there have in the last half dozen years grown up two clubs, one for the men, the other for the women, and I am told that practically they all belong. The result has been the disappearance of pretty nearly all of the pleasant neighborhood life of that day when a man gave his arm to his wife after supper and they went together for a social call upon some neighbor, for a chat, a little music, going home in good season for bed, telling one another that they had had a good time. There are no good times in that town any more—not of that kind at all events. The men spend the evenings bowling at the club; the women meet in committees to plan public improvements. The old time supper has become a later dinner and it is the rarest of all things to find a neighbor ‘dropping in’ unannounced—so rare that one feels that it somehow is not good form any longer. The family firesides are cold. And the young—I am told that there is a disproportionate number of them growing up idle and useless, if not worse. They have lost their hold, though they do not know it. I am no enemy of clubs, although I know little of them; but, as a substitute for the altar, I will fight them until I die. And I am a great backer of woman’s influence in public affairs—it has been good always and everywhere in my sight; but I say to you now that I would rather see, we could better afford, that every club and organization in the land should cease to exist, and every ten-pin alley stand silent and deserted, than that the old home life which centred about the family hearth should go from among us. With it goes that which nothing, no commercial gain, no advance in science or government or human knowledge, can replace.¹⁷⁴

The trope of Cain becomes a carrier of all that is good for the family, as well as the threats to it. Riis’s appropriation of the Cain story furnishes both the problem and a solution; the same trope offers homelessness and provides a model for assimilating homeless populations as a brother’s keeper. The mythic overlay renders the modern urban conditions and their remedies as transcendental, suprahistorical concerns. The modern American family becomes a family writ large across history and culture; a particular form of the family becomes a transcendental structure, not one formed by particular social and economic conditions.

¹⁷⁴ Riis, *Peril*, 52-55.

The family thus transcends any social structure and leads to confusions in how it relates to community and civil society. Part of the problem with the contemporary communitarian movement is the failure to distinguish these two distinct types of social structures, usually involving the collapsing of discussion of associations into the language of community.¹⁷⁵ At the end of the nineteenth-century, a different question was asked: how could home and family be secure when evenings were spent with friends in bowling leagues, rather than around the ‘family altar’? At the time that Robert Putnam charts the beginning of bowling teams,¹⁷⁶ associations were not a sign of vibrant civic life but were a symptom of decaying community. Social relations began to mimic capital because capital was shaping them. The ‘organic bonds’ were eroding before these began to emerge. The only people still sharing proximity over years were the family. It had to be protected. But the bowling teams, clubs, etc., pulled members out of the home and thus distended the family. With its fall, the entire community fell.

For Riis, civil society can have a significant function, only insofar as it serves the family. He served on many committees and associations developed to address social ills, like the Tenement House Commission or the Council of Hygiene. These social and political associations were to rectify the pressures against family life—slum decay, uncleanliness, lack of green space. This critique is precisely the same objection to bowling together—they threaten the family. Community might not reach farther than the family—a point made explicit by mid-twentieth century sociologists whom we will discuss in the next chapter, but this last remnant must be protected on all sides. The

¹⁷⁵ For instance, Robert Putnam erroneously equates social capital with community (*Gemeinschaft*). “Sometimes ‘social capital,’ like its conceptual cousin ‘community,’ sounds warm and cuddly.” Putnam, 21.

¹⁷⁶ Putnam, 440.

threats to family are not just from the poor and immigrant. Beyond associations, he attacks other parts of middle class life which problematize the preservation of the Christian home.

Despite his contradictory effort to instrumentally create the organicism of community, Riis thought that recognizing the other as brother could rectify social ills. For him, the mark of Cain arose from failure to recognize that ‘I am my brother’s keeper’; thus he felt that the tenement’s curse by this mark could be lifted by the undoing of this failure. Riis tells us that “Loving our brother, we shall not have the heart to leave him in the slough...we shall be cutting off the heritage of sin and sorrow and failure that would blight the to-morrow. We shall have lifted the curse [mark] that was laid upon man for forgetting his brother.”¹⁷⁷ Participating, creating this community is the solution for social ills, but the first step is the recognition of the bond with the other. Riis declares that “I am my brother’s keeper, and I am ashamed at last not to own it. That is the key-note of the whole modern reform movement, the new charity, the new school, the social settlement and all; and thank God for it!”¹⁷⁸ (Or, he also notes: “‘My brother’ is the word that has healing from all our social ills.”¹⁷⁹ Riis, like his contemporaries feared that community structures centered around the family were collapsing in the metropolis, and thus, he invoked myths which buttressed the family and othered the threats.

The Cain story crystallized Riis’s calls for transforming the slums into an image. In Section One, we saw Riis’s programmatic call to make the city safe for the Christian home. The punch line of the Cain story became a mythic legitimization of this desire for reform; Riis was no longer merely seeking some housing and business changes in the

¹⁷⁷ Riis, *Peril*, 174.

¹⁷⁸ Riis, *Peril*, 188.

¹⁷⁹ Riis, *Peril*, 185.

city. Instead, he framed the need to create spaces in which the family could flourish within a transcendental overlay—being a brother’s keeper. The trope of Cain furnished an image to argue for fostering the family and to combating the anomic propensities of urbanization. Riis’s trope provided an example to model social relationships on the brotherly ones of family life.

In the waning decades of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, advocates of family values have embraced civil society and social capital as panaceas for threats to the family—the former threat has become the solution. In Chapter Four, I will return to these tensions between communitarian desires and the associational life of civil society in a discussion of the rise of the family values movement out of the discourse on homelessness.

In this section, I have argued that myth has an integral role in the discourse on homelessness. First, I distinguished mythic and religious responses to the city and claimed that myth was a central mode of representation of city life. Fin-de-siècle religious interventions with social changes demanded a faith-based commitment and action from their audiences; the deployment of mythic tropes by journalists and activists merely proffered a cultural argument about family and social order. Second, I argued that these mythic tropes were invoked by urban commentators as part of a process of rationalization; their invocation of myth helped bring a semantic order to a chaotic city. This semantic order established the parameters for subsequent institutional and political reform in urban life. The invocation of mythic tropes, however, were not used exclusively for the purposes of representing homelessness; it also had a role in establishing the family

as a model for social life. By being my brother's keeper, Riis implicitly tells us, we can make society function as a family and not as the abstract, transactional relationships which were becoming dominant in urban life. The deployment of myth by activists consolidated the attitudes about family, religious threat, wandering, and place which we saw in the last section.

The anti-Semitic tropes functioning as myth brought a semantic order to the chaos of the fin-de-siècle American city. The journalists and activists whose rhetorical interventions began this ordering process were describing the city, its changes and their fears of its destruction to a way of life. This nostalgia for a way of life was a longing for a simpler time and place—the lone remnant of that supposed *Gemeinschaft* was the immediate family and its utopic locus of the Christian home.

In this chapter, we have seen novelists, journalists, and activists define the fin-de-siècle American city as homeless. They used language of homelessness because the city embodied threats to the Christian home ideal. Defining urban problems, suggesting ameliorative efforts, and categorizing populations enabled subsequent efforts to reform the city. Part of the process of responding to these problems included developing the means to represent the new urban conditions. The city had so quickly changed that current categories were inadequate to describe the city, so many writers turned to a set of anti-Semitic tropes which provided a readily available arsenal of images for othering individuals. These writers used these tropes as myth—they served cultural function of representing social problems.

The invocation of myth helped to bring a semantic order to the city; writers became better able to represent problems. By helping to define the characteristics of

homelessness, the mythic tropes abetted the efforts of reform—the social problems were represented so that subsequent institutional responses could change the structure of residences and neighborhoods to foster family. As we turn to the next chapter, we will see how sociologists later take up the language of homelessness. They codify homelessness as a category of social science and constitute the homeless man, but the basic assumptions of what the term signifies began in the fin-de-siècle period; these assumptions arose from the mythic tropes used to represent the homeless city and its residents.

Chapter 3: The Rise of the Homeless Man

This chapter charts the rise of homelessness as the normative category of social displacement. In the fin-de-siècle period the term first began to appear in the writings of social activists and journalists. The popular term was eventually taken over by the new field of urban sociology. In the first several decades of the twentieth century, it became increasingly used in sociological studies of shelter populations and residents of skid row districts in the city. First used as the primary term in Alice Solenberger's 1914 study *One Thousand Homeless Men*, it did not become the normative social science category of displacement until Edwin Sutherland and Harvey Locke's 1936 *Twenty Thousand Homeless Men*. (In the interim decade, the term received a great boost in Nels Anderson's book *The Hobo*.) All three studies resulted from collaborations between academic researchers and social service providers. The rise of this category required displacing a range of other terms and subordinating entire taxonomical systems to 'homelessness'. The term underwent a professionalization as it moved from the page of the journalist and activist to the scholarly journal and monograph. Many of the characteristics of the sociologists' homeless man were initially represented by the mythic tropes of Riis, Warner, et al.

The homeless man, however, was not constituted as a category until the mid 1930s. Until that time, other terms and taxonomies were also used, often representing distinct attitudes about or understandings of displacement. 'Hobo' was the last term standing as a competitor to 'homeless'. The stakes in the competition were far greater than vocabulary. These two terms represented two very different forms of displacement—as we shall see, the former much more embodies an agentive pure

movement and freedom. The hobo embraces a detachment from bourgeois society. The latter homeless man represents the anomie, collapse of mores and nostalgia which we found in the fin-de-siècle commentators. The hobo seeks a life and community outside of middle class society; the homeless man represents the loneliness of those who have lost their family. The former category is a self-definition, while the latter is imposed upon the individual in the shelter. Social service involvement was essential to the scholarly formation of the 'homeless man' as the dominant social science category.

The two forms of displacement represented by these two different terms—the hobo and the homeless man—were constituted under very different circumstances. The hobo was a name adopted by one who wanted to represent his embrace of independence, individuality and freedom. The homeless man, however, was a category formed in the social service system to describe those people whose identities were shaped through a process that Sutherland and Locke called shelterization. This process formed a docile population, malleable to the efforts of service providers and the proddings of social scientists.

In this chapter we see a categorical consolidation around the term 'homeless', but the moment of interpellation is deferred. Not until the 1980s (and the next chapter) do we find a homeless subject who acknowledges and internalizes the moniker, much like the hobo had in the early decades of the twentieth century. The category of the homeless man was consolidated in the gaze of the shelter provider and the sociologist by the mid 1930s, but the category was not accepted by the described population until decades later. Perhaps such an acknowledgement required a substantial price tag. The passage of 1987's Stewart B. McKinney Act finally tied the distribution of billions of federal dollars to

homeless social services; accepting the name homeless became financially remunerative—large number of people began to consider themselves to be homeless.

This chapter traces the consolidation of the category of homelessness in the sociology departments of the nation's largest cities. In the first section "Discourse and Subjectivation in American Homelessness," I look at the discursive conditions necessary for the formation of 'homelessness' as the normative category of social displacement. I argue that sociologists made spatial, linguistic, and institutional distinctions of particular populations to designate those who were displaced from the broader population. These individuals received the appellation 'homeless man'.

In the second section "The Limits of Hobosociality for Social Mooring," I argue that a consolidation of the category of homelessness required the dislodging of the competing category of the hobo from social science. We saw the linguistic and taxonomic subordination of the hobo in the first section, but in this second one, we see the institutional difficulties presented by the hobo and his incessant movement and desire for freedom. The hobo community sees itself as an alternative form of sociality which rejects the nuclear family for a community of fellow wayfarers. The discourse on homelessness consolidates the category of the 'homeless man' over against that of the hobo in a rejection of both the term hobo and the social practices of this community. Within the discourse on homelessness, the nuclear family remained the lone form of acceptable sociality.

In the final section of this chapter "Homelessness as Disaffiliation," I analyze the rise of disaffiliation as the definition of homelessness. The idea of disaffiliation arose from two new mid-century trends in American sociology—studies on loneliness and the

formation of the new category of the nuclear family. The term homeless man had just supplanted the hobo as the dominant term for social displacement in sociological literature. Further development of the category by social scientists was thus necessary. An implicit assumption of the discourse had long been that the homeless person was a threat to family; we saw this in the last chapter. While the idea that homelessness as disaffiliation became the dominant social science category, some activists resisted this assessment; their resistance went beyond the disaffiliation these to include objections to the rationalizing impulses of modern social science and social services. Despite such activist opposition, the advocates of rationalization and the disaffiliation thesis remained the dominant voice on social displacement.

The modernizing institutions of social services, municipal governments and urban sociology shaped a discourse and a population. Through processes of shelterization a normative category was established and an important foundation was laid for constituting a homeless subject. As we saw in the preceding chapter, the basic characteristics of this homeless man—threat to family, outside of society, restless, wanderer, etc.—were developed through mythic tropes. With the rise of social science in the early decades of the twentieth century, the mythic tropes fell out of common usage, but these basic attributes were taken up by the sociological definition of the homeless man.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the extremes of urban life slowly waned. The bohemianism of Greenwich Village was domesticated as social radicals found Cape Cod and the Hudson River Valley to be oases for their art production. The tsunami of immigration dwindled to a far lesser lapping onto the shores. Municipal

governments claimed greater authority to regulate urban chaos; at the behest of reformers like Jacob Riis, they instituted housing and zoning laws to regulate structures and those residing within them. The federal government extended its claims over speech to render much of the activity of political radicals illegal. With the shield of the First World War, the government rounded up socialists, anarchists and communists; it deported the immigrant and locked up the native radical. The New York that gave rise to the Draft and Tompkins Square Riots or the Chicago of the Haymarket Riot was reined in. The city became a more manageable locale.

Part of this managerial process included developing techniques to organize populations, to regulate social practices and to assimilate those not integrated to prevalent social norms. The techniques included administrative and discursive practices that shaped the urban populations into manageable groups. The fin-de-siècle urban chaos was finally reined in through these practices to alleviate bourgeois fears of cauldrons of simmering social unrest. Processes of rationalization restored a semblance of order, though social life was irretrievably transformed. Elements of the country—green spaces, air vents for fresh air, windows for sunlight—mitigated the impacts of modernization on cityscapes.

Riisian accounts of the fin-de-siècle American metropolis pictured a homeless city. He photographed new conditions—lives newly interrupted in their exile from small town American or European communities which immigrants had fled in search of greater opportunity. These photographs revealed a range of people rendered homeless by the severing of their ties to family and place. As many of these domestic and international migrants assimilated to the new norms of metropolitan life, acclimated themselves to bourgeois modes of behavior and became more financially secure over ensuing

generations, they moved out of the ranks of the homeless. These poor laborers were acculturated into bourgeois norms, even if still economically distant from this class. The formerly rural adopted patterns of citizenship, cleanliness and education to allay middle class fears of urban filth and the tensions brewing in this muck. Unlike in the macadam of Paris, few of these poor were always already urban, for the American city had no medieval heritage; it appears with modernity, through processes of modernization. From its 12,000 residents at the time of American independence to its millions just over a century later, New York outgrew its ability to accommodate populations with housing, services, work or space.

A subset of this population was migratory laborers, professional beggars, unemployed men and orphans. While the ranks of the homeless thinned through broader cultural assimilation, this subset stayed mired in the ranks. As the problems of tenements, poverty and large migrations became increasingly familiar, clearer attempts at articulation and new processes of organizing developed, like identifying clear social groups, in essence the ordering of all things homeless. New taxonomies of the displaced became common in early social science studies. These processes of systematically discussing social problems were the first step in managing them. Clearer distinctions of displaced enabled new processes of management to be tailored to address unique problems. When appearing in urban discussions, the scope of the term narrowed from the nearly three-fourths of the city's slum dwellers to this much smaller group of single men, who avoided (or lost) their natal families and never developed (or abandoned) a later conjugal one. The term's amorphous signification shifted from a catch-all for the city's

slum dwellers to a way of talking about a much smaller subset of the population—the residents of Hobohemia, the Bowery, or Skid Row.

Section One: Discourse and Subjectivation in American Homelessness

In a study of Chicago's homeless, the term narrowed further in the mid-1930s to become nearly coextensive with the sheltered man. Yet even in this point of seeming semantic contraction, it still implies a broader group of socially detached men—and almost always means men. A prologue to the constitution of the homeless subject began with the mythic tropes of the fin-de-siècle period. The mythic tropes of the fin-de-siècle commentators created a framework for discussing urban homelessness and naturalized a set of assumptions about the city, family and social behavior. The images of Cain and Ishmael—which intertwined with the trope of the Wandering Jew, the ideas of exile and the stranger, and the political radicalism attributed to hobos—distilled a set of implicit binaries like settled/unsettled; bourgeois/non-bourgeois, Christian/Jew to begin the discourse on homelessness, which culminated with the formation of the homeless man.

Before the sheltered man became fully constituted as a homeless man, several conditions arose. First, a way of delimiting this population developed—both from the 'normal' population and from other groups of the detached. The delimitation took both a spatial/geographical separation and a set of distinctions in social practices. A second condition was the development of a vocabulary to demarcate the socially disaffiliated man, and a third condition necessary for the rise of a homeless figure was the proliferation of institutions to manage and form the men.

All of these conditions were the products of and producers of this discourse through which the category of homelessness was eventually constituted. The discourse identified urban districts demarcated for the disaffiliated and a set of normative social practices—like marriage, heterosexuality, or sedentary work—against which the social practices of the homeless man could be juxtaposed. The semantic flux of the fin-de-siècle period settled first into a taxonomic series of distinct categories and then in the 1930s as subcategories of the metacategory of the homeless man. While the social service agencies remained independent, the municipal-level coalitions spurred the development of common practices, terminologies and extended their reach into academic and policy circles.

While the majority of the scholarly, policy, and social work literature of the New Deal and Eisenhower years coalesces around the category of homelessness, one prominent group from the religious left (a category hardly noticeable in twenty-first century America) resisted the dominant disaffiliation thesis. In their recuperation of the homeless man, the Catholic Worker sanctifies poverty and homelessness, or at least the homeless man. They combined these objections with an anti-modern appeal for a return to the land and a critique of the broader rationalizing and modernizing trends in social services and social science. Despite their objections, the discipline of sociology, along with social service providers, became the mid-century entity for defining social displacement.

The Space of Homelessness

Geographically circumscribing an urban space into which the homeless were separated from the broader middle class population faced an immediate problem—mobility. Mobility and migration were significant factors in creating the urban upheavals which came to be called homeless; they remained integral to the discourse on homelessness. Delimiting the space of a population on the move necessitates either an elimination of motion or creating a geography of spacelessness. Both processes appear in the discourse on homelessness.

An additional approach to spatial delimitation developed in the process of defining a space through which much of the wandering population passed at some time. The homeless figure became associated with the section of the city with day labor jobs, flophouses, pawnshops, cheap bars and brothels. But, only the home guard or bums remained in this location. Hobos and tramps threaten the social order with deterritorialization; they are wanderers. Their geography is one of motion—on trains, walking, hitchhiking—the space of the hobo and the tramp is one of movement, not of location. Climate, however, briefly necessitates a migratory cessation—either work ends for a season or camping spots along tramping routes become wintry wastelands. And thus the hobo and tramp settle—at least for a season—in the Main Stem, the metropolitan stretch for the poor and, presumably, derelict.

These Boweries, Skid Rows and Hobohemias became the locus for the homeless men. These urban districts share a dialectical relationship with the figure whom they help to form—they come to define a people who in turn come to define the place. Like this figure that these places come to geographically circumscribe, these spaces have their own

histories of development. By looking at shifts in these place names and their dislocation from the historical locus whence they emerged, I trace the spatial delimitation as it expands from particular places to describe a section of any city demarcated for the homeless. The place names come to represent a type of space in any city rather than a particular place in a specific city.

The oldest of the space names which becomes associated with the homeless figure is the Bowery. Of the terms for spatially marking the homeless figure, the ‘Bowery’ is the only one that did not develop specifically to describe a proto-homeless subject. The Bowery was the road providing a western limit to the 340-acre section of Manhattan’s Lower East Side which became part of prominent colonial estates.¹ The road—whose name derives from a Dutch word for farm (*bouwer*)—dates to the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam. The Dutch root is related to the Old High German verb *būan*, meaning ‘to dwell’; considering the last century’s history of the homeless in the Bowery, the term has an ironic etymology. In the mid-seventeenth century before British occupation and the regional renaming to New York, Peter Stuyvesant had the largest estate along what was then the largest road in New Amsterdam and his estate became popularly known as the Bowery. The region carried this name through British attempts to rechristen it and through its transformation from a sleepy, rural route to the eventual, supposed nadir of urban decadence.

Before the American Revolution the subdividing of the region began—stores and residences began to populate the area, and by the end of the eighteenth century, the Bowery became a prominent commercial center. The southern end reached into the Five

¹ Burrows and Wallace, 178. The following discussion of the Bowery’s history primarily draws upon Burrows and Wallace and David Levinson, “The Bowery,” in *Encyclopedia of Homelessness, Volume I*, ed. David Levinson (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2004), 32-35.

Points region of the city, which—long before the Draft Riots and Riis’s work as a police reporter—was already becoming an enclave of urban poor and immigrants. As a frequent disembarkation point for new immigrants, the Bowery became a hotbed for poor, nativist resentments and resistance to new arrivals. The proliferation of gangs and the concomitant violence shooed away middle class shoppers, stores and residences so that by the mid-nineteenth century the Bowery had much of the vibrant street life and character excoriated in Riis’s ongoing battle with the slum. The Bowery was already a tourist destination for the curious wealthy before the fin-de-siècle advent of Paresis Hall and other “resorts” for male prostitutes.² By the 1880s, this sightseeing practice was so common that the new term “slumming” was coined to describe the practice of curious onlookers taking titillating sojourns through the Bowery’s poverty, bohemianism and red light districts. The population of the destitute had increased in the Bowery with an influx of Civil War veterans and others displaced by the war.³

Because it became so associated with the down and out of New York, the name “Bowery” eventually shifted from a specific place name to be used for two semantic roles. First, it became an adjective for the disaffiliated man of New York’s downtown. After the ‘Bowery man’ came to describe a particular social type, the ‘Bowery’ was used

² See George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World 1890-1940* (New York: BasicBooks, 1994), ch.1. He discusses the Bowery as an object of spectacle for the slumming curious.

³ “In 1873, the YMCA opened a branch on the Bowery, the first lodging houses opened the following year, and the Bowery Mission opened in 1879. In 1878, elevated railroad tracks were erected over the sidewalks, making the street unattractive for pedestrians. In 1890, the Salvation Army opened four facilities, and by 1900, there were 100 lodging houses lining the street. The living facilities were soon neighbors to labor halls, secondhand stores, cheap restraints, pawnshops, brothels, and saloons. In 1916, the Third Street El (elevated railroad tracks) was built over the street itself, blocking out sunlight (until removed in the early 1960s). The population was composed almost entirely of men, including those who lived there year-round, day laborers, hoboes, and tramps.” Levinson, 33.

in a second way. The term became unmoored from Manhattan and became a general term for parts of cities in which disaffiliated men congregate.

Deriving from the Old High German verb ‘to dwell’, the spatial term ‘Bowery’ came to signify the absence of dwelling—the Bowery man was the homeless man. This urban homelessness belied the bucolic origins of the word as it entered into English as a description of expansive Dutch farms. The Bowery came to signify a space for homelessness. It was a locus designated as distinct from those of broader urban populations to create a rhetoric of geographical separation in which a homeless figure could be constituted.

While “the Bowery” with the definite article always signifies a district of downtown Manhattan, the term comes to simultaneously be a general category for a district of derelicts and a particular place name. The Bowery is, of course, not the only name for districts of lodging houses, bars and pawnshops. Other terms emerged later but followed similar trajectories.

The name Skid Row, however, became entirely unmoored from its locus of historical origin to become a name for a section of any city. An earlier form of the term—Skid Road—appeared in the 1880s lumber industry outside of Seattle. To move timber from forests to mills to process for the market, logs were skidded down the road. Services developed along the roads to accommodate the needs and desires of this migratory labor pool.⁴ In its transformed, popular form ‘skid row’ became the most common term for

⁴ “Concentrations of facilities which catered to homeless men came to be called ‘skid rows,’ the name deriving from the skidways on which lumberjacks in the Northwest transported logs. In Seattle the lodging houses, saloons, and other establishments were contiguous to the ‘skid road’ running from the top of the ridge down to Henry Yesler’s mill, and the term ‘skid road’ was applied to the community of the homeless. Transferred to other urban enclaves of homeless men, it became ‘skid row.’” Howard M. Bahr, *Skid Row: An Introduction to Disaffiliation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 32.

spatially delimiting the homeless. Skid Row so strongly signified the locus for the homeless that many studies on the homeless were eventually named for this location, e.g., Donald Bogue's *Skid Row in American Cities* or Howard Bahr's *Skid Row: An Introduction to Disaffiliation*. The Chicago School sociologist Donald Bogue alludes to the name's West coast origins, when he points out that Skid Row has become the term for where the urban homeless stay.

The term "Skid Row" (in the West it is called "Skid Road") has come to denote a district in the city where there is a concentration of sub-standard hotels and rooming houses charging very low rates and catering primarily to men with low incomes. These hotels are intermingled with numerous taverns, employment agencies offering jobs as unskilled laborers, restaurants serving low-cost meals, pawnshops and second-hand stores, and missions that daily provide a free meal after the service. Perhaps there are also barber colleges, burlesque shows or night clubs with strip tease acts, pennyarcades, tattoo palaces, stores selling men's work clothing, bakeries selling stale bread, and unclaimed freight stores. Most frequently the Skid Row is located near the Central Business District and also near a factory district or major heavy transportation facilities such as a waterfront, freight yards, or a trucking and storage depot.⁵

Here Bogue outlines the clearly identifiable nature of the district—its location in the metropolis and the services and entertainments available for passing the time.

The space becomes instrumental in constituting a homeless man—his activities, his morals, his interactions and his circle of acquaintances, as well as the types of institutions involved in shaping this category. Delineating this skid row space provides the means to separate the homeless from those in other parts of the city. And as we shall see in the next section, this spatial delineation provides the means to talk about the population as distinct from the broader population; the assumption of otherness, which

⁵ Donald J. Bogue, *Skid Row in American Cities* (Chicago: Community and Family Study Center, University of Chicago, 1963), 1.

began in the fin-de-siècle era, continues to mark the homeless man as distinct from the bourgeois residents elsewhere in the city.

Bogue elaborates on some of these ways of articulating differences by arguing that Skid Row men share three conditions which “distinguish them from residents of other communities in the city”: Skid Row man is homeless, poor, and has acute personal problems.⁶ Here Bogue makes explicit my point that the spatial delimitation of a ‘district in the city’ distinguishes a population of men from the remainder of the urban population. The poor, homeless man with personal problems is the Other of the “normal” population; the homeless man of skid row is only articulable in how he is different from the people of the rest of the city. The role as other, which dates to at least Riis’s *How the Other Half Lives*, continues to define homelessness. Bogue even goes so far as to use the term normal for the population not in skid row;⁷ the implicit norm to which this other is compared is now made explicit.

Despite some amount of unease with this normal-abnormal juxtaposition, Bogue still finds that there is an antinomy between the skid row homeless man and the more affluent populations. The sociologist appropriates the fin-de-siècle binaries—settled/unsettled, bourgeois/non-Bourgeois, social threat/threatened socially—and demarcates the population to which the negative formulation applies. The population is distinguished spatially, semantically, and institutionally from the broader population.

The primary distinction between the spatially circumscribed homeless man and the normal bourgeois population is the relationship to family. In Bogue’s list of three conditions common to Skid Row men, two of them are markers of familial separation.

⁶ Bogue, 2.

⁷ Bogue, 2.

Three conditions which Skid Row men share, and which serve to distinguish them from residents of other communities in the city are:

- a. They are homeless.—Most of them live outside private households and *have no family life*.
- b. They are poor.—Many work only very irregularly and receive low rates of pay. For these reasons, they are at the bottom of the income scale.
- c. They have acute personal problems.—With respect to society at large and in their interpersonal relations, many are poorly adjusted. This maladjustment frequently finds expression in heavy daily drinking, and in *withdrawal from conventional family living*.⁸

The spatial segregation marks an absence of family life. Skid Row became the most popular term for the urban district demarcated for the man disassociated from family life. The threats to family, which the discourse on homelessness articulated through myth in the fin-de-siècle period, now become an assumption of social science. Skid row man was the man withdrawing from family life. As we shall see more in the final section of this chapter, disaffiliation becomes the defining characteristic of homelessness.

Of the three place names which become unmoored from a particular location to signify the homeless area in any city, skid row falls chronologically in the middle. The Bowery was a place name in seventeenth-century New Amsterdam and came to describe a social type—the bowery man. While most common in sociological work in New York City, the Bowery became a term which signified the district of the poor and derelict. Much later in the 1880s, the term Skid Road appears and transforms to the more popular Skid Row by the 1940s. Like the Bowery, Skid Row became a name for that district of any city with pawnshops, brothels, and cheap bars. The formation of categories for urban districts distinguished from that of the ‘normal’ population geographically focused

⁸ Bogue, 2.

sociologists' studies and delineated the population which came to be designated as homeless.

The last of these names for spatial delimitation had a twentieth-century rise and demise. 'Hobohemia' appears to have been coined by the fiction writer Sinclair Lewis—he entitled a 1917 short story in the *Saturday Evening Post* "Hobohemia". In this story Hobohemia is indistinguishable from Bohemia. This district in downtown New York City is populated with artists, poets, novelists, anarchists, free love advocates and hangers-on. "Hobohemia is the place and state of being talented and free," Lewis's narrator tells us.⁹ In fact Hobohemia appears to be coextensive with Greenwich Village. When New York and Hobohemia newcomer Denis Brown is at a reception at Café Liberté (the epicenter of Hobohemia) with his would-be lover Ysetta—whom he has chased from their provincial Western hamlet Northernapolis, he faux-appreciatively looks at the crowd and declares:

"Some bunch!" said Mr. Brown weakly.

"Oh, these are just imitations—society slummers, and artists that are as disgustingly respectable as though they were merchants. The real Greenwich Villagers always go in the next room."¹⁰

The Hobohemians are Greenwich Villagers. Society slummers and bourgeois artists were not only mere simulacra of Hobohemians; they failed to recognize the differences. They were content to unwittingly mill about in an antechamber with other imitators, unknowing that the supposedly real bohemians lurked in an inner sanctum.

Despite an agonistic relationship with respectability and bourgeois decorum, Lewis's Hobohemia is not a space for the homeless man.¹¹ Nonetheless, Lewis's

⁹ Sinclair Lewis, "Hobohemia," *Saturday Evening Post*, April 7, 1917, 4.

¹⁰ Lewis, 6.

¹¹ First of all, Manhattan already had such a location—the Bowery. Second, the Greenwich Village of Mabel Dodge, John Reed and Max Eastman was a world of wealthy (or comfortable) radicals. The Ivy League and émigré Bohemians were a different class than the Bowery man. When 'Hobo King' Ben

Hobohemia presented lifestyles in tension with the norms of bourgeois families and homes. In the 1910s, the idea of homelessness was still broader than the narrow population of Skid Row man. When the weary Denis Brown was still trying to court Ysetta, he planned to call on her for a quiet evening. As he readied to suggest this borderline domesticity, he realized that he proposed a bohemian abomination.

He was under the impression that Ysetta was still in love with him, as she had been for all of five weeks. He was tired, one early evening. He wanted to be quiet. With a realization that the use of the expression would have got him court-martialed for espionage, in Hobohemia, he confessed to himself that he wanted to feel “homy.” He telephoned casually to Ysetta that he was coming up.¹²

The very idea of ‘homyness’ would elicit expulsion from Hobohemia, i.e., bohemianism was also a social threat to home. It was a competitor to hobodom as a social practice threatening middle class family norms. The moniker Hobohemia appears to integrate these two primary threats—hobos and bohemians, though Lewis only depicts the bohemian half of this nexus. Six years later Nels Anderson appropriates the name for the Hobo-half of the threat, where it remains until the name wanes into a historical term. The decline of the hobo brought about the irrelevancy of the Hobohemia moniker. The homeless man discursively subordinated the hobo and his place name.

Nels Anderson does much to popularize the name Hobohemia while simultaneously setting in motion the discourse which rendered it obsolete. His personal familiarity with this part of town is partially why was approached to conduct and write up this most exhaustive study of the hobo. He had been a hobo before finding himself

Reitman accompanied his anarchist lover Emma Goldman to New York on their speech tours the working class doctor repeatedly felt ill at ease. The political radicals from bourgeois families frowned at his coarse wit, licentious comments or his inability to expound on political theory. His unpublished autobiography is replete with the discomforts of the class chasm between the Hobo and the Bohemian radical. See Ben Reitman, *Following the Monkey*, unpublished autobiography, Box 1, Ben Reitman Papers, University of Illinois at Chicago Special Collections.

¹² Lewis, 126.

working on a Master's degree at the University of Chicago, and so could have a relatively easy entrée into the hobo milieu. "Mr. Nels Anderson, a graduate student in sociology in the University of Chicago, was selected to make the study. Mr. Anderson was already thoroughly familiar with the life of the migratory casual worker. He had shared their experiences 'on the road' and at work, and had visited the Hobohemian areas of many of the large western cities."¹³ In Robert Park's preface to the book, he declares that *The Hobo* is "intended to be the first of a series of studies of the urban community and of city life."¹⁴ The urban studies projects based at the University of Chicago, which came to be known as the Chicago School of Sociology, began with Anderson's *The Hobo*. The study of Hobohemia moved from the literary work of Lewis to the somewhat experienced-based study of a student (Anderson) to the full-fledged sociological study a decade later with Sutherland and Locke's *Twenty-Thousand Homeless Men*. Because of his intimate familiarity with the hobo community and life, Anderson later wrote a handbook for hobos under the pseudonym Dean Stiff.

In Part One of his 1923 study on the Hobo—"Hobohemia, The Home of the Homeless Man," Anderson argues that every city has a district for the homeless which he calls Hobohemia.

Every large city has its district into which these homeless types gravitate. In the parlance of the "road" such a section is known as the "stem" or the "main drag". To the homeless man it is home, for there, no matter how sorry his lot, he can find those who will understand. The veteran of the road finds other veterans; the old man finds the aged; the chronic grouch finds fellowship; the radical, the optimist, the crook, the inebriate, all find others here to tune in with them. The wanderer finds friends here or enemies, but, and that is at once a characteristic and

¹³ From the "Committee's Preface" in Nels Anderson, *The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923), ix.

¹⁴ Robert Park, "Editor's Preface," in Anderson, *Hobo*, v.

pathetic feature of Hobohemia, they are friends or enemies only for the day. They meet and pass on.

Hobohemia is divided into four parts—west, south, north, and east—and no part is more than five minutes from the heart of the Loop. They are all the “stem” as they are also Hobohemia. This four-part concept, Hobohemia, is Chicago to the down-and-out.¹⁵

Besides his claim that every city has such a district and his appropriation of Lewis’s place-name, I find a couple of other important points. First, Anderson says that this district is where “homeless types gravitate.” Typologies shift initially from ones of different types of socially displaced persons through several permutations to become types of the homeless; we will see this in our discussion of the vocabulary and taxonomies of homelessness in the next section. Anderson himself works through several taxonomies later in this monograph. Though he entitles the section *Types of Hobos*, he is already starting to talk about homeless types, as he does here.

Writing at this time of the waning of the hobo and the rise of something yet to come, Anderson’s vocabulary shifts between the departing moment and creating the rhetoric for the new era—that of the homeless man. There is an almost seamless movement between ‘hobo’ and ‘homeless,’ even though, as I will show, his idea of homeless men is much broader than the hobo. His analysis makes evident the inadequacy of the term ‘hobo’. We shall soon turn to this taxonomy and movement.

