

The Limits of Analogy: José Martí and the Haymarket Martyrs¹

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...if I am to die on account of being an Anarchist, on account of my love for liberty, fraternity and equality, I will not remonstrate. If death is the penalty for our love of freedom of the human race, then I say openly I have forfeited my life; but a murderer I am not.

Adolph Fischer, 1887

In May of 1886, the streets of Chicago witnessed scenes of violence between labor and police that shook the nation. Thousands of workers gathered in Haymarket Square on the evening of May fourth in favor of the eight hour work day and to protest police brutality against strikers at the McCormick Harvesting Plant two days earlier. Around ten, when one hundred and eighty police arrived to disperse the already dwindling crowds, an unseen attacker threw a bomb into their ranks, killing one and wounding over sixty more. After moments of shock and confusion, the panicked police opened fire on the fleeing crowd, killing and wounding several. In the end, six more police died, although several of these were probably a result of “friendly fire” (Avrich 208-209).

Newspapers across the country electrified readers with their horrific, and exaggerated accounts of what occurred at Haymarket: police arrived to the square and were met with wild-eyed and well-armed anarchists who met them in “pitched” battle (217). Since prominent anarchists and socialists in the labor movement were Eastern

¹ This article is dedicated, in gratitude, to the memory of Roberto Crespi.

Europeans, the nation's first "red scare" became a pretext for persecuting and demonizing immigrants. Eight men were arrested for the Haymarket bomb and put on trial for murder: the Germans August Spies, Louis Lingg Eugene Schwab, Adolph Fischer, and George Engel; the native born Americans Albert Parsons and Oscar Neebe; and Samuel Fielden, who had emigrated from England. In a trial marked by conspicuous improprieties, all except Neebe were sentenced to death for inciting murder, although Louis Lingg would commit suicide before his execution, and Fielden and Schwab had their sentences commuted to life in prison. Parsons, Spies, Engel and Fischer, now the object of a national and international movement of notables for clemency and justice, were hung on November 11, 1887.

One of the speakers at the Haymarket protest was Albert Parsons, a former confederate officer from Texas who had become a passionate advocate of the proletarian cause. In his prescient Haymarket speech, Parsons said that the military, with its Gatling guns, was ready to attack workers. "Is this Germany or Russia or Spain?" He asked the crowd, to which a voice responded, "It looks like it!" (David 201). Parson's challenge to the symbolic dyad of America/Europe, with its attendant analogues democracy/tyranny and freedom/oppression, continued to resonate throughout those sectors of the North American intelligentsia and labor movement that protested the unjust trial of the Haymarket Seven and their death sentence. "They died," William Dean Howells wrote about the executed men, "in the prime of the first Republic the world has ever known, for their opinion's sake" (Avrich 404). From New York, the Cuban patriot, journalist and exile José Martí closely followed this chapter in the history of North American labor, and came to the same conclusion. "Esta República, por el culto desmedido a la riqueza,"

Martí wrote after the execution of the Anarchists, “ha caído, sin ninguna de las trabas de la tradición, en la desigualdad, injusticia y violencia de los países monárquicos” (“Un drama terrible,” November 13 1887; Martí *OC* II 796).²

Even a cursory reading of Martí’s voluminous collection of dispatches to Latin American newspapers from New York underscores his passionate interest in labor issues. Since his days in Mexico as a journalist (1875-1876), where he participated prominently in debates about trade unions and strikes, Martí considered labor to be the most important social issue facing the developed world. The dramatic scale of conflict between workers and capitalists in the U.S. during the Gilded Age struck him as an epochal struggle that would define the relationship between labor and capital in the world: “En este colosal teatro” he wrote, “llegará a su fin el colosal problema” (“Carta de Nueva York”, 12 March 1882; 410). His interest in the labor question was not academic; the conflict between capitalists and workers was a domain where broader issues of economic practice, social justice and politics could be studied with an eye on the challenges facing an independent Cuba in the future.

The importance of Martí’s writings on U.S. labor and particularly the Haymarket Affair cannot be overstated. There is a broad consensus among scholars that this event was key in radicalizing Martí’s already critical attitudes toward the U.S., setting the stage for his later, more urgent missives against U.S. imperialism in Latin America.³ Yet, beyond this unanimity, few have openly explored the contradictions between Martí’s

² To make the dating of Martí’s chronicles clear, each of my parentheticals will include the title and date of each chronicle, as well as the standard page number and bibliographical reference.

