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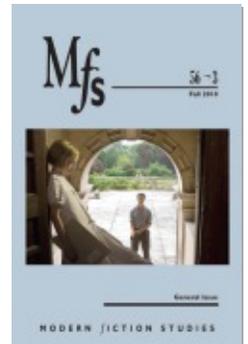
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“Going Blood-Simple Like the Natives”: Contagious Urban Spaces and Modern Power in Dashiell Hammett's Red Harvest

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**"GOING BLOOD-SIMPLE LIKE THE
NATIVES": CONTAGIOUS URBAN
SPACES AND MODERN POWER IN
DASHIELL HAMMETT'S *RED HARVEST***

Thomas Heise

In the great city the poor, the vicious, and the delinquent, crushed together in an unhealthful and contagious intimacy, breed in and in soul and body, so that it has often occurred to me that those long genealogies of the Jukes and the tribes of Ishmael would not show such a persistent and distressing uniformity of vice, crime, and poverty unless they were peculiarly fit for the environment in which they are condemned to exist.

—Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, and
Roderick McKenzie, *The City*

"ARE YOUR FINGER PRINTS ON FILE? How J. Edgar Hoover's
F.B.I. Can Help You Protect Yourself and Your Family"

—Headline from the cover of *Feds* magazine, Sept. 1937

Dashiell Hammett's 1929 novel, *Red Harvest*, ends with an appeal to the forces of federal law, the professional and bureaucratic "white-collar soldiers" (134) of national law enforcement that historically in the 1920s and 1930s took over much of the terrain once

patrolled by the private detective. The ending surprises because it apparently signifies that Hammett's hero, the anonymous Continental Op, has failed in the job he was hired to perform, namely, to rid the working-class city of Personville (called Poisonville by its residents)—"an ugly city of forty thousand people, set in an ugly notch between ugly mountains that had been all dirtied up by mining"—of the criminal elements of its organized, ethnic underworld (3). In one of his final acts in the service of his client, the Op informs him that the dire situation in the city necessitates the intervention of an authority greater than that which the Op alone can provide:

You're going to tell the governor that your city police have got out of hand, what with bootleggers sworn in as officers, and so on. You're going to ask him for help—the national guard would be best. I don't know how various ruckuses around town have come out, but I do know that the big boys—the ones you were afraid of—are dead. The ones that had too much on you for you to stand up to them. There are plenty of busy young men working like hell right now, trying to get into the dead men's shoes. The more, the better. They'll make it easier for the white-collar soldiers to take hold while everything is disorganized. . . . Then you'll have your city back, all nice and clean and ready to go to the dogs again. (134)

Originally summoned to Personville by Donald Willsson, the editor of the local *Herald*, a civic reformer, and "a lousy liberal" who functions as the novel's spokesperson for the bourgeois values of fairness and transparency in government, the Op quickly finds himself working instead for Donald's corrupt father, Elihu (21). Before the novel begins, Donald's efforts to expose the roots of civic corruption lead him directly to his father—a nineteenth-century industrial magnate determined to hold on to power in the ruthlessly competitive world of twentieth-century capitalism—and lead indirectly to his (Donald's) murder on the day the Op arrives to meet him.¹ Instead of returning to his San Francisco office, the Op remains in town, commissioned now by Elihu, purportedly to clean the city of the gangs of bootleggers and gamblers that once were—like the mining company, the bank, the press, and the majority of elected officials—firmly under his control. As the I.W.W. union leader Bill Quint recounts it, these criminals initially were hired by Elihu from the ranks of "gunmen, strike-breakers, national guardsmen and even parts of the regular army" to violently beat down a union action at his mine in 1921, but stayed on after the strike, eventually taking "the city for their spoils" (7). The Op's pledge to Elihu to wipe out the city's Irish

and Italian thugs—and in the process, to stamp out the illegal working-class pleasures of drinking and gambling—comprises the bulk of Hammett's tightly woven narrative. With the intention of "stirring things up" (57), he embarks on a relentless crusade to infiltrate and double-cross members of the city's corrupt police force and its criminal underworld by monitoring the poolrooms and speakeasies where they socialize, then setting them at war with each other until the last of them is killed off. By the end of Hammett's short novel, the Op has rigged a boxing match, participated in shootouts both with and against the police, is framed for the murder of the femme fatale Dinah Brand, helps destroy stashes of illegal alcohol, drinks a great deal of gin, and then returns back to San Francisco. If by the conclusion organized crime is vanquished in Personville, so too are the criminalized pleasures of working-class life. As if a rotten Elsinore, the city is subjected by the Op to a sacrificial bloodbath and to the imposition of an oppressive authority from the outside, "white-collar soldiers" (134), who place the blue-collar city "under martial law," replacing the detective who, back in the safe confines of his office, is thankful that he himself "was no longer officially a criminal" (142).

This essay argues that the American hardboiled narrative emerges in the midst of a profound shift in the study and prosecution of urban crime. Before the mid-1920s there was no national police force in America, nor any systematic accounting of nationwide trends in crime. Law enforcement was conducted at the municipal level by local police departments and private detective agencies—many of which provided the most rudimentary training, and many of which were corrupt and brutal, little more than an extension of the power of local political bosses. The methods and theories of law enforcement changed drastically in the 1920s and early 1930s. Along with the emergence of the hardboiled narrative in this period came an unprecedented federal and state intervention into the roots of criminality, a confluence of disciplinary and penal forces that sought to bring the origin of crime under new scientific examination and which, in the process, brought the spatiality and sociality of working-class life in the city under intensive scrutiny. In the 1920s, poor and working-class urban spaces were seen as the point of origin and dispersion of sensationalized new formations of deviancy. Most worrying for law enforcement and for urban sociologists (especially those associated with the Chicago School) was the development under Prohibition of syndicated criminality—criminal networks founded on extortion, racketeering, corruption, violence, and codes of loyalty and secrecy that defined organized criminal activity in the period.² The study and prosecution of underworld crime, this essay will show, gave license to sociological experts and to a new, professionally trained

federal police force to intervene into the sociality of the ethnic and working-class inner city.

There is "an ill-defined yet wide-spread feeling . . . that one is not secure in his life and his good, that the police have failed in their task of protection, and that all forms of crime are steadily mounting," the *Uniform Crime Reporting* manual alarmingly stated in 1929, the same year *Red Harvest* was published (Committee on Uniform Crime Records 17). The juridical and discursive response to this growing "wide-spread feeling" amounted to nothing less than an epochal shift in the 1920s and 1930s in the study of deviancy and criminality, a move away from the crude Lombrosian theories that argued for the genetic predispositions for crime and toward newer theories that stressed the influence of environmental factors in the formation of the criminal subject. This shift was announced perhaps nowhere more clearly than in *The City*, the collaborative study by the influential Chicago School of Sociology's leading researchers Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, and Roderick McKenzie: "In the great city, the poor, the vicious, and the delinquent [are] crushed together in an unhealthy and contagious intimacy" (45). This "contagious intimacy" could only lead, the study predicted, to crime, vice, and "the disintegration of the moral order" (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 25). Contemporaneous with the Chicago School's socio-scientific studies of criminal spaces was a revolution in scientific policing inaugurated with J. Edgar Hoover's appointment as Director of the Bureau of Investigation in 1924.³ As Claire Bond Potter has shown, Hoover's bureaucratic reforms converted a corrupt and disgraced department—which had been run by a former private detective—into a highly professional, "white-collar," national police force comprised of educated, middle-class officers governed by "a strict code of conduct," along with "a heavy reliance on the acquisition and sorting of information, and a system of uniform investigative procedures" (35). When the mammoth 1931 *Report on the Causes of Crime* declared in simple but sweeping language that "general delinquency results not from any racial disposition toward crime, but from the influence of the social environment," Lombrosian presumptions regarding the origins of crime seemed to be overturned once and for all in favor of the scientific study of environmental factors (US National Commission lvii). Theories that linked culture and space to crime were the new dominant episteme. With these theories would come an invasive monitoring of the "delinquent" urban spaces where crime was imagined to be produced and reproduced, planned and perpetrated.