The second point from this passage which I want to note is the transitory nature of all social relations—the homeless are ‘friends or enemies only for the day.’ Like Bogue, Anderson assumes that there is something personally wrong with the homeless man such that he is unable to sustain ‘normal’ social relations. While Bogue found this social pathology to be a threat to the rest of the city—“Not only is Skid Row a physical eyesore,

¹⁵ Anderson, *Hobo*, 4.

it is also sociologically poisonous to neighborhoods in a broad surrounding zone,”¹⁶ Anderson finds this basic characteristic of the homeless to be deserving of pathos. Anderson here limits his discussion of pathology to the transitory feature of social relations. Bogue, however, implies a broader array of “social poisons,” e.g., heavy drinking or disease. However, these other problems follow from the maladjustment in interpersonal relations;¹⁷ the nature of the homeless man’s social interactions is (or breeds) social pathology. In both cases, the normative assumption is that social relations must have longer standing than the mere passing of exchanges. Part of the sociological anxiety around the homeless figure is this unclassifiability of the homeless man’s interactions. In the next section “The Limits of Hobosociality for Social Mooring,” we will explore sociologists’ analyses and anxieties about the social relations of the homeless man and the hobo and how these relate to broader concerns about social order which we saw in the fin-de-siècle period.

Despite the place name’s original association with the latter half of the compound, Anderson clearly distinguishes Hobohemia from Bohemia. He identifies the space—Bughouse Square—where “Bohemia and Hobohemia meet.”¹⁸ This area—even called the “Village”¹⁹—is the meeting spot of “vagabond poets, artists, writers, revolutionists, of various types as of the go-about.”²⁰ While some political or artistic interests might overlap between the hobos and the bohemians, they still relate at best as a Venn Diagram—a small intersection for two primarily distinct groups. Anderson does not

¹⁶ Bogue, 4.

¹⁷ “With respect to society at large and in their interpersonal relations, many are poorly adjusted. This maladjustment frequently finds expression in heavy daily drinking, and in withdrawal from conventional family living.” Bogue, 2.

¹⁸ Anderson, *Hobo*, 9.

¹⁹ Most likely the name came from New York’s Bohemian Greenwich Village, which is frequently known by this abbreviated name.

²⁰ Anderson, *Hobo*, 9.

dwell on Bohemia; he merely appropriates the place-name for the homeless. By the time Nels Anderson published *The Hobo* in 1923, bohemianism was seeming to be an enervated threat to bourgeois life.²¹ Bohemia's 'anti-homyness' could be disregarded, yet Hobohemia's homelessness was a thriving menace.

Anderson's study of the hobo is subtitled: *The Sociology of the Homeless Man*.

The title seems to imply that the threat to home, i.e., the homeless man, comes primarily from the homeless hobo. He ignores any threats from Bohemianism and establishes that the homeless man is the resident of Hobohemia. Anderson lays the groundwork for establishing 'the homeless man' as the metacategory for all socially displaced. Hobohemia is the locus for the homeless; it is the threat to home.

In Anderson's text, homelessness—the very antithesis of the bourgeois home—dwelled in Hobohemia. The term homeless sloughed off its bohemianism and briefly became an important name for the city district demarcating the homeless. Constituting this district created a culture that shaped the people of the district.

This segregation of tens of thousands of footloose, homeless, and not to say hopeless men is the fact fundamental to an understanding of the problem. Their concentration has created an isolated cultural area—Hobohemia. Here characteristic institutions have arisen—cheap hotels, lodging houses, flops, eating joints, outfitting shops, employment agencies, missions, radical bookstores, welfare agencies, economic and political institutions—to minister to the needs, physical and spiritual of the homeless man. This massing of detached and migratory men upon a small area has created an environment in which gamblers, dope venders, bootleggers, and pickpockets can live and thrive.²²

²¹ In the six years intervening between Sinclair Lewis's short story and Nels Anderson's monograph, American Bohemianism was dealt some significant blows. When the United States entered the First World War, a number of Greenwich Village's bohemian stalwarts abandoned their radicalism to endorse the U.S. intervention. The U.S. entry into the war and the Bolshevik's October Revolution, spawned the 1917 Espionage Act, the 1918 Sedition Act, and the Palmer Raids of 1919 into the early 1920s. Factional disarray, deportation as enforcement of anti-radical legislation and disillusionment spawned by both domestic and international radicals, left much of the Bohemian left a bit shattered.

²² Anderson, *Hobo*, 14-15.

By identifying a segregated area, the geography of future studies of Chicago's homeless, e.g., Sutherland and Locke's *Twenty-Thousand Homeless Men*, was defined—the homeless man became the man in Hobohemia. The space only becomes Hobohemia through the discursive process of including certain spaces and institutions while excluding others—the milieu and culture of the homeless man came to be defined by the social life of the residents of this district. The category of Hobohemia arose through sociologists studying this area—the social practices of its residents, the institutions providing services, and those trying to manage or regulate them.

Hobohemia's heyday, however, was short-lived. By the time Frank Beck—Chicago minister and long-time instructor of social pathology at Chicago's Hobo College, published his reminiscences in 1956's *Hobohemia*, Hobohemia was a place of the past. The Hobo College was a continuing education program set up by hobos for hobos; classes included philosophy and politics, as well as tips for life on the road. It was the brainchild of James Eads How, who also founded the hobo union the International Brotherhood Welfare Association. How, who inherited money from his prominent St. Louis family, was known as the 'millionaire hobo'. He wanted to encourage the development of the hobo community and its alternative social life. Versions of the Hobo College were set up in several cities; Chicago's was the largest and longest lasting. How identified Ben Reitman as an early leader of the college and he worked at it off and on for a number of years.

When Frank Beck looked back on his years at the Hobo College, Hobohemia was no more. The chapters about people and places—Ben Reitman, Lucy Parsons (the Haymarket widow), Emma Goldman, Bughouse Square, et al.—have a tone of nostalgia.

Most of the people of whom he writes are long dead; the places are changed. This Hobohemia is no more. Just a few years later, Jack Kerouac laments the passing of the hobo life in his essay “The Vanishing American Hobo.”²³ The hobo and his place—Hobohemia—were gone. Only the homeless man remained.

Certainly Hobohemia was instrumental in establishing a delimited geography of the homeless man. In many ways, Hobohemia was more important than the Bowery and Skid Row in delineating the space for homelessness. Anderson’s analysis of Hobohemia sets the stage for the homeless man to supplant hobos, tramps and bums; Hobohemia—despite its etymological ties to the hobo—is always already associated with the sociological category of homelessness. The advent of the term coincides with the rise of the homeless man. Beck’s opening line to Hobohemia invokes Alice Solenberger’s early study *One Thousand Homeless Men*,²⁴ as a worthwhile study of the men of Hobohemia. This street—West Madison, which Beck identifies with Hobohemia and homelessness, is also central to both the locus and the new figure for Anderson; it is “a port of homeless men.”²⁵ In an elaboration on this locus of the hobo and its connection with homelessness, Beck begins with Whitman and ends with the hobo as homeless. He writes:

Walt Whitman reflected the restlessness and rebellion and individualism of the hobo mind in his verse:

What do you suppose will satisfy the soul,
Except to walk free and own no superior?

The Hobohemian life begins by breaking ties. First with the family and then the community. It ends by severing all associations with static

²³ Jack Kerouac, “The Vanishing American Hobo,” *Holiday*, March 1960.

²⁴ “*One Thousand Homeless Men* is the name of a worthwhile human study made of the denizens of West Madison Street. In this canyon stretching across the great west side from the Lake, through the Loop and on toward the setting sun, flow never-ceasing streams of humanity, the largest number of homeless and hungry men that have ever been brought together anywhere in our land.” Frank O. Beck, *Hobohemia* (Rindge, NH: Richard R. Smith Publisher, Inc., 1956), 13.

²⁵ Anderson, *Hobo*, 5.

people and roving over the face of the earth. The hobo thus becomes not only a “homeless” man but a man without a cause, without a country, without, in fact, any type of responsible associations.²⁶

The freedoms of the hobo become his undoing. As with Bogue and Anderson, Beck laments the unattached man. The homelessness is this disaffiliation. He saw his role as instructor at the Hobo College to counter this disaffiliation.

At the end of very course I presented at the College I stressed the idea that a romantic passion for human freedom was not enough. The highest achievement of a human life was to establish and maintain purposeful communications with other human lives. The bo rolls along, missing the security and the glory of an attachment to the earth, to a cause, and also the stability and satisfaction of a recognized, worthwhile position in the scheme of things.²⁷

The wandering of the hobo breaks ties and makes men homeless. Though giving their name to that part of town in which they alight when not on the road, the hobo is primarily a wanderer. The mobility of the hobo produces the condition of disaffiliation; this condition can be created by other practices—drinking, laziness, or begging. Disaffiliation which results from numerous social practices becomes the way to define social displacement; place becomes relations in a space and not a space itself.

This category of disaffiliation defines the loose anxieties of the fin-de-siècle commentators. They lamented the anonymity of the city and the decline of neighborliness. For them, the demands of modernization had so changed the pace of life that social relations were becoming transitory. The simpler ideal of a rural *Gemeinschaft* was better able to foster the family and social life. The homeless men of Chicago’s Near

²⁶ Beck, 76. This description of the hobo mind is quite reminiscent of Robert Park’s analysis of the same three decades earlier. “The hobo, who begins his career by breaking the local ties that bound him to his family and his neighborhood, has ended by breaking all other associations. He is not only a ‘homeless man,’ but a man without a cause and without a country.” Park, “Hobo Mind,” 159.

²⁷ Beck, 77.

North Side represented the fears of the early generation of social critics—men entirely without a family.

The homeless figure becomes the man of social disaffiliation. For this homeless man to emerge, a space had to be set aside, a district to rhetorically quarantine the group afflicted by social pathology. This spatial delimiting not only serves to form a coherent group; it becomes essential in defining the parameters of the figures's activities; he can frequent missions, pawn shops, thrift stores, cheap bars and brothels but little else. Any activities elsewhere in the city are not integral to the homeless man; the locus defines the activities and specifies the institutions that have roles in constituting the homeless man. These spaces were remainder after much of the city was assimilated to the practices of the 'normal' population; these outliers kept the name homeless attached to them for they were—as Anderson told us—spaces only for men; the absence of women and children were a sign that family life did not exist here.

The terms Bowery, Skid Row and Hobohemia signified those spaces set aside to study the homeless. These are areas of town in which families have not part; this space, according to Anderson, is known for its “complete absence of women and children; it is the most completely womanless and childless of all the city areas. It is quite definitely a man's street.”²⁸ The spatial delimitation enabled social workers and sociologists to readily identify a population, identify their distinctions from populations elsewhere in the city and laid the groundwork for developing a vocabulary for demarcating the socially disaffiliated man. For the space is not distinct until it is defined as such—the space only becomes that of the homeless man when it is called the Bowery, Skid Row or Hobohemia. With clear research laboratories demarcated in the city, sociologists began to

²⁸ Anderson, *Hobo*, 5.

more clearly define the populations residing in and passing through the regions; they developed new terms and taxonomies to sociologically represent this group of homeless men. Thus, having looked at the process of delimiting this population of the homeless, I now turn to the emergence of this second condition necessary for constituting a homeless figure—a new vocabulary.

The Language of Homelessness

The homeless man is not constituted as the category of social displacement until the way was clearly paved through a series of semantic and taxonomic steps. The spatial segregation of populations enabled a vocabulary to emerge around the men of this disenfranchised urban district. The homelessness of the city rhetorically came to modify the denizens of the metropolitan slums. The vague array of characteristics which came to be associated with the fin-de-siècle ‘homeless city’—the area of the unsettled, political and social threats, outside of family norms, non-bourgeois, etc.—began to describe people in the more dilapidated parts of the city. Certain parts of the slums—these skid row districts—were populated almost exclusively by men, devoid of family life, and had few connections with life beyond the district. These spaces became an object of a particular type of attention—the helping professions.

Representatives of these institutions, along with journalists and academics studying the population or the institutions, developed a language to talk about these groups. The language arises through several types of intersecting institutions: the institutions in and of the Bowery (pawnshops, cheap bars, lodging houses, brothels); the institutions in but not of the Bowery—to the extent that their *raison d'être* is to reform or

rehabilitate the people and place (missions, shelters, police); and institutions interested in, but outside the Bowery (universities, governments, businesses). The third of these also mediated and developed the terms for an additional set of institutional relations—how the Bowery relates to or is articulated vis-à-vis non-Bowery institutions. Governments, academics, service providers and journalists articulate the nature of the Bowery man, his place (or lack thereof) in the larger social structures, and how the broader society might intersect with the homeless man.

As I have noted, during the semantic flux of the fin-de-siècle period, terms arose willy-nilly. After the taxonomic chaos of the fin-de-siècle decades, the discussion of urban poverty, social outcasts and dereliction went through years of organizing and reflection by social scientists, activists, and active hobos. Fin-de-siècle commentators' mythic tropes had represented some urban problems and so began to bring a semantic order to the city, but it was not until later that others began to codify the attributes developed through these tropes. These characteristics were to be developed into taxonomic systems.

The language for social outsiders was a broad negotiation between the argot of displaced communities and the vocabulary of those institutions managing this group. The processes of constituting the category of the homeless man were, in part, this contest for semantic supremacy, with an eventual victory for these institutions and their discourse. The category of social displacement came down to a contestation between the self-defined hobo and the service provider-defined homeless man.

In a rather self-evident way, the eventual terminological prominence of the homeless man reflects the imbalances in social locations of the interested parties. The

homeless man is specifically that man who does not have a network of social relations and institutional contacts; he does not have the power by which to take on the entrenched interests of governments, businesses, churches or social scientists. This language of outcasts emerges from this set of institutions with interests in the homeless man.

The banal point of power differentials was not always a foregone conclusion, however. The fevered-pitch of fin-de-siècle rhetoric emanates from a great fear that the power imbalance favors the homeless. In 1890, three-quarters of New York City lived in the homelessness of the slums. Through efforts of reform, these ranks were significantly reduced to a more easily managed number; the homeless man is of this more easily administered population. With its eventual codification in social science, the term 'homeless man' came to describe a much smaller population subordinated to social service institutions.

The language of homelessness is not merely a series of terms. Systems of classification order categories of the socially displaced. They establish mechanisms for defining the terms/categories; they articulate how these groups relate to each other and how they are situated with respect to other social institutions. The language of homelessness includes the discursive norms that are the matrices by which the figure is ultimately defined. These norms appear in the early fin-de-siècle representations of homelessness and later became codified in social science classification.

The terms, the taxonomies and their definitions create an intellectual delimitation (much like the spatial one) with principles of inclusion and exclusion. By the time the category of the homeless man is clearly constituted in Sutherland and Locke's 1935 *Twenty-Thousand Homeless Men*, several decades of social scientific fretting had

produced a framework for defining, categorizing and delimiting this figure through many reworkings of typologies of the homeless. Over these first several decades of the twentieth century, the taxonomies move from types of hobos or displaced to become types of the homeless. Tracing this shifts, we are able to chart the consolidation of the homeless man as the category for social displacement.

In *The Hobo*, Anderson has the most extensive survey of typologies, most of which were developed by hoboes primarily affiliated with the Hobo College, including three former presidents of this institution—Ben Reitman, St. John Tucker, and Nicholas Klein.²⁹ After his brief survey of taxonomic literature, Anderson offers his own typology.

Although we cannot draw lines closely, it seems clear that there are at least five types of *homeless men*: (a) the seasonal worker, (b) the transient or occasional worker or hobo, (c) the tramp who ‘dreams and wanders’ and works only when it is convenient, (d) the bum who seldom wanders and seldom works, and (e) the home guard who lives in Hobohemia and does not leave town.³⁰

Two important points emerge from Anderson’s analyses in this section. First, he begins the shift—implied with his subtitle *The Sociology of the Homeless Man*—from the category of hobo to that of homeless man; this transition is completed with Sutherland and Locke. The framing title of the entire section of the book is “Types of Hobos,” but when he starts to delineate his taxonomy in the above passage, he replaces the word hobo with ‘homeless man’. The newer term is becoming increasingly significant. Anderson cites Alice Solenberger’s early work—1914’s *One Thousand Homeless Men*—and her tendency to use “[t]he term ‘homeless man’ ... to include all types of unattached men, tramps, hobos, bums, and the other nameless varieties of the ‘go-about.’”³¹ Anderson

²⁹ Anderson, *Hobo*, 87ff.

³⁰ Anderson, *Hobo*, 89. Emphasis mine.

³¹ Anderson, *Hobo*, 87.

argues that this term is the best one available to characterize the full range of inhabitants in Hobohemia.³² Despite his title, the hobo is but one of five categories in his taxonomy. For Anderson, the homeless man subsumes all five categories. The homeless man was not yet the dominant sociological term for the unattached, but Anderson makes a strong case that it should be.

The second significant point in the above passage is that Anderson's categories are malleable. Above, we see Anderson delineate five taxonomic categories, yet in his chapter headings—which he names after the categories, he drops one of those he delineates. His chapter headings only provide for the hobo, tramp, bum, and home guard; the seasonal worker does not appear (or is perhaps subsumed under the hobo).³³ He concludes the hobo/tramp chapter with the point that distinguishing between the three—seasonal worker, hobo, and tramp—is problematic.³⁴

This tendency to collapse the three migratory groups into one, I argue, is part of a dual process—the subordination of the category of the hobo and the elevation of the homeless man. The hobo was the most popular moniker for outcasts in the first several decades of the twentieth century; it was the title of Anderson's monograph, an eponymous term for the section of town where homeless men were found—Hobohemia, and the self-adopted name of migratory laborers. Such worker-wanderers established the Hobo College, published *Hobo News*, and held hotly contested elections for the Hobo King. To establish 'homeless man' as the term of choice for the socially displaced despite

³² Anderson, *Hobo*, 87.

³³ This discussion falls in Part II of *The Hobo*—"Types of Hobos", in which Anderson looks at "Why Do Men Leave Home?" (chapter 5), "The Hobo and the Tramp" (chapter 6), "The Home Guard and the Bum" (Chapter 7), and "Work" (Chapter 8).

³⁴ "The distinctions between the seasonal worker, the hobo, and the tramp, while important, are not hard and fast. The seasonal worker may descend into the ranks of the hobos, and a hobo may sink to the level of the tramp...Significant, also, but not sufficiently recognized, is the difference between these migratory types and the stationary types of homeless men, the 'home guard' and the 'bum.'" Anderson, *Hobo*, 95.

the popularity of the self-defined hobo, Anderson hearkened back to Solenberger's earlier work to provide a legitimating history to this category.

Many whose writings are integral to forming the category of the homeless man, including Anderson and Sutherland and Locke—who cite her “careful study” as an effort made “to define and secure a more adequate understanding of the problem,”³⁵ refer to her study as the beginning of the homeless man. By attributing to her a better understanding of unattachment, they affirm the superiority of the homeless man over other categories of displacement. They also extend their category further back into time. While it was not the dominant category at the time of Solenberger's study, she was prescient enough to understand that the urban problem was that of the homeless man and not some other form of displacement, like vagrancy.

Sutherland and Locke go on to indicate that the process of shifting focus to homelessness—both the category and the social problem which it represents—gains ground, and more importantly institutional support in the 1920s.

[O]ne of the earliest indications of a general shift away from concentration on the vagrancy problem to a study of the homeless man as such was the experience of the Committee on Begging and Vagrancy of the American Association for Organizing Family Social Work. This committee, organized about the time of the 1920-21 depression, soon found that it was really studying the problem of the homeless man in its larger aspects, and the name of the committee was subsequently changed to the “Committee on the Homeless.” The committee emphasized that the current work done with the homeless did not have adequate organization anywhere in the country and recommended organization as the first step. They said that the policies should fall in two general classes, constructive and repressive.

Thus through the decade 1920-1930 the most important development with reference to the care of the destitute homeless in America was a gradually emerging interest on the part of social work organizations, which resulted in an attempt to organize and centralize the

³⁵ Edwin H. Sutherland and Harvey J. Locke, *Twenty Thousand Homeless Men: A study of Unemployed Men in the Chicago Shelters* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 174.

services of the various organizations that had interested themselves in the problem.³⁶

Here we see that the semantic shift from older categories like vagrant to the homeless man is later than Solenberger's 1914 study. The taxonomic and terminological consolidation took place in the social science literature of the next two decades. As we see above, in the 1920s, social work institutions serving the displaced renamed themselves after the problem of homelessness. This Committee on the Homeless was constituted at nearly the same time as the Committee on Homeless Men commissioned Anderson to write *The Hobo* as a sociology of the homeless man.

While Solenberger does not signal the constitution of a homeless figure, she portends its imminent arrival. By the time Sutherland and Locke conduct their study in the mid-1930s, the homeless man is the category for social displacement. The backward nod to include her in the process is an effort to extend the reach of the homeless man further back in history. For Sutherland and Locke, it can serve to legitimate that there was a form of homelessness prior to the Depression of the 1930s, and for Anderson, she legitimates his semantic turn to homelessness in a study of the hobo.

Because her work is usually invoked as the Ur-study of homelessness, Solenberger's definitions and classifications become extremely important. While she erroneously argues that the homeless man has been a figure of "human society since its beginning,"³⁷ she does see that in the decades just prior to her study new terms and

³⁶ Sutherland and Locke, 175.

³⁷ Alice Willard Solenberger, *One Thousand Homeless Men: A Study of Original Records* (New York: Survey Associates, Inc., 1914), 1.

greater numbers of the homeless are appearing.³⁸ She provides a useful point of departure for the modern homeless figure. She writes:

The term “homeless man” might be applied to any man who has left one family group and not yet identified himself with another. It might include hundreds of men living in clubs, hotels, and boarding houses, and its use would not necessarily imply a forlorn or penniless condition. But for the purpose of this study the term will be used to designate those men of the homeless class who live in cheap lodging houses in the congested part of any large city.³⁹

Her definition of the homeless man looks very reminiscent of ones proffered by social scientists over half a century later⁴⁰ and incorporates many of the homeless characteristics which emerged in the fin-de-siècle period—urban congestion, poverty, and most importantly, being outside of family norms. Her work consolidates many of the vague ideas of homelessness floating around in the work of fin-de-siècle activists and establishes a working definition of the homeless man. This working definition was readily appropriated by both social workers providing services and sociologists like Sutherland and Locke or Bahr and Caplow. While she was not cited much at the time, her study was recuperated in later decades as her chosen category—the homeless man—became the social science category for social displacement.

³⁸ She subsumes all categories of beggars or tramps under the rubric of ‘homeless’ and then argues that we have always had beggars. Whereas, I contend that though beggars may have always existed, the homeless man is a very modern form of social displacement, predicated upon several discursive (as well as historical and economic) conditions. Merely because the older categories are subsumed under a newer one at a particular historical moment does not enable the anachronistic attribution of the new term and the figure it signifies.

³⁹ Solenberger, 3.

⁴⁰ Bahr and Caplow’s 1973 study continued this disaffiliation theme, writing: “Homelessness is a condition of detachment from society characterized by the absence or attenuation of the affiliative bonds that link settled persons to a network of interconnected social structures,” and they continued “the man who occupies the same lodging on skid row for forty uninterrupted years is properly considered homeless. The essence of the concept goes beyond residential arrangements. Homelessness is best visualized as a relationship to society at large.” Howard Bahr and Theodore Caplow, *Old Men Drunk and Sober* (New York: New York University Press, 1973), 5 and 7.

The idea that homelessness is about social relations and not residential arrangements already appears in these early foundations of the homeless man. Solenberger defines the homeless man by social relations, geographically circumscribes the population to a specific urban district, and then delineates a particular set of institutions—lodging houses—by which she distinguishes the population. She actually further narrows the population by limiting the study to applicants at the Chicago Bureau of Charities,⁴¹ i.e., the population is that subset of the men without familial connections who stay in cheap lodging houses in particular sections of cities and avail themselves of the helping professions. These one thousand homeless men, who are subjected to the study because they availed themselves of services, define homelessness.

The idea of the homeless man arises in studies of the assisted; the homeless figure becomes someone subjected to a certain form of study. He is a man who has lost the near absolute freedom of the hobo. Sutherland and Locke later follow in this stead by *de facto* equating the homeless man with the shelter man. Homelessness becomes shaped through interactions with social services and social workers; the homeless figure is constituted through processes of managing an urban population.

Solenberger develops two distinct taxonomies for the homeless man—one for the social service administrator and another for more clearly representing the group. She posits that from the vantage point of a social worker needing to administer this population, the group includes four distinct classes of men: self-supporting, temporarily dependent, chronically dependent and the parasitic.⁴² We can see that this administrative taxonomy defines the population by the subject's reliance on bourgeois social service

⁴¹ Solenberger, 3-4.

⁴² Solenberger, 9-10

institutions. While these categories which assess the “degree and character of their dependence” are useful for managing the group, she proposes an alternate form of classification for clarity in discussing the pool of homeless men.⁴³

One taxonomy is best suited for administering services, but another is more useful for communicating about this large and varied group. This latter system of classification divides “according to some common characteristic into small groups, such as insane men, aged men, boys, beggars, etc.”⁴⁴ Solenberger contends that multiple taxonomic systems can fall under the rubric of the ‘homeless man’. Here is the first move towards subordinating the varied types of social displacement under a unified category.

In 1914, the fin-de-siècle semantic chaos is still the norm; a triune division of tramps, hobos and bums is the most common—in that taxonomy, there is no reducing beyond these three. Hobo King and sometime director of Chicago’s Hobo College, Ben Reitman rarely falls back onto the term homeless, but rather he uses his own taxonomy. In his writings, he presents an alternate categorization of hobo, tramp, and bum, based on the physical labor and motion of the homeless body. The hobo both works and moves or wanders, the tramp wanders but does not work; the bum neither wanders nor works, but remains ensconced in the city.⁴⁵ The assumption of the movement of wandering—from Cain, the Wandering Jew, exile and the stranger—enters into these early social science taxonomies.⁴⁶

⁴³ Solenberger, 11-12.

⁴⁴ Solenberger, 12

⁴⁵ See Reitman, *Follow the Monkey*.

⁴⁶ While Ben Reitman was not a social scientist, he worked for a period at the Chicago Department of Health, he served on the Committee on Homeless Men that commissioned Anderson’s *The Hobo*, and Anderson included one version of Reitman’s taxonomy in the study. The activism of Reitman and other directors of the Hobo College had an open line of communication with the sociologists at the University of Chicago. Many of the early taxonomies from these hobos appeared in Anderson’s book. Robert Park

But Nels Anderson continues with Solenberger's sociological move to have one analytic category under which the systems of classification fall—he discusses the varied taxonomies as types of hobos. However, he also starts the process of moving the typologies from that of hobos to types of homeless men. Anderson's book moves toward the mono-category in fits and starts; he cannot fully decide what the category should be. He frequently uses the then popular term hobo as the category, but frequently moves toward the homeless man.

The terminological shift is intertwined with Solenberger's taxonomical problem of management versus representation. The standardization of the term is integrated with the needs of the service provider. The hobo represented a population that was not easily manageable; the homeless man signified a more docile figure. To have a solitary category, the management and representation needs had to coincide or one be subordinated. The homeless man was not only more easily managed, he was more easily studied. Few other social scientists had Anderson's entrée into the world of the hobo. Though not for another decade—until Sutherland and Locke, this equivocation ends with the consolidation of the homeless man.

Anderson's equivocation begins with the term 'hobo' itself; he seems to use it as the umbrella category quite ambivalently. We have already seen him say that the homeless man is the best way to describe the problem. He also uses the category of hobo in two different ways—a bit problematic for a single category. It is almost as if he were a timid young student unwilling to overturn conventional wisdom. After all, he was commissioned to write a report on the hobo by a group which included two of the doyens

famously takes up the idea of motion as defining the hobo in his essay on the hobo mind which came out two years after Anderson's book.

of American sociology—Robert Park and Ernest Burgess. Despite his ambivalence, he keeps the unitary category of the hobo in name only, while setting the stage for a shift to the homeless man.

Because the hobo is the object of his study, he uses it as the category to frame his analysis. For Anderson, the term hobo has multiple levels of meaning—1) hobo as a general term for all types of unattached men and 2) a particular sub-category of migratory laborers. The general term is evidenced by the book title; under the rubric of the ‘hobo’, his study includes analyses of the full range of displaced. He has a section of the book dedicated to typologies—the section is entitled ‘Types of Hobos’. In this discussion of types of hobos, he subsumes tramps, bums, home guard and the range of migratory workers under the single category of hobos.⁴⁷ The particular term appears in both the survey of literature and his own taxonomy, which I cited above. However, the term is problematic for the social scientist and the service provider.

Despite writing about the hobo, Anderson already seems to be calling for a semantic shift to ‘homeless men’. Service providers also seem wedded to the new term—Anderson conducts his study under the auspices of the Chicago Council of Social Agencies’ Committee on Homeless Men. Sutherland and Locke note the 1920s changes at the American Association for Organizing Family Social Work to establish a

⁴⁷ Hobo is used as the term for a particular form of homeless men, a broader term for the three categories of migratory workers, and the meta-category for all types of unattached and outcasts. A former head of Chicago’s Hobo College makes this point explicit. Anderson cites St. John Tucker’s analysis that all the forms of migratory workers are hobos.

A hobo is a migratory worker. A tramp is a migratory non-worker. A bum is a stationary non-worker. Upon the labor of the migratory worker all the basic industries depend. He goes forth from the crowded slavemarkets to hew the forests, build and repair the railroads, tunnel mountains and build ravines. His is the labor that harvests the wheat in the fall and cuts the ice in the winter. All of these are hobos. St. John Tucker quoted in Anderson, *Hobo*, 87.

Likewise, M. Kuhn (author of ‘The Hobo Problem’), Nicholas Klein (president of the Hobo College), Roger Payne (self-proclaimed hobo philosopher), all subsume all types of migratory workers under the term of hobo. Anderson, *Hobo*, 88 ff.

Committee on the Homeless. Even though the hobo was the most prominent category in the early decades of the twentieth century, the category of the homeless man was increasing in popularity.

The semantic shift marks an underlying hobophobia and an (as yet) permanent shift to the new category of homelessness; it is also inextricably intertwined with the rise of the helping professions. The three major scholarly studies—one seminal text each for the successive decades of the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s—through which I am tracking the rise of this discourse are all collaborations with service providers.⁴⁸ For Sutherland and Locke, the homeless man is *de facto* synonymous with the shelter man; the same was true in Solenberger's study—she identified the homeless men as that subset of the men without familial connections who stay in cheap lodging houses in particular sections of cities and avail themselves of the helping professions.

The rise of the homeless figure as an object of knowledge is always already about managing this population; the necessity of semantic and classificatory clarity—as Solenberger showed us in her bifurcated taxonomies of management and discussion—is always connected to an explicit investigation of how to best manage the population. The shift to the homeless man rests upon the unmanageability of the hobo; this semantic shift is part of an institutional effort to rein in the wandering population.

In the decade after Sutherland and Locke's study, the term hobo almost completely disappears from the vocabulary of the social scientist and service provider, though it is still used within the hobo community for another couple of decades. The

⁴⁸ I have already noted that Anderson's study was a University of Chicago collaboration with the Chicago Council of Social Agencies and that Solenberger studied applicants to the Chicago Bureau of Charities. Sutherland and Locke's study was likewise a collaboration between the University of Chicago and the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission.

hobo is a term used, embraced, cultivated and disseminated by the social class that these social scientists and service providers are endeavoring to manage. The hobo's independence proves difficult for these institutions. The subordination of the category hobo is a crucial step in consolidating the homeless man as the sole category of social displacement.

The Institutions of Homelessness

The sequestering of populations and the development of vocabulary arises through both those institutions within skid row and those serving and reflecting on the men of the area—they all contribute to the process of constituting the category of the homeless man. The category is developed by these institutions to describe those whose relations with society (and these institutions) is one of *de facto* powerlessness—the category represents those men subordinated to the service and research institutions. Writing in a later era, Howard Bahr makes this powerlessness a central argument in his analysis of skid row. “[W]e shall introduce one of the important themes of this work. It is that a distinguishing characteristic of the homeless is their powerlessness, and that much of the social abhorrence for skid row men is due to their powerlessness, itself a derivative of this disaffiliation or lack of social ties.”⁴⁹ The imputed disaffiliation of the homeless man eventually becomes a broader disaffiliation than a mere lack of familial ties; the discourse expands the disaffiliation to broader voluntary and organizational relations. The hobo unions, like the International Brotherhood Welfare Association, go away with the decline of the hobo; the homeless man is left with social service agencies, skid row

⁴⁹ Bahr, *Skid Row*, 17ff.

commercial interests, and social scientists who define and provide services to the disaffiliated. Social service agencies are the most conspicuous of these institutions.

While most of these are not much older than the homeless figure that they help constitute, charity, alms, and neighborliness do not appear with the modern city. The localized system of charity which reached the shores of colonial America with the Elizabethan poor laws⁵⁰ distinguished between supplicants from the town and outsiders.⁵¹ Those from the local community had settlement rights to assistance from the town; one obtained these rights by being born to a family from the community or by being accepted as a town member through a vote. If a nonmember appeared likely to become dependent on the town, e.g., the disabled or widowed, they had to move on.⁵² The public distribution of aid in the colonial era did not preclude private charity which was often fulfilled as a religious obligation above the tax duties for poor relief.⁵³ Because this charity was so localized, the distribution of relief did not usually require an analysis of the moral character of the needy; the reputation of the individual or family receiving aid was already known. Early charitable practices functioned on principles of *Gemeinschaft*—neighbor helping neighbor. The community took care of its own, while the stranger was asked to move on.

These assessments of the supplicant, however, became commonplace over the course of the nineteenth century. The growth of the town into a metropolis often prevented the disseminator of charitable largesse from personally knowing the aid

⁵⁰ The local government—town, county or parish—was made responsible for its poor with the 1601 Elizabethan code. Kusmer, 20.

⁵¹ This discussion of colonial charity borrows significantly from Rossi, 17 ff.

⁵² Peter Rossi points out that this colonial-era settlement requirement to receive public assistance lingered for most of the nation's history until a 1969 ruling by the Supreme Court "declared unconstitutional the length-of-residence restrictions that states and local communities ordinarily placed on eligibility for benefits." Rossi, 18.

⁵³ Kusmer, 21.

recipients and their family. Charity underwent the same sort of rationalizing transformations impacting the rest of the society. The structure of a local community taking care of itself gave way to transactional relationships in which organized charities collected funds from one group of people to distribute to a different set. Initially, with the burgeoning metropolis, some semblance of personal charity was maintained. In the waning decades of the nineteenth century, a proto-homelessness developed and charity changed; both were emerging from the vast urbanization taking place along the Eastern seaboard and in other cities like Chicago. “The swift expansion of the charity organization movement represented one response of a troubled middle class to the social dislocations of the post-Civil War industrial city.”⁵⁴ Organizing the bourgeois response to urban poverty was an effort to avert revolutionary upheavals; organized charity, according to late nineteenth-century commentator J.J. Cook, had “preternatural powers for fusing and moulding and tearing down and building up. Surely here, if anywhere, society will find that better thing than instantaneous revolution—gradual regeneration.”⁵⁵

The fin-de-siècle charities realized that they had no “ties of blood, sympathy or previous knowledge”⁵⁶ with the new urban populations. Yet, they strove to mimick the neighborliness found in small town life. “The charity organization ideal was to reestablish the patterns of social interaction of the small town or village, where the

⁵⁴ Roy Lubove, *The Professional Altruist: The Emergence of Social Work as a Career, 1880-1930* (New York: Atheneum, 1983), 2. The following discussion of the fin-de-siècle rise of charity organizations draws extensively from Lubove.

⁵⁵ J.J. McCook, “Charity Organization and Social Regeneration,” *Lend-a-Hand* XIII, 1894, 469, in Lubove, 5.

⁵⁶ F. J. Kingsbury, “Charity Organization a Necessity of Modern Conditions,” *Lend-a-Hand* XIV, 1895, 7, in *ibid.*, 15.

primary group exercised powerful social controls. The charity society was an ‘artifice,’ designed to restore the ‘natural relations’ which the city had destroyed.”⁵⁷

The *Gemeinschaft*-ideals of rural life were created under the auspices of the large charity associations by establishing district offices that sent out volunteer visitors to take friendship (and not alms) to the residence of those seeking help. This paternalistic practice of the volunteer visit eventually ceded to the professional social worker, who brought training and skills to bear on the circumstances of the aid recipient. The modernizing impulses for bureaucratization, efficiency and efficacy invaded charity, but all in service of sustaining an ersatz *Gemeinschaft*-ideal practice in the metropolis.

