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"We'll manage, like we've always done, never fear. We never know what's in store and . . ."

"Oh, Mother," my sister protested, "this looking on the bright side gets on my nerves. What this country wants is a blessed revolution."

(Walter Greenwood, *There Was a Time* 229)

I

"What this country wants is a blessed revolution" (229)—so pronounces Walter Greenwood's sister in his autobiography, *There Was a Time* (1967). Yet, his sister's impatience for socialist revolution is at odds with the patient pragmatics that underscore Greenwood's autobiographical account of life in the northern industrial town of Salford during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Although a socialist sympathiser like his grandfather (he joined the Labour party and helped produce its weekly newspaper [185]), he also subscribes to the hopeful—if less revolutionary—practicality of his mother, who recognises that one also had to get through life one day at a time. Her adage, which Greenwood may well have shared, is "Hope on, hope ever. One of these fine days my ship will come in" (82). For Greenwood, his ship does eventually come in. After years of unemployment and dole cuts, he finally receives news that his first novel, *Love on the Dole*, will be accepted for publication. On this note, his autobiography ends—not with a battle cry for economic revolution in England, but with the promise of personal advancement as he ventures forth on "the threshold of a wonderful year" (249). A sobering final chapter brings us to the 1960s (the date of the

autobiography's composition) and reminds us that capitalist economic conditions ("the big snatch all round" [253]) have still not changed; nonetheless, Greenwood leaves us with the lasting impression of hope rewarded.

Yet, readers of Love on the Dole (1933), which is closely based on Greenwood's early years in Salford, have found little hope in it. As a novel that recounts the debilitating effects of unemployment and poverty on Salford's Hanky Park during the 1920s and 30s, early reviewers described it as deeply pessimistic. Peter Monroe Jack of The New York Times Book Review commented on the novel's "general dreariness" (8). The Times Literary Supplement wrote that Greenwood "gives us a terrible picture of people caught in a trap, hopeless and helpless" (444). For the reviewer for Letters and Life, the novel never "lighten[s] the savage bitterness of the story" (43). In The Spectator, Graham Greene suggested that the novel was not remarkable for "blithe clerical optimism," but rather for "despairing, bitter humour" (956). Finally, in a review entitled "Hope Being Abandoned," William Rollins Jr. wrote in The New Republic that the novel has a "quality of inevitable disaster" where from the first there "is no hope" for the characters who shuffle toward their "inevitable doom" (229). As Stephen Constantine shows, Love on the Dole was extremely well received by the middle-class audience at which it was aimed (233). Its success was such that a stage version of it, co-written by Greenwood and Ronald Grow, ran for 391 performances at the Garrick theatre in London's West End (233). Yet, despite the novel's evident popularity, reviewers nonetheless expressed uneasiness about its pessimism. Rollins criticised Greenwood for not having "the ability" to provide some kind of resolution for the economic crisis that is portrayed (239) and in The New Statesman and Nation, E.B.C. Jones wrote that not all readers needed a "constant reminder" about human suffering (20). Constantine suggests that Greenwood's novel left its middle-class reviewers concerned, but untroubled (237); however, at least some of the novel's reviewers were more disturbed by the novel's bitterness than Constantine allows—they wanted a more promising ending. Like the publishers who

repeatedly rejected Greenwood's manuscripts, it appears that some of his reviewers sought "something of a lighter nature" (There Was 216).

More recent critical commentary on Love on the Dole has also suggested the novel's pessimism. D. M. Roskies argues that the movement of the novel's action is fatalistic insofar as Greenwood is obsessed with "crushed surrender, poisoned hope, [and] the relapse into numbed weariness" (79). Similarly, Carole Snee suggests that the novel's "deep-rooted pessimism" refutes "the possibility of change, or of any solution to the social problems he [Greenwood] identifies" (171). For both Roskies and Snee, the images of entrapment and circularity—which Valentine Cunningham argues pervade British fiction of the 1930s (92)—reveal the unremitting futility that characterises the novel. Snee, as well as most commentators on Love on the Dole, points to the novel's circular formal structure as indicative of its denial of future possibility (171-2): the novel begins where it ends, describing the police officer and the knocker on their morning rounds through a bleak and drizzly Hanky Park (Life 11, 255). If the novel's pessimism disturbed the middle-class sensibilities of reviewers who hoped for a tidy resolution to the economic crisis described, its pessimism upsets contemporary critics for different reasons. For Roskies and Snee, the novel's overriding pessimism evinces its failure as a socialist novel. While Roskies argues that the novel does not come "to renounce and unmake, to utter renegation in any sense approaching the Marxist" (81), Snee insists that "all Greenwood is left with is his pessimism, and his anger, and because he himself has no clearly articulated alternative to the misery he identifies, he appears subconsciously to transfer the blame to the working class themselves" (173). According to Snee, the tacked on happy ending—where Sally Hardcastle must finally prostitute herself to the rich bookie Sam Grundy in order to remove herself and her family from squalor—is also inadequate for a politics of social transformation inasmuch as it relies on "good fortune" rather than "political, or social change" (176). The position elaborated by Roskies and Snee, and taken up less forcefully by Roy Johnson, is the prevailing one—though Ramón López Ortega, A.V. Subiotto, and Roger

