The purpose of this article is to provide historians of American drama the first detailed description of the first draft of John Howard Lawson's Processional. This draft is of Act I only; it was written in France and is dated August 30, 1920. (Lawson was about 24 years old.)

Processional, "A Jazz Symphony of American Life," was presented for 96 performances beginning January 12, 1925, at the Garrick Theatre, New York, and also played at the Comedy Theatre, the 49th Street Theatre, and then again at the Garrick.

It was presented by the Theatre Guild "frankly as an experiment." To put it bluntly, the Theatre Guild, outwardly the "Patron of Ceaseless Experiment," was afraid to produce Processional, originally scheduled as the Guild's first production in its new Theatre Guild Theatre but instead moved to the Garrick.

Theresa Helburn, then executive director of the Guild, reports that even before the Garrick production "people were bombarding /her/ with the incessant comment that Processional was too modern, it wouldn't go." But Processional not only went, it raised a rousing controversy and Lawson got the appellation "bad boy of the American theatre."

Processional was published in 1925. In his preface Lawson emphasized method. He had "endeavored to create a method which shall express the American scene in native idiom." The "new technique" is "essentially

1) A microfilm of this manuscript was made available to me by the Curator of the Lawson Papers, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.
2) Richard Dana Skinner, quoted in Barnard Hewitt Theatre USA 1959.
4) Helburn, A Wayward Quest 1960, pp. 243-44.
5) Bushell Dimond, "A Glimpse of the New Plays," Broadway, March 6, 1925, p. 2. (Broadway was an apparently short-lived mimeographed newsletter then circulating among workers and devotees of the New York theatre world.)
vaudevillesque... a development of the rich vitality of the two-a-day and the musical extravaganza." For "it is only in the fields of vaudeville and revue that a native craftsmanship exists. Here a shining if somewhat distorted mirror is being held up to our American nature. Here the national unconscious finds a partial reflection of itself. Here the concern is with direct contact, an immediate emotional response." The world Lawson saw around him then was lively and "grotesque"—"Rabelaisian in intensity." He heard the "colorful exaggeration" of the American language. He said the "reality of America spiritually and materially is a movement, a rhythm of which the inner meaning has not been found."

This essentially vaudevillesque method can be seen in the process of development in 1920 in the first draft of *Processional*, which is not yet called "A Jazz Symphony of American Life."\(^6\)

Over forty years later, Lawson, in his early seventies, says in his unfinished and as yet unpublished autobiography: "In trying to achieve an American style, I relied too much on superficial dramatic values. It is not true that the real manners and modes of theatre are preserved in burlesque, musical comedy and vaudeville. There are vestigial remnants of imaginative projection in these forms, but the imitation of the forms of popular theatre is as far from art as the throwing of a cream pie in someone's face is far from the art of Chaplin. *Processional* is too naive, too eager for shortcuts in the means it employs. The cartoon, the comic strip, the stereotype, are used for themselves, rather than as the starting point of a deeper exploration. The leading characters break through the stereotypes in moments of emotion. But these people, driven by violence and a tragic sense of life, are not fully realized as persons. They are *larger than life* as symbols, but their conduct is explosive, and disconnected, or to use the modern term, existentialist."

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The action of John Howard Lawson's 1920 Sketch of Act I of *Processional* begins on the desolate outskirts of a city in Western Pennsylvania.

There is the feel and color of coal smoke heavy like a pall. Against the leaden sky, a mass of factory windows and

\(^6\) It should be noted that it was not until 1927 that Paul Whiteman conducted the first orchestrated jazz symphony, George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. 
chimneys. Rimming the courtyard of a factory, a huge fence taller than a man, severely formal, its bars grotesquely big and foreboding, each bar ending in a spike. A big iron gate, its arch graced with ugly filigree work. Just inside gate, a very new shiny white marble war monument—a dying soldier comforted by Victory, sword in hand.7) In the gateway, their backs to the audience, stand five stout men in frock coats and silk hats, in assorted heights, all well-fed, rounded, grotesque figures of the pork barrel, differing mainly in the way they wear their stomachs, some high, some low. Each has a white vest and a gold watch chain.

Standing beside the statue on a raised place, another man faces them. He rests one hand on the statue, in the other he waves his silk hat. Bigger and redder than the others,8) he is probably a bit apoplectic from his impassioned speaking: ... times of social stress... masses rise like ocean at full tide... good citizens, religious men, stand firm above the flood of anarchy and bolshevism on rock of American tradition... dollar, world's standard coin... Stars and Stripes, noblest flag... Ship of Democracy navigate the flood, winds of freedom filling its sails, dollar its compass... world safe while blood and gold of America ready to defend righteous cause.... America saved exhausted degenerate peoples of Europe from German barbarians... celebrate memories of 83 employees who went like minute men—when they were drafted—who gave their all freely...strike, but occasion symbolizes faithfulness of American industry... This graceful stone, in which the skill of the artist has molded an inspiration from the snow white purity of marble, expresses

7) The stage directions say: “An uglier use of the same amount of stone could hardly be invented.” In In Praise of Learning (1951) professor of architecture Oliver Braden criticizes the architecture of public buildings in the United States.