While the fin-de-siècle charities still tried to model their services on *Gemeinschaft*-like neighborliness, the processes of systematizing charity led to both the formation of the profession of social work and the modern social service agency. This new agency grew of reformer’s impulses for order—they appropriated administrative systems and approaches from industry to more efficiently provide services. The social service agencies and shelters began to resemble other modern, *Gesellschaft* structures—anonymous, transactional relationships. The category of the homeless man was developed to represent people in these modern social service agencies. They emerged through the gradual demise of the neighborly visit to the needy family or individual.

These friendly visits were a form of service called outdoor relief—stipends, food, clothing or other aid brought to the home, which began to fade, since a place of residence was, of course, necessary to receive such aid. Indoor relief—work houses, poor houses, etc.—were also available, though modeled much less on the small town community; the

⁵⁷ Lubove, 14.

Dickensian world made it across the Atlantic. Beyond this indoor relief, hobos, tramps or bums could avail themselves of overnight shelter in police stations, at least until the advent of the municipal lodge over the 1890s.

Jacob Riis invited his friend Teddy Roosevelt, the new police commissioner, to tour the police station bunks in New York; scandalized by their squalor, Roosevelt abolished “police lodging-houses, which were simply tramp lodging-houses, and a fruitful encouragement to vagrancy.”⁵⁸ After their closure, the missions or municipal lodges became the major abode for tramps. The systems of indoor relief became the primary model for early homeless services, since the displaced person had no place whereby to receive aid.

The unattached went to the shelter, to the mission, to the labor pool, to the soup kitchen. These institutions were in a fixed location in the city; the unattached men moved to this area. The desire for efficiency prompted these agencies to locate where they could be easily accessible to the homeless. The institutions helped to consolidate a population in particular urban districts, which produced a ready-made sociological lab for social scientists. The process of rationalization, i.e., the desire to more efficiently locate shelters near cheap bars and pawn shops, created the districts and established the routines of those men who went to the shelters. These service agencies dotted the Bowery in New York, West Madison’s Hobohemia in Chicago and the nascent skid row districts of cities across the country and thus brought the forces of rationalization into these districts.

These agencies joined those other characteristic institutions of skid row—thrift stores, pawnshops, single-room occupancy hotels and cheap bars—as the primary

⁵⁸ Theodore Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1920), 199.

organizations with whom the nascent homeless men interacted. These primary institutions were crucial in forming the category of the homeless man. While the commercial institutions were essential in defining the spatial parameters of the homeless man, service agencies both abetted this spatial delimitation and also provided a program of evaluation, categorization, and regulation.

These service agencies established the spaces and the routines which shaped the population that social scientists come to represent in the category of the homeless man. Sutherland and Locke talk about the regimented structure of the shelters and its role in shaping homeless men.

Regimentation, with its regulation and control over so many of the activities of the men and its requirement of constant waiting in line, makes the men dependent upon others for most of the things connected with their personal well-being. It lowers their moral, wastes time which might be used in looking for work, breeds a spirit of frustration and antagonism, emphasizes the men's dependency, and makes them assume less responsibility for their own welfare.

Hobohemians adjust more easily to shelter food, regimentation, and other external conditions than do non-Hobohemians. Hobohemians were habituated to a poor and coarse diet and feel at home in flophouses. The regimentation of the shelters may interfere somewhat with their freedom but it is easy to over-emphasize this. For non-Hobohemians the situation is generally quite different. They were accustomed to much better food, a better bed, and a private room in a home or better class hotel. As a result, non-Hobohemians are much more disturbed by the external conditions of the shelters than are Hobohemians.⁵⁹

The agencies gathered data, standardized the day of the shelter man, and assessed his needs and abilities while diagnosing his problems. The social science assumption was that shelters function in a continuum with the other institutions of Hobohemia to shape the men of the area into the sheltered man.⁶⁰ As Sutherland and Locke have pointed out,

⁵⁹ Sutherland and Locke, 148-149.

⁶⁰ "The process of shelterization is organically related to attitudes and behavior patterns acquired previous to life in the shelter. Shelterization, in fact, is adaptation not only to the shelters but to the total situation in

the twenty-thousand homeless men about whom they write underwent a formative process in the slums and in the shelters. For them, the homeless man is a man who enters a shelter which forms the displaced man into a homeless man who is docile and malleable to the shelter's governance.

These primary institutions are not the sole means by which the homeless man is formed; a secondary set of institutions play an equally essential role—universities and governments, especially municipal ones. To manage the homeless, a process of reflection on services, demographics, etiologies or habits takes place. Academic studies of social service practices and the recipients of these services begin this formation of the homeless figure. These studies define the populations, categorize them, and break down services appropriate to the individual need. The second of these secondary institutions—the government—establishes policies, funds and furnishes services, and adopts certain social science data and assumptions for governance.

While these secondary institutions—universities and governments—are integral to establishing the category of the homeless man, the primary service agencies brought together the population and regulated them. The efficient running of these institutions requires a manageable population. While the fin-de-siècle need for order originated to maintain social control and avert urban violence, by the time that the category of the homeless man is established, order and efficiency are becoming ends in themselves—the

which a man find himself. The total situation includes being unemployed and dependent on public relief, living in the slum area of the city, being isolated from former social and economic contacts, having disheartening experiences with employment agencies and business concerns, and either being or approaching the age when re-employment in industry is unlikely.

These prior experiences from a preliminary step in the shelterization process. The men had undergone such disheartening experiences as being out of work and being unsuccessful in the search for jobs. They had lost confidence in themselves and in their social world. Many of them had gone to the extent of pawning clothes, borrowing money from friends, going hungry, and sleeping in parks or hallways for a few days. The decision to enter a shelter was in many cases the surrender of a man's highest values and was made as a last resort." Sutherland and Locke, 144-145.

fear of an imminent threat of urban violence had waned. The agencies began a process of settling a population; this process was completed by changes in labor patterns, i.e., a decrease in the demand for migratory labor).⁶¹

This migratory propensity of the hobos provided social service institutions with difficulties. The mobility inhibited sustained administering of social services and kept the hobo from family and other settled social relations. The relations between fellow hobos did not register as social affiliation in the assessment of shelter workers. Sutherland and Locke report that shelters “write to everyone [the homeless men] tell them about;”⁶² the social workers want to reach any family or settled friends. This practice was a bone of contention with the homeless men—those in the know, they tell us, denied having any close relatives to the shelter workers. These workers sent letters to all the family and friends mentioned by the shelter man; these were obviously people with a known address, i.e., settled friends.

The shelter workers did not pursue social relations among fellow skid row men as possible sources of stability for the shelter man. Fellow hobos were not easily tracked down via mail and were not stable enough to help the hobo settle down. In describing mobility’s complications, Anderson focuses on the impact to those institutions within the skid row area.

⁶¹ For instance, many New Deal programs like the Federal Emergency Relief Administration or the Works Progress Administration settled unemployed migratory laborers and provided jobs. But World War II did the most to settle the hobo populations. About this trend, Peter Rossi writes, “The outbreak of World War II drastically reduced the number of the homeless, absorbing them into the armed forces and into mushrooming war industries. The permanent unemployed that worried Nels Anderson virtually disappeared, almost within months. The WPA public works employment projects were terminated after 1943 and relief programs were drastically reduced as employment opportunities increased and men went into the armed forces. Municipal lodging houses and emergency shelters were closed; what remained of the local and transient homeless were apparently left to forage on Skid Row, the bottom tier of the private housing market.” Rossi, 27.

⁶² Sutherland and Locke, 10-11.

The mobility of the migratory worker complicates the problem of the missions, police, and welfare agencies. The mission measures its success not only in numbers of converts but in the numbers of men fed and lodged. The police department, on the contrary, alarmed by the influx of hobos and tramps in response to free meals and free flops, has adopted a policy of severity and repression for the protection of the community. Welfare agencies, opposing alike the demoralizing results of indiscriminate feeding and lodging, and the negative policy of the police, favor a program of organized effort based upon an investigation of the needs of each individual case.⁶³

Investigations of each case require ongoing access to the subject being studied. Fact-checking, tracking down family members or enrolling a subject into a program adequate for a specific need all take time.⁶⁴ As we shall see in the next section, only a certain form of relationships is thought adequate to moor people to society—the passing relationships between fellow hobos was deemed by sociologists to be too limited for social mooring. Their wandering inhibits the shelter workers' efforts to rehabilitate the wanderer.

When the clients wander from city to city, most efforts to engage them in some social service are pointless. Rehabilitation is, after all, an act of settling; a state of semi-settledness (or at least an openness to this possibility) is necessary to begin the rehabilitation process. The influx of these wandering men necessitated state intervention (police) 'for the protection of the community;' these early homeless men—defined by

⁶³ Anderson, *Hobo*, 15.

⁶⁴ Early in my career in homeless services, I had a homeless mentally ill man—I'll call him David—whom I was trying to get into a facility for this specific population. Coordinating a meeting time with a caseworker for the facility and David who had no watch, no calendar, no fixed place for me to find him (on top of his mental health problems) was obviously difficult. Once the initial meeting and a preliminary indication of the David's eligibility for the facility, he was placed on a six month waiting list. Keeping track of this non-settled person over this course of time was not easy. I had to tell him to drop in to my office at least once every two weeks, so that when his name did come up on the waiting list, he might not lose his space. I did have an approximate idea of the location of David's urban campsite, where I could seek him out, if he stopped following up regularly. Multiply this incident by the thousands of homeless, and the problem of mobility becomes seemingly insurmountable. When the clients wander from city to city, most efforts to engage them in some social service are pointless.

family disaffiliation—were a threat to the community. Their mobility—among other characteristics—was socially problematic.

Yet, the hobo embraces wandering and unattachment. The lack of mooring in broader social networks is precisely what recommends the hobo style of life. The advent of hobos is not merely a response to capital's demands to expand transportation and industry across the country. Certainly, these migratory workers fulfilled that role. But hobodom provides a life, a community and means of support to those with no family or no interest in maintaining family contacts. As Amos Warner pointed out in the last chapter, new technology like trains and steamers afforded those afflicted with wanderlust a mobility never before seen. The hundreds of miles that once had to be walked could now be crossed sitting in a boxcar. Unattachment was a desired and sought position for the hobo; they legitimated the independence which shelters tried to rein in.

The hobos embodied the threats to family life which we saw associated with the proto-tramp; life had become easier for wanderers to, in Warner's words "get away from their *duties to families and neighbor*."⁶⁵ The homeless man was a man detached from family, but with the intervention of the shelter worker, Sutherland and Locke pointed out, he might be restored to some family, friend, or other settled person. The hobo not only withdrew from family duties, he stayed outside of the majority of bourgeois sociality—the world of the hobo was a world unto itself. They did not need the middle class institutions or social relations.

The hobos provided a counter-organizing schema to the shelters, missions and soup kitchens of Hobohemia. They had their own associational life. They had unions, like the International Brotherhood Welfare Association; the more radical union International

⁶⁵ Warner, 183.

Workers of the World also penetrated into the hobo community to organize migratory labor. They developed their own institutions for education and services, like the Hobo Colleges. Hobo newspapers, like the *Hobo News* or the *Hobo News Review*, disseminated information about organizations, events or recommended reading. This infrastructure of associational life itself exacerbated bourgeois anxieties. This associational life was embraced in lieu of kinship bonds. A primary goal of managing the homeless populations was to restore the homeless man to family bonds.

This restoration, however, was rarely complete. The homeless man was first and foremost the other—the one defined by a lack of home. The process of defining this population through a delimitation of space, language and institutions rendered the homeless of Skid Row as a group to be managed or contained. Assimilation consisted of molding the homeless man into a docile body who little threatened the social order. After these large frameworks of space, language and institutions established the parameters of the population, sociologists soon consolidated the category of the homeless man. The resident of Skid Row districts who availed themselves of the area's service institutions became the homeless figures—the remainder of the city was now exempt from this moniker. The population of the homeless shrank from the fin-de-siècle city to residents of the slums. As the poor families became Americanized, they raised out of the ranks of the homeless, which left primarily single men in the skid row districts of the city. The American city was no longer inherently a locus of displacement.

Section Two: The Limits of Hobosociality for Social Mooring

By the mid-1930s, there is a clear shift, or at least a consolidation, in thinking about social detachment. Social worker/activist, social scientific, and nascent government policy discourses coalesce around the new category of the homeless man. Taxonomic categories and terminologies all become subsumed under the rubric of the 'homeless man'. This new figure supplants many categories used by earlier activists and sociologists. The homeless throngs of the city which were a volcano imminently rising against the middle class became a population to be managed. New infrastructures of administration and new categories of analysis formed a set of assumptions about this homeless man. Rules of shelters, routines and managerial disciplines, and intersecting factions of interests—business leaders, elected officials, clergy, social workers, police and sociologists—all subjected this homeless man to their valuations. In the process of constituting this new category of homelessness, social workers and sociologists subordinated competing categories that could threaten the stability of this figure as the unitary category for social detachment. Spatial, discursive, and institutional distinctions demarcated that population which social science identified as being the homeless men.

While as we saw with Anderson, early decades of the twentieth century saw many terms and taxonomic categories being juxtaposed against each other—tramps, bums, the home guard, or lingering categories like vagrants, the hobo in particular maintained a position that endangered the formation of a homeless figure. The hobo was a self-defined, independent man not easily subdued by social services. Occasional encounters with service providers were too brief to enmesh him into a system of welfare. As the other

categories—tramps, bums, et al.—waned, the hobo continued to be used as a category for social displacement right up until the consolidation of the emerging homeless man.

The category of the homeless man was constituted through the gaze of social scientists, service providers, municipal and business leaders, and business interests. Sutherland and Locke's *Twenty Thousand Homeless Men* correctly argue that a homeless man is clearly constituted through the intersection of these self-interested discourses. These two sociologists conducted their University of Chicago-funded study⁶⁶ and concluded that a broad range of community interests shaped shelter policies (and thus the shelter or homeless man) for their own sake.

The social pressures which have influenced shelter policies constitute an illuminating chapter in the history of homeless men. These pressures have been exerted by religious, political, social work, business, and other groups in the community. While these groups were somewhat at variance with each other during the period 1901-1930, they have come into overt conflict for domination of the shelters since 1931. Both in the earlier and in the later periods most of these groups were interested primarily in their own welfare and only secondarily or not at all in the welfare of homeless men.⁶⁷

As we also saw in the fin-de-siècle period, many of the services provided and social reforms were for the interests of the service provider while those receiving the service were relatively incidental, e.g., Jacob Riis's reform as self-defense. By this Depression-era look back at the first several decades of the twentieth century, the self-interest of the homeless service providers is accepted as a foregone conclusion by this Chicago School study. The category of the homeless man is constituted to protect the interests of middle class religious, business and political leaders.

⁶⁶ "The salaries of the staff members were paid by the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission, and the other expenses of the project by the Social Science Research Committee of the University of Chicago. The authors of this book were connected with the University of Chicago during the period of the study." Sutherland and Locke, v, n.1.

⁶⁷ Sutherland and Locke, 186.

This new homeless man became a repository of anxieties—the perils of modern metropolitan life rested within this new figure. This homeless man is urban refuse; he represents those who are unable to be assimilated to the socioeconomic life of the bourgeois city. The city divided against itself. It demanded labor for factory production, but when more labor appeared, the city had no answer, no provision for these poor masses. As Sutherland and Locke note, “we find that modern society has not been organized or planned for the satisfaction of the basic needs of a great mass of the population, from which the homeless men in the shelters have come as representatives.”⁶⁸ These poor are the labor surplus which the city cannot absorb. This surplus shrunk from the late nineteenth century as the schools, tenements and economy slowly integrated more of the poor population into bourgeois social norms. The figure represents the underside of the city, that side that is necessary to produce a style of life for the top half. These are subjected to the outrageous misfortunes of poverty; they are shorn of symbols of status to a point of degradation.⁶⁹ The impoverished man entered shelters and underwent a process of ‘shelterization’.

As we saw above, Sutherland and Locke contend that the shelter system primarily serve the interests of a constellation of religious, political, business and social work groups, i.e., the normative group against whom the term ‘homeless’ is implicitly juxtaposed. This process of shelterization begins long before the homeless man enters the

⁶⁸ Sutherland and Locke, 49.

⁶⁹ “After a man had used up most of his money, he felt the necessity of selling or pawning his extra suits of clothes, watch, and suitcase. In many cases these material possessions were of critical importance as class symbols and their loss resulted in a feeling of degradation.” Sutherland and Locke, 88.

shelter⁷⁰—it starts with the commercial and spatial interactions in skid row, the Bowery or Hobohemia.

For Sutherland and Locke, the shelterization process is the process of making a homeless man. The routines of social work bureaucracies finally shape these men into the shelter man; these agencies subjected the men to endless repetitions that produced a docility such that the service provider could cajole, manipulate, and manage. I here quote extensively from Sutherland and Locke's discussion of shelter initiation, for their accounts confirm the role of routine in shaping certain types of compliant, docile subjects—much like other large, mass institutions of regulation like the military or penal system. They write:

It seems to me that the red tape of the shelters makes the men lose their sense of responsibility and initiative. Their whole life is regulated for them; they are told when and where to sleep, are awakened at the same time day in and day out, are told how much, or better how little, to eat, and when and what should be eaten. In fact, their daily routine is wholly a matter of program. Certain days and at certain periods on those prescribed days, they do certain things in a certain way. Everything is a matter of routine; and to make certain that the men do not even have to use their minds to remember these prescribed duties, they are bulletined all over the building.

Day after day there is a constant repetition of the same thing: line up to dress, line up to eat, line up for fumigation, line up to take a bath, line up to work, line up to get paid. "Why in hell don't they line us up against the wall and shoot us and get it over with."⁷¹

And once initiated, the program takes hold of one and eliminates individual will; one becomes a subject of the shelter—it determines what the homeless man does. They continue:

The monotony of the thing at first weighs on one's mind, but with the passing of time this condition slowly changes, and only at infrequent intervals, which become more widely separated, does this monotony

⁷⁰ For example, see note 60.

⁷¹ Sutherland and Locke, 14.

bother him. It is not only the monotony of shelter life but the absolute aimlessness of the things one does. There is no end to accomplish, nothing to look forward to, no reason why one should even do the things he does...A man's life becomes narrowed to a limited sphere of action, and after a few months his independence is broken down, his individuality disappears, his identity is lost, his personality becomes reorganized, and he becomes shelterized.⁷²

This shelterized man is the homeless man; the moment of interpellation is deferred until the 1980s (and the next chapter), but the subject is *de facto* formed at this stage. The modern world is too much with these men. The disciplines of shelter life panoptically shape them into a homeless man. This man is defined by his social disaffiliation—he is the man without a family.

In the next section we look at the social life of the homeless man and how the rise of the disaffiliation thesis relates to the formation of the category of the nuclear family. In the discourse on homelessness, the family is the presumed foundation for social life; other forms of sociality, like that of the hobo community, were inadequate to moor one in society. Because of this centrality of the family, sociologists and social workers reject the alternative hobosociality.

The importance of family is evident in the category of homelessness itself. To be homeless is to be without a family. At least since Alice Solenberger's study, homelessness is always about leaving a family. The centrality of family to this discourse reflects broader theoretical frameworks shaping the homeless man. In the last chapter, I cited Jacob Riis's fear that the rise of the associational life of civil society—groups like Robert Putnam's venerated bowling teams—would destroy the family. The social work profession assumed that being with one's family is a necessary good—so much so that the social workers, according to Sutherland and Locke, sent letters to the families of all

⁷² Sutherland and Locke, 15.

the new shelter men. The hobos certainly had a vibrant associational life, but these types of social relations were irrelevant to the helping professions. In fact, we have seen that the intersecting bourgeois interest groups wanted to settle the hobo community into sheltered life—the hobo life was a threat to bourgeois family norms. Reestablishing the man's relationship to a family (natal or conjugal would do); they presumably hoped to settle him down and tie him into social life.

This hyperbolic concern with the family highlights a rift that is still a central debate in the contemporary American public sphere—the family values and social capital movements. I will return to these debates in the next chapter, when we encounter the attempts to decouple family anxieties from the homeless figure to join them with broader movements concerned with social capital. The family values movement laments threats to community which is based on kinship and place. The putative *Gemeinschaft* has dwindled to the nuclear family; as the last bastion of this type of social relations, it is vehemently clung to. The thesis of declining social capital laments the loss of voluntary life; the associations were networks of transactional reciprocity in which the social relations have an exchange value. Both factions look at the presumed precipice of unmitigated individualism and fear its nihilistic propensities. However, they offer contradictory proposals to redress supposed social ills—one an embrace of modernity, the other a critique of it.

These tensions are evident in the discourse on homelessness. Large-scale debate about the best form of social structures in the United States, I contend, is basically coterminous—and often coextensive—with the rise of the discourse on homelessness. These debates arose as Americans attempted to negotiate the ravages of modernization

and the havoc it wrought on social life; these are the very same debates from which the discourse on homelessness emerged. For instance, Jacob Riis and Jane Addams were integral to early talk about proper social relations in a modernizing America. Fin-de-siècle commentators responded to social changes with calls to do whatever was necessary to protect the family. The homeless man is constituted through an atavistic desire for a return to a supposedly lost social form—that community life which was thought to foster family. The contemporary family values movement is the intellectual progeny of these reformers' efforts to make the city safe for the family.

In the Depression era, the fields of social work and sociology were still identifying the family as the proper form of sociality and actively sought to destroy the alternative hobosocial community. Even though there was a vibrant social life in the hobo jungle, it was excoriated as a locus of vice and pathology. The elaborate range of associations—like the International Brotherhood Welfare Association, Hoboes of America, the Hobo College, and even the International Workers of the World—were not hallmarks of the social connectedness of the hobo. The discourse on homelessness was at this time primarily blind to such institutions, and when they were acknowledged, e.g., in Anderson's *The Hobo*, it is not as a viable alternative to other social services.

Hobosociality was insufficient for social mooring because of two interrelated reasons. The first relates to my argument about family. An implicit Hegelian model of concentric relations grounds civil society in the family; on this read, the family must be the root institution of society. The interconnected social structures are the Hegelian series of concentric relations between the family, civil society, and the state. In this model, the broader social structures are predicated on the preceding ones—each structure is the

building block for next one. Thus, presumably, without family relations, one is not interconnected to civil society and the state. However, most associational life is not mediated through the family—excepting, probably religion; one usually joins voluntary clubs as an individual. These two social forms enter into tension because their structures are predicated on different expectations about the nature of social relations. Figures like Riis or the more recent Focus on the Family or Family Research Council presume that families provide primary relations that are not self-interested. While not necessarily altruistic, these relations are supposedly organic ones of binding sentiment; they are not instrumental but ends in themselves. Whereas, the associational life of social capital is still ultimately about productivity. We need not turn back to Marx⁷³ for this point for Robert Putnam's analogy between social capital and other forms of capital makes this explicit.

By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital—tools and training that enhance individual productivity—the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value. Just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity (both individual and collective), so too social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups.⁷⁴

Social capital increases individual productivity. While the means-ends distinctions of these social relations are more idealistic than empirical, the assumption that organic familial relations—rather than those of voluntary association—will solve presumed social ills underlies the contradictions which we will confront as we look at efforts to assimilate concerns for the family with those of social capital in the next chapter.

⁷³ Social relations began to mimic capital because capital was shaping them—as Marx said, social capital is both a prerequisite for and result of production. In his third volume of *Capital*, Marx analyzes the social character of capital in which these social relations both enable production and result from it.

⁷⁴ Putnam, 18-19.

While the means-ends distinctions of these social relations are more idealistic than empirical, the assumption that organic familial relations—rather than those of voluntary association—will solve presumed social ills underlies the discourse on homelessness and the social work/sociological institutions producing this discourse.

The helping professions dismiss the associations of the hobos and homeless for a second reason. These associations create a locus beyond the reach of bourgeois institutions. By being under constant observation, the shelter man posed relatively little social or political threat, while the hobo institutions were beyond this vigilant eye; surveillance does not fully extend to the hobo jungle or unions—though a quick study of the FBI's investigative files on James Eads How (the 'Hobo Millionaire') or Ben Reitman, among others, shows that this surveillance actually did reach into these associations. Even if some clandestine monitoring of the hobo associations could happen, the surveillance was not as effective as techniques of management for averting social upheaval. The associations did not usually subject themselves to the tools for assimilating the homeless "into more profitable uses," as Bahr phrases it. The IBWA was created to establish a modicum of hobo self-sufficiency, by supporting the independence of the hobo community from broader social institutions.

Early research on social services, like Sutherland and Locke, has argued that the services primarily maintain the interests of the services providers. If the interests of the individual hobos were central, such agencies would try to integrate them into the thriving hobo social networks. Instead, as we saw above, shelter workers attempt to contact any family or settled relatives of those whom they serve. However, the discourse on

homelessness grew out of fear; these fears rose in response to the uprisings of the Draft Riots, the Haymarket Square riot, the Tompkins Square riot, the bread or blood demonstrations, etc.

Here I must distinguish between a particular objection to the hobo associations for mooring individuals and a more general problem associational life. Service provider objections could be to the class of the association and not to associations per se. But the social workers in shelters did not try to plug the homeless men into bourgeois associations; they sent letters to family members. In the last chapter, we saw Jacob Riis object to bourgeois association for undermining family life. The family was the institution of choice for mooring people, to reattach the disaffiliated. In part, the discourse on homelessness arose through efforts to preserve the family; it was taken as the foundational institution for social life. Other institutions or social relationships were inadequate.

This discourse on homelessness excludes the hobo, who eludes the shelters and other institutions of homelessness; this exclusion marginalizes him. The exclusions happened through processes of defining and describing the new homeless man, as well as through institutional distinctions—the hobo did not frequent the shelters but did go to their own organizations. By the mid-1930s, sociological and social work discourses focus on the homeless man; the hobo becomes a non-entity. A small, aging hobo population with few remaining institutions lingered on in obscurity as social disaffiliation and the homeless man take center stage in studies and social services. The labor demands of World War Two eliminated the hobo life.

To carve a niche for the homeless man, sociologists dismissed the hobo as the normative category for social displacement. More than the institutional resistance, more than his wandering, the hobo carried a lore that legitimated him and his decisions. From Frank Beck's Whitman quote in the last section, we have seen a propensity to both valorize the wandering spirit and to wrap it up in an American lore. Anderson writes about this lore:

Hobos have a romantic place in our history. From the beginning they have been numbered among the pioneers. They have played an important role in reclaiming the desert and in subduing the trackless forests. They have contributed more to the open, frank, and adventurous spirit of the Old West than we are always willing to admit. They are, as it were, belated frontiersmen. Their presence in the migrant group has been the chief factor in making the American vagabond class different from that of any other country.⁷⁵

This unique status of the hobo made him less docile and less able to mold. While mobility presented logistical difficulties to assimilationist efforts, the romance legitimated the hobos' refusal to settle and integrate into a life thought to be unthreatening to an anxious middle class.

Years later, in a reflection on the relationship of skid row homeless men to the broader society, Howard Bahr opined that efforts of assimilation was part of a civilizing mission.

The skid row men are of interest because in many respects their ideas and customs are the antithesis of much that the "civilized" American sees as valuable and sacred. Yet every year many outsiders join the tribe, and after a short time they cannot be distinguished from the natives. Further, they and several related tribes located on reservations in other areas of the country have been recognized as problems and objects of social action for many years. In general, the basic question has been: "Is it better to leave the tribesmen [the homeless men] alone on their reservation [skid row] or shall we disperse them and try to socialize them into the dominant population?" As with other minority populations, the public has been

⁷⁵ Anderson, *Hobo*, 92.

concerned with the problem of assimilating the tribesmen, often against their will, into more profitable uses.⁷⁶

The interventions which formed model citizens of those receiving assistance from the helping professions not only could not reach the hobo; there was insufficient demand to reform this rugged pioneer who represented a certain form of Americana. While the hobo was in tension with these normative assumptions of proper social relations, he was not to be integrated into the civilized America. The fears of hobosociality did morph into, include, and overlay anxieties of homosociality—we will return to this point in the next section. Thus, the romantic lore of this American ideal was problematic on many grounds. The hobo was another ideal—the western pioneer, which could not be a model for everyone but could be trusted to disappear with the foreclosure of the frontier. The homeless man was not a mere resister to the bourgeois norms for family life; he was their antithesis.

While a sense of community may have existed among the hobos, social scientists found it to be an inadequate mooring into social life. The alternate form of social life exacerbated middle class fears—the hobos were under government surveillance, and as we shall see in the next section, represented threats to normative heterosexual mores. The fracturing of sociality into any number of forms could undercut the hegemonic position of the emerging nuclear family as the basis for social life. By establishing the homeless man as the unitary category of social displacement, sociologists working in Chicago ensured that this framework for social life would continue—any threat to family and home was othered. With the demise of the hobo, all the socially displaced were now

⁷⁶ Bahr, *Skid Row*, 11-12.

subsumed by the home-homeless juxtaposition. The hobo community and its alternative institutions, unions, associations and social practices carved niches not subsumed by this dialectic. Social science had no room for the hobo or hobosociality; the threats to the social order all collapsed in to the figure of the homeless man. Everyone either participated in family life (or did not challenge its dominance in the social order) or was rendered homeless.

Section Three: Homelessness as Disaffiliation

Hobosociality was alternate form of social life; it integrated freedom with a wandering spirit. The hobo community was a group still governed by its own norms and thus remained outside of the urban structures of governmentality, while the homeless figure was also displaced but subordinated to these structures. The marginalization of hobos and their community brought displacement under the purview of a rationalizing city and its structures of governmentality—through this process the homeless man was formed.

The social scientific consolidation of homelessness as the normative category of social displacement required spatial, linguistic and institutional segregation of the displaced from broader populations and the marginalization of the competing category of the hobo. ‘Homelessness’ became ascendant first as an analytic category and only later as a popular term. After the homeless man was established as the category of social displacement, much sociological work shifted to the fleshing out this category. In the next few decades following the depression-era marginalization of the hobo, the category of homelessness became a more extensive sociological term. Many core attributes were

carried over from the early fin-de-siècle responses to urban problems which were formulated with mythic tropes: separation from and threat to family and an odd combination of settled and unsettled (from the Cain tradition), a sense of being in but not of a place (from the Wandering Jew and the stranger), an imputation of pathology (from the Cain and Ishmael traditions). Social scientists began to systematically codify these loose assumptions in the development of the category of the homeless man.

Loneliness and the Nuclear Family

The consolidation of the categories of social displacement into the homeless man is coextensive with broader shifts in the bourgeois family. The family does not go nuclear until the bomb, but the movement towards this category is already underway in broader sociological work. The homeless figure comes to be defined as the disaffiliated man; the formation of this definition is closely intertwined with two important developments in the social sciences—the advent of the concept of the nuclear family and the near simultaneous rise in sociological studies on loneliness.

These two developments in social science provided a dual framework for developing the category of disaffiliation. At this mid-century point, American sociologists regarded the nuclear family as the last bastion of sentiment relations and a bulwark against the increasing threats of modernity. For them, loneliness either threatened the family, or the family was to be a panacea against the emerging problem of isolation. The 1949 coining of the “nuclear family” in the work of anthropologist George Peter Murdock and the early 1950s proliferation of studies on loneliness—e.g., David Riesman’s *The Lonely Crowd*, Paul Halmos’s *Solitude and Privacy*, and Margaret Mary

Wood's *Paths of Loneliness*—are major steps on the way to clearly demarcating the homeless figure as the disaffiliated man. While in Sutherland and Locke the homeless man was the sheltered man, this emerging homeless man becomes mediated through the problem of loneliness and its relation to the nuclear family. The new figure becomes the disaffiliated man.

Sentiment and Interest Relations

The paths of isolation taken to form this figure go through Mary Margaret Wood's 1953 study on loneliness; she expands the trendy topic to include the unemployed, the hobo, and the homeless. Wood makes explicit the discursive connections between *Gemeinschaft*, family, and the problem of homelessness. Her analysis relies upon Theodore Abel's two categories of social relations: sentiment relations and interest relations.⁷⁷ Abel points out that in his *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Tönnies was "the first to recognize the difference between what we have termed interest and sentiment relations."⁷⁸ By invoking the sentiment/interest (or

⁷⁷ Woods explains these distinctions: "In the category of interest relations the selection of contacts is made from the point of view of the service the relations may render toward the realization of some dominant interest; thus such relations are means to other ends rather than ends in themselves. For example, considerations of personality, group membership, and social status are of secondary importance in business relations, relations between employer and employee, lawyer and client, and so forth. On the other hand, relations in which sentiment takes the place of calculation are ends in themselves. They comprise the great number of relationships in which the satisfaction of the desire for affectionate response is the main purpose. They are characterized by intimacy, mutual attachment, and sympathy. Such, for example, are the relationships established in acquaintance, friendship, and love." Margaret Mary Wood, *Paths of Loneliness: The Individual Isolated in Modern Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 10.

⁷⁸ Theodore Abel, "The Significance of the Concept of Consciousness of Kind," *Social Forces* 9, no. 1 (Oct. 1930): 7. While Abel does slightly steer aside from entirely mapping sentiment relations onto *Gemeinschaft* by arguing that he grounds them in a "consciousness of kind" rather than Tönnies *Wesenswille*. For our purposes, however, this distinction is irrelevant. First, Wood does not even go into it—she does not even mention Tönnies. Second, it is these basic social relations and not their grounding which is crucial to Wood's analysis. Abel acknowledges that the basic distinctions in these relations are those of Tönnies.

Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft) distinctions in relations, Woods defines this homeless figure as the disaffiliated man.

Commentators and social scientists felt that the expansion of the field of interest relations in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century coincided with the contraction in that of sentiment relations. These, Woods argues, are narrowed nearly to the point of the nuclear family. She writes,

The field of the sentiment relationships has, on the contrary, been narrowed. The concept of the family, which is the great fountainhead of the sentiment relationships, has become more exclusive. Generally, only the more immediate kin are now included within the family circle. The obligations of kinship which formerly held the larger inclusive family structure together have ceased to function except among near kin, and even here they tend to be replaced by bonds of a different nature.⁷⁹

The immediate family becomes the last bastion of sentiment and emotion. It is the last haven against a modern world of pure instrumentality. However problematic this vision of the family might be, it enables the inevitable relation between home and family; this relation renders those disconnected from a family as homeless. The bonds of a different nature, i.e., transactional relationships, are those whose rise Jacob Riis lamented; these outside demands drew people away from the family altar. This separation from family, and thus any form of sentiment ties, is an unnatural aberration;⁸⁰ Wood and the 1950s loneliness literature cannot imagine meaningful relations in the modern world unless mediated through the nuclear family. The man—and here Woods is more interesting than most commentators on homelessness, for she looks fleetingly at single women in boarding houses—disconnected from a family is homeless. In her analysis of poor or working class men who are unmarried and have little education, she contends that they

⁷⁹ Wood, 23.

⁸⁰ Wood, 24.

are “largely deprived of the good times more fortunately placed young men and women have together. When they are older, the tragedy of homelessness is borne upon them.”⁸¹

Without the stability afforded by the family and its close personal relationship, those homeless men are lonely and restless; Wood argues that their mobility is an effort to escape their loneliness.⁸²

As we saw in our discussion of hobos and radicals in the last chapter, sociologist Robert Park has a different account of the role of mobility in homelessness—mobility is a basic animal instinct which is overridden by the desire for place. The hobo’s pure motion indicates animalistic impulses unchecked by civilization. Wood finds the mobility of the lonely homeless to follow the familial disconnection—wandering is a fleeing from loneliness in search of some more adequate relations. In Park’s account, the locomotion of the hobo is movement for its own sake, not Wood’s purposeful flight from isolation to a quest for new fulfillment. For Park “[r]estlessness and the impulse to escape from the routine of ordinary life, which in the case of others frequently marks the beginning of some new enterprise, spends itself for him [the hobo] in movements that are expressive merely. The hobo seeks change solely for the sake of change; it is a habit, and like the drug habit, moves in a vicious circle. The more he wanders, the more he must.”⁸³ The unfettered animalistic impulses of the hobos set this community outside of the civilizing roles of metropolitan institutions, and somehow their own institutions served no civilizing role.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Wood, 27.