Webster have countered it by defending the novel's socialist politics. Those who argue for the novel's socialism maintain that the pessimism is not necessarily incompatible with social transformation; while the novel may offer "no hint of amelioration or escape" (Subiotto 84), Subiotto and Webster suggest that it is precisely this description of abjectness that incites social change and subverts the *Bildungsroman* plot structure of classic bourgeois realist fiction (Subiotto 84; Webster 59). However, regardless of the critical perspective taken on *Love on the Dole*, it is clear that the question of hope's presence or absence has become vital to any assessment of the novel's politics. For the handful of middle-class reviewers who expect hopeful endings, for the critics who demand a hopeful vision, yet refute hopeful palliatives, or for the critics who defend the novel's pessimism, hope is the keynote in debates about this novel—though it never has been clearly identified as such. Despite the centrality of hope in the critical commentary on this novel it has not been adequately discussed. Against the prevailing tendency to read this novel as pessimist and anti-socialist, I want to suggest that *Love on the Dole* is not only hopeful, but also socialist oriented.

Of course, there is some difficulty in linking hope with socialist politics, if only because the status of hope has been particularly problematic in socialist theory. In traditional Marxist praxis, hope is repudiated as deluded idealism, anathema to Marxist concern with real material conditions (Hudson 49). For Engels, for instance, the utopian socialism of Charles Fourier, Robert Owen, and Claude Henri Saint-Simon "drift[s] off into pure fantasies" and wishful thinking (qtd. Levitas 68). In the *Principle of Hope* (1954-59), however, Ernst Bloch recuperates the concept of hope for socialist reform, establishing a crucial distinction between "abstract" and "concrete" hope (Levitas 65). If abstract hope is merely "compensatory" wishful thinking, then concrete hope is "anticipatory" political vision oriented toward real future possibility (Levitas 67). For Bloch, "anticipatory" hope is an implicit, but neglected dimension in Marx's thinking on social and economic transformation (Hudson 56; Roberts 39), a dimension that relies on "disciplined" or "educated" hope as opposed to "undisciplined" dreaming

(Levitas 65). While Bloch has been accused of naive idealism (Roberts 27), Frederick Jameson contends that Blochian hope should not be mistaken for "facile optimism" because it is coupled with an understanding that hopelessness is incompatible with human needs (133). I suggest that Love on the Dole approaches hope from a Blochian perspective—but take it one step further. Where Bloch rejects compensatory forms of hope as politically deluded, Greenwood's novel acknowledges them as necessary antidotes to despair. Reviewers and critics who have commented on the overwhelming pessimism of the novel have overlooked the kinds of hope it describes—probably because the fortune-teller's vision, the bookie's promise, and the romantic dream around which Greenwood's characters build their lives are regarded as socially irresponsible or politically complaisant. Greenwood's novel is not naive about how such kinds of hopes serve as cheap palliatives for the disenfranchised working classes and do little to change existing economic conditions; however, it also realises that these hopes help sustain the working classes through hardship. In other words, it offers a doubled perspective on compensatory hope: it describes how cheap entertainment and wishful thinking can pander to illusion, but also offset nihilistic despair. The kind of socialism the novel offers is not the "blessed revolution" that Greenwood's sister demands in his autobiography, but rather a softer, more pragmatic socialism always more sympathetic to human realities than to socialist orthodoxy. In the end, I agree with Elmer Davis, who reviewed the novel for The Saturday Review of Literature in 1934 and wrote that "this is not in any sense a propagandist novel" (70). Above all else, its primary concern is in how the people of Hanky Park will make it through to the next day.

II

To understand the reason why Greenwood's novel attaches so much importance to what Bloch would regard as "fraudulent" forms of hope (Roberts 34), we must take into consideration the sense of annihilating despair or "impending doom" that laid its shadow over Britain in the early 1930s (Klugmann 15). In her autobiography, Storm Jameson describes "the cancer of violence, cruelty, [and]