The stated impetus for the 1920s' and 1930s' socio-scientific investigations of the linkages between crime and urban life was to understand delinquency and to quell the gangland violence orches-

trated by organized criminal factions in large metropolitan centers. Prominent among the decade's many sociological studies of criminal urban spaces were *The City* by Park, Burgess, and McKenzie and *Delinquency Areas* by Clifford Shaw. More straightforwardly legal and juridical studies, such as the landmark *Illinois Crime Survey, Report on the Causes of Crime* by the US National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, and the US Department of Justice's *Uniform Crime Reports*, which tracked crime rates nationwide for the first time, also played an important role in the formation of a discourse on urban criminality in the years between the two world wars. The actual scope of the period's crime reports and new federal law enforcement tactics were in truth much wider than their purportedly narrow focus on delinquency and organized crime. They represent, I argue, a campaign to control the uses of urban space by surveying and criminalizing the sociality of nonnormative populations.⁴ Such is the hitherto underappreciated discursive context of the American hardboiled crime novel of the 1920s and 1930s, which, unlike the so-called Golden Age genteel mysteries of Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, and Ellery Queen, is noted for its naturalistic presentation of violence, its urban setting, and its representation of the milieu of poor, ethnic, and working-class Americans and of the criminal who is a product of these socially, economically, and spatially marginalized relations.⁵ If the official studies of crime were ostensibly a response to the highly publicized crime waves of the period, so too was the contemporaneous hardboiled novel, which investigated an urban milieu roiled by murder, assault, deception, and moral corruption. From its inception in the 1920s, the hardboiled novel used organized crime as a pretext for a study of "delinquent" urban spaces—speakeasies, poolrooms, gambling parlors, empty warehouses, and dark streets. Widely considered to be the first work to master the genre's developing formulas, styles, and themes, Hammett's *Red Harvest* is an ideal site for interrogating the means by which the genre at its beginnings managed the tensions of its historical moment.⁶

Through its narrative of detection, *Red Harvest* dramatizes the massive bureaucratic intervention to monitor the poor and working-class urban terrain—the "breeding places of delinquency and crime" (US National Commission lxxviii)—a project that Foucault argues authorizes a "generalized policing," "a means of perpetual surveillance of the population . . . that makes it possible to supervise . . . the whole social field" (281).⁷ Hammett's narrative maps out urban space, plotting a social geography of criminality that substantiates the "ill-defined yet wide-spread feeling . . . that the police have failed in their task of protection, and that all forms of crime are steadily mounting." Yet *Red Harvest*, I will show, also narratively embodies the

explosive aggression that inheres not in crime, but in the operations of law itself, the violent supplement undergirding the scientific study of crime in the period. Hammett details—through the figure of the detective—the methods by which law organizes urban space by suppressing underworld criminality, policing working-class leisure and crushing industrial labor action. While "no longer officially a criminal," the Op is, Hammett suggests, guilty of transgressions that are startling and manifold.

To argue that *Red Harvest* investigates the relays between modern power and the working-class city with irony and ambivalence is to be guilty of wild understatement. Historically, the breaking of strikes was performed by lower-middle-class detectives, a fact that Hammett himself learned when in 1917, as a Pinkerton, he was approached by vigilantes who promised to pay him thousands of dollars if he agreed to help murder an I.W.W. union leader in Butte, Montana, an offer he immediately declined. *Red Harvest's* similar founding moment of violence is the brutal suppression of labor, a moment that sets the stage for the optic lens of the Op to survey Personville's urban criminality, leading thus to the internecine war among Elihu's competitors for power and money. In eliminating them, the lower-middle-class detective strengthens the position of the text's *ur*-criminal, the savage capitalist whose politics are as dirty as his mines. Additionally, in clearing the way for the intervention of a national police force that will impose "martial law," Hammett's Op lays the groundwork for his own occupational obsolescence. At *Red Harvest's* end, the lone detective is replaced by a professional, bureaucratic army. Importantly, *Red Harvest* refuses to critique explicitly the violent techniques of power or to make ethical distinctions between the sites upon which power is exercised, but instead presents its reader with a narrative of power in action, one in which the line between law and crime is so blurred as to be erased altogether. Hammett's hardboiled novel is a contested terrain profoundly marked by its discursive moment and by a competing array of social anxieties—over crime, justice, class relations, and urban life—which it tries to manage. Though entangled with the scientific discourses of penalty, *Red Harvest* ultimately destabilizes the discursively produced definitions of criminality, while confirming the contention made by the official literature on crime that urban criminality is an effect of poor, ethnic, and working-class spaces and social relations.

With nearly two dozen murders in under 150 pages, *Red Harvest* is an exceptionally bloody book, even by the standards of the typical hardboiled narrative patterned around the surveillance and often, revengeful murder of dangerous, nonnormative subjects. The Op, a modern version of the frontier Indian-killer that Richard Slotkin

has examined in *Gunfighter Nation*, orchestrates by the novel's end a "savage war". . . . in which one side or the other attempts to destroy its enemy root and branch" (Slotkin 12). If Slotkin sees the hardboiled detective as a twentieth-century incarnation of this prototypical American figure who is reimagined for the new urban jungle, then Steve Marcus, in his study of Hammett's work, sees him as participant in a world of "universal warfare" where "the war of each against all, and of all against all" is a condition of life. "The only thing that prevents the criminal ascendancy from turning into permanent tyranny," Marcus posits about Hammett's work, "is that the crooks who take over society cannot cooperate with one another, repeatedly fall out with each other, and return to . . . Hobbesian anarchy" (205). What Marcus sees as a descent into anarchy, Slotkin views as a stage leading to an eventual "*regeneration through violence*" (12), a caustic cleansing of Personville's corrupted social body that the Op achieves by triggering a war between the city's ethnic gangsters.

Broadly speaking, scholars of the hardboiled genre—such as Slotkin and Marcus—have characterized it as ideologically conservative, both in its surface representation of the twentieth-century city as chaotic and in need of policing, and in its deep formal structures—notably, the reifying tendencies of its prose realism, the heroic individualism of its protagonists, and the deterministic nature of its plots, which invariably end with the triumph of law and order.⁸ Such arguments falter though when applied to Hammett's *Red Harvest*. While Hammett's world is one of pervasive warfare, the lawlessness that the text represents stems not from universal, ahistorical, or atavistic forces. But instead in *Red Harvest*, violence and disorder are an effect of the direct imposition of law. As Hammett's Prohibition-era narrative shows, the crimes of gambling and alcohol distribution and consumption are presented as *de rigueur*, victimless activities that in the absence of outside authority and in the presence of a corrupt police force have become a part of the fabric of everyday social life in the working-class city. Modes of entertainment that had been criminalized nationally, could be, the text implies, transacted openly without fear of legal retribution in Personville. While violence—in the form of labor-related strife—is part of the city's recent history before the Op's arrival, this earlier incident of bloodshed was perpetrated by strikebreakers acting in the name of law and order and hence stands as part of the text's representation of law's brutal repression of working-class life and culture. Though by no means idyllic, Hammett's grimy Personville was apparently a relatively peaceful city until the Op makes his entrance. Only when he arrives does the killing begin in earnest.