⁸² Wood, 31.

⁸³ Park, “Hobo Mind,” 158.

⁸⁴ Often debates at some of the hobo gathering locations at the Hobo College, Bughouse Square, or the Dill Pickle Club are described as rowdy and sometimes lewd. These did not serve a ‘civilizing function.

Parks' argument implies that the ever-new, ever-changing hobo life prevents the civilizing roles of stability. The social relations of modern associational life—i.e., interest relations or *Gesellschaft*—require reining in unfettered mobility.⁸⁵ Society cannot exist with the extreme individual freedom of unmitigated mobility. The city brought rules and order to govern itself when the multiculturalism of the metropolis undermined the possibility of an informal set of norms of a homogeneous community. Mobility resists the strictures of society. As I noted in the last chapter, cultural pressures, or civilization, are necessary to correct hobo locomotion. Park even finds that the meager cultural products of the hobos—a few poems—are primarily produced at times of enforced stability, i.e., prison. Civilization must furnish norms and social relations to check locomotion and tie the homeless man to place.

While Wood and Park differ on mobility as a means or an end (and Anderson thinks it is both), they all find family to be the appropriate palliative—this common ground is the important point. Being without wife and child, according to Anderson, increases the hobo's mobility and instability.⁸⁶ For Wood, the figure's integration into family averts the loneliness which gives rise to wandering. For Park a similar process takes place—"The hobo, who begins his career by breaking the local ties that bound him to his family and his neighborhood, has ended by breaking all other associations. He is

⁸⁵ Nels Anderson takes a middle ground between Wood and Park in finding that the hobo's mobility renders him unable to participate in organized associations. "The mobility and instability of the hobo or tramp, which is both cause and consequence of his migratory existence, unfits him for organized group life." Anderson, *Hobo*, 248.

⁸⁶ "[H]e [the hobo] is propertyless, and therefore the incentive of fixed ownership and fixed residence to remain faithful to any institution is gone. While the man of property secures himself best by associating with his neighbor and remaining in one locality, the hobo safeguards himself by moving away from every difficulty. Then, too, the hobo is without wife and child. His womanless existence increases his mobility and his instability." Anderson, *Hobo*, 248-249.

not only a ‘homeless man,’ but a man without a cause and without a country.’⁸⁷ But the locomotion is not a condition which arises only after ties with family are severed. For Park, locomotion is the rejection of civilization; for Woods is a search for it. In both cases, there is an inadequate family.

Nuclear Family

The disaffiliated man appears in this literature on homelessness after the idea of *Gemeinschaft* and its sentiment relations contract to the nuclear family. At this point, anyone outside the orbit of a nuclear family is represented as being unable to have strong, meaningful, emotional bonds. Social affiliation means affiliation with a family; the word (affiliation) here fulfills its gendered etymology—adopting as a son. The disaffiliated man has broken the bonds with his natal family and does not have (or has also broken) any with a conjugal one. Because he is not linked to a family and its locus, he is homeless. Disaffiliated man became the normative definition of the homeless figure through these 1950s developments and continued as a prominent analytical category into the early 1970s. In this period, many explanations developed for the homelessness of this figure, but they all maintained that the problem of social disaffiliation was at the root of homelessness.

While this consolidation of social sciences around this univocal account of homelessness has not sustained to the present—a decline to be explored in the next chapter, for a couple of decades the problem of homelessness was the problem of the disaffiliated man. Columbia University sociologist Theodore Caplow described this state

⁸⁷ Park, “Hobo Mind,” 159.

of sociology as a proliferation of terms but general consensus on the condition and its origins. He wrote:

If we compare the various explanations that have been offered, taking account of divergent terminologies, we discover that there is not really much disagreement nowadays about the etiology of homelessness. Whether the homeless man is described as under-socialized, sociopathic, anomic, nonaffiliated, kin-isolated, attitudinally passive, non-addictively alcoholic, having a negative ego-image, or economically marginal, the diagnosis reflects substantial agreement about his condition and its origins. The typical homeless man has had a long history of social undernourishment which has discouraged him from seeking satisfaction in family relationships, self-improvement, voluntary associations, or work.⁸⁸

By the time of this 1970 essay, this consensus was on the brink of fracturing. Much like Anderson before him, Caplow wrote of a culture about to be entirely transformed by broader social changes—an overseas war, deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, industrial flight from urban centers, and dramatic increases in unattached females. But in this moment of reflection, Caplow describes the homeless man as being without any social attachments. Elsewhere he makes it clear that homelessness is a condition in which affiliative bonds are absent or attenuated. In this definition of homelessness, he contends that homelessness is best understood through studies in the difference between the homeless and settled persons.⁸⁹ In such studies, we would presumably find the links which tie settled persons, links like family or voluntary associations. Caplow opens the possibility of relationships more broadly than the nuclear family to include the associational life of civil society.

This seeming shift in juxtaposing the homeless man with the family to a newer contrast between the homeless man and any social bonds is not as stark as it first appears.

⁸⁸ Theodore Caplow, "The Sociologist and the Homeless Man," in *Disaffiliated Man: Essays and Bibliography on Skid Row, Vagrancy, and Outsiders*, ed. Howard M. Bahr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 7.

⁸⁹ Caplow, Bahr and Sternberg, 494-499.

Caplow's definition is the "absence or attenuation of the affiliative bonds that links settled persons to a network of interconnected social structures."⁹⁰ These interconnected social structures are the series of concentric relations between the family, civil society, and the state of which I spoke in the last section. As I pointed out, this model erroneously posits that the family is the institution which facilitates one's access to these other relations. While Caplow wants to integrate homeless men into multiple social structures, the family is still fundamental to his analysis. Though he might seem to legitimate a broader social engagement for the homeless, e.g., their own associations, he does not move the disaffiliation thesis beyond its connections to the nuclear family.

Elsewhere, research which came out of Caplow's collaboration with Howard Bahr seems to undermine the connections between homelessness and the family. Bahr's paper "Family Size and Stability as Antecedents of Homelessness and Excessive Drinking"⁹¹—which came from a multiyear research project on which Caplow was the Principal Investigator,⁹² at first appears to belie my thesis that the homeless figure is constructed as the other of the bourgeois family. He argues that survey data cannot establish that either size or stability of the natal family can be considered as significant indicators in the etiology of homelessness (or excessive drinking). However, this study by Bahr and Caplow does not claim that homeless men lack this disconnection with family. They are analyzing the family in which the homeless men grew up, i.e., this study is a sociological analysis of the historical background of the homeless man, not a survey of his present

⁹⁰ Theodore Caplow, Howard M. Bahr, and David Sternberg. "Homelessness," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* 6, ed. David L. Sills (New York: Crowell Collier and MacMillan, 1968), 494-499, 494.

⁹¹ Howard M. Bahr, "Family Size and Stability as Antecedents of Homelessness and Excessive Drinking," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 31, no.3 (Aug. 1969): 477-483.

⁹² This Homelessness Project was conducted from 1965-1968 at the Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University with support from the National Institutes of Health. Bahr, "Family Size," 477. I will refer to this study, as Bahr and Caplow often do, as the "Bowery Project".

state. In fact, they actually reaffirm that home signifies family and thus maintain the dialectical negation of family in the discourse on homelessness. Bahr here analyzes some of the literature on ‘broken homes’, which he defines as “a family in which at least one of the parents is permanently absent.”⁹³ Here, he makes a direct correspondence between home and family; the only modification he provides from the term family corresponds to the modification of “home” by “broken.”

The sociological thesis that homelessness is a state of disaffiliation maintains the fin-de-siècle era assumption that homelessness is a condition of being outside of or threatening family norms. Even when social science starts to talk about integrating homeless men into a broader range of social structures, the centrality of the nuclear family sustains.

Deviance as Threat to the Family

This practice of locating an etiology of homelessness in family background became commonplace. It not only affirms the home-homeless dichotomy, it precipitated the propensity to define threats to the family. We saw Bahr identify family break up and excessive drinking as common problems or pathologies contributing to homelessness. Homelessness continues into the 1970s to be a state of violation of family norms. Initially in the fin-de-siècle period, homelessness threatened to entirely displace the bourgeois family. Eventually, the category of homeless was reduced from an overarching threat to family to a mere violation of family norms. These violations, nonetheless, elicited much anxiety.

⁹³ Bahr, “Family Size,” 477.

Donald Bogue dedicates a chapter to this line of inquiry into the pathology in the family of origin. While he finds that a poor home environment is conducive to marital strife, adult non-marriage, or alcohol problems,⁹⁴ he concludes that coming from a good home⁹⁵ is no guarantee against ending up on skid row. He likewise dedicates a chapter to the family life of men on skid row. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, studies of homelessness frequently analyzed their subjects' natal and conjugal backgrounds; the homeless man could not be understood apart from a relationship (or lack thereof) with family. When family background proves insufficient to account for the figure's homelessness, studies follow Bogue's pattern to determine why the man remained single, i.e., the normative expectation is conjugality. The single adult male deviates from this norm and so the deviance must be accounted for. Other forms of deviance are tested to assess their role in abetting deviation from family norms; drinking habits, infidelity, and sex lives of the homeless man are subjected to scrutiny.

The sexuality of the homeless man was a source of anxiety before Bogue's 1960s story. From the older days of the hobo, the possibility of homosexuality receives passing (or sometimes oblique) mention, but is rarely dwelt upon. These communities of men with few, if any, social ties were thought to provide a forum for this supposed sexual deviance. Nels Anderson—who, with an air of discomfort, most extensively explores the role of homosexuality in hobo culture—explains the 'perversion' of homosexuality as the result of sex isolation.⁹⁶ Bogue, however, looks at homosexuality as a prior condition to

⁹⁴ Bogue, 353.

⁹⁵ I assume that by a good home, he must be following the sociological conventional wisdom of the time, meaning an unbroken home, i.e., both parents in the household, with relatively little strife.

⁹⁶ "In his sex life, as in his whole existence, the homeless man moves in a vicious circle. Industrially inadequate, his migratory habits render him the more economically inefficient. A social outcast, he still wants the companionship which his mode of life denies him. Debarred from family life, he hungers for intimate associations and affection. The women that he knows, with few exceptions, are repulsive to him.

possibly account for a lack of desire for marriage. He concludes that most of the single men in skid row are not “active homosexuals” but merely undersexed men with a low level of interest in women, though there is a “small but significant proportion of active homosexuals.”⁹⁷

Whether homosexuality is considered as an effect of isolation from women (Anderson) or a possible cause of this isolation (Bogue), the implicit question (or perhaps, not so implicit)⁹⁸ remains: *why is this man not married, or why is he not in a family*. The homeless man remains at odds with the more common familial expectations of “civilized Americans.” Obviously, more is at stake in these sexual anxieties than a lack of marriage. However, I am focusing on the anxieties about the family.

The anxieties about family are more than sexual threats to heteronormativity, but this homophobia does exacerbate the perceived threats of the homeless man. Anderson’s account of homosexual activity arising from sexual isolation from women reveals an alarming fear of the inevitable result of those who do not have proper relations with the family. Margaret Mary Wood reaches a similar conclusion—men who have no outlet for their emotional needs other than other men will establish these seemingly abnormal

Attractive women live in social worlds infinitely remote from his. With him the fundamental wishes of the person for response and status have been denied expression. The prevalence of sexual perversion among the homeless men is, therefore, but the extreme expression of their unnatural sex life. Homosexual practices arise almost inevitably in similar situations of sex isolation. A constructive solution for the problems of the sex life of the homeless man strikes deeper into our social life than this study can carry us.” Anderson, *Hobo*, 149.

⁹⁷ Bogue, 371.

⁹⁸ Bogue opens his chapter on marriage and family life of men on skid row with two questions. “The topic requires two separate inquiries:

- a. Why didn’t the single men ever marry? Did these men ever participate in a courtship, and if they did, why did it not culminate in marriage?
- b. What caused the marriages of the separated and divorced men to fail? In what ways are these failures related to the presence of these men on Skid Row?” Bogue, 355.

relationships.⁹⁹ In the Anderson/Wood interpretation, the failure to integrate the homeless man into family life can lead to familial destruction—no new families will emerge from the same-sex relationships. This unfounded fear of the family’s demise through a lack of conjugality is rarely played out fully; Anderson stops short of unwinding the implications.

The unease about sexuality is related to a broader concern about gender roles and the proper form of domesticity. In the hobo jungle—camps along train routes, the hobo “can become domesticated without the aid of women...The hobo learns here the housewife’s art of keeping pots clean and the camp in order.”¹⁰⁰ Beecher and Stowe showed us in the last chapter that the housewife’s art—or her domestic science—is the female role, for the home is her domain. Hobosociality upends these norms; bending norms of gender and sexuality exacerbates the perceived threats to family life. The anxieties about threats to the bourgeois family are not always fully articulated; angst rarely is.

While the assumption of gender roles (and their relationship to family norms) is central to the discourse on homelessness, our concern with these articulations of ‘deviance’ is broader than the sum of pathologies. These sociologists assess each deviance—drinking, infidelity, homosexuality, violation of gender norms, etc.—in terms of its relation to the nuclear family. They ask questions like: Does the pathology arise

⁹⁹ “Without the satisfactions of home life and socially approved contacts with women, soldiers and sailors, like other sexually segregated groups of men, tend to find an outlet for their craving for emotional stimulation in ways which society condemns. Their behavior, seen as a response to a normal social environment, appears abnormal. Viewed, however, in relation to the segregated conditions under which they live, it is not. It is, on the contrary, a natural response to the particular environmental conditions which have called it forth. It is an adaptation to the isolation of a socially segregated environment which is as normal in its way as in the socially approved behavior of persons who are more fortunately placed.” Wood, 29-30.

¹⁰⁰ Anderson, *Hobo*, 18.

from the family of origin? Does the deviance inhibit the man from starting a family? Did the deviance lead to the break up of his family? In the sociological work on homelessness through the 1960s, etiology and pathology are articulated only with respect to the category of the nuclear family.

Testing the Disaffiliation Thesis

Toward the end of this period, the necessary relation between family and homelessness appears to be brought into question. Sociologists using the disaffiliation thesis had until this time defined disaffiliation as the separation from family relationships. Thus, the research into the pathology and deviance of the homeless man always focused on their relationship to family. This concern either oriented to research to questions of etiology—what in the natal family contributed to the pathology and/or disaffiliation. Or the researcher considered the pathology to explain the man’s inability to establish a family. But over the course of the Bowery Project, the definition of disaffiliation was called into question; the researchers wondered if disaffiliation was only connected with the family.

In another publication from their multiyear Bowery Project, Caplow and Bahr point out that they shifted their definitions of homelessness over the course of their study. They began with one that includes the traits of family relations, age, amount of rent paid, and employment status.¹⁰¹ They later shift to a seemingly broader sense of general disaffiliation.

We moved in time to the position that homelessness is a condition of general disaffiliation from social organizations. Traditionally, the

¹⁰¹ Howard M. Bahr and Theodore Caplow, “Homelessness, Affiliation, and Occupational Mobility,” *Social Forces* 47, no.1 (Sep. 1968): 29.

homeless man has been viewed as ‘unattached,’ and to describe homelessness in terms of disaffiliation is not an extreme departure from earlier definitions, but it does extend the phenomenon from the skid-row population to all persons characterized by the absence or attenuation of affiliative ties.¹⁰²

Here, Caplow and Bahr are writing at the time of the demise of the category of the disaffiliated man; they both document and abet the demise. The near indexical relationship between homelessness and lack of family relations collapses within their work, but they sustain the framework of disaffiliation for homelessness. While they shift their definition, it does not expand the pool of the homeless to include people with familial ties. The absence of family is still a necessary condition; it is just no longer sufficient. Their seemingly broader definition narrows the pools of the homeless to only include those disconnected from family who also do not have extensive connections to voluntary associations or other communities.

This late 1960s shift takes place long after the collapse of hobo communities; Bahr and Caplow are in effect excluding the single adult who still has extensive social connections. Thus, individuals like the single, young urban professional or the hippie in a communal living situation are not homeless. The disaffiliation thesis sustains despite a tweak in the social science term. Bahr and Caplow continue to write about the disaffiliated man into the 1970s, when the consensus that the homeless man is the disaffiliated man fractures—a process which we will explore in the next chapter.

The framework of disaffiliation also rests upon a semantics of family. We have already seen the unreflective shifting between the terms of home and family, both in the

¹⁰² Bahr and Caplow, “Occupational Mobility,” 29.

work of Bahr and Caplow and in those whose works they cite.¹⁰³ The categories of affiliation, and its negation, also assume familial relations—adopting as a son (or severing this son relationship). Their colleague James Rooney in his contribution to Bahr's *Disaffiliated Man* volume—which grew out of the Bowery Project—establishes that the Skid Row, unattached male¹⁰⁴ has to be understood in his distinction from the stable, family-oriented community.

The continuous development of a distinctive single man's culture was associated with increasing differentiation, isolation, and opposition from the stable, family-oriented community. The unattached men could not be included in the status groups of the resident community because of the differences of values stemming from the former's lack of structured responsibility, particularly as expressed in the lack of restraint in recreation, pursuit of immediate pleasure, and lack of concern for the future.¹⁰⁵

The disaffiliated man embodies a set of values antagonistic to the bourgeois family and so can only be understood through this opposition. The demise of the hobos eliminated the familial threats from a population prone to wandering, but the underlying framework of the homeless man as a figure without a family remains within the discourse on homelessness.

Bahr argues that an inevitable consequence of this disaffiliation is powerlessness. The negative freedom resulting from the attenuation of affiliative ties comes along with a loss of control over one's social (and non-social) environment.¹⁰⁶ Because power develops or manifests in relations, because it is always wielded through institutions, the

¹⁰³ For instance, F. Ivan Nye, "Child Adjustment in Broken and in Unhappy Unbroken Homes," *Marriage and Family Living* 9, no.4 (Nov. 1957): 356-361; or Lee G. Burchinal, "Characteristics of Adolescents from Unbroken, Broken, and Reconstituted Families," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 26, no.1 (Feb. 1964): 44-51.

¹⁰⁴ Bahr points out a range of synonymous labels for skid row man—"homeless man, derelict, unattached man, urban nomad, vagrant, and tramp." Bahr, *Skid Row*, 27.

¹⁰⁵ James F. Rooney, "Societal Forces and the Unattached Male: An Historical Review," in Bahr, *Disaffiliated Man*, 18.

¹⁰⁶ Bahr, *Skid Row*, 13.

lack of social relations and absence of organizational ties renders the homeless man powerless. Robert Park made a similar point in “The Mind of the Hobo.” The only form of social relations legitimated by this discourse on homelessness, though, is the family. Hobosociality was first dismissed as inadequate to moor individuals to society, and then, as the hobo community slowly disappeared, the alternate form of sociality became irrelevant. The homeless man is that individual who is literally subjected to those who have institutional authority over him—the police, missions, social service agencies, etc. With no other social moorings the homeless man comes to be defined by institutions of power.

In this social science framework, the family is the foundation of social life; it is that which settles and moors individuals. But the homeless man of skid row is the antithesis of the settled—“their ideas and customs are the antithesis of much that the ‘civilized’ American sees as valuable and sacred.”¹⁰⁷ The disaffiliation thesis continues to be the way to define the problem of homelessness through the 1960s.

The Catholic Worker: Resisting Disaffiliation

The sacredness of bourgeois life was critiqued by one group who resisted the otherness of the homeless. Their personalist embrace of the homeless and sacred duties to extend mercy to them shaped a response to the rise of the homeless man quite at odds with the broader society. The Catholic Worker grasped at models of charity discarded through the rationalization of alms; they were a reaction to social service practices which developed through the modernizing of older charity.

¹⁰⁷ Bahr, *Skid Row*, 11.

With the ever-increasing organization of charities, the fin-de-siècle personalist practices of volunteer visitation gave way to the emerging professional class of social workers. Demands of education, applied training and professional affiliations changed the face from whom the poor or sick received services—detached professionalism became the increasing norm. By the time of the Depression's exponentially increased demand on social services, the rise of social workers was fairly complete. This new profession and the new distastefulness which came with managerial duties were not lauded in all quarters—even among those who had significant roles in the development of social work practices. In an earlier era, these nascent tensions arose between the settlement movements and charities, who increasingly undertook a thorough vetting of a family before delivery of any service. Jane Addams expressed the outrage of those receiving charitable assistance which was delayed by these calculations. “When they see the delay and caution with which relief is given, these do not appear to them conscientious scruples, but the cold and calculating action of the selfish man.”¹⁰⁸

These fin-de-siècle shifts in charity marked the infusion of the instrumental practices of *Gesellschaft* into the previously personalist practices of alms-giving. The person and the relationship were subordinated to a world of seemingly objective calculations to determine if the impoverished person or family were a good investment; the practices of capital became those of charity. Charity is a sign of power imbalance. The impetus for autonomous associations to furnish necessities declines with the hobo; charity and its social service heir subject the homeless to its ministrations. The inability of social settlements to meet the Depression's augmented demands gave greater opportunities for the expansion of the large-scale bureaucratization of social services.

¹⁰⁸ In Lubove, 10.

As I have already discussed, the formation of the homeless figure comes through the processes of modernizing of charity; the homeless man is the anonymous product of anonymous services. The mid-1930s consolidation of the categories of social displacement in the figure of the homeless man was a semantic consolidation which paralleled the institutional ones in the rise of large-scale social service bureaucracies.

With this rise of professional social work, the lines of the late twentieth-century debates about faith-based organizations were already being drawn—calculating efficiency versus the personalist approach of a religious charity. The personalist camp has devolved primarily to the realm of the religious right, whose critiques of bureaucratic services has more to do with opposition to government-sponsored social services than to the particular practices of service administration or management.

An early resistance to this institutionalization of poverty and its remedies emerged from the ashes of the Greenwich Village left group that had formed around *The Masses* and its post-suppression heir *Liberator*. The radical journalist Dorothy Day, who had a brief early start at these magazines, co-founded the Catholic Worker movement with Peter Maurin and began publishing its newspaper in 1933. Maurin developed much of the intellectual framework for the movement which rested on the insistence that charity is personal. In her 1950s autobiography *The Long Loneliness*,¹⁰⁹ Day recollects an early exchange between Maurin and herself about the nature of charity in the modern world.

She wrote of Maurin:

If he had no money he went without food. He always advised people to beg if they were in need. But I know he did not like to beg himself. He preferred to go without. I used to taunt him gently with this.

“That is why people prefer going on relief, getting aid from the state,” I told him. “They prefer that to taking aid from their family. It isn’t

¹⁰⁹ Day also participates in the 1950s infatuation with loneliness.

any too easy, you know, to be chided by your family for being a failure. People who are out of work are always considered failures. They prefer the large bounty of the great, impersonal mother, the state.”

But the fact remained, he always reminded me, no matter what people’s preferences, that we are our brother’s keeper, and the unit of society is the family; that we must have a sense of personal responsibility to take care of our own, and our neighbor, at a personal sacrifice. “That is a first principle,” he always said. “It is not the function of the state to enter into these realms. Only in times of great crisis, like floods, hurricane, earthquake or drought, does public authority come in. Charity is personal. Charity is love.”¹¹⁰

This personalist approach to charity uses the same principle as Jacob Riis to ground philanthropy—I am my brother’s keeper. The Catholic Worker movement formed lay religious communities in which they tried to live out this principle. They combined this communitarian impulse with a desire for the locales in which such communities could best flourish, where people could work for subsistence and not a wage, and where they could resist the proletarianization which came from urban life.

Like Riis who also called upon people to be their brother’s keeper, the Catholic Worker calls for a return to the community lost with urban upheavals. The atavistic turn of the Catholic Worker extends Riis’s efforts to instill elements of rural community into urban society beyond Riis’s via media accommodation of modernity. Riis bemoans the ills of the modern city but accepts that it cannot be sent away. He calls for a greening of the city, while also availing himself of its institutions—the schools, the police, the churches. He wants to bring the country into the city to temper the extremes of modernization and the city.

The impetus of the Catholic Worker movement is a rejection of modernity. For them, charity comes from the *Gemeinschaft*-ideal of taking care of one’s own; kinship-

¹¹⁰ Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness: The Autobiography of Dorothy Day* (New York: HarperCollins, 1981), 179.

like obligations (being a brother's keeper) make demands upon one up to a point of personal sacrifice. The sectarian movement created a lay religious community within the city linked to farms—'agronomic universities' in Maurin's phrase—away from the metropolis that afforded opportunities to fulfill their mantra of work, not labor. For Peter Maurin, any future social order required a return to the land, which could furnish a home through community. Day wrote of his attachment to land:

Every talk of Peter's about the social order led to the land. He spoke always as a peasant, but as a practical one. He knew the craving of the human heart for a toehold on the land, for a home of one's own, but he also knew how impossible it was to attain it except through community, through men banding together in farming communes to live to a certain extent in common, work together, own machinery together, start schools together.¹¹¹

He wanted a communal return to land which rejected the organizing of industrial labor by rejecting industry; his vision was a pre-modern paradise with a community of brothers (and sisters). This *Gemeinschaft*-ideal required "personalism and communitarianism".¹¹²

Similar to Riis, Maurin uses the Cain story to frame his critique of modern social ills and a dependence on organized relief. Maurin felt that relying on anonymous government relief is a failure to recognize one's obligations to one's brother. The Catholic Worker Neighborliness, not bureaucracy, should be the tool for relief. In an article for *Commonweal*, Day makes the centrality of the Cain story explicit.

When Peter Maurin talked about the necessity of practicing the Works of Mercy, he meant all of them. He envisioned Houses of Hospitality in poor parishes in every city of the country, where these precepts of Our Lord could be put into effect. He pointed out that we have turned to state responsibility through home relief, social legislation, and social security,

¹¹¹ Day, *Loneliness*, 223-224.

¹¹² Day, *Loneliness*, 195.

that we no longer practice personal responsibility, but are repeating the words of the first murderer, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”¹¹³

As I demonstrated with Riis, the Cain story is far more than merely a question of being a brother’s keeper. Cain was a tiller of the soil and thus tied to the land. The insufficiency or inadequacy of his devotion to God precipitates the violent rending of his family. This follows the murder of his brother; he is expelled from his family and cut off from the soil—the kinship and spatial groundings on which *Gemeinschaft* are based. Losing ties to soil and breaking up of the family are co-extensive. Cain establishes the first city as a place to settle after he loses the ability to till. The city arises from the two violent punishments of expulsion from family and land no longer yielding to him. Cain’s urban progeny gave rise to technological innovation—all bronze and iron tools were developed by them.

With Cain, we have a small précis of that supposed later shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. A small community of kinships bonds—which relies on the land for harvesting and grazing—breaks, and new, reputedly less fulfilling, spatial and social relationships take over. The severance of these more intimate bonds also necessitates severance with the land; the city then arises with all of its technology. Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin read the Cain story as a cautionary tale of modernization.

The Catholic Worker’s personalism, however, was no match for the rationalizing forces ordering the city. They remained a dissenting voice of retreat from the modern world that failed to sway the direction of the discourse on homelessness. They set up Houses of Hospitality in cities around the country, but they did not stave off the rise of social service agencies—they merely provided an idiosyncratic alternative to social

¹¹³ Dorothy Day, “The Scandal of the Works of Mercy,” in *Dorothy Day: Selected Writings*, ed. Robert Ellsberg (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), 98-99.

services. In part, the invocation of the Cain story ran counter to the trends toward scientific efficiency in constituting a homeless man. Myth (or, in this case, perhaps religion) was an unnecessary cultural form at a time when order was being restored to the city. Even the problems of the Depression could not replicate the fin-de-siècle urban chaos; the city now had a language by which to be structured. Thus, the Catholic Worker movement's resistance to modernization only furnished an idiosyncratic alternative to the discourse that constituted a homeless figure through social science literature. They have continued to exist on their own without significantly impacting the institutional or discursive responses to homelessness.

This homeless figure became the normative category for social displacement as the twin concepts of the nuclear family and social isolation became prominent in American sociology and anthropology. In these new trends, the homeless man became that individual who found himself outside of family structure—the disaffiliated man. The language of homelessness, which had developed in the earlier era to describe threats to the Christian home ideal, had now become the mere absence of such a home. The absence of such family relationships was a working assumption of sociological literature throughout the New Deal era through the 1960s—all etiologies, pathologies, or deviance are analyzed in terms of their relationship to the nuclear family. Though questioned and resisted, the disaffiliation thesis of homelessness continued to be the dominant way of defining homelessness through the 1960s.

In the New Deal era, the discourse on homelessness incorporated a new stability. Political changes in the city and the consolidation of disparate categories of social displacement by sociologists changed the landscape of the city and social science. Sociologists

settled on the category of the homeless man to represent the urban displaced on skid row. The need for myth subsided; it had served its purpose in bringing some meaning-making mechanism to bear on the chaos of the new metropolis. But its turn to latency does not mean that it entirely went away. Social science became the dominant mode to discuss the family and the displaced through the Depression and Eisenhower years. The categorical stability held through the 1960s—the homeless figure was the disaffiliated man; a basic consensus was reached. Quibbling about etiologies and the relationships to particular pathologies dominated social science at this time. But the attributes that had emerged through the fin-de-siècle invocation of mythic tropes—male, threat to family, unsettled, and pathology as a medicalized form of sin—remained untouched. They became the characteristics of the homeless man.

The rise of the homeless figure as the disaffiliated man is the underside of the rise of the nuclear family. These two were intertwined in mid-century sociological work, much like the homeless city was intertwined with the Christian home a half century earlier; the homeless city or man did not exist without the family norm. Commentators and sociologists developed the homeless category in juxtaposition to the family norm. But this consensus that the category of homelessness represent threats to or absence of family norms began to be threatened in the latter part of the twentieth century. For the fracturing of the disaffiliation thesis, we turn to the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Homelessness and Family Values

Disaffiliation remained the definition of homelessness as long as the category of the nuclear family continued to be fairly stable. The consolidation of the category of the homeless man in the 1930s and the 1950s further elaboration of this figure as the disaffiliated man continued through the conclusion of Bahr and Caplow's late 1960s Bowery Project research. The publications which continued coming out from this research into the 1970s, e.g., Howard Bahr's *Skid Row: An Introduction to Disaffiliation*, continued with the same basic discourse on homelessness.

The fin-de-siècle use of mythic tropes defined the parameters for constituting a homeless figure—separation from or threat to family, pathology, unsettled, etc. As we saw in the last chapter, these attributes were taken up by sociologists studying the urban displaced of skid row. This broad framework of disaffiliation and pathology continued to be used by sociologists until we start to see fractures in this consensus in the 1970s.

As in the fin-de-siècle period, journalists first documented conditions which challenged the basic understandings of urban life, and then later sociologists take the issues up in earnest. For instance, the term bag lady—which represents a fracture in the gendered assumptions of the disaffiliated man—is coined in popular parlance in 1972, predating the first full-length study of homeless women by four years.¹ In the 1960s several changes in urban, family, and social life began to change some of the conditions which inform the discourse on homelessness. Slowly, sociologists begin to take up the changes that journalists and activists were reporting about.

¹ Both the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Merriam-Webster* date the phrase bag lady to 1972. It starts appearing in newspaper and magazine accounts of the city at this time. The first monograph on homeless women was the final publication from the Bowery Project. See Howard M. Bahr and Gerald R. Garrett, *Women Alone: The Disaffiliation of Urban Females* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1976).

As any conventional view of American history would tell us, the 1960s began to see breaks in the Pollyannaish accounts of American culture typified in sitcoms like ‘Leave it to Beaver’. Urban tensions, anti-war sentiments, the nascent appearance of a counter-culture, the appearance of a new left, pathologization of the African-American family, the rise of second wave feminism—all of these (and more) are thought to contribute to the breakdown of the idyllic America of the 1950s. No matter how problematic such narratives are, there were indeed social and cultural shifts beginning in the 1960s and continuing for the ensuing decades. The upheavals were not as violently visible as those at the waning of the previous century, despite explosions like Watts in 1965 or Chicago in 1968. But underlying structural changes over the late 1960s and early 1970s created new conditions for the collapse of urban manufacturing, the rise of inner city poverty, a backlash against the postmodern metropolis, and the emergence of a globalized economy. These changes in the economy and the city brought further change to social life, and the nuclear family was not beyond these impacts. Such shifts in the city and the economy began to fracture the conditions which had given rise to the sociological consensus with the disaffiliation thesis. In the face of such social changes, the sociological literature on homeless began to shift.

In this chapter, I show that the changes in family and social life which begin in the 1960s established the conditions for the greatest challenge to the disaffiliation thesis: the homeless family. The appearance of this new group in shelters and in the courts undermined a basic assumption of the discourse on homelessness. The logic of the discourse—homelessness as disaffiliation—assumes separation from a family. How,

then, could one be homeless if one is with one's family? But before this contradiction comes to the fore, several steps were taken from the disaffiliation of the homeless man.

In the first section—"Fracturing Consensus: Women and Minorities," we look at two historical shifts which prompt adapting changes in the discourse. First, we see the appearance of women on the streets and in the sociological literature. There were always a small minority of women who appeared in the discourse on homelessness. For instance, in the early hobo days, Boxcar Bertha gained popularity for her autobiography which she told to Ben Reitman. But women were always a small minority and thought of as incidental to the discourse. When women began to be seen on the streets and then in newspapers, social scientists had to acknowledge the gendered assumptions of their research. In this section we focus primarily on Howard Bahr's chapter on women in *Skid Row*, because it is the first sociological acknowledgement that women have been effaced in the literature on homelessness.

A second, similar assumption fell to the wayside for similar reasons—the almost exclusive whiteness in the representations of the homeless man. The assumptions of the discourse were integrated with particular spaces of the city where social science research took place—the Skid Row, Bowery and Hobohemia sections of town. These sections where sociologists studied the homeless man were in the 'white' sections of town. As we shall see in this first section, basic discursive assumptions were reinforced by the ways that definitions of homeless were operationalized. The rise of both homeless women and the African-American homeless followed shifts in the social roles of single women and the African American family. Opening up the gender and race assumptions of the

discourse enabled the greatest challenge to the discourse on homelessness—representing the homeless family.

In the second section, we look at the early discursive attempts to negotiate the homeless family. The homeless family appeared—in the streets and in literature—in the 1980s. Having already had to acknowledge cognitive blind spots to homeless women, the literature on homeless faced an even larger one with the homeless family. It required judicial action before social service providers and belatedly sociologists recognized that one could both be with one's family and be homeless.

Negotiating this contradiction between court rulings and the discursive logic, became a great challenge. As with each major shift in the discourse, the initial work was undertaken by journalists and activists. Because he wrote one of the first, very influential books on homeless families, we focus on the work of popular Pulitzer-prize winning writer Jonathon Kozol in this section. As with the fin-de-siècle commentators, he relies extensively on myth to ground his discussions of homeless families. This return to myth brackets the homeless family from the homeless figure. As prominent sociologists, like Peter Rossi or Christopher Jencks, move forward from this point, they continue Kozol's practice of bracketing the family from broader analyses of homelessness. Myth again provides a framework for thinking about homelessness and the family. It then recedes as the discursive order was reestablished and the family was segregated from the negative valuations associated with the pathologized, disaffiliated homeless figure. After the homeless family was bracketed from the broader discussions of homelessness, the basic disaffiliation thesis continued to be applied to these men and women. The logic of the

discourse on homelessness continued to shape social science and increasingly policy responses to urban problems.