despair" that was "eating into the thirties" (322), and more recently, James Gindin designates the thirties as "the dispiriting decade" (1). Throughout Britain, the decade began with both economic and political upheaval. The global economic depression brought on by the famous stock market crash of October 1929 checked world trade and subsequently caused the British economic system to break down. As Noreen Branson and Margot Heinemann write, "One of the richest countries in the world was patently unable to provide great numbers of its people with any way of making a living" so that "not only the working-class movement, but a growing number of middle class and professional people suffered from a sense of insecurity" (5). Politically, Britain was also far from stable. In 1931, the Labour Government dissolved when its Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, formed a coalition National Government with the opposition—an act which "was the culminating point of months of disillusionment" for Labour supporters and the working classes (Branson and Heinemann 9). Later in 1931, a new general election brought the Conservatives to power and, as a consequence, the introduction of the Means Test, a nation-wide survey which was used to recalculate unemployment benefits based on family income and eventually deny more than half of the registered unemployed from drawing any dole (Branson and Heinemann 17, 25). In 1933, journal articles called "Hope at Last?" and "The Return of Hope" which appeared respectively in The New Statesman and Nation and The Spectator predicted an economic turn for the better and suggested that "the time for fatalism [was] over" ("Hope" 560)—effectively revealing just how unhopeful events appeared in the early 30s when "the storm first burst" ("Return" 746). In a sardonic article entitled "The Right to be Bitter" published in The New Statesman and Nation in 1932, a regular columnist by the name of Y.Y. also expressed the sense of disillusionment in the early 30s: "For some time past it has been generally conceded that anybody under the age of forty is entitled to be as bitter as he chooses—to go forth eagerly in search of disillusionment and to discover futility as the pearl of great price" (441). Yet, significantly, he undercut this cynicism by ending with the suggestion there is still reason to "cheer up" and continue experiments in social reform (441). "I met a man in his fifties t

he other day," Y.Y. optimistically concluded, "who still believes in progress" (441). In a similar way, Love on the Dole articulates its politics of hope. While Greenwood was admittedly in "no merry mood" (Scott 10) when he wrote his book, but rather "burning up inside with fury at the poverty" around him (qtd. in Constantine 235), his novel does not succumb to despair, but rather finds refuge in hope. Not unlike Storm Jameson, who found antidotes to despair in writing and travel, Greenwood views despair as an unaffordable "luxury" (Gindin 209). In sheer defiance to the "impotence" (81, 90, 93) and "black despair" (43) that continually threaten to overtake the lives of his characters, Love on the Dole acknowledges sources of hope wherever it can find them.

Curiously, it is not Larry Meath, the novel's socialist, who offers this hope in the face of despair. In spite of his theories on social and economic reform, he does not inspire the people of Hanky Park with hopeful confidence, but rather heightens their sense of disillusionment. Early in the novel, Harry Hardcastle, the novel's chief protagonist, hesitates before seeking Larry's advice about working at Marlowe's engineering plant because he realises that Larry will be more discouraging than helpful (23). This soon proves to be the case when Larry manages to demoralise Harry by exposing Marlowe's exploitative business practices: he explains how the company extracts cheap labour from workers by hiring them for a seven year apprenticeship at half pay for a job that requires little real skill or training (47). While Larry's social criticism is warranted, he overlooks the fact that Harry, who has just been hired at Marlowe's, prefers his new occupation immeasurably over his last at the pawnbroker's: "Yes, despite what Larry Meath had said, this method of earning a living was far more desirable than Price and Jones's or any other office" (48). On the political front, Larry may be insightful, but on the human front, he is ineffectual. Instead of providing encouragement and solace to the people whose lives he hopes to improve, he demoralises them by negating whatever good (however ideologically delusive it may be) enriches their lives. Like Alderman Astell, the socialist in Winifred Holtby's novel South Riding, there is little doubt that Larry is well-intentioned;

nonetheless, he only seems to be able to provide "cold comfort" (Love 47).¹ It is not only other people's spirits that he depresses, but also his own. Unwilling to imagine future possibility amidst the "harsh realities" of Hanky Park (147), he resigns himself to the worst:

What do I want eh? Ha! What I'm not likely to get," an impatient gesture indicative of the street and neighbourhood in general: "Aw, having to live amongst all this. Blimey, day after day and no change at all. Work and bed and work again (141)

Eventually, it requires all of Sally Hardcastle's arts of feminine persuasion to convince him to overcome his negativity and give licence to, what he once calls, his "daft dreams" of marrying her (147). Therefore, when Snee writes that Larry represents "the one hopeful note in the novel" (174) or when Pamela Fox describes him as "the novel's 'true' hero" (Class 134), they both overlook the fact that he effectuates little positive change—he dies from pneumonia three quarters of the way through the novel. Sickly and effete,² Larry signals "the hopeless impotence of the utter futility of it all" (187) more than he symbolizes hope. Critics who view Larry as the "emblem of class agency" (Fox 79) or the novel's only hope (Snee 174) reveal their implicit political and class biases. They assume that the educated intellectual who speaks standard English³ and who is versed in socialist rhetoric should be the deliverer of this community; however, they make this assumption without addressing the ways in which he is criticised and without acknowledging the alternative forms of hope and class resistance that emerge in this novel. Larry is a doomsayer, all bite and no balm: he is neither the architect of revolution nor the remedy for Hanky Park's despair.