Hammett's first-person narrative opens with the Op stepping foot into Personville, having been sent out to the mountain city by his office, a thinly disguised version of the Pinkerton agency that employed Hammett in the years before he began professionally writing.⁹ The Pinkertons, Slotkin writes, were "the largest provider of investigative and protective services in the United States between 1858 and 1898." Noted for their brutality and cunning, they were "the only instrument of police power to function throughout the nation," that is, until the creation of Hoover's white-collar police force in the 1920s (Slotkin 139).¹⁰ Before Hoover assumed stewardship of the Bureau of Investigation, it was led by William Burns, himself a former private detective. As Potter notes, under Burns's leadership the Bureau's reputation plummeted. Its tactics were slipshod and its agents repeatedly were tied to political corruption, favoritism, graft, and the "widespread abuse of Prohibition laws" (Potter 10). "The disgraced Burns," Potter writes, "became the symbol of an amateur past that was being replaced by professionalism," namely the "rigorous training, dress regulations, [and] internal inspections," that Hoover imposed, rules that transformed the Bureau, making its "federal agents recognizable as professionals in any group of law officers," and thus ushering in "a new era in federal enforcement" premised on what she calls "scientific policing" (35). Under Hoover, the ragtag Bureau was turned into a "scientifically trained national police force" (Potter 12), one versed in the collection of fingerprints, lie detector tests, and in the compilation of statistics that could be marshaled into profiles in criminality.¹¹ The internal history of the Bureau of Investigation emblemizes the emergence more generally of the scientific study of the interrelations of criminality and urban space that aimed to bring large parts of the citizenry under the scrutiny of an interventionist state. Published in the midst of this new discourse and new practices, *Red Harvest* narrativizes these historical shifts, representing as it does a passing of the torch as the detective and the "police [who] have got out of hand" give way to the new "federal agent."

When the Op first arrives in Personville, he drops his bags off and immediately goes "out to look at the city" (3), thus beginning his campaign to map its social geography of criminality, which will take him—as it did the urban sociologists of the Chicago School in the 1920s and 1930s—to the city's working-class spaces. Killing time until he is to meet Donald Willsson, he rides a street car through the town, hopping off upon noticing "[t]hirty or forty men and a sprinkling of women" gathered in front of City Hall (5). Thus initiates a program of social surveillance that involves linking each observed subject to a particular type of urban space that reveals his or her

position in the city's class structure. As Hammett's narrative moves forward, it enforces the associations between class, space, and criminality with increasing intensity. The Op is no Hoover acolyte, but a private dick who works by intuition and strength. Yet as he "looks at the city" (Hammett 3), he does so with an eye for collecting and sorting information about class and criminality with "the prospect of discovering patterns of regularity in its apparent confusion" (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie viii), a goal the Op, Hoover, and the Chicago School's sociologists all shared. As the Op scans the crowd in this opening scene, he is not yet aware that a murder has occurred, yet he still studies it, taking in visual information from which he creates a composite that equals a cross-section of the urban citizenry, the city's "whole social field." He looks not so much for an individual suspect, but instead looks suspiciously at each and every individual who may prove to be a criminal: "There were men from mines and smelters still in their working clothes, gaudy boys from pool rooms and dance halls, sleek men with slick pale faces, men with the dull look of respectable husbands, a few just as respectable and dull women, and some ladies of the night" (5). Here working-class male laborers from the mines, young "delinquent" boys from the rough and tumble world of pool rooms and dancehalls, middle-class men accompanying women whose primary site of activity are the private spaces of bourgeois domesticity, and prostitutes negotiating the city's public streets are gathered to receive news of Donald Willsson's death. At the intersection of murder and law, the text draws together representative urban types from the city's disparate spaces, creating a lineup in which the citizenry, its sartorial codes, and its spaces of work and pleasure are anatomized.

Soon after the scene in front of City Hall, Hammett places his Op in the services of Elihu, who hires him to rid the city of the bootleggers and gamblers who, by opportunistically exploiting demands in the market caused by the criminalization of working-class leisure, have enriched themselves in a challenge to Elihu's hegemony. Positioning himself as a Progressive-era social reformer with a gun, the Op promises him "a good job of city-cleaning" (43). From this moment forward, *Red Harvest's* narrative focuses the Op's investigation exclusively on the city's working-class spaces, which are not simply the text's setting, but are where the text contends the social relations of organized underworld criminality are shaped and produced. In this manner, *Red Harvest* bears the impress of its historical moment, which saw, along with an increased scientific sophistication in the study of crime, a shift away from outdated theories that argued that deviancy was biologically determined. From the second half of the nineteenth century to the early years of the twentieth, the most

influential theorist of the origins of crime was criminal-anthropologist Cesare Lombroso, who professed that some individuals were born criminal and that visible traces of their innate criminality could be discerned in the anatomical aberrations of their faces and bodies. What constituted deformity was aligned closely with the features of eastern Europeans and Africans who, under Lombroso's taxonomy, became permanently categorized as the criminal classes. Viewed in its time as the most advanced scientific methodology in crime studies, by the 1930s Lombroso's theory was seen for what it was: the latest version of an older, racist, moral philosophy that superstitiously believed that the inward disposition of a person was reflected in his or her face. Park and his fellow researchers argued for a different focus: "It is probably the breaking down of local attachments and the weakening of the restraints and inhibitions of the primary group, under the influence of the urban environment, which are largely responsible for the increase of vice and crime in great cities" (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 25). The mass migrations and accelerated urbanism of the early twentieth century changed the face of American cities and altered the disposition of the urban citizenry who were forced to experience hyperstimulation, anonymity, and the "shock of . . . new contacts" (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 40). The cacophonous urban environment resulted in the unleashing of "vagrant and suppressed impulses, passions, and ideals," which eroded "the dominant moral order" and led to the sensationalized urban crime waves of the 1920s and 1930s (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 43).

Though the studies by the sociologists of the Chicago School and their associates were theoretically concerned with the effects of the urban environment in general on crime, in practice their investigations took them almost exclusively to the working-class, ethnic neighborhoods populated by new immigrants. As a result, their findings often ended up indicting the same populations that were stigmatized by earlier theories of criminality. In *The City*, for instance, they referred to "[t]emperament and social contagion" of "the poor, the vicious, the criminal," making no effort to distinguish between them. The possibility of a widespread "unhealthful and contagious intimacy" lent "special importance to the[ir] segregation" (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 45). Shaw's *Delinquency Areas*—a massive survey of sixty thousand adult and juvenile offenders in Chicago—reinforced these observations with scientific rigor. "[L]ittle systematic effort has been made to study delinquency from the point of view of its relation to the social situation in which it occurs," Shaw began, promising that "this volume represents a preliminary step" in an emerging field (ix). Shaw's project aimed to bring all of Chicago under surveillance, plotting as it did incidents of crime block by block by using over thirty distribution, rate, radial, and zone maps, which

it supplemented by statistical analysis and first-person narrative accounts by anonymous, self-described underworld criminals. In the "zone in transition" and "the zone of workingmen's homes"—interstitial areas undergoing great change—Shaw claimed to have found the highest percentage of the city's crime on a per capita basis (18, 19). In these inner city spaces, he wrote, one discovers "poverty, desertion, bad housing," "areas of first immigrant settlement," "Little Sicily, the Ghetto, the Black Belt," "pleasure seeking Bohemians . . . professional criminals," and a space "where play is crime" (18, 19). These poor, immigrant, and working-class neighborhoods were subject to systemic "social disorganization," that resulted, Shaw argued, from a deteriorating physical infrastructure and the continual "influx of foreign national and racial groups" (205). In the inner-city slum, Shaw charged, the harshness and anonymity of life gave birth to a criminally oriented value system, which was then passed from generation to generation, actively in the form of gang recruitment, and passively—as if a kind of communicable social disease—through the daily practices and traditions of its immigrant, poor, and working-class residents. The rundown ethnic neighborhood deformed its residents, who were in turn treated as the source of urban blight. Or as Park, Burgess, and McKenzie wrote, "the poor, the vicious, the criminal were peculiarly fit for the environment in which they are condemned to exist" (45).