This atomized homeless figure moves from a category of social science to a legal category codified in the federal law—the Stewart B. McKinney Act, later updated in the shorthand of McKinney-Vento. The legal recognition of the homeless arose from the seeming explosion of homelessness in the urban streets of America; sociology adopted the legal definition for use in its research. Certainly, the numbers of homeless people appear to dramatically increase over the course of the 1980s. Part of this increase relates to economic changes in the cities which had begun in the early 1970s—the demise of urban manufacturing, gentrification and the collapse of the cheap lodging houses and single-room occupancy motels (SROs) found in old skid row sections of town. This combination of job loss, loss of housing for the poor, and the reentry of the middle class into urban areas set the stage for tensions surrounding the newly displaced. Those losing housing and jobs no longer had SROs, and so the bottom of the housing market hit the sidewalk as young urban professionals started to reclaim urban space.

In the final section of this chapter, we look at how these concerns for the family move into the realm of public policy (and are no longer linked to the homeless figure). Yet, we find that the basic tensions between fostering family and promoting the associational life of civil society—antagonisms which we have seen since Riis—are not reconciled. Instead, the family values movement integrates the two concerns and, in the process, subordinates the family to the instrumental concerns of rationalization. We look at Senator Rick Santorum's attempts to assimilate the concerns for family values to the promotion of the associational life of civil society. Here, we will find that the family of

which he writes sloughs off the organicism of *Gemeinschaft* to make the family a product of the interest relations of civil society.

With Santorum emptying the family of its previous content and the separation of family anxieties from the homeless figure, the discourse on homelessness reaches its demise. Social scientists and policymakers continue to research and provides services to a homeless population, but the framework which arose with the fin-de-siècle commentators falls apart. The family which was regarded as the last bastion of *Gemeinschaft* has gone away; instead the family represented by the family values movement is one that accommodates modernity, embraces instrumentality, and is protected by the associational life of civil society. The norm to which the homeless man was an other ceased to be.

In this chapter, we find that the fracturing of a discursive consensus leads to shifts in the gender and racial assumptions of the discourse. No longer was the homeless figure exclusively the (white) man of skid row. This opening of the discourse created the possibility for a further opening—the constitution of the homeless family. The rise of the homeless family prompted several changes in the discourse. First, the homeless man was relieved of his role as the primary carrier of family anxieties about the impact of modernization. Second, the family anxieties found another cultural locus—the family value debates. The homeless figure, fully-distinguished from the homeless family, became increasingly policed to create family-friendly urban spaces. These shifts in the city and the family grew from the 1960s urban changes which transformed cityscapes and fractured the discursive consensus that homelessness was disaffiliation.

Section One: Fracturing Consensus: Women and Minorities

The univocal social science definition of the homeless figure as the disaffiliated man could not sustain, when faced with journalists documenting new problems in urban life. Even the most insensitive of social scientists had to ground their arguments with reference to some form of empirical research. The assumptions of age, sex, and race upon which this literature rested had always faced challenges, but, eventually, the limits of the disaffiliation model became evident in the streets. Though a cognitive blindness had hidden populations from the sociologist's gaze, eventually journalists and activists identified new trends and new terms (e.g., bag lady) to make sociologists have to acknowledge their blind spots on gender and race. And so the social science literature on homeless had continued to reaffirm its basic assumptions. The spatial, linguistic and institutional delimitations—which established the conditions necessary for the consolidation of the category of homelessness—created this framework for the subsequent study of homelessness.

In this section, we see this framework begin to fray. By the middle of the 1970s, women and African-Americans were increasingly documented as homeless. Before either of these groups had the adjective 'homeless' attached to them, there were a series of changes in the structure of the American metropolis combined with other social and political changes. The collapse of urban Fordist manufacturing, technological changes which enabled ever-greater distances between production and distribution, changes in middle class marriage and pathologization of the poor, urban African-American family all set the stage for the fracturing of the consensus of the homeless figure as the

disaffiliated man. One of these changes that first undermined the representation of homelessness as the disaffiliated man was the appearance of women on the streets.

Women Alone: Bag Ladies on the Streets

Before monographs on homeless women appeared to establish the existence of this group (beyond the passing nod usual in studies on homelessness), the term ‘bag lady’ gained sway in popular parlance. The homeless woman was on the streets and in the newspaper before social science recognized the limits of its spatial delimitation. The intersection of institutions, taxonomies, and urban geography created the conditions to render the homeless woman invisible to the social scientist. The overwhelming maleness of skid row and its primacy as the social scientific laboratory effectively excluded women from the ranks of the homeless. The turn to some form of inclusion of these socially excluded women was rather ham-handed; the social science literature did not know how to integrate these women. The social science disaffiliation thesis always posited a male homeless figure—it is the ‘filius’ (son) who is disconnected. Because of these, and other, difficulties, the efforts to study homeless women qua women (not just as some outlier to the studies of men) used existing paradigms under which to subsume homeless women. Extant studies of alcoholism provided an easy entrée.

Pathology and the Homeless Woman

Howard Bahr makes an early effort to establish homeless women as a legitimate category of analysis. In his 1973 *Skid Row*, he gives them a chapter unto themselves and a few years later co-writes the final volume to come out of the Bowery Project

exclusively on homeless women, though his studies use exceedingly small samples. Years later, Peter Rossi notes the paucity of women studied by Donald Bogue in the 1960s (3% of Chicago's skid row residents) and Howard Bahr in the 1970s (64 women over the course of a year) compared to his mid 1980s study which found women constituting 25% of Chicago's homeless population.² Despite the small samples, Bahr realizes the limits of applying the same assumptions of homeless men to women. Yet, when Bahr proposes to establish this new line of inquiry, he takes the popular, and to a lesser extent professional, view that there must be some pathological behavior among the skid row residents. This assumption of pathology, as we saw in the last chapter, was often used as an explanation for disaffiliation—if one were 'normal', one would presumably be with one's family. The pathology of alcoholism is the point of entry to study homeless women. The category of women alcoholics, he acknowledges, is broader than that of homeless women; the latter are a subset. While his own evidence belies this assumption,³ he takes it as his starting point, primarily because there is an extant body of literature with which he can work, rather than start with a *tabula rasa*.⁴ Of his turn to the literature on alcoholic women, he writes:

Homeless men have been widely studied, but there is no comparable body of literature on homeless women. Occasional studies on the female drunkenness offender point to the fact that some women alcoholics are

² Rossi, 39.

³ Bahr cites shelter caseworkers on alcohol use among women in the shelter. "Most caseworkers estimated at least half of the Shelter clients were chronic alcoholics, and the substantial majority had experienced some type of acute drinking problem earlier in their lives. In fact, caseworkers assigned special significance to excessive drinking as a cause of the predicament of Shelter women." Bahr, *Skid Row*, 210. His informants identify only about half as being alcoholics and the number seems to increase to a substantial majority only when the homeless woman's entire life history is considered, indicating that a substantial number of the homeless women do not have a drinking problem at the time that they are homeless.

⁴ Bahr argues that the literature on alcoholic women is relevant in two ways. First, it is a serious problem among skid row women (as well as a popular stereotype), and second, "most of the research on female subjects even roughly comparable to homeless women has been research on drinking behavior." Bahr, *Skid Row*, 193. He does not explain in what ways the material is comparable—class, personal pathology, etc.

homeless, but few follow-up investigations focusing on the life histories of these women have yet been undertaken. Explicit discussions of homeless women alcoholics almost always are singular accounts of their unsavory character and bizarre way of life...Accounts of this type constitute tangible evidence that homeless women exist, but, provocative as they are, such case histories have failed to stimulate much social research.⁵

This introduction to his chapter on homeless women hardly paints an accurate view of his study—only two of the four case histories which he explores cite women with alcohol problems, yet he uses studies of female alcoholics as a means to frame his analysis. A third case history is of a woman who talks about using pills. This seeming conflation points to an early propensity in the literature to collapse all types of substance abuse. Thus the 1980s advent of the crack epidemic produces a form of the homeless figure easily assimilable to the extant literature on winos. Bahr's argument rests on an *a priori* assumption that something is most definitely not right if women are homeless—the location of this “not rightness” he finds in the homeless figure.

The few women who appeared in the fin-de-siècle literature had this same imputation of pathology. We saw Riis appalled by “a sallow, wrinkled hag” working in a stale beer dive, and Jane Addams' brief foray into women's homelessness was in an article which implied connections between the sheltered woman and prostitutes.⁶ Even the majority of the mythic tropes—like Cain, Ishmael or the Wandering Jew—cannot provide for ways to articulate women's homelessness. The gendered connection between woman and home was so great that a homeless woman was inconceivable. A female was the foundation of a Christian home; the foundation cannot lose its hominess. Pathology could be the only explanation—it explained the abnormality of a non-familial female.

⁵ Bahr, *Skid Row*, 175-6.

⁶ Jane Addams, “The Sheltered Woman and the Magdalen,” *Ladies Home Journal* Nov. 1913, in Jane Addams, *The Jane Addams Reader*, ed. Jean Bethke Elshstain (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 264-269.

Bahr's account of the disaffiliation of females is different than that of males. Alcohol abuse accounts for the woman's disaffiliation, though Bahr finds that familial discord presages drinking problems. He writes, "[T]he family background of almost all female alcoholics can be seen in terms of a disorganization syndrome, which may include inadequate parental rearing practices, conflict in the home, maternal domination coupled with submission and instability of the father, and parental alcoholism."⁷ The female is able to be homeless because she is from a home with conflict, i.e., a home that is not truly a home. Even though Bahr rejects the widespread thesis that alcoholic women embody a greater pathology than do alcoholic men,⁸ he, nonetheless, establishes different standards in the evaluation of men and women. When he discusses the role of personal problems with men on skid row, he undertakes the trio of disabilities, disease, and drinking,⁹ yet the collapse of this list to the final problem in his analysis of homeless women can only partially be accounted for by the limits of the literature. His shelter sample is small; he can summarize the rates of disability and disease.¹⁰

Bahr argues that the relationship between alcohol and isolation (the necessary condition for homelessness, as we saw in the last chapter) is not, however, a simple cause and effect connection; "social isolation appears to be both an antecedent and concomitant factor in a vicious circle: Deviant drinking occurs as a response to social isolation; excessive drinking increases social isolation, which in turn leads to heavier drinking."¹¹ Distinguishing the two forms of drinking—deviant and excessive—enables him to

⁷ Bahr, *Skid Row*, 181.

⁸ Bahr, *Skid Row*, 187.

⁹ Bahr, *Skid Row*, 97ff.

¹⁰ Not to be disingenuous in my critique, Bahr and his co-author Gerald Garrett do undertake some of these questions several years later in their monograph *Women Alone*. Nonetheless, we are left with the situation that the first significant work on homeless women cannot get past alcohol as an explanatory mechanism.

¹¹ Bahr, *Skid Row*, 193.

explain a dialectic of alcohol abuse and homelessness for women. Isolation leads to drinking which increases isolation and then more drinking; thus, isolation and deviance/excess become the two root causes for women to be homeless.

The Invisibility of Homeless Women

The homeless women were disaffiliated because they never had a stable home without conflict—substance abuse was used to negotiate this discord. The discord is a necessary condition for considering a woman to be homeless. The dialectics of the language of homelessness are here instrumental in the advent of the women in the literature; Bahr first denigrates the home and then the female is represented as homeless—conflict and pathology appear as culprits of this denigration.

Partially, this turn to alcoholic women arises because Bahr recognizes the limits of the literature on homeless women. Yet, he further marginalizes women already at the margins of both society and scholarly literature by subsuming them under categories of deviance. As the bedrock of home, there is no way to articulate the problem of homeless women beyond an assumption of deviance. Even more importantly, Bahr also ends up replicating the spatial and semantic problems which he identifies as erecting the social scientific blinders around homeless women. He writes:

The scarcity of studies of homelessness among females may be attributed to a number of factors. In the first place, skid row women are rare... Since women are rarely present in the places where social scientists have studied homeless people, it is understandable that they have been overlooked. Furthermore, because homeless women are not ecologically concentrated in areas such as skid row, they have not been perceived as threatening the social order or as neighborhood problems. Politicians and neighborhood organizations have not been concerned with “cleaning up” areas where “unattached” women live, and as a result there has been little interest or financial support for the study of these women.

Finally, the definitions of homelessness used by sociologists have usually been operationalized in such a way that women are, for all intents and purposes excluded. For example, if homeless people are defined as those who participate in facilities and institutions of skid row, the probability of encountering a woman is exceedingly low.

Nevertheless, there are compelling reasons why careful attention should be given to this population. For one thing, unlike the “conventional” female alcoholic, the homeless woman may find it difficult to remain a “hidden alcoholic.” Moreover, investigations of the drinking behavior and misbehavior of homeless women may greatly increase the value of present findings about the homeless men.¹²

His admission of oversight triangulates the three types of segregation which I have identified in the last chapter as instrumental for constituting the homeless man—spatial, linguistic, and institutional. In this study, the three do not cohere, and so there was no female homeless figure. Bahr’s definition (language) of homelessness identifies those who participate in facilities (institutions) of skid row (space). Women were not in the space and thus not intersecting the institutions of skid row. Therefore, they were not considered under the definition of homeless. Women are *a priori* excluded because they are not brought under the gaze of the social scientists studying homelessness.

Equally important to the inability to identify women as homeless is the issue of social threat, or as Bahr refers to it in the above passage—‘threatening the social order’ or ‘neighborhood problems’. Because their seeming diffusion mitigates the possibility of being perceived as threats or problems, politicians and neighborhoods do not worry about ‘cleaning up’ the area where homeless women are found. While we have seen that the discourse on homelessness has always been intertwined with the fears of a social threat, the nature of the supposed threat to which commentators and social scientists respond has shifted. In Volunteer Special’s *The Volcano Under the City* and Riis’s fears of ‘Bread or Blood’ riots, the problems arose from overaccumulations of labor—the demands of

¹² Bahr, *Skid Row*, 176.

production for low wages created a city with too many poor. But the improved urban economies assimilated much of this labor. In Bahr's concern with 'neighborhood problems', we infer a move which becomes explicit with 1990s gentrification efforts—the threats shift to consumption. 'Neighborhood problems' are an euphemism for the activities—panhandling, urban camping, etc.—which are thought to drive down property values or chase away customers.

The reasons, which Bahr cites above for overlooking homeless women—place, institutions, lack of threat, and definitions, are interrelated. He tells us that he undertakes his research in the place where homeless men are ecologically concentrated; the institutions of skid row set a perimeter for those of the displaced being constituted as homeless. He tells us that the definition arose from this place and its institutions. The concentration of this unattached population in this place (primarily affected by the institutions) constitutes a threat to the social order, or at least a problem to the neighborhood.

The social threat arises through the constitution of the homeless as a group; the social services are to 'clean up' areas around this group to diminish the possibility of threat. We have seen the sense of threat and danger since the fin-de-siècle period. The Cain tradition invokes the first homicide; the collapse of radicals and hobos—prior to the constitution of a homeless figure—indicated political fears. Despite a seeming lack of danger, Bahr thinks that homeless women ought to be studied. The primary reason he cites relates to their drinking behavior; somehow he assumes alcohol problems are the norm for homeless women and that they will provide an interesting comparison with women of other class and status backgrounds.

The Shopping Bag Lady and the Limits of Disaffiliation

The problem of the homeless woman, however, goes far beyond the spatial limitations of studies, or the classificatory system of a social scientist. The problem of the homeless woman is the problem of 'woman'. The privative of homelessness is a life deprived of hearth and home, warmth and comfort. The underlying role of gender constructs long rendered the idea of a homeless woman unthinkable. Home is constituted by and through the female presence. The assumption of conjugality and natality is a male begotten by or joining to a woman. The woman is the *sine qua non* of the home and family. As we shall see in the next section, before a homeless family is constituted in the Reagan years, a homeless woman must first become possible.

The possibility necessitated several shifts in the idea of 'woman'. Never entirely monolithic—the middle class homemaker was the heir of Catharine Beecher's treatises on domestic science—the woman (as wife and mother) was to make the home. For the agent of homemaking to be rendered homeless, cracks had to first appear in the edifice of the dominant conceptions of homelessness. The univocity of disaffiliated man as a middle aged-to-older white male had to weaken in its position as the sole category of homelessness. Social and economic conditions, likewise, had to give rise to the discourse of unattached women. The discourse emerges with the advent of the unattached bourgeois female. Such conditions of detachment had already existed among the poor without giving rise to the category of the homeless woman. Once the unattached female appears in bourgeois discourses, she can then be more readily identified in analyses of the poor.

The category of the homeless woman, however, doubly marks a loss of ‘womanhood’. To be homeless means that woman is void of maternal abilities—the nurturing qualities around which home is purportedly constituted. But in this category, the woman also loses her sexuality; she is denied even the agency of the whore half of the popular feminine dichotomy. Her homelessness is represented as a state of mind—void of the ability to nurture—and a state of body—void of sexuality. She might be constituted as a woman in a technical, biological sense, but she has no womanliness.¹³ To be described as homeless, a woman is stripped of her femininity which is foundational for the home. This category of the homeless woman is not even a Magdalene; she—in her early incarnation as a bag lady—is a parody of the Upper East Side bourgeois woman. The clutch on bags from Saks, Bergdorf Goodman, and upscale boutiques is supplanted by more humble, wrinkled cast off bags hoarding found treasures discarded from the consumer culture of the metropolitan environs.

Shopping bag ladies were even more of urban outsiders than the disaffiliated man of Skid Row; in part, this marginalization is because the daily life and practices of bag ladies derive from traditional female roles.

In a society in which women have little power, their lives are considered unimportant compared to the lives of men. Indeed, there may also be certain differences in the life-styles of homeless women and homeless men that tend to reinforce women’s invisibility. According to sociologist Jennifer Hand, shopping bag ladies are urban economic outsiders who ‘live in nooks, crannies and niches,’ using public or semi-public places ‘for their own practical purposes,’ and differ from homeless men by using ploys derived from specifically female roles, like shopping, sorting, selecting, collecting, to gain access to urban facilities.¹⁴

¹³ For instance, see Stephanie Golden.

¹⁴ Alix Kates Shulman, “Preface,” in Ann Marie Rousseau, *Shopping Bag Ladies: Homeless Women Speak About Their Lives*. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1981. The Jennifer Hand citation is from Jennifer Hand, “Shopping Bag Ladies: A Study in Interstitial Urban Behavior” (paper presented at the Society for the Study of Social Problems, New York, NY, August 1976), cited in Rousseau, 6.

But the image of the bag lady is shorn of the respectability, panache, and femininity of the urban bourgeois practitioners of these roles. Alix Kates Shulman elaborates on this point. “Shopping bag ladies: Aging women with swollen ankles and ulcerated feet, toting bags, shuffling slowly across the street, poking into garbage cans, slumped on a park bench, dozing in doorways, sprawling across library steps, huddled among their possessions in the dreary waiting rooms of train and bus stations. Poor, sick, lonely, old, afraid.”¹⁵ Those latter women might carry bags with their consumables and even with supplies for many occasions; the toted parcel or purse is not the sum of one’s possessions. The bag lady takes her ‘home’ with her through the streets—the home enters into the public, while her bourgeois counterpart ventures forth for public life, but returns to privacy to unload or stow away the newly bought commodity.

The source of such possessions is also quite different—the woman who returns to her home purchases the products in her bags and her purse; she is part of the urban economy. Those possessions of the bag lady are literally the refuse of the city’s economic life. Shulman describes the differences between the bag lady and her counterpart; she points out how the bag is a locus for both connecting and differentiating between the bag lady and bourgeois women.

[I]n our culture, the ubiquitous bag—women’s indispensable gear, whether purse, tote, or shopping bag—remains an almost universal female sign, connecting ‘us’ with ‘them.’ It is not always easy to tell homeless women from other women. Even women with comfortable homes commonly carry around in their bags supplies for every occasion, from papers and pills to folding umbrellas and food. Nor is it only the homeless in this commodity-obsessed society who spend much of their time collecting, shopping around, squirreling things away. Nevertheless, there is a great difference between those who carry shopping bags for convenience and those who must—the difference of extreme poverty and

¹⁵ Shulman, 10.

isolation. While most of us have cupboards drawers, closets, and some even have attics, cellars, and safes in which to store our worldly goods, the homeless have only their shopping bags. Everything they own must travel with them.¹⁶

Seemingly, the bag lady carries her home with her, but this is a home reduced to consumption—the affect and the family which are discursively central to home are absent. Her home in the streets lacks private space, and so she has only the consumables for a home, none of those sentiment relations about which Mary Margaret Wood wrote in the last chapter. The category of the homeless women is equally disaffiliated as the homeless man.

In fact, the homeless woman takes the isolation of the disaffiliated man to another register, since he might at least have interactions with fellow skid row residents or become a habitu  of its institutions. Because the homeless woman is not ‘ecologically concentrated’, because she is so dispersed throughout the city, she does not—according to the literature—have any social interactions. The disaffiliated man in skid row has some interactions, just not the ones to properly moor him to society. The male-male bond of fellow frequenters of skid row do not ensure that a man will not pick up and move along with the coming of spring, but it is not a complete social isolation.

The appearance of the homeless woman in sociological literature presented challenges to the existing category of the disaffiliated man. The category of homelessness expanded in the sociological literature to include women but not without problematizing the women represented as homeless. As we have seen, the representations of the bag lady remove any sense of her femininity. Bahr’s first foray into studying homeless women inextricably intertwined their representation with pathology. In short, the constitution of

¹⁶ Shulman, 12.

the category of the homeless woman raised questions about the women who were described as homeless. Disaffiliation was no longer attributed exclusively to men.

Though the category 'homeless woman' begins to appear in the 1970s, it is not until the latter part of the decade and even more so in the 1980s that it becomes an extensive one—warranting focused research beyond being an also-ran in the broader studies of homeless men. Shortly thereafter, the category of the homeless family appeared in court papers which argued that families were homeless and therefore should receive homeless services.

Before the family could be rendered homeless, women first made their appearance in the discourse on homelessness, and then, after the dialectic broke open, the longstanding tensions between family ideals and homelessness eventually explode. The homeless woman presented a problem of sexuality, a problem of public life, an affront to the very idea of family. While the sexual threat of men alone had been great, it did not have the layers of valence residing in the body of the homeless woman. Fear of homosexual practices in the hobo jungle or skid row SROs simmered, but still, it was an anxiety redressed with approbation. The gendered idea of home problematizes homeless women in ways that homeless men do not.

The homeless woman becomes a problematizing cite for the gender and family ideals which shape the discourse on homelessness. Her appearance, however, is a necessary condition for the appearance of the categorical contradiction of the homeless family. Until a woman alone can be homeless, homelessness cannot define a mother and her children. The emergence of the category of the homeless woman opened up the category of disaffiliation without challenging the pathology, deviance, and family norms

incumbent with the disaffiliation thesis. This process of social scientists expanding the category of homelessness without shifting the logic of the discourse presages their response to the homeless family. They acknowledge that the homeless family exists, bracket it, and then maintain the same discursive logic that homelessness is a problem of disaffiliation.

Pathology and the African-American Community

The fracturing of the consensus that the homeless figure was a white, middle-aged resident of skid row extended beyond the question of gender to race. Women only appeared in the literature on homelessness after women began to appear as pathological objects in loci antagonistic to the family in a range of other discourses, e.g., critiques of feminism, literature on alcoholism, etc. One of these discourses of pathology was the means for opening the discourse of homeless women, and thus, she was from her inception a pathological category. At the time of this fracturing consensus in the 1960s and 1970s, African-American men also begin to appear with increasing regularity, until the popular image of homelessness eventually became that of a poor, black man.

African-American males only begin to appear in the discourse after the 1960s studies of the crisis in the Negro family, e.g., the Moynihan Report, a mid-sixties study which, as part of the War on Poverty, popularized social pathology in the African-American community. This pathologization of African-American families in general, and males in particular, emerges as the political gains of the Civil Rights movement were being codified as legislative ones with the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act. The demise of legal sanctions for racial prerogatives gave rise to ideological means of

sustaining the racial status quo. The appearance of literature on the African-American homeless also coincides with an increase in the attribution of personal pathology to the homeless figure; this coterminous relationship between the African-American homeless man and an increased assumption of pathology is not coincidence.

The problems of American cities in the 1970s arose from lingering issues of gender and race. Looking back from a 1990s vantage point, urban anthropologist Neil Smith points out how the shifting relationships between the metropolis and capital reached a crisis in the 1970s as the city's role as the locus of social reproduction was undermined by its inability to sustain the modes of patriarchy and racism upon which the reproduction was based. He writes:

The new urban revanchism is in many ways tied to the shifting niche of cities in the global economy. There is a lot of truth to the contention that whatever other myriad functions and activities it housed, the late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century capitalist city is geographically defined as the locus of social reproduction. Keynesian urban policy, from the 1930s to the 1970s, was devoted to the broad-based subsidy of local social reproduction that underscored capital accumulation in economic, political, and ideological terms. And from Lefebvre to Castells to Harvey, the so-called urban crisis of the 1970s was understood as emanating from a crisis of social reproduction having to do with the dysfunctionality of racism and patriarchy, and from the contradictions between an urban form constructed according to strict criteria of profitability but which was called into service as a means of reproducing a labor force. The reproduction of class and the accumulation of capital were in stark contradiction. Nearly a quarter century later, amidst the white heat of "globalization," these diagnoses seem almost quaint, and the urban scale has been significantly unhinged from such definitive responsibility for social reproduction.¹⁷

The 1970s economic crises, which marked a turning point in the delinking of production from social reproduction, established urban conditions whereby inner city populations were left in enclaves of little economic activity. Smith continues, "[A]midst the restructuring of production beginning in the 1970s and with class- and race-based

¹⁷ Neil Smith, "Giuliani Time: The Revanchist 1990s," *Social Text* 57 (Winter 1998), 9.

struggles broadly receding until the late 1990s, city governments had an increased incentive to abandon that sector of the population supplused by both the restructuring of the economy and the gutting of social services.”¹⁸ *De facto* abandoned by both the global economy and municipal governments, these inner city residents formed a population that within the ensuing decades would swell the burgeoning ranks of the homeless. These abandoned urban poor were easily overlooked—as Smith points out—because of racist and patriarchal dysfunctionality. The vilification of the inner city African-American had taken on a new tenor in the mid-1960s.

In his justifiably infamous assessment of the mid-1960s African-American family,¹⁹ Daniel Patrick Moynihan argues that African-Americans as a group urbanized relatively late,²⁰ but this process of urbanization exacerbated social problems already present in the African-American community. He wrote:

Country life and city life are profoundly different. The gradual shift of American society from a rural to an urban basis over the past century and a half has caused abundant strains, many of which are still much in evidence. When this shift occurs suddenly, drastically, in one or two generations, the effect is immensely disruptive of traditional social patterns.

It was this abrupt transition that produced the wild Irish slums of the 19th Century northeast. Drunkenness, crime, corruption, discrimination, family disorganization, juvenile delinquency were the routine of that era. In our own time, the same sudden transition has produced the Negro slum—different from, but hardly better than its predecessors and fundamentally the result of the same process.

¹⁸ Smith, 10.

¹⁹ For critiques of the report, see Rainwater and Yancey.

²⁰ Arguing in a stagist fashion, Moynihan contends that the African-American community came belatedly to urbanization and this accelerated encounter destroyed traditional life without proffering the ‘promises of the city,’ e.g., jobs, opportunities, education, etc. The historicizing problem of the idea of belatedness has been well criticized in other quarters and other contexts, so I need not dwell on such arguments against Moynihan. Writing on the idea of historical development in European colonizing and colonized segments of the world, historian Dipesh Chakrabarty critiques a common stagist theory of history which emerges. In this theory, the colonized are relegated to the waiting room of history from which they will belatedly emerge into political modernity. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Negroes are now more urbanized than whites...
 The promise of the city has so far been denied the majority of the
 Negro migrants, and most particularly the Negro family.²¹

In Moynihan's account, the African-American community had been able to maintain its ties to some form of *Gemeinschaft* much longer than the white community. By remaining a primarily rural community while whites were urbanizing, the African-American community had staved off the ravages of modernization and been able to maintain an ideal family structure well into the twentieth century. Essentially, the country had afforded the African-American community the space to foster a home.

Moynihan represents the sudden urbanization of the African-American community as precipitating the same displacement and disorientation as we saw Jacob Riis describe. Displaced from land and with family relations in disarray, the newly urbanized African-American community had become homeless, Moynihan is *de facto* asserting. For him, the African-American community was late coming to the city, late coming to modernity, and thus to adapting to the demands of this social life. As with other stagist views of history, the same processes were playing out as they had with other groups, only at a later time. The newly urban (and modern) African-American community was represented as experiencing the homelessness of the city which ravaged the fin-de-siècle era.

To represent the homelessness of the African-American community, the Report brought together the dual dysfunctionalities of racism and patriarchy by pathologizing the majority of African-American households for being headed by women. Moynihan writes:

In essence, the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which, because it is so out of line with the reset of the American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole, and

²¹ Moynihan, 63.

imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male and, in consequence, on a great many Negro women as well.²²

While Moynihan concedes that there is no necessity to patriarchal structure, he argues that since “[o]urs is a society which presumes male leadership in private and public affairs,”²³ a minority group should conform or face a significant disadvantage. He bolsters his claim by pointing out that the small group of middle class African-American families exempt from “The Tangle of Pathology”²⁴ were ones following a strict patriarchy. The African-American community was crumbling, and he identifies the absence of a patriarch as a big part of the problem.

Moynihan’s analysis fell back on the commonplace assumptions of the family’s central role in social reproduction. He implies that if the family is marked by homelessness, then the family will perpetuate it. Once marked with pathology, the family reproduces its problems. Jacob Riis had argued that efforts to assimilate families to bourgeois norms (and thus remove them from their homelessness) sometimes required targeting the children. Implicit in this argument is that middle class reformers needed to intervene in the cycle of social reproduction. Moynihan does not here move into such calls for intervention, but he fears the continuation of the African-American homelessness and pathology. He wrote:

The role of the family in shaping character and ability is so pervasive as to be easily overlooked. The family is the basic social unit of American life; it is the basic socializing unit. By and large, adult conduct in society is learned as a child...

But there is one truly great discontinuity in family structure in the United States at the present time: that between the white world in generally and that of the Negro American.

²² Moynihan, 75.

²³ Moynihan, 75.

²⁴ “The Tangles of Pathology” is the title of the chapter in which Moynihan blasts the matriarchal structure of the African-American community.

The white family has achieved a high degree of stability and is maintaining that stability.

By contrast, the family structure of lower class Negroes is highly unstable, and in many urban centers is approaching complete breakdown.²⁵

The sense of belatedness lingers in Moynihan's argument here that the Negro family has been unable to stabilize, as has the white family. Through its late encounter with modernization, the African-American community was only just confronting the anomic propensities of the city. It was uprooted from the country and not settled in the city. The very urbanizing problems which created homelessness in the fin-de-siècle tenement were now bringing homelessness to the African-American community. It is not until the large-scale urbanization of the African-American community that African-Americans come to be considered homeless. The African-American community belatedly came to urbanization and so belatedly came to homelessness.

The centrality of a traditional family structure for social life has been an undergirding presence of the discourse on homelessness. Normative expectations of a two-parent household informed the Christian home ideal and the rise of the nuclear family. In the earlier family ideal, any domestic arrangement which strayed from the norm was rendered homeless—extended families residing together, boarders sharing a family flat, or poor families doubled- or tripled-up in a small apartment. By the post-war rise of the nuclear family, economic growth and zoning laws had eliminated many of these alternative living arrangements. Thus, homelessness became the marker of the single male who failed to remain within the confines of a nuclear family.

²⁵ Moynihan, 51.

As we have seen in this section, these disaffiliated men did not long remain the lone homeless; the consensus began to fracture in the late 1960s-early 1970s. Women began to appear in the streets and the African-American community became a locus of pathology, just as the urban economy began to remove manufacturing and jobs from the city. The assumptions of the discourse had created enormous blind spots for urban sociologists—the spatial and institutional parameters which shaped the language of homelessness operationally excluded women and minorities. With the former, the gendered idea of home abetted this exclusion; with the latter, a ‘belated’ encounter with the modern city delayed their inclusion in the ranks of the homeless.

Once these groups began to appear in journalistic and social science accounts of homelessness, a time of flux entered the discourse on homelessness over the decades of the 1970s. African-American men were newly (and increasingly) noted in the sociological literature on homelessness. Not fulfilling their expected roles as family patriarch, they represented pathology, as the matriarchal family structure in the African-American community was also alleged to do. The family with an absent patriarch was not the nuclear family and so was easily othered. A woman alone was not fulfilling the proper gender role. As we saw in chapter two, a female was a *sine qua non* of the home. These two groups were the first to begin undoing the basic assumptions of the discourse; but the greatest challenge to this framework appeared a decade later in the early 1980s with the contradiction of the homeless family.

Section Two: The Homeless Family and the Return of Myth

The homeless family did not become a focus of social science literature until the mid- to late-1980s. This category did not immediately arise after the fracturing of the consensus that the homeless figure was a disaffiliated man. This fracturing was part of responses to a constellation of changes in the city over the 1960s-1970s; the urban crises of the 1970s intertwined with issues of race and gender to inflect the dominant modes of social reproduction. New social and rhetorical changes in response to these shifts in urban life established the conditions for an even greater difficulty in representing urban problem in the Reagan years.

In the early 1980s, the discursive relationship between family and homelessness nearly exploded with a court challenge trying to establish that a family could be described as homeless. Social scientists and service providers had failed to identify the homeless family, even though John Steinbeck and Dorothea Lange had seemingly documented them in an earlier era. The disaffiliation thesis of the discourse rendered the homeless family invisible in ways similar to Bahr's analysis of the obscurity of homeless women.

The constitution of the homeless woman was a first step toward this contradictory formation of the homeless family. As a constitutive component of the concept of home, woman had to be able to be rendered homeless for a family to subsequently be so. As we saw with the Moynihan Report, the family with an absent father figure was pathologized—the family norms assume a patriarchal family structure. The increase in female-headed, single-parent households enabled certain families to eventually be described as 'homeless'. This process of establishing the homeless family set the stage for an ill-fitting reconciliation between the discourse and empirical and policy changes.

Policy fiat changed the definition of homelessness, but the discourse on homelessness was unable to fully assimilate these changes.

In this section, we trace the rise of the homeless family category from its emergence in a court ruling, through an important early, popular account of homeless families, and finally into the sociological appropriation of this new category. The court ruling established a cognitive contradiction and thus precipitated a shift in the means of defining homelessness. This new figure was no longer primarily a disaffiliated individual but soon became someone without a fixed place to stay (though disaffiliation continued as a leitmotif). This continuation of disaffiliation in any form could exist alongside the homeless family only if this homeless family was bracketed from the broader discursive framework. In Kozol's early, popular account of families, we find that mythic tropes bracket the homeless family—it is a distinct set of concerns and issues and so need not be subsumed under the broader discourse on homelessness. This bracketing is implicitly taken up by the social science literature of the late 1980s and early 1990s; sociology has one set of analyses for the homeless figures—individuals without a place to stay—and another for families.

The logic of the discursive framework of the homeless figure as the other of family norms thus continues to shape social science, policy and service representations of homelessness. They continue to fall back onto the Victorian cultural assumptions about the family and the city which shaped fin-de-siècle commentators' analyses of urban life. When the Reagan era social science purveyors of these older assumptions were forcibly confronted with the new category of the homeless family, they were slow to react. A new sociological framework was first proposed by the activist Jonathan Kozol. And as we saw

in the fin-de-siècle era, an activist invoked myth to represent new urban conditions. The framework established by the activist mythic intervention was subsequently appropriated by social scientists. The deployment of myth continues to provide the means to bring a semantic order to new circumstances difficult to represent.