Davis, a reviewer for The Saturday Review of Literature in 1934, suggested that the only anodyne in Love on the Dole to "the ever-present insecurity" seemed to be "the movies, the hope of winning a threepenny bet on the races, or drink" (70). He was right. It is immediate palliatives such as these that ward off the despair that continually threatens to descend as jobs become scarce and unemployment

insurance increasingly unreliable. These palliatives come in a number of forms, but can be grouped into two main categories: first, entertainment and leisure (such as cinema viewing, fortune telling, gambling, and so forth) and, second, wishful thinking (such as dreams of success and romance). Roskies criticises the novel's depiction of a situation where people "desire nothing so much as the immediate remedying of an economic wrong" (81-82) and suggests that these provisional remedies do not address the underlying causes of the economic crisis described. He is no doubt right, but Greenwood's novel shows that provisional hopes—rather than socialist doctrine—are sometimes the only available alternatives to despair.

Entertainment and leisure are among the chief resources of hope in Love on the Dole. Greenwood's characters structure their lives around bets, drinks, movies, seances, and Saturday holidays. Mrs. Jikes and her neighbours eagerly await the daily One O'Clock (228), the midday sporting special that had covered the upcoming races and sporting events since 1885 (Clapson 40); Ned Narkey frequently over-imbibes at the corner pub (145, 188);⁴ the young, who have free time and spare pennies, attend the cinema (66); the older women in the community sit around Mrs. Jikes's kitchen table having their fortunes told for free (98); and Harry Hardcastle enjoys his Saturdays off work (53). At the time, contemporary moralists and social reformers censured the working classes, especially the unemployed, for spending money on leisure activities rather than on essentials (Davies 166). Of all working-class leisure activities, none was more condemned than gambling. In the early thirties, The Spectator published a series of articles against gambling, where its critics argued that it involved unnecessary risk taking (Rowse 281) and encouraged unchristian opportunism that invariably led to social friction (Green 667). One social reformer even went so far as to suggest that "much of the present-day poverty and distress is directly traceable to gambling" ("Gambling" 743).⁵ Socially minded critics of the left took a different, though equally negative, perspective on working-class leisure. J.L. Hammond, writing for the leftist journal The New Statesman and Nation in 1932, argued that gambling and "the entertainment industry" not only diverted the working classes

from political protest, but also further coated the palms of rich profiteers (Hammond 618-19).⁶ Love on the Dole reflects these negative attitudes toward working-class leisure, but it also acknowledges its vital importance. Oscillating between the negative and positive aspects of entertainment, Greenwood's novel offers a twofold perspective on the hope that betting, seances, and movies can offer to those living on or near the dole. This doubled perspective may not only imply the split vision of the narrator or implied author, but may also suggest a division between the narrator and the characters. It is often the characters themselves, whose voices are represented both directly and indirectly, who seem to challenge the disciplining and admonishing narrative voice.

The novel's doubled perspective on compensatory forms of hope comes across in almost every description of working-class entertainment. As to gambling for instance—which was a major underground industry in Salford at this time (Davies 142-67)—there is never any delusion about its shortcomings. At one point, the narrator draws attention to the "desperate, futile efforts" of the "discontented" to "relieve their poverty in gambling hazards they c[an] ill afford" (24). Later, Larry also suggests that gambling diffuses political dissent: "Ha, well, they [the National Government] told us what they'd do if they went back; wage cuts and all the rest. But everybody was too busy with their daft Irish Sweepstakes and all the rest of it" (186). Yet, if gambling is a distraction, it is also an important comfort. For Harry, his threepenny bet brings him an unimaginable windfall that allows him to take a holiday with his girlfriend, Helen Hawkins, and experience, if only for a while, life beyond the squalor of Hanky Park. Harry's little gamble gives him a "ticket of leave" (122) that allows him to indulge in the "magic casements" that are usually reserved for the more privileged. He returns home, moreover, with the feeling that "everything is possible" (124). Gambling not only offers hope to the individual, but also to the entire community of Hanky Park. As it brings working men together at lunch hours (48), lures neighbours out of their houses to watch the back street spectacle (110), and draws women around the kitchen table (228), it functions as communal hope. While the economics of gambling may be

competitive, the spirit of it is co-operative: the community as a whole wagers on a brighter future. The novel's leniency toward gambling is distinctly Orwellian.

Neither condoning nor repudiating it, George Orwell in The Road to Wigan Pier (1937) acknowledges how gambling provides many with "something to live for" and "a few days' hope" (82). Greenwood's novel similarly recognises that gambling can be an excellent palliative.

As with gambling, the novel views spiritualism and cinema viewing through a bifocal lens. In Salford and Manchester during the thirties, spiritualism and fortune telling were important features of working-class women's networks (Davies 79). Of course, as articles in The Spectator amply attest (Elliot 78; Joad 114), the popular press denounced spiritualism as a pseudo-science. Greenwood's novel also debunks its authenticity; however, it nonetheless acknowledges its significance for the women of Hanky Park. While Mrs. Jikes's fortunes may rely more on her keen powers of observation than her foreknowledge, her fraud is of little consequence. No one believes in it, as Mrs. Bull admits, but "it's a bit o' fun an' it costs nowt" (100). No one understands better than Mrs. Bull the fate that actually awaits these women: as she informs Mrs. Dorbell, "Ah can tell it [your future], lass, an' Ah'm no fortune teller. Tha'll keep on drawin' thy owld age pension and then tha'll die. Ah'll lay thee out an' parish'll bury y' " (102). Yet, however "daft" these seances may be (97), they allow these women to contemplate a different, and perhaps brighter, future for themselves. For Mrs. Hardcastle, Harry and Sally's mother, these seances are the only reprieve from her daily drudgery and penury; when she is not at Mrs. Jikes, she never appears elsewhere than at home labouring in her kitchen.