8) In his bigness and redness he is like politician Popper in Roger Bloomer (1923), but Popper's pork barrel nature is better brought out in the first draft of that play in 1920.
the mutual helpfulness of Capital and Labor, the mutual love... 9)

This speech is momentarily interrupted by offstage singing.

A strong male voice sings a ragtime tune: "Darlin', I can't wait/Do I get you now/Or must I hesitate?" Surprised, the speaker continues: "On one side, the brawny worker singing his song. On the other side (he taps his head) the brain." The male voice again sings in ragtime: "Ashes to ashes/Dust to dust." Flustered, the speaker sways to the rag: "On the one side, on the other side,..."

Jim Baldwin, the singer, enters.

He wears loose trousers, collarless shirt, and three days' growth of grizzly beard. He looks open-mouthed at the group of fat men near the statue. Almost as if addressing Jim, the speaker asks: "Shall we not eventually understand each other? take counsel together after the fashion of sane men?"

A soldier enters and brandishes a bayoneted gun at the doleful Jim, who leisurely clears his throat and spits with careful aim at a nearby spot. The soldier also spits, ostentatiously.

The speaker goes on: "...this elegant statue is a symbol of the future goodwill that shall enrich and beautify America. As I look into this crowd of loyal workmen..." (Jim asks "Crowd?" The soldier says the speaker ain't speakin' truth, he's just makin' a speech.) The speaker, relentlessly, goes on: "Hurrah for the conservative American workman. Hurrah for American business. May I live to see a similar marble monument to American industry rise everywhere—in the jungle, at the North Pole."

9) I have considerably abbreviated this long speech, even omitting articles and prepositions as well as substantives, maintaining the satirical elements in the speech but perhaps exaggerating its impressionism. L. R.
The speaker ends with a flourish of his hands and two other fat men help him off the pedestal. Jim whistles: "One swell gas bag."

Evans, the smallest fat man, gets up on the pedestal. A nervous man with a nasal voice and a terrifying abruptness, he explodes like a gun:

"...honorable gentleman has spoken compromise... don't see compromise... Who owns this country? If a man's servant is inefficient, he gets another servant. If his wife is untrue, he gets another wife."

A Tall Loose Man with a dragging voice says: "a bit strong."

Evans goes on:

"There's an international movement afoot to discredit money. Money is a Hell of a good thing. (His listeners murmur approval.) This is a monument to soldiers. Give us more soldiers. Give the family of everybody that died $1,000—that's me all over. But don't bite the hand that feeds you. No compromise. Force!"

A very old woman enters.

Old Maggie is dressed in black. She carries a mad umbrella, bits of it trailing in the wind. She has a curious solemn energy. She violently breaks in upon the fat silk-hatted men and disrespectfully pushes them aside. She seizes one after the other by his coat lapels and looks short-sightedly into his face. Then she seizes one—Josias Tannenbaum, the first speechmaker—and in a high squeaky voice says: "It's him took my son away and gave him syphilis."

The Tall Loose Man tries pulling Old Maggie away: "Now, now." There is a chorus of "Now, now." Tannenbaum swells with outraged dignity: "Madam, I assure you..." The fat men chorus: Ridiculous, absurd, preposterous, nonsensical.

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10) The theme of syphilis also enters the 1921 draft of Processional but is not developed there either and is omitted in 1925.
Old Maggie readies her umbrella to combat all these hounds of starvation, bastards, thieves, cut throats. The soldier calls her mad and tries to remove her. They fence, umbrella vs. bayonet. At the command of Evans, the soldier knocks old Maggie sprawling with the butt end of his rifle. The Tall Loose man says: "...shouldn't have done that." The fat men chorus: "It's a pity, pity..." Evans says it's war to the finish—nothing so dangerous to the social order as women and children.

It is impossible to continue the ceremony, so, each saluted individually by soldier Smith, the fat silk-hatted men march off slowly in single file, at the head of which the Tall Loose Man sees clouds in the sky: "Signs of the Times."

Smith scratches his head over the prostrate Maggie and apologizes to Jim, who has knocked his grandmother Old Maggie down himself sometimes. They roll Bull Durham cigarettes.

Smith is troubled fightin' old women. Jim says someday he'll have Jim to fight. Smith says soldiers are talking about an ugly dirty word. Jim asks: "Revolution?" Well, talkin' don't do nothin'.

Smith wouldn't like a bomb to go off under his tail. Jim goes on: "If it should come like a thunderstorm, black an' sudden, if we should slit your throats and ride all you guys on your own bayonets..." Smith is nervous: "This ain't Russia. This country has got some common sense."

Old Maggie stirs uneasily: "Bloody loafers. Bloody sons of bitches."