Far from being confined to an elite circle of academic crime scholars, the findings of the new urban sociologists influenced the practices of state and law federal enforcement and, more indirectly, as Morris Janowitz contended, "the American literary scene" (vii). The 1931 national *Report on the Causes of Crime*, for instance, drew conclusions similar to Park, Burgess, and McKenzie, and Shaw: "poor housing conditions," "a marked absence of the home-owning class," "a largely foreign population of inferior social status," and "unwholesome types of recreation" were the roots of nonnormative social behaviors that, if left untreated, formed the basis of the social activities of organized criminal gangs whose members were often comprised of former young delinquents (US National Commission Iv). Two years prior, the report *Organized Crime in Chicago*—part of the *Illinois Crime Survey*, then the most far-reaching study of criminal justice in America—observed, "It is a noticeable fact that in these less favored areas, in these abiding places of the transients and of the 'downs and outs,' and of the newly arrived immigrant, are to be found the breeding place of gangs, of the Mafia, and of the professional criminal" (Landesco 5).

Tellingly, the *Organized Crime in Chicago* report cast its disciplinary net much wider than the narrow scope of its titular subject as it sought "the application of business methods and scientific proce-

ture" to "deal with the crime problem in detail" (281). Laying out a far-reaching role for the social science expert, *Organized Crime in Chicago* asserts, "If we would control crime in Chicago, we must control the thoughts and the aspirations and the ambitions of youth and the moral and social atmosphere and outlook of the districts and localities where our criminals are trained and nurtured" (Landesco 7). The report's exploration of the social relations of Chicago's organized criminal leaders—Mont Tennes, John Torrio, and Al Capone (all of whom seem to have been employed as models for *Red Harvest's* gamblers and bootleggers)—soon gives way to the text's "real" concern, the disciplining of the urban space of the city's poor, working-class, immigrant, and African American populations, who represent a potentially politically radicalizing element in the urban fabric. "There are reasons," the survey announced, "why there are more murders and assaults and more race and gang conflicts in Chicago than there are in any European capital. In Europe, the races are segregated into nations and states and principalities" (Landesco 3). For the authors of the *Illinois Crime Survey*, the fence of American urban apartheid had too many openings.

This purported study of "organized, underworld criminality" goes on to argue that the "thousands of Negroes [who] have come to us from the rural centers of the south" turn to crime because their "natural home is in the field and not in the streets and congested quarters of a great city" where they "lack the guardianship and advice of their white masters and friends" (Landesco 5). Certain urban spaces—or urbanness in general—were "naturally" less amenable to certain populations—"Negroes," but also Italians, Irish, and Jews—and more amenable to others. Criminal subjects were no longer "born criminal," but were instead bred in the "breeding places of delinquency and crime." "[A]ttempts to control crime" were only "makeshifts" until the "sociological sciences secure[d] a more fundamental understanding of the forces moulding human nature and society." "The science of criminology," the report cautioned, "is only in its beginnings" (Landesco 283). A year later, criminology gained what it needed to qualify as a science: the ability to quantify its observations. In 1930, the National Division of Identification and Information of the Bureau of Investigation was commissioned by J. Edgar Hoover to "collect and compile" and publish "crime statistics" in the *Uniform Crime Reports* (1). The *UCR* helped nationalize and standardize definitions of criminal offenses, whose "geographic distribution . . . and periodic fluctuation" it mapped city by city, state by state, bringing into focus, for the first time, a portrait of crime in America (US Dept. of Justice 1, 2).¹²

The hardboiled crime novel, like the sociological urban ethnographies of the 1920s and 1930s, is a study of poor, immigrant, and

working-class social relations through the lens of criminality. Sidney L. Harring, in *Policing a Class Society*, historicizes the intersection of crime and urban space in ways that elucidate the hardboiled novel's depiction of criminalized sociality that these studies aimed to uncover. The late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century city, Harring writes, was represented in the middle-class imaginary as a space that was increasingly "dark, unknowable . . . [and] working-class" (153).¹³ "Within one generation," he notes, "large cities had been transformed from comfortable, secure, homogenous small towns to sprawling, diverse conglomerates full of unfamiliar people. Large crowds of foreigners gathered on corners all over town, spoke strange languages . . . hung out in saloons, shops, and vacant lots, and exhibited strange customs and beliefs" (153). In this atmosphere, middle-class reformers, urban sociologists, and representatives of manufacturing and commercial interests combined forces to regulate the spaces of working-class leisure—especially the saloon—which were thought to dissipate workers' energies into nonproductive consumption, to undermine middle-class social and religious mores, and to "inflame radical tendencies" among the working class (155). The primary site of working-class and immigrant socializing, the saloon cashed checks, made loans, collected mail for itinerant workers, and served as a meeting place for unions and labor-affiliated political organizations. Under the auspices of enforcing Prohibition, the surveillance of saloons, pool rooms, dancehalls, and clubhouses, places where "play is crime," was officially legitimized. But the law did not merely observe these places, it produced them. Prohibition created new physical spaces in the city that were designed solely for the clandestine manufacture, storage, distribution, and consumption of alcohol. The policing of these spaces created, in turn, an underworld of organized criminal networks on the municipal, and eventually, national level. In a Möbius strip of repression and production, the law produced a "dark, unknowable" underworld of the city which, as Foucault contends, the discursive and penal forces of law could "place in full light and . . . organize as a relatively enclosed, but penetrable, milieu" (276).

Red Harvest's representation of the city mirrors that of Harring's portrayal of it in the anxiety-ridden bourgeois mind. Attempting to penetrate the city's criminal milieu, the Op navigates its working-class, delinquent spaces: the "pool rooms, cigar stores, speakeasies, soft drink joints, and . . . street corners—wherever I found a man or two loafing" (47).¹⁴ The spaces of working-class and immigrant leisure and underworld criminality are conflated in Hammett's text. In these spaces, the Op seeks Personville's organized crime factions' leaders, whom the text ethnically inscribes: among them are the gambler Max "Whisper" Thaler, "a small dark young man" with a

"little dark head" (36, 46); the bootlegger Pete the Finn, whose underlings are "dagoes" (84), "swarthy foreign-looking men in laborers' clothes" (82); the fencer Lew Yard; the bootlegger and saloon owner Reno Starkey; the Irish police chief Noonan, his Lieutenant McGraw; Bob MacSwain, a former police detective and now "a sap and a cheap crook" (58); and the "foreigners" who run the department's own bootlegging operations (113). Sean McCann, in *Gumshoe America*, calls Personville "a fantastically cosmopolitan underworld," rightly noting that it "draws no racial distinctions." "Its members associate along commercial lines," McCann states, "rather than ethnic ones, and this criminal world includes 'old stock' Americans as well as new arrivals" (80). McCann's observations comport with official disciplinary studies of crime decades earlier, which found that in the urban spaces that produced the city's preponderance of crime—"Little Sicily, the Ghetto, the Black Belt"—"[t]he relative rates of delinquents . . . remained more or less constant over a period of 20 years," despite the fact that "the nationality composition of the population changed almost completely in this interval" (US National Commission lvii). Space, not race, led to crime, though the spaces of crime—or one should say, criminalized spaces—consistently proved to be poor, ethnic, and racialized.