Like these "spirituals," movies also provide the people of Hanky Park with a brief reprieve from their present sufferings by offering hope through escapist spectacle. By the 1930s, cinema viewing had eclipsed many other forms of popular entertainment, such as variety shows and music halls (Davies 73). As always, however, the novel presents a double message about the hope that this cheap

entertainment can provide. While movies, as well as cheap novelettes, offer a necessary escape from grim reality, they are inadequate:

Dully, insistently, crushing came the realization that there was no escape, save in dreams. All was a tangle; reality was too hideous to look upon; it could not be shrouded or titivated for long by the reading of cheap novelettes or the spectacle of films of spacious lives. They were only opiates and left a keener edge on hunger, made more loathsome reality's sores. (65)

In this passage, part of a long reflection by Helen, the attitude toward escapist entertainment shifts: while "dreams," such as those offered by "films of spacious lives," are among some of the only means of escape from a reality "too hideous to look upon," they are, in Marxist's terms, "only opiates" that inevitably wear off. Here, the doubled perspective about working-class entertainment that figures so often as division in narrative perspective or friction between narrator and character also comes to represent a character's double consciousness. This double consciousness suggests that the characters are not naïve about the double-edged quality of the entertainment they choose. As throughout the novel, the traditional Marxist position that hope is a deception finds its counterpoint in the equally tenable conviction that hope is a release for "Hanky Park's prisoners" (122).

If this doubled perspective on the social value of compensatory forms of hopes like gambling, fortune-telling, and movie-going were to be encapsulated, one would have only to turn to Harry Hardcastle's description of a Saturday—the day of leisure and entertainment for many in Hanky Park. An entire chapter entitled "Saturday" is devoted to the day that for Harry "bec[omes] one to live for" (54). Saturday is "the day of football and racing talk" (54), the day when men spend the night at public houses and the morning "in bed . . . with the missis" (54), and the day when Harry and his friends pay fourpennies for a movie at Flecky Parlour (66)—in brief, the day when "Hanky Park shred[s] its dreariness" (55). For Harry,

his day of leisure and luxury not only sustains him through the week, but also instils him with confidence in the future:

This Saturday feeling was intoxicating. He was happy, contented, oh, and the future! A delightful closed book full of promise whose very mystery enhanced its charm. It justified, fully, his choice of occupation

Optimism told him to rest content, assured him that joys undreamt of were in store. And who can question optimism? It seduces. Anticipation filled him with unwonted buoyancy, with sensations of reckless abandon. (54)

Yet, as always, the novel does not rest easy with celebrations of what Bloch calls "immature" forms of hope (Levitas 68). The chapter that follows, significantly entitled "Revelation," exposes and crushes Harry's naive idealism. The "seductions" of Saturday having worn off, Harry begins to understand the precariousness of his position at Marlowe's, where the wage is scant and the prospect of steady employment grim: "Glimmerings of truth began to dawn. A million mysteries slowly unfolded their secrets; what had been tinged with glamour crumbled to stark and fearful reality" (76). Throughout Love on the Dole, working-class luxuries such as gambling and Saturday entertainment are exposed for what they are—cheap palliatives. Yet, as much as Greenwood's novel exposes the false hopes that make up Hank Park's Saturday, it never proposes to divest the people of their Saturday. In spite of the "revelation," working-class leisure and entertainment continue to offer momentary solace. The socialist, Larry Meath, might be the only one who "wasn't in for drinking, gambling, swearing, or brawling" (22), but, he is also one of the more privileged members of the community. Earning 45 shilling a week steadily, he can afford to condemn the entertainment upon which many others depend. Like Orwell's The Road to Wigan Pier, Greenwood's novel never underestimates "the need of half-starved people for cheap palliatives" (Orwell 83), recognising that "the alternative would be God knows what continued agonies of despair" (83).