Smith wonders if Maggie sniffs coke. Jim says she's a good woman so doesn't sniff nothin'. Where Smith comes from, they don't take their religion so hard. Smith, a Catholic, doesn't Do much confessin'. Jim says religion takes

11) In Standards (1916) the Lawyer makes the same comment in more grammatical English.
12) In In Praise of Learning two former World War II soldiers remember one's fear of having a bomb explode beneath him and unman him.
a righthinkin' Protestant a murderous way. Old Maggie raises herself to speak, partly in an ecstasy: "I saw God and all his angels ridin' by on a cloud. You scum of damnation. And there was thunder and lightning and God spoke out of a whirlwind. And he said, you dirty good-for-nothing sneaking liar, Josias Tannenbaum, go down into Hell. The Canning Works shall be burned like a sulphur pit."

She rises to her knees and clasps her hands. Jim calls her a fool. Smith asks: "Is she or ain't she?" Old Maggie adds: "They killed my son in the machinery. They gave my grandson syphilis. What next in the sum of iniquities?"

Boob, a callow, inquisitive, sixteen-year-old, gum-chewing delivery boy has entered on a bicycle over whose handlebars is slung a basket of vegetables.

Old Maggie seizes a cabbage from the basket and launches it at Jim. She then denies hiding some potatoes under her ragged coat: "I'd be pretty poor if I'd be brought to stealin'." Boob says everybody's seen her grubbin' in garbage cans. She spills over the basket of vegetables: "Till the whole world falls about our ears like a basket of rotten vegetables."

Jim leads out his grandmother, who's been prophecycin' too much. Smith says it's a goddam strange world. 13)

Smith salutes Josias Tannenbaum and Phillpotts. 14) Tannenbaum, worried about anarchist tendencies, has faith in the conservative American workman, not dirty foreigners, but thinks Old Maggie's prophecy of his factory's burning extraordinary. Both nervous men exit.

Enters Felicite, whom Boob identifies as a French skirt whose husband is Green the riveter. 15)

13) In *A Hindoo Love Drama* (1914) one character says: "What a tangled web/Life is! A thing of clamorous confusion."

14) In 1925 Tannenbaum does not appear and Phillpotts, here identified as a private secretary, becomes a comic journalist.

15) Boob says her address is 21 Walden Street. Felicite does not appear in 1925.
She is a tired blonde woman, face lined with care, but eyes sparkling. She wears a crisply starched blouse, an old skirt, and shoes so worn they barely stay on her feet. She speaks with a slight French accent. To Boob’s parlez-vous she gives a delicious little laugh, then breaks from gaiety into sadness. She seldom speaks English: “The language of France is like a whisper carried delicately across the seas.”

Smith remembers soldiering in France.

Felicite says her husband was once a soldier too. He was brave then. He picked her up, to take her away to a good place, and they were married by a priest. Smith philosophizes: “You’re in a free country now,” Felicite says: “We French gave our blood for freedom.” Smith has heard tell Americans did the same. Felicite says Smith doesn’t understand: “You who talk Freedom, the gun in your hand, the bayonet…”

Here, a page of the manuscript is missing, at least on microfilm. Next, Jim and Felicite are together.

Felicite asks: “Pourquoi you call me Frenchie?” Jim spits casually: “Give us a kiss.” Felicite: “Dieu! Here in broad daylight?” As Jim grabs her arm, she half laughs: “There’s a place for a kiss.” Jim says he knows the place and that he comes in without knocking. Jim stops, however, and abruptly moves away.

Green, Felicite’s husband, enters. A workman in overalls with a dinner pail, Green looks from one to the other, a hard, surly look.

Green’s gotta gun for people talks to his wife. He’s gotten a medal in the war for killin’ six Germans in a trench single-handed. He’s done his duty to his country. Jim calls Green a bluff; his braggin’ about medals won’t get him nothin’ round there. Jim’s done his duty too, but he

16) He calls her Lizzie.
ain't never killed a white man in war or peace. When he shoots he shoots Chinamen and niggers. Felicite says both are liars and cowards: "You in America talk so much and mean so little. We of France whose hearts have a purpose cannot understand."

Green says he has a right to know the purpose of his wife's heart, but Felicite prefers to tell that to Jim. Green's been a sucker for marrying a Frenchie, but it's his own business. Both men lean against the iron bars, look at each other, expressionless. Green tells his wife (again) not to stick around the streets. Felicite says she's not a street walker. Jim thought in France they was all streetwalkers.

Felicite asks: "Jealous?" Green says he just makes things clear. To Felicite it is not clear. In France it is different—laughing and sentiment. Is their marriage the union of tenderness? Oh, if he would beat her, knock her down—"so that I may know I'm alive." Beat her. Do anything that feels. Green doesn't feel. Anyways, not that way. Felicite does not understand the American way to be jealous without sentiment, to fight without anger. In France women are not property.

When Green leaves, Jim says these domestic quarrels sort of take the lovin' instinct right out of a man: "Not tonight, Lizzie." Felicite says her name's Felicite, which means happiness, and she bursts into violent sobs. She exits and then Jim does.

Out of the factory gates come Tannenbaum and Phillpotts.

Tannenbaum: "Class conscious. Class struggle." He's heard of the latter but he's never seen it. He sees only conservative American workmen and only a sprinkling of Bolsheviks. (Phillpotts says Tannenbaum's eyes are bad.)