³ See Ibarra 87, Turton 87, and Foner 39. John Kirk is against periodizing Martí’s political thought, and in giving Haymarket too much emphasis in his trajectory as a thinker, he concedes that the violent scenes of Chicago and ensuing trial “*ultimately* illustrated for Martí the pitfalls of North American democracy” (my emphasis) (51).

earlier writings on the labor question, and his final Haymarket chronicle, “Un drama terrible.” Moreover, Martí’s first articles on the Chicago anarchists are in step with the North American press and the xenophobia it promoted: anarchist terror is the work of monstrous Eastern European immigrants who have brought the violent ways of the Old World to the New. The notion of “America” as a democratic alternative to barbarous “Europe” stands. After the execution of the anarchists, however, Martí does an about-face and re-writes his earlier account of events. He turns his rage on the political and justice system and softens his earlier critique of the anarchists. The U.S. is now as unjust and violent as despotic Europe.

In this article I explore Martí’s attitudes toward U.S. labor culminating in the violent events at Haymarket and the execution of the anarchists found guilty of ‘inciting’ murder. My analysis shows how Martí read class conflict before 1887 through an idealist lens that sublimated social agents and their interaction through a universal system of correspondences in which unions, strikes, and scabs are analogically tied to elements in nature and the self. However, between May of 1886 and November of 1887, when the convicted Haymarket anarchists were executed, Martí shed some of the distance that had characterized his previous analysis of labor, and which had permitted him to criticize it as harshly as the moneyed class. In a significant breakthrough, Haymarket forced Martí to reassess his view of the U.S. as a classless society where democratic practices were a viable conduit for social change. Moreover, the Haymarket crisis enabled Martí to move beyond race as a category of social analysis and overcome the deep antipathy that had marked his writings on Eastern European immigrants, and which had led him to echo North American xenophobia. In a very literal sense, Martí’s discourse moves toward a

more materialist mode of analysis, and laid the foundations some of his most radical critiques of the U.S., such as “Nuestra América” (10 January 1891) and “La verdad sobre los Estados Unidos” (23 March 1894). Although it would be premature to declare that Haymarket transformed Martí into a socialist, it did dislodge him from some of the deeply personal, universalist arguments that had made his analysis of labor before 1887 seem “evangelical” (Turton 123).

Martí and the Analogical Impetus

Martí read society through the matrix of analogy. In *Los signos en rotación*, Octavio Paz describes analogy as a poetics that expresses the correspondence between the celestial and terrestrial realms (253). For the Latin American Modernists, this poetics was nourished by Emmanuel Swedenborg’s theory of correspondences and the Baudelarian concept of synesthesia, and functioned as an aesthetic counter-measure to the fractures of modernity and its resulting alienation (Rotker 13-14). In short, analogy could counter the mechanistic and divisive rationalism of the Enlightenment with the dream of harmony and wholeness (Jrade 4). As early as the 1870’s, in his days as a political exile and student in Spain, Martí had settled on this elementary concept: “Todo va a la unidad, todo a la síntesis, las esencias van a un ser...un tronco es asiento de infinitas ramas: un sol se vierte en innúmeros rayos: de lo uno sale en todo lo múltiple, y lo múltiple se refunde y se simplifica en todo en lo uno” (Martí *Apuntes* 34). This worldview, which remained central to his aesthetics and ethics, enabled Martí to overcome the contradictions of modernity and reinstate an expression and experience of wholeness (Ramos 172).⁴

⁴ For more on analogy in Martí’s writings, see Ivan Schulman’s seminal *Símbolo y color en la obra de José Martí* (34-36).

Martí's dependence on the law of universal correspondences is evident everywhere in his writing, appearing in too many places to cite exhaustively in these pages. In his notebooks, where the young writer worked out some of the premises of his philosophy, we find some succinct examples, such as "El talento más estimado es el sintético" or "Las verdades reales son impotentes si no las animan las verdades ideales" (Martí, *Apuntes* 35, 36). Often, in his North American writings, the absence of analogy appears as an important sign of Martí's disapproval of historical agents or ideologies. For example, in 1881, Martí explicitly refers to the absence of analogy in his description of President Garfield's mentally disturbed assassin, Charles Julius Guiteau: "No hay, no, en todos los actos y palabras de este odiado réprobo aquella analogía y engranaje que revelan que una causa constata y cierta regula o perturba a quien habla y actúa" ("Carta de Nueva York," 26 November 1881; *OC II* 319). The ability to synthesize is a sign of spiritual elevation, of the ability to see into the essence of experience and reality despite a fragmented, disperse or multiple exterior (Ramos 207). Martí describes the North American historian George Bancroft in these terms; Bancroft sees from the peaks, and is thus able to encompass all that happens on the plains. As such, his is a synthetic talent, capable of recognizing and expressing the essence of complex historical events ("Carta de Nueva York," 23 May 1882; *OC II* 427). Like Emerson and Whitman, who Martí celebrated in two of his better known chronicles, we may characterize Bancroft as an elevated *hombre natural* capable of expressing himself through essential absolutes that encapsulate the hidden forces at work in nature.⁵ Later, as readers of Martí's "Nuestra