So far I have discussed how Love on the Dole alternates between criticising and justifying working-class entertainment, always disciplining this debate with a view to the hope that it can offer. Wishful thinking, or dreaming, is another kind of compensatory hope that the novel validates as it condemns. Harry and his girlfriend Helen are both especially susceptible to wishful thinking. They fantasise about future possibility precisely because their real prospects are so bleak. Harry, after he finds himself without a job and then without unemployment maintenance, is destitute: "Nothing to do with time; nothing to spend; nothing to do tomorrow nor the day after; nothing to wear; can't get married. A living corpse; a unit of the spectral army of three million lost men" (170). This description of life on the dole bears a startling to that in a 1933 issue of The Spectator where Hugh Martin suggested that the unemployed man is virtually "dead" for "everyday is like the day before and the day after, empty. A living death" (177). It is also not insignificant that the word "impotence" often serves to describe Harry's sense of powerlessness, for his manhood, as that of the other men, is threatened by his lack of employment (81, 90, 93). After a long period without work, he loses two important emblems of British working-class masculinity: physical virility and earning power. Not only is he unable to shovel coal for longer than a couple of minutes (172), but he is also forced to live off his sister's income and then Helen's once they marry (196, 230). If Harry's prospects are grim, Helen's are no better. She lives in an overcrowded house with the menace of incest.⁷With these harsh realities confronting them, then, it is no wonder that Harry and Sally succumb to wishful thinking. Despite the "ominous menace looming on the horizon" (131), Harry imagines the future with insistent optimism; Helen dreams of present transcendence through romantic fulfilment; and together, they introduce the dreamy romance plot into what would otherwise be a documentary account of working-class life (Fox, Class 177). It is they, in other words, who bring Love to the Dole.

If we examine Harry and Helen's wishful thinking more closely, we see that it is precisely this that helps sustain them through hardship. Harry, for instance,

continually imagines that he will free himself from the "prison" of Hanky Park. From the beginning, as Cunningham observes, Harry becomes associated with images of entrapment (Cunningham 83). As a boy, when he works for Mr. Price at the pawnshop, he "hear[s] the chains of the desk clanking behind him" (21), resents its "iron-barred windows" (30), and dreams of escaping it. Eventually, with a combination of expectation and desire, he finds a job at Marlowe's and manages to free himself from the "daily prison at Price's" (37). It is this wishful thinking that carries him through the rest of the novel. When he loses his job, for example, he realises that he is as much a prisoner of Hanky Park as he ever was at Price's pawnshop (122), but he refuses to succumb to self-defeating despair. In his mind, he is always a "soon-to-be-released prisoner" (31), a belief that encourages him approach adversity with almost militant optimism. When searching for employment, "he assure[s] himself that he w[ill] not fail" (129); when the future looks ominous, it only "serve[s] to set a keener edge upon his ambitions" (131); and when on the dole, he imagines "already, in fancy, [that] he ha[s] found himself a job" (154). Harry may be "dole-less" through much of the novel, but he never remains "dole-ful" for long (Greenwood, *There Was* 228). One cannot help but wonder whether the novel finally rewards this kind of wishful thinking, for in the end Harry finds the full-time employment for which he has dreamt all along. At least, one *might* leave the novel with the idea that hope is self-fulfilling if it were not for Jack Lindsay, Harry's friend who never finds a job. At the end, we are reminded that he still remains "an anonymous unit of an army of three millions for whom there was no tomorrow" (255). The novel has no delusions about the political lassitude of wishful thinking: it permits a one-man revolution, not a social and economic transformation.

Like Harry, Helen also indulges in wishful thinking that provides momentary hope—though not permanent change. However, her dreams do not revolve around personal success, but rather romantic fulfilment. She depends on Harry to remove her from her present suffering:

Escape there was, or, at least, relief, in friendship. In Harry, in none other, could she have confided, unburdened herself. She wanted him to herself; someone to whom she could talk, to whom she could confess the superflux of feeling; someone with whom she could dream her dreams. (66)

Helen's romantic vision soon influences Harry's, for he also learns to rely on her to reconcile him to the future. At one point, for example, he cries, "Oh, Helen, Helen. Only she could assuage the fear of the future that loomed, large and foreboding like a great, dark cloud on the horizon" (78). Together, Harry and Helen begin to fantasise about their future lives together, instilling hope in each other with these dreams. Most of their dreams revolve around private pleasures rather than social change, but these personal fantasies make life more bearable. As the narrator informs us, "Their fancies and the seductive pictures it painted of a home of their own obscured reality and made bearable what, otherwise, would have been intolerable" (129). At times, the novel seems to indulge in their flights of fancy, reproducing in romantic dreamscapes the "ecstatic oblivion" into which they escape through each other (125). The description that ends the chapter entitled " Magic Casements" is one such example for it appears to participate in the lover's romantic utopia: "The waxing moon climbed higher in the heavens: brilliant beams bathed land and sea. . . . No wind, no sound save the distant cool swish of the sea: rabbits kicked their heels, sheep grazed, bats flitted and owls were on the wing" (125). Yet, the novel does not indulge in their romantic escapism for long; while it defends their wishful thinking, it also problematises it. Their visions may provide "momentary relief from harsh reality" and may "spur" them "to renewed efforts" (230), but they are also ultimately evanescent. As the narrator explains, "when the illusion faded and the solemn stillness fell between them, they could only practice deception on each other in glum silences or in forced cheerfulness" (129-30). Is there, then, a place for love on the dole? I think Orwell sums up the novel's position best: "The working class think nothing of getting married on the dole. It annoys the old ladies in Brighton but it is proof of their essential good sense; they realise that losing your job does not mean that you

cease to be a human being" (81)—even if it means indulging in romantic visions in order to remain one.