The sociological literature on homelessness so connected this problem with disaffiliation from one's family that only judicial (*McCain v. Koch*) and legislative (Stewart B. McKinney Act) fiats could forcibly sever the structure of homelessness. This separation of the family from the category of homelessness required that a new legal definition overlay the long history of the concept—homelessness became a material condition and not about social relations through an imposition from above. But the logic could never be entirely suppressed. Even despite the legal-judico intervention in the redefining of homelessness, the basic discursive structure of disaffiliation continued in social science. The structure of homelessness still negates a term that has broader connotations than the legally defined absence of a fixed shelter—legalism did not undo the cultural logic of homelessness.

The problem of representing the homeless family tests the discourse. It stretches when empirical conditions appear to contradict the basic premises which sociologists had taken up—homelessness as a condition of threat to or absence of a family. A partial conciliation to the new empirical conditions could easily sustain the basic discursive framework of disaffiliation. The homeless families could be pathologized—like Moynihan's 'Negro Family'—and themselves become an other to bourgeois norms; if writers took this avenue, a new dialectic of homeless family/'normal' family could

emerge without disturbing the logic of the discourse. But the literature on homelessness does not seem to take this response.

Instead, the early activist writings on the homeless family tend to bracket it; the earliest monographs set the homeless family aside and exclude it from the rules and norms governing the discourse on homelessness. This way, the discourse does not have to adjust to empirical conditions on the streets. This practice of discursive segregation of the homeless family is first seen most extensively in Jonathan Kozol's *Rachel and her Children*.²⁶ The Pulitzer-prize winning author's study of homeless families in New York City established this pattern which became commonplace in subsequent sociological literature. The homeless family was not subsumed under the same rules as the homeless figure. The homeless family came to stand outside the discourse on homelessness, and thus the discourse could sustain in its critique of modern American life. This position on the outside was not codified in law but remained an implicit assumption in subsequent social science writings on homelessness.

In a pattern, which we first saw in the fin-de-siècle period, the first significant writing on a new trend in the discourse on homelessness emanates from activists or journalists. From Jacob Riis to the journalistic popularizing of the term 'bag lady,' social scientists have lagged behind these activists or journalists engaged in the documenting and addressing homelessness. Jonathan Kozol continues this trend. He is an activist awarded with fellowships from top foundations (Guggenheim, Ford, and Rockefeller, among others) for his work with and writing on children and education. As with the earlier activist work on homelessness, Kozol's book *Rachel and her Children* establishes

²⁶ Jonathon Kozol, *Rachel and Her Children* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1988).

a framework for representing the homeless family; this framework continues in most of the important works on homelessness which appeared after him.

The Return of Rachel: Myth and the Homeless Family

In Kozol's work, the entire structure of the homeless family is enwrapped within the mythic overlay of 'Rachel weeping for her children'—the same trope which we saw in Jacob Riis's discussion of Jewish slums. This Biblical narrative haunts the text beyond its obvious titular role and the eponymous pseudonym for a homeless family residing in New York's Martinique Hotel. Unlike McCulloch's nineteenth century choice of Ishmaelites as the eponymous family for his study of professional beggars, Kozol changes identifiers, i.e., he has named each character populating the text and selected Rachel and her children for the work's title. His name-giving for all the families reveals a penchant for Biblical names—he uses names like Lazarus, Benjamin and Rachel, and he also demonstrates a proclivity for biblical reference beyond this act of name-giving. These three biblical names which I here mention frame how Kozol wants us to read his homeless characters. First, Lazarus evokes the tale of the rich man and Lazarus, who was a poor, sore-covered man daily waiting at a gate and longing "to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table." (Luke 16:19-31) Likewise, the name Lazarus evokes Jesus' friend in Bethany, whom Jesus raised from the dead. (John 11) The same name connotes the poor, ill and down and out of Kozol's character and a possibility of restoration.

Far more important than the brief Lazarus connection is the overarching framework of exile and wandering which comes from the figure of Rachel. As we saw

earlier, Rachel was already mythologized within the biblical text to have a metonymic relationship with the Jewish people. The narrative frames his analysis in much the same way that Cain shapes Riis's—themes, motifs and structure conjure the story of Rachel and the Babylonian Exile.

In Kozol, the invocation of biblical tropes function as myth; they provide a framework to understand a modern problem, rather than an exhortation to act. The distinctions which we drew between the projects of Charles Sheldon and Jacob Riis are useful to remember. Sheldon offered a call to action for the faithful, not Riis's ordering of language and thus our collective social life. Kozol's project is akin to Riis's; he is developing a way to represent newly identified urban conditions—the homeless family. He, too, turns to deinstitutionalized religious tropes to furnish a means to order the representations of homelessness; his Rachel functions as cultural form beyond the religious social field and not as the explicitly religious discourse of a figure like Sheldon.

Kozol opens the book with a carpenter.²⁷ He—whom we learn is Peter (another biblical name)—is married to a homemaker Megan. This family serves as a good introduction to Kozol's recuperation of the homeless family. Much of his time, I argue, is spent bracketing the homeless family from the anxieties that connect to the homeless figure. Peter and Megan were an intact family with a father who worked in construction and a stay-at-home mother taking care of the children. Their idyllic life was interrupted by a house fire which destroyed Peter's work tools and thus his means of livelihood.

²⁷ Despite his Jewish background, his sprinkling of the text with biblical allusions is not limited to the Hebrew Bible (as evidenced by the Lazarus reference). The overall biblical framing—beyond Rachel, Lazarus and this opening with a carpenter “He was a carpenter.” Kozol, 1—includes references to Saint Paul (“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Kozol, 180), Matthew (“I was hungry and you gave me not food...” Kozol, 144.), and the idea of common Judeo-Christian roots. Kozol, 137.

Through this destructive process we are told that “the children have been scattered—placed in various foster homes.”²⁸ Violence and fire sundered the family and destroyed the home—scattering the children. These are the precise conditions giving rise to the matriarch Rachel’s tears for her children. The violence of war destroyed the Jewish homes and scattered her children. Her progeny were carted away and the nation destroyed.²⁹ Kozol closes his brief three-page introduction with the lament—“Why are so many people homeless in our nation?”³⁰ The idea of the (Jewish) nation implicit in the title is again invoked. The Jewishness of homelessness again resurfaces, when the entire family becomes homeless.

As we saw in the trope’s brief appearance in Riis’s *How the Other Half Lives*, ‘Rachel weeping for her children’ reinforced the connection between urban living conditions and the idea of exile in Judaism. Here, the representation of homeless families as Jewish still invokes the sense of exile and wandering, which we saw in Riis, but the trope no longer others the represented family. Much of this shift reflects changes in the status of Jews in American culture—a point to which I will shortly return.

The trope which a century earlier invoked anti-Judaic traditions as a way to other the proto-homeless subject now appears in a move to disconnect the homeless family from the homeless figure per se. Partially, this versatility attests to the malleability of myth—Cain can be a Gnostic or Byronic hero, as well as a Christ-killing, diabolic presence. But more than this malleable nature of myth, the inversion relates more to Kozol’s particular storytelling.

²⁸ Kozol, 2.

²⁹ The idea of wandering and language of refugees appears several times throughout the text. For instance, see Kozol, 155 or 180.

³⁰ Kozol, 3.

In Jeremiah, the matriarch Rachel weeps for her progeny who are being carted off into Babylonian exile—the family is sundered. Kozol's story begins at an earlier stage—before the family dissolution. The families in his study are intact but have an ever-looming possibility of state-sponsored break-up—a threat that the children will be carted off into the foster care system. Rachel is still with her children, and the invocation of the trope shows what may befall those families if American society does not intervene. The exile which comes with familial dissolution is the imminent threat, but there is the possibility for hope. By juxtaposing the homeless family to what he calls the lifestyle homeless, i.e., the street homeless or the homeless man, he is able to imply that without our intervention, this is the future of these children and their parents. He makes the case that childhood homelessness is a likely indicator of adult homelessness. The trope of Rachel is effective because the common arguments for the family's role in social reproduction are generally accepted within the discourse on homelessness. We saw this with Riis, the search for the etiology of homelessness in the family of origin, and in Moynihan's analyses of the pathology of the African-American family. Rachel weeping for her children is here a cautionary tale; in Riis, it invoked extant urban life.

After framing the narrative within the story of Jewish exile and a rent family, Kozol evokes this story throughout the narrative. Kozol calls a newborn—the youngest of all the children in the book—Benjamin, which is the name of the youngest of Jacob's twelve sons who were each the namesake for one of the twelve tribes of Israel; Benjamin was also one of Rachel's' only two sons. In the Genesis account, Benjamin is the innocent baby of the family who is wrongly framed for stealing from Pharaoh's palace. In Kozol, Benjamin becomes a symbol for the innocent homeless to whom things are done.

For instance, “Homelessness is not an act of God. It is an act of man. It is done to people like ourselves. It is done to people such as Benjamin.”³¹ Or when he relates the perils of homeless families to a friend, he connects Benjamin with Rachel, “I tell her about Benjamin and Holly. I tell her about Rachel and her kids.”³² Having only daughters, Rachel’s child could not carry the name Benjamin, but here Kozol narratively connects the two.) Holly (Benjamin’s mother) is sent into a state of wandering and can find nowhere to alight with Benjamin.³³

Kozol distinguishes the homeless family from the lifestyle homeless—a bracketing which is taken up by subsequent social scientists. His invocation of the mythic trope Rachel weeping for her children provides a legitimacy to the homeless family—they are those non-pathological displaced who can be recuperated.

Myth and the Politics of Culture

While Biblical names and tropes are common in American culture, Kozol’s particular invocations of tropes connect to tell an overarching story of homelessness. Kozol tells us one story of homeless families, and through these tropes, he evokes or implies another one. As we saw with Riis, Warner, et al., biblical tropes have become myth. Unmoored from institutions, practices, or a faith commitment, they provide a deep cultural basis for communication and legitimation of his story. A discursive turn to myth at the moment of the rise of the homeless family is not coincidence. First, as we have seen, myth is always latent within the discourse; it does not go away. Myth is a part of culture; it is a form of argument to which activists can turn when new conditions need a

³¹ Kozol, 133.

³² Kozol, 142.

³³ Kozol, 120.

form of representing.³⁴ It is unnecessary when social science categories furnish the means to represent urban conditions. When urban life changes quickly and these categories become inadequate to represent the metropolis, social activists usually furnish new means of representing the city—they turn to ancient mythic tropes.

Myth is the cultural form which is invoked when contemporary social and political arguments are unable to make sense of a situation or when the empirical evidence contradicts a cultural tradition. The invocation of myth to represent social problems is part of a broader movement in American political life—the culturalization of politics, a point to which we will shortly return.

Secondly, the connections of homelessness to Jewishness have also remained implicit. The exilic notions which were connected in part with the trope of Rachel resurface, albeit now in a seemingly recuperative mode. The shift in the function of the trope from an anti-Semitic othering to this recuperative role marks broader changes in American culture. First, mid-century geopolitical events contributed significantly to the amelioration of Jewish status in the United States—a combination of Holocaust guilt and the formation of an unquestioned political support for the newly formed state of Israel (consolidated through Cold War politics and evangelical theology) improved the domestic lot of American Jews. Secondly, a sense of Jewishness has been assimilated into the cultural formation of American identity—best evidenced in the idea of a Judeo-Christian ethic as the basis for American law and culture.³⁵ The Jewish connections with

³⁴ For an analysis of myth as argument, see Laurie L. Patton, *Myth as Argument: The Brhaddevata as Canonical Commentary* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996). For an analysis of myth as culture, see Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Work of Culture: Symbolic Transformation in Psychoanalysis and Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

³⁵ Even Anglo-American Biblical scholarship is marked by this last shift; it has cast aside the paradigms of classicizing Germanic biblical scholarship, most famously seen with Rudolf Bultmann, which considered Christianity to be primarily derived from Greek philosophical thought. More recently, Anglo-American

exile remain dormant within the discourse, but the signification of this has changed.

Kozol's assimilation of the Jewish roots of homelessness with Christian ideas—names, stories, and quotes—ensures an integration with Judeo-Christianity and not a return to an anti-Semitic othering.

Riis's and Kozol's invocations of myth brought new ways to represent problems in social life arising from economic changes, the rise of the industrial and post-industrial city, the culturalization of politics, etc. The discourse on homelessness is imbricated in these broader trends in American society. The homeless are not people with access to the means of production and they are visible at the given moment. In the Reagan era, it is precisely at the moment when they were gaining in visibility and thought to be spilling out from the ghettos of the bowery that the turn to myth happened.

It was precisely the inadequacy of the empirical explanations for the homeless figure that necessitated the turn to myth. The empirical explanations seemed sufficient to account for the 1980s burgeoning problem of homelessness—people had no place to stay at night because the bottom of the housing market, i.e., the skid row SROs, were eliminated. But these accounts worked against the cultural assumptions of the discourse on homelessness, which social scientists took up in their appropriation of attributes which were developed through the fin-de-siècle invocation of myth. If social scientists of the first three-quarters of the twentieth century had described homelessness as a purely material condition, they would have stripped the discourse of its links to the family and its implicit critique of modern life.

biblical scholarship searches for Jewish roots of Christianity in works by W.D. Davies, E.P. Sanders, and Mark Chancey.

As I have already argued, the turn to myth arises in response to two different forms of crisis. The first—which we saw in the fin-de-siècle era—was the inability of a society to legitimate itself from the means of the day; social commentators turned to antiquity by invoking mythic tropes to represent social life. The second of these primary forms of crisis—which we find here with the Reagan era reappearance of myth—is similar in that it is a breakdown in social explanation. But this crisis arises from a contradiction between the Victorian cultural assumptions underlying most of the social science work on homelessness and the contemporary social or policy accounts. When the empirical data and policy explanations of homelessness contradicted these older cultural assumptions, an activist invoked mythic tropes.

Myth, in the instance of homelessness, has been a tool of cultural drag. Beyond a Horkheimian cultural lag, the American family values debates and cultural wars of recent decades have established a cultural drag. Frankfurt school critical theorist Max Horkheimer's analysis of family³⁶ looks not only to the immediate impact of production on social forms but how cultural forms, like family, remain connected to older modes and thus lag in changing to reflect current economic circumstances. Because of this cultural lag, these slower-changing institutions, like the family, can sustain a form and rhetoric that reflects older economic conditions. However, I argue that the concerns about family in the discourse on homelessness are not a failure to recognize structures changing through shifts in means of production and consumption; a cultural drag is an effort to deny change in order to freeze time, while simultaneously lauding or trying to accrue the

³⁶ Max Horkheimer, "Authority and the Family," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Continuum, 1999), 47-128.

benefits of the economic shifts. Cultural drag is an effort to bisect cultural politics from political economy.

Tethering the modern problem of homelessness to ancient mythic tropes connects the social practices—whether they be Victorian tramping, fin-de-siècle slum-dwelling, or Reagan-era family homelessness in a welfare motel—to a past. These are not of the modern world; to be ever-new would require the cultural form to maintain its pace with the shifting landscape of modernization as it is writ large. The problem thus becomes delinked from the economic system of which the urban lumpen are an unfortunate side effect. This new problem of homelessness is thus rendered as a cultural problem and not an economic one. The homeless man or family is not a by-product of the flows of capital but an ancient problem threatening the family. The homeless figure is accounted for by explanations of sin appropriately secularized as pathology.

Even though policy and social science move to new material definitions of homelessness, the invocation of myth and the multiple significations of home (to which I will shortly return) still cast the problem of homelessness as one of culture and not political economy. Homelessness is a problem of how our society represents norms and deviations; it is a problem about the customs and habits of Victorian social life and not about changes in urban geography and economics.

The policy move to an empirically verifiable definition of homelessness—not having a fixed place to stay at night—combines with the seemingly adequate etiological explanations of mental illness, substance abuse, laziness, and pathology to define a homeless individual. The sufficiency of these created the conditions by which all homeless—including the homeless family—might be quickly accounted for by such

explanations. To break the homeless family out from this explanation—and thus preserve the discursive formulation of the homeless figure as other of family, Kozol turned the axis of representation for this particular group of people. The homeless family was rendered distinct; it had a different account—a different explanation, a different problem and presumably needed a different response. While the mythic tropes are not the primary way of discussing the homeless family, his invocation of myth did its job of discursively bracketing the homeless family. Social scientists distinguished the homeless family from the street homeless. Once done, the explicit use of myth was no longer necessary—it returned to a state of disuse.

The Homeless Family versus the Homeless Individual

With the 1980s rise of the homeless family, a series of tensions within the discourse on homelessness and in the social life of the urban poor emerged. The Moynihan Report already demonstrated the discursive practice of setting apart the poor, urban African-American family in the process of buoying the white, bourgeois family. The bracketing of the homeless family does not take the easy route and sever the poor family in order to preserve a rhetorical protection of the middle class.

To undertake this recuperative move, Kozol has to distinguish the homeless family from other elements of the homeless population. This distinction was not between the poor, urban family and the middle class, but rather between the homeless family and the homeless man. Jonathan Kozol certainly makes this latter distinction.

It is worth adding also that this book is not about the “lifestyle homeless”—young people, for example, who leave home out of the wish to drift and wander for a time, much as children of the counterculture might have done

in the late 1960s. Such people, if they are in danger, need protection. They are not the subject of this work.

Finally, the emphasis is not on those who were confined in mental hospitals and were deinstitutionalized ten years ago. The emphasis, if anything, is the reverse: It is the creation of an institution that makes healthy people ill, normal people clinically depressed, and those who may already be unwell a great deal worse...And it is this institution, one of our own invention, which will mass-produce pathologies, addictions, violence, dependencies, perhaps even a longing for retaliation, for self-vindication, on a scale that will transcend, by far, whatever deviant behaviors we may try to write into their pasts.³⁷

Here, we see him mapping his recuperating project onto a series of tensions, ones which we find embedded within the discourse on homelessness. The homeless family is not to be articulated through a dialectical distinction with the middle class family but by othering the rest of the homeless population. The homeless families about whom he writes do not suffer from pathologies like mental health problems, addiction, violence, etc.; these problems, he implies, may have been there in the other homeless. The basic social science assumptions of pathology and deviance do not apply to the homeless family, but he does not repudiate these assumptions. The lifestyle homeless are the other of the homeless family. Kozol cements this bracketing with his use of mythic tropes which legitimate the families.

The efficacy of this bracketing relies on implicit class arguments. Kozol's implicit argument requires on the one hand, longstanding distinctions between the lumpen and the proletariat and, on the other, the absence of any organized structures for the poor—whether laborers, unemployed, etc.—that could redress social issues which impact the homeless. These two distinctions are intertwined. The homeless fall into that class of people often considered unproductive. While many may labor—in the early twentieth century the wanderings of the hobo were to meet the demands of temporary or seasonal

³⁷ Kozol, 20-21.

labor, as a class they are constituted as unproductive. Since at least Marx's distinction of the lumpenproletariat (the rabble) from the proletariat (industrial laboring class), some form of distinction has been maintained between those populations from which come the individuals subsequently constituted as homeless figures—whether in a bowery or skid row motel, a shelter, or on the sidewalk—and the 'working poor'.³⁸ We have seen Riis distinguish between the honest poor and paupers and identified the clothesline as the division. The wage earners of the working poor do not need a mythologization because their status is not as controversial—they are participating within a bourgeois work ethic. Their status is easily accounted for through the supply and demand of labor economics. The manufacturing proletariat had through unions and labor policy improved their lot; the service sector wage earners were not as great but still their status did not threaten any major political narratives.

But the homeless individual living in the streets and parks of American cities, the 1980s homeless figure who was no longer contained within ghettoized enclaves—this individual does not integrate into narratives of prosperity or hard work. Some cultural explanations appear to elide the contradictions between the 1980s explosion of homelessness and political claims like Reagan's that no one went hungry in America. The dissonance between this popular rhetoric and the street-dwelling realities contributed to the need for myth—but the homeless individual was still easily dismissed for substance abuse or mental health problems. Explanation for the existence of this underclass was necessary yet does not fully account for the significance of Kozol's turn to myth.

³⁸ For some of the monikers since lumpenproletariat, see Kim Hopper, "A Quiet Violence: The Homeless Poor in New York City, 1982," in Mary Ellen Hombs and Mitch Snyder, *Homelessness in America: A Forced March to Nowhere* (Washington, DC: Community for Creative Non-Violence, 1986), 61-68.

The urban lumpen as a class exists outside the boundaries of bourgeois civil society—they are not integrated into the structures of capital or society; they, thus, have little infrastructure for self-provision. When the hobo was still a viably distinct figure, this marginal group had infrastructures like the Hobo College, the International Brotherhood Welfare Association and the International Workers of the World. But part of the formation of the category of homelessness was Sutherland and Locke's process of shelterization—a process which has many parallels in the social service institutions which Kozol analyzes.³⁹ And if not entirely subjecting the population to the space of the shelter, the figure—as we saw in the last chapter—is constituted by the institutions of skid row, but these were not institutions made by the efforts of the disaffiliated men populating the area. Without any associations, institutions, etc., the homeless as a class could not organize themselves.

In this institutional disarray, the boundaries of the population represented as homeless remain ambiguous—who is included and who is excluded? Why? In the fin-de-siècle, we saw a continuing contraction of the term homeless from the city, to its residents, to the residents of the slums, to the residents of skid row. In the last couple of decades of the twentieth century, the category began to expand and include larger populations—larger in numbers, larger in geographic dispersal, and larger in the social formations, i.e., families. Separating this last group from the pathologies and assumptions plaguing homeless individuals became necessary to ensure the discursive disconnection of the homeless figure from the homeless family.

In several different ways, Kozol distinguishes the homeless families whom he studies from the population of homeless individuals or 'lifestyle homeless', by including

³⁹ For instance, see Kozol, 129 or 171 ff.

habits of work, hygiene, honesty, etc., i.e. many of the pathological characteristics that have been connected with the concept of homelessness since it applied to the fin-de-siècle metropolis. For instance he tells us about one family, “They are good people: clean and honest. Diligent too. They love their children and each other. Nothing I’ve read about the culture of the underclass comes near the mark in stating what is elemental in this family.”⁴⁰ Clean, honest, hard-working—these are the middle class attributes that Riis wanted to instill; Kozol’s families already have these values. They are not part of the underclass—they do not have the problems and pathologies that those others do. Elsewhere, he makes distinctions between his families and the mental illness of homeless individuals, or the women in his families and the unkempt, unclean practices of shopping bag ladies.⁴¹ The women and children in the homeless families he studies have more in common with his middle class readers than they do with the other homeless.

Bracketing the Homeless Family

In the 1980s, the two groups—homeless individuals and families—were beginning to have strong rhetorical connections—most importantly the new application of the common term ‘homeless’ to both groups after long being semantically distinct. Categorically distinguishing between these groups required a mode of explanation

⁴⁰ Kozol 42.

⁴¹ “The debate persists as to how many homeless people are the former patients of large mental hospitals, deinstitutionalized in the 1970s. Many homeless *individuals* may have been residents of such institutions. In cities like New York, however, where nearly half the homeless people are small children, with an average age of six, such suppositions obviously make little sense. Six-year-olds were not deinstitutionalized before their birth. Their parents, with an average age of twenty-seven, are not likely to have been the residents of mental hospitals when they were still teenagers.” Kozol 135. “It may surprise the reader to be told that many of these women are quite young. Few are dressed in the familiar rags that are suggested by the term ‘bag ladies.’ Some are dressed so neatly and conceal their packages and bags so skillfully that one finds it hard to differentiate them from commuters waiting for a train.” Kozol 177.

beyond the sociological and economic accounts by which all homelessness was being defined, or the definition of homelessness could move away from the disaffiliation thesis.

The gender and race fractures in the disaffiliation thesis had already started the sociological shift toward the McKinney Act policy definition of homelessness as a material condition. With that change, the conditions whereby the homeless family could be formed and thus assume the broader assumptions of the problems of homelessness began. Columbia University urban economist Brendan O'Flaherty's look back to the 1980s rise of the homeless family from the vantage point of a decade later argues that there were two reasons for the slow rise of this group.

Before roughly 1982 in North America, families were not thought of as homeless for two main reasons. The first was linguistic: homelessness meant disaffiliation, and if you were part of a family you couldn't be disaffiliated. The second reason arose from the centrality of street homelessness: since very few families were seen on the street, it was difficult to think of shelters or hotels as keeping their inhabitants off the street. But given the unprincipled way the term 'homeless' is applied to single adults, invoking some sort of principle to exclude families doesn't seem warranted.

In North America during the 1960s and 1970s, the families that would come to be called homeless were usually referred to as 'families in emergency housing' or 'families in disaster centers' or 'families of battered women.'⁴²

The dominance of the street homelessness, e.g., people living on the sidewalk or alleyways, as the normative model of the homeless figure only precedes the homeless family by little more than a decade. The disaffiliation definition seen with Bahr and Caplow kept the 'homeless' as men in skid row motels, not street dwellers. The dramatic rise of this latter population took place primarily over the course of the 1970s. So O'Flaherty's first reason (linguistics) also significantly delayed homelessness as being

⁴² Brendan O'Flaherty, *Making Room: The Economics of Homelessness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 68.

considered a condition of people living on the street (his second reason for a failure to recognize a family as homeless). He is taking a very brief transitional period in the formation of homelessness and reifying it—the processes that led to the homeless figure as a street dweller were the same processes that enabled the formation of the homeless family. The processes involved the seeming decline of the disaffiliation thesis in response to changing accounts of street populations, changing demographics, and shifting geographies.

This supposed decline was resisted, although primarily for institutional, rather than discursive reasons. Brendan O’Flaherty writes that the constitution of the ‘homeless family’ met with great resistance and only judicial intervention enabled this process.

The year 1983 and the first use of the term ‘homeless families’ also coincides with the filing of *McCain v. Koch*, designed to establish judicial oversight over the family-shelter system. The city opposed this suit more vigorously than it opposed the companion suits (*Callahan v. Carey* and *Eldred v. Koch*) for single adults, and the case was not finally decided until 1986, but it may have hastened the linguistic change and may also have been responsible indirectly for some improvement in the quality of shelters.⁴³

While some institutional services were available to families and not to homeless individuals, and vice-versa, the impetus behind the court case of *McCain v. Koch* was that the municipal institutions established to provide homeless services were inadequately meeting the needs of families, i.e., the institutions needed to treat both populations the same. Homeless families—because of fears of children being taken away from them, do not tend to congregate in public spaces but much more frequently try to remain relatively hidden. The political implications of the public life of a homeless individual are not as dire. However, since the 1980s, many cities have adopted legislation establishing much

⁴³ O’Flaherty, 69.

of homelessness as a status crime, e.g., laws against urban camping make the state of having nowhere to live other than a sidewalk illegal. After this judicial intervention, the category of the ‘homeless family’ could enter into both everyday and social science parlance. The families were no longer considered to be families in crisis but homeless.

Once the linguistic line was crossed and a family could be homeless, the history of the term—its pathologies and nuances, its association with the city, its relationships to Victorian family ideals, etc.—all could now be signified within a family. The pathology and deviance implied in the term homeless now represented the family. The discursive logic entered into a contradiction: Homelessness was a condition of separation from or disaffiliation from family. Yet, since the term now applied to a family, the discourse had the awkward formulation of a ‘non- family’ family.

I identify a multi-step process that facilitated the discursive negotiation to undo this conundrum. First, after the interventions of Kozol, the homeless family was rendered distinct from those homeless individuals who were on the street. But since the same term ‘homeless’ applied to both groups, the term then had to be redefined. The codification of the redefinition came later with 1987’s Stewart B. McKinney Act. The bracketing of the family through practices like Kozol’s distinction between the homeless family, on the one hand, and the lifestyle homeless, the deinstitutionalized, or bag ladies, on the other, established that the homeless figure and the homeless family were not to be the same.

A subsequent step required that this distinction had to in some way be codified. The language (homelessness) and the institutions (shelters) were in part the same for both the family and the homeless individual; only the spatial structures—locations of congregation, the publicness of their lives, etc.—remained distinct. This codification—as

we have seen with Kozol, initially took the form of the invocation of myth. Once he established this distinction, the particular tropes, like Rachel and her children, were no longer invoked. Language of ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’, concern for the children who were ‘innocent’ in the process—as if someone is guilty of being without shelter. As with the New Deal era rise of the homeless man, the language of myth recedes at moments of discursive stability.

With the waning of the mythic tropes, a cultural bifurcation remained even though the two groups were no longer legally distinct. The cultural bifurcation created a bit of a discursive versus a legal/service schizophrenia. The one umbrella term subsumes both the homeless family and the lifestyle homeless, deinstitutionalized, etc, but the structure of services is where these are most evident. Programs serving homeless families are usually quite distinct from those serving homeless individuals. For example, see the breakdown in service categories in the United Way 211 help information systems for most metropolitan areas. The discursive bracketing continued in the field of sociology and in part in the field of social services.

Part of this bracketing was first to distinguish the family from the homeless individual. An additional step was also crucial—ensuring, on the one hand, that no other pathology attached to the homeless family and, on the other, positing that these very families embodied the crucial bourgeois virtues of hard work, thrift and faith. Kozol explains the homelessness of his families from fire, job loss, lead paint and family illness. In this last case—family illness, which is his first full narrative and interview with a family, a woman and her children became homeless precisely because of her attentiveness to family. Her father was at sea and her mother became quite sick. She left

school to take care of mother, lost work, and when her mother died soon found herself without a place to live.⁴⁴ He has a clear standard of the proper way to be homeless. He juxtaposes a woman whom he calls Kim with Rachel. “No two people in the Martinique are quite alike; but no two people could be less alike than Rachel and a woman I call Kim. Kim stands out from almost every other person I have met here. Her energy may be a helpful and instructive counterpoint to much of the hopelessness and panic we have seen.”⁴⁵ It is not a coincidence that Kim is the most ‘bourgeois’ of his homeless parents—hardworking, thrifty, well-adjusted.⁴⁶ She was a preschool teacher living in a fixer-up house that had a complete breakdown of the heating system in midwinter—“In a matter of weeks she was reduced from working woman and householder to a client of the welfare system.”⁴⁷

To ensure that the cognitive wedge between the homeless family and individual remains in force, he splinters the categories—he makes an argument for difference to undermine claims of pathology. His argument implies that as long as there are families headed by women like Kim, we cannot impute pathology to the homeless family. These families are not exceptions, rather these non-pathological families without substance abuse, prostitution, etc., demonstrate that there can be no categorical connection between the homeless family and pathology. He writes:

The use of the unrestrictive term, ‘the homeless,’ is in certain ways misleading. It suggests a uniform set of problems and a single category of poor people. The miseries that many of these people undergo are somewhat uniform. The squalor is uniform. The density of living space is

⁴⁴ Kozol, 32 ff.

⁴⁵ Kozol, 92.

⁴⁶ “Kim is a lively woman with an angry and investigative zeal. But none of her anger is turned in upon herself. It is turned out; and in that turning out, that venting of a well-defined and well-supported rage, she finds a fair degree of energy and health.” Kozol, 99.

⁴⁷ Kozol, 93.

uniform. The fear of guards, of drugs, and of irrational bureaucracy is uniform. The uniformity is in their mode of suffering, not in themselves.⁴⁸

The causes of homelessness are so varied, he argues, that we can make no blanket statements about the homeless; however, his argument continues, the effects of homelessness are in common—it is shelterization which creates a *de facto* uniformity (at least in parts of the experience).

The experience of being homeless breaks the family, he argues. So even if a family is in some way not working, he considers the problems to arise from their homelessness. This recuperation of the homeless family arises from a desire for an efficacious service or policy response, a response presumably better than that given to the deviant homeless individuals. He writes:

There is no quick fix for those we do not see as having human claims upon us. We move fast for those we love, ore patiently for those we neither love nor know nor feel that we could ever be. This is the great danger in the clinical detachment that allows us to assign the destitute their labels...

The distancing we have observed receives its most extreme expression in the use of language such as ‘undeserving.’ This is, in some sense, the ultimate act of disaffiliation and the most decisive means of placing all these families and their children in a category where they can’t intrude upon our dreams.⁴⁹

The language which we choose to describe the displaced is integral to both our assessment of them and the services we provide. He does not want the poor treatment which has been given to the homeless to be applied to these families. There is a possibility to recuperate them—the homeless individuals have been too long relegated to their underclass, lumpen status. They are not likely to receive new treatment by social services or policymakers. He hopes that by bracketing the homeless family, making them

⁴⁸ Kozol, 92.

⁴⁹ Kozol, 135.

distinct and thus fracturing the monolithic category of homelessness, he will be able to ensure a better treatment. If lumped together with the other homeless, he has little hope for these families. The formation of categories and the structures of the discourse on homelessness are again intertwined with the delivery of services.

I agree with Kozol that the monolithic category is problematic—a taxonomic system that acknowledges distinctions between populations is desirable. However much I agree with the argument for recognizing the pluralism within the populations considered under the rubric of homelessness, my concern is even more so with the term ‘homeless’ itself. The term carries legacies of theological and cultural critiques of modernity; it posits the idea of a home which transcends place. Our policies and services are designed to address Victorian cultural attitudes about the family, not meet the needs of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century urban conditions.

With the formation of the homeless city and the homelessness of its residents, the loss of fullness and unity felt by fin-de-siècle commentators was able to inhabit this negative term. Home could contain all the positive meanings and a history of loss could reside in ‘homelessness’. While home has come to be nearly synonymous with dwelling and homelessness with its absence, all of the attendant meanings—community, family, nation, etc.—still vie within the dialectical pair. Thus, the negation of dwelling is a negation of a source of meaning, of community, of metaphysical grounding. As we saw in the above passage, Kozol’s call for a more nuanced language is a recognition of the plurality of social practices subsumed under the guise of homelessness, but he fails to recognize that this pluralism is precisely what created the conditions for the rise of the

discourse on homelessness. Plurality undermined the unity necessary for the totality of community; the term homeless was deployed to represent the heterogeneity of the city.

I go beyond Kozol's critique of the category of homeless. It is not merely inadequate to represent a range of displacements; it is an inadequate way to talk about displacement at all. The term 'homeless' must go and then a new way of talking about social displacement must replace it. Otherwise, the discourse remains a carrier of critiques of modernity. As we move toward postmodern cities, perhaps we should shed the laments of yesteryear. The bucolic ideals central to the discourse on homelessness do not reflect current cultural commentary on the family, as we shall see in section four. Few still long for a small town of kin relationships and fewer think such an ideal obtainable. Yet, our categories of urban social science retain this nostalgia and a lament for the city which ended this community life.

The Social Science and Policy Appropriations of the Homeless Family

The fracturing of the monolithic consensus of the disaffiliated man did not eliminate disaffiliation as a basic characteristic of the homeless figure; the demographics of disaffiliation merely expanded to include a wider population. Disaffiliation remains a predominant characteristic of the homeless individual. No longer just the single, white middle-aged man, women and African-Americans now were reported in the populations suffering disaffiliation. Even after the advent of the homeless family, disaffiliation remains a basic determinant of the homeless individual; the homeless family thus remains quite distinct. Peter Rossi's late 1980s *Down and Out in America* was the first important work on homelessness after the emergence and bracketing of the homeless family. As

such, it is an important text to determine how Kozol's (and other's—he is after all emblematic of the process, not its sole advocate) distinction between the homeless family and the individual is assimilated into the discourse. Rossi argues that large-scale changes in the homeless population started in the 1970s. He argues that the structure and nature of homelessness changed so much that we have to distinguish between the 'old' homeless and the 'new'. He wrote:

The 'old' homeless may have blighted some sections of the central cities, but from the perspective of urbanites they had the virtue of being concentrated on Skid Row, which one could avoid and hence ignore. Also, most of the old homeless had some shelter, although inadequate by any standards, and very few were literally sleeping on the streets...Homelessness began to take on new forms by the end of the 1970s. Although all the researchers found some homeless people sleeping out on the streets or in public places in the 1950s and 1960s, the homeless by and large were familyless persons living in very inexpensive (and often inadequate) housing, mainly cubic and SRO hotels. Toward the end of the next decade, what had been a minor form of homelessness became more prevalent: literal homelessness began to grow and at the same time to become more visible to the public. It became more and more difficult to ignore the evidence that some people had no shelter and lived on streets. The 'new' homeless could be found resting or sleeping in public places such as bus or railroad stations, on steam grates in doorways and vestibules, in cardboard boxes, in abandoned cars, or in other places where they could be seen by the public.⁵⁰

The big change with the rise of Rossi's 'new homeless' is the formation of a class. The homeless have become the class of the urban displaced—they are the new lumpenproletariat or the urban rabble. Here, we see a shift that has long been under way—the 'homeless' are now a group; the term 'homeless' is no longer an adjective attached to the city or a person but the class of people experiencing a set of circumstances. In Sutherland and Locke, the homeless figure had been constituted as a solitary individual—he was a homeless man. Any semblance of individuality collapses

⁵⁰ Rossi, 34.

once ‘the homeless’ become a group. The individuality of the earlier homelessness is integrated with the assumption of disaffiliation. The homeless figure was a solitary, modern individual whose significant social relations were torn by the demands of urbanization. With the homeless family, homelessness became a collective act and the foundational assumption of disaffiliation was brought into doubt. The ability of the discourse and empirical situations to reconcile was brought into question; judicial and legislative actions were necessary for social services to even recognize the empirical shifts. What does it mean that the term ‘homeless’ was now an object and not a condition?