⁵ About Emerson, Martí wrote, "El veía detrás de sí al Espíritu creador que a través de él hablaba a la Naturaleza" ("Emerson"; *OC II* 5). In a similar vein, Martí describes a reading by Whitman as an

América” will remember, this hermeneutic is mobilized through the image of the *hombre natural* whose perception of the totality of the Spanish-speaking continent and its troubles is matched by his loyalty and commitment to building unity between the geopolitical and historical fragments that constitute its painful reality. To the image of a scattering of leaves (dispersion, division, multiplicity), Martí contrasts images of condensation and centeredness, like the image of trees forming ranks, and marching in unison to block the giant of seven leagues that threatens Latin America (“Nuestra América,” *OC III* 106). Thus, the discourse of synthesis that Martí had carried with him since his adolescence is now applied as an image of political and cultural sovereignty that contains diversity without losing its center: “Injértese en nuestras Repúblicas el mundo; pero el tronco ha de ser el de nuestras Repúblicas” (108).

José Martí and U.S. Labor before Haymarket

Until 1887, Martí’s primary mode of social analysis is filtered through the poetics of analogy and contributes to an optimistic assessment of the potential of U.S. democracy. His relationship to the American working class is modulated by a sense of distance, by his elevated vantage point as a joiner of fragments who is capable of seeing a big picture that workers and capitalists do not discern. Indeed, there are moments when Martí expresses a powerful sense of filiation with the working class, as in the case of his chronicle of September 5, 1884, when he is moved by the sight of a man with calloused hands who departs for work at dawn with his tin lunch pail, leaving his son behind. Martí is overcome by admiration, and by a desire to embrace the worker: “Y mientras más lo

expression of natural sounds and images, such as the rustling of branches, the beaks of birds, the flight of pollen and the expressiveness of light (95-96).

veo, lo quiero más” (“Cartas de Martí,” September 5 1884; *OC II* 520). When faced by the specifics of strikes, labor organization, specific trades and immigrants, however, he takes a more distant pose that allows him to explore the relative merits of the practices of workers, politicians and capitalists. In this context, Martí casts himself in the role of an elevated observer who catalogues historical players and events according to their transcendental value.

Martí’s idealist mode of analysis in this period is due to his negation of class as a category of social analysis; workers are not a class, but a constellation of different trades with different moral attributes.⁶ As late as 1886, Martí writes that the ways in which workers make their demands are defined by their trade; for example, drivers make their needs known with gloves, and blacksmiths with hammers (“La revolución del trabajo,” 25 March 1886; 626). Two years earlier, at a labor march in which several trades were represented, Martí enthusiastically celebrates the newspaper typographers, who have no need for weapons because they carry letters, and the noble bricklayers who are serene, dignified warriors (“Cartas de Martí,” 5 September 1884; 515). In contrast, the “ant-like” cigarette makers, who throw cigarettes into the crowd from their open carriages, making children roll on the ground to gather them, repulse him. To which Martí responds stiffly that no act that results in a child rolling on the ground should ever be undertaken (518). Finally, the contingent of butchers disgusts our observer: only what is foundational should be loved, not what spills blood (520). Martí’s non-materialist analysis of the working class is also evident in his charitable treatment of ‘scabs’; workers are read and

⁶ Paul Estrade has noted how Martí uses ‘worker’ and ‘artisan’ interchangeably during his years as a journalist in Mexico, and uses the phrase “working classes,” suggesting the concept of plurality and difference within the ranks of workers (244).

praised as tradesmen or individuals, and not for their loyalty to a particular union or strike.⁷ In sum, Martí repeatedly calls for U.S. labor to rise over emotion, which results in division, and to engage in analysis, which would facilitate an understanding of the totality of a situation and thus, reveal the proper course of action.⁸