If *Love on the Dole* is sympathetic to the compensatory hopes of the working class, as I have argued all along, the question that remains is whether it is too sympathetic. Critics like Snee and Roskies condemn the novel for pandering to bourgeois individualism and values (Roskies 81; Snee 176), and Fox suggests that it "has a difficult time stabilizing its master narrative of class pride and revolt" against its romance subplots (184). In other words, the novel itself appears to overindulge in the wishful thinking or romance fantasy of its characters, as nowhere more patently displayed than at its conclusion when Sally's illicit liaison with Sam Grundy furnishes jobs for Harry and his father and marks the auspicious turning point for the Hardcastles. Roskies and Snee denounce the novel's pessimism, but they also condemn it for offering only temporary solutions to economic wrongs. However, these critics overlook the extent to which the novel problematises its happy ending. We are not only reminded of Jack Lindsay, who has "no influential person to pull strings on his behalf" (255), but also of Sally. She prostitutes herself to the relatively rich Sam Grundy in order to escape her grief over Larry's death, experience some financial security, and share her new-found bounty with her family. Fox suggests the novel is masculinist insofar as it places the burden of sacrifice on its female character in order to restore the prosperity of its male characters. While she is right to argue that the novel resolves the economic oppression it describes by displacing it onto its female character in the form of prostitution, she neglects to mention that it also recognises the inadequacy of its happy ending. The last description of Sally with "a blank, forlorn sense of utter loneliness" is one that pointedly reminds us of her self-sacrifice (251). In its conclusion, the novel may participate in wishful thinking, but not without being aware of its costs. It is also profoundly aware of the human cost that comes with not indulging in a little wishful thinking now and then. Mrs Bull informs us that if Sally had not left with Sam, she would likely have committed suicide like the man up the street (254). Compensatory forms of

hope—whether they be cheap entertainment, wishful thinking, or happy endings—may not be desirable or socially responsible, but they are sometimes the only modes of survival. So Mrs Bull insists:

Anyway, if a lass like Sal Hardcastle gets chance t' see summat different an' get a few quid in her pocket, then more power to her . . . Even though it don't last for ever she *will* ha' seen summat different. That's more'n Ah can say for meself. (228)

If through its character Sally, Greenwood's novel discovers hope in the seedy capitalist Sam Grundy, it may not deliver the clear socialist message that Roskies and Snee desire, but it does offer a momentary reprieve from total despair.

III

"The future was the bugbear," as Harry declares halfway through the novel. His pronouncement is telling because it suggests how time is oriented toward the morrow in *Love in the Dole*: it does not tarry over the past or dwell over the present, but continually looks toward future possibility. While the future represents both fear and hope for the people of Hanky Park, the novel concentrates on resources of hope. However, it does not feature the kind of hope one would normally associate with a socialist novel. The hope it describes is compensatory rather than anticipatory—gambling, movies, daydreams, and the like. Between a nihilist view of the future or an illusive one, it chooses the latter. The hope to which the novel subscribes may seem to reproduce rather than resist the capitalist cultural and economic system that it denounces: it is the kind of hope that largely revolves around dreams of individual advancement and forms of commodity fetishism. Yet, Fox points out that critics need to "expand the category of resistance," particularly when studying working-class texts ("*De/Re-fusing*" 66). As she explains, "a method of reading which privileges anti-individualism, anti-privatism, and dialogism can begin at the wrong place" for analysis of working-class literature because "such criticism may finally be less successful in understanding these texts on their own terms" (66). While Fox's comments refer

to inflexible poststructuralist readings of resistance, they can also apply to socialist ones as well; as we have seen, socialist criticism against Greenwood's novel has been most vehement in its condemnation of its inadequate resistance. Fox's insights remind us that working-class resistance to class oppression may take a different form than that of middle-class, if only because working-class culture operates within a "different set of resources and exclusions" (66). Greenwood's novel recognises this difference. The hopes with which the working-class characters resist their present impoverishment and imagine their future prosperity are the hopes that are most readily available. However ideologically deluded these hopes may be, they enact working-class resistance to present economic realities. I suggest, moreover, that the novel's formulation of a politics of hope is one that is still compatible with socialism, insofar as socialism concerns itself with working-class needs and desires. The compensatory hope that the novel examines may not be the kind of hope that present-day socialist theorists like Terry Eagleton, Bernard P. Dauenhauer, or Linda McQuaig have in mind as a political weapon against postmodern malaise or global capitalism, but perhaps it should be. *Love on the Dole* legitimises, while it problematises, compensatory hope as an important form of social resistance. This kind of hope may not "smash money and th[e] beastly possessive spirit" that the novel's epigraph from D. H. Lawrence promises (7) or bring about "the blessed revolution" that Greenwood's sister demands, but it is the kind of hope that is humanly possible under the circumstances. As one reviewer suggested in a 1935 issue of the *Sunday Graphic*, the book presents itself "not as a theory but as a basis for human life" (43). All socialism should strive to be so humane.