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17) In his autobiography Lawson refers to his personal struggle to eliminate his own prejudices.
18) The theme of feeling/not feeling/not being able to feel recurs in Lawson's work.
19) In his autobiography Lawson admits he didn't know very much about France.
Believe him, he's got an honest sympathy for the common people. Phillpotts says the common people don't want sympathy, they want the world. Tannenbaum doubts they look beyond the next day: "A lot of people living in their own swill." Phillpotts says one generation eats the swill of the previous one and finds it tasty. Tannenbaum holds his nose: "Stop. It smells." He's not interested in filth.

A page of the manuscript is missing.

Phillpotts says Tannenbaum doesn't know the significance of it—people living. "The human being at his most useful and elemental stage is indeed an excellent animal. The regular people of America have lost their last conventions and decencies with the war..." (Tannenbaum thinks Phillpotts insane.) Phillpotts says: "Grotesque... The men and women of America are given over to the most inconceivable clownery, bobbing on a wire, tossed in a blanket. Out of this, what new sanity?"20)

A thrown brick hits Tannenbaum on the hip.

Phillpotts picks the brick up and fingers it, petting it casually, thoughtfully: "Among your enemies new generations are coming in like a flood. What shall be the way of them? What shall their laws be? Their customs?" Phillpotts says maybe a soldier threw the brick.

Both exit. Enter Psinski and Regelstein.

Psinski, a young Pole, subdued and quiet, has sudden flashes of gesture revealing him nearly insane. Regelstein, a middle-aged seedy Jew, has a slight lisp making his caressing voice ridiculous.21) Regelstein says: "We need discipline and moral courage." Strikes is no good. The American people is a joke. They laugh at death, but they

20) A similar question is asked in Nirvana (1926).
21) In 1925 Regelstein becomes Cohen. In Nirvana Philanthropist Holz also lisps slightly.
also laugh at life. Who is serious? Psinski is serious. When the time comes, people will follow him, saying he is a good socialist—like Christ. Regelstein gets angry: Psinski is not a socialist but only a soapbox agitator without discipline and solidarity. “You don’t think.” Psinski gets bitter: he has thought so much he is withered with thinking. Besides, human progress is not thinking, it is the whirlwind. His heart cries for blood, for fire.

Regelstein, a family man, doesn’t want to see no fire, no blood, but he's a socialist—ain’t they all? Psinski says Regelstein’s not a socialist but a hog. Americans aren’t serious. They got no cleansing hatreds, no aim for the future, don’t understand the procession of the human soul to its goal.

They see men in silk hats coming, wonder what they are thinking under their hats, shrug, and exit.

Gayer and more confidential, Tannenbaum and Phillpotts enter.

Phillpotts don’t doubt if the woman they’ve been talking about is still hanging around. Tannenbaum lowers his voice: “Women without the delicacy of women. Think of our own wives and daughters leading their sweet secluded lives.” Phillpotts observes—oh, not of their own wives and daughters—there’s a lot of harlotry in sweet secluded lives. Don’t talk to him about morals. “Immoral, perverted, debauched”—that’s the human creature he knows, and he wouldn’t exchange him for any penny-proud harp-strumming angel either.” Phillpotts likes the human race, all of it. Tannenbaum is astonished by this informative chap.

As they exit, Regelstein and Psinski re-enter.

Psinski thinks people will always be poor and selfish, so he preaches no millenium: “It’s the slow difficult progress up

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22) In *Success Story* (1932) Sol Ginsburg suggests Jesus Christ was a socialist.
the hill to the sunrise, and no sunrise in sight." An idealist
denies the facts. Him, he loves the facts. Regelstein is
stubborn: "When you touch me, you touch a family man
and an idealist." Psinski says the Revolution will come,
cruel and cleansing. Regelstein says sure—"And the poor
will be rich and we'll be drinking milk and honey free at
every dairy lunch." He shrugs.
Psinski amiably calls Regelstein a fool. "You'll wade through
blood up to your knees and you'll never know it. The
procession of human misery will go on like it has ages on
ages, and you'll be sitting in your delicatessen store eating
wienerwurst." Psinski says sure Regelstein's a family man,
but don't forget, there's world men, brothers all, to whom
the family ain't but a speck on the window pane.

Jim has entered, slouching, his hands thrust deep in his
pockets, and approaches them. Regelstein tells him to mind his
own business, or ain't he got none?

Jim thinks in his slow way and surveys the sky: "Looks like
a rough night. People are talkin'. They talk hot. There's
fifty soldiers lookin' for trouble. This place ain't a picnic
ground." Jim says grimly maybe he's looking for trouble
too.
Psinski calls Jim "brother" and Regelstein is annoyed: "You
fellers got more brothers..." Jim says: "Shut your jaw.
You're a storekeeper and a kike." Regelstein says he's an
American Jew: "I got a family I can look in the face without
blushing. I'm a Jew and I got my own name."
Regelstein says Jim's name is not Baldwin: "You came out
of your mother's loins with the name of Flimmins and you're
ashamed of it because it's been dragged dirty through all
the streets..." Jim forces Regelstein to repeat after him:
"My mother is as pure..." Regelstein says: "My mother..."
one damned regular saint." Regelstein: "Is one damned
regular saint."
Psinski says it ain't their mothers but their children they
got to think of. Regelstein: "Some people's children will be born crippled." At this, Jim tries to hit him. Psinski asks them both: "Don't you know your enemies and your friends?"