For Rossi, this shift signifies that a new homelessness has come into being. But Rossi’s oft-banded distinction between the old homeless and new homeless—essentially the disaffiliated man on skid row versus the shelterless living on sidewalks, parks, and boxes—fails to fully account for how the two conditions are connected. Despite appearing to be quite distinct social problems, the same term was used to apply to both. The practices could not include a complete break or the new problem could not have so easily assimilated to the old category. Even more importantly, the figure whom he calls the old homeless, continues to shape the language and rhetoric of his new homeless; these two groups embody the same basic assumptions about modernization and the family.

He argues for several shifts—most of which deal with demographic changes⁵¹—but acknowledges a good many continuities. These continuities go to the core of what the discourse assumes homelessness to be. Without some continuity, the two categories would be articulated as distinct social problems. Yet, both Rossi’s new and the old homeless continued to be considered homeless. Looking at Rossi’s outline of continuities helps us see what characteristics are at the core of homelessness. As I pointed out in the introduction, there are not complete breaks. Analyzing the continuities helps us to understand the basic assumptions of the discourse. Rossi explains these continuities:

“There are also some continuities from the old to the new homeless. First of all, they share the condition of extreme poverty...The new and the old homeless also are alike in having high levels of disability⁵²...A new twist is drug abuse...A final point of comparability between the old and the new homeless is that both are relatively isolated socially...So extensive was the absence of social ties with kin and friends among the old homeless that Caplow and Bahr define homelessness as essentially a state of *disaffiliation*, without enduring and supporting ties to family, friends, and kin. Disaffiliation also characterizes the new homeless, marking the group off from other extremely poor persons.”⁵³

These continuities account for the reasons that the ‘new’ are still subsumed under the rubric of ‘homeless’— extreme poverty, disability (pathology), and disaffiliation. At the moment that the social science and policy have supposedly assimilated the homeless family, the discourse cannot move beyond disaffiliation but rather disaffiliation

⁵¹ “A major difference between the old and the new homeless is that the old homeless routinely managed somehow to find shelter indoors, while a majority of the new homeless in most studies are out on the streets. As far as shelter goes, the new homeless are clearly worse off. In short, homelessness today means more severe basic shelter deprivation...A second major contrast is the presence of women among the homeless...A third contrast with the old homeless is in age composition...A fourth contrast is in employment status and income...A final contrast is presented by the ethnic composition of the old and new homeless populations. The old homeless were predominantly white—70% on the Bowery and 82% on Chicago’s Skid Row. But the new homeless are recruited heavily from among ethnic minorities: in Chicago 54% were black, and in New York’s shelters more than 75% were black, a proportion that has been increasing since the early 1980s.” Rossi, 38-40.

⁵² By disability, Rossi includes mental illness, physical disability, alcoholism and the newer problems of drug use. Rossi, 42-43. With the possible exception of physical disability, these other problems are the standard categories of pathology.

⁵³ Rossi, 40-43.

characterizes homelessness, despite a new policy definition—to which we will shortly come—based exclusively on where one stays at night. Rossi does not redefine disaffiliation to smooth over this difficulty; it remains for him a state “without enduring and supporting ties to family, friends, and kin.”⁵⁴ A family without ties to family or kin cannot exist; it is a logical contradiction, for, as we saw in the last chapter, the discursively presumed family is a nuclear one. Therefore, the discourse *de facto* separates the homeless family from the category of ‘the homeless.’ The discourse on homelessness—which has shaped the social science categories—is very slow to take up the new empirical shifts. Demographic changes are noted, as we see with Rossi, but the basic categories are not questioned. As judicial and legislative action forcibly work against culture, we find the deep cultural bases of the discourse resistant to change. The basic discursive framework remains, despite the change in the legal definition of homelessness.

Even Christopher Jencks’s famed summing of the state of the field in his 1994 book *The Homeless*—an implicit statement of who is in the group and who is not, looks at families primarily for the role of changes in marriage in contributing to the problems of homeless. (“[T]he decline of marriage may have been linked to a general weakening of family ties that left more of the very poor without relatives willing to help them.”)⁵⁵ His summary of the field has the glaring absence of the homeless family; he still studies the family to clarify the role of disaffiliation in the homeless figure. The only role for the family is for research into the etiology of the homeless individual; Jencks is working from the same assumptions as we saw with Wood or Bogue. He implicitly excludes the

⁵⁴ Rossi, 43.

⁵⁵ Jencks, 59-60.

homeless family from the state of the field of sociological research into ‘the homeless’. Jencks’ continuation of the (modified) disaffiliation thesis points to the successful bracketing of the family.

In earlier periods, ‘homelessness’ was a description of those people who experienced a state or condition of being homeless. In the fin-de-siècle period, the category was a grouping of other categories; these other categories fell out of the discourse by the New Deal era. But by the 1980s, a new shift is well underway from description to objectivation. The constitution of ‘the homeless’ as a mass (as a noun)—as we see in Jencks’s title—marks the group of people defined by the discourse; ‘homeless’ as an adjective remains a legal effort to work against the discourse.

When Congress defined ‘homeless’ for the purpose of funding and regulating social services,⁵⁶ the heading of paragraph 11302 was “General definition of homeless individual.” The category is still descriptive. The discourse maintained the assumption of disaffiliation by constituting a group defined as such. When the discourse on homelessness shifts from a language of description to the formation of a class, a new politics is embedded within the discourse. Is it merely a question of mass formation? Or is something else happening here? Why at this moment did ‘the homeless’ become a collective noun? What necessitated this grammatical shift? What does it mean? While this grammatical change in the category of the homeless is interesting, I am more concerned with how this shift relates to the tensions between the cultural assumptions of homelessness and policy. How does the formation of ‘the homeless’ relate to this?

The formation of a mass elides all individuality and personality; within the mass of ‘the homeless’, there is no longer a homeless figure. The mass is an elision of the

⁵⁶ US Code Title 42. Chapter 119. Subchapter I § 11302.

particular; it is the denial of the concrete. It is the formation of a transcendental form in lieu of the plural. Instead of Kozol's desire for recognition of the plurality of social displacement, the formation of the category of 'the homeless' establishes a unitary collective. 'The homeless' are not a composite in which each individual maintains identity; it is a category of the whole—it is not fully formed until each individual figure has been emptied of its content.

The constitution of this collective category of 'the homeless' runs parallel to the formation that other collectivity—the homeless family. Kozol's invocation of myth ('Rachel and her Children') established a collectivity bracketed from 'the homeless'. The new empirical conditions, which necessitated judicial and legislative interventions, met with superficial integration within much of the social science literature—as we saw with both Peter Rossi and Christopher Jencks. A new taxonomy of new versus old homeless made a nod to the policy fiats, but the Victorian cultural attitudes which had shaped much of the discourse on homelessness continued. The juxtaposition of the family to the homeless continues within the structure of the discourse. But this family-homeless dialectic takes on a dualness. First, 'the homeless' remain the other of bourgeois subjects and their social/familial norms. But a second layer of othering appears with the homeless family—the homeless family becomes an other to 'the homeless'. As we saw with Rossi and Jencks, sociology appropriates this second layer of othering which is assimilated into the disaffiliation thesis. Social science's incomplete move to the new definition of homelessness is not surprising. Beyond the traditions and categories which are steeped in defining homelessness as a condition of threat to or absence of a family, the new materialistic policy definition also contain an implicit bracketing of the homeless family.

Policy attempts to integrate all of the displaced by redefining the homeless individual by material means created the conditions whereby a family and an individual can all be homeless. This attempt to assimilate the homeless family appears to correct the dialectical relationship (between family and the homeless figure) whose logic had blinded social scientists and service providers to the families needing services. However, this judico-legislative action never fully undid the discursive logic. Rather, the constitution of the collectivity of ‘the homeless’ overwhelmingly failed to integrate the homeless family, as we have seen with Kozol, Rossi and Jencks. The discourse bracketed the family from ‘the homeless’.

Even though legislation established the means whereby the family could be brought under the general rubric of the homeless, it still failed to integrate it. Paragraph 11302 of the US code—which provides the oft-cited HUD definition of homelessness—delineates the “General definition of homeless individual” and goes on to declare that

(a) In general

For purposes of this chapter, the term “homeless” or “homeless individual or homeless person” includes—

- (1)** an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
- (2)** an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is—
 - (A)** a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
 - (B)** an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
 - (C)** a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

While acknowledging that the law needs to define the individual and not a collectivity, such a broad redefinition takes up the uncertainty of the moment in its use of three articulations of ‘homeless’. Two are clearly still functioning within the longstanding

adjectival form of the word—homeless individual or homeless person. The first use of ‘homeless’ (“the term ‘homeless’”) remains ambiguous—is it a move toward the mass formation of the noun *sans* the definite article? Or is it merely the adjective without a modified—homeless X, such as the family? The latter (“homeless individual or homeless person”) seems more likely because the subpoints 1 and 2 both assume a modification in the preceding line. The McKinney Act attempts to make space for the homeless family but not as family. ‘Homeless’ are defined as individuals. One’s family status is irrelevant to legally constituting an individual as homeless, but the collectivity of the ‘homeless family’ is not taken up within the law.

While making it possible for a member of a family to be constituted as homeless, the law, at the same time, circumvents the family tensions by ignoring them. The law does not take on the discursive logic of homelessness; rather, it reasserts an atomized homeless individual when reconstituting homelessness on material grounds. Following this definition, Rachel and her children are homeless not as the collective of the family but as solitary individuals who find themselves in a welfare hotel; their family status would thus only appear in the operational procedure of directing them to the appropriate shelter. By falling back onto a fragmented individual, the law leaves the cognitive space for the reassertion of disaffiliation to greater or lesser extent, such as Rossi’s assertion that disaffiliation continues as a defining characteristic of homelessness or Jencks’s falling back onto explanatory models which assume that shifting family structures—like marriage later in life and an increasing divorce rate—create the economic conditions in which people more easily become homeless.

The legal intervention of the McKinney Act (now McKinney-Vento) shifts the primary definer of homelessness from social science to law. The legal definition is now the working definition of service providers (whose funds come from McKinney-Vento budget appropriations) and social scientists. But, as we have seen in the representative works of Rossi and Jencks, the material definition is deployed but the discursive logic of disaffiliation continues.

Homelessness continues to be about the family. Public policy and social science are the two primary loci of the work on homelessness since Kozol's *Rachel and her Children*. They have both continued to perpetuate the Victorian cultural attitudes which were codified in the fin-de-siècle invocation of mythic tropes. Again, in the 1980s, a social activist turned to myth to represent newly identified urban problems. Kozol bracketed the homeless family from the rest of 'the homeless' and so established it as a category not imbricated with the pathology, deviance and social threat that is perpetuated in the social science disaffiliation thesis. The homeless individual is thus now dually other—other to the bourgeois family and other to the homeless family. This positioning of the homeless man, which began with Kozol, is in many ways a recycling of older distinctions from Jacob Riis. He had distinguished between the middle class family and the Other Half. However, he had another category which he deployed to represent the pathological beggars and paupers—the Nether Half. The Other Half could be potentially recuperated, while the Nether Half could not. Kozol already recuperated the homeless family and thus he gives it a status not defined against the middle class family but against the other—the homeless individual.

In this section, we have looked at the discursive negotiations of the rise of the homeless family—the concern is one of language and rhetoric and not with the changes in the streets. Those are important for they inflect and interact with the language but they are not our primary focus. In this section, we have seen that the homeless family was semantically bracketed from the disaffiliated men and women on the streets. This bracketing occurred in two forms—myth and sociological explanation. Mythic tropes were invoked to describe the homeless family, while the homeless individual continued to be discussed within the sociological framework of disaffiliation and pathology. The bracketing of the homeless family was essential to continue with this discursive framework.

This new distinction between the homeless family and the street homeless has parallels in the *fin-de-siècle* period. As we saw in chapter two, Jacob Riis distinguished between the honest poor and paupers, now more commonly distinguished as the working versus undeserving poor. With the bracketing of the homeless family, the street homeless take the position of the other to the family—those paupers (or in Riis’s more colorful description—the Nether Half) who embody the threats and anxieties to home and family. The street homeless become ‘the homeless’ proper; they are that group which Christopher Jencks discusses under that rubric (and that title). Newly constituted as a mass, ‘the homeless’ continue to be the other of bourgeois family norms and take on a new role as other to the homeless family.

The emergence of this category of the homeless family threatened the structure of the discourse. Policymakers did make a seeming break with the past by establishing a new definition of homelessness which uses the homeless individual’s material location as

the basis for determining one's homelessness. However, despite this shift in definition, the discursive framework of homelessness as disaffiliation continued.

Section Three: A Decoupled Homelessness: Rending the Family

For over a century, the discourse on homelessness had been a carrier of anxieties about the social impacts of modernization. Merely because a series of court cases and pieces of legislation redefined homelessness does not mean that anxieties about the family disappeared. In fact, concern for the family was already increasing—rising divorce rates, more women entering the workforce, *Roe v. Wade*, and greater demand for equal rights. There were now anxieties about the family that were originating elsewhere in American society—not merely through urbanization's impact on social structures. While these broader changes in gender and family politics certainly have ties to the same economic shifts informing the discourse on homelessness, the discourse of these newer problems developed independently of that on homelessness. Homelessness, thus was not an exclusive carrier of family anxieties. When homelessness became defined as a material condition, much of the family anxiety no longer remained connected to the homeless figure. These anxieties emerged in this other cultural location—the emerging family values movement.

Jonathan Kozol was already starting to see the incommensurability between worries about family values and the discourse on homelessness. In his interventions, he argues that the pathology associated with homeless individuals and, I argue, the implicit familial problems attendant to them cannot cohere to the homeless families. These families are loving, whole and struggling to remain so in the face of great economic

struggle. The problem is not a lack of family values within the family who becomes homeless; it is an insufficient embrace of such values by the institutional apparatus of social service bureaucracies. According to Kozol, any family destruction in those whom he studies is not the cause of homelessness, but rather is the result of being homeless. For him, the idea of disaffiliation cannot reside within the homeless family. Kozol writes:

[W]e may wonder at an agency of government that, even unwittingly, punishes a mother in a time of crisis for her desperation to remain close to the one adult in the entire world who seems to love her. Why would a society alarmed by the decline in family values try to separate a mother from her child's father at the time she needs him most and when he displays that willingness to share responsibility whose absence we repeatedly deplore?

This, then, is a case not of the breakdown of a family but of a bureaucratic mechanism that *disintegrates* the family, tearing apart a mother and father in a time of shared ordeal. Sharing pain does not merely bring relief to people under siege; it often forms a bond that gives them stronger reason to remain together later. So the efforts of the city, as belated as they were, to offer Holly shelter if she would agree to shed her child's father, like its offer to remove her as a parent altogether and to place the child in an institution—not because the child *needed* institutional care but because the city could not give her a safe home—represent destructive social policy on several levels.⁵⁷

The homeless family then is entirely beyond the pale of disaffiliation; it does not deny family values. For Kozol, those values are important and need to exist, but anxiety about the family cannot attach to this new construction of homelessness.⁵⁸

Throughout *Rachel and Her Children*, Kozol returns to this theme that anxieties about family destruction cannot properly be connected with the homeless family. For instance, he tells us “[t]here is a wealth of literature about the loss of certain values that provide cohesion for the family in American society. Less is written of the role played by society itself in the undoing of those decent family ties that do somehow prevail in even

⁵⁷ Kozol, 123.

⁵⁸ Kozol, 47. See also Kozol, 49 or 57.

the most damaging conditions of existence. How do bureaucratic regulations in themselves conspire to annihilate a family?" His successful bracketing of the homeless family ensured that it was never regarded as a threat to the bourgeois family. But his anxieties about the rise of the family values movements indicate a dénouement of our account of the discourse on homelessness.

The family values movement emerged at the time of the 1980s realignments in the discourse on homelessness. Kozol's work is an intervention at the intersection of these two trends—he writes to preserve the ideals of family within the group of those who are displaced. He also wants to represent the homeless family in such a way that it does not embody the pathology which many of the proponents of the family values criticize.

This intersection also indicates the waning of the homeless figure as a threat to the middle class family. The anxieties about threats to the middle class family are never fully decoupled from the discourse on homelessness, but the homeless figure is no longer a carrier of these social fears. Processes of a culturalization of politics enabled the family anxieties to become relatively freestanding as part of the family values movement. But in this moment when the family anxieties separate out from the discourse on homelessness, the family transforms into an entirely different form; the family of the family values movement is not that of the fin-de-siècle critiques of the city.

In this section, we return to a debate which we have seen in each of the two previous chapters—the relationship between family and civil society. In chapter one, these issues came to the fore as Jacob Riis lamented the rise of volunteer associations. We again encountered the contradictions between these two different social structures in the second chapter discussion of the limits of hobosociality for social mooring. In that

discussion, we saw that the associational life of the hobo community was regarded by sociologists as inadequate for social life; they wanted the family to be the proper foundation for society. Here, this debate reappears in its most recent incarnation—the assimilation of the family values movement to the advocacy of social capital. Recent concerns about family values have expanded into the realm of debates about the associational life of social capital.⁵⁹ In these discussions, confusions about the relations between family and civil society run rampant.⁶⁰ Much of this new discourse erroneously posits that social capital reinforces community and family. The effort to assimilate the concern for family with social capital obscures not only difference, but outright antagonism. This section unravels the cognitive contradictions necessary to create an instrumental politics to preserve the idea of the supposedly organic form of the nuclear family.

In tracing the state of this debate, we see the unwinding of the Victorian cultural attitudes which gave rise to discourse on homelessness. Those attitudes reflected critique and unease about urbanization and its impact on the family. But with the assimilation of family values to the social capital movement, the underlying dichotomies which have shaped responses to urban life—*Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft*, sentiment relations/interest relations, modernization/family—are upended. The family is assimilated to the norms of *Gesellschaft*; it is fostered by interest relations; modernity provides the means to protect

⁵⁹ For instance, see Rick Santorum, *It Takes a Family: Conservatism and the Common Good*. Wilmington: ISI Books, 2005. As does Senator Santorum, I primarily use the popular work of Robert Putnam for my discussions of social capital. Putnam describes social capital as: “[S]ocial capital refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them... ‘social capital’ calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations.” Putnam, 19.

⁶⁰ The confusions do not solely emanate from the religious right; they are also prevalent in the circles of those advocating social capital, where one finds rhetoric of community being conflated with that of associational life. Even beyond his subtitle, Putnam tends to collapse the two social forms into each other.

the family. The family becomes a shell of what it was. Social scientists and policymakers continue to research homelessness, but the *raison d'être* of the discourse on homelessness ceases to be. The family which was at its center is no more.

Family Values and Social Capital

The politicization of the family over the last two decades of the twentieth century is usually couched in terms of defining the country.⁶¹ The struggle to define America is much older than the coming of age of the baby boomers. Culture wars over the class, ethnic, and religious configurations of the nation have been with us at least since Victorian responses to the city, and truthfully, even much longer than that. For the ‘making of Americans’, Jacob Riis calls for hackneyed Protestant values of thrift, orderliness, hygiene, hard work, and dedication to family. He combined these values with a desire for ‘small town values’, a normative assumption of language (English) and expectations of cultural assimilation for the ‘other half’. For his prescription for social integration, he has received homage from contemporary religious right figures, like Marvin Olasky. Riis wrote of the need to preserve the family and home three-quarters of the century before James Dobson called for a focus on the family or the Family Research Council gave Reagan Administration officials a forum for further politicizing of the family.⁶² With the rise of the religious right, the previous fin-de-siècle *kulturkampf* now became an issue of policy. The culture wars spread from the way institutions function and

⁶¹ For instance see James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books: 1991).

⁶² Focus on the Family was founded in 1977 by psychologist and family counselor James Dobson. Dobson was also involved in setting up the Washington, DC-based Family Research Council in 1983; its first two directors—Gerry Regier and Gary Bauer—were former Reagan administration officials.

disseminate norms to legislative and executive actions. The tenor of the culture wars took a new pitch.

The discourse on homelessness has always been one front in a much larger struggle over American identity in response to modernization—defining the proper types of individual subjects and proper social structures. The 1980s bubbling up of the politicization of the family provoked realignments on several positions within the camps of the culture wars. Jacob Riis had drawn the lines clearly between the family and civil society—these were antagonistic social structures. He worried that after a day of work—either in the marketplace or in the realm of domesticity, the family would not gather in the home, but rather take care of the demands of civil society by spending their evenings in their voluntary associations. Yet our contemporary defenders of family values, e.g., Rick Santorum, now contend that clubs and associations are good for the family.

While these voluntary associations have had a brief period as a prominent social activity, their ostensible present decline elicits mourning as if it is the passing of an eternal tradition.⁶³ A basic assumption of theorizing civil society—the tensions between individual and society—fails to recognize a third pole to social tensions, another form of collectivity: community. The antagonism between community and civil society is not merely a categorical problem of social structures (or forms of relationships, as we shall see). These theoretical distinctions also correspond to historical frustrations with changes in social life. The historicity does not merely relate to distinct manifestations of social

⁶³ American involvement with voluntary associations has waxed and waned. However, I am not positing the demise of civil society; rather, I am analyzing how concerns for social capital have been assimilated to those of family values. For instance, former Senator Rick Santorum considers the nation's civic structures to be at a critical point. "In many respects, the problems we now face represent a more complex challenge, because almost all aspects of our civilization seem to be at tipping points. The good news is that capital *can* be replenished." Santorum, 12.

relations under different prevailing modes of production. Older tensions or complaints were that the rise of the associational life of civil society threatened other forms of social relations—namely the family.

Ignoring de Tocqueville's early nineteenth-century documenting of American associational life, Robert Putnam charts the widespread emergence of this form of civil society to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁶⁴ Most begin at about the time of his eponymous example of bowling teams—the American Bowling Congress began in the first decade of the twentieth century and did not have its meteoric rise until the two middle decades, only to peak in the 1960s. (The Women's Bowling Congress started a little later in the late 1910s.) The rise of these associations, however, was at the time not a lauded development; clubs and associations—commentators argued—pulled husbands and wives, mothers and fathers out of the home. The value placed on family came under threat from cultivating social capital.

Recent concerns about family values have expanded into the realm of debates about the associational life of social capital. In these discussions, confusions about the relations between family and civil society run rampant.⁶⁵ Much of this new discourse erroneously posits that social capital reinforces community and family. The effort to assimilate the concern for family with social capital obscures not only difference, but outright antagonism.

While the tendency to join family anxieties with the rhetoric of declining civil society is widespread, former Senator Rick Santorum's book *It Takes a Family:*

⁶⁴ Putnam, Appendix. See his appendix charting the rise of prominent associations and clubs.

⁶⁵ The confusions do not solely emanate from the religious right; they are also prevalent in the circles of those advocating social capital, where one finds rhetoric of community being conflated with that of associational life. Even beyond his subtitle, Putnam tends to collapse the two social forms into each other.

Conservatism and the Common Good is a particularly good example for a combination of practical and locational reasons. First, he most clearly makes the argument that the family and social capital are mutually reinforcing. Second, he used his position as a Senator and member of the Republican Leadership to provide a bully pulpit to promote family values in general and to promote prominent institutions and figures of the religious right's family values advocacy contingent (e.g., Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council, James Dobson, and Tony Perkins), as well as the broader religious right's promotion of civil society, like Marvin Olasky's compassionate conservatism project. Third, he self-professedly used his elected position and position in the Senate leadership to further agendas founded upon this intellectual and historical confusion. In short, he tried to make bad social theory the basis of muddled policy.

Santorum's project—through which I will work before looking at the implications for the discourse on homelessness—rests on the assumption that the 'traditional family', i.e., the bourgeois nuclear family, is the foundation of every successful civilization.⁶⁶ Setting aside all anthropological or historical evidence which might suggest the modernity of this 'traditional' social form, Santorum argues that there are five different types of capital in American civil society and that "family breakdown—out-of-wedlock births, divorce, cohabitation, and absentee parenthood—has depleted that capital in recent decades."⁶⁷ Santorum creates a liberal bogeyman by falling back on rather banal clichés of individual (the concern of liberals) versus society (the concern of conservatives), arguing that liberal social goals fail to recognize the bonds between individuals.⁶⁸ My

⁶⁶ Santorum, 7.

⁶⁷ Santorum, 9. His "five pillars of American civilization" are social capital, economic capital, moral capital, cultural capital and intellectual capital. Santorum, 10.

⁶⁸ Santorum, 55.

argument, however, does not fall on the false dichotomy of the individual-society binary; rather, I contend that the structure of the social bonds between individuals matters. All bonds are not the same. The structures of community are not the same as those of civil society. The bourgeois subject and its *Gemeinschaft*-type sentiment relations found in the nuclear family represent the proper form of individual subject and social organization for Riis; for Santorum, the family becomes but a cog within the machine of capital.

He undertakes his discussion of social capital with a brief summary of Robert Putnam's work *Bowling Alone*. Putnam describes social capital as: "[S]ocial capital refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them... 'social capital' calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations."⁶⁹ By erecting his argument on the erroneous edifice of Putnam's arguments, Santorum replicates Putnam's mistaken assimilation of communitarian rhetoric to the structures of civil society. By collapsing these structures, Putnam provides Santorum with an intellectual framework that reinscribes the individual versus society. All bonds are reduced to the instrumental ones of civil society.

The confusions do not solely emanate from the religious right; they are prevalent in the scholarly circles of those advocating social capital, where one finds rhetoric of community being conflated with that of associational life. Even beyond his book's subtitle, Putnam tends to collapse the two social forms into each other, as we have seen. For instance, Putnam tells us that "'Social Capital' is to some extent merely new language for a very old debate in American intellectual circles. Community has warred

⁶⁹ Putnam, 19.

incessantly with individualism for preeminence in our political hagiology.”⁷⁰ Or “It is emphatically not my view that community bonds in America have weakened steadily throughout our history—or even throughout the last hundred years. On the contrary, American history carefully examined is a story of ups and downs in civic engagement, *not just downs*—a story of collapse and of renewal.”⁷¹ In the first quote, Putnam juxtaposes the individual to society, whatever the social structures may be; and in both community and civil society (or civic engagement or social capital) are used interchangeably.

These relations and the reciprocity arising from the bonds form the crucial first of Santorum’s five pillars of American civilization. He argues that where the family breaks down, social capital crumbles. Yet, while his account initially claims that the traditional family undergirds each of these pillars,⁷² Santorum appears to reverse the direction of causality with his discussion of Putnam. Initially, families had to be repaired and nurtured to build and support social capital. Now he finds that “we need an abundant store of social capital to create and sustain the kind of freedom that our founding fathers envisioned, the kind of freedom that promotes the common good and supports families. It’s a freedom requiring a certain degree of selflessness and virtue.”⁷³ Strong families are necessary for social capital, but we need the freedom which arises from social capital to support families. He tells us that “the place to begin in building up social capital is with the family,”⁷⁴ but how then does the proper form of freedom exist to support the family?

⁷⁰ Putnam, 24.

⁷¹ Putnam, 25.

⁷² “Where social capital has disappeared, the breakdown of the traditional family usually was a huge factor in that calamity.” Santorum, 10.

⁷³ Santorum, 56.

⁷⁴ Santorum, 57.

[W]hile the number of Americans who went bowling for recreation was higher in the 1990s than in the 1950s, the number of Americans participating in bowling leagues had declined markedly over the same period.

Now, that may sound trivial, but think what that kind of statistic means. A bowling league is an association; *joining* means agreeing to change your personal, individual life—for example, by agreeing to show up for games every Monday night, whether it is convenient or not—for the sake of others, who rely on you to show up... The thing of huge significance to all Americans is that the decline of bowling leagues is but one of countless examples revealing that Americans over the past generation have given up on the habit of joining, the habit of association. Now, we still sometimes go bowling, but only on our terms, as the fancy strikes us—which means we go bowling alone. Most often, however, we just stay home and watch TV, alone. We have gone from being a nation of reliable joiners to a nation of individuals jealously guarding their “free time,” the time when no one has a claim on them. We are not renewing our social capital.⁷⁵

The idea of ‘joining’ is entirely at odds with the familial ideals from Tönnies to Riis to Wood—one does not join a family (excepting by marriage) but rather is born into it. The family ideal assumes an organic naturalness, and this organicism is to be the basis of social relations, not the artificial relations based on capital that require joining.

Gemeinschaft, Gesellschaft, and the Family

Santorum is calling for the defense of a different institution than Riis. This family of the new millennium attempts to keep the form of family without the same internal principles structuring it. Implicit is a sense that there has been a foreclosure of the sentiment relations of *Gemeinschaft*—it becomes irretrievable. The family, which was articulated as its last remnant, no longer seems to exist; it has to have a new means to bolster it. The exhortations for protection of the family from policy and legislation inserts instrumentality into the institution of the family—it has become, in Tönnies’ sense, a

⁷⁵ Santorum, 54-55.

Gesellschaft structure. The collapse between the movements of family values and social capital marks a second acquiescence—the family has been irredeemably changed by modern life. The family of the family values movement is a shell institution in which the previous content has been emptied.

As the family itself transforms, Santorum can argue that to restore the five pillars of capital we must start with the family⁷⁶—all forms of capital, he argues are grounded in the family. He inverts the Riisian claims that capital (and its social versions) was the cause of family breakdown. He—among others—reconstitutes the family as a modern political institution—the means of addressing the anxieties about family values thus work at odds with the language of family. At the discursive level, the family values movement is a partial rejection of modernity, or at least the impacts of modernization. With this movement, the older social form of family, or *Gemeinschaft*, is to be a bulwark against the onslaught of modernization.⁷⁷ Whereas the prescription of social capital implicitly recognizes the sufficiency of modernity to solve its own problems—a modern social form of *Gesellschaft* can be the panacea for social problems. By integrating the family into the concerns about social capital, the religious right sheds the critique of modernity from the concerns for the family.

Since anxieties about the family are no longer integrated with commentators' critiques of modern civil society, they are able to take up new means for redressing concerns. Riis's attempt to bring the countryside to the city and set limits on capital are not the responses of Santorum—he calls for an embrace of capital. The religious right is

⁷⁶ “It will come as no surprise that I believe the place to start in restoring these pillars of our society is with the family—because the family is at the center of all the types of capital I’ve just described.” Santorum, 12.

⁷⁷ Of course, despite the transcendental claims posited by the family values movement, the nuclear family is also a historical form which arose with the bourgeoisie.

very much a political movement and, as such, grounded in instrumentality. The primarily evangelical movement⁷⁸ has to legitimate its decision to shed its centuries-old commitment to a Troeltschian sectarianism vis-à-vis the state.⁷⁹ The *de facto* withdrawal from concerns of temporal power has been foresworn through the classic moves of *ressentiment*-politics. With the decline of unions and other voluntary life, religious institutions remain the sole locus of vibrant social capital. The religious right has a comparative advantage over its political opponents because of this in-built infrastructure into which it can tap. Thus, it assimilates social capital to its political goals of ‘family values’, however ambiguously defined.

But the functioning of the religious right is not our concern here. The assimilation of family values rhetoric to the concerns of social capital signals a rapprochement between social conservatism and modernity. As economic shifts push the nation into a globalized, postmodern culture, middle class angst no longer hearkens back to the simple times of *Gemeinschaft*-ideals. It is too remote a past to be viable; thus, there is an acquiescence to modernity. The modern family values movement spurns its Victorian roots by maintaining the nostalgic language for a life and family of old built around a Christian home, while embracing means and institutions, and even more importantly, a form of family, which belies the nostalgia. The torch-bearers of the family have transformed the family ideal. Most of the longtime compatriots in this cause have abandoned the nostalgia in all but rhetoric while embracing the language as a means for

⁷⁸ Senator Santorum represents the social conservatism alliance between evangelicals and Catholics. With longstanding traditions of subsidiarity from Catholic social teaching, the Catholic church is easily integrated into a concern with civil society.

⁷⁹ The German liberal Protestant thinker Ernst Troeltsch wrote at the turn of the last century about sectarianism as a relationship of a church to broader society. Sects were those religious groups which had thought that the dominant church groups were in some way corrupt or diminished in their accommodation of broader society. They usually had an element of withdrawing from broader political and civil life and were strong advocates of a staunch church/state separation.

political power. The family is now but a remnant of the social institution which it once was, but this shrinking has taken place at the hands of its defenders.

American modernization is now not so very new; its problems have been negotiated for well over a century. Yet, as we have seen, the basic concerns about its downsides have continued into our current political debates. As the industrializing spatial fixes which created the extreme growth of the late-nineteenth-century city began to fracture with the geographical separation of production and consumption, modern life irreparably changed. From a loss of inner city jobs to a culturalization of politics, the changes in capital and its relationships with the American city have changed the conditions for the discussions of the modern family.

The elevation of the family to a policy concern indicates a giant shift in the nature of the anxieties about the family. The family has now become an institution or association which can be sustained through instrumental interventions; it is no longer the organic sentiment relations remaining from some long-faded *Gemeinschaft*. The family and the Christian home ideal which were at the center of American critiques of modernization have ceased to be.

The discourse on homelessness is thus a piece of history. The structures of othering, which originated in the commentary of fin-de-siècle activists worried that the city would destroy family life, continue to shape current social science and policy. But the family has so transformed that the initial impetus for Riis and Warner, Howells and Law is no longer. The norm against which the other is measured does not exist. If that family has gone its own way, it is time for the homeless to go theirs.

In this chapter we have seen the winding down of the discourse on homelessness. First, we saw the Eisenhower-era consensus that homelessness was a problem of the white men in metropolitan skid row areas fractured—women and African-Americans began to appear in sociological literature. Both had been obscured in sociological research because social scientists looked for the homeless only in the places where they would find white, homeless men. This sociological blindness arose because of underlying discursive assumptions, like the gendered assumptions of the idea of home and the ‘late’ arrival of the African-American community to the city. As these assumptions were undermined by changes in attitudes toward women (following second wave feminism) and the African-American family (following the Moynihan Report), these two groups began to appear in the literature on homelessness.

The appearance of these new groups in sociological literature broke down the gender, racial, and geographical limits to the study of homelessness. This fracturing enabled the homeless family to finally be identified as such—a family in the welfare hotel located beyond the boundaries of the Bowery could now be called homeless. Poor, displaced families had previously been represented as being in crisis or transition but never homeless; the disaffiliation thesis made it unlikely for the sociologist or service provider to describe a family as homeless. But a group of homeless families sued the City of New York in order that they might receive homeless services, and the category of the homeless family was established.

With this advent of the homeless family, activists and popular writers like Jonathan Kozol invoked mythic tropes that bracketed the family from the broader homeless population. This bracketing enabled the continuation of the same disaffiliation

framework for homeless individuals and a different valuation for the homeless family. Kozol expressed doubts about the way that the emerging family values movement articulated its value of the family. He is right, this new movement was not representing or protecting the family in the same way that he or Riis did. The rise of the family values movement indicates that the framework of family and home, city and homelessness was no longer the same. The discourse on homelessness had lost its original purpose—protecting the family which was the last remnant of *Gemeinschaft*.