In the first third of Hammett's narrative, the Op's survey of space ranges from the "pool rooms" to the "street corners" and finally to the "lunch counter[s]," places where money exchanges hands for information circulating through an informal but efficient social network. He does so in order to strategically infiltrate working-class centers for the distribution of information in an attempt to disrupt the city's underworld of organized gambling, classified by the *Report on the Causes of Crime* as one of the more "unwholesome types of recreation" (lv). "I don't like the way Poisonville has treated me," the Op reveals, and so he begins his secret campaign to "even up" (45). He begins by "spreading" the news that in an approaching boxing match the favored fighter, Ike Bush, is to take "a dive in the sixth" (47). "My spreading technique was something like this: 'Got a match? . . . Thanks . . . Going to the fights tonight?'" the Op says, passing himself off as a local by mimicking working-class male reticence (47). "I looked most honest when I was lying," he later professes in a moment of ironic self-disclosure (112).

As he forges his way through the working-class milieu, the Op sets in motion what he labels, in a conversation with the erotically charged Dinah Brand, "an experiment," a moment when the novel parodically acknowledges the discursive context that has shaped its representation of crime (47). "What's your idea of how to go about purifying our village?" she asks tauntingly. Knowing full well that the

Op's methodology is not "scientific procedure," but simply "stirring things up," she goes on to say, "So that's the way you scientific detectives work" (57). Before the bout begins, the Op arranges the final pieces of his "experiment" by secretly reversing course and threatening Bush that if he does not win, he will escort him back to Philadelphia, where the boxer is wanted on criminal charges. Accordingly Bush emerges victorious, but only to be killed by a knife that is thrown from the crowd into "the nape of Bush's neck" (53). The Op is wholly unconcerned: "That was only an experiment—just to see what would happen," he says (57). The other results of his social experimentation are a near riot, a financial hit to Max Thaler, and apparently great losses to the working-class men duped by the Op's advice. The homosocial space of the boxing arena, with its "Smoke. Stink. Heat. Noise," is one of the sites of the illegal working-class leisure that the text places under scrutiny. In what is perhaps the Op's most significant observation of the event, he notes that "most of the population seemed to be on hand" (50).

In the scenes following the fight, the Op and Dinah Brand drink a "couple of hookers of gin" and discuss the corruption in the city's police department. Brand, whose alluring sex appeal has led men to buy her favors (she is in many senses of the word, a brand), stands at the center of the city's networks of gossip. She reveals to the Op that the ex-police detective Bob MacSwain—"a big good-looking Irishman" who is now "[a] small-time grifter" (58, 61)—was involved two years ago in the cover-up of the murder of Tim Noonan, the brother of the police chief. Both Brand and Chief Noonan think Max Thaler shot Tim in a love dispute over another woman, but the Op soon discovers his murderer was MacSwain. As he sets off to find MacSwain, he again perfunctorily comments, "I went out to hunt. . . . I did the pool rooms, cigar stores, speakeasies, looking around first, then asking cautious questions" (62). The near-identical repetition of language from the prior scene before the boxing match signifies his rote surveillance of working-class male space. Upon apprehending MacSwain, the Op hauls him into Noonan's office where the two corrupt cops confront each other. Hoping to spark a war between Noonan and Max Thaler, the Op does not reveal that MacSwain is his brother's real killer, but instead leads him to believe that MacSwain was merely involved in an attempt to make the death look like a suicide. Instead of arresting him for accessory to a murder, Noonan savagely beats him, threatens to kill him, and then sends him down to the cellar where "the wrecking crew" tortures him (66). In this case, Hammett's narrative leads directly from the working-class "pool rooms, cigar stores, speakeasies" to the center of the local criminal justice system where punishment is administered in a manner that is itself criminal.

In addition to these sites, Hammett's narrative takes the reader through other spaces in Personville's social landscape, into what Shaw in *Delinquency Areas* termed the down and out "zone in transition" and "the zone of workingmen's homes" (18, 19). *Red Harvest* escorts the reader into Brand's "disorderly, cluttered up" apartment (22), into a "Ronney Street rooming house" (109), and into cheap hotels with "narrow front doors . . . and shabby stairs leading up to second-story offices" with "dirty day-book register[s]" on their counters (49). It directs the reader down "a dark street not far from the center of town" (33) where Thaler's gambling "joint" is concealed by a "cigar store" (34), and out into a dilapidated warehouse district where Finn and Starkey manufacture and store their alcohol. As the Op moves through these underworld spaces, he employs methods common to detective and criminal both, at one point falsely identifying himself as a "member in good standing of the Industrial Workers of the World" (6) and at another acting "so excessively secretive" that he is asked by a woman, "You aren't a bootlegger, are you?" "I let her get whatever she could out of a grin" is the Op's response (4). The Op trespasses into the spaces where the report *Organized Crime in Chicago* contended "criminals are trained and nurtured" (7). Here he learns underworld mores, practices—the value of deception, the dangers of pride—and the social relations of criminality that he red-plays in destructive ways.

But what is peculiar about *Red Harvest's* portrait of working-class spaces is how little labor and socializing the text actually represents. Carl Freedman and Christopher Kendrick, in "Forms of Labor in Dashiell Hammett's *Red Harvest*," make a similar observation, noting for instance that the labor of the text's nameless miners "is never explicitly shown . . . and, after the first chapter, is never so much as mentioned" (13). McCann as well comments that it is "as if Personville had no inhabitants except thieves and corrupt officials" (79). While committed to depicting the infrastructure of working-class sociality, Hammett's novel largely represents these spaces as vacant forms, devoid of the manifestations of everyday life that the text implies forms the fabric of this blue-collar city. This city of forty thousand is—with the exception of a couple of crowds and an anonymous waiter, bartender, and restaurant customer or two—empty of people who are not underworld criminals. The effect is not to lessen the extent to which *Red Harvest* is a narrative of detection centered in working-class life, but is rather to heighten the sense of working-class life as criminal. Emptying Personville of manifestations of ordinary labor, Hammett's narrative fills the city's spaces with an organized, underworld criminality that is presented as indigenous to working-class and immigrant life. This is why the Op in the end must

call in the "white-collar soldiers" to impose martial law even though the leaders and minions of the city's organized criminal underworld have been killed off. Who are these federal officers going to police, if not the working-class and immigrant men whose appetite for prohibited leisure activities sustained the illicit syndicates of organized criminality in the first place?

Midway through the narrative, the Op becomes less an observer of the urban working-class scene—less of a "scientific detective"—and more of a direct catalyst for violence. Or more accurately, he unleashes the violent undercurrent implicit in his nefarious study of Personville's social mores. "I've got to have a wedge," he says, "that can be put between [the city's criminal leaders]. . . . If we can smash things up enough—break the combination—they'll have their knives in each other's backs" (78). To "break the combination" is to shatter the network of shared social practices, languages, or counterhegemonic cultural customs that form a protective membrane against upperworld intrusions into the hermetic relations of socially and spatially marginalized or criminalized populations. In Park, Burgess, and McKenzie's study of the city, they posited that in the dilapidated centers of the great metropolises where life was characterized by "mobility" and by the "number and intensity of stimulations [that] tends inevitably to confuse and to demoralize the person," alternative or "deviant" criminal cultures developed to compensate for the breakdown of "social control" and "moral order" (59). In Shaw's *Delinquency Areas*, the anonymous, petty underworld figure Case #5 brought their theory into the practice of everyday life. In Shaw's study, Case #5 relates how in Chicago's "flophouses" and "cheap hash-houses" he "brushed shoulders with crooks and gunmen of the underworld" (128). In the slums of Chicago, Shaw's unnamed subject found a spatially and socially marginalized world composed of "[m]en of all nationalities and races . . . a 'brotherhood' whose object was mutual pity and sympathy," a sphere held together by a code of loyalty and secrecy that "was unbreakable." "To violate this code by 'squalking'" to the police was, Case #5 discloses, "an unpardonable sin" (128). In Hammett's novel, the Op circumnavigates through Personville's criminal milieu, seeking not so much to decode it, but to break it. The more progressive social reformers of the 1920s and 1930s endeavored—at least on paper—to move the ethnic and immigrant citizenry of the city away from what they viewed as tribal loyalties and brotherhoods, so as to integrate them into national social and political institutions. The goals of Hammett's Op are not nearly so high-minded. As he tells Elihu near the end of his crusade, now that "everything is disorganized," the conditions are ripe "for white-collar soldiers to take hold" and reorganize the city under an

oppressive authority whose presence will benefit, first and foremost, the brutal Elihu. In this manner, *Red Harvest* dramatically embodies a major project of early-twentieth-century progressive social reform, while simultaneously casting doubt upon it, suggesting that its ultimate beneficiary may be the industrial capitalist who reaps the profit of a cowed and disciplined citizenry.