Because of his belief in analogy and harmony, Martí's reading of U.S. labor until Haymarket was also conditioned by a surprisingly charitable analysis of North American society. Unlike Europe, where classes did exist, the U.S. was a place where social hierarchy was fluid and ever changing. The worker of today could be the capitalist of tomorrow: "Acá el trabajador sabe que el monopolista era ayer todavía trabajador: cuando trata de su huelga con un empresario, con un trabajador de ayer trata, lo que modera al que pide, y ablanda al que ha de dar" ("El problema industrial en los Estados Unidos," 19 September 1885; 600). Working from within this paradigm, Martí was free to challenge both capitalists and workers for their excesses, because the two camps did not represent the fixed identities that more radical voices proclaimed. Martí certainly did not identify with the capitalists; the profit-motive at the heart of commerce was rejected by his ethical understanding of what should drive society (Ibarra 88-90). Yet, Martí's analogical ethics also led him to vigorously reject immigrant trade unionists and revolutionists for sowing violence and division where reconciliation was possible. Martí rejects the importation of European, revolutionary ideologies into the North American

⁷ For chronicles in which Martí defends scabs, see "Conclusion" of "Grandes Motines de Obreros" (May 16, 1886) and "Las Asociaciones de Obreros" (December 1883). For a discussion of how Martí moved away from these arguments in the late 1880's see Paul Estrade (138-139).

⁸ See Martí's enthusiastic defense of the Knights of Labor, a powerful yet moderate union that sought to avert or resolve strikes peacefully and educate workers. During the Railroad Strikes of 1886, which spun out of control and became violent, Martí indignantly criticized Martin Irons, a labor leader whose agitation during the strike was contrary to the prudence, reason and conciliatory attitude he attributed to the Knights of Labor (April 27, 1886; *OC II* 636).

labor movement because such systems are a product of *ancien regime* societies where liberty and opportunity are severely curtailed, unlike the U.S., where democracy, however imperfect, exists.⁹ In short, the immigrant is full of appetite and anger, and does not understand the democratic values, traditions and protocols of his adopted homeland (“Carta de Nueva York,” 12 March 1882, *OC II* 409; Mestas 51).

Martí’s reading of immigration is a geopolitical and developmental model that privileges the U.S. and its political system over the backwardness of the “Old World.” In light of Martí’s long-standing commitment to harmony as a philosophical principle, his view of immigration as a potentially dangerous form of particularism is hardly surprising. Yet, in addition to the coherent arc of these lines of argument, which are tied to the foundations of his philosophical thought, there are also racialized intonations in Martí’s writings that resonate with some of the more conservative discourses of the Gilded Age. In much of his writings, Eastern European ethnicities come into being as ugly, physical imprints of deformed humanity. In 1884, he described German radicals as vengeful, rude, greasy, and as having ugly heads and beards (“Cartas de Martí,” 5 September 1884; *OC II* 515). Following Haymarket, he hits on the same notes, but more intensely: Germans have “square” heads and their beards are anathema to the development of ideas (“Grandes motines de obreros: conclusión,” 16 May 1886; 657). One of the convicted

⁹ Based on Martí’s notations in the 1887 edition of John Rae’s *Contemporary Socialism* (first published in 1884), José Ballon observes that Martí’s arguments about socialism, anarchism and European revolutionists may have been enriched by Rae’s arguments. The suggestion that Rae is the Rosetta stone for Martí and socialism is intriguing and important. Yet, there are some problems to consider that demand our caution. In light of the fact that the annotated edition in question is the 1887 edition, I am not persuaded by Ballon’s argument that Martí must have read both the first and second edition and studied the text between 1884 and 1887 (48). As early as 1882, two years before the publication of Rae’s study, Martí was making arguments against European revolutionism in the U.S., arguments that Rae deploys later; see 12 March 1882; *OC II* 409 and 29 March 1883; 469. Further, as my analysis demonstrates, I disagree with Ballon’s claim that between 1884-1887 Martí made class a key category of social analysis.

anarchists, Schwab, is described as bent, sickly and ugly, and months later as a repulsive, “subterranean creature” (“Grandes motines...,” 16 May 1886, 657; “El proceso de los siete anarquistas de Chicago,” 692). The prominence of race as a category of analysis and condemnation is underlined by code words that reference medical science and which define the authorial gaze as that of a clinician examining a “foreign” contaminant: Europe is the source of “poison” (“Carta de Nueva York,” 12 March 1882; 409); Irish immigrants are “a contagious secretion” (“Cartas de Martí,” 5 September 1884; 513); and uncontrolled immigration is the equivalent to an “injection” of poisoned blood (“Grandes motines...,” 16 May 1886; 657). Further, the suggestion that one of the anarchists, August Spies, looks like President Garfield’s assassin, Guiteau, references typological, scientific discourses about criminality, such as Lombroso’s landmark study of criminal types, *L’uomo delinquente* (1876), which linked physical attributes to the *reo nato* or ‘natural’ criminal. Martí may not have dwelled on such racialist arguments or developed them further after the crisis of Haymarket but their presence underscores how tenaciously Martí clung to the idea that native-born workers should control the U.S. labor movement.