Accused of being mad, Psinski says he's mad because he talks in the dark of a hatred hidden in the wayward heart. He shall find a symbol for his hatred.

A tall unkempt woman enters.

Mrs. Flimmins is forty years old. She wears loose homemade clothes of cheap pattern. No hat, but a flower in her frowsy hair. She wants a word with her son Jim: his grandmother Old Maggie is on the streets talking blood. (Jim says it ain't his business.) If Old Maggie is put in jail, there ain't enough money to get her out—all Mrs Flimmins got is her smile. Jim tells his mother to do what she thinks she should. Mrs Flimmins says she's sick.

Mother and son exit slowly.

Regelstein and Psinski comment.

Regelstein, triumphantly: "Have you seen the saint?" Psinski says there was other saints with their faces painted and their bodies free to the first comer. Regelstein says Jim's mother is a whore and his grandmother is a mad woman. But to Psinski it is good to see people in whom life stirs. In him too life stirs: "Out of decay where the worms eat shall rise the new tower of Babel, marble bright in the new Dawn!" Regelstein thinks these "decayed European notions."

23) The theme of crippledess is dropped here. In "Humanlike" (1919) there is a pathetic crippled boy. In Processional (1925) an old Civil War veteran has a wooden leg. In In Praise of Learning (1951) a university gardener and in Parlor Magic (1963) a cynical writer have lame legs. Lawson himself may have been born with a club foot, according to a friend of his; but John Dos Passos has written me that Lawson's lameness was the result of an automobile accident which happened when Lawson was about thirty years old.

24) Lawson uses the number 40 often in his plays, so it may have numerological significance.

25) Lawson had been reading The Golden Bough.
An overdressed, sallow-faced, seventeen-year-old girl in a crude red dress enters.

Regelstein chucks his daughter Sadie under her chin. Ain’t she pretty? Good, too, like they don’t make ‘em these days—pure like Grade A milk. Psinski says it’s good to be pure and it’s good to be wise, but both is impossible. Regelstein disagrees: “Not when you keep genteel and free of the scum of the earth—the grandmother prophecying like a ghost, the mother selling herself, the son acting like a ripper.”

Regelstein explains to Sadie a ripper tears the clothing off a girl’s back. Sadie says she’d like that. Regelstein, delighted: “Pure, ain’t it?”, hurries out.

Boob rides in on his bicycle, and Psinski, courtly, leaves them to what is called youth and simple love.

Sadie at once asks Boob: “What did you do with my garter you picked off me in the cemetery?” Boob holds up the garter and sticks out his tongue. They speak in low querulous tones, excited children. Boob wants another souvenir: “Them little silk drawers. Tonight give me the panties.” Sadie asks what it gets her, being loved up by a kid like Boob; she knows a travelling salesman’s got a car. Boob sings: “Little Maidenhead.” Sadie says don’t insult her, she’s pure and he knows it.

Felicite enters carrying packages of provisions. Boob offers to carry the packages. Felicite says Americans are nice to get a kiss. She does not sell the kiss. She gives him where he belongs. Boob exits. Sadie and Felicite talk.

Sadie: “You never sell the kiss?” Felicite: “You want me to say something naughty. Then you gossip...” Sadie’s worried: “You’re French and you’re wise. You know about love.” Felicite says for children like Sadie there’s love with wings. Sadie: Wings! If I didn’t have my wits, I’d be raped every night out in the cemetery, but I fight ‘em off.”
Where does that get you? Felicite suggests it gets a girl streetwalking. She and Sadie agree streetwalking’s the best way for a woman to make a start in life.

Sadie is sick of her father, sick of working in a jam factory, sick of the boys out to the cemetery. Felicite thinks it funny Americans make love on graves, and half laughs and half cries: “Have you not learned/all there is to know about love/out there on the graves?” Sadie may not be innocent but she is pure. But the boys are getting nearer every night. She gives them three weeks to make her a lost woman.

As their conversation continues, it is getting dark, and the steel grey of the afternoon is fading to copper-colored evening.

Sadie can take care of herself; she doesn’t need no fence around her lily.26) It would take some husky fellow to deflower her—as they say in the movies—but she sort of wants to be deflowered and get the suspense over with. “The boys say they know 69 ways of doing it in France.”27) Sadie asks: “Why not?” A feller an’ a girl will talk in the moonlight an’ a warm smell risin’ from the ground. Yet it don’t get Sadie nothin’. She’s full of curiosity. She watches dogs. She don’t get the technique.

Felicite says: “In France we are different. We have not your embittered curiosity. To us it is a delicious game. We are so old. A people can be grey. You don’t know what stirs in people from year to year marching on. We have lived too long for morals, too long for curiosity. Ages of naughty peole behind us killing and loving. But you wake up sudden like frightened children, shocked at the touch and pressure of flesh, anxious to save the broken flower.”