The Op gains the confidence of Personville's working-class citizenry and criminal leaders by offering up false information at some points—such as when he impersonates a union member—and withholding it at others—such as when he lets linger the impression that he himself is a bootlegger. He secures entry into this world too by speaking its tough, staccato, pragmatic language: "Give me the straight of it. I only need that to pop the job," he demands of Thaler (36). By enacting the practices of this criminal milieu—participating in shootouts, showing his skill with his gun—he gains its trust. After Thaler sees the Op shoot a man, he tells him, "You dropped Big Nick . . . I'll take a chance on you" (37). Once he has earned the loyalty of Thaler, Noonan, Starkey, Elihu, and others, he gathers the rivaling bands together for what he ironically calls a "peace conference" in which he skillfully turns the "delegates" against each other (97). Violent infighting, he declares, is "no good for business," though an internecine war is exactly what he seeks (100). "We won't get anywhere unless everybody comes clean," he announces, and then begins to narrate a misleading version of events regarding recent murders (primarily that of Tim Noonan) and recent police raids. The Op's conference breaks any remaining loyalties, an act that precipitates the bloody slaughter that consumes the remainder of the text in the red harvest of its title. At the conference, Elihu claims that he wants an end to the slaughter, but the Op soon turns the city into a grim abattoir.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the "ill-defined yet widespread feeling . . . that all forms of crime are steadily mounting" (US Committee on Uniform Crime Records 17) and the sense that "the present disturbing conditions" were in need of "ultimate relief" (US National Commission xvi) led to calls for a coordinated, scientifically organized campaign of aggressive policing. In *Red Harvest* and in the hardboiled novel more generally, these social anxieties were dramatized and ironized in narratives that presented the enforcer of law not as the tonic to violence, but as its leading instigator. In Hammett's novel, the "ill-defined . . . feeling" becomes quantifiable by a mounting body count. The flow of the crime wave that the Op's presence unleashes largely moves along the pathways devoted to the manufacture, storage, and consumption of alcohol. From the city's ramshackle warehouse district to its speakeasies, the Op follows its scent, leaving a trail of working-class and immigrant corpses behind him.

He participates in a raid on Finn's warehouse that leaves "four dead bodies. . . . swarthy foreign-looking men in laborers' clothes. . . . practically shot to pieces" and the building "ankle-deep with booze" (82). At Reno's speakeasy, "The Silver Arrow," where "[y]ou can get away with anything . . . so long as you don't get noisy," the Op stumbles upon a shootout, an effect of the war he has triggered between the rival gangs (89). Later, he watches "[m]en . . . being led, dragged, carried, from pool room to wagon" as police officers in cahoots with Finn arrest Whisper's and Thaler's henchmen (122). In the narrative's final chapter, the Op surveys "the street . . . hunting for buildings that looked like deserted warehouses" (137). Here he discovers both more murder—"a battered face. . . . of the useless, characterless sort that goes well with park benches"—and a cache of Canadian Club "branded Perfection Maple Syrup" (138). In Hammett's novel, the down and out—the "sort that goes well with park benches"—and underworld crime are awash in alcohol that spills everywhere like blood.

As the death count piles up in *Red Harvest*, even the crooked Chief Noonan cries, "I'm getting sick of this killing. . . . I'm sick of this butchering. I can't stand it anymore" (95, 96). The Op, on the other hand, is not sickened but disturbingly invigorated by murder: "I've arranged a killing or two in my time, when they were necessary. But this is the first time I've ever got the fever. . . . It makes you sick, or you get to like it" (102). The feverish contagion of murder is contracted, the text makes clear, by prolonged dwelling in the urban sphere: "This damned burg's getting to me," the Op divulges (102). Hammett's narrative bears out Park, Burgess, and McKenzie's fear of the city's "unhealthful and contagious intimacy" (45). "If I don't get away soon," the Op worries, "I'll be going blood-simple like the natives" (102). When he is in the city, he behaves like one of them; what Park, Burgess, and McKenzie labeled the "vagrant and suppressed impulses [and] passions" are elicited from the Op by his proximity to "the poor, the vicious, and the delinquent" (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 43, 45). Before the Op escapes Personville, almost all of the text's minor and major characters are gunned down in a violent flourish. Noonan himself is "shot to hell" by Thaler (101). The speakeasy owner Reno kills "the bitch" Dinah Brand with an ice pick and tries to pin it on the Op. He knocks off Lew Yard too, then murders Finn after dynamiting his headquarters. In a fitting ending, Thaler and Reno shoot each other, their bodies hauled away, the Op wryly observes on the very last page, by a "tired looking ambulance crew" (142).

Red Harvest—along with the hundreds of other pulp novels and magazines published yearly in the 1920s and 1930s for an estimated

readership of ten million—ultimately chooses violence over urban sociology, reformist politics, and the progressive journalism embodied by Donald Willsson as the best weapon in fighting crime (Smith 19). Hammett's hero's ultimate answer to Brand's question of how he plans "to go about purifying our village" is, by the novel's end, to wash Personville in blood until it is "all nice and clean" (57, 134). The line between law and crime is deliberately rubbed out by Hammett, who consistently figures the detective as the most violent, blood-thirsty presence in a city where municipal reform is made synonymous with the expunging of immigrants and criminalized working-class culture. The inability of newspaper exposés to uproot urban crime in the 1920s and the 1930s is what led, in part, to the period's sociological studies of criminality. In arguing for "the application of business methods and scientific procedure," these studies were calling into question the efficacy of reform-minded journalism. *Organized Crime in Chicago* made this point clear by classifying "the many exposures of vice, gambling, bootlegging, and graft, and . . . [the] series of earnest and determined civic crusades that have been launched against the rule of the underworld" all "failure[s]" (Landesco 278, 279). The hardboiled novel makes a similar assessment in its portrayal of newspaper journalism as ineffectual, bourgeois, and effete. The "newspapers were good for nothing except to hash things up so nobody could unhash them again," the Op says as he finishes the job Donald Willsson was unable to complete (123). Yet as quickly produced and widely circulated responses to news headlines, the hardboiled novel itself functioned as a sensational exposé of crime, a fitting role given that crime literature developed out of the nineteenth-century broadsheet.¹⁵