Revision: “America is Europe”

Martí’s final Haymarket chronicle, titled “Un drama terrible” (November 13, 1887), marked a significant reorientation of his thinking on labor, class and race issues. Julio Ramos’ insights into the “discourse of catastrophe” in Martí’s analysis of modernity may be applied here. Catastrophe, as in the case of Martí’s account of the earthquake of Charleston, undermines the commanding power of the Enlightenment and its teleologies, and their embodiment in the ordered, “modern” city. Moreover, Ramos writes that

disaster gives rise to the reconstruction of the chorus of community and “the restitution of the power of myth and the imagination (proper to literature) that was cut short in the city by rationalization and its disenchantment” (Ramos 120). For Martí, the execution of the Haymarket anarchists marks the site of a national catastrophe that belies the myth of North American democracy. For years, in his critique of immigrants and radical ideologies in the labor movement, Martí had upheld the geopolitical teleology that stated that the U.S. was further along the path of liberty than Europe, which was weighed down by age-old divisions between rich and poor. Now, Martí collapsed the distinction and declared that the U.S. was no different than a monarchy (“Un drama terrible,” 796). In his initial reactions to Haymarket, Martí had celebrated the heroism of the police and demonized the European anarchists in terms similar to those found in the mainstream U.S. press. In “Un drama terrible,” however, he retells the story of what happened on May fourth in a way that was much more sympathetic to workers and anarchists. He indicts the police, the national media and the justice system for their lies and corruption. If before he had referred to the anarchists as beasts, now it was the Republic as a whole that has become savage like a wolf (795). Martí’s newfound solidarity with the working class, and his sympathetic representation of the anarchists he had previously rejected, results in a powerful identification with the working class, where a new community emerges out of the ruins of the Haymarket Affair.

Why did Martí have a change of heart? Three chronicles from 1886 chart Martí’s shift toward a more critical analysis of the U.S. The first is a chronicle written in April on the controversy surrounded the excommunication of an activist priest from the Catholic Church. Father McGlynn publicly supported the Labor Party candidacy of Henry George

for mayor of New York in 1886 against the direct orders of his superior, Archbishop Michael Corrigan. In 1887, the Archbishop set in a motion a series of reprisals that resulted in McGlynn's excommunication. Martí's eloquent defense of McGlynn, whose commitment to the poor he admired, contains forceful assertions of solidarity with the working class, as well as expressions of distrust toward the press (Foner 39). A few months later, in a piece that Peter Turton has identified as an important milestone, Martí was appalled by the threatening tenor of U.S. jingoism toward Mexico when Colonel Francis Cutting, a founder of the American Annexation League, was arrested by Mexican authorities for defaming their nation in a newspaper article published in Texas (Turton 81). Martí rejects U.S. saber rattling and adjudicates its true cause to the "insane avarice" of the wild men on the U.S. side of the border, and their desire to loot Mexico's riches (671-672). In a similar vein, Martí rallies to the defense of Mexico and attacks the colonialist ideology of the U.S. when Charles Dudley Warner publishes a series of Mexican travel sketches in *Harper's Monthly* in the summer of 1887 (Turton 83). Clearly, by the fall of 1887, when the Haymarket anarchists were executed, Martí was finding less reason to invoke any silver lining in a democracy and a culture that, even at his most optimistic, he had viewed with a reserve of suspicion. The dialectic between U.S. foreign policy and its constitution as a nation and a capitalist system has begun to be apparent for Martí.

The text itself of "Un drama terrible" provides us with an understanding of the ways Martí breaks with his previous analysis of U.S. labor. Setting aside the more self-evident aspects of his condemnation of the political and judicial corruption which sentenced the anarchists to death, three dimensions of this chronicle deserve a closer

look: 1) Martí's move away from his idealist, and ultimately insular template for reading class conflict, toward arguments that are more historical in nature; 2) The rejection of racialist and geopolitical discourses that had postulated the Haymarket anarchists as foreign contaminants; 3) The diminishment of Martí's authorial voice in the final section of the chronicle, which enables the voices of the anarchists to be poignantly sanctioned.