This movement of family anxieties into the realm of policy is part of the transformation of the family into an institution or association which can be sustained through instrumental interventions; it is no longer the organic sentiment relations remaining from some long faded *Gemeinschaft*. The family and the Christian home ideal which were at the center of the rise of the discourse on homelessness ceased to be.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The prominence which attached to homelessness as a social problem in the 1980s has waned. No advocates occupy news programs or have television cameras recording their congressional testimony on homelessness. The crisis of homelessness has seemingly subsided into banality. Certainly people still go without shelter in the United States; each year over a million Americans find themselves without a fixed place to stay at night. But homelessness is no longer regarded as a national crisis. Much like a century earlier, urban order has been restored; this order always comes with an element of acquiescence—in this case, to the idea that we will have people living on the streets of American cities. The acquiescence is abetted by the homeless return to invisibility through processes like gentrification.

A semblance of order has come to the city and to social services. Homeless advocacy has undertaken the common professionalization of activists with a revolving door between political appointments and positions of leading advocacy groups. Social advocates are few, but professional social workers are many. Along with this new mode of professionalization, there has come an increasing willingness of homeless service agencies and advocacy groups to partner with business, civic and municipal leaders. These collaborations usually involve a willingness to consent to the spatial marginalization of the homeless in exchange for funding of programs. The services thus route the collection points of homeless people away from convention, tourist, and business districts. Often some old school advocates refuse to go along and thumb their nose at the business community and the majority of service providers. But this seemingly new partnership is in fact a return to the practices at the time of the initial formation of

the discourse on homelessness. Then, early advocates like Jacob Riis wanted business to take the lead in responding to homelessness—he did, after all, regard business as the Haussmann of the American city. Municipal leaders were to pass laws which facilitated the restoration of order to the city. The American city is increasingly an antiseptic space to accommodate the gentrifying demands of young professionals and urban families.

From its beginnings, the discourse on homelessness has been concerned with making the city safe for the family. At the turn of the last century, New York came to be called the ‘homeless city’ because its slums threatened the home which simultaneously fostered the family and citizens.¹ This dual fostering highlights a contradiction which was long latent in the discourse but only came to the fore with the advent of the family values movement: the instrumentality of social policy and activism to foster the supposed organicism of community and family. Early in the fin-de-siècle rise of the discourse on homelessness, the family (in its emerging nuclear form) was presumed to be a naturally given social formation.

But the state (of which one is a citizen) and civil society are not natural. Again, at the turn of the last century, Jacob Riis was alarmed by the increasing presence of the voluntary associations of civil society; these associations were destroying the family. The state, however, was a reformer’s ally; it was a necessity. Statist institutions became allies in bringing changes to daily lives. The reach of these state institutions was not (primarily) to go into the family but to create spaces in which the family could flourish. Zoning laws, building codes, and housing ordinances established a literal framework to which the family could retreat from the fast-paced life of the city. This pace was augmented by technology, demands from work, and demands from civil society associations. The state

¹ Riis, *Battle*, 7.

could help to protect the family, while associations were merely a distraction. The eventual assimilation of the concerns for the family to those for social capital introduced instrumentality into the family. Now, the family accommodated itself to this modernization. The *raison d'être* for the discourse no longer exists.

In chapter two—"Metropolitan Displacements," I argued that the emergence of the concept of homelessness was integrated with the process of legitimating the bourgeois family. The industrializing city transformed social life and rent longstanding ties to small town life; it became a locus defined by these ruptures. Journalists and activists documented the displacements by which they began to represent the city. The family was represented as the last remnant of the small communities which urban life had destroyed; its utopic locus in a Christian home was to be a haven from the perils of the city. The concept of homelessness was developed to represent the threats to the family in its Christian home—the city, the slum dweller, and the pauper. These others were represented with mythic tropes; the proliferation of these tropes in the work of activists and journalists created a constellation of assumptions which became associated with the people described as homeless: unsettled, wandering, non-Christian, radical, and threat to family.

The invocation of these tropes began a process of bringing order to the city. They were the first codification of a range of Victorian attitudes about the city and the family. This constellation of representations helped to define the urban problems and populations. By providing the first basis for a semantic order to the city, they helped to establish a framework for subsequent services and research in the metropolis. In this

process of ordering the concept of homelessness became the other to both the family and to order, since the family was to be the basis for social order.

In chapter three—“The Rise of the Homeless Man,” new forms of representing homelessness are taken up in the emerging field of sociology. The fin-de-siècle semantic order had paved the way for political and service interventions in the city. These helped establish some stability in urban social life which along with a middle class acquiescence to metropolitan life lessened the immediate anxiety from the processes of urbanization. With a relative social order, social science was able to more clearly distinguish populations, groups, and urban spaces—new taxonomies also made their way into the discourse on homelessness. The earlier mythic tropes had established a framework for the discourse; sociology consolidated these basic characteristics into taxonomies and definitions.

In this chapter, I argue that the homeless man was consolidated as the normative category of social displacement. Before this consolidation took place, an urban population was segregated from the broader (and in one sociologist’s phrase ‘normal’) population. These men were distinguished by spatial, linguistic, and institutional limits—these residents of skid row areas of town came to be the homeless men. This constitution of the category of the homeless man integrated efforts from social service providers and sociologists. The consolidation of this category came about through the marginalization of the competing category of the hobo. The homeless man was the skid row man who went through a shelter, the hobo was a free spirit who did not remain long in one place. The hobo had his own institutions and associations; the homeless man was shorn of significant social relations.

The discursive role of the homeless man as the other of the family continued into this new social science category. The assumption that the family was the only legitimate basis for social order moved from fin-de-siècle activists to the Chicago School sociologists. They and their sociological heirs did not find the widespread hobo associations to be a legitimate way to moor individuals into society. Rather, relations to one's family were to be the basis for integrating one to society. The thriving hobo community was disparaged—the associational life of the poor, working men was an insufficient form of society and failed to allay social and political anxieties.

These anxieties of political violence or the collapse of the family lost the fevered pitch of the fin-de-siècle commentator; they slowly subsided into a sense of social worry. The language of homelessness was no longer deployed to describe threats to the Christian home ideal; it became the mere absence of such a home. The homeless figure came to be defined as the disaffiliated man, as the mid-century appearance of the category of the nuclear family integrated with the sociological fad of loneliness studies. The fears of the impact of the city were no longer fears of revolution or the collapse of social life as it was known; they were replaced with worries about loneliness—the family was the panacea for this problem.

The cultural logic of homelessness was completely integrated with family legitimation—the homeless man was the other of the family. The assumption was so integrated into the sociological work on homelessness that enormous blind spots developed within sociological studies. The spatial location was an enormous part of this limitation—sociologists studied homelessness in those skid row areas where they found the homeless, white men outside of family life. The disaffiliation thesis could easily

continue, since only disaffiliated populations were studied. This spatial limitation to sociological work had a series of consequences; most importantly the displaced people outside of these urban regions were not considered homeless. Racial and gender blind spots became increasingly glaring over the late 1960s and early 1970s; a decade later other such blind spots began to appear.

In chapter four—“Homelessness and Family Values,” I argue that the emergence of the contradiction of the homeless family brought another glaring blind spot to the fore. The logic of the discourse and the role of the homeless figure as a primary carrier of social anxieties about the family were brought into tension with empirical realities. The discursive logic had long obscured the presence of homeless women and African-American men—journalists had to document their appearance on the streets before social scientists noticed them. This sociological blindness arose because of underlying discursive assumptions, like the gendered assumptions of the idea of home and the ‘late’ arrival of the African-American community to the city.

Displaced families were known to be around—they were called families in crisis or transition. But they logically could not be homeless, since they were together with their family; sociologists never studied them and never represented them as homeless. The *McCain v. Koch* lawsuit resolved this problem and established the homeless family. The *de facto* bracketing of this group with monikers like families in crisis took on a new form—myth. The deployment of mythic tropes bracketed the homeless family—they were distinct from the other street homeless. This homeless figure became dually juxtaposed—first to bourgeois family norms and then to the homeless family. The basic framework of disaffiliation continued to define the street homeless, while the homeless

family became bracketed from the assumptions of disaffiliation and pathology. A new legal definition of the homeless individual—one without a fixed place to stay at night—rendered homelessness as a material condition. However, the discursive logic continued within sociological work which maintained the disaffiliation thesis while deferring to the new material definition.

Even though the homeless family was bracketed from the homeless individual described in the new 1980s policy definition, the decade saw the unraveling of the discourse on homelessness. The family that had been represented in the discourse on homelessness had to be shielded from the modern world—its pace and pressures were threats to the family. The homeless figure embodied the threats of modern life—unsettled states, movement, absence of family, and a life that is always already urban.

The bracketing of the homeless family was Kozol's effort to extend the discursive protections which had attended to the middle class family to this category for a poor family. But, he recognized that he was out of step with his contemporary efforts to ensure a proper value of family was maintained. His work both grew from and critiqued the emerging family values movement. This movement accommodated itself to the call for increasing social capital. The family represented in the discourse on homelessness has an organic naturalness not the artificial relations based on capital. The family which was being protected was no longer the norm to which the homeless man was the other. The discursive framework of family and home, city and homelessness was no longer the same. The discourse on homelessness had lost its original purpose to protect the family represented as the last remnant of *Gemeinschaft*. The *Gemeinschaft*-ideals which were foisted onto the family are no longer heralded as a model for society—modernity is too

much with us. The family can now accommodate itself to the modern world. Even though the disaffiliation thesis lingers on within the sociological literature on homelessness, it no longer has the same discursive framework. The discourse on homelessness is no more.

Epilogue

Despite the death of the discourse on homelessness, there are still individuals and families represented as homeless. More importantly, there are people in cities and small towns around the country with no shelter. As the homeless are increasingly swept from public view and the fastest growing segment of the homeless (children) are rendered nearly invisible, homelessness seemingly retreats as a public problem, that is public in the spatial sense. The realignment of the definition of homelessness to a spatial signification offers potential for improving how we represent social displacement. I hope that such an effort will take place.

First and foremost, I hope that the urban conditions to which the discourse brings a semantic order will go away. In another generation, SROs were the bottom of the housing market. The near simultaneous loss of urban jobs, increase in housing costs, and destruction of SROs thrust the bottom of the housing market onto the sidewalk.² One hopes that through a combination of zoning ordinances, equitable economic development, and increased public investment in affordable housing that the bottom of the housing market might again be within some building intended for residence. While recent H.U.D. money is targeting permanent housing, the funds are not rebuilding SROs or some newer equivalent of low-income housing. But beyond these changes in the urban economy, one hopes for other shifts.

² For a discussion of the economics of this, see O'Flaherty.

My second hope is that there will be a semantic change—in effect, the termination of the language of homelessness. The framework of the discourse is gone, now let the term go. The language of homelessness is laden with too many judgments, too much history and too great an engagement with problems of yesteryear to continue to effectively function. The term ‘homeless’ must go. Before the discourse was codified, Children’s Aid Society founder Charles Loring Brace floated the term ‘houseless’. While it is an improvement over the current term, it still problematically assumes the proper domestic space to be a house and not a multi-unit dwelling. We saw that bias with Isabel March—the flat was an inadequate space for a home. No, houseless will not do. Something as antiseptic and boring as the twenty-first-century city is becoming is probably most appropriate—undomiciled, unsheltered, or shelterless come to mind. The term should reflect the materiality of the current definition. The term for a material condition should not evoke as much affect as does ‘homeless’. The discourse—and hence our struggles with modernity—cannot be fully put away until we shed their signs from our language of social displacement. With a category that is so long established in sociology and policy, my hope will most likely not see fruition.

The discourse has brought up many questions about the proper form of social structure and the rules for inclusion/exclusion in these structures. In it, we saw laments for the loss of community, fears for the collapse of family and criticisms of the associational life of civil society. Within the discourse we have also encountered critiques of the wrong form of individualism (as well as the wrong form of community). Both were most clearly identified with the hobos’ rugged individualism of the frontier, which could

mistakenly be thought to legitimate a non-familial life or the alternative social life of hobosociality.

Underlying these concerns with proper forms of the social and the individual is a great unease with modernization in America. This ambivalence was not merely at those moments when its impacts were just beginning to be felt but has been an ongoing response and negotiation to the processes of modernization. Now that globalizing economic shifts are bringing even more (and different) social change, the anxieties have become even more apparent. This analysis of the discourse on homelessness exposes confusions prevalent in American society; it wants the advantages of modernization and the flows of capital undergirding these but does not want any adverse side effects.

The discursive turn to ancient mythic tropes seemingly de-linked any connections between homelessness and capital so as to enable an embrace of the benefits of capital while obscuring any connections to its underside—the problems of social displacement were rendered mythical. Money, technology and daily comforts could be appreciated without having to acknowledge their undersides. Invoking mythic tropes obscured the immediacy of the source of the problems grouped together under the rubric of homelessness. I find that the efficient cause of urbanizing capital was elided for an invented formal cause—the idea of homelessness as derived from the banishments and wandering of Cain and Ishmael, the peregrinations of the Wandering Jew, the exile of the Jewish people, etc. Because the problem was seemingly always with us—the discursive logic implies, capital cannot be implicated for its roles in forming homelessness.

Myth not only provides symbols of and structures for representing homelessness; it let modern America off the hook for having a role in the problem—the other need not

be a concern for middle class society. Certainly, through the McKinney-Vento Act and the work of foundations, individuals and agencies across the country, homelessness has been addressed. Many—either through theological, ethical or political reasons—want to respond to homelessness. But myth and the ways in which it constituted fragmented homeless figures hides the underlying social structures, e.g., lingering feudal family structures in immigrant households or the associations of ostensibly displaced hobos. Responses are overwhelmingly focused on the homeless figures themselves and not the apparatus through which such figures were constituted. The underlying economic conditions impact both the family structure and the other of this family. But transcendentalizing both the family and its other absolves them of a role; the efficient cause becomes personal and individual—sin secularized as pathology.

The transcendentalization of mythic tropes was instrumental in constituting a homeless figure as the other of the middle class family. This dichotomy established the framework for the discourse on homelessness. The discourse on homelessness is not the lynchpin of modern American life, but analyzing it provides an avenue for a concrete critique of American modernity. However, the conditions for this discourse have unraveled. The ways that we as a society represent the family have entirely transformed; the new family is no longer that one threatened by the ravages of modernization. As that family has gone away, so should its other.

Bibliography

Abel, Theodore "The Significance of the Concept of Consciousness of Kind." *Social Forces* 9, no. 1 (1930): 1-10.

Abramovitz, Mimi. *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present*. Boston: South End Press, 1996.

Addams, Jane. "The Sheltered Woman and the Magdalen." *Ladies Home Journal*, Nov. 1913, in Jane Addams. *The Jane Addams Reader*, ed. Jean Bethke Elshtain. New York: Basic Books, 2002, 264-269.

_____. *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*. New York: MacMillan Company, 1914.

_____. *Twenty Years at Hull-House*. New York: Signet Classic, 1961.

Alger, Horatio. *Tony, the Hero: Or, a Brave Boy's Adventures with a Tramp*. New York: A.L. Burt, Publisher, 1895.

Alighieri, Dante. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*. Translated by Allen Mandelbaum. New York: Bantam Books, 1982.

Allen, Woody. "Annie Hall." 1977.

Althusser, Louis. *For Marx*. Translated by Ben Brewster. London: Verso, 2005.

Ambrose. *Saint Ambrose: Hexameron, Paradise, and Cain and Abel*. Translated by John J. Savage. New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1961.

Anderson, George Kumler. *The Legend of the Wandering Jew*. Providence: Brown University Press, 1965.

Anderson, Nels. *The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923.

_____. *Men on the Move*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940.

Ariès, Philippe. *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*. New York: Vintage, 1962.

Arnold, Kathleen R. *Homelessness, Citizenship, and Identity: The Uncanniness of Late Modernity*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004.

Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Augustine. *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*. Translated by Henry Bettenson. New York: Penguin Classics, 1984.

Bahr, Howard M. "Family Size and Stability as Antecedents of Homelessness and Excessive Drinking." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 31, no. 3 (1969): 477-483.

_____, ed. *Disaffiliated Man: Essays and Bibliography on Skid Row, Vagrancy and Outsiders*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.

_____. *Skid Row: An Introduction to Disaffiliation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Bahr, Howard M. and Gerald R. Garrett. *Women Alone: The Disaffiliation of Urban Females*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1976.

Bahr, Howard M. and Theodore Caplow. "Homelessness, Affiliation, and Occupational Mobility." *Social Forces* 47, no. 1 (1968): 28-33.

_____. *Old Men: Drunk and Sober*. New York: New York University Press, 1974.

Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. Translated by Annette Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang, 1987.

Baudelaire, Charles. *The Flowers of Evil*. Translated by James McGowan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Beck, Frank Orman. *Hobohemia*. Rindge, NH: R. R. Smith, 1956.

Beecher, Catharine E. *A Treatise on Domestic Economy, for the Use of Young Ladies at Home, and at School*. New York: Source Book Press, 1970.

Beecher, Catharine E. and Harriet Beecher Stowe. *The American Woman's Home: Or, Principles of Domestic Science; Being a Guide to the Formation and Maintenance of Economical, Healthful, Beautiful, and Christian Homes*. New York: Arno Press, 1971.

Behrends, A. J. F., ed. *My Brother and I: Selected Papers on Social Topics*. New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1895.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999.

Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967.

- Berger, Peter L., Brigitte Berger, and Hansfried Kellner. *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*. New York: Random House, 1973.
- Berman, Marshall. *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New York: Penguin Books, 1988.
- Bertha, Box-Car. *Boxcar Bertha: An Autobiography, as told to Ben Reitman*. New York: AMOK Press, 1988.
- Blumenberg, Hans. *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*. Translated by Robert M. Wallace. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1983.
- _____. *Work on Myth*. Translated by Robert M. Wallace. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990.
- Bogue, Donald B. *Skid Row in American Cities*. Chicago: Community and Family Study Center, University of Chicago, 1963.
- Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.
- Boyse, Samuel. "The Triumphs of Nature." *Gentleman's Magazine* 12, 1749, 324.
- Brace, Charles Loring. *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years' Work among Them*. New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, Publishers, 1872.
- Bruns, Roger. *Knights of the Road: A Hobo History*. New York: Methuen, 1980.
- _____. *The Damndest Radical: The Life and World of Ben Reitman, Chicago's Celebrated Social Reformer, Hobo King, and Whorehouse Physician*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987.
- Burchinal, Lee G. "Characteristics of Adolescents from Unbroken, Broken, and Reconstituted Families." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 26, no. 1 (1964): 44-51.
- Burrows, Edwin G. and Mike Wallace. *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Byron, George Gordon, Lord. *Three Plays: Sardanapalus; the Two Foscari; Cain: 1821*. Oxford: Woodstock Books, 1990.
- Caplow, Theodore, Howard M. Bahr, and David Sternberg. "'Homelessness'." In *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. David L. Sills, 6, 494-499. New York: Crowell Collier and MacMillan, 1968.

Caplow, Theodore. "The Sociologist and the Homeless Man." In *Disaffiliated Man: Essays and Bibliography on Skid Row, Vagrancy, and Outsiders*, ed. Howard M. Bahr. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.

Cassirer, Ernst. *The Myth of the State*. Translated by Charles William Hendel. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946.

_____. *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Volume 2: Mythical Thought*. Translated by Ralph Manheim. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Chaplin, Charlie. "Modern Times." 1936.

Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World 1890-1940*. New York: BasicBooks, 1994.

Chowers, Eyal. "Gushing Time: Modernity and the Multiplicity of Temporal Homes." *Time & Society* 11, no. 2/3 (2002): 233-249.

Clay, P.L. *Neighborhood Renewal*. Lexington: Lexington, 1979.

Cohn, Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera. *U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050*. Pew Research Center, 2008.

Cohn-Sherbock, Dan. *The Crucified Jew: Twenty Centuries of Christian Anti-Semitism*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997.

Coontz, Stephanie. *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*. New York: BasicBooks, 1992.

Crane, Stephen. *Maggie, a Girl of the Streets, and Other New York Writings*. New York: The Modern Library, 2001.

Davis, Mike. *Planet of Slums*. London: Verso, 2006.

Dawson, William Harbutt. *The Vagrancy Problem. The Case for Measures of Restraint for Tramps, Loafers, and Unemployables: With a Study of Continental Detention Colonies and Labour Houses*. London: P.S. King & Son, 1910.

Day, Dorothy. *Dorothy Day, Selected Writings: By Little and by Little*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992.

_____. *The Long Loneliness*. San Francisco: Harper, 1997.

Deegan, Mary Jo. *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988.

Defoe, Daniel. *The History of the Devil*. Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972.

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Masumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

DePastino, Todd. *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Desert News vol. 7, 107; vol. 17, 257. 1856.

Dickens, Charles. *American Notes for General Circulation and Pictures from Italy*. London: Chapman & Hall 1910.

_____. *Dombey and Son*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Diggins, John Patrick. *The Rise and Fall of the American Left*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992.

Dobkowski, Michael Nachin. "Ideological Anti-Semitism in America: 1877-1927." Dissertation, New York University, 1976.

Durkheim, Emile. "Anomic Suicide." In *Suicide, a Study in Sociology*, 241-276. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1951.

Durkheim, Émile. "La Famille Conjugale." *Revue philosophique* XCI (1921): 1-14.

Elshtain, Jean Bethke. *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

_____. *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy: A Life*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.

_____, ed. *The Jane Addams Reader*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.

Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

_____. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

_____. *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, ed. James D. Faubion. New York: The New Press, 1998.

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Translated by James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1962.

Fried, Lewis. *Makers of the City*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990.

Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.

Gibson, Campbell. "Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990." ed. U.S. Bureau of the Census Population Division, 1998.

Gillin, J.L. "'Vagrancy and Begging'." *The American Journal of Sociology* 35, no. 3 (1929): 424-432.

Gilman, Sander L. and Steven T. Katz, ed. *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*. New York: New York University Press, 1991.

Gilmore, Harlan W. *The Beggar*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940.

Glanz, Rudolf. "The Wandering Jew in America." In *The Wandering Jew: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend*, ed. Galit Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes, 105-118. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.

Glazer, Nathan and Daniel Patrick Moynihan. *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1963.

Golden, Stephanie. *The Women Outside: Meanings and Myths of Homelessness*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Gutman, Herbert G. "'The Tompkins Square 'Riot' in New York City on January 13, 1874: A Re-Examination of Its Causes and Its Aftermath'." *Labor History* 6 (1965): 44-70.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*. Translated by Frederick G. Lawrence. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996.

_____. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.

Halmos, Paul. *Solitude and Privacy: A Study of Social Isolation, Its Causes and Therapy*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1952.

Hand, Jennifer. "Shopping Bag Ladies: A Study in Interstitial Urban Behavior." In *Society for the Study of Social Problems*. New York City, 1976.

Harris, Lee O. *The Man Who Tramps: A Story of Today*. Indianapolis: Douglas and Carlon, 1878.

Harvey, David. *The Urban Experience*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

_____. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.

Hasan-Rokem, Galit, and Alan Dundes. *The Wandering Jew: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.

Hegel, G.W.F. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Translated by T.M. Knox. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Heller, Agnes. "Where Are We at Home?" *Thesis Eleven* 41 (1995): 1-18.

Hertenstein, Mike "What Would Jesus Do? The Settlement House Movement and in His Steps." *Cornerstone Magazine* 1997, 39-40.

Heschel, Susannah. "The Exile of Redemption in Judaism." In *Religions of the Book*, ed. Gerard Sloyan. Lanham: University Press of America, 1996.

Hombs, Mary Ellen and Mitch Snyder. *Homelessness in America: A Forced March to Nowhere*. Washington, DC: Community on Creative Non-Violence, 1986.

Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve, Findings of the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients Highlights. Washington, DC: Department of Housing and Urban Development Interagency Council on the Homeless, Dec. 1999.

Homer. *The Odyssey of Homer*. Translated by Richmond Alexander Lattimore. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.

Hopper, Kim. "A Quiet Violence: The Homeless Poor in New York City, 1982." In *Homelessness in America: A Forced March to Nowhere*, ed. Mary Ellen Hombs and Mitch Snyder, 61-68. Washington, DC: Community for Creative Non-Violence, 1986.

Horkheimer, Max. *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*. Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell. New York: Continuum, 1999.

Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Translated by John Cumming. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 2001.

Howells, William Dean. *A Hazard of New Fortunes*. New York: The Modern Library, 2002.

- Hunter, James Davison. *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books, 1991.
- Hunter, Robert. *Poverty: Social Conscience in the Progressive Era*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965.
- Irving, Washington. *Rip Van Winkle and Other Stories*. New York: Puffin Classics, 1996.
- Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: The Modern Library Edition, 1993.
- Jencks, Christopher. *The Homeless*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- Jusserand, J.J. *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*. Translated by Lucy Toulmin Smith. London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1950.
- Katz, Michael. *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*. New York: Basic Books, 1986.
- Keats, John. *The Complete Poems of John Keats*. New York: Modern Library, 1994.
- Kerouac, Jack "The Vanishing American Hobo." *Holiday*, March 1960, 60-61, 112-113.
- Kingsbury, F. J. . "Charity Organization a Necessity of Modern Conditions." *Lend-a-Hand XIV* (1895).
- Kozol, Jonathon. *Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America*. New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1988.
- Kusmer, Kenneth L. *Down and out, on the Road: The Homeless in American History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Kyle, Ken. *Contextualizing Homelessness: Critical Theory, Homelessness, and Federal Policy Addressing the Homeless*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Lane, James B. *Jacob A. Riis and the American City*. Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1974.
- Lasch, Christopher. *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1977.
- Laubach, Frank Charles. *Why There Are Vagrants, a Study Based Upon a Examination of One Hundred Men*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1916.
- Law, M.W. "Our Ishmael." *The American Journal of Sociology* 8, no. 6 (1903): 838-851.

Lears, T.J. Jackson. *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1981.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Urban Revolution*. Translated by Robert Bononno. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Leo XIII, Pope. *Encyclical letter of Our Holy Father by Divine Providence Pope Leo XIII: On the Condition of Labour*. London: "The Universe" Office, 1891.

Levinson, David, ed. *Encyclopedia of Homelessness, Volume I*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2004.

Lewis, Sinclair "Hobohemia." *Saturday Evening Post* April 7, 1917, 3-6, 121-122, 125-126, 129-130, 133.

Life. June 6, 1918. 71(1858), 915. and June 20, 1918. 71(1860), 983.

Lincoln, Bruce. *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

_____. *Authority: Construction and Corrosion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Logue, Larry. *To Appomattox and Beyond: The Civil War Soldier in War and Peace*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Inc., 1996.

Lubove, Roy. *The Professional Altruist: The Emergence of Social Work as a Career, 1880-1930*. New York: Atheneum, 1983.

Lukács, Georg. *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*. Translated by Anna Bostock. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999.

_____. *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*. Translated by Rodney Livingstone. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000.

Marx, Karl. *Surveys from Exile: Political Writings Volume II*, ed. David Fernbach. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.

_____. "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844." In *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1978.

_____. *The German Ideology, Including Theses on Feuerbach and Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1998.

McCook, J.J. "Charity Organization and Social Regeneration." *Lend-a-Hand* XIII (1894).

- McCulloch, Rev. Oscar C. "The Tribe of Ishmael: A Study in Social Degradation, 1888."
- McDannell, Colleen. "Parlor Piety: The Home as Sacred Space in Protestant America." In *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, ed. Jessica H. and Thomas J. Schlereth Foy, 162-189. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992.
- Merton, Robert. *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1963.
- Moynihan, Daniel Patrick. "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action." In *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy*, ed. Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey. Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1967.
- Murdock, George Peter. *Social Structure*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1949.
- National Alliance to End Homelessness. *Homeless Counts*. Washington: National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2007.
- Neale, Joanne. "Homelessness and Theory Reconsidered." *Housing Studies* 12, no. 1 (1997): 47-61.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Translated by Carol Diethe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Nye, F. Ivan. "Child Adjustment in Broken and in Unhappy Unbroken Homes." *Marriage and Family Living* 19, no. 4 (1957): 356-361.
- Obeyesekere, Gananath. *The Work of Culture: Symbolic Transformation in Psychoanalysis and Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- O'Flaherty, Brendan. *Making Room: The Economics of Homelessness*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Olasky, Marvin. *The Tragedy of American Compassion*. Washington: Regnery Gateway, 1992.
- Orwell, George. *The Road to Wigan Pier*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1958.
- _____. *Down and out in Paris and London*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1969.
- Ostwald, Martin. *Nomos and the Beginnings of the Athenian Democracy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.
- Park, Robert E. "Editor's Preface." In *The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man*, ed. Nels Anderson, v-viii. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923.

Park, Robert E., Ernest W. Burgess, and Roderick D. McKenzie, ed. *The City*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1925.

Park, Robert E. and Herbert A. Miller. *Old World Traits Transplanted*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1921.

Patton, Laurie L. *Myth as Argument: The Brhaddevata as Canonical Commentary*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996.

Patton, Paul. "Conceptual Politics and the War-Machine in 'Mille Plateaux'." *SubStance* 13:3/4, no. 44-45 (1984): 61-80.

The Philistine. July 1913.

Philo. *Philo*, Vol. 2. Translated by F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heineman Ltd, 1929.

Piven, Frances Fox and Richard A. Cloward. *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*. New York: Vintage Books, 1971.

Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000.

Quinones, Ricardo. *The Changes of Cain: Violence and the Lost Brother in Cain and Abel Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Reitman, Ben. "Following the Monkey, Unpublished Autobiography." Ben Reitman Papers, University of Illinois at Chicago.

Reitman, Ben L. *The Second Oldest Profession*. New York: Garland Pub., 1987.

"Review of 'American Charities'." *The Dial*, Aug 23 1919, 164.

Ribton-Turner, C.J. *A History of Vagrants and Vagrancy and Beggars and Begging*. Patterson Smith Reprint Series in Criminology, Law Enforcement, and Social Problems ed. Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1972.

Riesman, David. *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950.

Riis, Jacob A. "The Problem of the Children." In *My Brother and I: Selected Papers on Social Topics*. New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1895.

_____. *The Making of an American*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1901.

_____. *The Peril and the Preservation of the Home: Being the William L. Bull Lectures for the Year 1903*. Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co., 1903.

_____. *The Children of the Poor*. New York: Garrett Press, Inc., 1970.

_____. *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York*. New York: Penguin Books, 1997.

_____. *The Battle with the Slum*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1998.

Rooney, James F. "Societal Forces and the Unattached Male: An Historical Review." In *Disaffiliated Man: Essays and Bibliography on Skid Row, Vagrancy and Outsiders*, ed. Howard M. Bahr, 13-38. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.

Roosevelt, Theodore *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920.

Rossi, Peter H. *Down and Out in America: The Origins of Homelessness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Rousseau, Ann Marie. *Shopping Bag Ladies: Homeless Women Speak About Their Lives*. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1981.

Said, Edward W. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Santorum, Rick. *It Takes a Family: Conservatism and the Common Good*. Wilmington: ISI Books, 2005.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Course in General Linguistics*. Translated by Roy Harris. La Salle: Open Court, 1986.

Schlesinger, Jr., Arthur. "Introduction." In *A Hazard of New Fortunes*. New York: Modern Library, 2002.

Scorsese, Martin. "Gangs of New York." 2002.

Sellier, Phillippe. "Cain." In *Companion to Literary Myths, Heroes and Archetypes*, ed. Pierre and Brunel. New York: Routledge, 1992, 174-183.

Sheldon, Charles Monroe. *In His Steps*. Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1937.

Shields, Charles Woodruff. *The Final Philosophy, or System of Perfectible Knowledge Issuing from the Harmony of Science and Religion*. New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1877.

Shulman, Alix Kates. "Preface." In *Shopping Bag Ladies: Homeless Women Speak About Their Lives*, ed. Ann Marie Rousseau, 9-12. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1981.

Simmel, Georg. *Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.

_____. "The Stranger." In *Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.

_____. *The Philosophy of Money*. Translated by Tom Bottomore and David Frisby. London: Routledge, 2001.

Sjoberg, Gideon. *The Preindustrial City: Past and Present*. New York: The Free Press, 1960.

Smith, Neil. "Giuliani Time: The Revanchist 1990s." *Social Text* 57 (1998): 1-20.

Snow, David A. and Leon Anderson. *Down on Their Luck: A Study of Homeless Street People*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Solenberger, Alice Willard. *One Thousand Homeless Men: A Study of Original Records*. New York: Survey Associates, Inc., 1914.

Sommerville, C. John. *The Secularization of Early Modern England: From Religious Culture to Religious Faith*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Sommerville, Maxwell. *A Wanderer's Legend*. Philadelphia: Drexel Biddle, 1902.

Staats, William. *A Tight Squeeze: Or, the Adventures of a Gentleman Who on a Wager of Ten Thousand Dollars, Undertook to Go from New York to New Orleans in Three Weeks without Money as a Professional Tramp*. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1879.

Stiff, Dean. *The Milk and Honey Route: A Handbook for Hobos*. New York: The Vanguard Press, 1930.

Stoker, Bram. "The American 'Tramp' Question and the Old English Vagrancy Laws." *North American Review*, Nov. 1909 1909, 605-614.

Strong, Josiah. *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*. New York: Baker & Taylor Co., 1891.

Sue, Eugene. *The Wandering Jew*. London: Dedalus Ltd., 1990.

Sutherland, Edwin H. and Harvey J. Locke. *Twenty Thousand Homeless Men: A Study of Unemployed Men in the Chicago Shelters*. Chicago: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1936.

- Szasz, Ferenc M. and Ralph F. Bogardus. "The Camera and the American Social Conscience." *New York History* 55, no. 4 (1974).
- Tönnies, Ferdinand. *Community and Civil Society*. Translated by José Harris. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Trattner, Walter I. *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*. New York: The Free Press, 1989.
- Vexliard, Alexandre. *Introduction a La Sociologie Du Vagabondage*. Paris: Libraire Marcel Rivière et Cie, 1956.
- Volunteer Special. *The Volcano under the City*. New York: Fords, Howard, & Hulbert, 1887.
- Ware, Louise. *Jacob A. Riis, Police Reporter, Reformer, Useful Citizen*. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Incorporated, 1938.
- Warner, Amos. *American Charities: A Study in Philanthropy and Economics*. New York: Thomas Crowell, 1894.
- Watson, Sophie and Austerberry. *Housing and Homelessness: A Feminist Perspective*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.
- Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Talcott Parsons. Routledge Classics. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass: Selected Poems and Prose*. New York: Doubleday, 1997.
- Wiebe, Robert H. *The Search for Order, 1877-1920*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1967.
- Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- _____. *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
- Wilson, William Julius. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- _____. *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.

Wirth, Louis "A Bibliography of the Urban Community." In *The City*, ed. Ernest W. Burgess Robert E. Park, and Roderick D. McKenzie, 161-228. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925.

Wiseman, Jacqueline P. *Stations of the Lost: The Treatment of Skid Row Alcoholics*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970.

Witte, Jr., John "Ishmael's Bane: The Sin and Crime of Illegitimacy Reconsidered." *Punishment and Society* 5, no. 3 (2003): 327-345.

Wood, Margaret Mary. *Paths of Loneliness: The Individual Isolated in Modern Society*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.

Wuthnow, Robert. *American Mythos: Why Our Best Efforts to Be a Better Nation Fall Short*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

XIII, Pope Leo. *Encyclical Letter of Our Holy Father by Divine Providence Pope Leo XIII: On the Condition of Labour: Official Translation*. London: Westminster Press, 1891.

Young, Terence. "Modern Urban Parks." *Geographical Review* 85, no. 4 (1995): 535-551.

Zaretsky, Eli. *Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life*. New York: Harper and Row, 1986.

Zukin, Sharon. "Gentrification: Culture and Capital in the Urban Core." *Annual Review of Sociology* 13 (1987): 129-147.