When Herbert Asbury, author of *The Gangs of New York: An Informal History of the Underworld* (1928), favorably reviewed *Red Harvest* in 1929, he declared, "It reads like the latest news from Chicago" (1). Asbury undoubtedly had in mind the late 1920s newspaper exposés of bootlegging and gangland murder, rather than the news offered by *Delinquency Areas* and the *Illinois Crime Survey*, both of which had taken Chicago as their privileged (or infamous) site of study. Suffering at the hands of successive and competing organized criminal factions and pervasive political corruption, Chicago in the 1920s emerged in the national imaginary as a symbol of rampant urban violence in a wide-open town. The criminologists and crime historians, Dennis Kenney and James Finckenauer estimate that by the mid-1920s there were "10,000 professional criminals . . . at work in Chicago" (130). Others speculate that upwards of sixty percent of Chicago's police department was actively engaged in bootlegging (Panek 99). Much like the crime wave in *Red Harvest*,

Chicago's crime wave between 1923 and 1926 was triggered by renewed efforts to suppress the illicit circuit of profit in prohibited alcohol. The law and order campaign of Mayor William Dever—who had ousted the publicly corrupt administration of William Thompson—sparked Chicago's infamous beer wars, which in the end left 365 dead. "Where the Thompson administration," Kenney and Finckenauer recall, "had permitted an occasional gun battle, full-scale guerrilla warfare now existed" (126). In retrospect, *Red Harvest's* appeal to the new methods of federal law enforcement proved to be prescient. The arrest of Al Capone in 1931 was obtained not through a shoot-out, but by a careful review of his income tax statements. The collecting and sorting of information won out over sheer brute force. The final demise of the most publicly visible aspects of Chicago's organized crime came in 1933 with Repeal, which relegalized the production of alcohol and placed it under the jurisdiction of the states, which began intensely regulating and taxing its distribution and consumption for their own profits.

While for Asbury *Red Harvest* represented all the latest news about bourgeois crime-fighting tactics in Chicago, for Hammett's working-class reader the text's red mountain town of Personville most likely would have called to mind the aforementioned traumatic repression of union workers in Butte, Montana, a decade earlier. Understanding the possible receptions of *Red Harvest*—or of the hardboiled novel more generally—is essential for detailing the way in which its representation of modern power was consumed by different readers. In its conflation of working-class space with organized crime, *Red Harvest* reveals its commitment to bourgeois law, but it simultaneously problematizes this commitment by foregrounding the fundamental, explosive violence that is produced by the law's repression of working-class life. The hardboiled detective novel's fraught relationship to class and power originates in the historically contested relations that the profession of private detection had to negotiate. Recruited from the ranks of the working class, private detectives—especially during America's bloodiest years of labor strife from 1880–1930—regularly were hired by railroads, factories, and mining companies to break strikes through violence and intimidation or to infiltrate unions and destroy them from within. As Haring recounts it, striking workers were denounced repeatedly as "criminals" and "viewed as part of the criminal classes," a fact that reveals how power has historically deployed and shifted the category and definition of criminality to suit its own ends (143). Of all the detective agencies responsible for crushing unions, none was more effective than the Pinkerton Detective Agency, which for years had employed Hammett as an agent. Pinkerton's agents had helped fight dozens of

strikes, most notably the McCormick strike of 1885, the Homestead strike of 1892, and the Pullman strike of 1894. As a Pinkerton assigned in 1917 to disrupt the union activities of the I.W.W. in Butte, Hammett had been offered five thousand dollars to murder strike leader Frank Little, which he refused to do. Little was subsequently lynched by masked vigilantes widely suspected to be Pinkerton detectives.¹⁶ The incident arguably was a turning point for Hammett who for the rest of his life devoted himself to leftist causes.

The parallel moment in *Red Harvest*—the breaking of the I.W.W. strike at Elihu's mine—transpires before the narrative even begins, but overshadows everything that follows. "The strike lasted eight months. . . . When the last skull had been cracked, the last rib kicked in, organized labor in Personville was a used firecracker," Bill Quint says (7). For Hammett's working-class readers in 1929, the "strike-breakers" and hired "gunmen" certainly would have been understood to be former private detectives.¹⁷ In *Red Harvest*, the original offer of five thousand dollars to murder Frank Little is reimagined as ten thousand dollars to kill off the men who lynched him. Published in a year that saw 921 strikes involving more than 288,000 workers (Peterson 21), *Red Harvest* can be read, and undoubtedly was read by some of its working-class readers, as a revenge narrative in which one representative of law rights a historic wrong by orchestrating a war between other representatives of law who are guilty of the text's original crime, the violent destruction of Personville's I.W.W. union.¹⁸ In this light, *Red Harvest* becomes a narrative of a "'savage war'" between private cops (Slotkin 12), rather than between various factions of the city's underworld.

Under different circumstances, the war in *Red Harvest's* frontier city might have led to what Slotkin calls a "*regeneration through violence*" and the birth of an uncorrupted democratic sphere (12). But Hammett's cynical novel forestalls this utopian possibility. Much like the bureaucratic and scientific interventions in the 1920s, Hammett's narrative moves through the spaces in the urban field that had been labeled the "breeding places" of the criminal underworld and reinforces the impression that in these spaces originates a modality of life that is criminal and contagious. But unlike these discourses, Hammett's text destabilizes what constitutes criminal behavior both "in its individual and organized forms" (Landesco 283). If at the text's very end the Op's juridical status is—negatively formulated—"no longer officially a criminal," then it remains unanswered what his positive status is. Is he a free and legal, law-abiding subject? Is he officially a representative of law and unofficially a criminal? And for that matter, has the law produced both the organized urban criminality he suppresses and the criminal methods by which

he stamps out crime to make the city "all nice and clean"? The text also blurs the definition of what does and doesn't constitute organized criminality. Certainly the network established by *Red Harvest's* bootleggers and gamblers is organized and criminal, but historically the definition of organized crime would have included the strike tactics of the text's I.W.W. workers who were, Bill Quint remembers, "advised the old sabotage racket, staying on the job and gumming things up from the inside" as part of their struggle against Elihu (7). For its part, the nationwide agency for which the Op works is based on a historical model that possessed a laundry list of offenses rivaling that of the era's organized crime networks. And yet this list pales when compared against the harassment and intimidation perpetrated by the Bureau of Investigation under its scientific manager, J. Edgar Hoover.

Ultimately the Op works for the person who can afford to pay for his services, Elihu, the text's industrial capitalist. Hence the first-person narrative the Op voices serves his interests. As Freedman and Kendrick observe, the Op is in the end obligated both to "the economic law of profit [which] requires that the Continental Detective Agency act in the interests of its clients" and to "the letter of bourgeois legality" (18). The Op "breaks" the strikebreakers and returns to Elihu a broken city that is purged of underworld criminals, but also free of the networks that had produced the city's alcohol. In the end, it remains unclear whether Elihu will exploit these new openings in the market and become further enriched by establishing himself as Personville's source of criminalized working-class pleasure or whether he'll suppress production of alcohol so as to extract greater efficiency from his unionless workers. In circulating a dire portrait of the plight of the urban working class, *Red Harvest* does not vindicate the forces of industrial capitalism that emerge victorious from its narrative. Rather, the news that it brings to its reader is the extent to which industrial capitalism is undergirded by the law's organized and systematic repression of the activities of working-class production and consumption. The crimes committed by Hammett's private detective disclose the violence of law, but also work to eliminate the working-class and ethnic criminality that impedes the efforts of the text's bourgeois character to amass capital. In disclosing this truth, *Red Harvest* erases the distinction between law and criminality that was vital to the legitimization of the moralistic bourgeois sociology of the 1920s and 1930s and that continues to be vital to the bourgeois accumulation that the law seeks to advance. In an era when the official discourse of criminology repeatedly singled out the poor and working-class neighborhoods of the city as the source of crime, Hammett's text implies that the whole city will "go to the dogs again"

if the true origins of crime—systemic political corruption, economic exploitation, state-sponsored violence—are not uncovered. The absence of this kind of investigation in *Red Harvest* suggests that the roots of crime will remain a mystery, one which will go unsolved by the city's new "white-collar soldiers."