Martí begins his retelling of the Haymarket Affair by encapsulating his previous claims about the relationship between U.S. labor and European revolutionism: "Como gotas de sangre que se lleva la mar eran en los Estados Unidos las teorías revolucionarias del obrero europeo, mientras con ancha tierra y vida republicana, ganaba aquí el recién llegado el pan, y en su casa propia ponía de lado una parte para la vejez" (796). This moment of foundational promise, which spurns the doctrines of the Old World and validates the promise of North American democracy, is now projected as an obsolete period of U.S. history, not a factor in the political present. After the civil war, and the rise of monopoly capitalism and immigration, Martí argues that the peaceful village of the nation was transformed into a disguised monarchy (796). Following this historical clarification, he moves his gaze laterally to consider the factor of place for an understanding of the Haymarket Affair. In Chicago, which he terms the "metropolis" of the west, several factors came together to provoke the events at Haymarket: a more rudimentary way of life, because of the absence of the cultural restraints of the East; a stronger and more unified block of workers; accelerated economic growth, which magnifies the separation of society into the haves and the have-nots; and the prominence of German radicals in the city. The stories of Haymarket and of the problems of U.S.

labor thus begin to acquire a historical and local quality that was not present in the arc of Martí's previous writings.

The emphasis on historical factors is accompanied by a rejection of the lies of the authorities and of the press. Whereas Martí's earlier accounts of Haymarket are clearly predicated on the very same enraged indignation that dominated the U.S. press, now he distances himself from these sources. He underscores the relationship between the untruths of the press and the violence of the authorities in their pursuit of criminal anarchists.

¿No dicen, aunque es falso, que tienen los sótanos llenos de bombas? ¿No dicen, aunque es falso también, que sus mujeres, furias verdaderas, derriten el plomo, como aquellas de París que arañaban la pared para dar cal con que hacer pólvora a sus maridos? ¡Quememos este gusano que nos come! ¡Ahí están, como en los motines del Terror, asaltando la tienda de un boticario que denunció a la policía el lugar de sus juntas, machacando sus frascos, muriendo en la calle como perros, envenenados con el vino de colchydium. ¡Abajo la cabeza de cuantos la hayan asomado! ¡A la horca las lenguas y los pensamientos! (806-807)

Martí mimics the voice of blind reaction that forbids freedom of speech and thought in the wake of the attack on police. The national press stokes the flames of rage by representing the anarchists as savages and by dwelling on stories about the grieving children and widows of the dead police (808). The country has been whipped into a frenzy of revenge by these stories; to not kill the anarchists in this culture of fear is to insult the memory of the police who died as a result of the Haymarket bomb. The spirit of this moment of reaction is communicated through the emblematic scene of the weeping

wife of one of the condemned men being rebuffed when she presents a petition for clemency to a police chief. “¡Y ni una mano recoge de la pobre criatura la memoria que uno por uno, mortalmente pálida, les va presentando!” (808). Martí had once indulged in the demonization of the anarchists as monstrous men driven by hatred, but now the uncivilized sign of rage is projected onto the authorities, the press and public opinion.

Martí also rejects the trial of the anarchists as a sham, contrasting it to a succession of elevated truths, characters and scenes. After noting the corruption of the trial, he introduces a series of affirmations that indicate what should be taken as authoritative by his readers: “se probó con prueba plena...el que arrojó la bomba era un desconocido”; it is undeniable that one of the condemned men, Albert Parsons, surrendered to the police of his own will after eluding capture for months; the story of Nina Van Zandt, who falls in love with one of the condemned and seeks to marry him is deeply moving; and “Lo que sí pasma es la tempestuosa elocuencia” of the mestiza Lucy Parsons, lobbying for her husband’s release and becoming a national leader in the labor movement (807). To the trial, emblem of anger and corruption, Martí juxtaposes scenes of self-sacrifice and love. Although this formulation undoubtedly carries with it the force of his idealism, it still marks a significant break with the national media and its prevalent calls for retribution and immigration control.

In addition to these hermeneutic and ideological shifts, Martí also rewrites his narrative of the anarchists as foreign provocateurs, an argument that had led him to support the most moderate factions in the U.S. labor movement and to echo racially determinist views about Eastern Europeans. He continues to disapprove of anarchist violence as a tool for social justice, noting the ominous quality of anarchist discourse.