26) In Standards a cabaret singer sings “Little Laughing Lily.” In Lawson’s early plays lily has erotic significance, sometimes referring to the hymen.

27) This use of the number 69 may be the first in American drama.
Felicite remembers and saddens: “What there is to know I have known since a baby. The warm smell of ground. The man that encircles and holds. The making of new children.” Sadie asks if she knows a way to keep from having children. Felicite’s voice breaks: she knows a lot. She cries. Sadie says she doesn’t want to be serious if it’s going to make her sad like Felicite.

Felicite asks: “What does it matter if you stay alive marching with the rest of your people? Going through night to morning.” Sadie says it sounds like street walking. Felicite admits having been a streetwalker. It’s neither good nor bad. It tires the feet. It tires the heart. It’s a business like other businesses. Americans say good or bad. They are fools. They are not alive.

Felicite warns Sadie to stay away from the graveyard, where the ghosts wait. Their long conversation continues.

Sadie now knows it’s true guys pick you off the street and marry you respectable. Felicite, silent, clings to the iron bars like one being crucified. She says the art of living is “by the sentiments and the common sense.” To the dumbfounded Sadie Felicite says: “…children and old people—Simple, like a fairytale.” Sadie has seen Prince Charming in the movies. Felicite says while one lives there is hope of princes. Sadie hopes: “Might meet a guy with a big diamond watch chain across his slim waist, wearing ridin’ breeches made out of silk an’ a jockey cap, sayin’, ‘Waiter, bring on the champagne.’”

Felicite laughs: Sentiment is the art of living. To make the street a palace. Bowing. It is life. She regrets lost days. The wedding ring. Does she not carry a gravestone around the neck? Is she not dead? In France there are red poppies. They say they are the souls of those who die. There is a poppy for her in France. Red. Staining the fields. 28)

28) In Souls (1915) Roland Ross (or Rood) recites a lyric of his about red poppies.
As Felicite exits, Sadie repeats they pick you off the street and marry you respectable, and the evening gets dimmer.

Boob appears on his bicycle.

Sadie curtsies, imitating Felicite’s lost and regal manner. (Boob thinks she is trying to scratch herself.) Sadie is “chock full of romance” and just found it out. So long as you’re romantic, it don’t matter what you do. It’s the bow and the smile that matters. Boob bows, and Sadie commands him to kiss her hand. Boob: “It’s pretty dirty.” Sadie: “Go ahead, slob.”

Sadie turns her back on the audience and puts her foot up on the stone base of the iron railing so that Boob can put her garter back on her: “Don’t tickle. Do it pretty.” Boob raises her skirt and sees what’s pretty. He kisses her knee.

Regelstein enters unobserved: “Do I see what I see or am I blind already?”

Regelstein calls Boob a loafer and the stinkin’ son of a loafer. Will Boob lay his hands on Sadie, will he turn her to ruin. Shall Regelstein break Boob’s bones? Sadie says: “What do I care for him, Pa? He ain’t even old enough to shave.” To her spluttering Pa, Sadie says she’d do the same with any man and she ain’t ashamed. She ain’t a kid. She’s a woman an’ she’s got a woman’s ideas.” Regelstein tells her to shut up with her ideas.

Sadie goes down on her knees: “Forgive me, Pa.” Boob convulses with glee. Regelstein is lost and nervous: “Is it a moving picture you think you’re in?” Sadie’s driving her old father crazy: “Tell me my little girl’s pure. Pure,

29) In Servant-Master-Lover (1916) teenager Cinders, also chock full of romance, commands the Servant to kiss her foot.
30) The movie idea foreshadows Lawson’s “treating the stage as a comic charade in which people are tragically aware of their own unreality” in A New England Fantasy (1924) and in Loud Speaker (1927). Quotation is from Lawson’s comment on the former play in his unpublished autobiography.
ain't it? Little lily-white Sadie." Sadie rises: "You don't understand us young people, Pa." He embraces her. There ain't another like his Sadie—but keep away from young loafers'.

Regelstein tells Boob to beat it, and Boob exits giggling. Regelstein and Sadie talk.

Regelstein says it with his heart: the young is lewd; Sadie's so innocent, she doesn't understand the world. Sadie says he doesn't understand how she feels thirsty for love. Regelstein says: "Them movies!" When Sadie gets fat with a little shop to keep and roasted chicken every Saturday, he says, that's the time for love. The movies are lies, cursed lies. If he ever catches her again in the dark, making love from the ground up... Ain't a good education nothing? Ain't a moral example nothing?

Psinski comes in. Regelstein tells him: "The young ones, what's good and what's bad, they don't know." For Psinski, there's no good nor bad, all there is is people, the living and the dead. Jim and Mrs Flimmins enter, firmly holding Old Maggie, who struggles to escape.

"Come one, come all/Maggie says/wash in the River Jordan. We're goin' to wash the rich guys an' the poor guys. Strip 'em naked an' wash 'em an' bring 'em shiverin' naked before the Lamb of God." Begin now an' strip!