Notes

1. As it turns out, Donald was murdered by Robert Albury, a poor assistant bank clerk in love with the femme fatale Dinah Brand. Albury spies Donald entering her apartment one night. Mistakenly suspecting that Donald is another of Brand's lovers and humiliated over his inability to compete with a wealthier man for her affections, Albury shoots him. The narrative thread surrounding Willsson and Albury comes to a quick finish—the Op solves the murder within the first third of the novel—and primarily serves to dramatize the class tensions that structure and destroy all personal relationships in the city. These tensions are magnified, if still implicit, in the largely unspoken agon between Donald and his villainous father, Elihu.
2. The phenomenon of organized criminal gangs is perhaps as old as urban culture itself. But prior to Prohibition, the territoriality of urban gangs tended to be narrowly circumscribed by neighborhood. While criminologists differ over the constituent features that define "organized crime," most view the phenomenon as a process or an activity, rather than a fixed, localizable entity. In a definition broad enough to account for historical changes in the patterns of organized criminality, Peter A. Lupsha singles out its central attributes as a sustained interaction by a group of individuals, who employ violence or the threat of violence and corruption of public officials in order secure a long-term accumulation of capital through the exploitation of market disparities between supply and demand that are created by government over- or underregulation (33, 34).
3. What is today known as the FBI grew out of the Bureau of Investigation (1908–34), which was renamed in 1934 as the Division of Investigation and which, in 1935, assumed its current denomination. For an excellent history of the transformations in federal law enforcement, see Claire Bond Potter's *War on Crime: Bandits, G-Men, and the Politics of Mass Culture*.
4. Municipal police departments were first organized and professionalized with the massive influx of immigrants to urban centers in the mid to late nineteenth century. The campaign to discipline the use of urban space by nonnormative populations in the early twentieth century included harassment of gay and lesbian populations in places such as New York's Greenwich Village in the 1910s and the infiltration and disruption of the organizing efforts of communists and radical (usually immigrant) unionists during World War I. As Potter notes, the

public image of the Bureau of Investigation in the 1920s was that of "a disgraced unit of Red-baiters" (3). Upon his promotion to Director, J. Edgar Hoover transformed the Bureau of Investigation by replacing the overtly brutal suppression of political dissent with more scientific methods, which consisted primarily of collecting information on radicals.

5. In addition to Hammett's *Red Harvest*, the period saw the publication of dozens of other hardboiled novels, including W. R. Burnett's *Little Caesar* (1929), Carroll John Daly's *The Hidden Hand* (1929) and *The Tag Murders* (1930), and Paul Cain's *Fast One* (1932).
6. Published in 1929, *Red Harvest* is not the first hardboiled crime story. That honor belongs to Carroll John Daly's "The False Burton Combs" (1922).
7. Foucault goes on to state that "[d]elinquency functions as a political observatory" (281). Describing how delinquency produces this observatory, Foucault remarks that "[p]olice surveillance provides the prison with offenders, which the prison transforms into delinquents, the targets and auxiliaries of police supervisions, which regularly send back a certain number of them to prison" (282). I argue that the study of organized crime in the 1920s and 1930s was, for all intents and purposes, a study of poor, immigrant, and working-class men and women who were labeled delinquent populations.
8. Dennis Porter argues that the "mission" of the detective novel "involves the celebration of the repressive state apparatus or at least of that important element of it formed by the police" (121). Along similar lines, Ernest Mandel contends that "bourgeois ideology[']s . . . privileged expression in the field of literature is the crime story" (109). While recognizing its conservatism, the recent critical engagements by Erin Smith and Sean McCann have presented a more nuanced portrait of the hardboiled genre's politics.
9. Since Hammett's first-person novel begins with the Op's arrival, the narrative is tainted from the start by his presence. But what Personville was like before the Op can be discerned in the way illegal drinking and gambling are represented as aspects of everyday life. The relative peace of Personville is implied too by the Police Chief's nauseated reaction to the crime wave the Op unleashes.
10. Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall note that the Department of Justice frequently retained personnel from the Pinkerton agency until Congress prohibited the practice in 1892 (17).
11. In 1930, the Bureau launched a campaign to fingerprint all Americans, which it advertised on the cover of the magazine *Feds* with banners that asked "ARE YOUR FINGER PRINTS ON FILE? How J. Edgar Hoover's F.B.I. Can Help You Protect Yourself and Your Family"; see Churchill and Wall (11, 25, 27). By 1974, the Division of Identification and Information had gathered the prints of approximately 159,000,000 Americans. By the 1920s, the General Intelli-

gence Division had assembled 450,000 personal files on Americans, a collection that had grown to approximately 20 million by the 1980s.

12. See Daniel Bell's *The End of Ideology* for an analysis of what he terms "the myth of crime waves" (151). Bell convincingly argues that the *UCR* consistently inflated its crime statistics by, among other things, using older census figures for the basis of calculating per capita rates of current criminal offenses.
13. Harring's study investigates the historical role of the police in the regulation and repression of working-class culture. Hardly a neutral arbiter of justice, the police, he argues, are an ideological state apparatus that serves to protect and advance bourgeois interests through the unique position afforded them, namely, the legitimate use of violence and coercion. Wishing to avoid a crude instrumentalist notion of state power, though, Harring contends the tensions within police departments between working-class, immigrant officers and their duty to uphold bourgeois interests (such as to protect property from striking workers), make the police department a site of class struggle as well as an instrument against the struggles of the working class.
14. David E. Ruth reinforces Harring's claims about the anxiety experienced by the white, middle class living in the midst of rapid demographic, social, and economic change in urban America. Ruth writes,

Especially in the first two decades of the new century, middle-class men and women combined professional organization with political and social activism to impose their vision of order on the apparent chaos of the new urban, industrial society. These progressives marshaled bureaucratic organization, expert management, and the creed of efficiency to construct social institutions that would regulate otherwise dangerous urban phenomena: huge corporations, impersonal markets, and unprecedented concentrations of workers and immigrants. Issues that commanded middle-class attention—from public health, to the assimilation of immigrants, to housing, labor, and civil-service reform—were pieces of the era's most challenging puzzle. How to live in the city? (6–7)

15. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault theorizes that law produces the criminal subject who in turn produces not only crime, but "an enormous mass of 'crime stories'" (286).
16. See Diane Johnson's biography of Hammett (esp. 20, 21); see also Churchill and Vander Wall (19).
17. In tracing the genealogy of the hardboiled detective to the frontier Indian-killer, Slotkin suggests that "In the 'detective story' the 'man who knows Indians' is replaced by a 'man who knows strikers'" (126). Slotkin goes on to argue that the hardboiled detective figure was often based on the real-life actions of Pinkerton detectives. Given

Hammett's years of experience as a Pinkerton, this is almost certainly the case in *Red Harvest*. Pinkerton was a writer too, the author of *The Mollie Maguires and the Detectives* (1877) and *Strikers, Communists, Tramps and Detectives* (1877). Of the former Slotkin comments, it was "a pattern-setter for the genre: it follows a clear narrative line and centers on the adventures of a single heroic detective whose persona is carefully built up as a model of the anti-labor detective as hero" (141).

18. For an early record of strikes in America in the 1910s, see Jay Lovestone's 1923 study, *The Government Strikebreaker: A Study of the Role of the Government in the Recent Industrial Crisis*. For a historical account of the use of police officers as strikebreakers, see Sidney Harring's *Policing a Class Society: The Experience of American Cities, 1865–1915* (esp. 101–48).

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