The native-born Parsons speaks as if cracking a whip and thrusting a knife, while the writing of August Spies is tainted by the penumbra of death (800). The shape of Spies the orator is that of a bent tree in a tempest, inciting a storm of passion in his listeners (801). Louis Lingg, a bombmaker who committed suicide in his prison-cell by exploding a fuse cap in his mouth, becomes the metaphor of the anarchist as stick of dynamite (802). Yet, the focus is no longer on these and other radicals as the importers of a foreign ideology. Rather, these men are the expression of the hopelessness and rage of the working class, the fiery projectiles of the dehumanized soul of the working poor: “...surgen de entre esas muchedumbres, erguidos y vomitando fuego, seres en quienes parece haberse amasado todo su horror, sus desesperaciones y sus lágrimas” (799). Martí thus maintains his disapproval of the anarchists while representing them more sympathetically. He proposes that their anger is not the expression of an individual insanity, or a foreign ideology, but the materialization of what lies inside the helpless worker. “Metía la mano en aquellos pechos revueltos y velludos,” writes Martí about Spies, “y les paseaba por ante los ojos, les exprimía, les daba a oler las propias entrañas” (801). The violence remains (thrusting, squeezing, brandishing), in conjunction with a reference to the butchery and blood that disgusted Martí, but now the anarchists have been subsumed into the working class as its deplorable yet inexorable unfolding into despair and desperate measures. In this respect, we see how Martí successfully works toward a view that integrates his rejection of anarchist violence with his growing identification with the cause of the working class. By discarding his rehearsed criticism of anarchism as a geopolitical anachronism, and proposing it as a metaphor for the victimization of the working class, Martí integrates the field of U.S. labor into a unified whole, as opposed to

dividing it into native and non-native factions, union members and non-union members or a hierarchy of trades.

Despite this adjustment to his models of analysis, Martí remains committed to the discourse of personal elevation and gently indicts workers for being led astray by their base passions. The embodiment of the anarchists as the despair of the masses points to the instinctiveness of the downtrodden, who have lost their ability to reason and are thus only capable of lashing out in anger, like cornered animals (798-799). Martí wonders: “¿Dónde hallará esa masa fatigada...aquel divino estado de grandeza a que necesita ascender el pensador para dominar la ira que la miseria innecesaria levanta?”(799). However, unlike previous criticisms of the working class, this question is asked in a sad, resigned key, not a condemnatory one.

The final section of “Un drama terrible” reveals the most intriguing facet of Martí’s reading of Haymarket. Throughout his account, he maintained his distance from the anarchists while amending his historical and analytical frames to enable an alliance with the movement for clemency. When decrying the injustice of the trial his examples of pathos were limited to the women who sought clemency for the condemned, not for the condemned themselves. Although he avoids dehumanizing the anarchists as monsters as he had in previous accounts, we can see traces of the same monstrosity in their discourse, which is infernal in its extremism. The final section of his chronicle, however, proposes a vision that is at odds with the rest of the text, not only in its sympathetic view of the anarchists, but in its tone. As Martí contemplates the last night and the dawn of the condemned men, he strips his writing of much of the exclamatory authorial presence that dominates the rest of the chronicle. Now he limits himself to describing in detail the

activities of the men building the death scaffold and reports snatches of conversation from guards and prisoners alike. He offers, in its entirety, Heinrich Heine's revolutionary song "The Weaver," which Engel recites ecstatically from his cell (810). We listen in to Fischer telling a guard that he is not afraid to die because he believes his death will further the cause of the working class (811). To the same query, Engel seems jocular and firm in his belief that even in death he continues his fight. We see Spies writing his final letters calmly and Parsons pacing his cell for a chorus of angels who rise splendorously to confer upon him the mantle of Elijah, and transform him into a shooting star (812). Fischer is lit with a smile and he breaks into "La Marseillaise," his head directed skyward (812). Unlike the final moments of Guiteau, which Martí had described in 1882, the condemned express themselves with great dignity. They are enjoined with songs that represent social justice, and with phrases and poses that are calm and self-sacrificing. These are not the words and acts of the prophets of destruction who represent rage, helplessness and despair, but the glow of illuminated human beings that Martí admires. Bathed in the redemptive rays of the sun, the condemned are a biblical revelation of life in the midst of flames (812). Moreover, as they are bound in leather belts for the last walk to the scaffold, the biblical theme is struck again when Martí suggests that the white shrouds thrown over their heads are like those of Christian neophytes.¹⁰

¹⁰ There are some correspondences between some of Martí's imagery and the speeches of the Haymarket martyrs right before their sentencing. For example, Samuel Fielden said: "I trust the time will come when there will be a better understanding, more intelligence, and, above the mountains of iniquity, wrong and corruption, I hope the sun of righteousness and truth and justice will come to bathe in its balmy light an emancipated world" (Kogan 75-76). With regards to the notion of the condemned anarchists as self-sacrificing men, consider the powerful words of Adolph Fischer: "...if I am to die on account of being an Anarchist, on account of my love for liberty, fraternity and equality, I will not remonstrate. If death is the penalty for our love of freedom of the human race, then I say openly I have forfeited my life; but a murderer I am not", Ibid. 68. Also Spies: "...if death is the penalty for proclaiming the truth, then I will proudly and defiantly pay the costly price! Call your hangman!" (65).