The three Flimminses exit and Regelstein speaks:

"Ain't it a family? An old woman that goes mad... That's treason. Immorality. Ain't it three generations of sin? One gets religion in the head...One is a common prostitute...An' the son is a swaggerin' bloody drunk. An' is there a penny in the bank?"

31) In the 1920 version of Roger Bloomer Roger says he lives in the 20th century, so doesn't know right from wrong.

32) It is possible that the lamb image on a landscape painting in Lawson's script for the film Blockade (1937) symbolizes the Lamb of God.
Regelstein tells his pure daughter to keep away from the Flimminses, from dark places where men kiss you and pull your legs. Sadie is frightened. Her father asks: “Ain’t it right sin would frighten you?” Psinski says he could weep, because he likes people. Regelstein says he’s welcome to people.

The three Flimminses return. There is the sound of people laughing and chattering. “The Procession!” People, slouching in the dusk, follow Old Maggie, jeering. Old Maggie breaks away and speaks:

“I am the the Goddess of Liberty. I hold up a torch saying burn, burn, burn, the big white houses. So we can build a New Heaven and a New Earth... America, I love you. The money will be melted into jewels for the women. And the men will be pure like George Washington.”

A voice calls: “Hit ’em again, Maggie!” There is laughter and violent cursing.

Regelstein asks: “Ain’t it a lesson for all of us—the Procession of an American family. The very old, the old, and the young. Holding onto nothing. Not even the flag.” Psinski says they fly too high for the flag. Regelstein says Psinski’s got no respect, either. Psinski retorts: “All you see is respectability an’ you don’t know respectability burns like a fire to cinders before the anger of the people.” Regelstein calls them people loafers. Psinski adds: “All you see is your dirty morals. I see people wakin’ to social consciousness through the experience of misery.”

Old Maggie now cries:

“Stop your laughing, fools. I tell you to take joy. I lay with my husband and I enjoyed it. And look what I brought

33) In Thunder Morning (1953) black sharecropper Eben Carter also refers to building a New Heaven and a New Earth.
34) In Roger Bloomer Roger praises George Washington because he had an ideal: Freedom.
forth—worse than lizards, worse than dung! Adulterers, and they were sick."

Green wades through the crowd—he’ll fix her!—and Tannenbaum and two soldiers with bayonets clang the factory gates shut against the people and exit. Green pulls Felicite aside.

Felicite was just watching people—they are so strange—but he accuses her of chasing strange men, which she denies: “You understand nothing. There is a time and a way to be jealous.” Assez! Green asks: “What are you to me to be jealous?” He’s tired of the sight of her. Green says he’s not a woman’s guy. Felicite says: “You mean not one woman.” She tells him to take another woman. Why should she mind. “Go to a house where there are women.” Green says she ain’t got no more morals than a rabbit. Felicite calls him a liar: “...only last night you went to such a house. You are such a coward not to say it.” She smelled the bad strong perfume. Green says: “You’re rotten all through. You got a rotten mind.” Felicite says if he hits her she may love him.

Green tells Felicite she can’t come home no more—the door’s locked. She laughs and points to the factory gate: “Like that door is locked. When the people come back, they open it. It is so with your door. I am free and I laugh. When I come back you will open it.” Green would like to make her afraid of him.35) Felicite says: “Hit me!” Would she be afraid of such a man as he? She can twist him on her finger. Beast. Cochon.

Green leaves, and Old Maggie suddenly appears. She calls Felicite the black rose of the soil, but Felicite tells her to go to Hell. Maggie says not her because God blessed the pure in heart. Old Maggie exits muttering.

In the shadow Boob watches as Felicite opens her blouse at

35) In Lawson’s early plays several male characters, good and bad, like to make women afraid of them or are pleased when they are.
the neck: "Look at my heart—is it pure?" She trembles. It is her nerves. She pulls Boob off—to the graveyard. On a grave she will show him how they make love in France.

Tannenbaum enters, walking about angrily. In the dark he runs into Mrs Flimmins. She's looking for her mother. What's he looking for, a girl? Tannenbaum says: "My God, Madam, you are not a girl! You infect! The more I see of the moral standards of this community the more I'm convinced selfgovernment is a mistake. Woman suffrage for you? Haugh!"

Soldier Smith enters. Tannenbaum flashes a flashlight on Mrs Flimmins, who runs off screaming; Tannenbaum is pleased she is afraid of him. Smith goes on patrol.

Sadie enters. Tannenbaum tells her to move out of the shadows into the moonlight. "What are you doing, my child, out after dark?" He lights a match to take a good look at her. The light shows his leering old face.

"Don't be afraid," he says, You've found a friend." In the dark, Sadie giggles: "You're tickling." She slaps his face. She says people call him the Boss because he's a hard old million-dollar brute. He says he's a father to the people working for him. Tannenbaum asks her if she would like him to be a father to her. Sadie carelessly replies: "You can have me if you pay my price." Tannenbaum calls: "The commercial spirit!" What is Sadie worth? Take it or leave it, Sadie says, a house and lot free of mortgage, and a job as an actress. She adds—she is a virgin, he'll find out when he has her. Tannenbaum says Sadie's too crude: Her lack of moral sense would ruin his pleasure. Sadie guesses she ain't romantic. Tannenbaum says her sense of humor may save her.