Endnotes

1. Like Larry, South Riding's Alderman Astell is unable to provide comfort with his socialism. Ironically, it is the conservative Councillor Robert Crane who offers solace to the needy when Astell cannot. Astell inwardly seethes that "men who profited by injustice, who perpetuated anarchy, who had never risked one hour's discomfort to relieve oppression, could yet by a feeble anecdote, a trick of

laughter, do something that [he], who had given health, ambition, happiness and half his life to man's service, could not do" (289).

2. As Pamela Fox points out, the novel shows many examples of masculinity being confirmed and contested (De/Re-fusing" 62). Harry especially has difficulty in establishing a viable masculine identity for himself, but Larry does as well. The novel contrasts him repeatedly with Ned Narky, juxtaposing Ned's "enormous muscularity" against Larry's "slightness of build" (134). The narrator does not valorise Ned's brutish masculinity, but neither does it Larry's effeminacy. Instead, Larry's effeminacy even further distances him from the working-class men like Harry who are clearly more impressed by "great muscular men" of Ned's type (48). We see Harry attempting to "emulate the posture of a notorious wrestler" (18), not the effete intellectualism of Larry.

3. A number of critics have commented on the different levels of speech as well as the (sporadic) translation of dialect in Greenwood's novel (Ortega 142; Constantine 243; Cunningham 316), but Chris Hopkins specifically draws attention to the hierarchisation of language. He argues that only Larry and the narrator, who alone communicate in Standard English, "seem able to articulate and interpret the experience of Hunky Park" (6). While he criticises the novel for privileging Larry as the emblem of social change over the working classes "who are presented as being too stupid to bring about change" (7), he also adds that the description of the working class "lack of insight and articulacy" also lends the text its literary and political power insofar as it illustrates their victimisation (7). Unlike most critics, then, he presents a more complex picture of the way language communicates class agency in this novel: after all, Larry's or even the narrator's Standard English may be less effective at representing Salford's socio-economic crisis than the worker's dialect, or discuss what sources of hope from which they can draw..

4. Drinking figures incidentally rather than prominently in this novel. However, insofar as it is described, it receives more negative commentary than other forms

of working-class leisure. The novel condemns Ned Narkey for his drunkenness (145, 188), while it quietly applauds Mr. Hardcastle for his resistance to "the temptation to go drown worry and misery in drink" (94).

5. As Mark Clapson has shown, gambling among the lower classes was mostly "conducted in a restrained and careful manner" that "reflected the size of the wage packet" (43), yet, the middle-class stigma against gambling was nonetheless widespread.

6. Another contemporary objection to working-class leisure and entertainment was its excessiveness. C. Delisle Burns wrote in 1932 for The Spectator that a surplus of leisure among the unemployed was precipitating mental apathy as well as "depression and despair" (635).

7. The suggestion of incest in connection with Helen and her family is oblique rather than specific. Harry indicates that the sexual behaviour of her drunken parents is not just "disgust[ing]," but so [shocking]" that he "hate[s]" them "savagely" (124). When we recall Harry's earlier anxiety that Helen might be sleeping with her grown brothers (63) and remember Helen's reference to "unmentionable things" going on in the Hawkins home (65), we cannot help but infer incest.

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First Response

An interesting paper with a genuine case to make. There are a number of very small errors, more or less at the level of typing (a couple of wrong page numbers for quotations, too, at least by my text) which another revision would eliminate. Then publishable as it stands: though if length is a problem [it is not, as the paper stands, although revisions may compel some abridgement], it would surely be possible to assume more knowledge of the 1930s, and therefore be a bit more economical at the beginning of section II, or relate this more specifically to the novel.

My only comment of substance is that it seems a pity that the author does less with the 'different levels of speech' briefly acknowledged in fn 3. These seem to relate crucially to the 'doubling' interestingly referred to at several stages. The

trouble with this 'doubling', as currently described, is that it implies a more monologic text than is the case: characters' voices are very extensively transcribed in free indirect discourse. This valorises and particularises their own visions and dreams, in ways relevant to a 'politics of hope'; it creates a vestigial vitality in the dialectical energy of the voices themselves; and it makes 'doubling' much more a division between characters and implied author than the more deeply divided division in authorial perspective implied at various points in this paper. A point where its reading might be developed, for example, is around the quotation beginning "Dully, insistently, crushing came the realization that there was no escape...reality was too hideous to look upon...". This seems to me to offer a good opportunity for commentary on (i) the novel's own realistic strategies, and (ii) its use of character perspective - the passage quoted comes in, and potentially as part of, a long reflection by Helen. Neither opportunity is taken up at the moment: (ii) would be of relevance to a range of writers about the working-class fiction: Lawrence, Henry Green, Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Alan Sillitoe.

This is not a reservation about publishing a tidied form of the paper as it stands, just a question it currently, obviously, raises.