The straightforward description of the hanging itself is one of the most powerful and chilling moment in all of Martí's chronicles. We hear the final words of the men, instants before and during the release of the trapdoors. Parson begins to say: "Hombres y mujeres de mi querida América..." and before he finishes he falls with the trapdoor, and dies quickly (813). Spies lasts longest of them all: "cuelga girando como un saco de muecas, se encorva, se alza de lado, se da en la frente con las rodillas, sube una pierna, extiende las dos, sacude los brazos, tamborinea: y al fin espira, rota la nuca hacia adelante, saludando con la cabeza a los espectadores"(812). The final section of the chronicle documents scenes from the funeral of the anarchists, including the eulogy of their legal counsel, Captain Black, and the less exalted and charitable voice of Robert Reitzel, the editor of the anarchist paper *Der Arme Teufel*, who, speaking in German, said: "We grieve at ourselves that we did not rise in our might and prevent this crime..."(Avrich 397). This veiled call for violence perturbs Martí who, without naming Reitzel directly, describes the voice as coming from a man with a thick beard and a bitter heart (814). It would seem that the dehumanized logic of violence and its bearded ambassadors are still present on the social and political scene. To the very end, while learning how to mourn and celebrate the Haymarket martyrs, Martí also clung to his ethical stance against the anarchist cult of dynamite.

The Haymarket Affair was a foundational crisis in the history of U.S. labor because it showed the tragic extremes that were possible when workers and capitalists entered into violent conflict. The incipient American Labor movement experienced its first "red scare" and was set back for decades, although it acquired its first revolutionary

martyrs (Avrich 454). In many quarters, Haymarket was also a national embarrassment that pointed to the deep flaws in the American justice system and law enforcement. Martí's treatment of Haymarket, culminating in "Un drama terrible," represents an important milestone in the development of his revolutionary thought. Martí's pre-Haymarket writings on U.S. labor cast him in the role of an idealist whose inherent distrust of economic elites is tempered by his analogical analysis of labor as a fractured and uneven field of resistance. Haymarket shook the edifice of this analytical model and shifted Martí's critique in a new direction, allowing for a closer identification with the working poor and their plight.

It is tempting to only think of Martí as the author of "Nuestra América," a complex and relevant analysis of nationalism and Panamericanism, and elide the aesthetic that underpins his development as an artist and an intellectual. As a poet, novelist and chronicler, Martí's discourse was permeated with the analogical impulse to harmonize the parts into an "illuminated" whole. This aesthetic impulse, so pronounced in his aphoristic writings, had certain limitations in his depictions of U.S. labor before Haymarket. Moreover, despite the significant shifts in his analysis of the social problematic in "Un drama terrible," it would be reductive to see this chronicle as a moment of complete rupture; the analogical impetus, and the role of knowledge as an ethical foundation for political action, will continue to be felt to the very end in "Nuestra América" and later writings, bridging Martí's earlier writings with his more revolutionary texts. After Haymarket, the quest for harmony and organicity was reframed within a new awareness of the economic and social realities of U.S. capitalism, without losing its commanding position as the foundation of his political criticism. For example, a year

before his death, Martí wrote “La verdad sobre los Estados Unidos” (23 March 1894), in which he summed up the U.S. by describing it as a site of disjunction and rupture where the differences of the country’s constituent parts and polities had transformed the nation into an “unnatural” federation defined by the unities of violence and injustice (*OC* II 988). The “natural” equilibrium and harmony of parts that liberty requires to thrive is absent, making U.S. democracy a fraud.

When the trapdoors of the gallows were released on November 12, 1887, Albert Parsons had begun to say “Shall I be allowed to speak? O, men of America...” before his voice was cut short by the noose. Deeply moved by the injustice of Haymarket, José Martí continued to speak, in the name of the executed anarchists, for the poor and the hopeless, and for the Latin American republics threatened by U.S. foreign policy. Thus, the Haymarket affair underlines how Martí’s familiarity with, and critique of North American current events during the Gilded Age did in fact play a substantive role in maturing his views on labor and enabling his later critiques of colonialism.

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