As Sadie leaves, Tannenbaum says that place is an extraordinarily soiled place, and he leaves too.

Psinski sticks his head out from behind the bars of the iron railing.
Psinski says he is inside the factory of the silk-hatted men—he is at their heart. He asks Jim: "What do you care for your dirty skin when the whole social structure is heavin'?" (Jim: "Maybe it is, maybe it ain't.") How long shall the weak control the strong? It is the dollar against the beating heart. The heart shall win!

Psinski regrets not being able to set fire to the factory. Hate must find a symbol. It is the law of people that march and don't know where. Jim suggests the white marble statue of Victory shining in the moonlight dedicated to them that died for democracy is a symbol of hatred of those who sent men out to die. "An' they make a white gravestone to frighten them that live."

Psinski sees another victory coming. It's got smoky wings and flesh all in a sweat. Jim hands Psinski a big cobble from the road: "Knock the guts out of that statue. Knock the head off their Victory." There is silence, then a hard measured knocking of stone against marble. Against the white marble, Psinski is a small black figure moving frantically like a scarecrow in the wind. The smashing doesn't make much headway, but Jim says it ain't headway they want, it's the laugh.

Smith the soldier enters and confronts Jim, who challenges him to put down his gun and fight like a man. Smith declines.

Jim tells Smith: "In there a man is knockin' the face off your duty, 'cause he ain't afraid. You're afraid, or what would you be carryin' that big gun for?" Jim wrestles the gun away from Smith. "Hear him! He's taking the guts out of your monument." Jim says the monument is going to be Smith's gravestone. "It's going to be a broken doll with the guts fallin' out."

Smith says Jim'll get jailed for this, but Jim says tomorrow there won't be no jails, and they fight, rolling about on the ground. Old

36) Earlier Jim says if he was Psinski he'd give the statue of Victory a black eye. Ain't that funny? There is a suggestion of Dada here.
Maggie enters and screams in a high, querulous voice.

"Ain't there no end of fightin'? Shall man crawl like a bloody lizard in the mud? Shall God turn his face away? No, I say. God is riding in the battles. God is moving in the whirlwind, giving his old laws. Hear, hear. Brother shall fight with brother until the Dawn. At Dawn one of 'em will rise up like an angel sayin' Behold, we got one purpose and one end. To make the earth a green Paradise and the factories run double time and a great fornication in the market place.

Maggie repeats "Come and hear God" and runs out.

Jim hears people coming and warns Psinski to escape. Jim asks Smith if he's had enough fighting and Smith says he had enough before he began.

"God damn you," Smith says, "I went into this trap because it looked like an easy job, all bootlickin' and quick advancement. Here I am, everybody against me, hittin' me here and hittin' me there, takin' my gun away. I'm fed up."

Psinski appears at the top of the iron railing. What are bars to him? He scales the bars like a cat. He comes down like a comet. Jim hastily exits. Smith looks for his gun. Another soldier comes in, sweeping the scene with his flashlight. The light shines full on Psinski: he is caught by the back of his coat on the point of one of the iron spikes, hanging down, arms and legs sprawling ridiculously, the figure of a grotesque defeat.

There is a great deal of noise. Cries of "Light!" People flock in, the ragged inhabitants of the district, carrying candles, torches, a green-shaded oil lamp, and electric flashlights.37) There is a great deal of hoarse laughing and swearing, the mingled hysterical music of human voices.

37) These various lights suggest the historical development of lighting—the whole a kind of procession or pageant symbolic of human ascendency toward the light.
Tannenbaum and Phillpotts enter. Psinski, hanging down, stretches out his arms and wriggles, saying:

"They got me. I hang like an old rug on a railing. I hang like a human flag. I'm the statue of defeat. The human statue with arms and legs that spin in the wind. I am defeat, and I am stronger than your marble Victory. I have knocked off her head. I have made her a fool."

All turn toward the statue, headless and mutilated. A cheer rises from the crowd, whom Psinski addresses:

"Will you sing? Will you come to me making a glad shout? Will you join me in my defeat?" (The crowd is silent.) Psinski continues bitterly: "Cowards. There was others that was crucified. It is a good thing. Up here I can see, I can feel. I am in the winds that blow from the north and the east carrying the news. I can see the rich people. I can see worms crawling under their silk hats. I can see your hearts red in you. America, I love you. Not the flags waving. But that gang that ain't got a voice. The millions shall have a voice. The millions shall have a name. Your sweat is good. Your entrails is good."

Phillpotts says: "The human species." The soldiers push the people back with their guns. Psinski points to the soldiers.

"You too, I love you. You too are made out of sweat. Join us. The Procession shall go on. Trampling down the silk hats. Trampling down the cannon. Trampling down the factories. Till the whole earth, trodden and bloody, shall be ripe for a new harvest."

As the soldiers clear away the crowd, Tannenbaum and Phillpotts look up at Psinski, who laughs quietly, up in the air.

The curtain then closes on John Howard Lawson's Sketch of Act I of Processional, August 30, 1920.